

## **Note of meeting about WCC's proposals for new housing in Pimlico, specifically the redevelopment of the Queen Mother Sports Centre (QMSC)**

19:30-21:00hrs, 14 January 2026, Dryburgh Hall, Alderney Street, Pimlico, London, Greater London, SW1V 4ET

1. Pimlico Neighbourhood Forum's chair, Peter Ruback, welcomed members, explained the running order for the meeting, and drew attention to WCC's interest in two sites in Pimlico for the construction of housing including a major proposal for the redevelopment of QMSC. This meeting would cover the QMSC proposal since that was by far the most substantial as far as the neighbourhood is concerned. (The other proposal is building on the children's play area in Sussex Street.)
2. The chair explained that our understanding is that WCC is considering two substantive types of option for the QMSC.
  - a) *De minimis* approaches – renovation/upgrades to the existing structure with minimal scope for new housing.
  - b) Major redevelopments – entailing demolition of the existing structure and its replacement with a new sports centre with significant new housing. It is assumed that much of the new housing would sit on top of a new sports centre.
3. PNF needs to have submitted its observations in time for WCC's next decision point, which we understand will be in March. The feedback from forum members at this meeting will be used to shape those observations.
4. Two forum members, Fabrizio and Chiara, of SP architecture workshop talked PNF members present through a set of slides. These illustrated the current design of the block containing the QMSC, and its surrounding streets and built environment. They outlined the various policies in the Pimlico Neighbourhood Plan that would be relevant to any development of the site: Policy PIM 23 on Major Developments (uses, heritage, destination, permeability, employment) and Policy 10 on Building heights and Townscape.
5. In the discussion that followed:
  - Members supported the policies in the Plan, particularly the continued use of the QMSC as a local community sports/leisure centre offering comparable facilities at affordable prices.
  - Nearly all members there said they were regular users of the sports centre – the majority using it for swimming but also badminton and other classes. One member raised the possibility that making the centre an 'Olympic' centre

could add value to the area; however, other members were concerned that becoming a 'national centre' could restrict community access and broader use of the facilities.

- 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. There were worries that other local facilities would not be able to cover their needs if it was closed – Dolphin Square would be too expensive, and the proposed Chelsea Barracks facilities are not yet built. However, other members expressed concern that retaining functionality during a major redevelopment would make the project take longer and possibly result in a less attractive end result at greater cost than a complete shut-down.
- Those present felt that the Centre should remain in Council ownership.
- Upgrade v. redevelopment were discussed. However, without more information being available (for example, estimates of the likely life of the existing building if only upgrades were undertaken) discussion was limited, although a number of members indicated they would be happy with an upgrade option, with perhaps one of the other buildings in the block being used for housing.
- There was widespread support for the building height/open skies policy and concerns were expressed about how the reference height of six stories could be respected in the event of a major redevelopment with the aim of including significant housing. Members were keen that the errors of mass, scale and design of the Sainsbury's block on Wilton Road were not repeated.
- Other concerns were expressed about how other properties in the block would be affected by a major redevelopment of the QMSC, and whether and how these could be incorporated into such a redevelopment.
- Hope was expressed that any major redevelopment would result in new, well-designed office, retail, housing and leisure facilities that were futureproofed and fit for the 21st century.

**PNF 1 March 2025**