

		<b>AGENDA ITEM 5</b>
		<b>GTP/03/19</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD</b>	
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>15 July 2019</b>	
<b>Report:</b>	<b>PROVISION OF ALLOTMENTS AT GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK</b>	
<b>Enquiries to:</b>	<b>Paul Partridge, Head of Operations</b>	

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide Members with an update on proposed allotments within the boundary of Great Notley Country Park.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

In February 2018, Braintree District Council (BDC) approved a recommendation to purchase a 65 acre (gross) area of allocated employment land (Horizon 120) in Great Notley as an effective means of delivering a major new employment site in accordance with its Corporate Strategy objectives.

The Council's vision for Horizon 120 is to create an exemplar business community attractive to a number of sectors including professional services companies, research, digital and development sectors and advanced manufacturing. The site is likely to be of particular interest to companies working with London Stansted Airport.

The original masterplan proposed by Countryside Limited and approved by BDC's Local Development Framework Sub-Committee back in February 2012, included provision for an allotment site within this development to be managed and operated by Great Notley Parish Council. Whilst the commitment is not legally binding, BDC (as land owner) is keen to see that it is honoured.

In the original adopted masterplan, the site earmarked for the allotments was in an area of land in the north-east corner of the site (Horizon 120) adjacent to the Country Park which, in the revised masterplan, is designated a wildlife area.

The original site would not have been available for up to 10 years under Countryside's proposals and had no vehicular access. In addition, an allotment site here would be visually incongruous with the architectural standards specified in the draft Local Development Order and would occupy approximately 1.5 acres with a developable value.

For these reasons it is not considered suitable to locate the allotments within this development and Great Notley Parish Council has confirmed its agreement to creating the allotments elsewhere within the village boundary, providing suitable land can be found.

### **3. CURRENT POSITION**

Options for alternative sites for the allotments are limited. BDC has considered using a vacant piece of land between Skyline and the grass football pitches on the Country Park which does not form part of the land leased to Essex County Council. It is currently leased to 1<sup>st</sup> Great Notley Scouts until September 2019 who had plans to build a new Scouts Hut, but this was not progressed as the land has no vehicular access. It has only been used periodically by the Scouts for nature conservation activities and the Scout Leaders have confirmed that they are not looking to renew the lease when it expires.

Following a recent meeting between ECC and BDC officers, it transpired that the land in question is rich in wildlife and habitat: birds use it for nesting, it is abundant in wildflowers and protected species of newts have been relocated there. Whilst the option remains to redevelop it, officers jointly agreed that it would be preferable not to do so as there are other areas within the boundary of the Country Park that could potentially accommodate the new allotment site.

It was agreed that a site meeting would be convened to explore the other areas of land including surveys to assess their feasibility for use as allotments and how many half-size plots could be accommodated. In the meantime, BDC officers will continue to consider other potential land within the Great Notley catchment area should any be identified.

Members will receive further updates as they become available.

### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the report for information.

**Paul Partridge**  
**Head of Operations**

**1 July 2019**