

Report to: **Lead Member for Resources**

Date: **15 September 2016**

By: **Chief Operating Officer**

Title of report: **Former Beaconsfield College Land, Crowborough**

Purpose of report: **To dispose of a site, previously declared surplus, on a long lease arrangement to Crowborough Town Council.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member for Resources is recommended to:

- (1) Enter into a long lease (exceeding 14 years) with Crowborough Town Council at a peppercorn rental; and**
 - (2) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the final terms of the lease.**
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1. Background Information

1.1 Beacon Academy Crowborough was opened in 2012 at which stage the land parcel was not included in the Transfer, as it was not required for educational purposes.

1.2 The land, formerly tennis courts, has been unused since 1992 and now comprises an area of light woodland area, extending to 1.4 hectares (3.44 acres). The whole was declared surplus to operational requirements under a Lead Member report dated 22 May 2012 at which stage the Chief Operating Officer was given authority to dispose of the land at best price reasonably attainable.

1.3 Alternative uses for the site have been considered, including possible residential development, but these have not proved feasible. The land is heavily landscaped with access largely only via a wide footpath off a private road to the west. The land abuts a residential street, Williams Way, to the north east but land levels are much higher and supported by a structural bank, which would require very significant earth works to remove, and redesign to accommodate. A public right of way passes through the site.

1.4 An approach from Crowborough Town Council (CTC) to secure the site for recreation and community uses can be facilitated by a long lease arrangement with the permitted use limited to a "Pocket park and Nature Reserve for quiet enjoyment and educational purposes".

2. Financial Appraisal

2.1 The nature of the land (ecology, levels, lack of vehicular access) means that the Council is unlikely to realise a substantive capital receipt or generate income.

2.2 The land presents an ongoing liability to the Council, since we retain responsibility for fences, site maintenance and Health and Safety issues at the site.

2.3 In order to relinquish financial liability ESCC would expect that CTC would take responsibility for any costs associated with the land.

3. Supporting information

3.1 The site is shown cross-hatched black on the attached plan at Appendix 1. The site comprises 3.44 acres or 1.4 hectares.

3.2 This site was declared surplus to ESCC requirements by Lead Member on 22 May 2012.

3.3 The Local Members have been informed and have no objections regarding the proposal to enter a long lease with CTC.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 The property has not been in beneficial use since 1992, and is not subject to S77 consents required from the Secretary of State for Education.

4.2 CTC have approved an outline proposal to adopt the site in order to turn the site into an “exciting new community engagement project which will lead to the creation of a new ‘Pocket Park Nature Reserve’ for the enjoyment and education of residents and visitors to Crowborough”.

4.3 It is recommended that the negotiation for the terms of the lease be delegated to the Chief Operating Officer to conclude the proposed transfer under long lease community asset transfer arrangement. The length of lease is yet to be formally agreed but anticipated to be in substantially in excess of 14 years (above delegated officer level authority), and is not a “sale” as had been indicated in the earlier decision papers.

4.4 It is recommended that the terms and conditions of the lease include CTC taking responsibility for any costs associated with the land, otherwise the proposal is not financially viable.

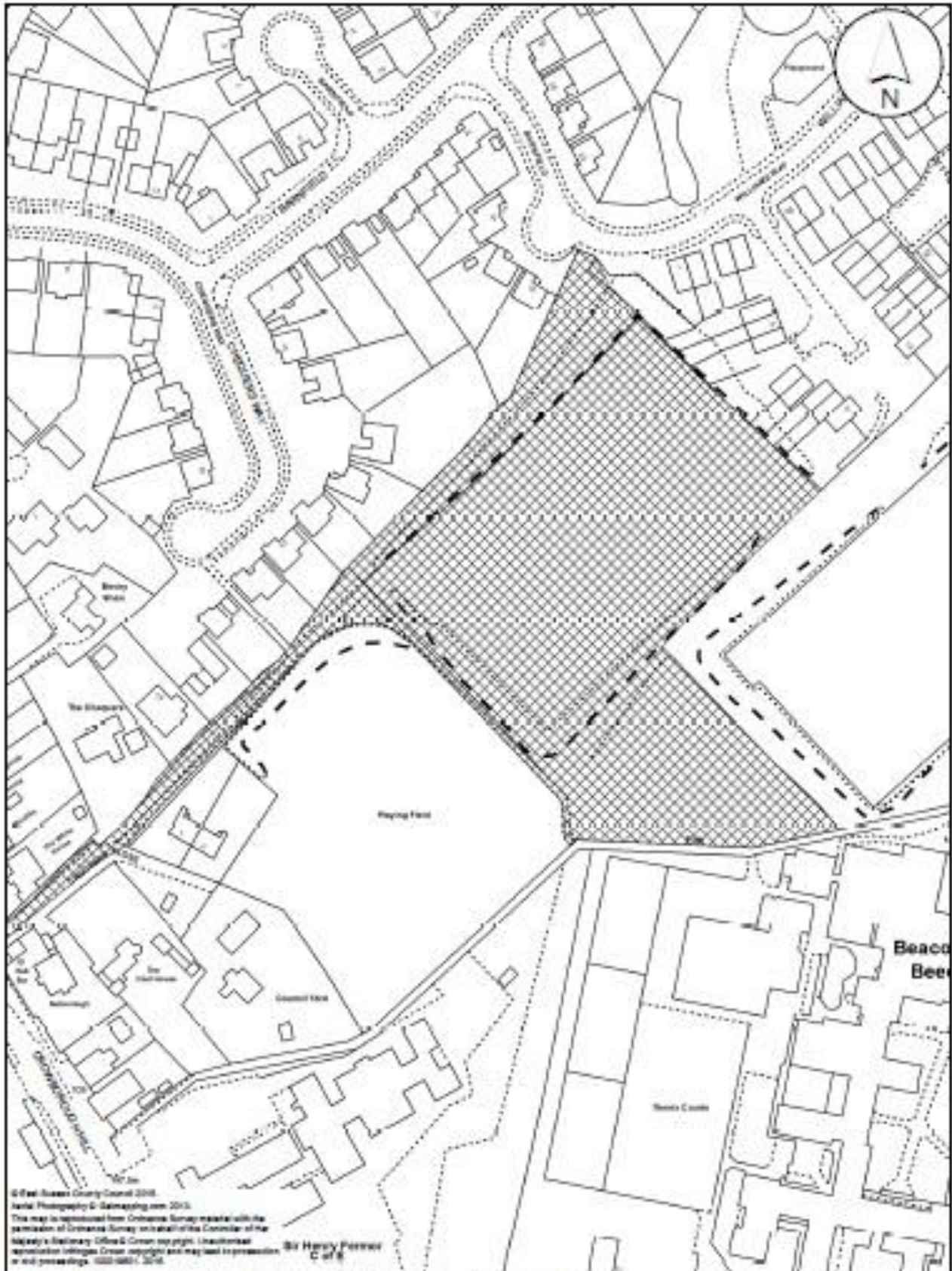
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Local Members: Councillor Tidy & Councillor Stogdon

Appendix 1

Plan of Surplus Land at Beacon Academy, Crowborough.



Map Title: Surplus land @ Beaconswood, Crowborough		East Sussex County Council County Hall St Anne's Crescent Lewes 
Date: 22.08.16	Map No: 007	
Scale: 1:1,500	Author: KVN	