

2 November 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

Land Transfer from Essex County Council

Report of: *Russell Clinker, Senior Assets Manager*

Wards Affected: *Shenfield*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report considers the acquisition of an area of land adjacent to the Merrymeade House site and Brentwood school Football pitches accessed from Shenfield Road.
- 1.2. The area of land is identified on the attached plan and is currently owned freehold by Essex County Council.
- 1.3. The land comprises a single unmade access track which was part of the former Merrymeade Estate.
- 1.4. It is proposed that Brentwood Borough Council purchase the land from Essex County Council for the sum of £1.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the area of land is purchased by Brentwood Borough Council in order to secure control of the potential future development of sites adjacent to and accessed from the area of land.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1. Essex County Council currently own the subject area of land (as identified on the attached plan) although this is surplus to their requirements and they have offered it for sale.
- 3.2. The land provides access to the area between the Shenfield Road in central Brentwood with its surrounding urban area and the A12 trunk road which passes Brentwood to the North (See map attached). It also provides access to land which has recently been offered for sale by

Savills in two Lots (Lot 1 – Grassland 15.99 Acres/6.48 Hectares, and Lot 2 – Mixed Grassland and Woodland – 26.27 Acres/10.63 Hectares) situated off Hall Lane . Details of these are attached to this report.

- 3.3. The sale of the 2 lots of green belt land has caused some speculation about future development opportunities. Whilst the lots in question are protected under law and the council's planning policies, via their green belt status, securing the right to this key access point to the site is intended to provide greater security and peace of mind to local residents.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1. The purchaser will be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the site which is estimated to be in the region of £2,000 per annum. This primarily relates to the maintenance of vegetation and trees.
- 4.2. Under an agreement with ECC, the designation of the track is to be protected, with Essex County Council reserving the right to apply a claw back of 75% of the value of the premises should this ever change. i.e. The purchaser will have to pay Essex County Council 75% of the value of the land if re-development occurs. The following is classified as redevelopment in the Heads of Terms: The sale of the land to a third party, any planning approval for a change of use (on all or part of the site), a lease to the site to a third party for five years or more. There are no plans for any of these scenarios. The key reason for the proposed transaction is to secure control of a potential access to sites adjacent to and accessed from this area of land.
- 4.3. In the Heads of Terms transfer of the freehold is permitted to other charitable organisations / third sector companies only with the prior written consent of the Essex County Council, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1. To secure control of the potential future development of sites adjacent to and accessed from the area of land.
- 5.2. In conjunction with the review of the Local Plan, additional protection to the Green Belt policy could be provided by the land being designated as a Local Green Space. A local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. No formal consultation has been undertaken or is required

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1. Value for Money: policies that invest in key services to create opportunity for all provide better value for Brentwood's taxpayers and enhance the Borough's infrastructure whilst modernising and transforming Brentwood Borough Council. We will re-prioritise and focus our resources and be innovative in our approach.
- 7.2. Our Borough: Policies which promote our environment, support sustainable growth, and safeguard our high quality environment including heritage and countryside. We will provide responsive, accessible and forward thinking services for vulnerable residents, supporting people back into work and providing good quality housing making Brentwood our residents' Borough of Choice.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Tel & Email 01277 312542 / christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1. There is an estimated maintenance cost of £2,000 per annum that will become the Council's liability if the land is acquired.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officer and Head of Support Services

Tel & Email 01277 312860 / christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.2. None directly arising from this report.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.1. None directly arising from this report

9. Background Papers

None.

10. Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Plan of site

Appendix B - Plan of adjoining sites recently marketed by Savills

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Russell Clinker

Telephone: 01277 312931

E-mail: russell.Clinker@brentwood.gov.uk