

MEETING OF COMMISSIONER KENNY
Monday, 7th September, 2015

Present:- Commissioner J. Kenny.

Also in attendance Councillor D. Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member.

27. WHILST THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 DO NOT APPLY TO THIS MEETING IT IS STILL PROPOSED TO DETERMINE IF THE FOLLOWING MATTERS ARE TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER THE CATEGORIES SUGGESTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT ACT.

28. PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF PITHOUSE WEST.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Economic and Development Services Directorate outlining the negotiations process to sell the Pithouse West following a successful marketing of the property.

The report detailed previous marketing attempts and sales negotiations and, in particular, the pre-conditions of sale that would have applied. A current bid had been received from Gulliver's (family theme parks) following a local and national marketing campaign in early 2015. Gulliver's bid was outlined in the report, including the economic benefits it would bring alongside job creation in the local area.

The report outlined two clauses relating to the Coal Authority applying a clawback on proceeds from any sale until 2021, and also the requirement to invest remaining profits of sale in the Rother Valley Country Park.

Having evaluated Gulliver's offer, it was clear that, despite a comprehensive bid from them, some further work was required to protect the Council's interests and facilitate a deliverable leisure development of local, regional and national significance. It was hoped that the further work would enable delivery of the regenerative benefits to the area and economy and financial consideration to the Council appropriate to this site. It was anticipated that these issues would be addressed in the sale agreement between the Council and Gulliver's.

The submitted report outlined the next steps and timelines involved. This included the issues of planning consents and the Coal Authority clawback.

It was noted that the Council had been involved in two previous negotiations to sell the property where the return to the Council would have been larger. However, these projects had been unable to secure the necessary capital investment required to actually deliver the scheme.

Commissioner Kenny required further satisfaction about negotiation of the

clauses and intended to approve them before the proposed sale took place. She also requested that further work be undertaken on the proposal to establish a caravan site on the property. She felt that this would be better achieved by a private developer.

Prior to the publication of the decision and the report, Commissioner Kenny asked for a check to be made with Gulliver's to ensure that they were satisfied that none of the information revealed would compromise their commercial interests.

Commissioner Kenny was minded to grant the decision as outlined in the submitted report provided that further work was undertaken on the terms of sale, which she would then approve as a final decision.