

	<p align="center">Cabinet 16 June 2025</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Corporate Director, Service Reform and Strategy & Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration</p>
	<p align="center">Lead Members – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure (Councillor Neil Nerva) Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property (Councillor Teo Benea)</p>
<p align="center">Future of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and Hillside Corridor Proposals</p>	

Wards Affected:	Stonebridge
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
List of Appendices:	<p>Eight</p> <p>Appendix 1: Consultation Report</p> <p>Appendix 2: Hillside Corridor Masterplan</p> <p>Appendix 3: Equality Analysis</p> <p>Appendix 4: Physical Activity Timetable</p> <p>Appendix 5: Physical Activity Booklet</p> <p>Appendix 6: Redevelopment Alternative Provision</p> <p>Appendix 7: Alternative venues map</p> <p>Appendix 8: Artist's impression of new leisure centre</p>
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides updates regarding progress on the development of the new leisure centre at Bridge Park, proposals for closing the existing Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and outcomes from the recent public consultation on the emerging plans for the Hillside Corridor Masterplan, including the Bridge Park site.
- 1.2. The report requests a Cabinet decision on the closure of the Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and sets out the proposed transitional arrangements for centre users impacted by the closure. The report also outlines amendments required to the current Conditional Land Sale Agreement (CLSA) and for the Council to enter into a deed of variation to the CLSA.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Having regard to the contents of this report which details the outcome of consultation, decides that the closure date of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre is 31 July 2025 and notes the proposed transitional arrangements for users impacted by the closure.
- 2.2 Approves the revised facility mix for the council led development at Bridge Park.
- 2.3 Subject to the decision to close the centre and the outcome of the decision of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport as outlined in paragraph 3.2.4 of this report, approves the demolition of the council owned buildings at Bridge Park, subject to securing the relevant consents for undertaking demolition works.
- 2.4 Approves the Council entering a deed of variation to the CLSA with Stonebridge Real Estate Development (SRED) as detailed in paragraphs 3.2.12 – 3.2.15.
- 2.5 Delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property to agree any further variations that are required to update the CLSA with SRED.
- 2.6 Approves the proposed site use options for the Twybridge Way, Morland Gardens and Bernard Shaw House sites that form part of the Hillside Corridor Masterplan and approves a capital budget of £1m to commence design work for these sites.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Members Foreword

- 3.1.1 The Hillside Corridor regeneration proposals will help to meet a number of outcomes within the Borough Plan.

- 3.1.2 The five sites (Bridge Park, Twybridge Way, Morland Gardens, Roy Smith House, Bernard Shaw House) will contribute towards Strategic Priority 1: Prosperity and Stability in Brent. Specifically, in addition to the new leisure centre, the sites will provide new affordable homes and training and skills opportunities through the new provision for Brent Start and new employment/work opportunities in the Affordable Workspace
- 3.1.3 The Hillside Corridor also contributes to Strategic Priority 3: Thriving Communities to allow the local community to be involved in and lead on activities for their communities. Three sites are proposed to have community facilities, and the Council has sought input from the community to help shape these facilities.
- 3.1.4 At Bridge Park, a new leisure centre with enhanced facilities compared to the existing centre will contribute towards Strategic Priority 5: A Healthier Brent. The new leisure centre and public realm spaces in Stonebridge will provide greater opportunities for Stonebridge residents to access good quality facilities and open spaces to improve their physical and mental health.
- 3.1.5 Brent's Leisure Centres are key to the mental and physical health of residents and this proposal has a strong alignment to Brent Council's priorities for the borough. The council's most recent Borough Plan, '[Moving Brent Forward Together for 2023 - 2027](#)', outlines Strategic Priority 5: A Healthier Brent, which aims to tackle health inequalities, particularly through co-designed approaches with communities, improve physical health and provide more accessible facilities in public spaces.
- 3.1.6 Similarly, the [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027](#) provides a further detailed breakdown of health and wellbeing priorities, including Healthy Lives, Healthy Places, Staying Healthy and Healthy Ways of Working, and includes a comprehensive set of action plans for how each priority will be achieved.
- 3.1.7 The council needs to provide and future proof its leisure facilities to allow Brent's residents to have access to as many opportunities as possible to improve their health. Both strategies can be found here: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/strategies-priorities-and-policies>
- 3.1.8 Local government is facing the most challenging financial environment for many decades. Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre is running at a significant loss. The council would need to invest at least £1.5m in the near future to bring the facility up to a suitable, safe standard, which is not a good use of public funds when the facility would need to be closed in the near future for vacant possession to be given under the CLSA.
- 3.1.9 The council and its development partner SRED are proposing to redevelop the area and create a thriving, inclusive neighbourhood for generations to come. The Council has been developing its current plans for Bridge Park for over a decade. In 2013 the Council consulted on the different options for the Leisure Centre. The least preferred option, supported by approximately 5% of

respondents, was to leave the site as it was. In 2017 the Council entered into a Conditional Land Sale for Bridge Park in order to replace the converted bus garage with a new purpose-built leisure centre. Following a further public consultation, the vision for Bridge Park was agreed by Cabinet in 2019. The scheme has stalled due to the legal proceedings regarding the land ownership. Now that this has been resolved, the council is keen to move forward to deliver the vision with enhanced facilities for the community.

- 3.1.10 The council acknowledge the part Bridge Park had in an important chapter in Black British history and the community's achievements in creating this space in the 1980s to empower local black residents. We are committed to working with the community to ensure this history is commemorated within the new development.

3.2 Background

History of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre

- 3.2.1 Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre was once the largest black-led community enterprise in Europe, with 32 start-up units for local businesses, a sports hall, theatre, training centre, recording studio, restaurant and bar.
- 3.2.2 The council recognises that Bridge Park is a valued place for many local residents and that it was a symbol of community togetherness for many years. It is important to do justice to its history and legacy.
- 3.2.3 A plaque on the current Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre marks the achievements of the late Leonard Johnson, community activist and Chair of Harlesden Peoples Community Council, in creating this space. This will be retained and included in the new facility. The council will work with the community to ensure that this history is commemorated in the new development.
- 3.2.4 Harlesden People's Community Council have commenced a Save Bridge Park Campaign and submitted listing applications to Historic England to place Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and Technology House on the National Heritage List for England. The developer, SRED has also submitted Certificate of Immunity (Col) from listed status for the same buildings and their Unisys site. Historic England will consider the applications and compile a report for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. It is anticipated that a decision on the Col and listing applications will be made in the summer 2025.
- 3.2.5 The main purpose of listing Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and Technology House is to protect the buildings and their surroundings from changes which materially alter the buildings or their setting. Once a building is listed, listed building consent may be needed, in addition to any potential need for planning permission, for works and alterations to the buildings, and breaches of the listed building regime are subject to criminal penalties and enforcement action.

Conditional Land Sale Agreement

3.2.6 In June 2017, the Cabinet approved a Conditional Land Sale Agreement (CLSA) with GMH and to complete the CLSA, the following conditions need to be achieved:

- Planning: For the developer to achieve outline Planning Consent for the Bridge Park Masterplan
- Financial Viability: For the developer to achieve a profit and for Brent to fund the capital construction of a new leisure centre from the land sale proceeds.
- Vacant Possession: For Brent to acquire the Car Breakers Yard, either via private treaty purchase or CPO proceedings. It should be noted that the Council purchased the Car Breakers Yard in February 2019 via private treaty purchase.

3.2.7 At the signing of the CLSA, the Council and GMH envisaged the delivery of a Bridge Park Masterplan, which comprised a new hotel, a modern leisure centre and approximately 500 new homes.

3.2.8 In February 2019, and following public consultation, Cabinet approved proposals to optimise the development potential of the site by enhancing the leisure provision, incorporating additional community facilities, enterprise space and supported living accommodation.

3.2.9 Given that the new leisure provision is to be funded from the sale proceeds, GMH sought to optimise the quantum of housing that can be delivered on their part of the development site. The change to the CLSA would have provided “at least 500 apartments/townhouses.” Since the agreed change, the council and GMH have been working to maximise the site even further and the current proposals is to include:

- Approximately 1,000 homes to meet the needs of Brent’s growing population
- Modern flexible community facilities
- A better environment and public realm
- A new permanent home for Brent Start, the council's adult education service
- Enhanced leisure provision
- A hotel with a restaurant.

3.2.10 The Bridge Park Masterplan and underpinning CLSA demonstrates a partnership approach between Brent Council and SRED, with a significant investment to improve the neighbourhood.

3.2.11 This redevelopment is part of a wider initiative to invest in sites along Hillside, aiming to create new affordable homes, more jobs, and outdoor spaces for

everyone to enjoy. The other sites in the Hillside Corridor are Twybridge Way, Morland Gardens, Roy Smith House and Bernard Shaw House.

CLSA Variation

3.2.12 As discussed earlier the council entered into a CLSA with GMH in order to redevelop Bridge Park. The CLSA was entered into in 2017, and progress was made on the proposed redevelopment. This was paused due to the legal proceedings taken against the council by Harlesden People's Community Council (HPCC) with regard to the ownership of the Bridge Park site.

3.2.13 Following completion of the court action in the council's favour and changes to building safety requirements for tall buildings, there have been delays to the project against the timeframes set out in the original CLSA. Cabinet is requested to agree to varying two key dates of the CLSA:

3.2.14 **Longstop Date:** This is the date by which the "Planning Condition" must be satisfied, with provision to extend this Longstop Date if, GMH having submitted a planning application, there is a resulting planning appeal, Judicial Review challenge or calling-in by the Secretary of State. It is proposed to revise the Longstop Date to 9 September 2027.

3.2.15 **Ultimate Date:** This is the non-extendable date by which the "Planning Condition" must be satisfied, in the event that the Longstop Date is extended due to a planning appeal, Judicial Review challenge or call-in affecting a submitted planning application. As such, the CLSA will automatically terminate if a satisfactory planning permission has not been obtained by this Ultimate Date. It is proposed to amend this date to be 9 September 2029.

3.2.16 Cabinet is also requested to delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property to agree any further variations that are required to update the CLSA with SRED.

Current Operating Picture at Bridge Park – Usage

3.2.17 The following table 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 (BPCLC)

Year	Gym Usage Figures	Room Booking Numbers	Sports Block Bookings	Gym Membership Numbers
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

Year	Gym Usage Figures	Room Booking Numbers	Sports Block Bookings	Gym Membership Numbers
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

3.2.18 Over the past two years, monthly gym memberships and casual usage have increased, mainly due to the lower cost compared to other leisure centres. Various discounts have been offered to bring back members following the Covid period. As at May 2025 the published price of adult gym membership was £27.50, with most members paying a concessionary price of £22.50. These prices are lower than other market competitors (Wembley Leisure Centre, Vale Farm Sports Centre, Willesden Sports Centre, Private Gyms) but the other facilities provide a greater range of facilities such as larger gyms, more exercise classes and some offer swimming pools.

3.2.19 In 2024/25, Bridge Park had a monthly average of 473 members. More than half (72 percent) of BPCLC gym users are from the NW10 Willesden postcode. One-sixth (17 percent) are from the Wembley postcodes of HA9 and HA0 To give a comparison, the monthly average membership number at Willesden Sports Centre is 3,597 and at Vale Farm Sports Centre is 3,289.

3.2.20 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).

Current Operating Picture at Bridge Park – Condition and financial

3.2.21 BPCLC is housed in an aging converted bus garage. The building is at the end of its expected lifespan, is in a poor condition and requires ongoing capital investment to maintain operations.

3.2.22 Previous condition survey work was undertaken in 2019 and this work identified significant capital and maintenance works required to bring the building to an acceptance condition standard. Due to the proposed development of the site, it was not cost effective for the council to undertake repair works so the condition of the BPCLC has now deteriorated further.

3.2.23 The centre has managed to operate without carrying out major repairs and maintenance. However, there is a high risk of failure of vital equipment, as much of the centre is well beyond its expected life and this risk of failure increases daily.

3.2.24 For the financial year 2024/25, BPCLC had an outturn position of -£499k. Although usage has slowly picked up after the pandemic, the significant overspend or losses incurred by the council are similar to previous financial years. At the current membership of £27.50 per month, an additional 1,512

members would need to join and pay monthly for 12 months to make up this significant loss.

Proposal to close the centre by 31 July 2025

- 3.2.25 The option of closing the Centre by 31st July 2025 has been considered alongside the option to continue to operate the Centre for a bit longer. Taking into account the need to clear the site to allow for the new Centre to be built as soon as possible, finalise scheme plans to enable planning submission, complete the CLSA, and then build out the new facility, the earliest construction commencement date of the new leisure centre at Bridge Park is likely to be September 2027. Closing the leisure centre in July 2025 will also allow the council to secure vacant possession of the site, commission intrusive site surveys, finalise the structural plans especially foundation design and potentially seek to reduce the timetable for delivering the new leisure centre.
- 3.2.26 Given the financial liabilities for operating the current facility, upholding the maintenance of BPCLC within the context of reduced usage, the availability of other free and paid for community, health and fitness options, and that there will be an enhanced, new leisure centre at Bridge Park to replace this provision, officers are advising Cabinet on the preferred approach to close BPCLC by 31 July 2025.
- 3.2.27 The Council has the option to keep the Centre open for a bit longer; however, the benefits of closure will mean that the Council will avoid the financial liabilities for operating the current facility and maintaining BPCLC at a time when not all usage is yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. It will also remove the likelihood of emergency closures due to breakdowns of plant and building condition issues and its collective impact on staff and users.
- 3.2.28 Whilst closure of the Centre will result in the temporary loss of this leisure service and of spaces that can be hired, alternative spaces exist nearby. These include Willesden Sports Centre, Vale Farm Sports Centre, Wembley Leisure Centre, Moberly Sports Centre, various community facilities, schools, faith facilities and private gyms. These alternative facilities are well served by public transport from the Stonebridge area.
- 3.2.29 Brent Council Public Health have a wide range of opportunities for residents to be physically active with over 70 free sessions running each week. These include Walking for Health sessions at six of our parks, instructor led sessions at 20 outdoor gyms, six weekly sessions with Sport in Mind to support mental wellbeing, Our Parks sessions in Brent parks and libraries, Steady and Stable falls prevention class for those over 50 years, Couch to 5k, parkrun, community based sessions such as Zumba and Bollywood dancing and sessions for vulnerable residents.
- 3.2.30 Details on all the above are available on the council's website with additional information produced that has been shared with residents at community engagement events to promote the 70+ free sessions that the Council coordinates each week. Please see the current weekly timetable of activities in Appendix 4 and Physical Activity booklet digital flyer (Appendix 5).

- 3.2.31 Public Health carried out a survey in 2024 to review the provision of these free physical activity sessions. Survey findings showed that those from more deprived communities within the borough are participating in the public health offer and that the programme is reaching the previously inactive and priority groups. The programme has been, and will continue to be, developed in line with insights from the survey to the types of activities which would attract inactive residents
- 3.2.32 Officers will signpost users of the building to alternative facilities. We will provide a list of facilities, within Brent, for hire including sports centres, community centres, schools, sports clubs and charitable organisations. Other transitional arrangements proposed include, exploring what availability other facilities have and what rates might be available. Vale Farm and Willesden sports centres have provided times that the sports halls are available and have offered to meet with Bridge Park sports hall users to see how they can support/accommodate them. We will also connect groups directly with alternative providers and we will continue to promote other facilities and encourage users to continue with their physical activities. We have also explored facilities in neighbouring boroughs which may have facilities which are suitable to specific user groups at Bridge Park.
- 3.2.33 We are looking to continue delivering some of the classes that currently take place at Bridge Park at nearby venues, for example the football session for vulnerable men and Zumba for older residents.
- 3.2.34 Subject to a Cabinet decision on the proposal to close BPCLC on 31 July 2025, users will be informed of the decision and provide information on alternative provision that is available. Officers will have an information area within the centre with information about other facilities and direct email with information. Users will be given at least one months' notice of closure.
- 3.2.35 Break notices were issued to all commercial tenants at Bridge Park and Technology House, and the tenants moved out in February and May 2025, respectively.

Alternative closure options

- 3.2.36 The council has considered two main alternative options to the closure of the existing Bridge Park Centre by 31 July 2025.
- 3.2.37 The council could seek to increase fees and charges to customers to address the financial difficulties associated with the ongoing operation of the leisure centre. However, we do not think it would be possible to raise enough funds to make up the losses in this way, because of the impact on membership numbers and usage of an increase in fees and charges.
- 3.2.38 Secondly, the Council could consider keeping the leisure centre open until either the planning permission application for the Bridge Park development is decided (expected in October 2026) or until the leisure centre is required to

close as part of the council's agreement with the proposed developer of the Bridge Park site (expected in early 2027).

- 3.2.39 Choosing a later date would reduce the gap between the current centre closing and new centre opening. This allows more time for existing users and members to seek alternative facilities.
- 3.2.40 However, this will lead to a greater risk of building condition failure(s) and will mean further costs to the council in terms of operating costs as well as the risk of having to spend significant funds on reactive maintenance and repairs.
- 3.2.41 We are not proposing to take these options forward because of the financial, building-related and other considerations explained in this report.
- 3.2.42 During the second phase of the consultation, the community was asked whether the closure of the centre in July 2025 would have a positive, negative or neutral impact on you and your household. Of the 92 responses, 71% responded it would impact them negatively, 20% neutral and 9% positive. Section 5.4 of Appendix 1 provides more detail on the qualitative responses to this element of the consultation.
- 3.2.43 Subject to Cabinet approving the closure of BPCLC and the decision from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on whether to list or not list Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and Technology House, Cabinet approves the demolition of the council owned buildings at Bridge Park. Officers will then seek to procure a demolition contractor, secure the relevant consents and undertake the necessary demolition works.

Council Development Facility Mix

- 3.2.44 The Bridge Park site has been part derelict for many years. It is a prominent site in Brent, which needs significant regeneration. In planning terms, there is a site-specific allocation for Bridge Park for a new leisure centre, hotel, office, residential and small scale commercial and community uses. In June 2013, Cabinet approved plans to redevelop the Bridge Park site in discussions with General Mediterranean Holdings SA (GMH), as the landowner for the adjacent Unisys site.
- 3.2.45 At Bridge Park, the council is proposing to directly deliver a new leisure centre and a separate adult education and community hub space. The table below details the range of facilities that will be provided and compares it to the existing provisions. The total size of the existing BPCLC is 6,866m² and the proposed facilities will be 5,227m² for the new leisure centre and 2,839m² for the adult education centre and community hub, totalling 8,066m².

Table 2 – Bridge Park Facility Proposals

Facility	Current Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre	Proposed new facilities
Swimming Pool	None	25m 6 lane pool with a moveable floor
Gym	2 small gyms 39 stations (16 cardio, 23 fixed resistance plus dumbbells, bars & plates)	100 station gym
Sports Hall	5 court sports hall (745m ²)	4 court sports hall (695m ²)
Activity Space	Small party room for food & drink	200m ² Activity Space for soft play and climbing wall
Group Exercise Studios	1 exercise studio	3 exercise studios (150m ² multi-use studio (25-30 persons), 200m ² multi-use studio (40-45 persons) and 100m ² Cycle/Spin Studio (30-35 stations)
Refreshment and catering	Current kitchen not operational Vending machines	Modern Cafe facility with commercial kitchen
Changing Room Provision	Dry Changing for Gym/Fitness/Sports Hall	Wet' Changing 'Village' Dry changing for Gym/Fitness/Sports Hall
Steam / Sauna	Steam & sauna (each in separate changing rooms)	Steam & sauna
Community Spaces	Main function hall Five meeting rooms (450m ²)	450m ² of community space Commercial Kitchen
Adult Education	None	2,389m ² of new adult education provision
Commercial / business units	2,176m ² of commercial use space	None

3.2.46 This is a deviation from the 2019 Cabinet approved facility mix which proposed a leisure and community centre to the front of the site with supported living accommodation units and workspace units in a tall building to the rear of the site.

3.2.47 It was previously proposed in 2019 for the council to provide residential to the rear of the site but due to the financial issues with delivering viable affordable housing, the council is unable to deliver the affordable homes but will deliver the community space and adult education centre.

3.2.48 Officers are therefore proposing to deliver a leisure centre only to the front of the site with the community space and adult education centre proposed to the rear in a separate building. These will replace the affordable workspace in the

2019 facility mix and it is proposed to provide affordable workspace/commercial units at Twybridge Way as part of the wider Hillside Corridor proposals. The new leisure centre will be larger than the existing leisure centre with additional facilities such as a swimming pool and an increased number of exercise studios.

3.2.49 Table 3 below provides an indication of the proposed delivery timetable for the new buildings at Bridge Park

Table 3 – Indicative Delivery Timetable

Milestone	Target Delivery Date
Complete RIBA 3 Designs	October 2025
Listing Application Outcome	August 2025
Planning Application Submission	November 2025
Planning Application Determination	October 2026
Complete Contractor Procurement	January 2027
Complete RIBA 4 Designs	July 2027
Commence start on site	September 2027

3.2.50 Whilst the Council is proposing to redevelop the Bridge Park site, it doesn't mean that the history will be lost. The council is proposing to set up a community panel with community members who expressed an interest in being part of a future community advisory group. The redevelopment is to be an opportunity to both recognise the historic importance of the site and also engage the community in shaping the future.

Hillside Corridor Site Options

3.2.51 As part of the council's commitment to provide social and/or community infrastructure for its residents and communities in the Stonebridge area, the council has proposed a range of use options for the following sites as part of developing a complementary vision for the Hillside Corridor Masterplan (refer to Appendix 2):

- Bridge Park
- Twybridge Way
- Roy Smith House
- Morland Gardens
- Bernard Shaw House

3.2.52 In Phase 1 of the Hillside Corridor consultation which ran from November 2024 – January 2025, it was proposed that by relocating Brent Start and affordable workspace to Bridge Park, the council can unlock the Twybridge Way and Morland Gardens sites to allow for other development uses. Residents and local community groups were asked to suggest their preferred site use options as part of developing a complementary vision for the Hillside Corridor.

3.2.53 Cabinet is asked to note that Roy Smith House was subject to its own Cabinet report in September 2024 which approved a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) investment to provide a new community venue. The results of phase 1 showed the top three site uses at the following sites as:

1. Twybridge Way: Youth Facilities, café/restaurant, commercial space
2. Morland Gardens: café/restaurant, youth facilities, community hall
3. Bernard Shaw House: café/restaurant, commercial space, workspace/business units

3.2.54 Officers considered the responses to Phase 1 and proposed the following site development options for the three sites above for the second phase of the consultation (March – May 2025) and asked respondents whether they were satisfied with the site use options:

1. Twybridge Way: affordable homes and commercial space which could include a café/restaurant and workspace/business units
2. Morland Gardens: affordable homes and youth facilities
3. Bernard Shaw House: affordable homes only

3.2.55 The results of the consultation show that of the 92 responses received, 39% were satisfied with the proposed site use options, 26% were dissatisfied with the proposed site use options and 35% were neutral or preferred not to say. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the consultation responses to this element of the consultation.

3.2.56 For Morland Gardens, there was also a petition requesting that the locally listed Altamira Building should not be demolished as part of development plans for the site. 251 people had signed the petition. A decision on the demolition or retention of this building will be subject to a future Cabinet report after the necessary design, site investigation works and viability assessments are undertaken. Proposals would also be subject to a planning application which would also consider the appropriate planning and heritage considerations.

3.2.57 Cabinet is therefore asked to agree the proposed site options set out in the second phase of the consultation and listed in paragraph 3.2.54 above as well as agreeing a budget of £1million. Officers will use this budget to undertake feasibility studies and commission the necessary design work to develop the site use proposals in more detail for future member consideration.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 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.

4.2 In 2017, the Council consulted with users of BPCLC and residents on the nature of the proposed community building. That consultation informed the current plans for a new Leisure Centre at Bridge Park.

- 4.3 In November 2024, 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. This consultation will inform a planning application for the redevelopment of the Bridge Park site to include the new Leisure Centre.
- 4.4 The council undertook public consultation on development plans for Bridge Park and other development sites within the Hillside Corridor from 27 November 2024 – 12 January 2025. Local residents, community groups and businesses were contacted to inform them of the forthcoming consultation. The council updated its website and associated webpages (<https://www.brent.gov.uk/business/regeneration/growth-areas/bridge-park>) to reflect the proposed plans and to advertise the public consultation, including an online questionnaire.
- 4.5 The consultation comprised of a launch event for community groups on 27 November 2024 and two public exhibition events held at Brent Start, Twybridge Way on 28 November 2024 and 30 November 2024. 8,000 homes were leaflet dropped encouraging residents to attend the exhibition events and complete the consultation questionnaire. The exhibitions demonstrated the plans for the sites along the Hillside Corridor with details on the proposed masterplan development at Bridge Park that intends on providing a new leisure centre, community space, new adult education provision, 1,000 homes, café and extensive public realm. At these events, the plans for the site and intended closure of the existing centre were discussed with attendees. The Bridge Park redevelopment webpage described the proposals as well as having a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section which provided responses to questions, including what will happen to the existing centre. The response to this question was that the council intends to close in early 2025.
- 4.6 51 responses were received during the consultation period and the key outcomes of the consultation are included in Appendix 1. Below are a few key points from the consultation in relation to Bridge Park:
- 96% of respondents agreed that the Bridge Park site is in need of significant investment.
 - 100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that new parks and green spaces will be valuable assets for the area.
 - 86% of respondents agreed that the leisure and community facilities in the proposal offer a good mix of spaces and activities for everyone
- 4.7 The second phase of the consultation ran from 3 March 2025 until 11 May 2025. The website was updated to reflect the outcome of the first phase and the content of the second phase of consultation. The consultation asked about three key areas; the closure of the existing Bridge Park, feedback on the proposed facilities for the new leisure centre and the site use options for the other sites in the Hillside Corridor.
- 4.8 The consultation included leaflet drops to over 8,000 homes, two public exhibitions, drop-in sessions at Bridge Park, a meeting with block bookers of

the centre as well as door knocking to 500 homes to ask residents to respond to the consultation questionnaire.

4.9 Appendix 1 sets out the results of the second phase of the consultation. Below are a few key points:

- Closure
 - Of the 92 responses, 71% responded it would impact them negatively, 20% neutrally, and 9% positively.
 - Main area of dissatisfaction was related to losing access to the facility and for the time proposed.
- Feedback on new leisure centre
 - Of the 92 responses, 51% were satisfied, 36% were dissatisfied, and 13% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the proposed facility mix of the new leisure centre.
 - Main area of dissatisfaction was related to the size of the proposed facilities not meeting a particular sport or activity's space requirements (e.g., the absence of a specific sport facility, the proposed size of spaces like the sports hall or swimming pool being deemed insufficient).
- Hillside Corridor
 - Of the 92 responses, 39% were satisfied, 26% were dissatisfied and 35% were neutral or preferred not to say on the proposed site use options for the sites in the Hillside Corridor.
 - Feedback here covered views on the broader balance of uses across the redeveloped sites such as any commercial space serving the needs of the local community and the scale of any residential development overshadowing the community uses.

4.10 The council also asked respondents whether they were interested in being part of a community / advisory steering group for the Hillside Corridor and Bridge Park. 37% of respondents answered yes and provided their contact details to which the council will collate and contact in due course be part of a steering group to work with the council to assist in shaping the future of the sites within the Hillside Corridor as well as updating on projects progress.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 For the financial year 2023/24, the Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre had an outturn position of -£457k. Although usage has gradually picked up since the end of Covid restrictions, the overspend or losses incurred are similar for previous financial years. For financial year 2024/25, the centre had an outturn position of -£499k. The Council commissioned FMG Consultants to assess the viability of the new leisure centre and they expect an operational surplus in year 5.

5.2 The financial position of the council means that we cannot continue running the centre at a significant loss. In addition, the risk of unplanned costs through

repair and the maintenance cost pressures do not provide value for money when the building will be demolished in the next couple of years.

- 5.3 Previous condition survey work undertaken in 2019 identified capital and maintenance works to an approximate value of £1.5m, now likely to be significantly higher, that would be required to adequately replace building components and bring the building to a good condition rating, including a level of safety. This investment would be needed in 2025-26, putting pressure on the council's already stretched capital programme and incurring revenue costs for borrowing. It would also place additional pressure on existing revenue budgets should maintenance works be required.
- 5.4 The council has considered the benefit of keeping the Centre open against the required costs of maintenance and repair for a building which will have to be demolished for the new centre to be built. Maintenance and repair costs need to be funded by revenue. This would be on top of the current revenue loss from operating the Centre.
- 5.5 The centre is already facing operational challenges: the boiler has broken and the roof is leaking. The age of the facilities has made it very difficult to source replacement parts including for recent break downs of the lift as well as the sauna and steam rooms. Keeping the Centre open does not appear to be a financially viable option or good use of public funds. The option to close the centre in July allows us to plan the closure, rather than being forced to close due to works being required or safety concerns. Furthermore, the proposal to close the leisure centre in July 2025 will allow the council to secure vacant possession of the site, commission intrusive site surveys, finalise the structural plans especially foundation design and potentially seek to reduce the timetable for delivering the new leisure centre.
- 5.6 The council has considered increasing income by increasing fees and charges to customers, but this would not raise significant funds to make up the losses. Further, fee increases would need to consider the limited facilities at Bridge Park in light of the age of the building and its condition. Current membership is advertised at £27.50 per month, this would equate to a need to significantly increase in memberships being sold across the year (1,512 at £27.50 per month for 12 months).
- 5.7 In 2019, Cabinet approved a capital budget of £50m for the council's development at Bridge Park. It is anticipated that this will be mostly funded through S106 receipts, Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) and the land receipt from the sale of part of the council owned land at Bridge Park. In addition, the council intends to seek grant funding from Sport England. The council does not intend to fund any of the scheme through external borrowing.
- 5.8 There are 11 permanent employees (seven full time and four part time) and six group exercise instructors. These staff are at risk of redundancy. There will be some redundancy costs depending on the number of staff that are not redeployed. The maximum cost for redundancies will be £90k based on calculations provided by Human Resources colleagues in May 2025. There will

also be Pension Strain costs of £88k for two members of staff for early release of pension.

- 5.9 If a building has been in continuous lawful use for at least 6 months of the last 3 years at the point of the granting of a planning permission, then the floorspace of that building can then be used as an existing building credit to reduce the CIL payable on a development. Should the Centre be demolished prior to the approval of the planning permission, the Council would lose 7,208 m² of floor space which could be used to offset CIL payments.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The council's statutory duties in relation to sport and leisure provision are engaged under s19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which gives a local authority the power to provide such recreational facilities as it sees fit.

- 6.2 Extensive consultation has been undertaken by the officers to ensure compliance with the Gunning principles. The basic legal requirements relating to the conduct of a consultation, are that:

6.2.1 Consultation must take place at a time when the authority's proposals are still at a formative stage and the mind of the decision-maker is still open to change (**Gunning 1**)

6.2.2 The public authority must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response (**Gunning 2**).

6.2.3 Adequate time must be allowed for consideration and response (**Gunning 3**)

6.2.4 The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the relevant proposals (**Gunning 4**).

- 6.3 The consultation has therefore been undertaken in compliance with these principles.

- 6.4 A building may be added to the list of buildings which are protected pursuant to the listed Buildings Act 1990 if they are of special architectural or historic interest [**s. 1**]. Buildings included on the list are known as "listed buildings". The power to add a building to the list lies with the Secretary of State but they must consult with Historic England in advance of making any such decision. The process for adding a building to the list is, in practice, as follows:

- a. An application is made for a building to be listed;
- b. Historic England validates the application and makes an initial assessment;
- c. If the initial assessment indicates potential for the building to meet the criteria for listing, then Historic England will carry out a full assessment and consult with relevant parties (including the owners of the building);

- d. Historic England compiles its final report and makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State (who makes the final decision).
- 6.5 An interested party can seek a review of a recommendation, by Historic England, for a building to be listed. The application for review must be received by the Secretary of State within 28 days of Historic England submitting its recommendation. The application must contain “significant evidence” to suggest that Historic England’s recommendation is incorrect. There is no avenue of appeal (other than judicial review) after the Secretary of State has made a decision to list the Site.
- 6.6 Prior approval is also required prior to the demolition of the buildings. The applicant is required to put up a site notice which must be in place for at least 21 days within the 28-day application period.
- 6.7 An application must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority which includes sufficient information to demonstrate the proposed method of demolition and how the site will be left at the end of the demolition process. This normally includes a demolition management plan demonstrating how the environmental impacts of demotion will be managed, and a Demolition Logistics Plan which looks at vehicular routes to the site and how vehicles will be managed both within and outside of the site (e.g. timings, vehicle turning, wheel washing, any road closures / removal of parking bays / hoardings or use of the highway/footway).
- 6.8 The Planning Authority must consider and determine the application within 28 days and may grant Prior approval, determine that prior approval isn’t required or may refuse prior approval. The demolition can then be carried out within 5 years of the approval (if prior approval is granted) or within 5 years of the submission of the application if prior approval is not required or if the Planning Authority don’t determine the application within 28 days.
- 6.9 The demolition of the building would also require approval under the Building Regulations. There are also other considerations such as procedure to ensure the protection of protected species (e.g. bats / birds).
- 6.10 Should the proposal to close the Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre be agreed, various consultancy and works contracts will need to be let relating to the demolition and subsequent construction of the new leisure centre at Bridge Park. Such contracts will be let using the Council’s Contract Standing Orders and the Procurement Act 2023.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics

are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 A detailed analysis of the equality implications is contained within the Equality Analysis which is attached as Appendix 3. Members must consider the detail as part of their decision-making process.
- 7.4 Sport England's Active Lives survey identifies a number of target groups which are underrepresented in terms of participation in sport and physical activity. The nationally identified under-represented groups are young people, women and girls, people with disabilities, over 45s and black and minority ethnic groups. Analysis of the available data in relation to the impact on the different protected characteristic groups shows that closing the Centre may have a negative impact on Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups as a greater proportion of users are from the broad black group – Black Somali, Black Caribbean and Black African. Closing the centre may also have a negative impact on people with disabilities, as there is a targeted session for young people on a Saturday. There may be a negative impact on the older population as they may find it more difficult to travel to alternative provision.
- 7.5 Closing the centre could have a negative impact on the five faith groups who hire the Centre on a regular basis for a total of 12 hours per week. Attendance across the 5 groups varies between 217 and 339 per week.
- 7.6 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. The council recognises the importance of working with the community to ensure this history is commemorated within the new facilities. We will work closely with the Libraries, Arts and Heritage Team to explore how best to recognise the legacy and contribution that Bridge Park had in Black British History. For example, working with local groups, organisations and individuals, this might be a photo exhibition showing the development of the community centre from a bus garage through to today and a mural on the hoardings of the development site to reflect the history.
- 7.7 While the Equality Analysis has identified potential adverse impacts of the proposal, 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 it open, the condition of the building, the

cost of repairs, and the desire to avoid an unplanned closure. The council's goal is to provide residents with a new and improved leisure centre by 2030. Mitigating factors identified including making the council's free physical activity offer more visible online and better publicised to residents, signposting current service users to alternative leisure and exercise provisions nearby, offering guidance and advice to business tenants using the site, and identifying and signposting to alternative meeting room provisions in facilities within a two-mile radius. The longer-term plan is to have a new and improved leisure centre facility on this site which will serve the local community.

- 7.8 Members are to give due regard to the Section 149 duty but must also pay regard to any countervailing factors which it is proper and reasonable for them to consider. These may include budgetary and financial constraints which are outlined elsewhere in this report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 The council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and set out to do all in its gift to become carbon neutral on a borough-wide basis by 2030. The council has subsequently adopted a Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (2021-2030) which sets out the council's route map to achieve this aim.
- 8.2 Bridge Park forms part of the council's overall carbon footprint for its own estate and operations. The age of the building means that it performs poorly from an energy efficiency perspective. It has the second highest energy use (measured both in kWh and cost), of all the Corporate owned and operated estate buildings. Therefore, there will be significant energy savings opportunities from replacing it with a new and much more energy efficient leisure centre building. The design and construction of a new building provides an opportunity to revitalise the site with environmental sustainability as a key consideration, with the potential for installing low carbon technologies and building fabric considerations that meet the environmental sustainability expectations of the Local Plan, the London Plan and Building Regulation requirements. It is also proposed that the site would be a car-free development, save for parking for blue badge holders, which would also support a reduction in the site's associated carbon footprint and contribute to improved air quality in the area.
- 8.3 The council will aim to minimise any negative environmental impacts wherever possible as part of the demolition plans. The alternative to demolition and creation of a new building, would be look at retrofitting the buildings to improve energy efficiency on existing site as it currently stands. This is not deemed viable due the current costs associated with non-domestic buildings. When considered alongside the wider rationale for the proposals set out within this report, on balance it is felt that overall future sustainability of the site would be best secured through the re-development proposals to meet the needs of the site and the local area.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 There are 11 permanent employees (seven full time and four part time) and six group exercise instructors. These staff will be at risk of redundancy. Staff will be consulted regarding the closure of the Centre should the decision be made to close the Centre. A minimum of 15 days is required.
- 9.2 Staff will be given early access to internal employment opportunities via the Redeployment process. Those that are not redeployed will be notified of their redundancy, HR will notify recruitment to ensure roles at the same grade, one grade higher or lower are prioritised for the redeployees before other internal/external candidates are shortlisted.
- 9.3 Staff have been offered support from HR including skills matching and training such as CV writing and interview techniques, stress and resilience and financial literacy. Courses can be accessed via the council's internal training catalogue and staff have been made aware of support they can access via the Employees Assistance Programme and CareFirst, a confidential helpline.
- 9.4 We have contacted other leisure operators within the borough to ask if they would consider speaking with staff at Bridge Park to make them aware of upcoming employment opportunities.
- 9.5 Should staff leave Council employment prior to the closure of the centre; we may need to consider reducing the opening hours of the centre.
- 9.6 In relation to the property considerations, break notices were issued to all commercial tenants at Bridge Park and Technology House. All tenants at Bridge Park were informed that they were required to vacate by Friday 28th February 2025. The one tenant at Technology House was informed that they were required to vacate by 15th May 2025. All tenants at both sites have since vacated.
- 9.7 A Certificate of Immunity (Col) from Listing has been submitted by SRED for Bridge Park and Technology House. A campaign group, Save Bridge Park, working with HPCC has also submitted an application to list Bridge Park.
- 9.8 The council has responded to Historic England to comment on the two applications as landowner and as the local planning authority. Historic England will consider both applications and prepare a report for consideration by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in the summer 2025.
- 9.9 Should the Col be granted then the building will be protected from listing applications for a five-year period. There is a risk that Historic England consider the building(s) are listable and this could prevent the buildings from being redeveloped as proposed.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 An external public relations company (Four Agency) has been jointly commissioned by Brent and SRED to manage the pre-planning public consultation process for Bridge Park given that is a major regeneration scheme.
- 10.2 Consultation was undertaken with the public during November 2024 – January 2025 and March – May 2025. This involved exhibition events, meetings drop-in sessions and online information and questionnaires.
- 10.3 The council will continue to keep residents updated on progress of these events/milestones through a newly created community advisory group who will be involved in shaping the future of the Hillside Corridor and/or the development of the Bridge Park site.

Report sign off:

Rachel Crossley

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Alice Lester

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