

## Committee Report Checklist

**Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.**

### **Stage 1**

#### **Report checklist – responsibility of report owner**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Date</b>
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	<b>Y</b>	<b>15/8/25</b>
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	<b>Y</b>	<b>30/7/25</b>
Relevant Group Head review	<b>Y</b>	<b>13/08/25</b>
MAT+ review (to have been circulated <b>at least 5 working days before Stage 2</b> )		
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee		
	<b>Reviewed by</b>	
Risk comments		
Legal comments	<b>J Clare</b>	<b>26/8/25</b>
HR comments (if applicable)	N/A	

**For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.**

**Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.**

### **Stage 2**

#### **Report checklist – responsibility of report owner**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Date</b>
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>	<b>Linda Heron</b>	<b>22/8/25</b>
S151 Officer commentary – at least <b>5 working days before MAT</b>	<b>Terry Collier</b>	<b>19/8/25</b>
Confirm final report cleared by MAT		<b>2/9/25</b>



# Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

**Date of meeting – 30 September 2025**

<b>Title</b>	Safeguarding Children and Adults at Eclipse Leisure Centre and operational matters
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee/Council
<b>Report Author</b>	<i>Lisa Stonehouse</i>
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	<i>No</i>
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Community
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consider and approve Option 1 as set out in Section 3 of this report relating to the teaching pool viewing area.</li><li>2. Consider and approve Option 4 as set out in Section 3 of this report in relation to the leisure centre operating contract relating to the availability of showers.</li></ol>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<p>A decision is required as to whether the 'Places Leisure' existing safeguarding policies and procedures are adequate to ensure the safety of children and adults at risk, or whether additional physical measures are required.</p> <p>A decision is required as to whether the existing arrangement between the council and 'Places Leisure' should continue regarding the provision of showers for homeless people.</p>

## 1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>An update regarding the Places Leisure Contract was provided to the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee (CWHC) on 03/06/2025. A few councillors raised concerns that members of the public can access the teaching pool viewing area and main viewing area without passing through a security gate, which they believe could be a safeguarding risk. New access control restrictions on individual door will have practical implications for the public. New security gates/re modelling the lobby area will have a significant cost implication.</i></li><li><i>The leisure contract specifies that “The operator shall offer to those identified by the Local Authority as homeless free access to the showers at the Facilities”. In this context, ‘homeless’ means street homeless.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk is of crucial importance. Concerns must always be investigated to determine if there is a risk to children, young people or adults at risk and whether the risk could be minimised.</i></li><li><i>The requirement for the leisure operator to offer showers for street homeless people was recently raised as a concern by a member of the public to a Cllr.</i></li></ul>
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>A decision from the Committee is required to confirm whether Councillors are satisfied with the current safeguarding policy and procedural arrangements at the leisure centre or whether they would like to recommend additional physical security controls. The advantages and disadvantages of both will be considered.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Once the Committee has considered all the advantages, disadvantages and risks, a decision will be made and a recommendation will be made to Council.</i></li></ul>

## 2. Key issues

- 2.1 An update regarding the ‘Places Leisure’ Contract was provided at Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee (CWHC) on 3 June 2025. A few councillors raised concerns that the viewing areas for the teaching pool

and children's splash pad are accessible to the public without passing through a security gate which they believe could be a safeguarding risk.

- 2.2 A concern was separately raised by a councillor about street homeless people being referred from housing to 'Places Leisure' for a shower.
- 2.3 Under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004, commissioned services must comply with safeguarding legislation and good practice. 'Places Leisure' are the commissioned leisure operator for Spelthorne Borough Council.
- 2.4 'Places Leisure' are commissioned by Spelthorne Borough Council to operate both 'Eclipse' and Sunbury Leisure Centres. Under Section 11 of the Children's Act, commissioned services must comply with safeguarding legislation and good practice. 'Places Leisure' have comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures in place to keep children and adults at risk safe (Appendix A-E), which are led by the group safeguarding team who set standards, conduct audits and deliver training. The Senior Safeguarding Team for each area meet regularly to review incidents and discuss good practice. Each contract has a Designated Safeguarding Lead in Spelthorne this is the Contract Manager. An external specialist child protection consultant with a background as a police detective working in complex child protection cases provides expertise.
- 2.5 All staff have Disclosure and Barring checks in accordance with the legislation and mandatory safeguarding training. Further training is provided dependent on the role. 'React, Record and Report' is one of the key messages within the training and all staff are aware of when to report and how to report issues of concern. The pool attendants, swim teachers are particularly observant of the surroundings when children and young people are in the pool and always raise issues of concern. The viewing areas are in a clear line of sight of both pools. Proactive access control checks is another crucial role that staff undertake throughout the centre. Spelthorne Borough Council monitor the contract and randomly select to view training and DBS records to ensure that policies and procedures are being followed. 'Places Leisure' immediately report safeguarding incidents to Surrey Safeguarding and notify Spelthorne Borough Council. Spelthorne Borough Council monitor these procedures via regular contract monitoring.
- 2.6 The teaching pool and splash pad viewing area is self-contained and there is no physical access to pool side. The main pool, teaching pool and splash pad are also visible from the main pool tiered seating albeit much further away. There is no physical access to pool side from the tiered seating. The main pool is also visible from two locations on the first- floor corridor.
- 2.7 Both the teaching pool and main pool are surrounded by external windows meaning that the pools are visible from outside the centre. The lifeguards who have all undergone the mandatory safeguarding training have a clear view of people in the spectator areas and therefore would notice and report people of concern. 'Places Leisure' have closed the blinds on the external windows on a few occasions as ladies doing aqua aerobics requested this.
- 2.8 A membership card is required to access both swimming pools, pool changing, sports hall, gym and the group exercise studios. Using a membership card to access a door or gate gives some added security but still relies on the vigilance of users and staff to prevent 'tail gating' which can

often be a problem at leisure centres. The dry side viewing area (1st floor corridor), main pool tiered seating viewing area (1st floor) reception, café, and clip and climb are accessible to members of the public without requiring a membership card to go through the gates. The roof area/football pitches are locked unless a booking has been made.

- 2.9 GT3 designed this state-of-the-art facility with the specific intention of being able to view the activities from the café and foyer area. Other architects have designed similar facilities.
- 2.10 The following local leisure centres have café's or foyers where customers can view the teaching and main pools without passing through any security gates:-

Xcel Leisure Centre, Walton (Operated by Places Leisure)

Egham Orbit (Operated by Achieve Lifestyle)

Camberley Leisure Centre (Operated by Places Leisure)

Wokingham Leisure Centre (Operated by Places Leisure)

Eastleigh Leisure Centre (Operated by Places Leisure)

Malden Centre, New Malden (Operated by Places Leisure)

Loddon Valley Leisure Centre, Earley, Reading (Operated by Places Leisure)

This is also the case at the following Everyone Active operated leisure centres (the former Spelthorne Leisure Centre operator) in the Southeast:

Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, St Albans

Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre

Holly Hill Leisure Centre, Southampton

Taro Leisure Centre, Petersfield

Westcroft Leisure Centre, Carshalton

- 2.11 'Places Leisure' were asked to provide an opinion about adding access controls to the teaching pool spectator area. Their opinion is that it would be impractical and counterintuitive as they want to encourage members of the public to be able to spectate. They emphasised that access control systems are fallible, and people often hold doors open for others or people tailgate through security doors and gates. 'Places Leisure' do undertake regular access control checks, in fact whilst walking around the leisure centre making notes for the report, the report author was challenged by the Duty Manager after staff raised concerns.
- 2.12 The ground floor viewing area is ventilated by the same air handling unit as the reception/café area. It takes in air at external temperatures and circulates it, but it does not cool the air. The room can be warmed during the winter. In the summer, the ventilation strategy for this room is to open the external

escape door, meaning that an access restriction on the internal door would be ineffective.

- 2.13 It may be possible to add access control needs to the teaching pool spectator area, but it is likely that access would only be possible for those with a booking in the pool. e.g. parent of a child taking part in a swim activity. There may also be fire evacuation implications of doing this, which would need to be investigated further. People requiring the use of the room for other reasons, e.g. a child with special needs or a parent needing a quiet space for a child would have to make a request to the leisure centre team, which would have an impact on their time. The external escape door being opened on hot days does however mean that the access control would be ineffective. A Leisure Centre Manager informed the report author that this ground floor viewing area is popular with parents of Special Educational Needs and those with small children who often choose this room to sit away from the noise in the foyer/ café area. There have been some comments from parents about the area being quite close to the teaching pool.
- 2.14 The Lammas Splash Park is in Lammas Park, Staines. Children using this facility are dressed in swim wear. The Splash Park is surrounded by fencing and a gate. There are no access controls. The area surrounding the splash park is accessible to all members of the public with no restrictions.
- 2.15 The Leisure Centre CCTV covers the area from the front entrance to the reception desk, which includes the entrance to the teaching pool. There is no CCTV in the teaching pool viewing area. The main pool tiered seating is covered by the poolside CCTV and the first-floor corridors also have CCTV. The Eclipse team are able to playback CCTV footage for up to 30 days after an incident and download any footage to their encrypted USB if it is required. Practical actions such as regular access control checks and deterrents such as the CCTV all help to create a safe environment.
- 2.16 The former Spelthorne Leisure Centre had turnstiles and a gate at the main reception desk, but if people requested to use the café or toilets, they would be let through the turnstiles. Both pools could be viewed via the café's. There were safeguarding incidents committed at the former leisure centre by people who were legitimately in the leisure centre for an activity.
- 2.17 The architect's (GT3's) view is that "the building layout as designed should provide no concerns relating to safeguarding issues as long as appropriate access control measures on doors and CCTV coverage of key spaces are fully implemented. This, alongside appropriate management on site by the leisure operator, would fully address any concerns or issues that may have arisen since the building opened"
- 2.18 The Spelthorne Borough Council Chief Executive asked GT3 to look at possible draft options for the 'Eclipse' Leisure Centre entrance area. They proposed that the existing fire escape door within the café area could be used as the main entrance and the existing entrance as the fire escape door. It also includes installation of a new turnstile/gate that people would use to access the upper level of the building and the teaching pool viewing area. (Appendix G). GT3 state that this proposal would require a fire engineer review to confirm viability as to whether these turnstiles/gates are permitted to be within the key escape route for the building. They estimate that the capital

cost of the work would be in excess of £500,000. Willmott Dixon (the building contractors) have already indicated that they would not be interested in carrying out further work on the centre.

- 2.19 'Places leisure' did not have an influence on the design of the building and believe that a new entrance lobby could be considered, but emphasised that access control systems are fallible and their regular access control checks and CCTV all help to deter criminal activity. Places Leisure have not offered to fully fund the capital cost of a new entrance
  - 2.20 The Spelthorne Strategic Safeguarding Board took place on 4 July. The Chair of CWHC attended along with the Strategic and Operational Safeguarding Leads and senior managers of front-line services. The Board reviewed the safeguarding policies and procedures from 'Places Leisure' Operational Safeguarding Lead was tasked with meeting with the Leisure Centre Manager to ask further questions which were resolved (Appendix F) and writing this report.
  - 2.21 Committee is asked to consider whether further restrictions are required to the viewing areas of the Centre and the advantages/disadvantages/risks of each option or whether the current Places Leisure policies and procedures are adequate.
  - 2.22 The 'Places Leisure' operator contract states that the "Operator shall offer to those identified by the Local Authority as homeless free access to the showers at the facilities". This relates to street homeless housing clients rather than all housing clients
  - 2.23 The housing team refer people for a shower. The Housing Options manager stated that they have referred two street homeless people for showers in the last 3-4 years.
  - 2.24 One person recently raised a concern to a Cllr, but it is the only concern raised for several years.
- 3. Options appraisal and proposal**

### **Safeguarding Matters**

- 3.1 Option 1 - (proposed option) is to do nothing**
- Recognise that 'Places Leisure' have comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures in place to keep children and adults at risk safe. Further physical access restrictions are not required. The policies and procedures will be kept under periodic review.**

### **Advantages of option 1**

- 3.2 The general public can currently view the pools, easily and watch the huge range of swimming activities provided at the 'Eclipse.' In addition, the public can view dry side activities from the 1st floor corridor. There is no physical access to the children from this viewing area.
- 3.3 Viewing activities within the leisure centre encourage other people to take part. For example, a child that is nervous about swimming could be



encouraged to use the splash pad, take lessons or attend the family pool inflatable sessions when they see other children having fun. An adult reluctant to swim in the previous dated facilities at Spelthorne Leisure Centre could be tempted to use the brand-new facilities. A target within our Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to increase physical activity.

- 3.4 The viewing areas can be seen from both pools and the foyer area, which means that people of concern could be quickly spotted.

#### **Disadvantages of option 1**

- 3.5 There is always a possibility that someone with the wrong intention is viewing the pool, but this is also a risk if there were access restrictions as access restrictions can be bypassed. It is very easy to view the pool from outside the leisure centre. As mentioned previously there have been safeguarding cases that have occurred when the guilty party was legitimately in the leisure centre. The Council are not aware of any safeguarding incidents linked to viewing areas mentioned in 2.8.

- 3.6 **Option 2 - Install access restrictions on the ground floor viewing area. eg swipe access card for people with swimming bookings to deter people walking in from the street.**

#### **Advantages of option 2**

- 3.7 The risk of someone with the wrong intentions accessing this room is reduced but not eliminated.

#### **Disadvantages of option 2**

- 3.8 The 'Eclipse' is a centre intended to be accessible to the public. It would be a shame to restrict genuinely interested members of the public from viewing the pool from the ground floor.
- 3.9 In the summer, the ventilation strategy for this room is to open the fire escape door, meaning that members of the public could access the room from the outside.
- 3.10 It is likely that the access cards for this room would be for parents of children having swimming lessons.
- 3.11 'Places Leisure' say that this area is also popular with parents of Special Educational Needs and parents of small children who often choose to sit in this room to stay away from the noise in the foyer/café area whilst the child has a nap, lunch, or to sit quietly. These people would have to gain access via the leisure centre team, which is time consuming for the customer and staff

- 3.12 There are still opportunities to view both pools and the splash pad from the 1st floor corridor and the tiered seating next to the main pool, albeit from further away.
- 3.13 Any access restrictions would need to be discussed further eg the impact on fire safety etc.
- 3.14 There will be a cost to the Council as 'Places Leisure' are likely to expect the Council to fund access controls applied to the viewing area. 'Places Leisure' estimate that this may cost between 3-4k. There is currently no budget for this
- 3.15 **Option 3 – Reconfigure the main entrance as tentatively proposed by the GT3 to utilise the existing fire escape door within the café area as the main entrance and the existing entrance as the fire escape door. It also includes installation of a new turnstile/gate that people would use to access the upper level of the building and the teaching pool viewing area.**

#### **Advantages of option 3**

- 3.16 Public access would be restricted to the ground floor teaching pool viewing area and the upper levels of the building which increases security of the area.

#### **Disadvantages of option 3**

- 3.17 This may not be possible due to fire restrictions. GT3 are clear that this proposal would require a fire engineer review to confirm viability as to whether these turnstiles/gates are permitted to be within the key escape route for the building.
- 3.18 GT3 estimate that the cost of the work would be in excess of £500k which is extremely costly, especially at a time when the Council in line with the Improvement and Recovery Plan needs to make savings and reduce debt.
- 3.19 The financial implications of borrowing to cover the cost of the work are outlined in 3.20. If Committee were to decide to pursue this option the Committee would need to find offsetting savings or £47.5k per annum.

3.20

<b>Financial Implications of Borrowing £500,000</b>		
<b>Component</b>	<b>Annual Cost (£)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Interest Charges	£22,500	Based on fixed interest rate of 4.5%.
Minimum Revenue Provision	£25,000	MRP is the annual charge to repay debt over 20yrs.
<b>Total Annual Revenue Impact</b>	<b>£47,500</b>	<b>Total annual cost to revenue budget.</b>
<b>Total over 20 years</b>	<b>£950,000</b>	Excludes any changes, refinancing, or early repayment.

- 3.21 The public perception of modifying the foyer area so soon after the build is likely to be negative. The work would also involve a significant amount of disruption, which would impact on leisure centre users.
- 3.22 Willmott Dixon (build contractors) have already indicated that they would not be interested in carrying out further work on the Centre, so alternative builders would have to be procured. The council would lose the warranty on this area of the building if the works are carried out by another company.
- 3.23 There would also be a cost of covering any lost income to 'Places Leisure' whilst the works are carried out.

### **Leisure Centre Operational Matter**

- 3.24 **Option 4 - do not vary the 'Places Leisure' contract so that street homeless housing clients can continue to be referred by council housing team to the leisure centre for a shower.**

#### **3.25 Advantages of Option 4**

The contract will remain the same and showers will be available for street homeless people which is a social value benefit. There will be no legal costs in negotiating and documenting the variation and no impact on officer time in trying to secure this service elsewhere.

#### **3.26 Disadvantages of Option 4**

There may be some complaints from leisure centre members about homeless people using the showers, although there has only been one comment in several years. (Everyone Active previously offered this service for many years).

- 3.27 **Option 5 – Amend the ‘Places Leisure’ contract to remove the requirement for the leisure centre to provide the access to showers for street homeless customers.**

3.28 **Advantages of Option 5**

No risk of potential complaints from members of the centre.

3.29 **Disadvantages of Option 5**

Removing the part of the contract whereby the operator offers free access to the showers at the leisure centres could be seen as discrimination against street homeless people

**4. Risk implications**

**Safeguarding**

- 4.1 There is always a risk in a public building or space that a child or adult risk could be at risk of harm if a safeguarding incident took place. The Council’s main priority is to prevent incidents occurring, but if an incident occurred there could be both a reputational and legal risk to both the council and ‘Places Leisure’. ‘Places Leisure’ have a range of safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that staff recognise and report concerns. The Council monitor the contract to ensure that policies and procedures are being followed. ‘Places Leisure’ immediately report any incidents of concern to the council.
- 4.2 There is always a possibility that the viewing areas within the leisure centre could be used by someone with concerning intentions, this was also the case at the previous Spelthorne Leisure Centre. Measures to restrict access to the ground floor viewing area would be of limited benefit as both pools can be viewed from outside the leisure centre.
- 4.3 This type of viewing area is common in modern centres as mentioned in 2.10. The council are not aware of any safeguarding incidents linked to these types of viewing areas.
- 4.4 GT3’s view is that the building layout as designed should provide no concerns relating to safeguarding issues providing that appropriate access control measures on doors + CCTV coverage of key spaces are fully implemented. This, alongside appropriate management on site by the leisure operator.

**Leisure Centre Operational Matter**

- 4.5 Removing the part of the contract whereby the operator offers free access to the showers at the leisure centres could be seen as discrimination against street homeless people and therefore a risk of reputational damage

## 5. Financial implications

### 5.1

Option	1	2	3
<b>Work Required</b>	No action. Physical access restrictions are not required	Install access restrictions on the ground floor viewing area eg swipe card to deter people from walking in from the street.	Reconfigure the main entrance as tentatively proposed by GT3 to utilise the existing fire escape door within the café area as the main entrance and the existing entrance as the fire escape door. It also includes installation of a new turnstile/gate that people would use to access the upper level of the building and the teaching pool viewing area.
<b>Cost to the council</b>	£0 cost	'Places Leisure' estimate that it may cost between 3-4k to install this equipment. It is likely that the council would be expected to cover this cost. The Committee would be asked to explore finding offsetting savings within its budgets.	The cost is estimated to be in excess of £500k. This would require a supplementary Capital Estimate via Full Council.

## 6. Legal Comments

- 6.1 Under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 local authorities must make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Anybody carrying out the service on behalf of local authorities must have regard to this need.
- 6.2 Legal Services are to be consulted if a decision is made to vary the leisure centre operating contract. Any agreed variation is to be documented in a Deed of Variation.
- 6.3 Legal Services are to be consulted if a decision is made to procure an alternative building contractor to carry out alterations to the Eclipse Leisure Centre. There may be warranty implications if a different contractor is

appointed to carry out significant alterations to the building. Further legal advice will be required if this option is considered.

## **Corporate implications**

### **7. S151 Officer comments**

- 7.1 The financial implications will depend on which options the Committee decides to pursue. If option 2 were pursued there would be a potential cost to the Council of £3-4k. The Committee would be asked to explore finding offsetting savings within its budgets. If option 3 were pursued, then there would need to be a supplementary estimate of at least £0.5m. Given that the Council is no longer financing capital expenditure through new borrowing, the Council would need to consider how such expenditure could be financed. Unless grant funding could be secured, this would be challenging and therefore the S151 Officer would caution that from a financial perspective Option 3 would be challenging. The Council could certainly explore with Places whether they might be willing to make a matched funding contribution, on the basis that a redesigned entrance might improve their footfall.

### **8. Monitoring Officer comments**

- 8.1 The monitoring officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

### **9. Procurement comments**

- 9.1 There will be procurement considerations if either options 2 and 3 are progressed and a decision made to procure a contractor to carry out works. Any procurement exercise will be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

### **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 The 'Eclipse' Leisure Centre is a public building. All members of the public should feel welcome and safe in this space and be able to view the activities at the centre without too much difficulty.
- 10.2 Removing the part of the contract whereby the operator offers free access to the showers at the leisure centres could be seen as discrimination against homeless people.

### **11. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 Option 3 includes major layout changes in the foyer and cafe area. Any changes will have to comply with the Passivhaus standards.

### **12. Other considerations**

There are no other considerations

### **13. Timetable for implementation**

- 13.1 There is no timetable until a decision has been made.

### **14. Contact**

**Lisa Stonehouse, Community Development Manager and Operational  
Safeguarding Lead.**  
**01784 446431**  
**[l.stonehouse@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:l.stonehouse@spelthorne.gov.uk)**

**Background papers:, There are none.**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Places Leisure)**

**Appendix B Safeguarding Adults Policy (Places Leisure)**

**Appendix C DBS Policy (Places Leisure)**

**Appendix D Places Leisure Reporting Process 2024**

**Appendix E Photography Policy**

**Appendix F Additional Questions asked by Spelthorne Safeguarding Board**

**Appendix G Possible draft options for the `Eclipse' Leisure Centre entrance  
(A4 and A3 size)**