

# DECISION NOTICE

Notice is given that the following decision has been taken under the Provisions set out in the Council's Constitution

**Decision maker:** Cabinet Member for Regeneration

**Date:** 19 May 2016

**Decision in the matter of:** Gawsworth Farms Estate - General Management

- Decision:**
1. That approval be given to the principle of letting Over Bank Farm, edged red on the plan attached to the report, within a farm business tenancy for a period of 10 years (with break clauses every 3 years in respect of the main farm and every year in respect of the land shown hatched red on the plan).
  2. That approval be given to the allocation of up to £120,000 from the existing approved capital programme (Farms Strategy) to fund building improvements, subject to the payment of an additional rental charge equating to 7% per annum of the actual cost.
  3. The farmhouse buildings and paddock of Underbank Farm, shown shaded blue on the plan attached to the report, be declared surplus to requirements and sold on the open market.
  4. The Assets Manager be authorised to determine the heads of terms for the disposal of Underbank Farm and whether to seek any planning approval/s prior to disposal.
  5. The County Land Agent be authorised to determine the heads of terms for the tenancy of Over Bank Farm.
  6. The Director of Legal Services be authorised to prepare approve and execute all necessary documentation to give effect to the heads of terms for grant of a tenancy of Over Bank Farm and the sale of the farmhouse buildings and paddock of Underbank Farm.

**Background:** The overarching farms estate strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2012 and supplemented by the findings of a Cabinet Review

Group during 2013. Options for the structure of the wider estate were further considered in July 2015 confirming that Over Bank and Underbank Farms should be combined to create one Entry Level 2 opportunity and release one property for disposal. Parts of the farm have been identified as 'Safeguarded' land in the current Cheshire East Local Plan.

This tenancy opportunity has been advertised to all existing tenants by informal tender and applications considered in the context of the recent lettings at Ridley, which were advertised on the open market. A viable proposal has been received from a tenant of an Entry Level 1 sized farm to farm the combined units as a stock farm.

Whilst the alternative of offering the tenancy on the open market could result in the farm continuing to be used as a dairy unit, the rent receivable is unlikely to be significantly greater and such an approach would undermine the further reorganizational opportunity that this approach creates within the estate. In addition the retention of the farmstead of Underbank Farm would be inconsistent with the current strategy and serve no operational purpose, retaining a property of significant value with an inherent maintenance liability and little or no potential to secure a sustainable net positive return.

**Background Documents:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

**Approved:**

Signed .....  
Councillor Don Stockton (Cabinet Member for Regeneration)

**Date:**

19 May 2016

**Advising Officer:**

Signed .....  
David Job (County Land Agent)