

Community and Wellbeing Committee – 5 March 2026

Agenda Item 1 – Questions and Statements from the Public

Chair's Response to Question 1

“Thank you for your question, and for submitting it in advance of this meeting. I appreciate the time you have taken to research gym-only memberships and how these might be applicable to the Rainbow Leisure Centre.

As you know, the Rainbow is not operated by the Council and consequently we do not have the power to direct their corporate pricing strategy.

The parameters of the pricing strategy were set during the procurement process, and we believe they do support our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, through the concessionary prices on offer, and the active communities programme Places are delivering.

However, we have raised the option of a gym-only membership with Places, to understand their rationale for not offering this at the Rainbow.

Rainbow Leisure Centre is designed and operated as a full-service leisure facility rather than a budget-gym provider. Epsom is already very well catered for in terms of gym-only provision, so Places' role is not to replicate what the market already offers. Instead, their membership structure reflects the broader purpose of the centre — a multiactivity facility that supports participation across swimming, health, fitness, family activity and community wellbeing alongside access to catering facilities and showers / changing areas. This wider, more inclusive offer is what differentiates Rainbow and ensures residents can access a diverse range of activities.

To support affordability and inclusion, they already offer discounted membership options for Juniors (16–18 years), Young Adults (19–25 years), as well as concessions for seniors and fulltime students. These categories directly support the age groups referenced in the question and help ensure that cost is not a barrier to accessing a broad wellbeing offer.

In addition, they offer a Healthy Communities membership that is heavily discounted that caters for customers that have long term health conditions.

They also have targeted memberships that attract either a 50% discount or are provided free of charge via means test.

A multiactivity approach supports healthier long-term habits, and the current membership model is designed to encourage exactly that kind of balanced participation.

Introducing a gym-only tier would shift the facility towards a more fragmented, single-activity model and could reduce engagement in the wider health and wellbeing activities that the Council has encouraged operators to promote.

The gym and supporting studios at the Leisure centre have just completed a fabulous refurbishment which is part of an ongoing investment programme. If there are concerns about membership and affordability, please speak to Places leisure as there are many options available including pay as you go instead of monthly memberships.”

Councillor Clive Woodbridge
Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee