

**Report to:** Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

**Date of meeting:** 06 July 2021

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

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

**Purpose:** To agree the disposal of a declared surplus asset following the completion of the marketing of this asset.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:

- 1) Agree to the disposal of the former Wadhurst Household Waste Recycling Centre, Wadhurst to the preferred bidder following the marketing of the site in Spring 2021 and an analysis of the offers contained in the Exempt report at a later agenda item; and**
  - 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve the details of the disposal to the preferred bidder and take any other actions considered appropriate to give effect to this decision, and 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 October 2020, authority was agreed to declare the former Wadhurst Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) site surplus to operational requirements. In addition, authority was given to proceed with the disposal of the asset to a preferred bidder. Unfortunately, the preferred bidder did not complete the sale due to economic uncertainty arising from the coronavirus pandemic. The Council decided in January 2021 that remarketing of the property was the preferred route. The property was subsequently re-offered to the market in Spring 2021. Offers were received and a preferred purchaser has now been selected for the Lead Member to consider. The offers received in Spring 2021 were at higher values than the original marketing exercise in mid-2020.
- 1.2 In Spring 2021, Wealden District Council received an application to register the site as a community asset under the Community Right to Bid legislation as defined under the Localism Act 2011. East Sussex County Council were consulted as freeholder owners and did not object. Wealden District Council reviewed the application for the asset to be listed and determined the criteria was not met and notified East Sussex County Council in April 2021.
- 1.3 In tandem to the Community Right to Bid application the Council had re-commenced marketing of the property. The period of marketing was extended a few weeks in Spring 2021 and by this time the outcome of the Community Right to Bid application to Wealden District Council had been made known.
- 1.4 The Council has reviewed offers and an analysis has been undertaken to understand the wider set of financial and non-financial benefits reflecting the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy. In conclusion, a preferred purchaser (bidder) has been selected based on their proposal as outlined in a separate Exempt report later in the agenda.
- 1.5 The location of the site can be seen in the plan in appendix 1.

## **2 Supporting information**

- 2.1 The decision required relates to reviewing the offers received and determining that the Council now proceeds to sell the freehold of former Wadhurst HWRC, Faircrouch Lane, Wadhurst to the preferred bidder as outlined in the Exempt report appendix 2.
- 2.2 The property marketing in early 2021 has been well received in the marketplace drawing seven private offers and a single community offer.
- 2.3 The disposal of the asset will provide a capital receipt that will contribute to the Council's capital programme.

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

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Lead Member agrees the disposal of the freehold to the preferred bidder as outlined in appendix 2 of the Exempt report later on the agenda. If the sale is not completed in a timely manner, then the next highest bidder is considered.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Lead Member agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve the details of the disposal to the preferred bidder and take any other actions considered appropriate to implement the decision, as outlined in paragraph 3.1 above.

**Phil Hall**

**Chief Operating Officer**

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## **LOCAL MEMBERS**

Cllr Bob Standley