

Gurnell Leisure Centre Redevelopment London Borough of Ealing (LBE) & EcoWorld

Frequently Asked Questions Document

September 2020

September 2020 update

This is an updated set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the proposed redevelopment of Gurnell Leisure Centre. This document was published in September 2020 and follows the Covid-19 pandemic and decision not to reopen the existing Leisure Centre which was agreed by Cabinet in July 2020. At the time of producing this FAQ update a planning application has been submitted for the full replacement of the Leisure Centre with 599 residential units on the existing site. The application status is currently pending. As part of the planning application two virtual public consultation events were hosted on 22 and 25 July 2020. This document seeks to capture and respond to questions raised at these public consultation sessions and to answer questions raised in relation to the decision not to reopen the existing Leisure Centre at this time.

Although some planning matters are covered below, this FAQ document is not intended to provide a detailed justification on the specifics of the design or technical aspects of the planning application itself, such as parking / traffic impact, flood risk or impact on Metropolitan Open Land. The planning case for the development has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and all material submitted in support of the proposals is available for review by the public with a link to the application provided below.

This document is intended to respond to questions raised around the decision to rebuild Gurnell Leisure Centre in the way proposed and the specifics of how it is to be delivered.

For more information please refer to the following links:

www.ealing.gov.uk/gurnell

Information on the Council's website relating to the development. A version of these FAQs can be accessed there as well as information on previous consultation events and details on the new facilities.

www.gurnellealing.co.uk

An updated website which sets out the principles of the scheme's design approach and is intended to provide a summary of the development as part of the planning application.

The full planning application, including associated documents, can be viewed via <https://pam.ealing.gov.uk/online-applications/> entering the application reference number 201695FUL

Previous reports to Cabinet on the Gurnell project, which confirm the political decision making and evolution of the proposals over time which has led to the current proposals, can be accessed via the links below:

[Cabinet: 14 July 2020 - Item 13](#)

[Cabinet: 17 September 2019 - Item 15](#)

[Cabinet: 17 May 2016 - Item 11](#)

[Cabinet: 24 March 2015 - Item 18](#)

[Cabinet: 21 July 2015 - Item 8](#)

[Cabinet: 24 November 2015 - Item 21](#)

[Cabinet: 24 March 2015 - Item 18](#)

What has changed since the previous version of this document?

The overall approach to redeveloping Gurnell Leisure Centre remains consistent with that presented in previous versions of this document and as initially approved by Ealing's Cabinet in March 2015. The current Leisure Centre is at the end of its design life having been opened in 1981. Refurbishment of the current facility has been considered however, given the constraints and overall condition of the building, further significant capital investment into the existing Centre would not offer value for money as a long-term solution.

Since 2015, the Council has been progressing with plans to fully rebuild the leisure centre. Given the financial constraints the Council has and continues to operate under, the project seeks to secure a new leisure centre by funding the construction costs in part through residential enabling development.

At earlier stages of the project, it had been anticipated that no affordable/social housing would be provided within the residential offer on the basis and that it would be a 100% private housing scheme. The project was providing a new leisure centre with private housing being required to enable the development. However, following the Council's ambition to deliver significant new affordable housing in the borough, the housing mix has been adjusted where approximately 34.5% of the units in the scheme (based upon habitable rooms) are proposed to be affordable rather than full market. There is no overall increase in the total number of housing units as a result of this change and the total number of residential units proposed is 599. Subject to securing planning permission and proceeding with the development, the intention is that the Council's wholly owned housing company Broadway Living will acquire 196 of the 599 units and that these will be affordable.

Following this change in residential mix, the Leisure Centre and 196 affordable units above the Leisure Centre will now remain in the Council's ownership and the deal structure with the Developer has been adjusted such that the Council will directly build the new Leisure Centre and affordable housing with the Developer delivering only the 403 private residential units with the Developer making a land payment to the Council for that element of their scheme. This is a change to the previous approach where the Developer was to build the scheme in its entirety and then lease back the leisure centre to the Council. This change in approach was agreed in principle by Cabinet at a meeting in September 2019 (please see link above to relevant Cabinet report)

What are the benefits and business case for the project?

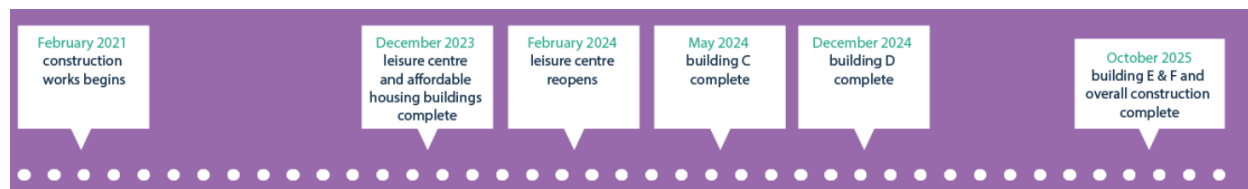
The summary of benefits of the project are as follows:

- Provides a new state of the art Leisure Centre which if directly built and paid for by the Council would cost in excess of 40 million pounds
- The project provides 196 affordable homes (98 genuinely affordable / social rent and 98 shared ownership)
- The project will fund over one million pounds in wider improvements to the park including improved pedestrian experience by relocating all current car parking underground
- Contribution towards a new BMX regional facility, skate park and playground
- The project will deliver new commercial units at ground floor of the housing which will offer local employment opportunities
- The project will be required to make Section 106 contributions towards wider infrastructure improvements including highways, schools and health provision to mitigate the development

- Vast majority of the site, including the Leisure Centre and affordable housing, are to remain in Council ownership and the Council will retain control of specification and construction / delivery arrangements

What are the timescales for the project?

The provisional timescales for the project are as outlined below however remain subject to the proposals receiving planning permission and finalisation of arrangements with the Developer and appointment of a building contractor.



FAQs on the LEISURE CENTRE

What are the benefits of the new Leisure Centre and how does it contribute to the health and wellbeing of Ealing residents?

The new replacement sport and leisure facility which will include the latest design and operational features, the building will be more cost and energy efficient whilst the new facility mix will better meet the sporting and health related needs of local residents long into the future.

The new facility will support the vision, aims and objectives of the existing Ealing Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21 as well as those contained in future strategies focussed on increasing the physical activity levels and mental wellbeing of Ealing residents, helping to achieve the following long term aims:

- create opportunities to sustain good mental and physical health for children and adults at every stage of life;
- reduce health inequalities by improving outcomes for neighbourhoods and communities experiencing poor health;
- enable people of working age to participate as fully as possible in working and community life, to improve the health and economic outcomes for them and their households;
- enable everyone to be healthy and independent for as long as possible, helping to prevent or delay the need for social and acute care.

The new Gurnell facility and the programmes to be offered to residents in partnership with Public Health and other related services will hopefully have a significant impact on major health conditions including:

- Reducing childhood obesity;
- Reducing smoking prevalence;
- Increasing physical activity;
- Improving health-related quality of life for people with mental illness;
- Increasing social contact for older people and carers

By providing a network of sport and leisure facilities available for community use across Ealing, including the proposed new Gurnell Leisure Centre, the Council is ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to be active, creating a healthier Ealing.

The facility will offer a range of employment opportunities from practical activity delivery and plant maintenance to administration and management roles. All leisure operators have a training and career pathway associated with each role, offering long term employment opportunities and career progression. It is predicted that the proposed new Gurnell Leisure Centre facility with its extensive range of facilities and activities over and above those offered by the existing facility, will provide around 30 additional full time equivalent roles, for local people across a range of different sectors from life guarding to catering.

The new Gurnell Leisure Centre will have facilities that allow a range of sports to take place ensuring people from all sections of the community have the opportunity to adopt a healthy active lifestyle. The recreation pool and the soft play area will engage parents and toddlers in fun, enjoyable activity helping to establish at a very early age a lifelong enthusiasm for activities that are both physically and mentally stimulating.

The main 10 lane 50m swimming pool with moveable floors and submersing booms will offer activity space for lane swimming, which is enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities as an individual or as part of a swimming club training session; learn to swim lessons for adults as well as children and people with disabilities and/or additional needs; school swimming lessons supporting Ealing primary schools to deliver curriculum activity; aqua fit classes enjoyed mainly by older people and women of all ages and a wide range of sports club activity from triathlon to underwater hockey.

The studio spaces will be home to a range of group exercise activities; enjoyed by men and women as well as voluntary martial arts clubs and other indoor sports. The gym will offer both juniors and adults the opportunity to exercise individually or as part of a specific group, for example supervised gym sessions run successfully throughout the borough providing like-minded people with perhaps less gym use experience with the opportunity to exercise together under supervision, off peak activity usually enjoyed by older adults and those maybe new to exercise or returning to exercise after an illness or injury.

The new outdoor floodlit skate area will be designed in partnership with existing users with the latest features to engage youngsters as well as those interested in less traditional activities. The mix of the proposed new facilities will appeal to people of all ages, from all backgrounds with a range of abilities, providing them with an opportunity to be physically active and mentally engaged thus encouraging them to live a healthy active lifestyle.

Leisure facility operators also encourage users to look at their own and their family's lifestyles and providing healthy lifestyle information and guidance, raising the awareness of topics such as smoking, drug use, alcohol consumption and the need for a balanced healthy diet, etc. Engagement and awareness raising events are regularly run in house face to face as well as the information being available via social media and the web.

Is there evidence of demand for a new swimming pool facility in Ealing? Why build a new leisure centre at all?

In 2010, the Council worked in partnership with Sport England's Facilities Improvement Service to develop a comprehensive evidence base for indoor and outdoor sports facilities in the borough; the findings were then used to develop the Ealing Sports Facility Strategy 2012 – 21 which assessed the current and future need for the most popular indoor and outdoor sports facilities across Ealing. The Facility Strategy 2012 – 21 was adopted by Cabinet in February 2013.

In the swimming pool section of the document, the Council's stated aim is to create a network of high quality pool facilities geographically spread across the borough which gives local people the

opportunity to take part in a wide range of water based sports and activities, progressing from learn to swim classes through to elite competition, increasing the number of people who take part in swimming and other water based activities.

The replacement of Gurnell Leisure Centre was included in the scenario testing completed in 2010; using Sport England's Facility Planning Model, the proposed new replacement facility included a 50m x 17m eight lane pool and a 16m x 12m learner pool, giving a combined water space of 1,042 square metres (sqm). Gurnell's current swimming pool capacity is 975sqm, the main pool is 750sqm and the usable space in the fun pool is 225sqm. The proposed new 10 lane x 50m main pool and recreation pool will provide a combined total water space of 1,334sqm; this water space is needed to meet the predicted levels of demand for swimming pool space established in 2010, for 2021.

The current Ealing Sports Facility Strategy 2012-21 developed in 2010, in partnership with Sport England states the two proposed pool developments to replace Acton Baths and the other to replace Gurnell Leisure Centre should be actioned. Acton Swimming Baths was successfully replaced by the Everyone Active Acton Centre in 2014 and work started on the Gurnell replacement project soon after.

In the period since the strategy was written, the supply of water space in Ealing as measured by Sport England's Facility Planning Model (FPM) has decreased, however the demand for pool space in Ealing has risen due to the population growing to a level over and above that predicted back in 2012 and the increasing levels of demand for pool space all the borough's wetside facilities are currently experiencing, especially at peak times for activities such as learn to swim, club swimming sessions and public lane swimming.

Pool space in all of the public facilities is at a premium during peak hours, with very little if any spare capacity. The demand for learn to swim places has meant that both Ealing's leisure operators run 7 day a week year-round programmes to try and meet demand.

Another important user group at the new facility and across all of Ealing's pools is Ealing Swimming Club and all its sub sections. Due to the Club's continued success and popularity over recent years, as well as the breadth of water-based opportunities offered, the Club membership has risen to approximately 1,800 members of all ages and abilities. The new facility will help meet the future needs of the Club as it will provide an excellent range of water based facilities for the club to use 7 days a week throughout the year, providing a wide range of sporting opportunities for Ealing residents of all ages and abilities.

In summary, since the strategy was written, the amount of water space available as measured by Sport England's Facility Planning Model has reduced whilst the demand for water space has grown at a much faster rate than that predicted in 2010 due to both the rapid increase in the borough's population and the demand for pool space in Ealing due to many factors including residents desire to be and stay active. The successful replacement of the existing Gurnell Leisure Centre facility is key to Ealing being able to meet the future demand for water space in the borough.

What is the difference between the existing Leisure Centre and that which is proposed?

The new leisure centre will provide the following indoor facilities:

- The main 10 lane 50 metre pool with its two moveable floors and 2 submerging booms will have the functionality to be split into pools of various sizes and of different depths, which will allow an extensive programme of activities for people of all ages and abilities to be delivered at any one time. It is approximately 40% larger than the existing pool.
- Leisure Pool featuring flume, wave pool, lazy river and rock pool and beach

- State of the art c900 sqm gym and fitness suite with over 150 stations, close to triple the size of the existing gym
- 3 group exercise and dance studios
- 1 cycle studio
- Wellbeing zone for therapy and physiotherapy rooms
- Multi-floored soft play
- Café
- Wet and dry changing facilities
- Spectator viewing
- Clubroom
- Meeting space
- Club office accommodation

The proposals would provide the following additional outdoor improvements in the area:

- Regional Floodlit BMX Facility
- Major floodlit skatepark
- New playground
- New bridge to link cycle and pedestrian routes to Perivale Park and beyond
- Park landscaping
- Tree planting and biodiversity improvements
- Enhanced riverbanks linking into the Gurnell to Greenford Greenway
- Targeted activity programmes such as Exercise on Referral schemes and health related fitness programmes delivered in partnership with Public Health teams will focus on reducing health inequalities across the borough

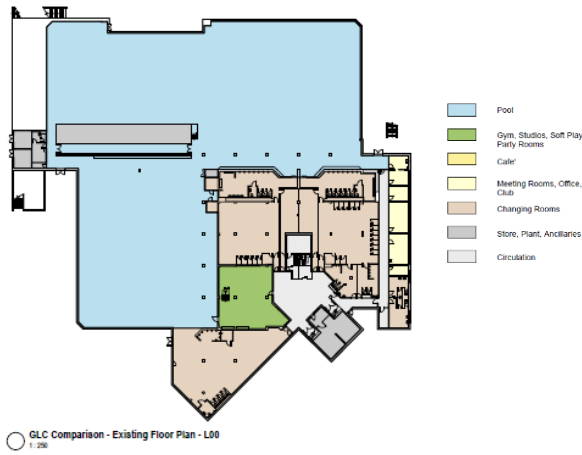
The below table provides an area comparison between the existing leisure centre facilities and the proposed leisure centre facilities

	Existing Leisure Centre	Proposed Leisure Centre
Main pool	Total length: 50m Total width: 13-15m Total area: approx. 760sqm. Divided in 2 sections (one is approx. 24m x 13m – the other is approx. 26m x 15m).	Total length: 50m Total width: 25m Total area: 1,250sqm Incorporates moveable floors to create up to 3 separate smaller pools 25x 25, 25x 12.5 and 25x8.5.
Leisure / fun pool	Total area: 488sqm	Total area: 330sqm To include flume, wave pool, lazy river and rock pool and beach
Spectator area	127sqm	167sqm
Changing facilities	1,092 sqm (937sqm wet and 155 sqm dry)	1,128 sq. m (775 wet change and 353 sq. m dry change plus toilets)
Gym facilities	303sqm	881 sqm
Activity studios	1 x 156sqm Studio and 1 x 122sqm Spinning studio	3 x studios 492sqm plus breakout area (68sqm)

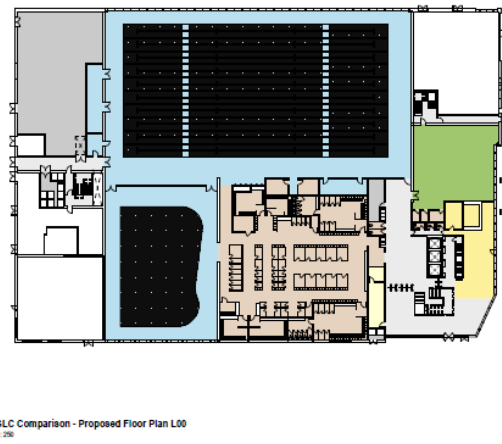
	Total area: 278sqm	Total area: 560 sqm
Soft Play	Not provided in current facility	250 sqm double height soft play area plus a 126 sqm party room
Cafe	Not provided in current facility	139 sqm (exc toilet and corridor)
Meeting Rooms	Not provided in current facility	60 sqm Club and Meeting rooms
Parking	175 spaces surface level	175 spaces underground
Total useable floor area of Leisure Centre	5,460 sqm	7,914 sqm

Below are scaled floor plans which compare the existing leisure centre to that which is proposed.

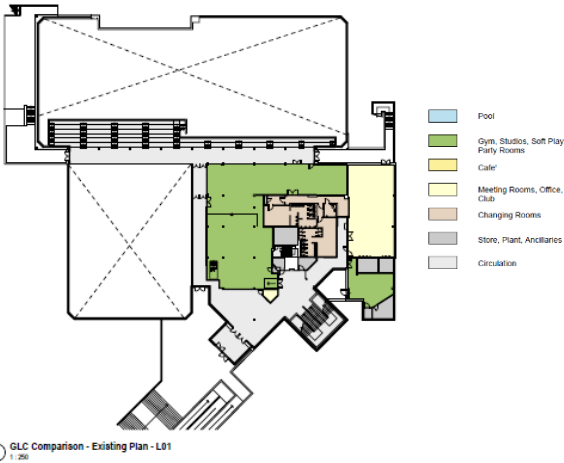
Existing Ground Floor



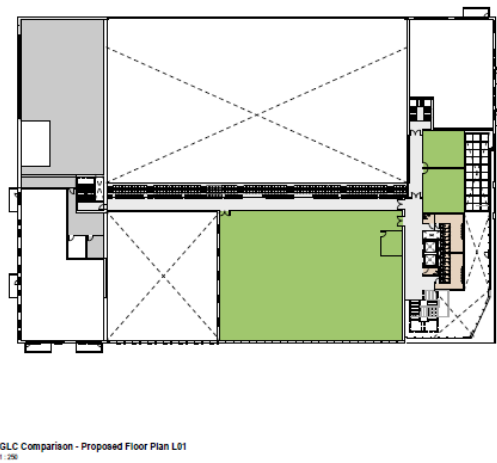
Proposed Ground Floor



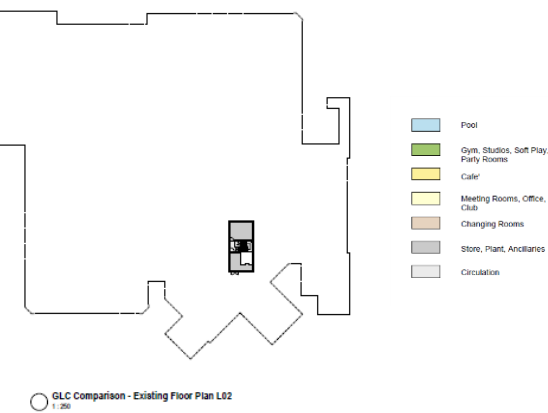
Existing First Floor



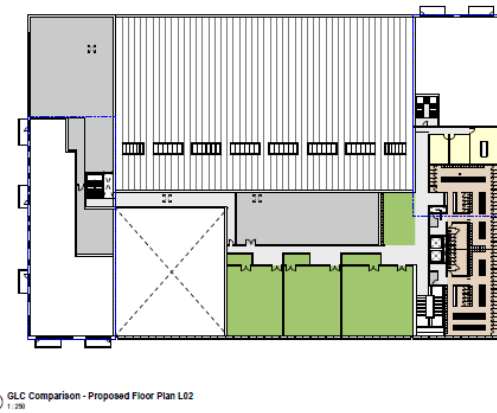
Proposed First Floor



Existing Second Floor



Proposed Second Floor



What is 'state of the art' about the new leisure centre?

The competition pool configuration will be one of only three similar installations in England that will enable the optimal programming of water space. The Leisure Pool will enjoy the latest in water movement technology and the gym will be designed and fitted out with the most up to date initiatives in the health market. Points of sale will be designed to enable easy access for users and the basement car park includes direct lift access to the reception. The soft play offer will be significant and incorporate the latest in interactive equipment.

Gurnell will incorporate the latest energy efficient technology to reduce cost and carbon emissions. The approach to energy involves demand minimisation through effective building form and orientation, good envelope design and proficient use of services before considering the use of Air Source Heat Pump-led district heating and Low and Zero Carbon technologies to decarbonise the energy supply.

The costs which have been stated in the past both for the refurbishment and for the rebuild of the leisure centre have changed over time and have been inconsistent?

Costs published to date have been based upon estimates and best information available at the time. Construction costs are subject to change as a result of a variety of factors including construction market price fluctuations, inflation and refinement of scope as the design is further developed, including as a result of any requirements of the planning process. The final costs of the development will not be fixed until a final tender price is received for a construction contract.

The costs of refurbishing the Leisure Centre is particularly difficult to estimate and will vary greatly depending on the level of refurbishment required and overall scope of works. Refurbishment would additionally require a greater level of contingency allowance to account for unforeseen issues which might arise when works are underway and following the building being 'opened up'. The planning application includes estimates of refurbishment as provided in 2018 by a professional cost consultant and which ranges from a 'low level' estimate of £5.5 million up to a 'high level' estimate of £30 million depending on whether for example allowances are made for full replacement/refurbishment of all sanitary installations, mechanical and electrical and lift/conveyor and wet areas.

The leisure centre looks over specified - why can't the Council build a cheaper leisure centre? There are examples of other leisure centres having been built for less than what this is anticipated to cost?

It is very difficult to directly compare the cost of the proposed new Gurnell Leisure Centre to other recently constructed leisure centres, as rarely will two leisure centres contain the same mix of facilities. The new centre has been designed to meet the needs of the borough as outlined above and the exact mix and size of accommodation has been carefully considered to respond to local demand and demographics and to compliment other nearby facilities.

Various factors will influence the cost of the project and which are likely to skew a direct comparison to other facilities in the country. General factors which will influence a project's cost include:

- Geographical and urban location influence; building within London is inherently more expensive than in other regions within the UK.
- Site specific factors; for example, the variation in level of the site itself, the composition of the site substrate, the need for piled foundations and the presence of ground gas or ground water can all impact on construction budgets. In particular the presence of contaminated land can add cost

to construction projects, the magnitude of which may vary considerably due to location and previous historical usage.

- The current use of the site; demolition of existing buildings occupying the site, the removal and replacement of trees or other ecological features.
- Construction timeline; economic factors such as the effects of market inflation
- Project scope; the mix and size of facilities, some projects also include outdoor facilities such as grass pitches, tennis courts, playgrounds or significant landscaping. Large facilities may require infrastructure upgrades such as new electrical substations or upgrades to the local road network.

Some examples of factors which have influenced the cost of the proposed new Gurnell Leisure Centre specifically include:

- A 50m pool is a fantastic asset that many authorities are unable to provide due to cost constraints. Most leisure centres are built with a 25m pool. The construction of the tank itself is complicated with many interfaces and takes a long time to build and test. The moveable floor and boom are costly to provide but give great flexibility to the operator and will allow them to provide a greater variety of water-based sports and increased swimming lesson capacity. The pool hall is a large area and special steel trusses are required to span the pool; specialist plant is also needed to ventilate the pool hall. Finally, a large spectator seating area is being provided to allow swim competitions and galas to take place.
- The project must comply with the GLA London Plan, a higher sustainability standard than local plans outside of Greater London. This will require a greater capital investment at the outset to achieve but over the long term will mean that the facility is highly energy efficient.
- In order to minimise the impact of the project on the Metropolitan Open Land and to reduce its footprint, the centre is arranged over three floors requiring deeper foundations and additional structure and services. Most leisure centre are single storey. Car parking and plantrooms are located within a further basement floor.
- The existing centre will need to be demolished and (if found) any asbestos containing materials removed. The hardstanding for the car park will need to be removed and the site profiled to new levels to suit the surface water drainage strategy with overall long-term management of the flood plain which is an enhancement to the area
- Parts of the leisure centre provide support to the homes above; therefore, additional structure and larger foundations are required. In order to protect the homes above additional measures are required within the leisure centre to comply with latest regulations regarding fire safety and to prevent noise breakout.
- An extensive range of facilities are included in the new leisure centre including a large wet change facility to serve the 50m pool and leisure pool. Many additional facilities such as soft play, party rooms, a wellness centre and a café may not form part of the offer at other leisure centres. Furthermore, the 881m² fitness gym and three studios provide a much larger fitness suite than many other centres with the corresponding opportunity to generate revenue from memberships.

The Council have engaged their own design team, led by a leading architectural practice specialising in the design of leisure centres, to undertake a due diligence exercise and complete the detailed design of the proposed new Gurnell Leisure Centre to ensure that a best in class facility is provided.

The leisure centre project costs are to be overseen by an independent third-party cost consultant who has benchmarked and verified that the project budget represents value for money. As the project price is being finalised by means of an open book tender process, the independent third party cost consultant will ensure that each construction trade is competitively market tendered and they will be able to confirm that each individual trade price provides value for money.

Why is the Council proposing not to reopen Gurnell after the Covid lockdown has eased but is planning to reopen all other leisure facilities in the borough?

The facility at Gurnell has been operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) under a contract extension, open book accounting arrangement since November 2018 which has enabled the facilities to remain open while the revised redevelopment proposals are progressed. As a result of the various delays to the redevelopment and uncertainty regarding the closure date, the customer base and income streams have fallen over the last 3 years with a 50% reduction in surplus payments to the Council for 2019/20.

As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, all leisure facilities including Gurnell Leisure Centre were closed in line with Government guidelines. Leisure centres have subsequently been permitted to reopen however the operational restrictions that apply, for example social distancing, mean that usage and class capacities are reduced, therefore further impacting on income and the potential number of users.

With Covid-19 restrictions not anticipated to be fully lifted until the pre-Covid planned closure of Gurnell in December 2020 analysis of projected income, expenditure and usage levels indicate that the Council would be required to pay a significant subsidy to the leisure operator. Additionally, due to the proposed redevelopment, there has been only essential spend on facility maintenance leading up to the closure date, resulting in a deterioration of the plant and building fabric. If the facility were to be reopened, there would be backlog repairs and maintenance works needed which are currently unbudgeted for.

It has therefore been proposed that the leisure centre should remain closed and this approach was approved by Cabinet in July 2020. Further detail including financial projections have been included in the Cabinet report available via the link at the top of this document.

What will happen if these proposals do not obtain planning permission – does the Council regard the planning process as a ‘done deal’?

The Council considers that the case for the application has been sufficiently made and that the proposals comply with planning policy and should receive planning permission. However the planning application has not been determined and will be subject to the recommendation of the planning case officer. Any decision to approve or refuse the application will be made ultimately by the Council’s Planning Committee and subsequently the Mayor of London. As noted above, the decision not to reopen Gurnell has been made as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and financial impact of reopening the facility for a short period. The Council will continue to evaluate the position as the application is determined.

What will happen to the current users of Gurnell while it is being redeveloped?

The current users of Gurnell Leisure Centre come from all sectors of the community – all ages, genders and abilities, from a wide range of backgrounds. They include older adults taking part in early morning swimming sessions, primary schools bringing pupils to learn to swim as part of the school curriculum, young people learning to swim usually immediately after school into early evening and at weekends, Ealing Swimming Club members including adults and juniors, as well as swimmers with additional

needs and/or a disability, the general public comprising all ages and abilities and other sports club users mainly adults, with some juniors.

For the last three years, the Active Ealing team has worked closely with Everyone Active and Better to manage the swimming pool programmes in Ealing's 3 other wetside facilities – Northolt Leisure Centre, Everyone Active Acton Centre and Dormers Wells Leisure Centre. Valuable daytime hours have been protected so that when Gurnell Leisure Centre does close, there will be existing capacity to accommodate the majority of schools currently using Gurnell; priority will be given to relocate in borough state primary schools, followed by In borough state high schools then out of borough and private schools who are currently using Gurnell for lessons. These schools will be offered timeslots at the closest facility to the school. Schools have been kept up to date and have been supportive of the proposed relocation plans.

One of the biggest user groups include the current members of Better's Swim School, one of the biggest in London; these children and young people will be able to switch to Everyone Active's learn to swim programme operated at Ealing's other three pools which has existing spare capacity or some may choose to relocate to other Better facilities in neighbouring boroughs.

Early morning swimmers, who include older adults will be catered for at the same timeslot at Ealing's other pools or might also choose to swim in other pools across West London. Aqua classes are currently available at Everyone Active operated facilities during the day and in the evening, existing classes do have some spare capacity, but additional classes will be available as these classes tend to be popular with women and older adults, especially during the day.

The biggest user group to relocate will be Ealing Swimming Club, one of the biggest clubs in the country catering for swimmers of all ages and all abilities, as well as triathletes and water polo players. Active Ealing has been working closely with Club officers to ensure that the disruption to the club during the closure period is kept to an absolute minimum. Together Active Ealing offices and the club are looking at how the three remaining Ealing pool sites can be used most effectively to cater for as many club sessions as possible as well as exploring options to use facilities in Ealing managed by operators other than the Council.

Other existing club users including the canoe club and underwater hockey club have been kept apprised of the situation and Active Ealing will support the relocation of these clubs to other Ealing's pools or facilities in neighbouring boroughs. The general public have also been kept informed through public consultation events and posters around the site; young families who use the recreation pool weekday daytime and at weekends can relocate to Northolt Leisure Centre or Everyone Active Acton Centre as there is daytime capacity in the teaching pools at both sites. Most other users of Gurnell's swimming pools will have options to swim at other sites; some might though have to slightly alter their swimming time to ensure access to other pool facilities.

The clubs using the studio will be offered space in similar facilities at other sports and leisure centres in Ealing as will gym users and group exercise class attendees; some will choose to switch their usage to other providers whilst others will prefer to stay with Better and relocate to other facilities nearby. The BMX track users mainly members of Ealing BMX Club will, if all goes to plan, be enjoying the new improved facilities at the proposed new regional BMX facility less than 400m from the current track and existing Skate park users will be able to make good use of the new floodlit skate park facilities in Acton Park opened last year with all the latest design features.

How much will it cost to use the new leisure centre? Will it be for the private residents only?

The new Leisure Centre is proposed to be a community facility and will operate in a similar way to at present and will be available for public use. There will be no exclusive access for residents.

The new Gurnell Leisure Centre will operate a concessionary pricing scheme similar to Ealing's existing Leisure Pass scheme, which offers discounts of up to 50% for adults and 33% for young people on leisure activities in the borough, including sports courses, sessions and activities. To be eligible you must live in the borough and meet certain criteria such as receiving unemployment benefit, or employment and support allowance or income support, be a spouse or partner of a leisure pass holder, be a full-time student, a carer, part of a foster family, a care leaver or senior citizen living in or outside Ealing. A junior leisure pass is available to children (aged under 16 years) of adult leisure pass holders.

How much parking is proposed for the Leisure Centre and for residents?

Details of the parking strategy can be found in the planning application available at the link above alongside the Transport Assessment. It is currently proposed that the parking be relocated to a basement car park which will provide 175 spaces for leisure centre use (which is the same as at present in the above ground car park) and a further 168 resident car parking spaces.

FAQs on the HOUSING

How many residential units are there and how many will be affordable?

As noted earlier in this document, the Council has placed an increased emphasis on the need for the project to include an appropriate level of genuinely affordable housing and so the residential mix has been adjusted such that circa 34.5% by habitable room will now be a mix of genuinely affordable and intermediate affordable housing.

The total numbers of units and mix as proposed within the scheme are:

- Block A 98 Genuinely affordable units (London Affordable Rent) – this is also referred to as ‘social rent’
- Block B 98 Intermediate affordable units (Shared Ownership) – this enables people to transition from rented accommodation to home ownership. It is relevant when income exceeds the criteria for social rented accommodation, but people are unable to purchase open market properties. This applies to key workers as well as other groups.
- Blocks C-F 403 Full market sale units
- **Total** **599**

This is a change to earlier versions of the proposals where it was initially proposed that there be no affordable housing within the project. The overall number of 599 units in the scheme remains consistent with earlier versions of the proposals, ie there are now proposed to be fewer full market units which have been replaced with affordable units.

At an earlier stage, some housing within the scheme had been intended to be Discount Market Rent (DMR), which is an intermediate affordable housing product, with the costs of this anticipated to be supported by Right to Buy receipts. It is no longer anticipated that the project will access Right to Buy funding to support DMR accommodation and instead the project has secured alternative grant funding from the GLA’s Building homes for Londoners programme which will assist in paying for the costs of the genuinely affordable units.

What is the justification for building housing on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)?

Metropolitan Open Land carries a high level of protection which requires that development can be permitted only in ‘very special circumstances’. The Planning Statement within the planning application (available at the link above) provides a detailed summary of both the benefits and harms (with mitigation) of the scheme and its impact on Metropolitan Open Land.

In summary, the justification for the development on MOL is set out below:

Improvements in overall quality and usability of the park area

- the provision of designated walking and cycling routes where currently no such paths exist;
- the installation of a bridge across the River Brent to contribute towards the aspiration of creating a Greenford to Gurnell link;
- flood mitigation measures to make the parkland useable and safe for a far greater proportion of the year than current;
- the creation of new planting areas and natural interventions to increase the biodiversity value of the Site;
- the creation of different landscaped areas to allow for substantial flexibility for different sporting and leisure activities.

The substantial design benefits the new leisure centre building as compared to the existing

- open the leisure up to the MOL with a materials palette that is more sympathetic to the natural context;
- provide the leisure centre with a degree of transparency, inspiring users of the wider MOL park to similarly engage in sporting and leisure activities including children's play, skate park and BMX track; and
- provide additional MOL parkland to the northern end of the leisure centre, with the proposed footprint reoriented more towards Ruislip Road East

The overarching benefits of providing a new leisure centre in this location

- the strengthening of local communities by providing them with a diverse and higher quality sporting facilities;
- encouraging general and increased sporting participation for all sections of society with the resulting mental and physical health improvements that would result;
- increasing the regional sports role this area has within London, incentivising further economic investment in, and development of the borough's sporting provision; additional long term jobs and medium term employment opportunities through construction.

The provision of the facilitating 599 new homes (including 196 affordable homes)

- will contribute towards the draft London Plan's much increased housing target for Ealing of 2,807 homes per annum, whilst also;
- generating sufficient funding to facilitate the construction of the leisure centre;
- providing much needed affordable housing;
- providing a wide mix of high quality and spacious accommodation to meet the varying needs of the borough's population;
- introduce a new community to the area, providing additional footfall to the nearby Greenford Town Centre;
- and generating S106 financial contributions to the borough.

Who will be purchasing the Affordable Housing?

At present, it is proposed that the Council's wholly owned Housing company Broadway Living will purchase the 196 affordable housing units. This remains subject to finalisation of terms of sale at this time.

Why isn't the Developer being required to build affordable housing? Why isn't the project achieving the Council's target of 50% affordable housing?

The project is being approached as a whole and the overall scheme will deliver circa 34.5% affordable housing units based upon habitable room. The proportion of affordable housing has been set at a level which the scheme is able to support, noting that it must also contribute towards the costs of a new leisure centre. A financial viability appraisal (FVA) has been included as part of the planning application which confirms that the scheme cannot financially support additional affordable housing over and above that proposed. The local planning authority and the Greater London Authority with both undertake their own evaluation of the FVA and scrutinise the assumptions, prior to the scheme being considered by the planning committee.

The affordable residential mix doesn't reflect the needs of the area and has too many studio flats.

The affordable mix has been assessed by the Council's housing team and is considered to offer a suitable and balanced mix of accommodation to meet the needs of the area. The genuinely affordable / social rent block has been adjusted prior to the application being submitted to remove studio apartments and to include a greater number of 2 and 3 bed units to accord with demand.

What will the difference in experience be between those living in the affordable housing and those in the private residential housing? Why aren't the affordable and private housing more integrated.

The affordable housing had originally been anticipated to be a 'full market' rent offer and the design and specification remains consistent with a level expected for private housing. The resident experience whether living in the affordable housing or private sale housing will be very similar in terms of quality of accommodation. There will be no fenced off parts of the park for exclusive use of private residents and the leisure centre and gym will be available to all residents (and the wider public) at the same rates.

Has the marketing of the private units started in the UK or overseas?

No, marketing has not commenced on any of the residential units proposed within the development. Any marketing would be subject to planning permission and completion of the land sale and therefore would not be anticipated until 2021 at the earliest.

FAQs on the DEVELOPER AND THE CHANGE IN APPROACH TO DELIVERY

Who are EcoWorld and what happened to Be, who were the Developer previously?

EcoWorld acquired majority interest in Be Living and subsidiary companies in 2018 and the company was subsequently re-branded. EcoWorld is therefore obligated to meet the commitments previously agreed with the Council on Gurnell and the team working on the project remains the same as that who were operating as Be.

EcoWorld London is part of Eco World International Berhad (EcoWorld International), a real estate developer listed on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad. EcoWorld London is also partly owned by Willmott Dixon, one of the UK's largest privately-owned construction and interior fit-out groups that has over 160 years of experience in the UK.

Is the Developer 'walking away' from the deal?

No, the Developer is not walking away from the deal. The Council and the Developer have renegotiated the approach to the development where the Council will directly deliver the Leisure Centre and Affordable Housing (Blocks A + B) by tendering a building contract directly. Under this proposal the Developer will build the basement car park which sits beneath the development and the 403 residential units proposed for private sale. The Developer will pay the Council for the land upon which the 403 private residential units are proposed to be located (Blocks C-F) only.

What legal arrangements will be in place between the Council and the Developer?

The Council has already entered into an Agreement for Lease with the Developer which was signed in December 2016. The intention is that this agreement will be varied to reflect the new approach to the project with the variation to this agreement to be signed once a final position on the project including costs have been reached.

Is the whole of the Gurnell site including the park being sold to the Developer and how much for?

Under the revised deal proposed, the Developer would only be sold the land upon which the private residential buildings sit (Blocks C-F) although the precise 'red line' for the land to be sold is still to be finalised and agreed. The terms of this sale would be based upon a 250-year leasehold sale of the land to the Developer. The freehold interest for the entirety of the site, including the park and the new leisure centre/affordable housing, will be retained by the Council.

The land price payable by the Developer to the Council is subject to the outcome of the planning process and additionally the conclusion of a live commercial negotiation. It is therefore not possible to make public the anticipated land price which the Developer will pay. However, the planning application includes an independent financial viability assessment which provides cost estimates for the development.

How much is the Developer making out of the deal?

Subject to the proposals receiving planning permission and the completion of any land sale, the Developer will be paying the Council a fixed amount for the land which will be confirmed at the time of sale as part of the Agreement for Lease. The Developer will then construct Blocks C-F and when completed will sell the units in the open market. The Developer will be holding the risk on prevailing market conditions both in terms of construction costs and sales values and therefore the ultimate amount which the Developer could make as profit out of the deal will depend on these factors.

The Council will receive its own independent valuation advice around the land price payable by the Developer which will need to satisfy the Council that it is receiving 'best consideration' for the price paid by the Developer for the land.

If the Council is now directly delivering the Leisure Centre / Affordable Housing isn't the Developer being let off the hook? Previously the development risk sat entirely with the Developer and now the Council is accepting part of this?

Under the original scheme as envisaged, it had been anticipated that the Developer would build the whole scheme and would lease back the new Leisure Centre to the Council. This approach was based upon all residential units being offered for full market sale or as a private rent product which would remain with the Developer to manage. Under this arrangement the Developer would carry the risk both on construction and on sales of the full scheme. The Developer would be entitled to apply a margin for this risk at a level consistent with the appropriate level of market risk and this is factored into the overall costs of the development.

As the project has evolved, a greater emphasis has been placed on the need for the project to provide a suitable level of affordable housing in addition to providing a new leisure centre. It has subsequently been agreed that the project should incorporate affordable housing into the scheme by converting the units proposed above the leisure centre to an affordable offer. The affordable housing is proposed to be 'pre-sold' to the Council's own housing company Broadway Living and, as a consequence of this change, both the Leisure Centre and affordable housing sitting above are all planned to remain in Council ownership.

On the basis that the affordable housing is to be pre-sold in full, the benefits of the leisure centre and affordable housing remaining with the Developer to deliver has reduced as the sales risk on the affordable housing component has essentially been removed. In negotiation with the Developer, the Council intends to retain and directly deliver this element of the project and as a consequence the Developer will waive the margin to which they would have otherwise been entitled for this element and will no longer take any profit on this element.

Additional benefits of this change in approach include that the majority of the land will remain wholly in the Council's ownership and additionally that the Council will retain direct control of the

delivery of the leisure centre and affordable housing elements of the project, where previously the Council was reliant on the developer building these and providing the leisure centre back to the Council under a lease.

How much will the development cost and how much money is the Council putting in?

The Council has previously committed £12.5 million pounds as a contribution towards this project which was approved by Cabinet in March 2016. The scheme has developed significantly since that time and for example now includes approximately 34.5% affordable housing. The final costs of the project will be clarified following the granting of planning permission and once a final tender for the proposed construction contract has been submitted to the Council.