



## LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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

**TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023 AT 2.00 PM**

**REMOTE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

### **AGENDA**

1. Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 27 June 2023 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
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. Corporate office estate: new lease for St Mark's House, Eastbourne - revised lease terms following negotiation (*Pages 7 - 12*)  
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
5. Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Eastbourne Road, Polegate - Disposal of Freehold (*Pages 13 - 18*)  
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
6. Uckfield Leisure Centre, Uckfield (*Pages 19 - 48*)  
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
7. Any other non-exempt items previously notified under agenda item 3
8. 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).
9. Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Eastbourne Road, Polegate - Disposal of Freehold - Exempt Information (*Pages 49 - 56*)  
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
10. Uckfield Leisure Centre, Uckfield - Exempt Information (*Pages 57 - 66*)  
Report by the Chief Operating Officer
11. Any other exempt items previously notified under agenda item 3

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3 July 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 27 June 2023 at Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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### 10. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 23 MAY 2023

10.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023.

### 11. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

11.1 There were none.

### 12. URGENT ITEMS

12.1 There were none.

### 13. REPORTS

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

### 14. DISPOSAL OF LAND, HYE HOUSE FARM, CROWHURST

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

## DECISIONS

14.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- 1) declare Hye House Farm, Crowhurst (“the site”) to be surplus to the requirements of the Council;
- 2) approve the disposal of Hye House Farm, Crowhurst (“the site”) in accordance with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- 3) delegate authority to Chief Operating Officer to take all actions necessary to secure the disposal of the site at best value in accordance with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972, and to agree the terms of the disposal and other documentation required; and
- 4) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to proceed with the next best offer(s) in the event of the sale.

## REASONS

14.3 The Council has no ongoing operational use for the site. It is therefore surplus to the Council’s requirements. The disposal of the site will reduce revenue liabilities relating to the management and holding costs of this surplus asset.

## 15. RENT REVIEW OF PEBSHAM WASTE TRANSFER STATION AND HASTINGS HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING SITE, FRESHFIELDS, BEXHILL ROAD, ST LEONARDS-ON-SEA

15.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer together with exempt information contained in a later agenda item.

## DECISIONS

15.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

- 1) Approve settlement of the rent review for Pebsham Waste Transfer Station and Hastings Household Waste Recycling Site dated 1 April 2023 which has been reviewed in accordance with the rent review provisions contained in the lease, as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of the report;
- 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to document the increase in the form of a rent review memorandum, and take any other actions considered appropriate to give effect to the recommendations in this report; and
- 3) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to approve and document future rent reviews due to occur under the existing Lease, in line with the terms of the existing Lease.

## REASONS

15.3 The Lease is a legally binding contract and the rent review provision forms part of the obligations the Council has entered into as the tenant.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

16.1 It was RESOLVED to exclude the public and press for the remaining agenda items 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).

17. RENT REVIEW OF PEBSHAM WASTE TRANSFER STATION AND HASTINGS HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING SITE, FRESHFIELDS, BEXHILL ROAD, ST LEONARDS-ON-SEA - EXEMPT INFORMATION

17.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer which provided exempt information in support of an earlier item on the agenda.

DECISIONS

17.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to note the exempt information which supports an earlier agenda item.

REASONS

17.3 The report contained exempt information in relation to an earlier item on the agenda.

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

**Date of meeting:** 11 July 2023

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

**Title:** Corporate office estate: new lease for St Mark's House, Eastbourne - revised lease terms following negotiation

**Purpose:** To update the Lead Member on progress towards a new lease of St Mark's House for use as part of the Corporate Office provision and to delegate powers to the Chief Operating Officer to conclude the negotiations

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1) note the progress of negotiations with the Landlord for a new lease of St Mark's House, Eastbourne;
- 2) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to:
  - a) approve the final lease terms, including the most appropriate time period for the new lease;
  - b) authorise the signing and completion of the lease by the Council;
  - c) serve any necessary notices or counter notices and to surrender the original lease and approve any related documentation; and
  - d) take any other actions considered appropriate to give effect to the above recommendations.

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## 1 Background

- 1.1 The Council is undertaking a review of its corporate office requirements, as a key part of the Council's Asset Management Plan 2020-2025, to drive efficiency from its assets and to reduce costs and carbon emissions.
- 1.2 The Council currently has two office bases in Eastbourne: St Mary's House and St. Mark's House. As part of the Asset Management Plan, it is proposed that the Council moves to a single base in Eastbourne.
- 1.3 St Mark's House, Eastbourne, currently provides the sole office base in Eastbourne for Children's Services, who also work very closely with different partner agencies. The building is not owned by the Council, it is a leased property. A plan showing the location of the property is shown at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 At his decision making meeting on 24 January 2023 the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change approved the Council entering into a 12-month lease for use of St Mark's House as part of the Corporate Office provision, to take effect from 14 April 2023.
- 1.5 The term of the original lease expired on 13 April 2023. It was originally proposed (as set out in the 24 January 2023 report to Lead Member) to enter into a 12-month

lease to commence at the end of the term of the original lease, i.e. from 14 April 2023. To date, no new lease has been entered into.

- 1.6 The Council is instead currently 'holding over' on the terms of the original lease while lease renewal negotiations have been ongoing. The original lease is protected by the security of tenure provisions contained within the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. While a tenant is 'holding over', they must abide by the terms of the existing lease, including any obligations to repair and pay rent. They may vacate at any time on three months' notice. The Landlord must serve a formal 'Section 25' notice on the tenant to bring their lease to an end. This notice must give the tenant a minimum of six months' notice to vacate and is only valid if at least one of the seven grounds contained within the Act can be satisfied. These grounds range from 'fault' grounds such as non-payment of rent, through to 'non fault' grounds such as an intention to demolish or reconstruct the building.
- 1.7 Currently, no Section 25 notice has been served by the Landlord, although we are aware that the Landlord has plans to re-develop the site in due course. The Landlord retains the right to serve a Section 25 notice at any time until a new lease is granted.
- 1.8 A new lease for St Mark's House is therefore still required to allow sufficient transition time to relocate children's services staff currently operating from there to alternative sites. The new lease will assist the Council in further planning of its ongoing provision of office accommodation in Eastbourne.
- 1.9 Negotiations with the landlord for the new lease have been ongoing and it is now provisionally proposed to enter into a longer lease of 18 months, with a break clause after 12 months, which will provide the Council with some flexibility if further time is needed to prepare and refurbish alternative office accommodation. In return for providing this level of flexibility to the Council, the Landlord will require the new lease to be contracted out of the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, meaning the Council will not have a right to hold over and remain in the premises after the expiry of the extension period.

## **2 Supporting information**

- 2.1 On 20 June 2023, a fire broke out at St. Mark's House. Due to damage caused by the fire, it has been necessary to temporarily close the building and for staff that usually work from St. Mark's House to work from alternative locations. However, this is anticipated to be a short term disruption and so it is still appropriate to take steps to ensure a planned transition over a twelve to eighteen month period can be implemented.
- 2.2 The new proposed lease, once agreed, will be backdated to 14 April 2023 and will include a tenant-only break option after 12 months. This break option will enable the Council to vacate at that point if alternative premises are ready for occupation before the expiry of the agreed extension period.
- 2.3 The rent payable during the period of extension is £384,900 per annum from April 2023, as per the Lead Member's 24 January 2023 decision. This represents an increase of £20,000 per annum above the rent set out in the original lease. The rental of the premises is exclusive of business rates, utilities and cleaning, and the lease will place liability on the Council for repairs. This is the case with the current lease, so the proposed new lease places no additional operational liability on the Council.
- 2.4 The increased rent of £20,000 per annum (reflecting general market conditions) will be an additional cost to the Corporate offices budget but these pressures will be mitigated in year.



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

- 3.1 Although the proposal, ultimately, is to move to a single office base in Eastbourne, the Council needs to ensure that the transition from two to one building is properly planned and managed. To ensure a seamless office move and maintain business continuity for key frontline services, it is anticipated that twelve to eighteen months will be required to complete the office move.
- 3.2 The recent fire at St. Mark's House adds additional pressure to the timeline for a planned relocation. It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member notes the progress with the negotiations for the new lease to date and delegates authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the final terms of the lease extension including the most appropriate time period for the lease.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Lead Member delegates authority to the Chief Operating Officer to:
- (a) approve the final lease terms, including the most appropriate time period for the new lease;
  - (b) authorise the signing and completion of the lease by the Council;
  - (c) serve any necessary notices or counter notices, to surrender the original lease and approve any related documentation; and
  - (d) take any other actions considered appropriate to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

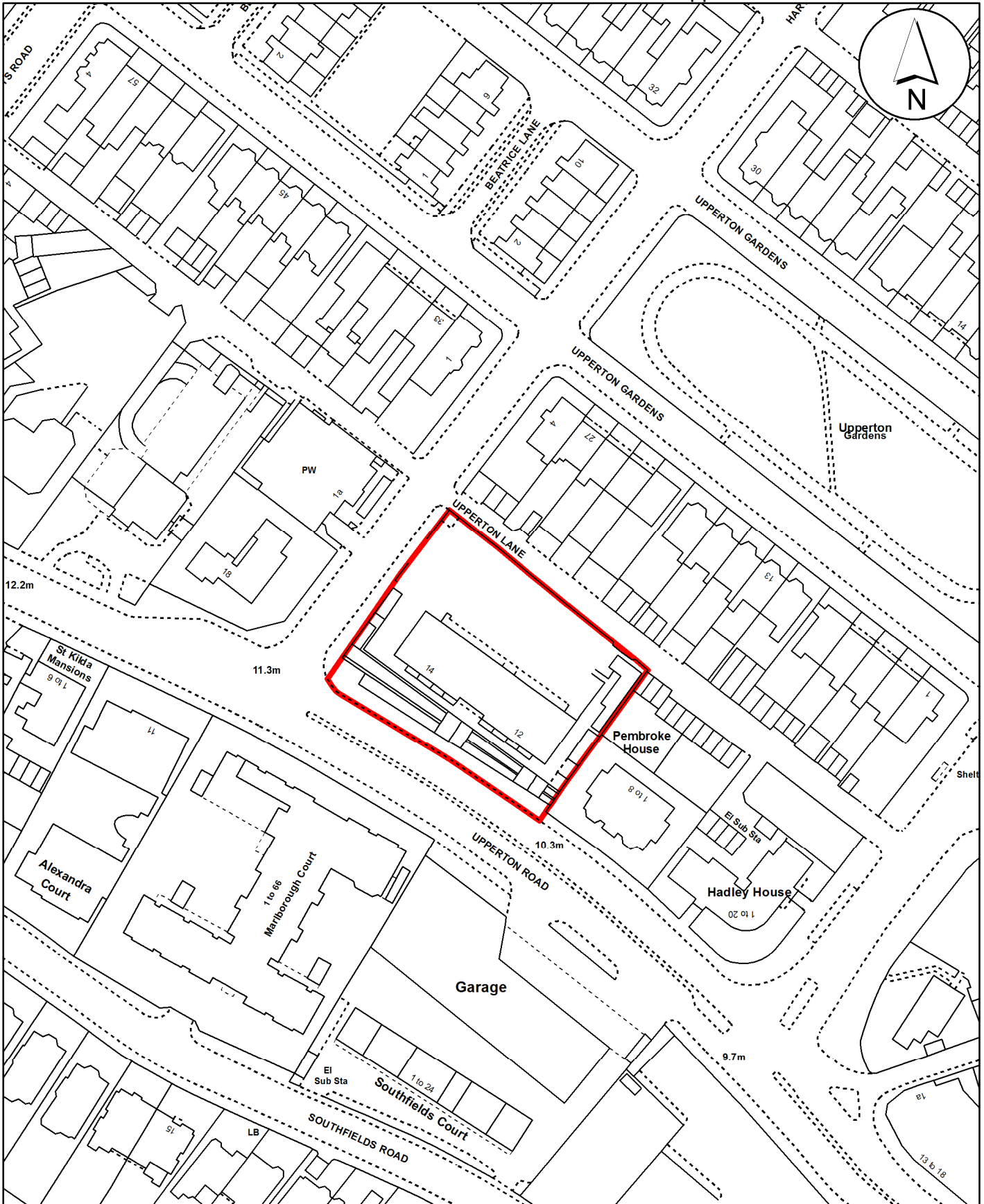
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**Chief Operating Officer**

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LOCAL MEMBER  
Councillor Pat Rodohan

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

**Date of meeting:** 11 July 2023

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

**Title:** Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Eastbourne Road, Polegate – Disposal of Freehold

**Purpose:** To re-declare the property to be surplus to the operational requirements of the Council and to agree to dispose of the asset following completion of marketing of the site.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1) re-declare the Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Polegate shown in Appendix 1 (“the Site”) to be surplus to the requirements of the Council;
- 2) approve the disposal of the Site in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- 3) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of the sale to achieve best value for the Site in accordance with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972, including but not limited to, (i) determining whether to sell the Site as a single plot or two separate plots (being Parcel A and Parcel B) and (ii) proceeding with the next best offer(s) in the event of the sale(s) not completing within the expected timelines; and
- 4) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to take all actions necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

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## 1 Background

- 1.1 The site encompasses two parcels of land, as shown in Appendix 1 (the “Site”).
- 1.2 Parcel A is approximately 1.788 ha (4.42 acres). The western boundary has a frontage to the Eastbourne Road (A2270) with a mature and young tree belt. The eastern boundary abuts Courtland Road which is an established residential development. Adjacent to the northwest boundary is a petrol station, with vehicular access from Eastbourne Road. To the southeast is a mixed-use development site that was granted planning permission at appeal in October 2022 for the erection of 180 dwellings together with a medical centre, parking, servicing and onsite open space.
- 1.3 Parcel B is approximately 1.15 ha (2.85 acres) and is bounded by mature trees, most of which appear to be under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Parcel B is landlocked for vehicular access. Mornings Mill Farm abuts the eastern and north-eastern boundaries. There was an outline application submitted in respect of Mornings Mill Farm in 2021 for a comprehensive mixed-use development, which included 700 dwellings, employment and community uses and open amenity space. Permission was granted by appeal in September 2022.
- 1.4 The Site is currently allocated as ‘private land’ and is not a designated area of public open space. It has historical use as a playing field for private organised sporting fixtures, not open to the public, but has not been used for this purpose since at least 2012.

- 1.5 The site was declared to be surplus and approval given to sell it at a Policy and Resources Committee, Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 28 March 1989. Following that decision, the Site was actively promoted for development. Given the passage of time since the original decision to declare surplus, the Lead Member is recommended to affirm that decision by re-declaring the Site as surplus to requirements. It currently forms part of the wider strategic development area in the adopted Wealden Core Strategy 2013.
- 1.6 The Site is within the Council's capital receipts programme, which funds the Council's Capital Programme in accordance with the Council's Capital Strategy.
- 1.7 The Site was part of the allocation included in the Wealden Strategic Sites Local Plan before being withdrawn. More recently, Parcel A was considered as part of the Wealden District Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (January 2019). Parcel A was assessed as being both suitable for housing and employment, with a suggested yield of 73 dwellings. However, it was not retained as a development area in the Submission Wealden Local Plan January 2019, which has subsequently been withdrawn.

## **2 Supporting information**

- 2.1 We have made enquiries with the Department for Education to ascertain whether or not consent to dispose of the land would be required under Section 77 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998 and Part I Schedule 1 Academies Act 2010. They have confirmed that consent is not required in this instance.
- 2.2 The site is not classified as open space land, as defined by Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Therefore, there is no requirement for the Council to advertise its intention to dispose of the land for two consecutive weeks prior to a decision being made.
- 2.3 The Council commissioned a detailed planning brief in 2022, prior to marketing the site, supported by an ecology appraisal. Both of these documents were made freely available to view via the Council's appointed marketing agent's website, and as part of the sales pack provided to all parties that expressed an interest in the site.
- 2.4 The Council marketed the site through an experienced property agent for development sites. The marketing was conducted on the open market via a competitive, transparent, non-discriminatory bidding process designed to establish the best consideration for the site. The Council is confident that, through this process, best value will be secured in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2.5 An informal tender process was adopted, with offers invited in writing by noon on 9 May 2023. Twelve (12) offers were received. Best bids were then invited from the highest four (4) by 31 May 2023. An analysis of the offers is included in an exempt report later on the agenda.
- 2.6 The disposal of this site will result in a capital receipt. Capital receipts are an important source of funding, and the Council seeks to maximise the levels of these resources which will be available to support the Council's capital plans and reduce the need to borrow in accordance with the Council's Capital Strategy.
- 2.7 The Local East Sussex County Council Member has been consulted on the sale of the land.

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

- 3.1 For the reasons set out in the above report, in particular within paragraph 2.6, the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:

- 1) re-declare the Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Polegate shown in Appendix 1 (“the Site”) to be surplus to the requirements of the Council;
- 2) approve the disposal of the Site in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- 3) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of the sale to achieve best value for the Site in accordance with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972, including but not limited to, (i) determining whether to sell the Site as a single plot or two separate plots (being Parcel A and Parcel B) and (ii) proceeding with the next best offer(s) in the event of the sale(s) not completing within the expected timelines; and
- 4) delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to take all actions necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

**Ros Parker**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

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LOCAL MEMBERS

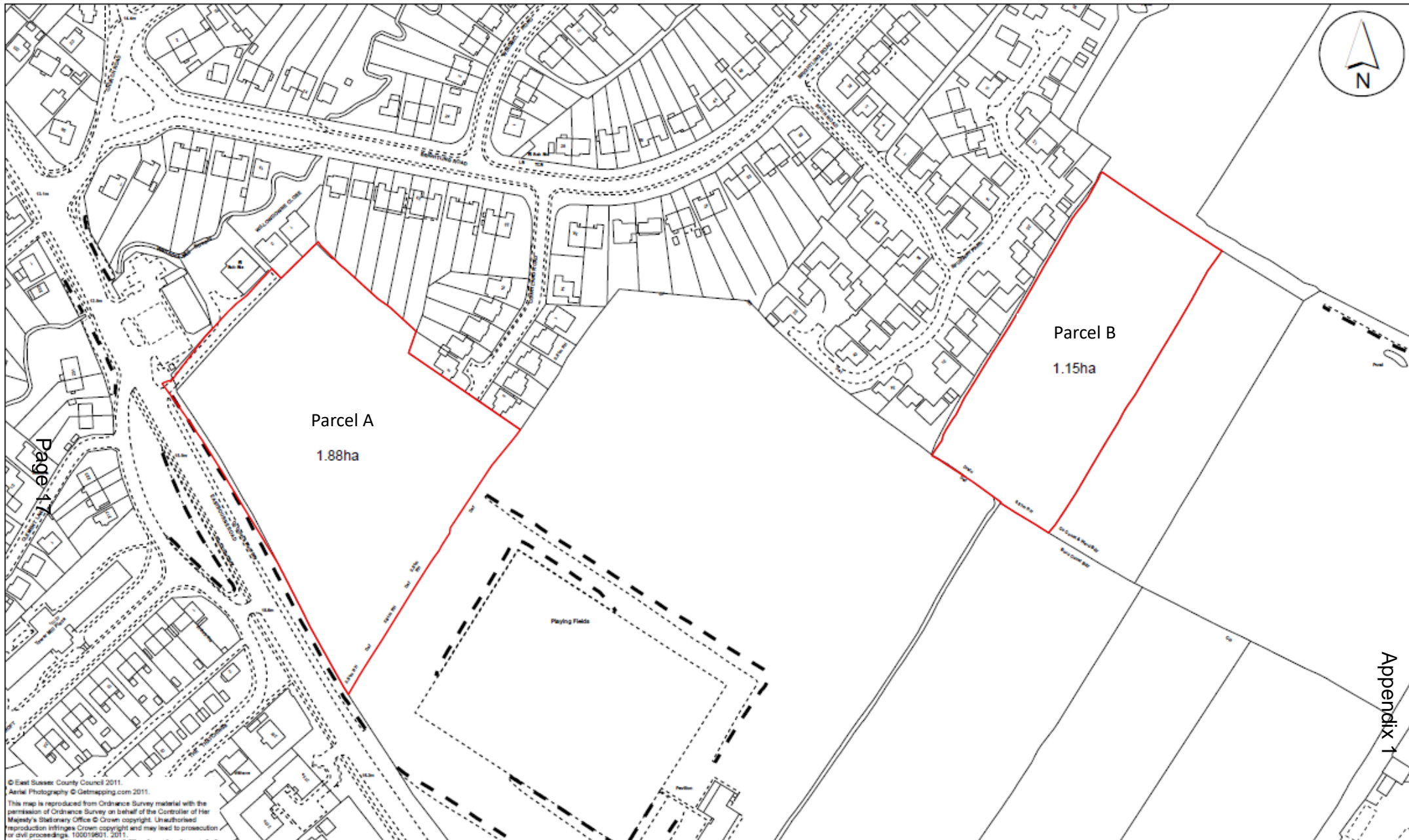
Councillor Daniel Shing – Polegate and Watermill

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site Plan

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Map Title: Hindsland Fields, Eastbourne Rd, Spurway Park, Polegate

Date: 10 Aug 2012

Map No: 1

Scale: 1:2,500

Author: PML/RP



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

**Date of meeting:** 11 July 2023

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

**Title:** Uckfield Leisure Centre, Uckfield

**Purpose:** To review and fully consider the outcome of the public consultation in respect of future options for community use of Uckfield Leisure Centre (including swimming pool) and to agree a lease extension of the facilities.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

1. Note the findings of the public consultation on the future community leisure provision at Uckfield Leisure Centre that took place between 18 March and 27 May 2023.
2. Approve a 19-year lease extension between East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council to continue ongoing provision for community use of the leisure facilities, including the swimming pool at Uckfield Leisure Centre whilst retaining Uckfield College curriculum provision.
3. Approve, as an interim measure, a short-term property agreement between East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council for occupation of the Leisure Centre if the proposed 19-year lease extension is not completed by 17 July 2023, noting the current lease between both parties expires on 16 July 2023.
4. Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to carry out all actions necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report including but not limited to finalising the terms of the lease.

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## 1 Background

- 1.1 Uckfield Leisure Centre is situated within Uckfield College (UC) grounds. The Leisure Centre is a separate building forming part of the main college campus. The Leisure Centre is occupied by Wealden District Council (WDC) under a long-term operational lease. Under the terms of the lease with WDC, UC has priority use of the dryside leisure facilities during school hours. Outside of these hours, there is community use of the facilities for both dryside and wetside facilities. The facilities include a sports hall, fitness suite, studio, two squash courts, swimming pool, splash pool, sauna and steam room, café and creche. The facilities are managed by Freedom Leisure; WDC's contracted leisure provider.
- 1.2 In late 2020 WDC decided to cease community provision at Uckfield Leisure Centre ('the Centre'), not to renew its lease and to return the Centre to East Sussex County Council ('ESCC') as the freeholder of the site. ESCC therefore ran an expression of interest exercise in November 2021 to seek proposals for viable and sustainable business models for continuing non-college community use of the Centre. No viable sustainable options were received.
- 1.3 On 28 February 2023, the Lead Member of Resources and Climate Change considered a report relating to the future of the Centre. The Lead Member noted the outcome of the Expressions of Interest exercise (EOI) including the additional financial support that would be required for the running of the community facilities and approved a ten-week public consultation regarding the non-college community use of the Centre and swimming pool.
- 1.4 Previously, at the 14 June 2022 Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change meeting, the Lead Member approved an extension to the property agreement between ESCC and WDC for a

one-year period from 18 July 2022. The report to the 28 February 2023 meeting set out that a further report would be presented to the Lead Member providing an analysis of the outcome of the public consultation, including an updated Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and setting out the proposed next steps. The purpose of this report is to provide that update.

- 1.5 The final public consultation analysis report is attached as Appendix 1. The ten-week public consultation was conducted on ESCC's 'Citizen' webpage with hard copies available at County Hall, Uckfield Library, Uckfield Leisure Centre and the Town Council Civic Centre. The consultation asked for detailed information from respondents as well as seeking opinions on five options:
- a. Keeping all dryside and wetside facilities at the Leisure Centre open for usage both by the College and the community;
  - b. Keeping all dryside facilities at the Leisure Centre open for both community and the College but ending all wetside use;
  - c. Ending all dryside community use of the Leisure Centre but keeping the wetside facilities open for usage by the College and the community;
  - d. Ending all dryside community use of the Leisure Centre and closing the wetside facilities so that only the dryside facilities will remain open but solely used by the College;
  - e. Considering alternative operating models consistent with the existing College use.

## **2 Supporting information**

### ***Summary of the results of the public consultation***

- 2.1 In total there were 3,306 responses, of which 3,283 were received online and the remainder were filled in by hand. Most respondents were concentrated in and around Uckfield; 68% of all respondents had a TN22 postcode, 11% had a TN6 postcode, and a further 14% had a BN8, TN20 or TN21 postcode.
- 2.2 The remainder of the submissions either didn't specify a postcode or were from people in other neighbouring areas. In terms of age, 15% of respondents were under the age of 35 years, 36% were aged 35-49 years, 25% were aged 50 to 64 years, and 14% were aged 65 years and above.
- 2.3 Respondents were asked the reason for their interest in the consultation. The most common responses were "as a resident" (69%), "as a current member or user of the leisure centre" (43%) and "as a parent/carer" (34%). There was also strong representation from members of various local groups, clubs and organisations, including Uckfield College, Uckfield Grasshoppers Junior Football Club, Hartfield Stoolball Club, Uckfield Walking Football Club, AFC Uckfield Colts, Uckfield Runners and the Fun & Friendly Badminton Club, among others.
- 2.4 80% (2,649) of all respondents said they have visited the leisure centre since the start of the current calendar year, and only 2% (71 respondents) said they have never been to the leisure centre. 52% (1,723) of all responses were from people who said they use the leisure centre at least once a week, and a further 25% (818) said they use the leisure centre 1 to 3 times a month. In terms of the facilities used, 1,269 (38%) people said they use the dryside facilities at least once a week, and 1,238 (37%) said they use the wetside facilities at least once a week (these figures include 784 respondents (24%) who said they use both wetside and dryside facilities once a week or more).
- 2.5 The survey asked respondents to advise on other leisure centres they used. In summary, the most commonly visited dryside facilities were Crowborough (335), Hailsham (155) and Isenhurst Health Club (121). The most frequently visited wetside facilities were Crowborough (362), Hailsham (152) and the East Sussex National Hotel, Golf Resort and Spa (140). Other sites mentioned included the Dolphin Leisure Centre in Haywards Heath and the Triangle Leisure Centre in Burgess Hill.

- 2.6 Respondents were asked whether they would be able to visit alternative leisure facilities in East Sussex, should Uckfield Leisure Centre close. Over half either chose not to respond to this question but used the 'Other' field to state that they would be able to use other facilities. Of those that did express an ability or willingness to use alternative facilities, the responses were Crowborough (24% of all respondents), Hailsham (8%) and Lewes (8%) for both dryside and wetside facilities.
- 2.7 3,254 respondents (98%) stated they either strongly agreed or agreed with the suggestion to keep both dryside and wetside facilities at the Leisure Centre open for both community and College use, while 95% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with proposals to end community use of all facilities but keep some facilities open for use by the College. Only 20 respondents (0.6% of all responses) disagreed with the statement that all dryside and wetside facilities should be kept open for use by both the College and the community.
- 2.8 Respondents were offered the opportunity to explain the reasons for their view, and 2,312 respondents (70% of all responses received) took the opportunity to do so. Over 1,250 respondents cited concerns over increasing traffic and the associated impact on the environment should they have to travel to alternative facilities, while others cited the cost of travelling to other facilities as a barrier. Many residents also highlighted the fact that there are a lot of new housing developments being built in and around Uckfield, and expressed concern about the pressure that the town's increasing population might have on leisure facilities in other towns such as Crowborough, were Uckfield Leisure Centre to close. Several residents also pointed out that Uckfield Leisure Centre is the only pool in the area with fully accessible changing facilities and disability hoists for changing and entering the pool.
- 2.9 Many commented on the physical health benefits of swimming and other activities currently on offer at the Leisure Centre. Over 1,100 respondents also mentioned the social benefits associated with visiting the Leisure Centre, with some respondents expressing concern that the closure of the Leisure Centre might lead to a rise in antisocial behaviour, as well as an increase in mental health issues and more social isolation. There were also concerns that the closure of the Leisure Centre might result in fewer children learning to swim.
- 2.10 1,559 people (47% of all respondents) responded to the question asking for suggestions for an alternative operating model. Many felt that it was hard to comment without having access to the figures and associated information.
- 2.11 Many respondents commented on the strong community spirit in Uckfield and suggested organising community-led fundraising initiatives. Others suggested running the Leisure Centre as a Community Interest Company (CIC). Several respondents also questioned whether the Council has applied for grants and external funding, such as the recently announced Sports England grants, as well as Lottery Funding.
- 2.12 There were also suggestions that the Leisure Centre could install solar panels on its large south-facing roof, as well as ground-source heat pumps as a way of reducing energy bills and to help make the Leisure Centre more sustainable.
- 2.13 Other residents focused on ways that the Leisure Centre could increase revenue. Several respondents suggested hiring out the facilities for private events and functions, while others suggested hiring out some of the facilities to local schools. Other suggestions received included upgrading the facilities to encourage greater use and to make them more competitive with other private leisure facilities in the area, increasing admission charges, charging for car parking, extending/reopening the restaurant and creche facilities, and offering a greater range of fitness-related classes and activities. Many also called for better marketing and advertising to help sell the benefits of the Leisure Centre to those who do not currently use the facility.
- 2.14 There were also suggestions to offer different membership and visitor options to encourage more people to join, such as offering day-passes, senior membership deals, swim-only passes, and maternity membership schemes. Some local business owners also suggested a company subscription scheme that businesses could offer to their employees.

- 2.15 Several respondents also suggested that East Sussex County Council re-approach Wealden District Council to see if they would reconsider extending the lease, while others suggested approaching private companies to explore a public/private partnership.
- 2.16 Full copies of all the responses received as part of the consultation, together with a report of all the verbatim responses received, have been placed in the Members' Room at County Hall.

### ***Outcome of the consultation regarding the future of Uckfield Leisure Centre***

- 2.17 Reflecting on the outcome of the public consultation outlined in the paragraphs above, ESCC has been in further discussions with WDC and the College. WDC has agreed in principle to a new 19-year lease with ESCC for a continuation of all services currently provided, subject to approval through WDC governance processes. The service is to be delivered through their existing leisure partner, Freedom Leisure and will include all wetside and dryside activities. The College curriculum use will be unaffected and there will be no changes to the provision of the 3G pitch.

### ***Financial Implications***

- 2.18 The terms and conditions of the new lease will remain broadly the same as the original 2002 lease, including an annual RPI increase. Additional detail about the commercial terms of the proposed lease is set out in an exempt report later on the agenda.

### ***Uckfield Leisure Centre - Summary of Equality Impacts***

- 2.19 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, and a summary of the findings is appended in Appendix 2. The proposed Lease extension with WDC will result in no changes to the current service delivery. The full Equality Impact Assessment is available in the Members' Room. The Lead Member must have due regard to the equality implications set out in the Equalities Impact Assessment in making this decision.

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

- 3.1 In reaching a decision on the future of curriculum and community use of the Uckfield Leisure Centre, including the swimming pool, the Lead Member must carefully consider the consultation feedback; the equality implications set out in the Equality Impact Assessment as well as the wider financial implications. The Lead Member is recommended to note the outcome of the consultation.
- 3.2 For the reasons set out in paragraph 2.17, the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:
- 3.2.1 Approve a 19-year lease extension between ESCC and WDC to continue ongoing provision for community use of the leisure facilities, including the swimming pool at Uckfield Leisure Centre whilst retaining Uckfield College curriculum provision.
- 3.2.2 Approve, as an interim measure, a short-term property agreement between ESCC and WDC for occupation of the Leisure Centre if the proposed 19-year lease extension is not completed by 17 July 2023, noting the current lease between both parties expires on 16 July 2023.
- 3.2.3 To delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to take all steps necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report including but not limited to finalising the terms of the lease.

- 3.3 If the Lead Member agrees the recommendations in 3.2 above, officers will work with Wealden District Council to prepare a temporary property agreement until the new 19-year lease and associated documents are completed.

**ROS PARKER**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

Contact Officer:  
Nigel Brown - Email [Nigel.Brown@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Nigel.Brown@eastsussex.gov.uk)  
Tel. No. 01273 481406

LOCAL MEMBERS  
Councillor Claire Dowling, Uckfield North

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS  
None

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## Consultation on Future Options for Uckfield Leisure Centre: Summary report

This report was created on Monday 19 June 2023 at 10:54 and includes **3306** responses.

The activity ran from 18/03/2023 to 27/05/2023.

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First part of your primary residence postcode e.g., TN22. Information will be used for mapping interest in leisure facilities in the area	4
Are you interested in this consultation as a...	4
Are you interested in this consultation as a...	4
If applicable, what is the name of the business, community, organisation, or interested group?	4
If applicable, what is the name of the business, community, organisation, or interested group?	4
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When did you last use the community DRYSIDE facilities within the Uckfield Leisure Centre? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.	6
When did you last use the community DRYSIDE facilities within the Uckfield Leisure Centre? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.	6
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If 'yes' which one(s)?	7
If 'yes' which one(s)?	7
Within the last 12 months have you used other district, borough council/local authority WETSIDE facilities within East Sussex County? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.	7
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If 'yes' which one(s)?	7
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Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority DRYSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.	8
If 'yes' which one(s)?	8
If 'yes' which one(s)?	8

Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority WETSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.

Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority WETSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.

If 'yes' which one(s)? 8

f 'yes' which one(s)? 8

If Uckfield Leisure Centre DRYSIDE community facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members. 9

If Uckfield Leisure Centre DRYSIDE community facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members. 9

Other - please specify. 9

Other - please specify. 9

If Uckfield Leisure Centre WETSIDE facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members. 9

If Uckfield Leisure Centre WETSIDE facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members 9

Other - please specify. 9

Other - please specify. 9

In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? 10

In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? 10

- (a) keeping all dryside and wetside facilities at the Leisure Centre open, for usage both by the College and the community;

In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? 10

- (b) keeping all dryside facilities at the Leisure Centre open for both the community and the College, but ending all wetside use;

In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? 11

- (c) ending all dryside community use of the Leisure Centre, but keeping the wetside facilities open for usage by the College and the community;

In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? 11

- (d) ending all dryside community use of the Leisure Centre and closing the wetside facilities, so that only the dryside facilities will remain open but used solely by the College;

In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? 12

- (e) considering alternative operating models consistent with the existing College use. (Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree or Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree)

You may explain the reasons for your view on these options below (maximum 500 words) 12

You may explain the reasons for your view on these options below (maximum 500 words) 12

Regarding any of the options do you have any ideas or suggestions for an operating model to ensure the future of the Leisure Centre is financially sustainable? (maximum 500 words) 12

Regarding any of the options do you have any ideas or suggestions for an operating model to ensure the future of the Leisure Centre is financially sustainable? (maximum 500 words) 12

What other community facilities would you like to be available/offered within the Leisure Centre building? Please bear in mind that appropriate steps would be needed to safeguard students from any proposals for shared use by community users during the College day. (maximum 500 words) 12

What other community facilities would you like to be available offered within the Leisure Centre building? Please bear in mind that appropriate steps would be needed to safeguard students from any proposals for shared use by community users during the College day. (maximum 500 words) 12

Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the DRYSIDE and/or WETSIDE facilities to the community, or the alternative options identified above, would or may particularly affect persons sharing any of the following "protected characteristics": age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. (maximum 500 words) 12

Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the DRYSIDE and/or WETSIDE facilities to the community, or the alternative options identified above, would or may particularly affect persons sharing any of the following "protected characteristics": age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. (maximum 500 words) 12

If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse/negative impact in relation to persons with one or more particular protected characteristics, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to reduce/remove or avoid such impact? (maximum 500 words) 13

If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse/negative impact in relation to persons with one or more particular protected characteristics, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to reduce/remove or avoid such impact? (maximum 500 words)	13
<b>What is your sex?</b>	13
What is your sex?	13
<b>If you prefer to define your sex in another way, please write that below</b>	13
If you prefer to define your sex in another way, please write that below	13
<b>Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?</b>	13
Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?	13
<b>What is your age?</b>	14
What is your age?	14
<b>Do you consider yourself to be disabled?</b>	15
Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	15
<b>What is your sexual orientation?</b>	15
What is your sexual orientation?	15
<b>If you prefer to identify your sexual orientation in another way, please write that below:</b>	15
If you prefer to identify your sexual orientation in another way, please write that below:	15
<b>What is your religion or belief?</b>	16
What is your religion or belief?	16
<b>If other religion or belief, please write that below:</b>	16
If other religion or belief, please write that below:	16
<b>Are you pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 26 weeks?</b>	16
Are you pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 26 weeks?	16
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	17
Asian or Asian British	17
<b>Any other Asian background, please write that below:</b>	17
Any other Asian background, please write that below:	17
<b>Black, African, Caribbean or Black British</b>	17
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	17
<b>Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, please write that below:</b>	17
Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, please write that below	17
<b>Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups</b>	18
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	18
<b>Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background please write that below:</b>	18
Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background please write that below:	18
<b>White</b>	18
White	18
<b>Any other White background, please write that below:</b>	18
Any other White background, please write that below:	18
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	19
Other ethnic group	19
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Any other ethnic group, please write that below:	19

## **What is your name?**

### ***Name***

There were **3289** responses to this part of the question.

## **What is your email address?**

### ***Email***

There were **3255** responses to this part of the question.

## **What is your organisation?**

### ***Organisation***

There were **1430** responses to this part of the question.

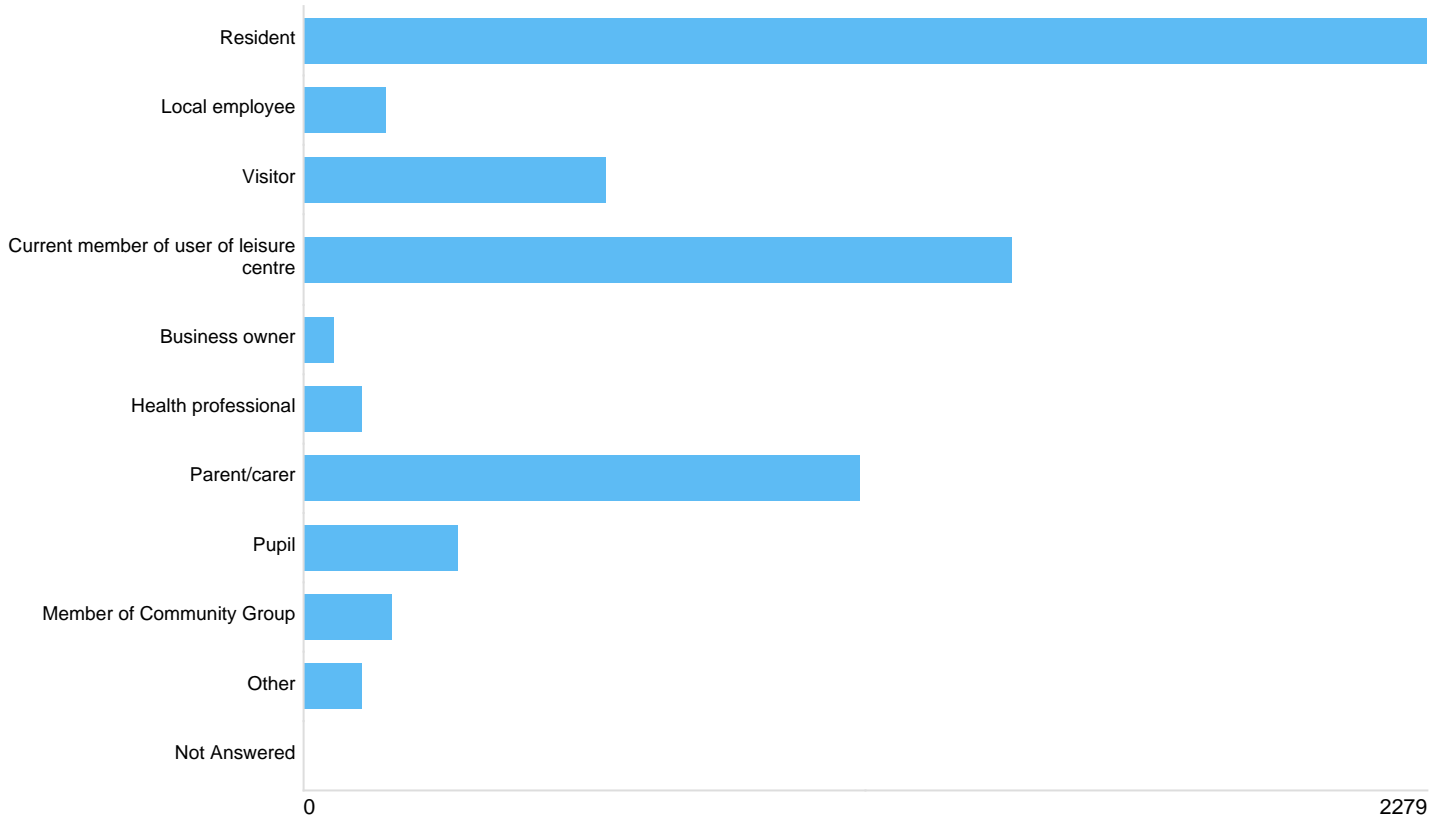
**First part of your primary residence postcode e.g., TN22. Information will be used for mapping interest in leisure facilities in the area**

*First part of your primary residence postcode e.g., TN22. Information will be used for mapping interest in leisure facilities in the area*

There were **3252** responses to this part of the question.

**Are you interested in this consultation as a....**

*Are you interested in this consultation as a....*



Option	Total	Percent
Resident	2279	68.94%
Local employee	164	4.96%
Visitor	609	18.42%
Current member of user of leisure centre	1432	43.32%
Business owner	57	1.72%
Health professional	117	3.54%
Parent/carer	1124	34.00%
Pupil	310	9.38%
Member of Community Group	175	5.29%
Other	115	3.48%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

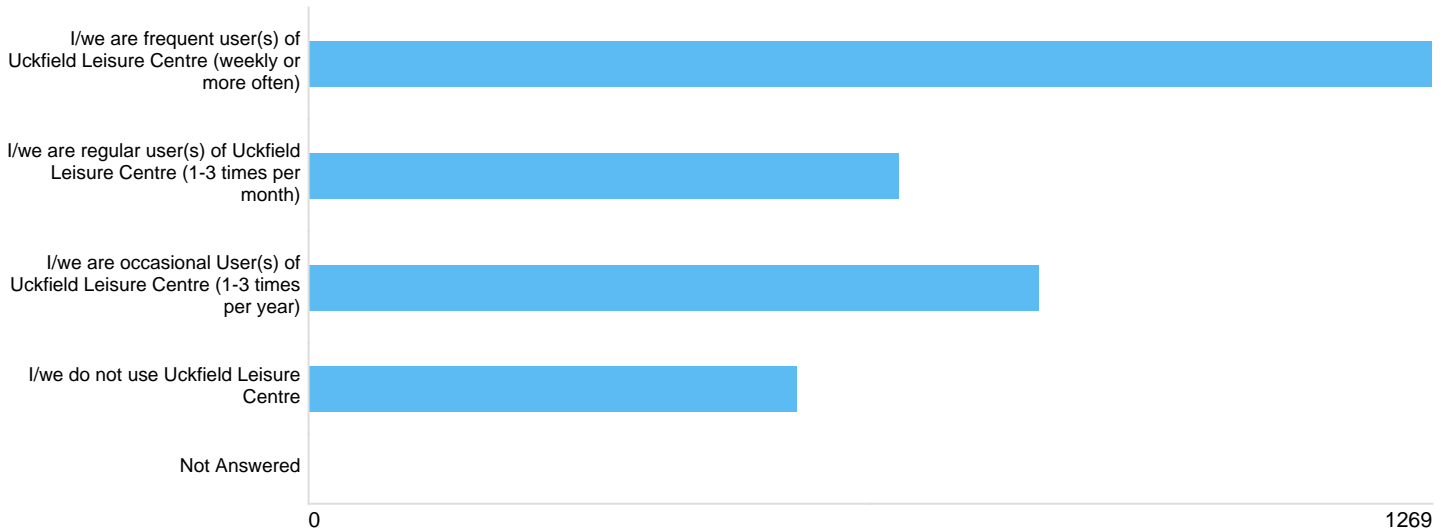
**If applicable, what is the name of the business, community, organisation, or interested group?**

*If applicable, what is the name of the business, community, organisation, or interested group?*

There were **664** responses to this part of the question.

**In reference to the DRYSIDE facilities, which of the following apply? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

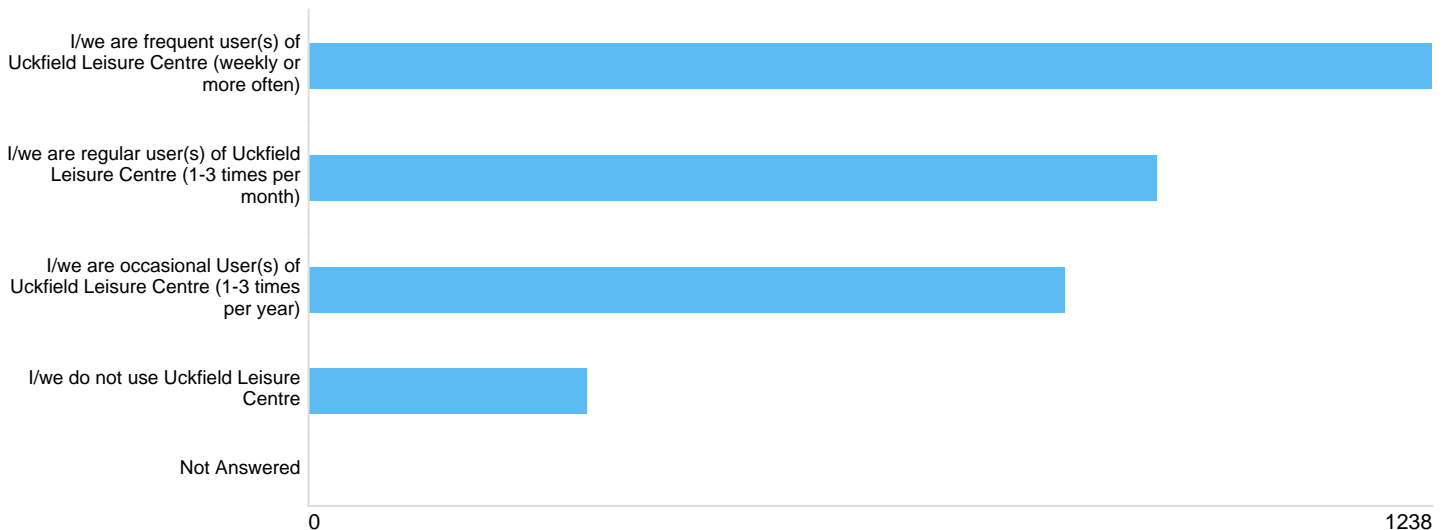
*In reference to the DRYSIDE facilities, which of the following apply? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
I/we are frequent user(s) of Uckfield Leisure Centre (weekly or more often)	1269	38.38%
I/we are regular user(s) of Uckfield Leisure Centre (1-3 times per month)	665	20.11%
I/we are occasional User(s) of Uckfield Leisure Centre (1-3 times per year)	823	24.89%
I/we do not use Uckfield Leisure Centre	549	16.61%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**In reference to the WETSID facilities, which of the following apply? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

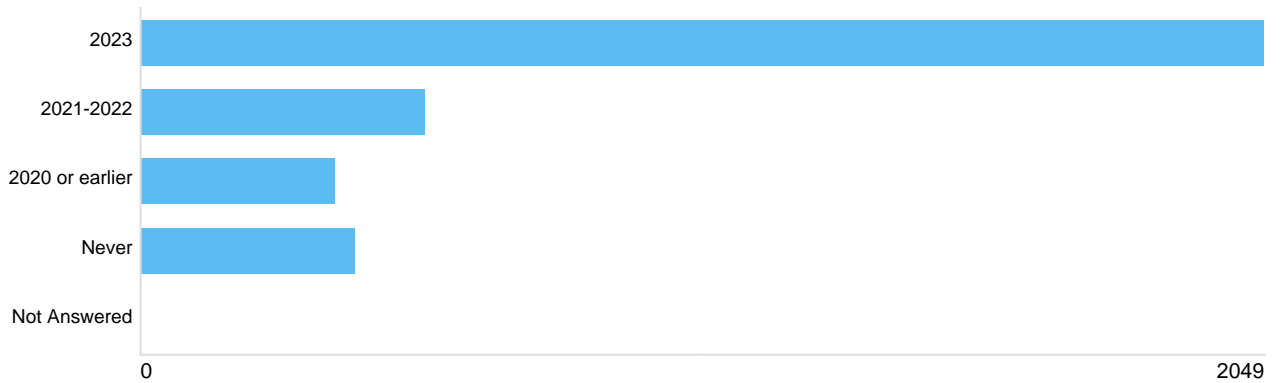
*In reference to the WETSID facilities, which of the following apply? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
I/we are frequent user(s) of Uckfield Leisure Centre (weekly or more often)	1238	37.45%
I/we are regular user(s) of Uckfield Leisure Centre (1-3 times per month)	932	28.19%
I/we are occasional User(s) of Uckfield Leisure Centre (1-3 times per year)	832	25.17%
I/we do not use Uckfield Leisure Centre	304	9.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**When did you last use the community DRYSIDE facilities within the Uckfield Leisure Centre? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

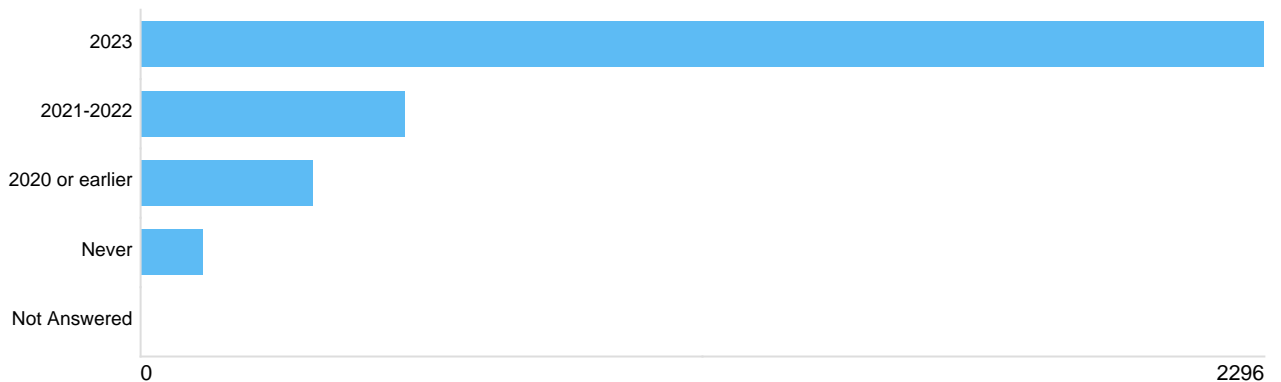
*When did you last use the community DRYSIDE facilities within the Uckfield Leisure Centre? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
2023	2049	61.98%
2021-2022	517	15.64%
2020 or earlier	353	10.68%
Never	387	11.71%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**When did you last use the WETSIDE facilities within the Uckfield Leisure Centre? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

*When did you last use the WETSIDE facilities within the Uckfield Leisure Centre? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
2023	2296	69.45%
2021-2022	536	16.21%
2020 or earlier	351	10.62%
Never	123	3.72%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**Within the last 12 months have you used other district, borough council/local authority DRYSIDE facilities within East Sussex County? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

*Within the last 12 months have you used other district, borough council/local authority DRYSIDE facilities within East Sussex County? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	655	19.81%
No	2651	80.19%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

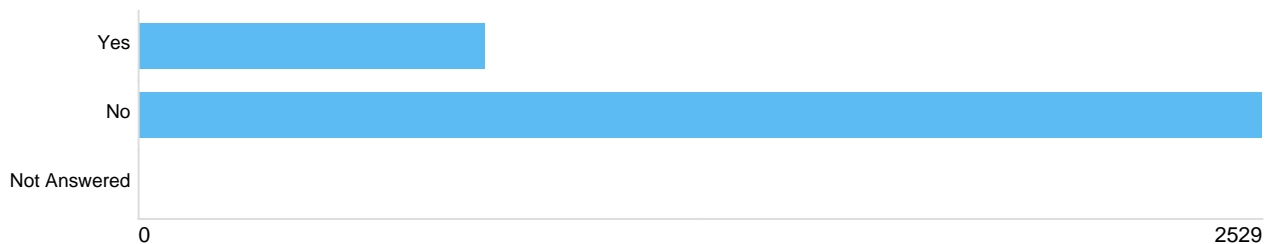
**If 'yes' which one(s)?**

*If 'yes' which one(s)?*

There were **696** responses to this part of the question.

**Within the last 12 months have you used other district, borough council/local authority WETSIDE facilities within East Sussex County? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

*Within the last 12 months have you used other district, borough council/local authority WETSIDE facilities within East Sussex County? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	777	23.50%
No	2529	76.50%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**If 'yes' which one(s)?**

*If 'yes' which one(s)?*

There were **806** responses to this part of the question.

**Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority DRYSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

*Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority DRYSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	539	16.30%
No	2767	83.70%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

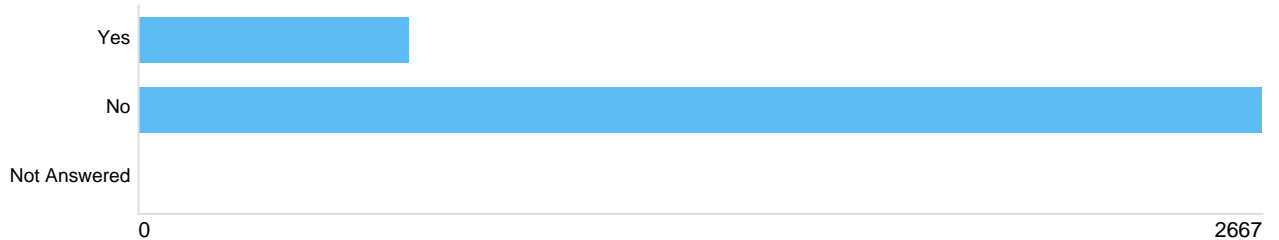
**If 'yes' which one(s)?**

*If 'yes' which one(s)?*

There were 555 responses to this part of the question.

**Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority WETSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.**

*Within the last 12 months have you used other non-local authority WETSIDE facilities instead of or as well as using Uckfield Leisure Centre (e.g., private leisure centres, member of hotel leisure facilities in the area)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.*



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	639	19.33%
No	2667	80.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**If 'yes' which one(s)?**

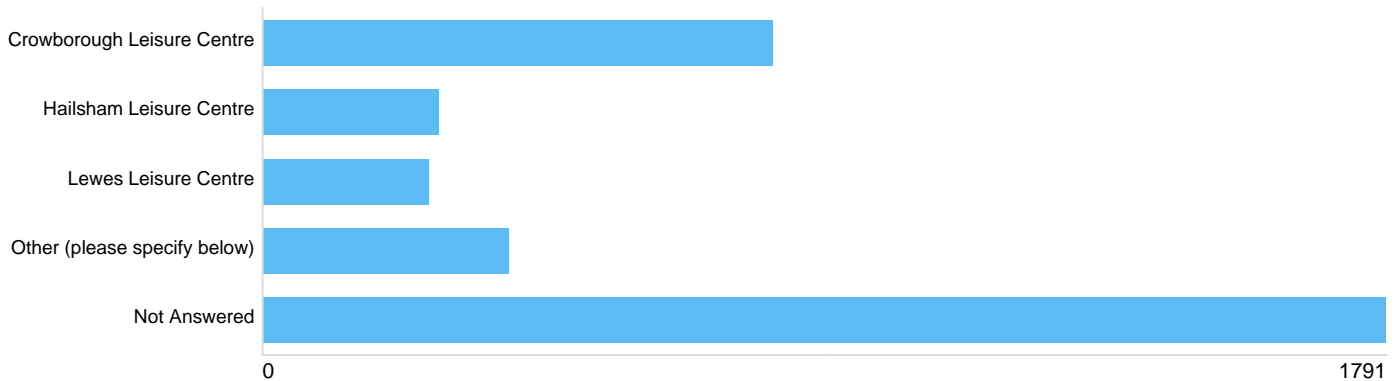
*f 'yes' which one(s)?*

There were 648 responses to this part of the question.



If Uckfield Leisure Centre DRYSIDE community facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.

If Uckfield Leisure Centre DRYSIDE community facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.



Option	Total	Percent
Crowborough Leisure Centre	810	24.50%
Hailsham Leisure Centre	279	8.44%
Lewes Leisure Centre	263	7.96%
Other (please specify below)	389	11.77%
Not Answered	1791	54.17%

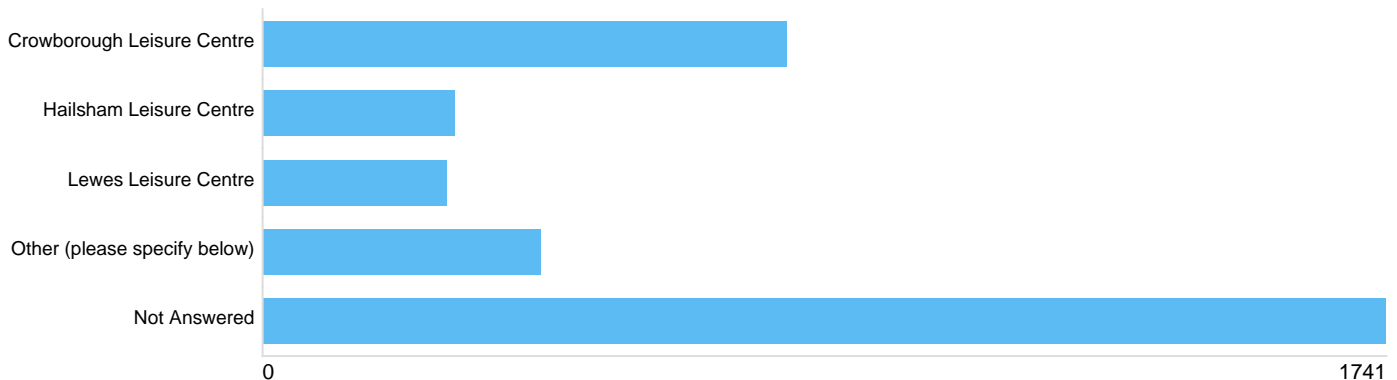
**Other - please specify.**

*Other - please specify.*

There were 644 responses to this part of the question.

If Uckfield Leisure Centre WETSIDE facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members.

If Uckfield Leisure Centre WETSIDE facilities were to close, would you be able to use one of the following alternative Leisure facilities instead (please tick all those that apply)? Please answer on behalf of yourself and any immediate family or household members



Option	Total	Percent
Crowborough Leisure Centre	810	24.50%
Hailsham Leisure Centre	296	8.95%
Lewes Leisure Centre	283	8.56%
Other (please specify below)	430	13.01%
Not Answered	1741	52.66%

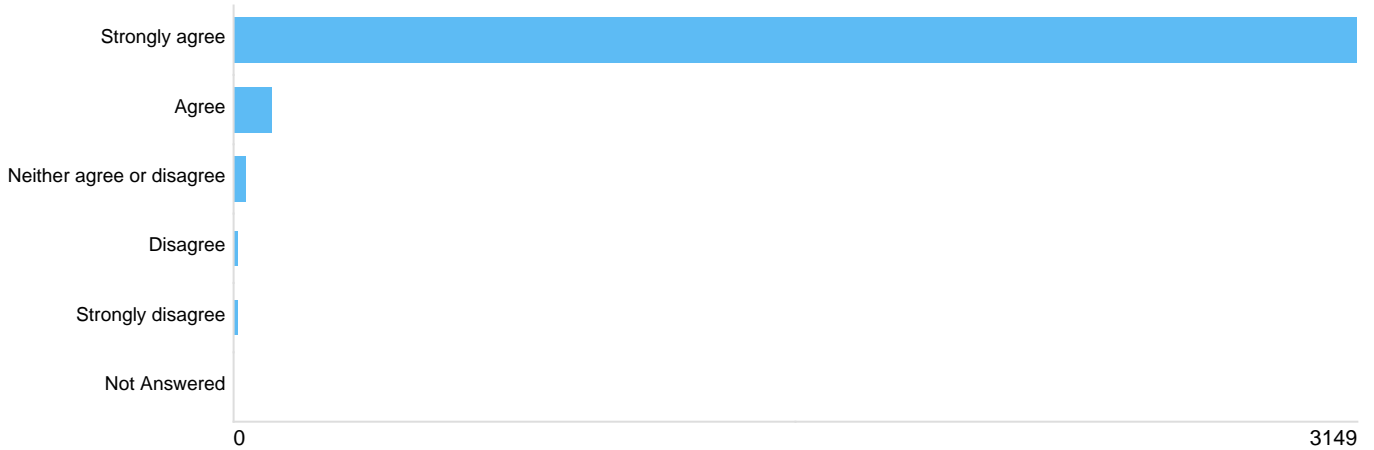
**Other - please specify.**

*Other - please specify.*

There were 703 responses to this part of the question.

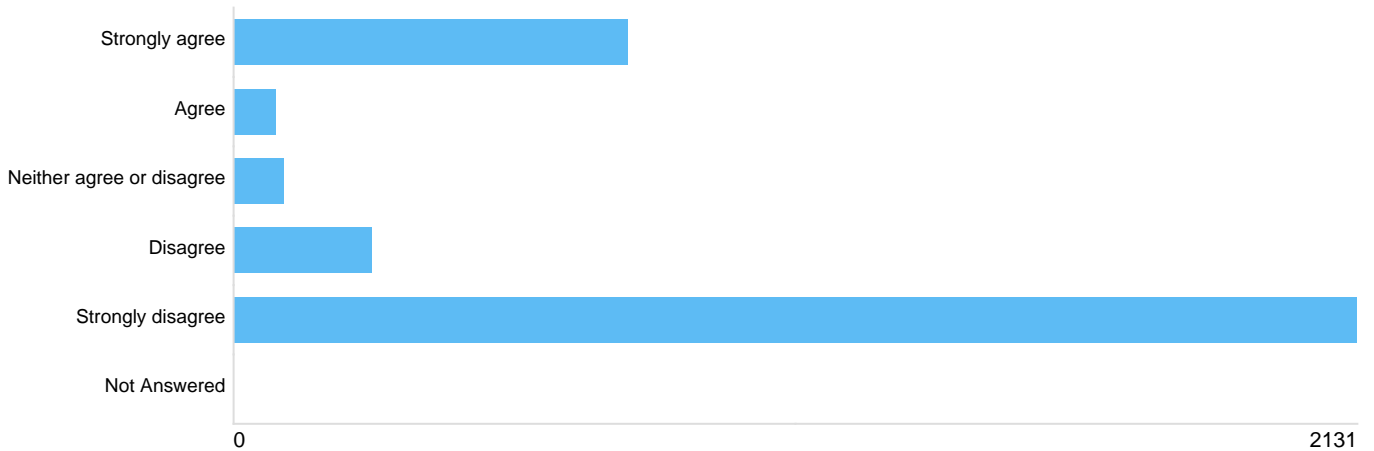
**In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre?**

*In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? - (a) keeping all dryside and wetside facilities at the Leisure Centre open, for usage both by the College and the community;*



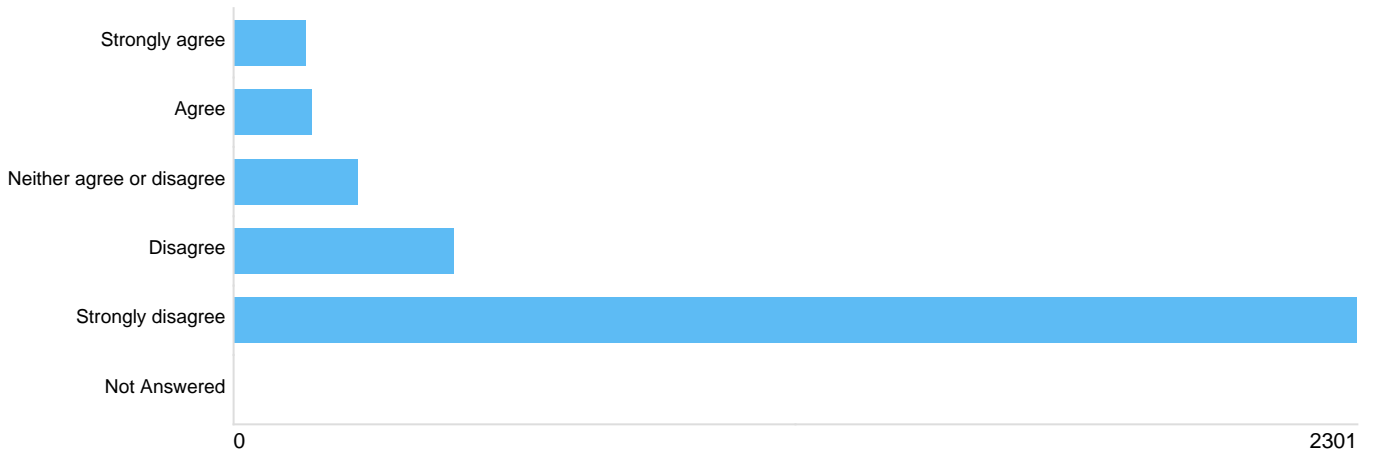
Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	3149	95.25%
Agree	105	3.18%
Neither agree or disagree	32	0.97%
Disagree	9	0.27%
Strongly disagree	11	0.33%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

*In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? - (b) keeping all dryside facilities at the Leisure Centre open for both the community and the College, but ending all wetside use;*



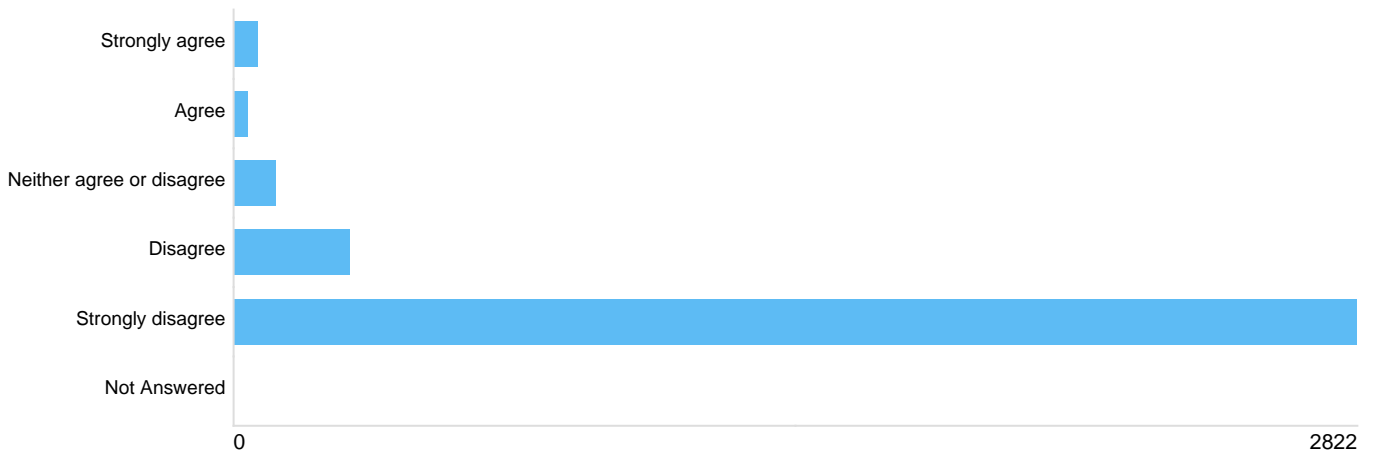
Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	746	22.57%
Agree	76	2.30%
Neither agree or disagree	93	2.81%
Disagree	260	7.86%
Strongly disagree	2131	64.46%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

***In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? - (c) ending all dryside community use of the Leisure Centre, but keeping the wetside facilities open for usage by the College and the community;***



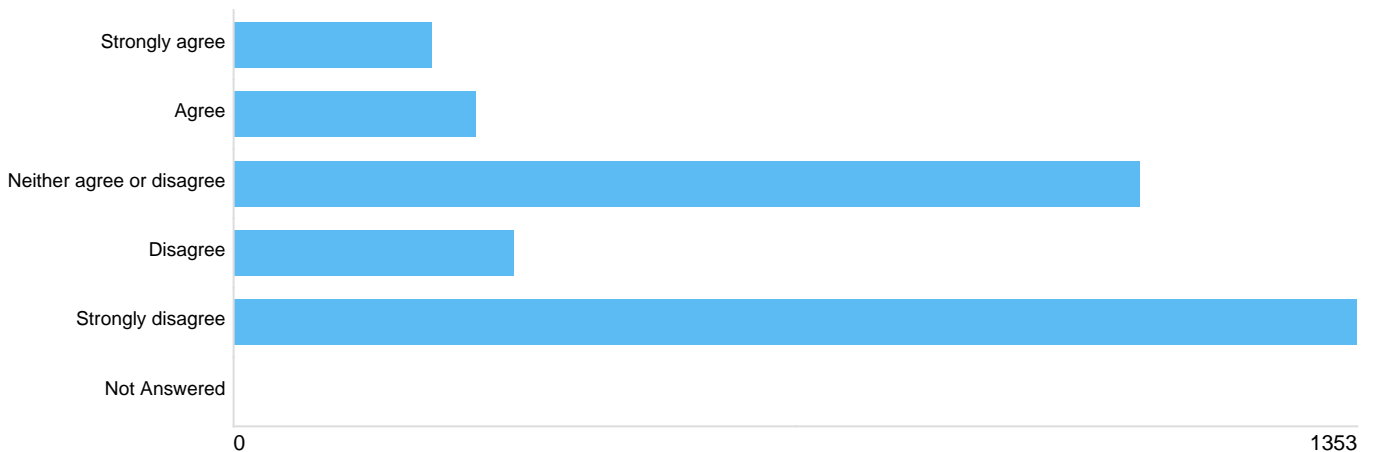
Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	147	4.45%
Agree	156	4.72%
Neither agree or disagree	253	7.65%
Disagree	449	13.58%
Strongly disagree	2301	69.60%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

***In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? - (d) ending all dryside community use of the Leisure Centre and closing the wetside facilities, so that only the dryside facilities will remain open but used solely by the College;***



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	57	1.72%
Agree	35	1.06%
Neither agree or disagree	101	3.06%
Disagree	291	8.80%
Strongly disagree	2822	85.36%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

***In light of the information provided above, what is your view about the following options for the future of the Leisure Centre? - (e) considering alternative operating models consistent with the existing College use. (Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree or Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree)***



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	238	7.20%
Agree	290	8.77%
Neither agree or disagree	1089	32.94%
Disagree	336	10.16%
Strongly disagree	1353	40.93%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**You may explain the reasons for your view on these options below (maximum 500 words)**

***You may explain the reasons for your view on these options below (maximum 500 words)***

There were **2312** responses to this part of the question.

**Regarding any of the options do you have any ideas or suggestions for an operating model to ensure the future of the Leisure Centre is financially sustainable? (maximum 500 words)**

***Regarding any of the options do you have any ideas or suggestions for an operating model to ensure the future of the Leisure Centre is financially sustainable? (maximum 500 words)***

There were **1559** responses to this part of the question.

**What other community facilities would you like to be available/offered within the Leisure Centre building? Please bear in mind that appropriate steps would be needed to safeguard students from any proposals for shared use by community users during the College day. (maximum 500 words)**

***What other community facilities would you like to be available offered within the Leisure Centre building? Please bear in mind that appropriate steps would be needed to safeguard students from any proposals for shared use by community users during the College day. (maximum 500 words)***

There were **1014** responses to this part of the question.

**Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the DRYSIDE and/or WETSIDE facilities to the community, or the alternative options identified above, would or may particularly affect persons sharing any of the following “protected characteristics”: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. (maximum 500 words)**

***Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the DRYSIDE and/or WETSIDE facilities to the community, or the alternative options identified above, would or may particularly affect persons sharing any of the following “protected characteristics”: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. (maximum 500 words)***

There were **1503** responses to this part of the question.

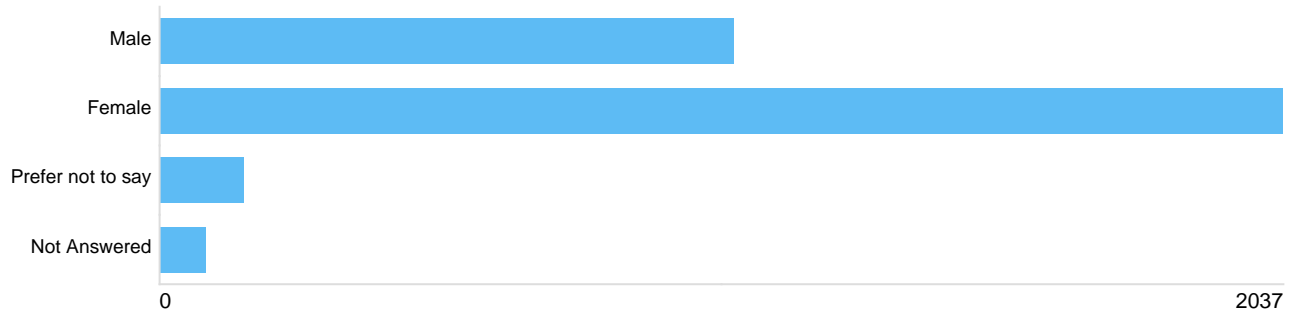
**If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse/negative impact in relation to persons with one or more particular protected characteristics, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to reduce/remove or avoid such impact? (maximum 500 words)**

*If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse/negative impact in relation to persons with one or more particular protected characteristics, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to reduce/remove or avoid such impact? (maximum 500 words)*

There were **949** responses to this part of the question.

**What is your sex?**

*What is your sex?*



Option	Total	Percent
Male	1037	31.37%
Female	2037	61.62%
Prefer not to say	151	4.57%
Not Answered	81	2.45%

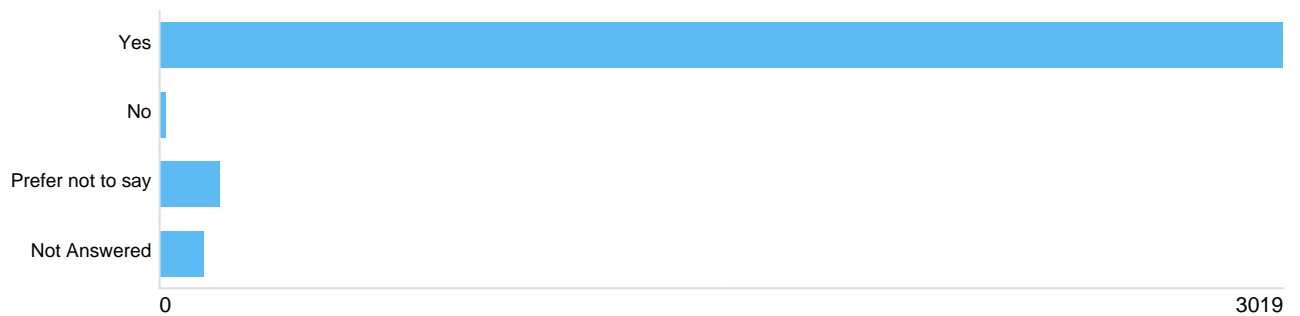
**If you prefer to define your sex in another way, please write that below**

*If you prefer to define your sex in another way, please write that below*

There were **73** responses to this part of the question.

**Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**

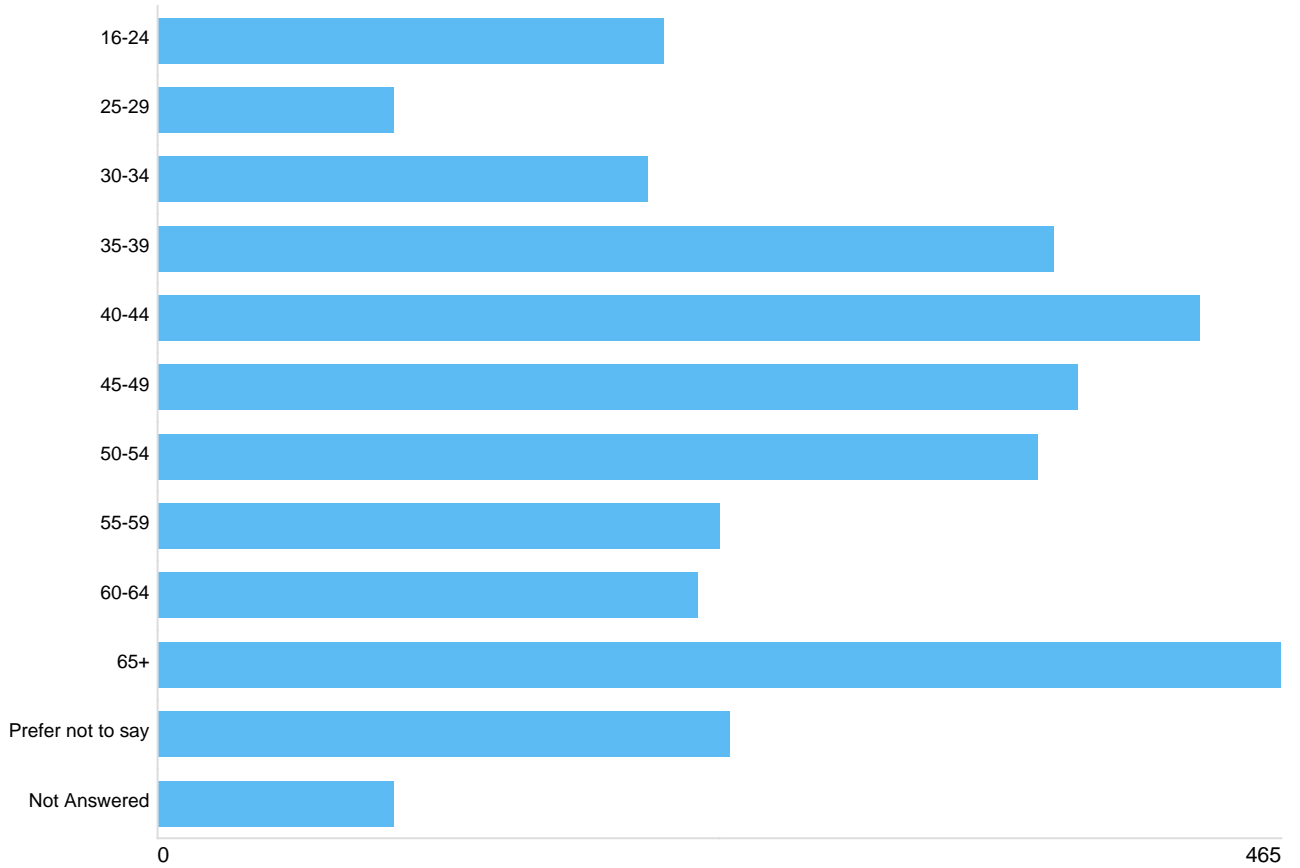
*Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?*



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	3019	91.32%
No	12	0.36%
Prefer not to say	160	4.84%
Not Answered	115	3.48%

**What is your age?**

*What is your age?*



Option	Total	Percent
16-24	209	6.32%
25-29	97	2.93%
30-34	202	6.11%
35-39	370	11.19%
40-44	431	13.04%
45-49	380	11.49%
50-54	364	11.01%
55-59	232	7.02%
60-64	223	6.75%
65+	465	14.07%
Prefer not to say	236	7.14%
Not Answered	97	2.93%

**Do you consider yourself to be disabled?**

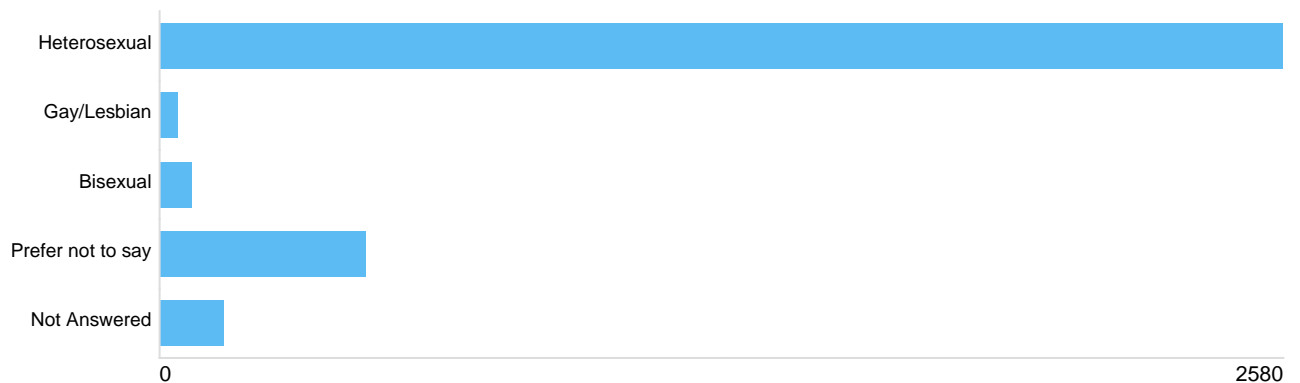
*Do you consider yourself to be disabled?*



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	203	6.14%
No	2834	85.72%
Prefer not to say	162	4.90%
Not Answered	107	3.24%

**What is your sexual orientation?**

*What is your sexual orientation?*



Option	Total	Percent
Heterosexual	2580	78.04%
Gay/Lesbian	38	1.15%
Bisexual	73	2.21%
Prefer not to say	472	14.28%
Not Answered	143	4.33%

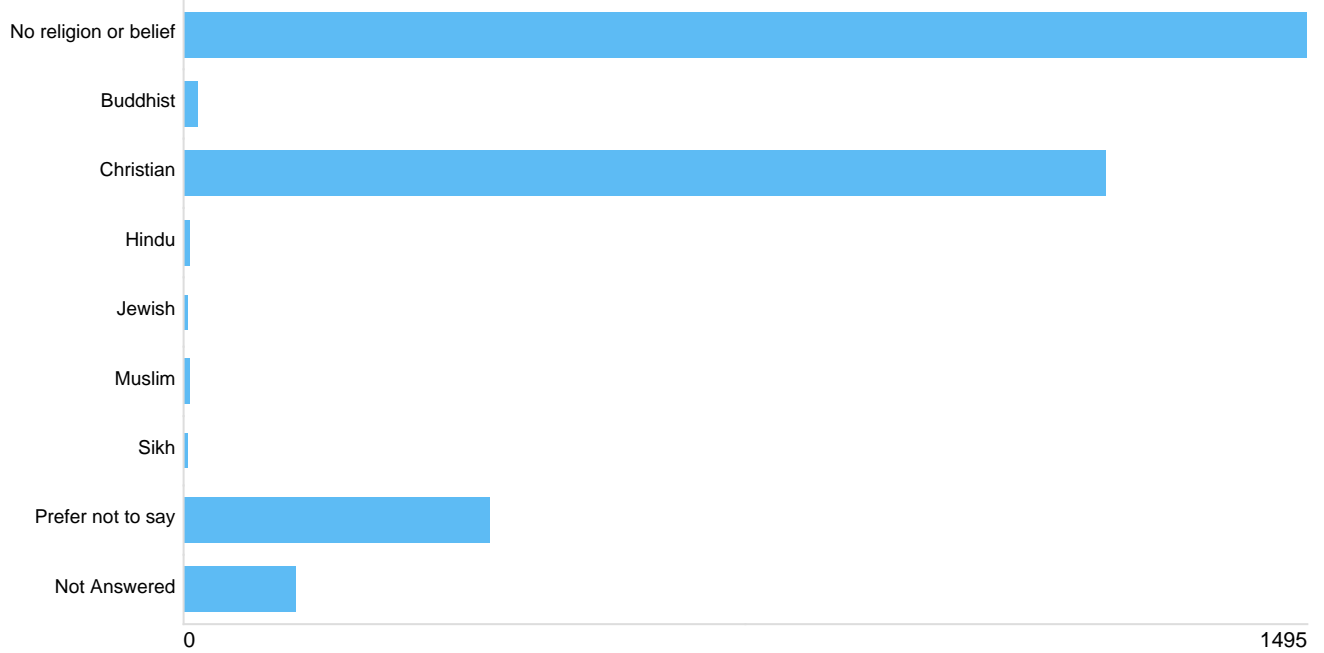
**If you prefer to identify your sexual orientation in another way, please write that below:**

*If you prefer to identify your sexual orientation in another way, please write that below:*

There were 65 responses to this part of the question.

**What is your religion or belief?**

*What is your religion or belief?*



Option	Total	Percent
No religion or belief	1495	45.22%
Buddhist	17	0.51%
Christian	1225	37.05%
Hindu	6	0.18%
Jewish	3	0.09%
Muslim	6	0.18%
Sikh	1	0.03%
Prefer not to say	406	12.28%
Not Answered	147	4.45%

**If other religion or belief, please write that below:**

*If other religion or belief, please write that below:*

There were **80** responses to this part of the question.

**Are you pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 26 weeks?**

*Are you pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 26 weeks?*





Option	Total	Percent
Pregnant	35	1.06%
Had a baby in the last 26 weeks	49	1.48%
Not Answered	3222	97.46%

### Asian or Asian British

#### Asian or Asian British



Option	Total	Percent
Indian	9	0.27%
Pakistani	4	0.12%
Bangladeshi	5	0.15%
Chinese	12	0.36%
Not Answered	3276	99.09%

### Any other Asian background, please write that below:

#### Any other Asian background, please write that below:

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

### Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

#### Black, African, Caribbean or Black British



Option	Total	Percent
African	17	0.51%
Caribbean	7	0.21%
Not Answered	3282	99.27%

### Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, please write that below:

#### Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, please write that below

There were 23 responses to this part of the question.

## Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

### Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups



Option	Total	Percent
White and Black Caribbean	20	0.60%
White and Black African	11	0.33%
White and Asian	37	1.12%
Not Answered	3238	97.94%

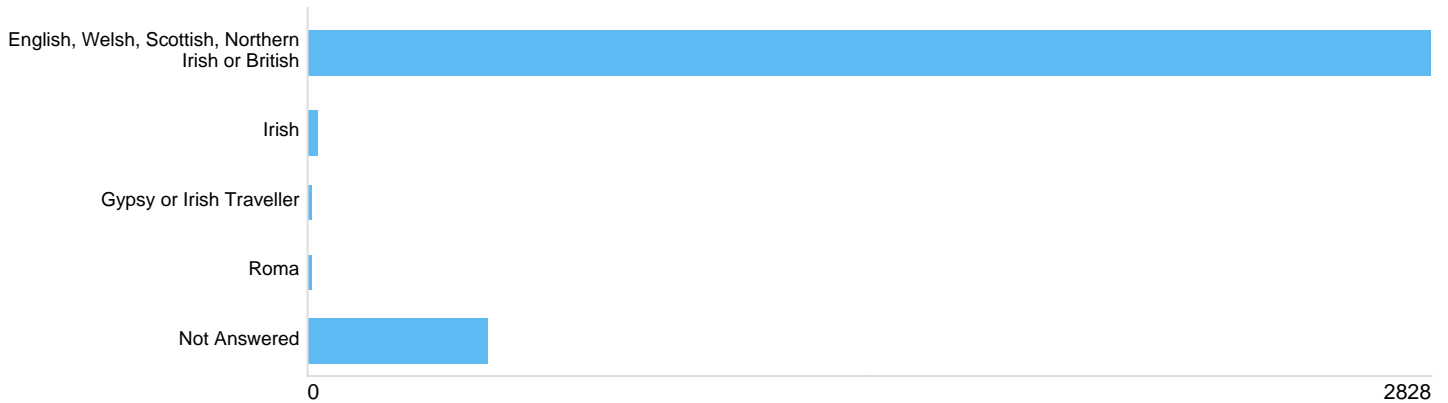
### Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background please write that below:

#### Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background please write that below:

There were 31 responses to this part of the question.

## White

### White



Option	Total	Percent
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	2828	85.54%
Irish	21	0.64%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	5	0.15%
Roma	3	0.09%
Not Answered	449	13.58%

### Any other White background, please write that below:

#### Any other White background, please write that below:

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

## Other ethnic group

### *Other ethnic group*



Option	Total	Percent
Arab	5	0.15%
Prefer not to say	98	2.96%
Not Answered	3203	96.88%

### **Any other ethnic group, please write that below:**

#### ***Any other ethnic group, please write that below:***

There were **28** responses to this part of the question.

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## Uckfield Leisure Centre - Summary of Equality Impacts

The council has duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) to pay ‘due regard’ to the impact of proposals where these may disproportionately affect people because of their legally protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>. In order to identify any such impacts and to assess whether negative impacts can be avoided or reduced, an initial assessment of equality impacts was undertaken and as a result two specific questions were asked in the consultation to invite perspectives on this<sup>2</sup>. In making a final decision on the options proposed, Members are required to pay rigorous and proportionate attention to the duties set out in of the Equality Act and this equality information, and to consider it alongside all the other factors and information related to these proposals.

The following equality impacts were identified in the council assessment and by respondents to the consultation survey:

- Problems with transport to other facilities:
  - Buses too expensive or infrequent service, potentially disproportionately impacting on younger and older people, disabled people and carers, and parents.
  - Barriers for non-drivers, with potential disproportionate impacts as above, on younger and older people and disabled people.
- Impacts of closure on physical and emotional well-being, with specific potential impacts on disabled people (both in relation to physical and mental health), older people (in relation to physical and mental health and social isolation) and younger people (especially disabled children and those with SEN and/or who are neurodivergent).
- Negative impacts of increasing loneliness and isolation (specifically older and disabled people, but potentially for people sharing all characteristics, especially after the increased pressures of Covid-19). The leisure centre was described as a place where people from a range of backgrounds could socialise.
- Specific impacts were noted as possible for women who may have more caring responsibilities and limited time and/or income to access alternate venues.
- The benefits of swimming were highlighted as a low impact exercise, especially for older and disabled people with limited mobility and/or joint pain, and during pregnancy. People with these characteristics were also highlighted as potentially being more likely to have problems with transport to other venues. The evidenced benefits of swimming on self-confidence, especially to women and girls was also noted.

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<sup>1</sup> The legally protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.

<sup>2</sup> The two questions were: “Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the dryside and/or wetside facilities to the community, or the alternative options identified above, would or may particularly affect persons sharing any of the following “protected characteristics” [they were then listed]” and “If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse/negative impact in relation to persons with one or more particular protected characteristics, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to reduce/remove or avoid such impact?”

- The national curriculum requirement to provide swimming instruction in Key Stage 1 or 2 was noted, particularly impacting younger people. Swimming was identified as an invaluable life skill, especially for children, as well as good for exercise.
- The pool was identified as being better for young people with SEND and/or who are neurodivergent than larger alternative facilities, as it is quieter. It was also noted that change and longer travel times can be very challenging for children and young people with SEND and/or those who are neurodivergent. Its facilities for disabled people (hoist, accessible toilets and changing facilities) were also noted to be better than alternatives.
- Sessions at the pool had been specifically aimed at older and younger people, as well as post-natal classes and mindfulness sessions, and removal of those was seen as a specific loss, especially where alternate activities are limited locally.
- The impacts on people living on low incomes was also noted, as limiting the ability to travel to other venues.

Impacts are identified in relation to a number of the legally protected characteristics: age (older and young people), disability (mental, physical, sensory and neurodiversity), pregnancy/maternity, and sex (women).

Mitigations identified if the centre is closed include the following:

- The national curriculum requirement to provide swimming instruction in Key Stage 1 or 2 remains a duty on schools. This can be delivered at other local facilities.

Respondents also proposed the following which would require further agreement or action by other organisations:

- better provision/council subsidy of bus routes or a shuttle bus to alternate venues (although this was noted not to overcome all the barriers),
- improving facilities at other venues and ensuring that they are fully accessible and inclusive to everyone,
- some suggested ways of increasing funding (such as Lottery bids, raising entry costs, room hire),
- guaranteed lessons and sessions at alternate venues for those enrolled at Uckfield (again noted not to address all barriers), or
- simply not closing the leisure centre (the vast majority of responses proposed this).

In terms of consultation responses, respondents were asked to complete an equality monitoring form.

- More women responded to the consultation than men: 62% women, 31% men, and less than 1% defined in another way. 7% chose not to say.
- Less than 1% of people defined as transgender;
- People from a wide range of age ranges responded to the questions: almost half of all responses came from people aged 35-54 (a total of 46% of respondents). Age breakdown:
  - 16-24: 6%
  - 25-29: 3%

- 30-34: 6%
  - 35-29: 11%
  - 40-44: 13%
  - 45-49: 12%
  - 50-54: 11%
  - 55-59: 7%
  - 60-64: 7%
  - 65+: 14%
  - 10% preferred not to say.
- Of those who answered the question, 6% said they were disabled, which is lower than the Wealden Census 2021 figure of 15.7%. 8% chose not to say.
  - 3% of respondents identified as being lesbian, gay or bisexual: approximately in line with the Census 2021 figure for Wealden. 18% chose not to say.
  - In relation to religion, 45% had no religion; 37% had a religion; and 17% preferred not to say.
  - 2% said they were pregnant or had had a baby in the last 26 weeks.
  - In relation to ethnicity, 86% identified as being White British (Wealden: 91.8%); 0.9% identified as being from a different white ethnicity (Wealden: 4.3%); 1% were Asian/Asian British (Wealden: 1.4%); 0.7% were Black/Black British (Wealden: 0.4%); 2% were from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds (Wealden: 1.7%); and 0.2% were Arab (Wealden: 0.1%). 3% preferred not to say.

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