

Bridge Park a new chapter for Stonebridge



A message from Cllr Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council

Dear Resident

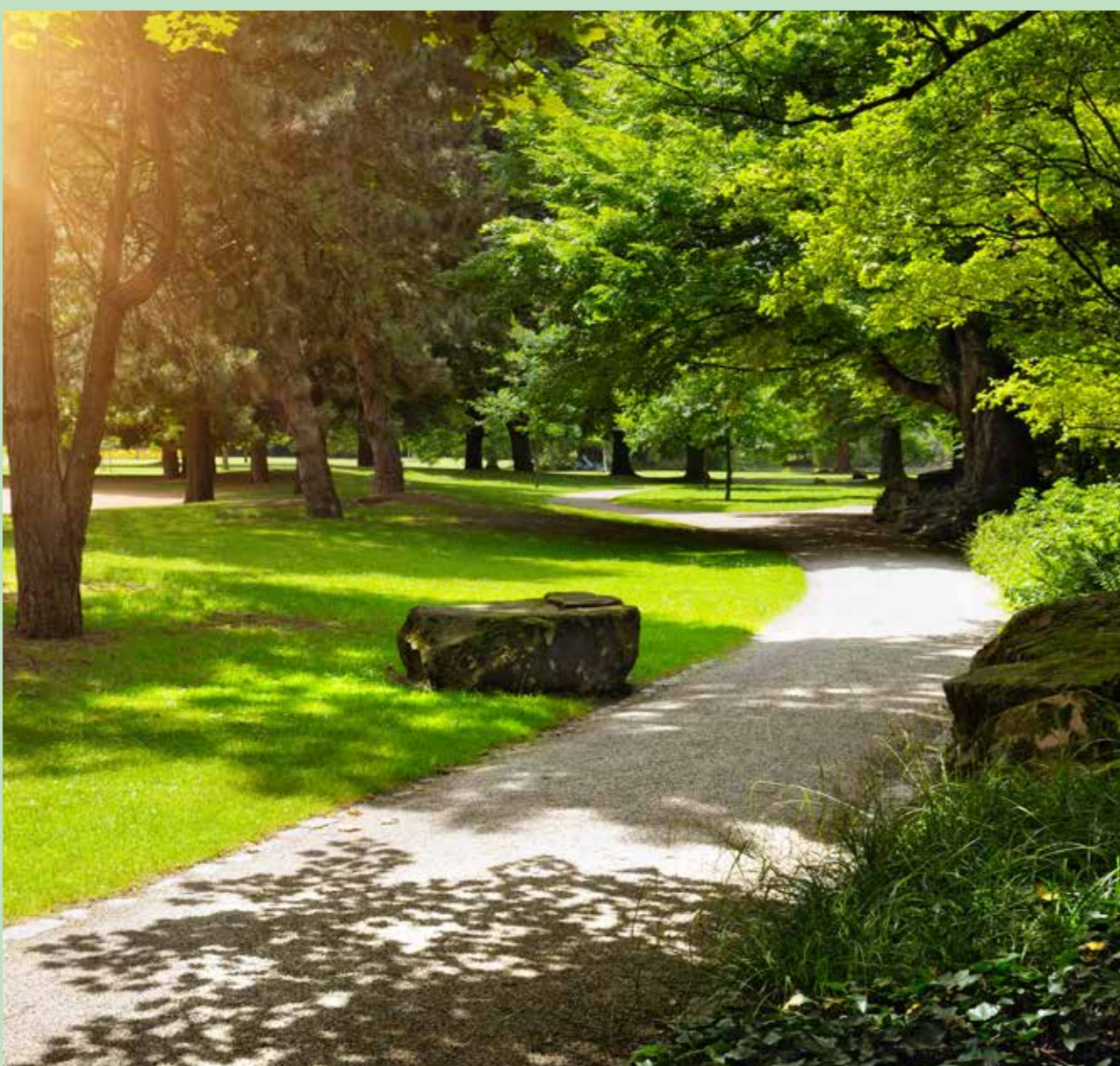
Welcome to the next Bridge Park exhibition. Like you, we want Stonebridge to be a great place to live, work and play.

This consultation is all about how public input can shape the facilities, features and services available in the planned replacement leisure centre as well as hearing your thoughts on the proposed closure of the the current Bridge Park Leisure Centre, including mitigation measures if the proposals are implemented. We are also keen to hear from you if you want to be part of an Advisory Group to discuss and shape any transition process.

We acknowledge Bridge Park is a place valued by many local people and we have an amazing opportunity for it to be part of a bigger plan for investing in sites along Hillside, to create new homes, more jobs and beautiful outdoor spaces for everyone to enjoy. Brent Council and Stonebridge Real Estate Development Limited (SRED) are partnering to put £600million into improving your neighbourhood, including Bridge Park, Morland Gardens, Twybridge Way, and Bernard Shaw House. These proposals include new flexible community spaces, an improved adult education centre, fully accessible gardens, a hotel, as well as hundreds of new homes (including affordable and supported housing) to meet the growing demand for housing.

We've listened to what you said you wanted from a new centre. In these proposals, the revitalised neighbourhood centres around a rebuilt Bridge Park Centre with state-of-the art facilities offered at affordable rates. With your help, we can build on the work and passion of all those who have contributed to Stonebridge's past success and create a thriving, inclusive neighbourhood for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,
Cllr Muhammed Butt
Leader of Brent Council



The vision



The council and Stonebridge Real Estate Development (SRED) are working together to make Bridge Park a great place to live, work and play. With new parks, homes and places for communities to come together, it will be a place everyone can feel proud to call home. As the new neighbourhood on the block, it will honour the history of Stonebridge and meet the needs of the families that will live in and around Bridge Park for years to come.

Commitments for the Bridge Park Masterplan



A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

Bridge Park will be a welcoming space where everyone feels valued. It will have its own unique character and be an integral part of the Stonebridge neighbourhood.



A NEW LEISURE CENTRE

We will build on the legacy of the Bridge Park Leisure Centre by creating a brand-new and improved facility for the whole community to enjoy.



AFFORDABLE HOMES AND INCLUSIVE LIVING

Bridge Park will provide much needed affordable homes – including homes for older, disabled, and neurodiverse residents – encouraging independence and community wellbeing.



CREATING JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY

We will create good jobs for local people with plans for a new hotel, shops and cafés, and affordable workspaces for small and start-up businesses.



COMMUNITY SPACES TO ENJOY

Bridge Park will have clean, safe, and beautiful parks and public spaces for residents to relax, play, or spend time together – all designed to be fully accessible and inclusive for everyone to use.



ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

We are committed to creating a neighbourhood that helps tackle climate change with greener buildings, more trees, and areas that support wildlife.

Have your say on the future of leisure and community facilities at Bridge Park



The deteriorating condition of the existing leisure centre means that it would require very substantial capital investment to keep the site open and safe on a sustainable basis, including major and expensive works to the lifts and other key parts of the building fabric.

We do not believe this expenditure is a sensible use of limited council funding when there are proposals to build a new, state-of-the-art centre for the community to use for years to come.

Brent Council is asking local people for their views about closing the existing leisure centre in July 2025, to enable a planned closure to take place in a managed way, for the reasons explained below.

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council said: "Bridge Park Leisure Centre is so much more than a building and we want to honour its history and build on its legacy for the next generation of residents. I want to thank residents who told us what they would like to see in a new and improved leisure centre at Bridge Park, including brand new leisure facilities, much needed new homes, a new jobs and skills hub and community and green spaces. Now that we have a clearer vision of the future, we want to work closely with the community to shape the future of leisure and community facilities at Bridge Park. This next phase of consultation is about gathering feedback on the proposed closure, and transition arrangements for residents."

Why is closure being proposed now



Bridge Park has been at the heart of the Stonebridge community for decades, providing a space for sports, leisure, and community activities. However, the current building has reached the end of its lifespan and no longer meets modern accessibility, safety, and efficiency standards.

In June 2017, Brent Council signed an agreement with Stonebridge Real Estate Development Ltd, which is linked to General Mediterranean Holdings SA (GMH, owners of the adjacent ex-Unisys site) to sell the land where Bridge Park Leisure Centre is located. As part of this agreement, the council is committed to delivering a new leisure centre to replace the current Bridge Park Leisure Centre. The Council originally planned to keep Bridge Park Leisure Centre open until the new leisure centre was ready. However, the sale has been delayed due to legal challenges, meaning the new leisure centre has not yet been built.

There are now several other challenges explained below that the Council is having to manage. Some of these challenges were not present to the same extent when the Council intended that there would be no gap in provision, and therefore the closure of Bridge Park Leisure Centre is now being proposed:

- 1 The building is in a poor condition and would need significant capital investment to keep the building open on a sustainable basis.
- 2 There is a risk of sudden closure if something breaks, as it may render the building unsafe and may not be possible or affordable to fix.
- 3 The Council's reasons for proposing the closure of the building are explained in more detail below.

Condition of the building

Bridge Park is proposed to close because the building is outdated, with structural and mechanical issues that would require significant investment to repair and maintain to keep the building open on a sustainable basis. The council estimates the cost to bring the centre to a suitable condition to be at least £1m (based on a survey undertaken in 2019, meaning that the actual costs at today's prices are likely to be significantly higher). These costs reflect condition improvements without providing new facilities such as a swimming pool and larger gym that only a new centre can provide. We do not currently believe that this is affordable, as explained below.

The building is of course still open, despite the significant issues with its condition. However, because of these issues there is a significant, and increasing, risk that the condition of the building could deteriorate to such a degree that it becomes unsafe. This could happen at any time and cause an unplanned closure of the building. This would be disruptive to some leisure centre users as it may be difficult to make alternative arrangements at short notice. It could also result in unforeseen costs to the council. As a result, and given the other factors explained in this document, the council's preference is for a managed closure in July 2025.

Financial considerations

Local councils are facing the most challenging financial environment for many decades. Against this backdrop, Brent has maintained a strong position in terms of financial resilience and sustainability, in part by making savings needed to balance its budget. However, during the 2023/24 financial year the council overspent its revenue budget by £14m and is forecast to overspend again in 2024/25. This overall financial position means the council has to carefully consider its financial

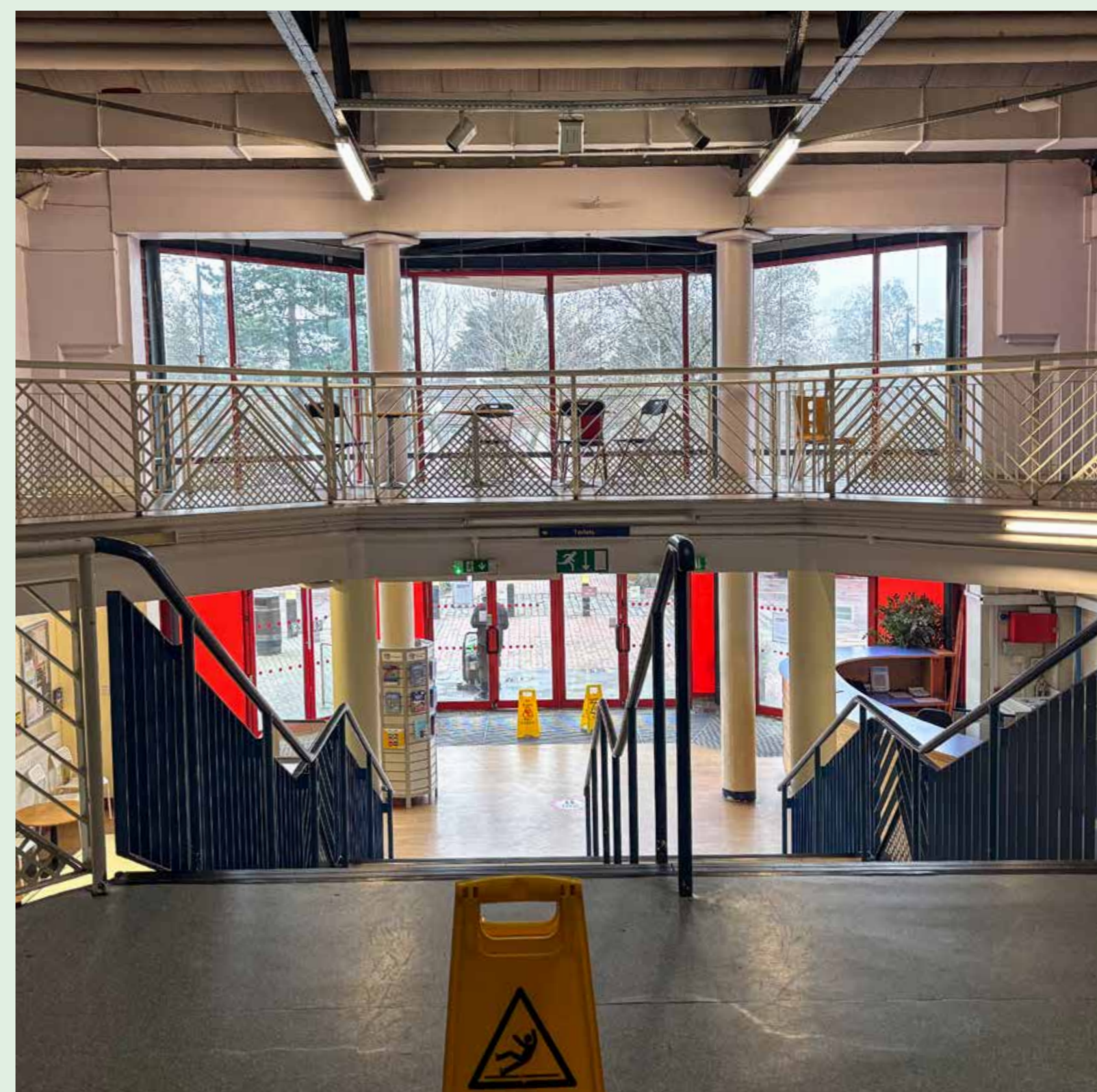
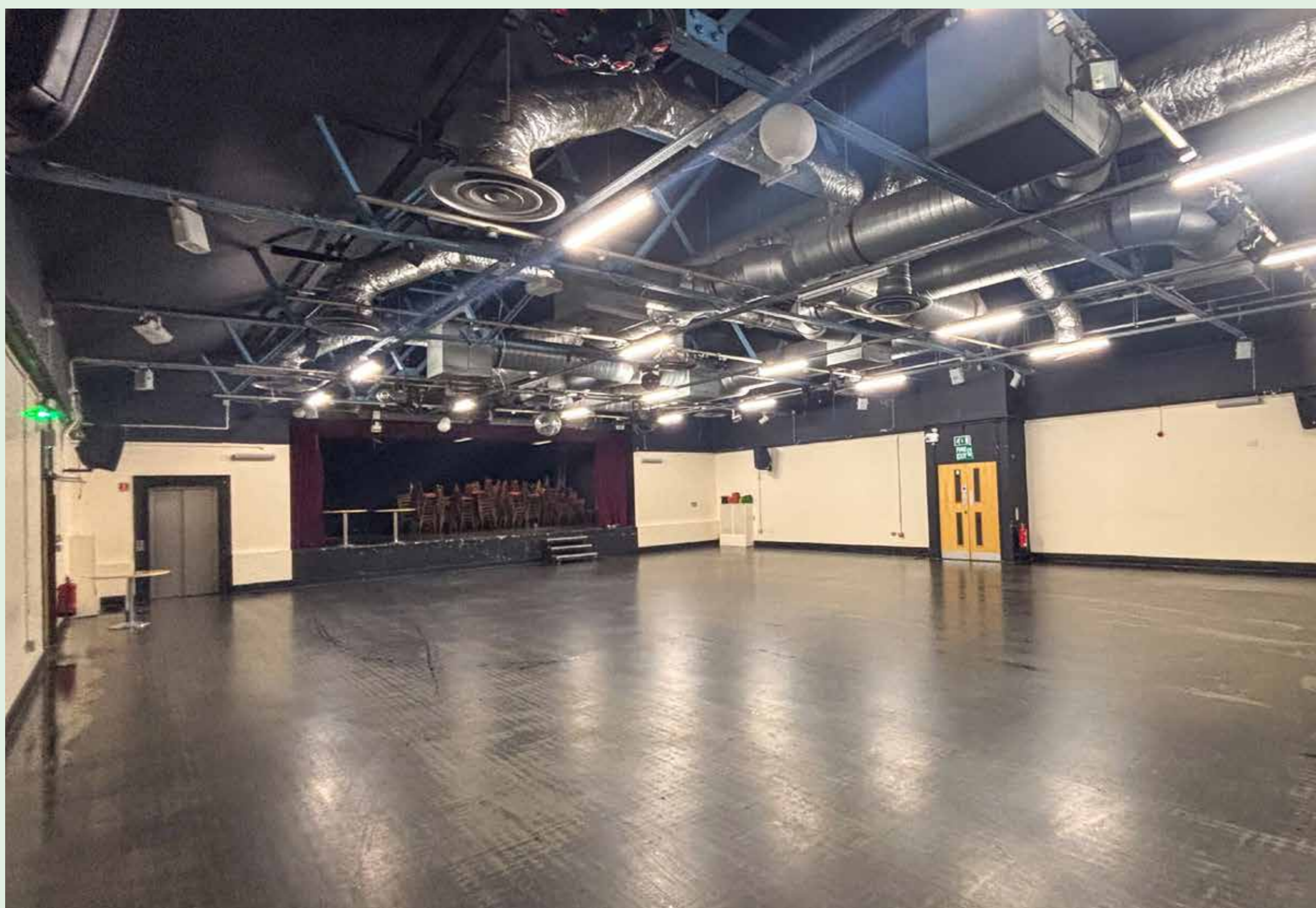
priorities. The council does not believe that the significant investment needed to repair and maintain the building to keep it open on a sustainable basis would be justified.

Bridge Park is also operating at a loss. For the 2023/24 financial year, the leisure centre cost the council £457,000. Although usage overall has partly picked up since the pandemic, the costs to the council of operating Bridge Park so far during 2024/25 are similar to previous financial years.

Keeping Bridge Park open is money that the council is unable to spend on other vital public services. Given our overall financial position, the problems with the condition of the building we currently do not believe that we should continue to fund the operation of the leisure centre at a significant loss beyond July 2025.

Closing the centre would not be entirely cost-free for the council. There may be some staff-related costs (for those leisure centre staff who may be at risk of redundancy) and if the leisure centre is not in use at the point at which planning permission is granted the council may have to pay a slightly higher community infrastructure levy associated with the redevelopment. However, these costs would be relatively minor compared to the financial implications of keeping the leisure centre open beyond July 2025.

Why is closure being proposed now



The Bridge Park redevelopment

The council expects that construction will begin, subject to obtaining planning permission, in 2028. This should take two years to complete, meaning that the new leisure centre would be open in 2030. In considering the future of Bridge Park leisure centre, the Council has taken into account the fact that our redevelopment plans include the provision of a new, significantly improved leisure centre in 2030. While there would be a gap in provision until the new leisure centre is open, the Council currently believes that this is the most appropriate way forward for the reasons explained elsewhere in this document.

Anticipated impacts

The council is conscious of the potential impacts of the proposed closure on leisure centre users and residents. The council anticipates that the main impacts will be on:

- ▶ Gym members. In 2023/24, there were on average 542 members throughout the year.
- ▶ Sports Hall users. Sports Hall block booking numbers were 16,492 in 2023/24.
- ▶ Users of the sauna and steam room facilities.
- ▶ People attending room bookings. In 2023/24 the figure was 13,403, although this figure has been higher in the past.
- ▶ Users of meeting rooms, the conference room, and function hall. There are roughly between six and nine bookings on a weekly basis.

While the proposed closure would result in temporary loss of leisure space and loss of spaces that can be hired, alternative provision exists in the local area. Willesden Sports Centre, less than two miles from Bridge Park, is the nearest alternative Brent run leisure centre and has a gym, four-court sports hall, and sauna and steam room, as well as two swimming pools and two running tracks. There are also various community facilities, schools, faith facilities and gyms within a two-mile radius. There are also other public leisure facilities available at Vale Farm Sports Centre and Wembley Leisure Centre within three miles of Bridge Park.

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

Should the leisure centre close, council officers would work to signpost leisure centre users to available alternative provision.

Planning ahead and setting a closure date would help the council work with residents to understand the impact and plan support. As leisure centres are important for health, fitness and in supporting communities to get active, we want to hear your views on how the proposed closure might impact you and whether there are alternative options, and any additional alternative provision, the Council should consider before making a final decision.

The council will also continue to have regard to its wider health and wellbeing strategies, which can be found here: www.brent.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/strategies-priorities-and-policies

Alternative options considered

The council has considered two main alternative options.

Firstly, we have considered increasing 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.

Secondly, we have considered keeping the leisure centre open until either:

- a the planning permission application for the Bridge Park development is decided. This is likely to be in September 2026; or
- b until the leisure centre is required to close as part of the council's agreement with the proposed developer of the Bridge Park site. This is likely to be early 2027.

We are not proposing to take these options forward because of the financial, building-related and other considerations explained in this document.

Bridge Park Leisure Centre Feedback



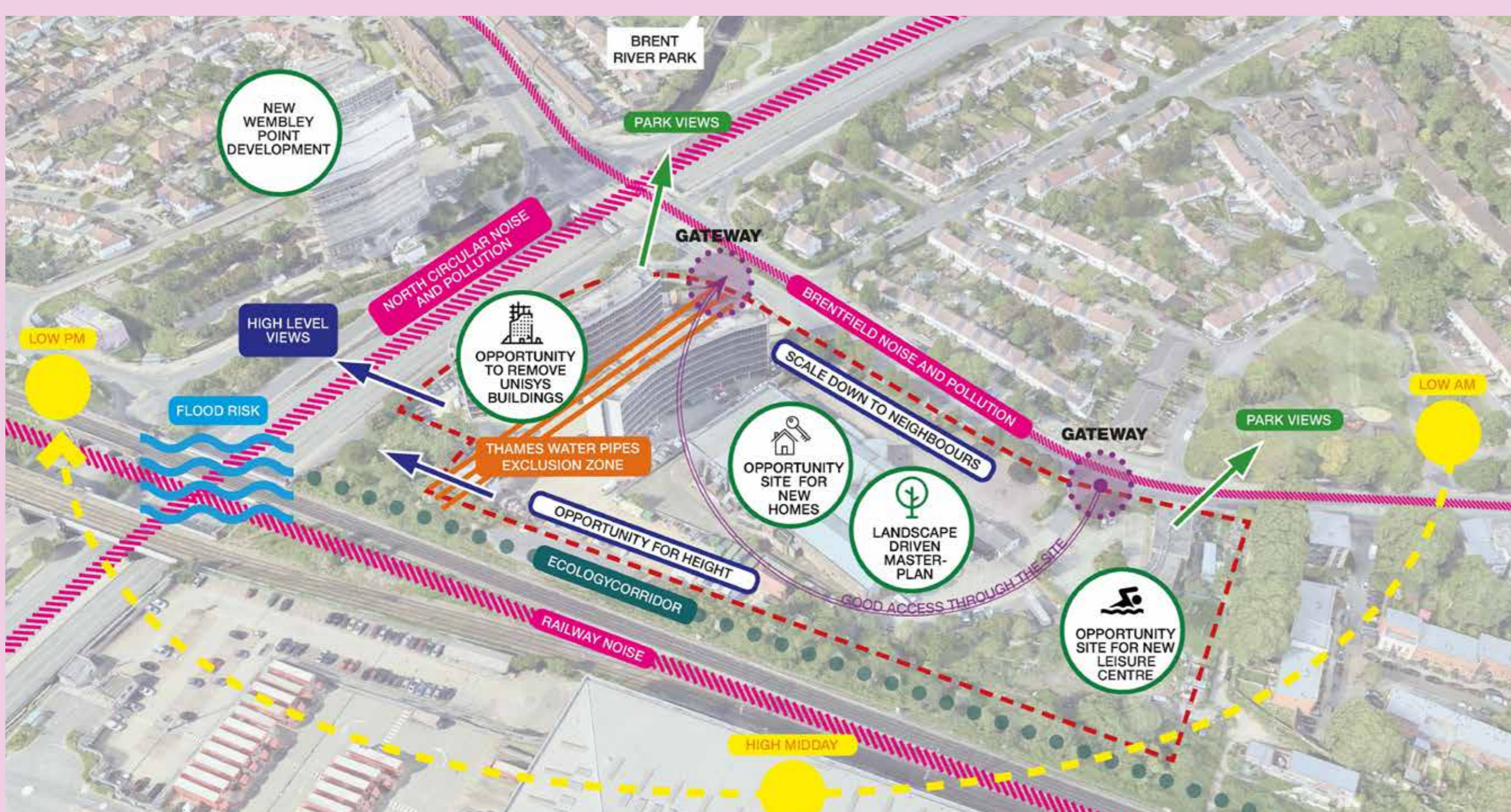
In the first part of our consultation, we invited residents, businesses and stakeholders to give us their feedback on the future of Bridge Park Leisure Centre as part of an ambitious plan to invest £600million into the regeneration of the Hillside Corridor.

You told us what you would like to see in a new leisure centre, including a new swimming pool, new sports hall, larger gym, a function hall, meeting rooms and café.

Your valuable input has directly shaped the next stage of our proposals.



- ▶ 90% of respondents agree that the existing Bridge Park site, including vacant buildings, requires significant improvements to meet the needs of the community.
- ▶ 52% of respondents feel that the proposed mix of leisure and community facilities offers a good balance of spaces and activities for different users. However, there were concerns about affordability and accessibility.
- ▶ 75% of respondents support the inclusion of new parks and green spaces, seeing them as valuable assets to the area.



The new Bridge Park Leisure Centre



Ground floor



First floor



Second floor

Your input continues to shape the plans

The new plans reflect the priorities raised by the community, with affordability and accessible leisure facilities being among the most frequently mentioned concerns. By refining the proposals to meet these needs, we are ensuring that Bridge Park remains a vital, inclusive space for generations to come.

Ground floor

- ▶ A six-lane, 25m² swimming pool with a moveable floor – designed for both leisure and fitness swimmers, featuring designated lanes for different skill levels, accessible entry points, and adaptable water depth for various uses.
- ▶ Changing facilities – ensuring comfort and accessibility for all users.
- ▶ A 200m² multi-use activity space –proposed for use as a soft-play type facility for young children
- ▶ A welcoming reception and lounge area for visitors and members– comparable in size to a large coffee shop, providing ample seating and a comfortable space for relaxation and socialising.
- ▶ Easy access from the new landscaped public space, enhancing walkability and connecting the leisure centre with surrounding neighbourhoods through well-lit pathways and dedicated cycle routes.
- ▶ Designed to be fully accessible, with step-free routes, wide entry points, hearing loops, and adapted facilities for individuals with mobility or sensory impairments.

First floor

- ▶ A 690m² multi-use sports hall, the size of four badminton courts, suitable for basketball, badminton, volleyball, futsal, and other indoor activities.
- ▶ Two fitness studios (185m² and 175m²)—each roughly the size of a professional tennis court—offering spaces for aerobics, dance, yoga, pilates, and high-intensity training.
- ▶ Adjustable lighting and temperature controls to create a comfortable and adaptable environment for different types of classes.

Second floor

- ▶ A 450m² spacious gym to accommodate approximately 100 exercise stations which will be fully equipped gym with free weights, resistance machines, and cardio equipment, providing everything from treadmills and rowing machines to functional training rigs and resistance bands.
- ▶ Designed for all fitness levels with designated zones for strength training, endurance workouts, and flexibility focused exercises.
- ▶ Enhanced ventilation and climate control systems to provide a comfortable training environment.
- ▶ A dedicated spin studio - a specialised indoor cycling studio, equipped with high-performance bikes, immersive lighting, and surround sound systems to create an engaging workout experience.
- ▶ Accessible training areas ensuring inclusivity for all users.

Emerging vision for the Hillside Corridor

Hillside Corridor feedback

During the first phase of the consultation, we asked the community, alongside affordable homes, what other facilities they would like to see at the sites in the Hillside Corridor.



Twybridge Way

Your top three facilities you would like to see here were youth facilities, a café/restaurant and commercial (e.g. shops). The council's proposed site use mix is to provide affordable homes, commercial space, which could include a café and workspace/business units



Morland Gardens

Your top three facilities you would like to see here were a café/restaurant, youth facilities and a community hall. The council's proposed site use mix is to provide affordable homes and youth facilities.



Bernard Shaw House

Your top three facilities were a café/ restaurant, commercial (e.g. shops) and workspace/business units. The council's proposed option is to deliver affordable homes only.



Roy Smith House

Roy Smith House has a 250-square-metre commercial space for which the council is proposing to convert into a community venue and flexible event space. It is currently being marketed for an external operator to manage the space in the future.



Bridge Park

This site supports all other locations within the corridor. In addition to a new, modern community leisure centre, residents will benefit from a new purpose-built space for Brent Start. By moving Brent Start to Bridge Park, this unlocks other opportunities at the other locations along the Hillside Corridor.

Next steps

The future of Bridge Park is shaped by the people who use it. We are committed to working with the community to ensure that the redevelopment of Bridge Park meets local needs. Your feedback has been essential in shaping the updated proposals. Below are the key upcoming milestones in the project timeline.

Your role in shaping the future of Bridge Park

Your feedback has been vital in shaping the Bridge Park proposals. As we move towards the next stages, we remain committed to working with the community to refine the plans and ensure they reflect local priorities.

How your feedback will be used

All community feedback will be carefully reviewed and used to refine the final design, ensuring the proposals reflect local priorities. We are committed to transparency – summary reports of consultation feedback will be shared with the community so you can see how your input has shaped the final plans. We will carefully consider and analyse your feedback on the proposal to close Bridge Park Leisure Centre in July 2025 before any final decision is taken.

Ongoing engagement beyond planning

Even after the planning application is submitted, we will continue engaging with the community through public meetings, newsletters, and online surveys to ensure clear updates and involvement in the next steps of the project. Your voice remains essential throughout the process

Ways to stay involved

Give your feedback

Scan the QR Code on the right to share your views via the online consultation portal (where we have uploaded other relevant information, including an Equality Impact Assessment relating to the proposed closure of the leisure centre). Alternatively you can fill out a feedback form and hand it to a member of staff at the exhibition.



Find out more about our plans and stay updated

Scan QR on the right to sign up for project updates through Brent Council's website. You can also find all about our exciting plans for the future of the Bridge Park Leisure Centre and Unisys buildings site.



Be part of the future

Your input is essential in shaping the future of Bridge Park and the council is looking to create a local Advisory Group to help shape the Bridge Park and Hillside Corridor proposals. If this is something of interest, please let the council know through your responses to this consultation.

Timeline

November 2024 – January 2025 Phase one consultation

The first part of the consultation invited you to have your say on plans for a new Bridge Park Leisure Centre.

December 2024 – January 2025 Public feedback review

We assessed all community feedback and refined the proposals accordingly.

March – May 2025 Phase two consultation

We are feeding back what you told us in the first part of the consultation and also asking for your views on the proposed closure of the current Bridge Park Leisure Centre.

July 2025 Proposed closure of existing centre

Subject to the outcome of phase two of the consultation and Cabinet approval, the centre is proposed to close in July 2025.

Late 2025 Planning application submission

A formal planning application will be submitted for approval.

2028 Construction begins

Subject to obtaining the necessary approvals, construction work for the new leisure centre will begin and is expected to take two years.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please get in touch. We welcome your feedback whether you are able to visit the exhibition or not, and you can share your views using the contact details below:

E BridgePark@four.agency

T 020 8044 9155

www.brent.gov.uk/bridgepark

You can also write to us at:

Bridge Park Consultation
c/o Four Agency
The Hickman Building
2 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1FX