
LIVE BORDERS – PLANNED TEMPORARY CLOSURES OF FACILITIES

Report by Director of Resilient Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

21 February 2024

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Council on the temporary closures which are required to some of the Live Borders operated sporting facilities to ensure necessary electrical inspections/works are undertaken and proposes that, given buildings are closed, further survey and scoping work is undertaken, subject to available resources.**
- 1.2 A joint programme of actions was approved by Council at its meeting of 23 November 2023, including undertaking condition surveys of SBC buildings managed by Live Borders.
- 1.3 Electrical compliance-related works are planned by Live Borders in a number of buildings which will require their temporary closure for short durations.
- 1.4 Works to upgrade the heating system at Eyemouth Leisure Centre is ongoing and the facility remains closed during this period.
- 1.5 It is proposed that these temporary closures are utilised to allow some further scoping works to be undertaken. This adopts the same principles used following the Peebles Swimming Pool fire whereby additional fabric improvement works were delivered at the same time.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Council agrees:-**
 - (a) the proposal, subject to available resources, to take the opportunity of temporary closures to carry out condition surveys, and a scoping exercise which will identify further works required to the Eyemouth and Hawick facilities from simple interventions to full decarbonisation; and**

- (b) to delegate authority to the Chief Executives of both organisations in consultation with the elected members of the SBC/Live Borders Executive Board to extend these closures, if required, to facilitate additional works, subject to available funding.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Council approved a joint programme of actions on 23 November 2023 following the presentation and analysis of a detailed review by specialist consultants, Alan Jones & Associates.
- 3.2 This agreed programme included the commission of condition surveys of all Live Borders' managed buildings to determine their current status and also the level of investment that might be required.
- 3.3 Approval was granted separately for planned plant, mechanical and refurbishment works at Eyemouth Leisure Centre which was being delivered with support from Scottish Borders Council. This work commenced in November 2023 and was due to complete by February 2024, but has had to be extended due to a number of unforeseen issues within the building, resulting in an extended period of closure.
- 3.4 A new interim Chief Executive of Live Borders was appointed at the beginning of 2024 and he has implemented a review of property compliance matters, including statutory electrical inspections. These can be complex pieces of work, especially in public buildings, and the decision has been taken to close these temporarily to allow the works to be executed safely and efficiently.
- 3.5 The facilities which will be affected in February and March are:
- Kelso Swimming Pool - 5-day partial closure (4th to 8th March), open late afternoon into evening.
 - Gytes Leisure Centre (Peebles) - 5-day partial closure (19th to 23rd February), open late afternoon into evening.
 - Tweedbank Bowling Centre/Tweedbank Sports Centre – 2.5-day partial closure for bowling centre, 2.5-day partial closure for sports centre (week commencing 11th March). Both open late afternoon into evening.
 - Teviotdale Leisure Centre (Hawick) - will be closed for approximately one month (4th to 29th March) to allow essential works to be undertaken following a previous inspection undertaken in 2023.

4 SCOPING EXERCISE

- 4.1 The current works at Eyemouth were instructed jointly by SBC and Live Borders at relatively short notice in order to address the immediate technical issue related to the heating and ventilation system in the building, but without considering wider opportunities for the facility.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the continued closure of the centre be used as an opportunity to undertake a scoping exercise to determine whether additional works could be undertaken within the building. This exercise would consider simple interventions through to full decarbonisation of the building.
- 4.3 This piece of work will allow a greater understanding of the works that may be required in this specific building, but also offer an insight into the potential scale of the challenge – both physical and financial - across the wider SBC estate operated by Live Borders. (65 buildings).

- 4.4 It is anticipated that external consultant support will be required to augment SBC and Live Borders resources.
- 4.5 Subject to initial findings, this may result in a proposal to extend the temporary closure of Eyemouth Leisure Centre to permit additional works to be carried out.
- 4.6 It is also proposed that condition surveys of the other temporarily closed buildings (as noted in 3.5 above) be carried out simultaneously, where possible, and that consideration be given to a second scoping exercise at the Teviotdale Leisure Centre.
- 4.7 Given the evolving nature of the inspection and scoping works, it is proposed that any discussions to extend closures to allow further works to be carried out are delegated to the respective Chief Executives of both Scottish Borders Council and Live Borders in consultation with the elected members on the SBC/Live Borders Executive Board which are Councillor Jardine, Councillor Rowley, Councillor Pirone and Councillor Thornton-Nicol.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- (a) There will be financial costs associated with professional fees for the scoping works. These have not yet been obtained, but it is anticipated that the Eyemouth Leisure Centre assessment may cost up to £10,000.
- (b) Anticipated costs for subsequently identified works cannot be determined in advance; however, it is proposed that budget provision to support these works be considered as part of the 2024/25 financial planning process.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) Eyemouth Leisure Centre could reopen on completion of the current works without undertaking this exercise; however, failing to capitalise on this opportunity could mean that future minor works may require a further closure. The new Air Handling Unit (AHU), once commissioned to specification, is estimated to be capable of delivering circa 20% energy usage savings per annum. A consultant has been engaged to advise on the required steps to maximise the efficiency of the new AHU (including any works required to deliver this).
- (b) An early assessment, followed by further fabric modifications at this time, will contribute to decarbonising the building and to reducing on-going revenue costs.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) The temporary closure of facilities will have an adverse impact on service users within local communities. However, all possible steps have been taken by Live Borders to minimise this impact where possible.

- (b) In addition to the impact on local residents, prolonged closure of Eyemouth Leisure Centre will have a detrimental impact on the local economy. Caravan park bookings also include use of the Eyemouth swimming pool (as per the contract between Live Borders and Haven). Longridge Towers School also has a long-standing arrangement with Live Borders for exclusive use of the swimming pool in Eyemouth for half a day each Friday during term time.
- (c) Both the Gytes Leisure Centre (Peebles) and Kelso Swimming Pool will be temporarily closed for a short 5-day period each but will open as normal from 4.00pm each day of closure. All Live Borders members will still be able to access all other Live Borders swimming pools, gyms or fitness classes at any of their other locations.
- (d) Teviotdale Leisure Centre (Hawick) will be closed over a longer, almost 4-week period; with all memberships payments frozen over this period, and with members still able to access all our swimming pools, gyms or fitness classes at any of our other locations.
- (e) The re-opening of facilities following works will re-instate all facilities within their local communities.

5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

The scoping works identified within this report will allow the continued support of UN SD Goal 3 ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all ages.

5.5 **Climate Change**

The scoping works identified within this report may support Climate Change Implications by identifying works that will contribute to SBC and Live Borders' decarbonisation programme. None of the references in this report has a detrimental impact on climate change.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not affect or amend rural proofing policies.

5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from proposals contained in this report.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals within this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Director (Finance & Procurement), the Director (Corporate Governance), the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change) and Corporate Communications are being consulted and Council will be updated on any further comments received at the meeting.

Approved by

Name Jenni Craig

Title Director Resilient Communities

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Ray Cherry	Chief Officer Estates x5187

Background Papers: Council – 23 November 2023

Previous Minute Reference: none

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Ray Cherry can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Ray Cherry – rcherry@scotborders.gov.uk