

Committee: **Lead Cabinet Member for Resources**

Date: **12 February 2015**

Title of Report: **Land swap option to provide land for a two form entry (2FE) School in Uckfield**

By: **Chief Operating Officer**

Purpose of Report: **To declare shrub land at Ridgewood Farm surplus to Council requirements and to approve its transfer to Welbeck Land in exchange for 0.6 hectares of land to provide for a 2FE school**

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member for Resources is recommended to:

- 1. Approve land at Ridgewood Farm be declared surplus to the Council's requirements;**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to negotiate and agree the final terms of sale on the basis the Council obtains the best price reasonably obtainable in line with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972; and**
- 3. Approve the purchase of the 0.6 hectare site to construct a new school within Ridgewood Farm for the purposes of providing for a 2FE school; and**
- 4. Agree that authority be delegated to the Chief Operating Officer to approve the terms of the acquisition of the site.**

1. Background

- 1.1 Welbeck Strategic Land are looking to obtain outline planning permission on a site at Ridgewood Farm. Under the Local Plan, Welbeck are not obligated to provide the additional 0.6 hectares required to create a two form entry school. As such they could demand a premium from the Council.
- 1.2 There is no income generated from this site, hatched black in Appendix 1.

2. Supporting information

- 2.1 The Council's shrub land of 0.3 hectares at Ridgewood Farm, as hatched black in Appendix 1, borders the A22. The land is unused having been acquired some years ago for the purposes of the Uckfield by-pass.
- 2.2 Consultations with the Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) department have confirmed this parcel of land can be declared surplus.
- 2.3 Welbeck Strategic Land are the freeholder of the remainder of Ridgewood Farm and are shortly to submit an outline planning application for the development of 1,000 new homes. Welbeck wish to acquire an option over the subject land to provide an additional access route into the development that will enable traffic to the nearby waste transfer/sewerage facility to be routed away from the existing residential development.
- 2.4 The local planning policies require Welbeck to provide land for the provision of a single form entry school but the Council wish to secure an option over sufficient land

for a two form entry school which would allow for the relocation and expansion of Holy Cross Church of England Primary School which is situated within the middle of the proposed redevelopment area in Uckfield Town Centre. That would mean acquiring an option on an additional 0.6 hectares to increase the single form entry school (as set out in the planning policy) to a two form entry school. A single form entry school requires between 0.89 hectares and 1.12 hectares.

2.5 In exchange, Welbeck Strategic Land will benefit from an option to acquire the Council's shrub land site.

2.6 The deal will not be structured on a *quid pro quo* basis, either option will be mutually exclusive from the other; however, by entering in to these options, both Welbeck Strategic Land and the Council will have established agreeable terms for their respective disposals and acquisitions options.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The land swap will enable the expansion of Holy Cross Church of England Primary School to a two form entry school which will benefit the local community.

3.2 The Lead Member is recommended to approve declaring the shrub land site surplus to the Council's requirement;

3.3 Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of disposal in line with best consideration as defined by S123 of the Local Government Act 1972;

3.4 Approve the potential decision to acquire 0.6 hectares of land within Ridgewood Farm, at best value in accordance with s. 120 of the Local Government Act 1972; and

3.5 Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of the acquisition in accordance with S120 of the Local Government Act 1972.

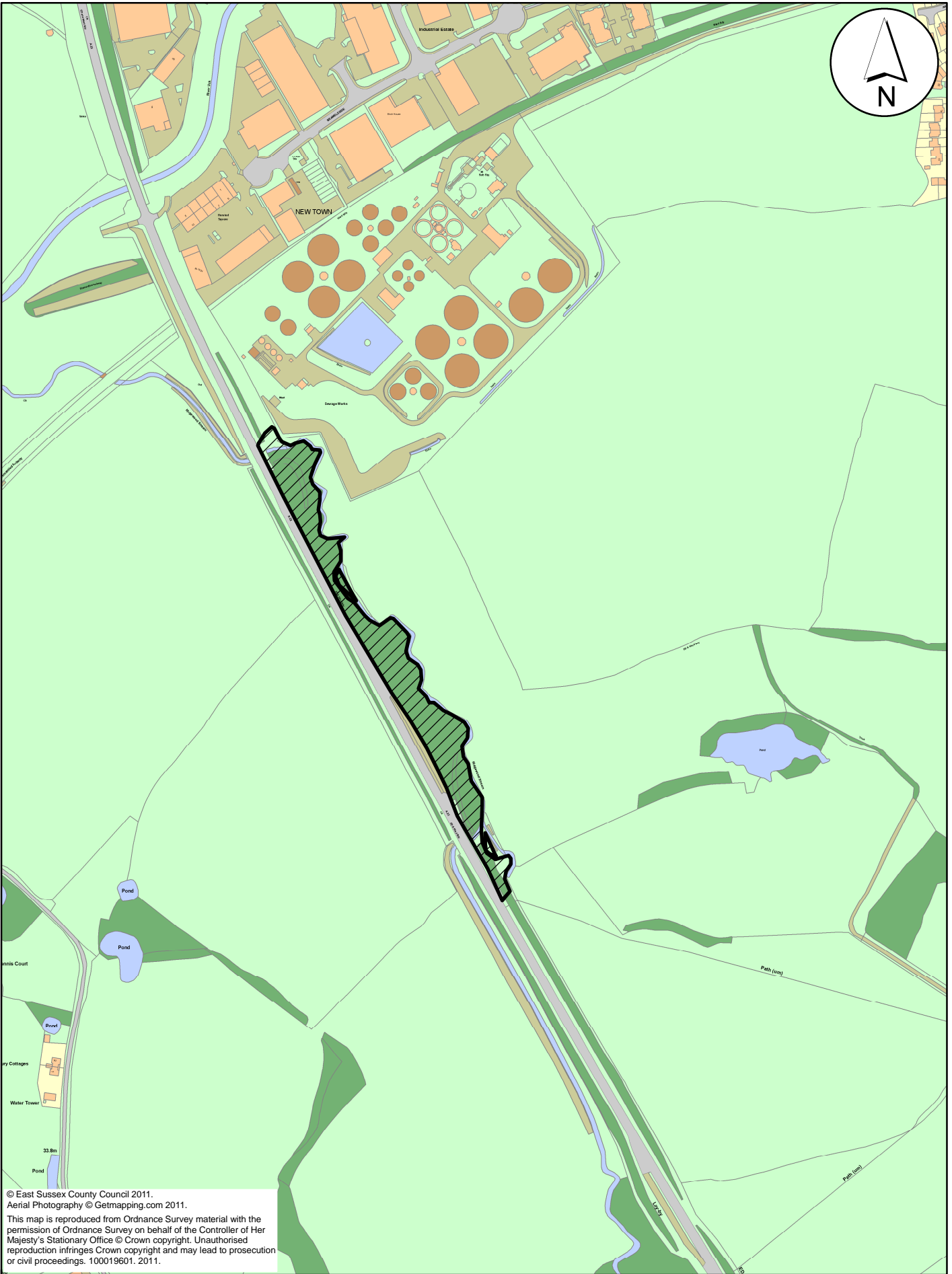
KEVIN FOSTER
Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer: Christopher Reed, 01273 336237


Local Members: Councillor Dowling

Background Documents:

None



© East Sussex County Council 2011.
 Aerial Photography © Getmapping.com 2011.
 This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. 100019601. 2011.

Map Title: Shrub land at A22, Uckfield		East Sussex County Council County Hall St Annes Crescent Lewes 	
Date: 12th February 2015	Map No: 1		
Scale: 1:4,480	Author: CTR		