

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive  
Forward Plan  
Reference**

**E2502**

**Beechen Cliff Open Space - Future Management  
Arrangements**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	5-Dec-12
<b>The Issue</b>	<i>To consider a funding arrangement intended to secure the future management of Beechen Cliff and associated areas</i>
<b>The decision</b>	<p>(1) To ENTER into a management agreement with the National Trust whereby the future management and maintenance of Beechen Cliff is undertaken by the National Trust in perpetuity while retaining ownership of Beechen Cliff by the Council;</p> <p>(2) To TRANSFER the ownership of the adjoining fields and allotments to the National Trust as a gift;</p> <p>(3) To WORK with the National Trust as it launches a Bath World Heritage Landscape Appeal for up to £2m, the proceeds of which would initially be used to provide the necessary cost of the maintenance of Beechen Cliff and then the cost of the endowment of Beechen Cliff, and thereafter the protection and maintenance of other landscape features in the world heritage site; and</p> <p>(4) To CONTRIBUTE £500K (less the costs of immediate tree safety works), for securing the future of Beechen Cliff woodland as included for Provisional Approval in the Capital Programme for 2012/2013, subject to third party negotiations and a detailed project proposal, with the management agreement recognising the appropriate level of future liability and subject to the agreement of the s.151 officer.</p>
<b>Rationale for decision</b>	<p>The Council has been unable to maintain Beechen Cliff to the standard identified within the 1993 Cobham Resource Consultant's management plan for Beechen Cliff. This is as a result of insufficient revenue funding within the Parks budgets.</p> <p>A management agreement with the National Trust will ensure the future stewardship of such an important asset and at a higher standard than could be delivered by the Council acting alone.</p> <p>The use of the Council's allocation of £500k for Beechen Cliff as a contribution towards the future management of Beechen Cliff and the surrounding land and the launch of a Bath World Heritage Landscape Appeal by the National Trust represent a good return on investment of the Council's resources to safeguard the future conservation and stewardship of this important area.</p> <p>The proposal fits with the Council's corporate and strategic objectives within the refresh and launch of the World Heritage Setting document and the Council's Green Infrastructure strategy.</p>
<b>Other options</b>	<b>Do nothing</b>

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**considered**

This is not an option as the risk to Beechen Cliff is further decline and potentially an increased safety risk, together with risk to the woodland cover through lack of management and increased risk arising from climate change factors.

**Continue to manage the site as present**

This is not a sensible solution as continuing to maintain the site with an inadequate budget and within a context of reducing revenue resources will lead to similar risk identified above.

**Declarations of  
Interest**

**The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision**