

## EQUALITY ANALYSIS (EA)

<b>POLICY/PROPOSAL:</b>	<b>Early closure of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Care Health Wellbeing</b>
<b>TEAM:</b>	<b>Public Health/Leisure</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Sarah Hawken - Public Health – Health Improvement Manager</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>19/05/25</b>

*NB: Please ensure you have read the accompanying EA guidance and instructions in full.*

### SECTION A – INITIAL SCREENING

1. Please provide a description of the policy, proposal, change or initiative, and a summary its objectives and the intended results.

Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre (BPCLC) will have to close prior to the redevelopment of the Centre planned as part of the Hillside Corridor redevelopment. The Council could choose to close the centre immediately prior to demolition or to choose to close the centre earlier. The Council's preference, subject to consultation, is for the leisure centre to close in July 2025.

The building is in a poor condition and requires investment of an approximate value of at least £1.5m, to bring it up to a suitable standard.

The vision for the project is to provide a modern, attractive, quality facility that can compete in the mixed economy leisure market. The Council anticipates that construction of a new leisure centre will begin, subject to obtaining planning permission, in September 2027. This should take approximately two years to complete, meaning that the earliest a new leisure centre would open is late 2029. There is always however a degree of uncertainty, including with respect to timelines, attached to any major redevelopment project. It will be responsive to the diversity of Brent's residents, leading to increased participation and engagement in the centre's activities. It will realise a healthier and more active population and provide best value for the Council and residents. Environmental sustainability will be at the heart of a resilient, efficient and durable building which will maximise long term value for money.

The purpose of this EA is to ensure that LB Brent has due regard to the three equality needs identified in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. These needs are eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between different protected groups. This EA has been undertaken with those equality needs in mind.

This EA is a living document. Local residents and leisure centre users have been invited to comment on it during the consultation process, and relevant data was collected during the consultation. The EA has been updated considering consultation responses and considered prior to any final decision being taken by the Council.

## 2. Who may be affected by this policy or proposal?

BPCLC is located in the Stonebridge ward.

Stonebridge and Harlesden Wards had the highest deprivation scores in the borough as measured by the English Indices of Deprivation.

Brent is the 4th most deprived borough in London, with some wards, including Stonebridge, experiencing significant socio-economic challenges, including high levels of poverty and health inequalities.

Physical activity levels in Brent are below the London average, with 33.3% of Brent residents aged 16+ being inactive compared to the 24.6% London average (Sports England's Active Lives Adult Survey – Nov 2023/24). These levels of inactivity contribute to poorer health outcomes such as higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

In Brent, 61% of adults are overweight or obese compared to the London average of 57%, and 40% of Year 6 children are overweight, higher than the London average of 39% (Brent JSNA -2022/23). Stonebridge ward has the highest percentage of adults who have a Body Mass Index over 30. Specifically looking at our place of focus, the percentage of those with good and very good health is lower in Stonebridge (81%) compared to the whole of the borough (85%).

The number of visits to Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre has varied over the last 6 years, influenced by Covid, the condition of the building and by the opening of other facilities in the near vicinity. The tables below show the usage of the existing centre across a range of activity or usage types:

**Table 1: Usage Figures for Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Gym Usage Figures</u>	<u>Room Booking Numbers</u>	<u>Sports Block Bookings</u>	<u>Gym Membership Numbers</u>
2018-19	23,278	53,080	19,853	322
2019-20	25,484	55,094	16,916	288
2020-21	3,346	0	151	42
2021-22	15,634	1,810	9,080	256
2022-23	15,131	10,130	5,689	377
2023-24	26,340	13,403	16,492	542
2024-25	22,663	18,459	17,699	473

The meeting rooms, conference room and function hall usage has significantly reduced, with several regular church groups and other users moving to alternative venues when the Centre was closed due to the pandemic. On a weekly basis there are approximately 6 – 9 room casual/block bookings (most on a Sunday due to church groups).

Sports Hall usage has picked up well since the pandemic but is still less than previous usage 5 years ago.

Monthly gym memberships have increased, mainly due to the discounted cost which is significantly less than other sports centres and private gyms.

The proposed closure of BLCP in July 2025 would result in the temporary loss of leisure service and loss of spaces that can be hired, but alternative spaces exist in the locality that can be hired.

Users of the centre will be provided with information on alternative provision that is available in the borough, contact details, costs etc.

In summary, the proposal to close BPCLC would affect gym users, nursery users, business tenants, users of the function, meeting rooms and sports halls.

3. Is there relevance to equality and the council's public sector equality duty? Please explain why. If your answer is no, you must still provide an explanation.

Yes, the closure of a leisure and function facility is relevant to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty as it will affect residents that currently use the facility and those who might have used it in future and could particularly impact individuals from protected groups such as older residents, young people, disabled people, BAME individuals, those from certain religions/beliefs, pregnant and maternal residents and those from lower-income households.. The users of BPCLC are predominantly from the local area and closing the facility before a new facility is opened will result in users having to travel to another facility and potentially incur greater costs. Although alternative provision is available in the local area, and we would take steps to mitigate impacts, the closure may also have an impact on overall participation and activity levels. Some individuals may not choose to travel further or pay more for alternative provision.

As a result, there may be an impact on the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, which is one of the three equality needs set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. However, as explained below, the Council considers that the proposals would be objectively justified, so as not to give rise to discrimination.

The Council also acknowledges that Bridge Park has played an important role in the Stonebridge community for many years. Bridge Park is an important chapter in Black British history and the community's achievements in creating this space in the 1980's to empower local black residents. It is important to work with the community to ensure this history is commemorated within the new facilities.

There may therefore be an impact on the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, one of the other relevant equality needs. The Council is seeking to mitigate this as much as possible

including through public consultation both on the proposed closure and our plans for the new leisure centre and wider redevelopment.

4. Please indicate with an “X” the potential impact of the policy or proposal on groups with each protected characteristic. Carefully consider if the proposal will impact on people in different ways as a result of their characteristics.

Characteristic	Impact Positive	Impact Neutral/None	Impact Negative
Age			X
Sex			X
Race			X
Disability *			X
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief			X
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage		X	

5. Please complete **each row** of the checklist with an “X”.

#### **Screening Checklist**

	YES	NO
Have you established that the policy or proposal <i>is</i> relevant to the council's public sector equality duty?	X	
Does the policy or proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?	X	
Would the policy or proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?	X	
Has the potential for negative or positive equality impacts been identified with this policy or proposal?	X	

**If you have answered YES to ANY of the above, then proceed to section B.**

**If you have answered NO to ALL of the above, then proceed straight to section D.**

## SECTION B – IMPACTS ANALYSIS

1. Outline what information and evidence have you gathered and considered for this analysis. If there is little, then explain your judgements in detail and your plans to validate them with evidence. If you have monitoring information available, include it here.

Demographic data from gym and group exercise class users at BPCLC  
 Data from the Sports Centres was analysed and informed this assessment.  
 Insight and data from Brent Council's Joint Strategic Need Assessment (JSNA), which details ward level information on health, deprivation, disease and poor health, education, housing and living and life expectancy.  
 Ward profiles from census data  
 Active Lives survey.  
 PHE Fingertips

We have collected demographic data through our public consultation on the proposed closure of the leisure centre which has helped to inform further analysis and evaluation. More detail on the consultation responses is attached.

2. For each "protected characteristic" provide details of all the potential or known impacts identified, both positive and negative, and explain how you have reached these conclusions based on the information and evidence listed above. Where appropriate state "not applicable".

## **AGE**

<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>The proportion of Brent young people aged 5-16years who are physically active (51.6%) is higher than London (47.3%) and the UK (47.8%).</p> <p>BPCLC is situated in the Stonebridge ward: The resident ward population is 20,209. The census 2021 showed that almost a quarter of the population was under 16, 22.9% compared to 19.0% for Brent. 9% of residents were aged 65 and over, compared to 9.3% for Brent. Stonebridge had a smaller working age (16 to 64) population than Brent, 68% compared to 69.3%.</p> <p>Of the information available 83% of BPCLC users were aged 17-59 years. 13% were aged 60+. There is little information on 0-17year old usage but would include junior activities and junior gym membership.</p> <p>The age profile of BPCLC centre users varies depending on the type of activity. For example, there is a Zumba Gold class on a Friday at the centre, which attracts over 60's.          Responses to the consultation were higher from those aged 35-44 years (28%)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="517 1845 1441 2009"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th><th>Percentage response</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16-24</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr> <td>25-34</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr> <td>35-44</td><td>28</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	Percentage response	16-24	6	25-34	16	35-44	28
Age	Percentage response								
16-24	6								
25-34	16								
35-44	28								

	45-54	20
	55-64	20
	65+	10
<p>There is a Nursery on the site, but it is not part of the Leisure Centre. Alternative sites have been explored locally and given to the business owners.</p> <p>Younger and Older people may not be able to travel as easily to an alternative provision.</p> <p>Feedback from consultation highlighted some concerns about older adults losing access to facilities like saunas or steam rooms that are important for their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Based on the information available, the proposal could have a negative impact on this protected characteristic.</p>		

## **DISABILITY**

<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>15.5% (3102 residents) in Stonebridge are disabled under the Equality Act. This compares to 12.1% across Brent.</p> <p>5.9% of Stonebridge residents consider themselves to be in bad or very bad health, compared to 4.4% across Brent.</p> <p>The percentage of residents who consider themselves to be in good or very good health is lower in Harlesden and Stonebridge compared to the borough overall.</p> <p>Of the information available 9% of BPCLC users stated that they had a disability.</p> <p>Disability sessions at BPCLC attracted a total of 1030 attendees last year. This includes users from the Sports Ability sessions for children and young people 8 years + on Saturdays. Leisure is an important part of any young person's wellbeing, but especially for those with a disability as they may not be able to be active independently.</p> <p>Depending on the nature of an individual's particular disability, it may also be more difficult for some disabled individuals to travel to alternative provision than for individuals who are not disabled. Individuals attending the disability specific sessions running at the centre (Disability Trampolining and activities for Brent day centres) are brought to the centre by their parents/carers by car/minibus. Changing location would still enable this to happen.</p>
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	<p>There is an established young people disability session at Willesden Sports Centre which would welcome participants from Bridge Park. The session leader is familiar with the session, as she has worked with Willesden Sports Centre previously, and will make parents aware of the details and directions/transport links.</p> <p>Based on the information available it can be concluded at this stage that the proposal is likely to particularly affect people with a disability.</p>
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## **RACE**

<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>In Stonebridge ward 79% of the population are from BAME groups. 43.5% black groups, 21.1% white groups, 17.3% Asian groups, 12.3% other groups and 5.8% mixed.</p> <p>The communities that are affected varies depending on the facility used.</p> <p>81% (from a total of 461) of gym users are from Black communities: 15% Black Caribbean, 24% were Black African 22% Black Somali. For the period April 2023-March 2024; there were 28657 users from BAME groups of the sports hall, dance studio and steam and sauna.</p> <p>Demographic information is not currently collected for sports block bookings.</p> <p>The number of room booking hours is not recorded – only the number of attendees is counted. On a weekly basis there were approximately 6 – 9 room casual/block bookings, most on a Sunday due to Christian Faith groups from the Black African or Black Caribbean community. It can be concluded that based on the information available that Black residents could be negatively and disproportionately affected by the proposal as over 80% of gym users belong to this group, highlighting the potential for adverse impacts on this community.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that Bridge Park is an important chapter in Black British history and the community's achievements in creating this space in the 1980's to empower local black residents. It is important to work with the community to ensure this history is commemorated within the new facilities.</p> <p>There may therefore be an impact on the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, one of the other relevant equality needs. The Council is seeking to mitigate this as much as possible including through public consultation both on the proposed closure and our plans for the new leisure centre and wider redevelopment.</p>
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## **SEX**



<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>52.5% of Stonebridge ward is female and 47.5% male.</p> <p>More men use the gym and sports hall at BPCLC, and more women attend groups exercise classes than men. The proposal could adversely affect aims to increase female participation in active leisure, and therefore there could also be a negative impact on women.</p>
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## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>We do not have robust data on sexual orientation, as members have a choice whether to complete this information. We also do not collect data on individual users within a group booking. There appears to be no evidence that the proposal will particularly affect individuals based on their sexual orientation. However, a recent members enquire was received from London Roller Derby, representing 150 skaters - many of them sports women from the LGBT+ community - who have regularly used Bridge Park for training for the last 20 years. Information on alternative facilities that might be suitable for the club to hire have been provided.</p>
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## **PREGANCY AND MATERNITY**

<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>There is no evidence that the proposal will affect, or at least not disproportionately affect, this protected characteristic with regards to the closure of the leisure centre.</p> <p>The nursery has closed, and the nursery owner was provided with information on other suitable locations to operate from and other nurseries in the locality.</p>
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## **RELIGION OR BELIEF**

<b>Details of impacts identified</b>	<p>39.9% of residents in the Stonebridge ward identified themselves as Christian and 36.2% as Muslim.</p> <p>Of the gym members, 10% preferred not to disclose their faith information, of those that did 31% were Christian and 46% Muslim.</p> <p>Demographic information is not required for room bookings, and service users generally do not provide this information.</p> <p>Current users will be informed of alternative facilities in the immediate area such as community halls, schools and other places of worship.</p> <p>Based on the higher percentage of Muslim service users, it's possible that the closure could have a disproportionate impact on this protected group.</p>
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## **GENDER REASSIGNMENT**



**Details of impacts identified**

There is no evidence that the proposal will affect, or at least not disproportionately affect individuals who have undergone gender reassessment.

**MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP**
**Details of impacts identified**

There is no evidence that the proposal will affect, or at least not disproportionately affect, this protected characteristic. t.

**3. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?**

No. Although we have identified likely adverse impacts regarding the equality needs in s. 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, we consider that the proposals would be objectively justified so as not to give rise to discrimination. This is because the Council is pursuing legitimate aims, including the need to manage the financial position facing the council given the operating costs of keeping the leisure centre open, the condition of the building, the cost of repairs, and the Council's desire to avoid an unplanned closure. The council also has the goal of providing residents with a new and improved leisure centre by 2030.

**4. Were the participants in any engagement initiatives representative of the people who will be affected by your proposal and is further engagement required?**

Extensive consultation/engagement with local residents on the proposed plans for a new leisure centre and redevelopment of the area has taken place and current users of BPCLC have been notified of these opportunities to feedback.

All previous consultation activity to inform future provision of leisure services on this site has been predicated on closure as part of the planned redevelopment. In 2017, the Council consulted with users of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and residents on the nature of the proposed community building. That consultation informed the current plans for a new Leisure Centre at Bridge Park. Between November 2024 and January 2025 residents were invited to have their say on the future of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre, as part of the plan to invest £600 million into the Hillside Regeneration Corridor in Stonebridge.

Further consultation on the redevelopment proposals and the proposal to close the leisure centre in July 2025 have just concluded. The consultation report is attached. Several events were held at Bridge Park Leisure Centre with one event being specifically for centre users.

**5. Please detail any areas identified as requiring further data or detailed analysis.**

The consultation report (attached) has been carefully considered to help with this report.

**6. If, following your action plan, negative impacts will or may remain, please explain how these can be justified?**

The Council however acknowledges that there would be some negative impacts remaining following mitigating actions (explained below). However, as above, we consider that these would be objectively justified because of the legitimate aims the Council is pursuing. The longer-term plan is to have a new leisure centre facility on this site which will serve the local community.

7. Outline how you will monitor the actual, ongoing impact of the policy or proposal?

Those that attended the consultation events had the opportunity to be kept informed. Engagement with current members via email/text to keep them informed on closure and redevelopment of new leisure facility. A notice board at the leisure centre will have information on the redevelopment and any alternative facilities that might be suitable. Once the facility has closed and during the redevelopment, we will continue to engage with local communities through events with Public Health and Brent Health Matters. We will promote physical activity and signpost residents to activities.

## **SECTION C - CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the analysis above, please detail your overall conclusions. State if any mitigating actions are required to alleviate negative impacts, what these are and what the desired outcomes will be. If positive equality impacts have been identified, consider what actions you can take to enhance them. If you have decided to justify and continue with the policy despite negative equality impacts, provide your justification. If you are to stop the policy, explain why.

As above, we consider that, while the proposals would have adverse equality impacts in respect of the three equality needs identified in s. 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, they would be objectively justified.

In reaching this assessment we have considered ways of mitigating the adverse impacts of the proposals.

There are several sports centres/gyms within a 2-mile radius of Bridge Park – two are Brent Council owned and the remaining privately run. The costs of monthly gym membership for the competitors range from £42.95- £19.99 per month compared to £27.50 - £16.00 (depending on age/status) at BPCLC. We are not currently proposing to offer a subsidy to use other facilities in the area but would signpost people to alternative provision nearby.

Business tenants used at Bridge Park for storage space and/or training space. These tenants have had their contract terminated and have vacated the building. Alternative accommodation has been suggested and guidance and advice offered.

In reviewing the alternative meeting room provision, we have identified facilities within a two-mile radius of BPCLC. Initial enquiries have indicated that there would be some capacity at the facilities. Information on alternative facilities has been provided to users.

While there are limited sports hall type facilities in the locality, there are eight schools within 2.2 miles of BPCLC that have confirmed either sports hall and or sports pitch facility provision although some of the hours of use are limited to term time. Contact has been made with schools to see whether they may have availability and details given to users. Willesden Leisure Centre and Vale Farm Leisure Centre both have extensive facilities including a gym, sports hall and dance studio. Contact has been made to see what availability there is and the managers of both centres are happy to try and accommodate bookings where possible.

Brent Council Public Health also provides a wide range of free physical activity opportunities for Brent residents, including Walking for Health sessions at 6 of our parks, instructor led sessions at 20 Outdoor gyms, 6 weekly sessions with Sport in Mind to promote mental wellbeing. Our Parks sessions in parks and libraries, Steady and Stable (a falls prevention exercise for those over 50), Disability Sports Club at Willesden Sports Centre, Couch to 5k, Zumba, Chair based classes and other sessions. The council has worked to make this free physical activity offer more visible online and better publicised among residents.

## SECTION D – RESULT

*Please select one of the following options. Mark with an “X”.*

<b>A</b>	<b>CONTINUE WITH THE POLICY/PROPOSAL UNCHANGED</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>JUSTIFY AND CONTINUE THE POLICY/PROPOSAL</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>CHANGE / ADJUST THE POLICY/PROPOSAL</b>	
<b>D</b>	<b>STOP OR ABANDON THE POLICY/PROPOSAL</b>	

## SECTION E - ACTION PLAN

This will help you monitor the steps you have identified to reduce the negative impacts (or increase the positive); monitor actual or ongoing impacts; plan reviews and any further engagement or analysis required.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Explore options for alternative	List of viable options for current members	Health Improvement Manager –	February 2025

gym/sports/meeting provision		Public Health	
Consultation exercise	Residents invited to consultation	Head of Capital Delivery	22 March – 11 May 2025
Consultation exercise	Residents invited to consultation	Head of Capital Delivery	27 November 2024 – 12 January 2025

## SECTION F – SIGN OFF

Please ensure this section is signed and dated.

<b>OFFICER:</b>	Sarah Hawken - Health Improvement Manager – Public Health
<b>REVIEWING OFFICER:</b>	Policy and Performance Manager
<b>HEAD OF SERVICE / Operational Director:</b>	Dr Melanie Smith Director Public Health