

Report to: Lead Member for Resources

Date of meeting: 26 January 2021

By: Chief Operating Officer

Title: Land at The Grove, Former St Leonards Academy, Darwell Close, Hastings

Purpose: To agree to the disposal of a declared surplus asset following completion of marketing of the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) agree to the disposal of the site following the marketing of the site and an analysis of the offers contained in Exempt report at a later agenda item; and
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to secure best value in accordance with S123 of the Local Government Act 1972.
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1 Background

- 1.1 At the Lead Member for Resources meeting in June 2013, authority was agreed to declare the former Grove School property in Hastings surplus to County Council requirements and to authorise disposal of the site. The Lead Member decision required the Chief Operating Officer to take all necessary steps and actions in connection with securing Secretary of State consent to dispose of the site in accordance with section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ('s77 consent'), and in accordance with schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010 ('schedule 1 consent').
- 1.2 Following a consultation and formal detailed application, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) secured s77 consent from Secretary of State in November 2020 to sell the site of this former school.
- 1.3 ESCC subsequently undertook competitive formal marketing of the site through an experienced property agent for residential re-development sites. ESCC received four robust formal offers, an analysis of which is included in a later agenda item containing Exempt information.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The site known as The Grove, Former St Leonards Academy is shown in the plan at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 ESCC appointed specialist planning consultants to secure planning permission for residential homes in accordance with local plan planning policies. Hastings Borough Council, as the planning authority, granted outline planning permission for 210 homes in a decision dated 21 June 2018. The matter will require the submission of a Reserved Matters application prior to 21 June 2021.
- 2.3 The Local Member has been consulted on the sale of the land.
- 2.4 The ESCC property team are confident best value has been secured following formal marketing of the site in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended to proceed with the disposal of the asset to the preferred purchaser as outlined in the later agenda Item. The preferred purchaser is aware of the section 77 consent.
- 3.2 It is also recommended for the Lead Member of Resources to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to dispose of this property and secure best value in accordance with S123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

PHIL HALL

Chief Operating Officer

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Matthew Beaver – Hastings Maze Hill and West St Leonards

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site Plan (not to scale)