

**Minutes of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee
11 March 2025**

Present:

Councillor S.M. Doran (Chair)
Councillor O. Rybinski (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M. Arnold	S.A. Dunn	K.M. Grant
C. Bateson	R.V. Geach	A. Mathur

Apologies: Councillors M.M. Attewell and L.H. Brennan

17/25 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

18/25 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

19/25 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

20/25 Forward Plan

The Committee noted the **Forward Plan**.

21/25 Leisure Centres Operating Contract Update

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Lead, Leisure on the governance arrangements and reporting mechanisms for the leisure centres contract monitoring. The report outlined that the leisure operator was required to produce an annual plan, monthly and quarterly monitoring reports. To ensure transparency and accountability, a report covering the first six months

of the contract for Sunbury Leisure Centre and Eclipse Leisure Centre will be presented to the Committee in June 2025, with annual reports thereafter. Key performance indicators and financial performance will be monitored monthly by the contract monitoring group and quarterly by the Strategic Partnership Board. Regular reporting will help maintain standards and provide members with confidence in contract management.

The Committee requested a brief update on outstanding operational issues with the Eclipse Leisure Centre such as concerns with small pool which was not yet open. The Strategic Lead Leisure advised that the initially appointed contractor would be responsible for conducting any repairs on the pool. The pool had been closed since opening due to safety concerns, though, the centre was fully compliant with building control regulations upon opening. It was explained by the Group Head, Community Wellbeing that any remedial costs would not be accepted as a cost to the Council. The Committee noted it would be practical to conduct any works at a time which caused the least impact to clients. It was confirmed that this was the intention, however, any works would inevitably impact clients and this would be carefully managed by sharing regular communications.

The Committee noted the strategic priority 2 on increasing engagement with specific groups to expand the number participating and the frequency of participation in sport and physical activity amongst certain groups. On this point, members queried how can this be measured for those individuals who used facilities which don't belong to the Council. The Strategic Lead, Leisure responded that the KPIs being measured were specific to Council owned Leisure Centres and outreach programmes. Kamal expanded on the outreach opportunities offered by the Eclipse Leisure Centre Operator as part of their contract. This involved working with target communities and encouraging them to engage in leisure activities.

The Committee further reflected on a report presented at the previous Committee meeting which concerned the turfed area of the leisure centre and the rooflight enclosure and requested an update on progress. The Strategic Lead Leisure confirmed that a permanent barrier had been installed around the rooflight. In consultation with the Group Head, Chair and Vice Chair of Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee a type of box hedgerow had also been agreed to be installed along the front edge of the centre adjacent to the pavement. Further to discussions with the Leisure Centre Project Team, the intention was to install this hedging at an appropriate time of the year (around the summertime) to ensure best conditions and maintenance of the shrub. In one corner of the centre, a banner advising on car parking arrangements had already been installed to obstruct clients from cutting across part of the grass area.

The Committee questioned when it was expected for the leisure centre to start generating profit for the Council. The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that in consideration of current operational issues and the need to offset these costs, it was likely we would reach a breakeven position by the one year anniversary

of the centre opening and thereafter significant and rising contributions would be made to the revenue budget year on year.

Separately, the Strategic Lead Leisure also updated on the news that Eclipse Leisure Centre had been shortlisted as a finalist in the green building and infrastructure project of the year as part of the edie awards. This was an important achievement which was indicative of all the hard work put into this project.

The Committee **resolved** that they had considered the information on the arrangements for leisure centres contract monitoring.

22/25 Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

The Committee considered a report which proposed the adoption of a new Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to address issues such as the anti-social use of cycles, e-bikes, e-scooters and similar devices, the use of face coverings to conceal identify during anti-social behaviour, and the possession and use of catapults. The PSPO aimed to enhance public safety, reduce intimidation, and prevent damage to property and cruelty to animals. Following a public consultation with strong support, the intention was for the PSPO to run for an initial three-year period, with regular monitoring and enforcement to ensure compliance. The Committee was asked to adopt the proposed PSPO to provide legal powers for effective management of these issues.

Key points of discussion by members included commendations for the Community Safety team's efforts in progressing the PSPO proposal, suggestions for effective communication with youths through schools, and the importance of partnership action days and joint patrols with police. Concerns were raised about public arrest powers, how anti-social behaviour on bicycles was determined and the challenges of identifying offenders, particularly youths. The Community Safety Officer noted all points, clarifying that only authorised officers would have the powers to issue a fixed penalty notice or escalate the breach of the PSPO to prosecution. Cooperation with police and the use of CCTV in obtaining evidence would be essential, especially when identifying offenders wearing face coverings. The Community Safety Officer also mentioned that the PSPO would only apply to over 15 year olds, however there were plans for legislation to lower the age limit in the future. As an alternative measure, younger individuals and their parents would be issued community protection warnings.

The Committee **resolved** to adopt the proposed Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order.

23/25 Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which was a statutory

requirement to be published every five years. Following extensive public consultation and data analysis, the strategy outlined three key priorities: partnership working to tackle homelessness, identifying opportunities to address housing needs, and proactive homelessness prevention with an effective service response. The strategy was supported by a detailed action plan and had received strong public support. The Committee was asked to approve the strategy to ensure compliance with statutory duties and to address housing challenges effectively. The strategy would go live shortly subject to approval and making further graphic enhancements.

In consideration of upcoming Local Government Reorganisations plans, the Assistant Strategic Housing Lead also updated that any progress or actions associated with the strategy would be transferred to the new unitary body. In the meantime, officers would deliver as many of the strategic priorities as possible.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

24/25 Exclusion of public and press

It was proposed by Councillor Arnold, seconded by Councillor Bateson and **resolved** to exclude the public and press in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

25/25 Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 3 Extension Update

26/25 Urgent Item- Outline to the Renters Rights Bill

The Principal Environmental Health Officer presented to the Committee a verbal update on the Renters Rights Bill which was currently going through the parliamentary process, due to be implemented later this year and was the most significant housing legislation in 40 years, aiming to improve security, standards and enforcement in the private rented sector. Key provisions included ending Section 21 evictions, introducing a Decent Homes Standard for private rentals, and establishing a Private Rented Sector Database and Ombudsman. The Bill also addressed rental discrimination, rent increases, and the practice of rental bidding. Enforcement measures included civil penalties for non-compliance and expanded investigatory powers for local councils. The Bill was expected to be implemented swiftly, with new burdens funding to support Council enforcement duties.

During the discussion, members of the Committee welcomed the bill, highlighting its potential to support renters in Spelthorne, noting the long term benefits in avoiding emergency homelessness situations and improving housing stock. Concerns were however raised about the impact of this bill on the committee's budget, questioning if there was provision for extra Environmental Health staff and if government funding will be sufficient. The

Deputy Chief Executive noted the lack of clarity around funding, with some funding expected in the upcoming financial years. The need to respond quickly to key changes was also emphasised, with a suggestion to draw down reserves to accommodate additional resources if necessary. The Group Head, Place Protection and Prosperity mentioned that tenancy reform and enforcement will be prioritised first. The Committee requested that an additional paper be brought back to a future committee to demonstrate how the bill will work in practice once passed, to which officers agreed they will involve Councillors by sharing relevant updates. The setting up of a project board at a corporate level was also mentioned, which would involve multiple services to assist in the redesigning of processes and procedures.

The Committee **resolved** to agree that they had considered the update to the Renters Rights Bill.

Meeting ended at 20:18