



7 February 2026

Dear Councillor Ormsby

Queen Mother Sports Centre: Pimlico Neighbourhood Forum input to WCC

1. We understand that WCC will shortly be considering an appraisal of 6 sites in Westminster, already owned by the Council for the possibility of providing more housing. One of the sites is the Queen Mother Sports Centre between Wilton Road and Vauxhall Bridge Road. This is one of the very few large sites in Pimlico not completely protected by being in a Conservation Area, or comprising listed buildings.
2. WCC has kindly discussed a number of options that they are considering in reaching a decision on which site or sites to take forward. They appear to fall into two groups:
 - Retention of the existing Queen Mother Sports Centre with refurbishment or improvement; and
 - Complete redevelopment of the Queen Mother Sports Centre envelope, possibly including the Wilton Road frontage of the block (the subject of a planning consent to Vitcorp) and/or the Parkinsons Society offices on Vauxhall Bridge Road.

Pimlico Neighbourhood Plan

3. The principal Pimlico Neighbourhood Plan policy relevant to this site is PIM 23 for Major Developments. PIM 10 on building heights which also talks about the effect on the setting of Conservation Areas also applies. There is extensive detail and discussion in the presentation made to Forum members (see below).

Views of members

4. We held a meeting with Pimlico FREDA open to Forum members on 21 January 2026. Some 25 members attended and were taken through a presentation of the Pimlico Plan policies by Fabrizio Primavera and Chiara Schina of SP architecture workshop (see a more detailed version attached) who are helping the Forum. Those members attending used the Sports Centre for a range of activities; swimming, gym, exercise cases, sauna, racket sports in the sports hall, and squash.
5. The main points from the meeting are:
 - **Members supported the policies in the Plan, particularly the continued future use of the QMSC as a local community sports/leisure centre offering comparable facilities with the current situation. Achieving this with a design, building height and scale that meets the Plan policies is our key concern;**
 - Members did not think that there were any current uses that should be abandoned: they supported the continuation of 3 pools: 25 m; teaching pool and diving pool. We think the current scale of swimming facilities is right for a sports centre that meets the need of the community, albeit over a wide area.
 - There was strong support for future facilities charging, as at present, affordable prices and therefore continued ownership by the Council, as the only way of guaranteeing this.
 - Most forum members were anxious to retain functioning swimming pools as a minimum throughout the course of any upgrade or redevelopment, if not all the other facilities

currently offered. However, other members expressed concern that retaining functionality during a major redevelopment would make the project take longer and could result in a less attractive end result at greater cost than a complete shut-down.

- There was strong support for the building height/open skies policy and were concerns that a major redevelopment would not respect the reference height of six stories. The errors of mass, scale and design of the Sainsbury's block on Wilton Road should not be repeated.
- The principle of upgrade v. redevelopment was discussed: the choice was unclear as we did not know whether retention was practicable and for how long.
- Some members preferred the upgrade option, suggesting developing other buildings in the block for housing (e.g. the Parkinson's building).

Conclusions and questions/issues remaining

6. The Steering Group thinks that there is a clear view about future uses – that none of the current functions should be abandoned. We also strongly support an affordable facility for the use of the community within the ownership of the council. We continue to support the design policies in the plan.
7. We have the following observations/requests:
 - Is retention/refurbishment practicable for a long time, or does this simply defer re-development? This is crucial for understanding the range of choices;
 - We (the steering group) thought a re-development could produce a permeable scheme which would be an improvement, but would not support this if this meant breach of the height/massing policies. The balance should be agreed in consultation with the Steering Group and the wider community.
 - Gillingham Row, currently linking Wilton and Vauxhall Bridge Roads needed addressing, whichever broad scheme is adopted. Longmoore Street also needs tidying up;
 - We would like the Pimlico community to be consulted further on a range of options for massing, before a final scheme is decided;
 - The centre is used by residents outside Pimlico and indeed workers, so there should be further consultation on uses with these users and Pimlico residents and businesses who are not PNF members;
 - We do not see a need for massively increased facilities, nor consider that it is appropriate for a community site;
 - Any proposal must preserve protected townscape and views, the setting of any listed building or unlisted building of merit and the setting and key features of any Conservation Areas;
 - Finally, we should add that the Pimlico Plan seeks to protect the much needed Sussex Street playground and we would like to see it brought back into as much community use as possible.

I am copying this letter to Pimlico N and Pimlico S Councillors and to officers working on the 2 sites.

Peter Ruback
Chair
Pimlico Neighbourhood Forum