

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** 10 October 2016

**Report Title:** Land on Churchfields Estate

**Report By:** Peter Grace  
Assistant Director Financial Services & Revenues

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### **Purpose of Report**

To seek approval to purchase land on the Churchfields Estate.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

To purchase the land on terms set out in the Part 2 report.

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

The land is allocated for employment use in the Development Management Plan (DMP) and adjoins vacant plots in the Council's ownership so offers opportunities for development.

The Council is seeking income generation opportunities in the future but most importantly looking to ensure economic development opportunities continue within Hastings.

## Background

1. The land is Plot PX & QX off Sidney Little Road which is the largest undeveloped site on Churchfields Industrial Estate as shown in Appendix 1. It is a 1.61 ha (3.95 acres) sloping site that is currently overgrown with scrub.

## Opportunity

2. The owners, C & C Marshall Ltd wish to dispose of the land and in principle terms have been agreed for the Council to purchase as set out in the Part 2 report. These are considered to be the best available to the Council and are in accordance with the independent valuation obtained from DVS – the Property Services arm of the Valuation Office Agency.
3. The DMP indicates that the site could provide a development with a potential gross floor area of 6,900m<sup>2</sup> and is capable of accommodating a single large unit or, more easily given the topography, several medium sizes units.
4. The site adjoins Plots NX2 & NX3 which are in the Council's ownership. We are also in the process of acquiring the long leasehold interest of Plot NX1. Assembling these areas together will offer more scope and flexibility for potential development.
5. We currently own 62 factory units, with a further one under construction, and only one of these is shortly to become available to let. Both of our Business Centres are fully let and after many years we have had some interest in developing Plots NX2 & 3.
6. Once the site is acquired the Council will consider all options for bringing the site and adjoining areas forward for development to maximise investment returns and employment opportunities.
7. The Council has the opportunity to acquire the site at a time of historically very low interest rates and would also benefit in terms of the retention of an element of Non Domestic Rates.
8. With limited land availability within Hastings this is an opportunity to acquire one of the few remaining undeveloped sites within the borough. It is however not without risk given the competition that will be forthcoming for tenants given the developments along the link road within Rother.

## Conclusion

9. The acquisition of this land provides options for future development which would provide, once developed, opportunities for employment and economic development within the town. There is also the opportunity for the Council to enhance its income stream in the longer term.

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## Wards Affected

Hollington.

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## Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	No
Anti-Poverty	No

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## Additional Information

Appendix 1 – Plan of the land.

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## Officer to Contact

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