

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET MEMBER MEETING FOR
COUNCIL SERVICES

17 April 2014

Report of the Director of Property

Lease Renewal for Willow Tree Family Farm, Shirebrook

1. Purpose of the Report

Approval is sought to the surrender and renewal of a lease to Willow Tree Family Farm, Langwith Rd., Shirebrook.

2. Information and Analysis

A 25 year lease of land on a former school site was granted to the Willow Tree Family Farm in April 2003 and the farm then secured funding to enable the construction of agricultural and educational buildings suitable for its use. The staff and volunteers at the farm look after a range of animals which adapt well to a semi-domestic environment. The unit works principally with both adults and young people who are disadvantaged or suffer from low self-esteem, teaching animal husbandry and developing the transferrable skills of the client group thus improving employability; in addition the farm is both an educational resource and an affordable leisure facility for the area.

Although only half-way through its current lease there have been significant changes in the way the land around the farm has been used. The Council has now disposed of the remaining former school buildings and potentially there are alterations to the use of the Council owned playing field adjacent to the farm. It is proposed to move the playing field provision on the land adjacent to the farm (operated by the Town Council) to the former Stubbin Wood Special school site a short distance away. However, this is subject to Secretary of State approval and planning consent. In addition a mutually acceptable lease has to be agreed. The farm wishes to secure its future and would like to be in a better position to attract grant funding in order to both extend the range of activities that it can undertake and to develop those currently on offer. However, many external grant-funding bodies require applicants to demonstrate security of tenure of at least 15 years and often as long as 25 years. There are only 11 years remaining on the current lease, consequently the Farm would like to surrender the existing lease and

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take a new lease on a 25 year term. It is proposed that in all other respects the lease should mirror the existing agreement and so all other terms will be the same as are in the original lease subject to modernisation.

3. Council's Commitment

The farm is a valuable community resource and so the grant of the lease would fulfil the Council's pledge to the people of Derbyshire to create a Local Derbyshire and put communities at the heart of decision-making. In addition the farm provides practical support for people thus helping the Council to establish a Derbyshire that cares.

4. Financial Considerations

The annual rent for the new lease will be a peppercorn, but the Willow Tree Family Farm will pay its own outgoings so that there is no cost to the Council as regards the day to day operation of the farm.

5. Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health and transport considerations.

6. Key Decision **NO**

7. Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? **NO**

8. Background Papers

A plan of the subject land is attached.

9. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That approval be given to the surrender and renewal of the lease as detailed in the report.

JEREMY GOACHER
Director of Property

