



Andover Town Council

To **receive** a report on the Land Purchase Project and to **decide** if work should continue.

Item
No.
20

Produced for: Full Council

By: Town Clerk

Date of Report: 12 Jun 2024

Background:

The council were ready after the meetings on 22nd and 29th May to carry out the following:

- Prepare a business plan for the future use of the site.
- Appoint an independent valuer to give realistic purchase price guidance.
- Draft the Community Ownership Fund application form wording.
- Publish the Survey that had been carried out.

On Thursday 30th May, Wates were advised that:

- The Town Council had now concluded the public consultation and that the responses were overwhelmingly in support of Andover Town Council's proposal to seek government funding to buy the land.
- Councillors voted to approve that appointment of an independent valuer who would incur a significant cost to council.
- They were also requested to confirm their asking price as it would be needed to submit an application for government funding by 26 June.

On Monday 3rd June, the Town Clerk received an email from Wates: (extracts from email)

...we have been continuing to market the land..... The marketing has progressed such that we have identified a buyer for the site and it is expected that the entity will complete the purchase within the next couple of weeks.

.....we do not want the TC to incur any unnecessary expenditure, given that we are likely to complete the purchase in a couple of weeks.

It is unfortunate and we appreciate that this will be disappointing, clearly if circumstances change then we would get back in touch with you.

The Town Clerk responded by asking if there may be any opportunity to remain in discussions with the parties. No email response was received.

At this point, the Town Clerk decided not to appoint the independent valuer, in order that £3,750 would not be wasted.

Work stopped on the Business plan and the application forms, as without a willing seller, the project ceases to exist.

On the morning of 12th June, a conversation took place with Wates' Development Director.

He was unable to give the name of the buyer, nor could he confirm the purchase price.

Wates were due to exchange contracts in the next week. He confirmed that he believed the buyer was keen to start building and that he felt that they would not be interested in selling to the Council. However, if the opportunity arose for him to ask the question for the Council he would do so.