

**Report to:** Lead Member for Resources

**Date of meeting:** 20 October 2020

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

**Title:** Former Wadhurst Household Waste Recycling Centre, Wadhurst

**Purpose:** To seek Lead Member approval formally declare the asset surplus and delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to secure best value upon Disposal.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Lead Member for Resources is recommended to:

- 1) Agree for Wadhurst Household Waste Recycling Centre to be formally declared a surplus property asset; and
  - 2) Agree to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve the details of the formal disposal of the site
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## **1 Background**

1.1 The Cabinet approved alterations to the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Waste Service on 26 June 2018 and agreed to the closure of Wadhurst Household Waste Recycling Centre. Subsequent work to decommission the site, and surrender both the Environment Agency approved waste licence and service / occupational arrangements has been concluded. An internal review of the asset and market testing has identified a number of interested parties.

1.2 A prospective purchaser has been identified following a full eight week marketing period whereby multiple parties were identified. The property was marketed on the basis of either leasehold or freehold interest. The vast majority of the interest appeared as applicants looking to acquire the freehold.

1.3 As a means of offering complete transparency and due to the popularity of the site, it was seen as the most appropriate method to seek best and final offers to obtain the true market value.

1.4 A chosen purchaser was then selected on the basis of their proposal (i.e. likelihood / ease of obtaining planning for their proposal) as well as the strength of their financial offer.

1.5 The decision required will be to now formally declare the asset surplus and to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to secure best value.

## **2 Supporting information**

2.1 The decision required relates to whether ESCC may now sell the freehold of Former Household Waste Recycle Centre, Faircrouch Lane, Wadhurst.

2.2 The proposed sale is sold as seen subject to contract and ESCC approval.

2.3 A private property firm were commissioned to offer high-level development options including residential, commercial and industrial and how potential units might fit on the site. Despite the original requirement to consider residential options for this site, following the advice provided by the planning consultant, it was agreed that residential options would not be pursued.

However, four options for other uses were considered. Options for light industrial, light industrial with office space, light industrial with warehouse/storage space, and office space with a yard were explored.

2.4 The proposed options provided a range of units from six small business units to one small office unit with 'yard' space. Sufficient car parking to suit the requirements of East Sussex County Council's 'Guidance for Parking at Non-Residential Development' was also provided.

2.5 The options considered were as follows:

Option A - six light industrial/business units

Option B - three light industrial/business units and one large storage/warehouse facility. Use as storage or a warehouse facility would be subject to transport considerations and reasonable access.

Option C - three light industrial/business units and one large office unit

Option D - one small office unit with 'yard' space. This option would be considered under the 'Sui Generis' use class and would be subject to transport considerations and reasonable access (as Option B).

2.6 All housing and commercial development options have been considered and evaluated, with the freehold sale being assessed as the best option to bring greatest value to the Council.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member agrees for Wadhurst Household Recycling Centre to be declared a surplus property asset.

3.2 It is further recommended that the Lead Member agrees for the dispose of the freehold as detailed above.

3.3 It is recommended that the Lead Member agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve the details of the disposal.

**Kevin Foster**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

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LOCAL MEMBER: Councillor Bob Standley

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None