

Britannia Development Proposal

Frequently Asked Questions for Public Consultation Phase

22/03/17

Background

The feasibility study

The Council commissioned a feasibility study in summer 2016, to look at options for replacing the existing Britannia Leisure Centre with a new facility, and creating a new secondary school to help meet the rising demand for school places in the borough. The team that completed the study were asked to consider how to make the most effective use of the available Council-owned space at Britannia, and deliver an affordable scheme that would allow the school to open as soon as possible. It was assumed that no funding would be received from central government to pay for the new Leisure Centre, and that the Council would also need to contribute to the costs of the school.

This study was completed in October 2016. It considered more than 30 options to meet the objectives set. Three were identified as deliverable financially and practically. Each specified that c. 400 private homes for sale were needed to fund the Council's primary aim of providing public infrastructure, although the Council would still need to invest additional funding to keep the housing density at this level. The feasibility study identified that 560 homes would be needed to make the scheme self-funding.

These three options were then taken forward for public consultation.

Given the need for a new secondary school of a fixed size, and the need to replace the existing Leisure Centre, those facilities were present in every option and the location for both is limited given their size and configuration. Of the options considered, a number were undeliverable for various reasons (not affordable, denser development, no advantage to replacing Shoreditch Park Primary School, etc.) and so were not included in those presented to the public. The option to 'do nothing' is simply not acceptable if we are to provide the school places the Borough needs, and the quality of Leisure facilities that our residents deserve.

Public consultation

The three options selected were consulted on from 5th December 2016 to 12th February 2017. Eight drop in events were held at Britannia Leisure Centre, Shoreditch Park Primary School, the Colville Estate Community Hall and Hackney Service Centre. The public consultation received 479 responses. The key outcomes of that consultation are as follows:

Question	Outcome
Do you agree with the proposal to replace the Leisure Centre with a brand new leisure facility?	59.7% (Agreed) 26.5% (Disagreed)
Do you agree with building... private housing to fund the Leisure Centre and school?	47.8% (Agreed) 38.2% (Disagreed)

Do you agree with the proposal to provide affordable housing on the site?	62.% (Agreed) 23.2% (Disagreed)
Do you agree that the Council should continue to provide secondary school places in the borough in line with increasing parental demand?	72.3% (Agreed) 11.3% (Disagreed)
Do you agree with the proposal to provide additional secondary school places by building a mixed, non-denominational (accepting people of all faiths) secondary school on the Britannia site at Hyde Road?	58.7% (Agreed) 21.8% (Disagreed)
Support for feasible options [higher number = more popular]	480: 1.57 440: 1.45 400: 0.94

A report will be submitted to Hackney Council's Cabinet on 19 April 2017, asking Cabinet to agree whether to proceed with this project or not.

Project timeline

Please note that the project timeline is subject to change.

March 2016	The City of London Corporation submitted an application to the Department for Education to set up two new schools in Hackney
June 2016	Feasibility study launched
July 2016	DfE gave initial approval for the new schools to proceed
October 2016	Feasibility report submitted to the Council for further analysis
November 2016	Planning permission granted for the temporary school
December 2016	Consultation launched, with a series of drop-in sessions held at Britannia Leisure Centre, Shoreditch Park Primary School, Hackney Service Centre and Colville Estate.
12 February 2017	Consultation concluded
April 2017	Decision reached on whether to proceed, and which option would be taken forward if a decision is taken to do so
April 2017	Master plan process will commence, subject to Cabinet approval
September 2017	Secondary school opens at temporary site
February 2018	Planning application expected to be submitted
June 2019	Construction expected to commence

Britannia Leisure Centre

Will the existing leisure centre be knocked down?

If the Council decides to proceed with the project in April, then yes, but all the options consulted on include a new Leisure Centre. The age of Britannia Leisure Centre, and the level of investment required to bring it up to current standards, means that it is no longer cost effective to operate or to continue to meet the needs of users and the wider community. All of the options consulted on assume the existing Leisure Centre will remain open until the new one is completed and open.

Why do facilities need updating? The leisure centre is only 40 years old – why are you knocking it down?

Britannia Leisure Centre's age and the level of investment required to bring it up to standard means that it is no longer cost effective to operate or to continue to meet the needs of users and the wider community. However, ensuring that there is a modern, up-to-date centre in this area is a priority for the Council.

It is *not* our intention to reduce the type or quality of facilities – in fact, we want to improve them and ensure that residents have access to a centre that meets expectations and demands.

What will the replacement facilities be like?

The following is being considered as a minimum: a 25m main swimming pool, a new learner pool, a confidence pool (targeted at 0-5 year olds) with flume, a children's soft play area, squash courts, a 180 station fitness suite, a spinning studio, two exercise studios, a sports hall, a multi-use games area on the roof and a café and toilets (which will also serve park users).

Will the existing leisure centre be closed before the new facilities are open?

The options we consulted on all assume that the existing Leisure Centre will remain open until the new one is completed and open.

What's wrong with the existing facilities?

Britannia Leisure Centre was built in two phases in the 1970s and 80s, with the dry side built first, followed by the pool. This has resulted in multiple plant rooms and an inefficient building layout that is, unfortunately, not cost effective to operate. The mechanical and electrical systems need replacing and there are leaks from the health suite into the pool circulation area, and from the swimming pool tanks into the surrounding ground.

The design and layout of the existing building also means that the facilities do not fully comply with current design guidance from Sport England and national governing bodies of sports' standards – particularly with regard to the swimming pools (the main swimming pool is what is known in the industry as a 'free form leisure pool' which is not conducive to swimming lessons, health and fitness swimming or swimming galas in a way that a rectangular 'tank' would be).

Will you replace the hard-standing courts when the new Leisure Centre is built on that area?

The Council aims to replace as much of the current hard standing multi-use games area as possible on the roof of the new Britannia Leisure Centre, subject to consultation feedback, planning and it being practical to deliver.

What will be the impact of the scheme on access to the leisure facilities?

There are no plans to change access to the Leisure Centre for any current sport and physical activity users.

Will there be any disruption to existing services or opening hours during any building works?

The Council will seek to maintain all existing services and current hours throughout the building of the new Leisure Centre and the school. It may be necessary to access the existing Leisure Centre through a different entrance at some point, but if so this will be advertised in advance and signage put up to make the entrance arrangements clear.

How can leisure centre users have their say?

If it is decided to proceed with one of the options we have consulted on, the next stage of the process will include detailed design work for the Leisure Centre. The Council will seek the views of existing users and local residents to help inform what facilities are included in the Leisure Centre. Details of how and when this will take place will be publicised if the Council decides to proceed with this development. The decision is expected to be taken on 19 April 2017.

Will there be facilities in the Leisure Centre that Park users can access?

The Council is planning to include a café and toilets in the Leisure Centre that can be used by the public, without the need to go through the turnstiles that provide access to the Leisure Centre's activity areas.

Could GLL staff lose their jobs?

There is no reason why any members of GLL staff should lose their jobs. All of the options consulted on assume the existing Leisure Centre will remain open until the new one is completed and open.

Will the school have a joint use arrangement with the leisure centre?

There have been no such discussions about a joint use agreement. It is the Council's aim to provide the school with sufficient facilities to prevent the need for it to use the Leisure Centre to provide core PE and sports provision. It will be able to book to use the Leisure Centre like any other school, but will not have any right to exclusive access.

The Secondary School

What sort of school will the new secondary school be?

The City of London submitted an application in early 2016 to the Department of Education (DfE) – with Hackney's support – to provide two new, non-denominational secondary schools in Hackney. One is proposed to be located at Hackney Downs and the other, the City of London Academy Shoreditch Park, at the Britannia site.

Both will have six classes in each year group, taking 180 students in their first year and eventually offering 900 new school places plus sixth form. The City of London's applications were approved by the DfE in July 2016. Each school will be an Academy, as Councils are no longer legally allowed to set up maintained community schools. Both will use Hackney's existing admissions policy, based on distance from the school. They will not be selective.

Who will run the new secondary school?

The City of London Academy Trust will be the sponsor of the new schools. The City of London already sponsors the very successful City Academy Hackney, so the Council has an existing, positive relationship with them.

When will the new secondary school open?

The school will open on a temporary site, in Audrey Street, Haggerston, in September 2017, before moving to its permanent site in the academic year 2020-21.

Why is the school opening in temporary accommodation?

The London Borough of Hackney needs 1,650 additional secondary school places by 2021 (the equivalent of two new 6FE schools). These places cannot be accommodated within existing schools. The first of these new pupil places need to be provided from September 2017. The permanent site for the City of London Academy Shoreditch Park will not be ready at this stage and so a temporary site has to be established to accommodate its pupils, until the permanent site is complete.

Where will the temporary school be?

The temporary school will be located at Audrey Street, Haggerston. This site is owned by the Council, and was previously used as a depot by its Parks Department.

What will the temporary school buildings look like?

The temporary school building is a modular construction, to accommodate up to 540 pupils. It is a high quality building, with equivalent facilities and environment to a permanent secondary school.

Where is the temporary school being built on Haggerston Park?

The temporary school building is being built on the hard-standing area within the fence line of the Audrey Street depot. It will not be built on the publicly accessible area of the park. Once the school has vacated the site, the hard-standing area will become publicly accessible Park land for the first time. The Council has committed to this through a unilateral undertaking with the Planning Department. The Council will run a consultation before the school closes (which will be in July 2022) to determine its future use.

Why don't you just let a free school set up on site and allow the Government to fund the build?

By retaining the Britannia site, which is Council-owned, we can ensure we build to the high standards our schools have come to expect and deserve. Hackney has an excellent track record in building award-winning, world-class schools through its Building Schools for the Future programme, and this school will be of the same high quality. By working with the City of London we can also ensure additional high quality education provision is created to benefit young people in the Borough.

Will the new school be a community school?

The new school will be an Academy. The Council is not able to open a new maintained community school, following changes to the law. By working with the City of London Academy Trust, the Council is partnering with an excellent education provider that operates the same admissions policy as Hackney's secondary schools, and is committed to working with the Borough to provide the highest standards of education for our pupils. The Council can also ensure that the building is to the same high quality as its award-winning Building Schools for the Future schools, by providing additional funding to create the facilities our young people need and deserve.

Why is the new school being built here?

The Council needs to provide an additional 1650 school places by 2021 to keep pace with the growth in demand within the borough. The first of these schools is proposed to be built at Britannia, the second at a site in the Hackney Downs area. The concentration of pupils of school age across the borough does of course vary, and the availability of places in some areas is also supplemented by a higher density of non-maintained pupil places, particularly in the north. The Britannia site will provide the additional school places needed in the south of the borough. Secondary school catchment areas are significantly bigger than those for a primary school, both because the size of the school is greater and because older pupils are able to travel further to attend school, although admissions will be based on the standard Hackney admissions code, which gives priority to pupils who live closest to the school.

Shoreditch Park Primary School (formerly Whitmore Primary)

What are your plans for Shoreditch Park Primary School?

The school will stay in its existing buildings on its existing site. The feasibility study did consider an option to replace it elsewhere on the site, but this would have meant a decrease in the size of the accommodation available to the school and a period of disruption. The existing school facilities are in good condition and offer a variety of spaces that the school makes full use of, but which would be difficult to replicate in a new building on what would have been a smaller footprint.

What commitment will you give to protecting the amount of outdoor space the school has?

The Council is considering how additional areas could be added to the school's outdoor space to make up for the proposed loss of an area of the site in the north-west corner (where the Anthology marketing suite is currently located), and whether the retained areas could be improved. We continue to work closely with the school to ensure it is aware of, and can comment on, any proposals that affect it.

How would the school be affected during any building work?

The project team and Hackney Learning Trust will work with the school to minimise disruption. The detailed construction programme will take account of the need to disrupt the school as little as practically possible.

How much land are you going to take from Shoreditch Park Primary School?

The area that has been identified is in the north-west corner of the site, where the Anthology marketing suite is currently located. It is likely to take up the boundary from Penn Street to the school car park, and extend to the edge of the existing hard standing playground. Its precise footprint has not been set, and will not be until more detailed design has been completed, so this may change slightly.

Will Shoreditch Park Primary pupils still be able to use Britannia Leisure Centre?

Any existing use can be maintained.

How will you minimise disruption, particularly for children with special educational needs?

The Council has considerable experience in this area. During the Building Schools for the Future programme, we rebuilt all our secondary and special schools and there was no negative impact on outcomes for pupils. The project team and Hackney Learning Trust will work closely with the school to minimise disruption and offer support where needed during any building works. This will include ensuring specialist support for SEN children is safeguarded. Please note that, as the school will continue to operate from its existing buildings, the extent of immediate disruption should be relatively minor and the Council will seek to ensure that any improvement works to Shoreditch Park Primary School itself will be programmed for outside school hours.

How can parents have their say?

Two sessions were held at Shoreditch Park Primary School as part of the recent public consultation, providing parents with further information on the Council's proposals and an opportunity to ask questions. The Council will hold further meetings should it be decided to proceed with the development, so parents can comment on more detailed proposals.

Housing

What sort of housing will you be building?

The options we recently consulted on show a mix of different housing types, with two including affordable housing (either c. 40 or c. 80 units respectively) in addition to the private for sale housing needed to finance the whole scheme. The units built are expected to be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms.

Why is the Council building private housing?

Over the last decade, Hackney has benefited from one of the biggest and most ambitious schools building and regeneration programmes in the country. It has seen us invest nearly £0.5 billion in creating new primary schools and academies, as well as the refurbishment and rebuild of all our secondary schools. That funding is no longer available following the ending of the Building Schools for the Future, and its equivalent primary school, programme.

Like most London boroughs, Hackney has, however, to continue to manage the impact of an increasing population on our schools. We need to provide 1,650 secondary school places by 2021 to keep pace with increasing demand.

Funding is extremely limited, and we have a significant funding gap – the new Leisure Centre will not attract any central government funding, and the cost of building the new school will only be partially met by the Department for Education. By acting as the developer, the Council will be able to ensure that the maximum amount of money is available for the Council to deliver the new school and leisure facilities; it will eliminate the need for a private developer to factor in profits for itself and any shareholders.

The Site Allocations Local Plan states the Britannia site would be suitable for up to 176 flats – how/why are you applying to build more?

The reference in the Site Allocations Local Plan is to an earlier proposal that looked at how to replace the existing, ageing Leisure Centre with a new facility. That study estimated that 176 flats would need to be sold to fund that proposal, although it only related to replacing the Leisure Centre, not the larger scheme and site that we consulted on. The most recent feasibility study considered building both a new 1100 place secondary school *and* a new Leisure Centre, against a background of increasing construction costs. This is why the number of units included in the options recently consulted on is more than that original number.

Will any money raised help to pay for social housing elsewhere?

The options we are consulting on include two that include affordable housing, and both assume these homes will be provided on site. These would be in addition to, not instead of, private for sale units. There will be no surplus from the overall scheme that can be used to fund social housing elsewhere in the Borough.

How many private for sale homes will be built?

The feasibility study has indicated that up to 400 private for sale homes would need to be built to pay for the leisure centre and secondary school, although even then the Council would be making a significant contribution to the scheme to reduce the number of units needed for the whole project to be entirely self-funding, as that was estimated to require more than 560 units. The Council has, however, committed to building no more than c. 480 homes in total, and not increasing the private for sale homes above c. 400, meeting any remaining gap from other sources.

How much will the flats be sold for?

The Council has not fixed a price for the flats, or the final mix of tenure (i.e. how many will be private for sale, how many affordable, and what form of ‘affordable’ a number will be). Estimates have been made of the potential sales values for the private for sale element, using market intelligence. Given that any flats are unlikely to be sold for around 3 years, it is not possible to state a definitive price at this point, but the Council will continue to monitor property values in the immediate area should the project proceed, and through its subsequent development.

Why can't you say exactly how big the towers will be/what the development will look like?

At this stage the Council has not commissioned detailed design work. As we stated in the recent public consultation, we estimate that three towers will be needed, with heights in the range of 18-24 storeys, but this is dependent on further work to confirm a number of factors, including the type of housing, number of bedrooms per

unit, etc. The feasibility study confirmed that there are suitable locations for residential buildings, and that these would need to be in the range set out above. If it is decided to take the project forward, the Council will consult further during the design development and planning phase.

Impact on surrounding homes/estates

With more housing being built, will local facilities become overcrowded?

If one of the options set out in this public consultation goes ahead, the Council will of course consider the impact on the local area. This is an important part of planning applications, which include a section called the 'environmental impact assessment'. This will take into account the effects of the development on all aspects of the local environment, including the impact of the development as it is constructed and its impact once completed and functioning. It also looks at the development's use of natural resources, the potential emission of pollutants, and the elimination of waste. Further information can be found at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1824/schedule/4/made>

What will you do to prevent building noise from affecting local people?

Again, this is an important part of any planning application and the Planning Committee will expect applicants to demonstrate that residents will not be negatively impacted, whether during construction or once the new development is operational. Further details on how noise issues are assessed as part of the planning process are available at <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/noise/noise-guidance/>

Will there be an impact on parking and traffic?

Any planning applications will need to include an environmental impact assessment and a transport assessment, which will take into account these issues.

Will there be job opportunities for local people as a result of this development?

The Council is looking at ways of ensuring that local people are given access to the employment opportunities that will arise from the development, if it goes ahead. This could include offering more apprenticeships than current legislation and policy dictates, requiring more jobs to be filled by those living locally, and providing training for young people to allow them to access skilled jobs in due course.

What health and safety measures will be put in place to minimise the risk to the local community including pupils at Shoreditch Park Primary School and users of the Britannia Leisure Centre?

The Council has considerable experience in this area. For example, when we built the new secondary and special schools including managing health and safety risks of a large construction programme. The builder will be required to be part of the Considerate Contractor's Scheme which requires them to consult with and respect the local community. An essential part of this scheme is to ensure the contractor puts the health and safety of the local population impacted by the project high on its list of priorities. Details of what it covers can be found at <https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/index.php/ccs-ltd/what-is-the-ccs/code-of-considerate->

practice. Health and safety issues are also covered by extensive legislation, including the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, details of which can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/index.htm>

How does Crossrail 2 fit into all this?

The Council has responded to the Crossrail 2 consultation, strongly defending the park and leisure centre site against plans from Crossrail 2, which proposed to use the land for a worksite and permanent vent shaft. We have suggested the only suitable sites identified by Crossrail 2 are on Eagle Wharf Road. We have regular meetings with the Crossrail 2 team and we should have an update on this soon.

What type of 'affordable' homes will be provided?

The Mayor has committed to providing 500 London Living Rent homes in Hackney, as part of his ongoing commitment to making the borough more affordable for those on lower and middle incomes. Two options are included in the consultation that include a proportion of affordable housing. Although the final tenure mix will not be set until later in the process, should the development proceed, the Council will investigate fully whether some or all of the affordable housing could be London Living Rent, and the remainder available as social rent properties.

Impact on Shoreditch Park

Is any area of Shoreditch Park included in the proposed new development?

The only area of the park that we anticipate will be affected is the ball courts / tennis courts adjacent to Pitfield Street, which currently form part of Britannia Leisure Centre's facilities.

Will you be building on park land?

We propose that the ball courts, on the border with Pitfield Street, will be used for the new Leisure Centre. The Council is looking to replace those ball courts on the roof of the new facility. We do not anticipate that there will be any loss of green park space.

Do any of the options include improvements for Shoreditch Park?

The new Leisure Centre will include toilets and a café that can be used by members of the public using the Park.

Will the new secondary school be using Shoreditch Park to deliver lessons and after school activities?

This may be the case on a temporary basis, when the school first opens but its own external areas are not fully finished. If it is, the Council will consider the impact on the park, particularly its grass areas, and what improvements would need to be made to address this. At this stage it is not known whether this will even be necessary.

Will the buildings have an impact on views of the Park?

The Leisure Centre will be built on the Pitfield Street side of Shoreditch Park, on the existing ball courts. Although it will affect the view from the street into the Park, from

ground level these are already obscured by the fencing around the ball courts. The Council will seek a design solution for the Leisure Centre that will allow a view through part of the final structure from Pitfield Street into the Park. The residential towers will be located to minimise the impact upon views of the Park from the respective boundaries. The feasibility study sought to find locations along the roads (e.g. Penn Street and Hyde Road) that run to the north of the Park, so that the housing would not be right on the border of the main, southern section of Shoreditch Park. The secondary school will be built in the car park of the existing Leisure Centre, and will not therefore block views of the Park, as the Leisure Centre already does so on that part of the site.

Will any green space be lost?

There is not expected to be any loss of green space on the Park itself. If the scheme proceeds, the trees on the edge of the existing Leisure Centre site will need to be removed to make way for the school building, but the Council will look to re-provide the same number *as a minimum* elsewhere.

Will the school have exclusive use of the park at times?

No. The school may make use of an area of the Park when it first opens, before its own external areas are not fully finished. If this is the case, the Council will consider the impact on the park, particularly its grass areas, and what improvements would need to be made to address this. At this stage it is not known whether this will even be necessary. It is not envisaged that the school will have exclusive use of the park.

What happens next?

Will you be publicising the outcomes of the consultation process?

The Council intends to publish a summary in March 2017.

When will a decision be taken on whether the development will go ahead?

A report will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet, setting out the results of the public consultation process that ran from 5th December 2016 to 12th February 2017, including a risk analysis, and setting out the programme for the next steps, should the decision to be taken to proceed. A confidential appendix will be included that sets out the financial implications of the options consulted on. This will not be available to the public as it is commercially confidential.

This report is expected to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 19th April, when it will be asked to decide the following:

- Whether to proceed with the delivery of one of the options consulted on.
- Which of the options will be taken forward.
- To approve the timetable for the delivery of this option, in particular the immediate master plan stage up to planning approval.
- To confirm that the master plan process can commence, and how it will operate.
- To approve the proposed procurement route for the construction project.
- To approve the financial costs of the project.

What will happen in the 'master plan stage' if the development is approved by the Council?

Work will commence on developing the option that has been selected to go forward to detailed design. A team, including architects and other consultants (quantity surveyors, civil engineers, etc.), will start that work, including opportunities for the public (including local residents, Leisure Centre users, etc.) to provide their views and thoughts on how we might develop the best possible combination of public facilities (in particular for the Leisure Centre and public areas involved in the development) and high quality design for each element. These events will be publicised at the start of the master plan stage, if the Council decides to proceed.

The master plan team will produce detailed designs that can be submitted for planning approval. It is currently estimated this will be in February 2018.