

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

**Date of meeting:** 25 September 2025

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

**Title:** Playing field adjacent to the Tilling Green Community Centre – outcome of the public consultation of the Council’s proposed disposal of the land

**Purpose:** To consider the responses to the public notice of the Council’s intention to dispose of the land and to consider the options for the next steps.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- 1) Note the summary of the responses to the public notice of the Council’s intention to dispose of the site;
- 2) Approve that the site is to be marketed on the open market by an appointed marketing agent; and
- 3) Approve the exercise of the Landlord’s option to break the lease relating to the site at an appropriate time.

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## **1 Background**

1.1 On 22 April 2025, the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change approved that the Council commence consultation under Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 to dispose of the playing field adjacent to the Tilling Green Community Centre, Rye (the site). A record of the decision can be found here: [Decision - Playing Field Adjacent to the Tilling Green Community Centre, Rye | East Sussex County Council](#)

1.2 The consultation focussed on the intention to dispose of the playing field adjacent to Tilling Green Community Centre. There is no intention to dispose of Tilling Green Community Centre.

1.3 The site is subject to a lease that includes a rolling Landlord break option.

1.4 The site is allocated for housing in the Rye Neighbourhood Plan, the latest version of which can be found here: [Rye Neighbourhood Plan – Rye Town Council](#). It is considered to be appropriate for the development of at least 20 dwellings, subject to various considerations. The community centre is to be retained in-situ.

1.5 The Rye Neighbourhood Plan has recently been subject to public consultation, which closed on 21 July 2025.

1.6 The site is identified in Appendix 1 to this report.

## 2 Supporting Information

2.1 There is a statutory duty imposed by Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 to advertise a proposed disposal of Public Open Space and to consider any objections made. In accordance with this duty, the Council gave public notice of the intention to dispose of the playing field. A notice was placed in the Hastings Observer for Rye for 2 consecutive weeks on 23 May 2025 and on 30 May 2025, giving a deadline of 16 June 2025 for objections to be made. Notices were positioned around the boundaries of the playing field. A notice was also available to view online on the Public Notice portal here: [Notice near TN31 7BE from Sussex World](#).

2.2 Four written responses were received. All responses were acknowledged by the Council as soon as possible after receipt. Correspondence has been sent to each person that contacted the Council, to notify them of the date of the Lead Member meeting where this report is to be considered and to advise that a decision is to be made.

2.3 Broadly, 2 of the responses were supportive and 2 of the responses were not supportive of the intention to dispose of the site.

2.4 The general theme of the objections is summarised below:

- Tilling Green does not need more houses, it needs a community space which people can use;
- If developed, there would be a further burden on the roads, infrastructure and flood risks in the area.

2.5 The 2 responses received in support of the intention to dispose of the site acknowledged that the site was allocated for housing in the Rye Neighbourhood Plan and outlined a preference for the site to be developed as affordable housing.

2.6 In light of the responses, the following options have been identified for the site:

- **Option 1:** To retain ownership of the site and not exercise the Landlord's break option to bring the existing lease on it to an end.
- **Option 2:** To market the site for sale on the open market and to exercise the Landlord's break option to bring the existing lease on it to an end at an appropriate time.

2.7 Option 1 maintains the current use as playing fields associated with the Community Centre, but means that a key site identified for housing in Rye is not brought forward.

2.8 A number of organisations have publicly expressed an interest in developing the site for housing. If Option 2 is progressed, it is recommended that the site is marketed on the open market to ensure a fair and transparent disposal process. Given the site allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered to be most likely that offers will be received from developers wishing to build housing on the site. The site will be marketed for an appropriate amount of time, with offers invited by a given deadline. Offers received will be considered by the Lead Member at a future decision-making meeting.

2.9 Development of the site will be subject to the grant of planning permission. Rother District Council, as the local Planning Authority, will ensure that matters raised by local residents, as set out in paragraph 2.4 above, will be considered as part of the public consultation stage of the planning process, once a planning application has been submitted for approval. Matters such as Local Plan Policy compliance, drainage, access, development density, design and affordable housing provision, environmental and highways impacts will be considered during such a planning process before any development scheme is granted planning permission.

2.10 The Council has a duty to dispose of assets for the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained, in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, unless the Secretary of State consents to the disposal. General consent from the Secretary of State is given to local authorities in certain specified circumstances, as outlined under Circular 06/03: Local Government Act 1972 general disposal consent (England) 2003 (disposal of land for less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained).

2.11 It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member approves Option 2, i.e. to market the site for sale on the open market and to exercise the Landlord's break option to bring the existing lease on the site to an end at an appropriate time.

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

3.1 The Council has considered the outcome of the responses from members of the public concerning the intention to dispose of the site, as summarised in this report. The feedback on the proposal to dispose of the site is balanced in terms of the numbers for and against. The Lead Member is recommended to note the feedback, as set out in this report.

3.2 As set out above, in the absence of consent from the Secretary of State, the Council is obliged under s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to dispose of assets at the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. In addition, the proposal to dispose of this land will support the likely provision of housing in the local area. The Lead Member is therefore recommended to approve that the site be marketed for sale on the open market.

3.3 In order to dispose of the Site, it will be necessary to exercise the Landlord's option to break the existing lease relating to the site. The Lead Member is therefore recommended to approve that, at a time that is considered to be appropriate, the Council exercises the Landlord's option to break the existing lease on the site.

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

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### **LOCAL MEMBERS**

Councillor Keith Glazier OBE – Rye and Eastern Rother

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Copies of all responses received

Copy of notices placed in the Hastings Observer for Rye