



LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DECISIONS to be made by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change,
Councillor Nick Bennett

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 10.00 AM

VIA MS TEAMS

AGENDA

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 24 January 2023 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
2. Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct
3. Urgent items
Notification of any items which the Lead Member considers urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda.
4. Uckfield Leisure Centre - next steps (*Pages 5 - 8*)
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
5. Any other non-exempt urgent items previously notified under agenda item 3
6. Exclusion of the Public and Press
To consider excluding the public and press from the meeting for the remaining agenda item on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
7. Uckfield Leisure Centre - next steps - Exempt Information (*Pages 9 - 12*)
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
8. Any other exempt items previously notified under agenda item 3

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20 February 2023

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LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change, Councillor Nick Bennett, on 24 January 2023 Via MS Teams

64. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 13 DECEMBER 2022

64.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2022.

65. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

65.1 There were none.

66. URGENT ITEMS

66.1 There were none.

67. REPORTS

67.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

68. CORPORATE OFFICE ESTATE NEW LEASE

68.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

DECISIONS

68.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

1) approve the proposed 'agreement for a lease' and new lease terms of St Mark's House, Eastbourne; and

2) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve the final lease negotiations; the signing and completion by the Council of the lease to the Property; any agreement for lease and related documentation; to take any other actions considered appropriate to give effect to the above to secure best value in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999.

REASONS

68.3 To allow for continuation of corporate use of St Mark's House for the Children's Services Department and their partnerships.

Report to:	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change
Date of meeting:	28 February 2023
By:	Chief Operating Officer
Title:	Uckfield Leisure Centre – next steps
Purpose:	To consider a formal public consultation in relation to the future options for facilities at Uckfield Leisure Centre (including Uckfield swimming pool)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate change is recommended to approve the proposal to hold a 10-week public consultation regarding the options for Uckfield Leisure Centre (including Uckfield swimming pool) to commence in March 2023.

1 Background

- 1.1 Uckfield Leisure Centre is occupied by Wealden District Council (WDC) under a 20-year operational lease that expired in July 2022. Both Councils agreed to a 12-month extension until July 2023. The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change approved the lease extension on 14 June 2022 based on revised financial terms.
- 1.2 Uckfield Leisure Centre comprises a swimming pool and dry side leisure services. Freedom Leisure (FL) have a direct 12-month contract extension with WDC. FL was originally set up 20 years ago by WDC to run leisure services, they now run other leisure facilities in East Sussex and beyond.
- 1.3 Uckfield Leisure Centre is on the same site as Uckfield College but is a separate building from the school and was not part of the new College build programme funded by the Department for Education (DfE). During school weekdays, Uckfield College uses the swimming pool, but it is not a secondary school curriculum requirement. A small number of primary schools use the pool for their school curriculum use. Local residents can use the pool, café, and fitness suite at various times during the school day and residents can use the dry side facilities outside of school hours.
- 1.4 In 2020, WDC Cabinet undertook a review of their four leisure facilities and decided not to renew the lease for the two East Sussex County Council (ESCC) centres (Uckfield and Heathfield). In January 2022, WDC provided a press release advising that they are investing £9 million in new, or adapted leisure facilities at Crowborough and Hailsham, but these will not be on stream until 2025 or 2026.
- 1.5 During summer and autumn 2021, ESCC commenced an Expression of Interest (EOI) market testing exercise undertaken by an independent advisor, to assess if a sustainable and viable ongoing or alternative operating model could be found for the Centre. The marketing period was extended twice due to a lack of market interest. ESCC ensured that all local stakeholders (including the College) were aware of the process, deadlines, and were kept fully informed. It concluded on 5 November 2021. There were two submissions of interest submitted with a Business Case and their proposals involved significant financial support from the County Council.
- 1.6 WDC has recently re-confirmed that it is not their intention to renew the lease in July 2023 and following the Expression of Interest marketing exercise held last year, ESCC now proposes to commence public consultation on the options for the Leisure Centre.

2 Supporting Information

Uckfield College

- 2.1 Uckfield College have a 3G pitch which is managed via a direct contract arrangement by Freedom Leisure, along with other school hall facilities in their main campus buildings.

Market intelligence

- 2.2 Over the last 3 months, at a national and regional level, there has been some wider acceptance that cost-of-living increases and the energy price increases have directly impacted on swimming pools resulting in temporary or permanent closures. Leisure Centres, including swimming pools which operate at low profit levels, were outlined in a recent Local Government Association (LGA) article in December 2022. The LGA recently reported on the number of increased closures and encouraged local authorities who are leisure commissioners to assist.
- 2.3 The consultation outcomes would need be analysed for Members to consider alongside wider financial aspects and taking into account an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 2.4 *Timetable summary, based on a 10-week consultation period:*
- 28 February 2023 - Lead Member Resources and Climate Change decision regarding holding a public consultation.
 - Early March 2023 - Consultation starts for 10 weeks.
 - Mid May 2023 – Consultation concludes.
 - June 2023 - Analysis of consultation results.
 - June 2023 - The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change will consider the consultation results and make a decision regarding the future of the site.
 - 17 July 2023 - WDC lease expires.
- 2.5 Part of the Consultation process will be to seek views from all stakeholders, including Uckfield College and Uckfield Town Council and consider any new ideas/proposals that may come forward. The dry side facilities must continue to be used on an ongoing basis as part of the College curriculum delivery.
- 2.6 An Equalities Impact Assessment has previously been undertaken and it will be updated using analysis of the public consultation.
- 2.7 The formal consultation process would be conducted by an online survey via ESCC's Citizen Space webpage and hard copies of the survey would be available at Uckfield College and at County Hall reception.
- 2.8 Uckfield College will continue to use the facilities within the leisure centre building and the 3G pitch for curriculum use and there will be no change to these arrangements. They will also continue to offer outside of school hours community use of the 3G pitch and associated main school building facilities.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 WDC has recently re-confirmed that it is not their intention to renew the lease in July 2023 and following the Expression of Interest marketing exercise held last year, ESCC now proposes to commence public consultation to seek views from all stakeholders, including Uckfield College and Uckfield Town Council and consider any new ideas, or proposals that may come forward.
- 3.2 The Lead Member is recommended to approve a 10-week public consultation on future use of Uckfield Leisure Centre (including Uckfield swimming pool) to commence in March 2023.

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Local Members

Uckfield North – Councillor Claire Dowling

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