

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Head of Schedule 12(A) and Brief Description</u>
14.	Shoreham Woods, Shoreham – Disposal of Part	3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
40.	<u>SHOREHAM WOODS, SHOREHAM – DISPOSAL OF PART</u> (REPORT NO. 14 – 15.05.08)	

Further to the Performance and Governance Committee (17.04.08), Members were advised that as part of the ongoing Property Review the Council considered applications from third parties to acquire land and property currently owned by the District Council. In 1991 the District Council acquired some 250 acres of established woodland at Shoreham from the Forestry Commission. The land was acquired to preserve and provide access to the countryside for the public and since the woods had been in public ownership grant funding had been received under the Woodlands Grant Scheme in respect of the management of the woods. Since acquisition the District Council had constructed a rangers' lodge with public toilets together with a woodland depot. The lodge is the base for the countryside ranger team. The construction of the M25 Motorway in the 1980s had fragmented the parcels of woodland with the main areas of woodland to the east of the M25 separated from the remainder of the land holding to the west of the motorway. Two high level pedestrian and bridle bridges connected the areas of woodland.

The Professional Services Manager advised that following the Performance and Governance Committee he had been in discussion with Shoreham Parish Council and the prospective purchaser of the land set out in Appendix B of the report. Their responses were circulated as late information to Cabinet. The Parish Council had raised issues in relation to the odd shape of the land and whether it would affect the District Council's use and management of the remainder of the land. The shape of the land was as a result of consultations with the operating department being requested to identify the land in response to the offer to buy. The question of a lease had been discussed with the prospective purchaser who would prefer to buy the land but was not averse to a possible 99 year sub-lease. This would make no difference to the income for the Council.

Cllr. Grint, a Local Member of the ward abutting the woods, asked whether the disposal of this land was part of a coherent strategy of land management and whether the disposal of the land would make it easier for the Council to dispose of the land at Jenkins Neck Wood. He had walked the land and had found it unprepossessing. However it was a good habitat for flora and fauna. The Performance and Governance Committee had raised the question of the advantages and disadvantages of a private sale as opposed to an open market sale. Cllr. Grint was advised that sales of such parcels of land in the past had attracted inappropriate prospective purchasers.

Resolved: (a) That it be agreed that the parcel of land identified in appendix C of the report be sold to the adjoining land owner for the sum

NOTE:

*Date of publication: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Key decisions will take effect on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008.*

## Cabinet – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008

indicated in the report and subject to such other terms and conditions that the Head of Legal and Committee Services deems necessary to protect the Council's interests; and

(b) that it be agreed that the parcel of land identified in appendix B of the report be leased to the adjoining land owner for a peppercorn rent and premium that would equal the proposed purchase price and subject to such other terms and conditions that the Head of Legal and Committee Services deems necessary to protect the Council's interests.

### 41. LEADER FUNDING (REPORT NO. 15 – 15.05.08)

The Head of Housing Services advised that Leader was a new source of funding for rural businesses and communities. In early 2008 the West Kent Partnership submitted a successful bid for funding being offered by South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA). There were conditions to be met which Members approved, subject to other West Kent Partners also giving their support.

Resolved: That approval be given to the conditions associated with the proposal, subject to other West Kent Partners also giving their support.

### 42. CABINET VERBAL REPORT – DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Chairman stated that he was sure Members were all aware of the importance, both in terms of quality services and financial management of the Development Services Review. He therefore proposed that the Cabinet should take a direct role in overseeing the review and asked that Officers prepare a comprehensive report on progress to be submitted for consideration to Cabinet as soon as possible.

This was agreed.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.35 P.M.

Chairman

#### NOTE:

*Date of publication: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Key decisions will take effect on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008.*