

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rob Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment

DECISION NO:

24/000068

For publication**Key decision: YES / NO**

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: KCC Heritage Conservation Strategy Revision – Change to Windmills Policy

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Environment, I agree to the decision that:

(i) KCC should seek to divest itself of the windmills it currently owns by a method that ensures that the windmills have a sustainable future in which they are appropriately cared for and maintained as community assets, and that

(ii) The Heritage Conservation Strategy is updated to this effect.

Reason(s) for decision:

Divestment of the windmills is a change to the policy set out in the adopted Heritage Conservation Strategy.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

A public consultation was undertaken from 28 November 2023 until 29 January 2024.

In advance of the public consultation the issue was discussed at a meeting of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 15th November 2023.

The final proposal was considered by Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 July. The recommendation was endorsed in a recorded vote; 8 members voting for the recommendation and 6 Members voted against the recommendation. There were no abstentions.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1: Do nothing and retain ownership of the windmills. This option does not reduce the cost to KCC of maintaining the windmills and was therefore rejected.

Option 2: Retain the windmills but look to reduce the financial input from KCC. Whilst income generation ideas were suggested through the consultation, the scalability and deliverability of these are unclear. Community based owners would also be eligible for a wider range of grants than currently available to KCC. It is therefore not just in KCC's interests that the mills find new owners but potentially in the best interest of the mills themselves. This option was therefore rejected.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

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signed

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date