

Report to: Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

Date of meeting: 16 April 2024

By: Chief Operating Officer

Title: Joint Use Agreement relating to Battle Area Sports Centre, Battle

Purpose: To seek approval for the Council to enter into a 4-year Joint Use Agreement with Rother District Council relating to Battle Area Sports Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- 1) Approve the Council entering into a Joint Use Agreement with Rother District Council to facilitate ongoing curriculum and community use of the Sports Centre facilities at Battle Area Sports Centre for a 4-year period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028; and
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of the Joint Use Agreement and to carry out all actions necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.
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1 Background

- 1.1 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) holds a Joint Use (JU) portfolio, comprising 10 assets. The majority of these JUs relate to the use of the facilities by schools for delivery of the curriculum and by the wider community outside of the curriculum hours. Each asset has a Joint Use Agreement (JUA), which is a legal document setting out roles and responsibilities for operational use in addition to specific partners' share of ongoing property costs.
- 1.2 The respective assets are run and managed by a wide range of partners including the County Council, as well as District and Borough Councils, Town Councils and community groups. Operational and financial costs are shared in agreed proportions between the partners. The level of day-to-day maintenance and capital investment required by each of the partners also forms part of the arrangements.
- 1.3 Battle Sports Centre has a JUA between ESCC and Rother District Council (RDC) dated January 1986. RDC funded and constructed the original building on ESCC land on the Claverham Community College site. The key aim of the JUA was the delivery of both the school curriculum and provision for the wider local community.
- 1.4 The original JUA at Battle Sports Centre was varied in 2015 and expired on 31 March 2024. The variation was needed because of the conversion of the squash courts to a dance studio, alongside the installation of a new fitness facility. There was also a new College 3G all-weather pitch constructed which is run and managed via the Sports Centre during the community use hours.
- 1.5 A temporary agreement was put in place from March 2023 until March 2024 whilst all partners worked to agree a new JUA.
- 1.6 There is a Battle Area Sports Centre (BASC) Management Committee in place with representation from ESCC, RDC, Battle Town Council and Claverham Community College which meets annually to oversee the operational arrangements.

- 1.7 RDC have now completed their Health and Well-being: Leisure Facilities Strategy 2022-2023 review across Rother district. This strategy sets out RDC support for facilities in Battle and to focus partners to renew the JUA.
- 1.8 The partners have now reviewed the current arrangements and financial contributions, and all parties have agreed in principle to a new 4-year JUA. If approved by the Lead Member, the new JUA will cover the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2028. The proposed term of the new JUA is shorter than the original JUA term. The parties will continue to work to ensure that the facilities remain sustainable whilst recognising wider constraints in public sector funding over the medium-term future. The financial terms are outlined in the exempt report later on the agenda.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 Battle Area Sports Centre is situated within the grounds of Claverham Community College. The College has exclusive daily use of the facilities with community use at evenings, weekends and holiday periods.
- 2.2 The facilities available for community use are:
- Large Sports Hall;
 - Fitness Suite;
 - Dance Studio;
 - Netball / Tennis Courts;
 - Activity Studio / indoor climbing wall;
 - Changing facilities;
 - Outdoor field areas;
 - 3G pitch.
- 2.3 The Sports Centre has managed the community operation to minimise disruption very successfully during the recent Department for Education (DFE) funded new College rebuild programme which was completed in September 2023. The netball/tennis courts were closed during the build programme and there was reduced car parking provision. All facilities are now fully reinstated as the final building works have been completed.

Financial Implications

- 2.4 The terms and conditions of the new JUA will remain broadly the same as the original JUA (as amended by a 2015 Deed of Variation).

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The ongoing community use of the sports centre is of benefit to the residents of the local and wider area. The parties have agreed in principle to enter into a new Joint Use Agreement on substantially the same terms as the previous agreement, albeit the length of the new agreement shall be four years.
- 3.2 The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is therefore recommended to:
- approve a 4-year JUA between ESCC and RDC to continue provision for community use of Battle Sports Centre, including the 3G pitch, whilst retaining curriculum provision for Claverham Community College; and
 - 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 joint use agreement and associated documentation.
- 3.3 If the Lead Member agrees the recommendations in 3.2 above, officers will work with RDC and Claverham Community College to finalise the JUA.

ROS PARKER
Chief Operating Officer

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Kathryn Field, Battle and Crowhurst

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None