

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **20 September 2016**

Title of Report: **Land exchange at Yew Tree Cottage, Coleman's Hatch, Hartfield, East Sussex**

By: **Chief Operating Officer**

Purpose of Report: **To consider the exchange of land held by the Ashdown Forest Trust and the owner of Yew Tree Cottage.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Cabinet are recommended to:

- 1. approve the exchange of land held by the Ashdown Forest Trust with Yew Tree Cottage as set out in Appendix 1; and**
 - 2. delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of the exchange and take any action necessary to give effect to it**
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1. Background and Supporting Information

1.1 The recommended exchange of the plots of land contained in the attached plan (Yew Tree Cottage – Land exchange, Appendix 1) will be at nil consideration as their monetary value is considered to be equal.

1.2 The land in question is held by the Ashdown Forest Trust (AFT) of which the County Council is the Trustee. The land is currently used as a vehicle turning point; this is marked in red hatching on the attached plan. The exchange of these areas of land will be in the interests of the Charity, increasing overall woodland owned by the Trust and regularise the current usage of the land to reflect that as it exists.

1.3 The boundaries of the two areas owned by Yew Tree Cottage and subject to the exchange are shown hatched blue on the attached plan. Boundaries for both of these areas are indistinguishable on the ground. The smaller is believed to represent the location of a former cart shed of which no traces remain. The larger is believed to have been a fruit garden which has become overgrown and shows no signs of recent use. To assist with this transaction the corners of the larger area have been marked out on site with orange tipped metal posts.

1.4 The proposed exchange was considered by the Roads, Planning and Amenities Committee (the RPA Committee) of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest on 1 February 2016. The Committee unanimously supported the land exchange at Yew Tree Cottage subject to a positive environmental assessment being received from the Conservation Officer (Agenda item 04/16 in the attached supporting minutes, Appendices 2 and 3). The environment report was completed on 11 February 2016 and was approved by the Chair of the RPA Committee subject to any refuse on the land being acquired by the AFT being removed.

1.5 In addition to the attached plan, a photographic schedule has also been prepared to further illustrate the land which is to be exchanged (Appendix 4).

1.6 The Local Member, Councillor Whetstone, is a Conservator and is aware of this recommendation and has raised no objections.

1.7 A habitat and ecology survey has been undertaken, the results of which are attached

as supporting information (Appendix 5).

2. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

2.1 The exchange is considered to be in the interests of the Trust increasing the woodland owned by the Charity, formalising the current use of the land and will result in the absorption of land typical to much of the surrounding area in to the Ashdown Forest.

2.2 The Cabinet is recommend to agree to the exchange of the plots of land set out in the appendicies, and to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of the exchange and take actions necessary to give effect to it.

KEVIN FOSTER
Chief Operating Officer

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LOCAL MEMBERS:

Councillor Francis Whetstone