

Introduction

Welcome to this community consultation event about the future of the St George's Leisure Centre site.

The Council is committed to deliver a new modern, affordable leisure and well-being facility at the site alongside new high quality affordable rented homes. The Council is working with developers and housing associations to build a minimum of 1,000 social homes for rent per annum (4,000 over the next four years) with a focus on 3-4-bedroom homes.

Both the leisure facilities and homes will be owned and managed by The Council.

To deliver the new facilities and homes, The Council has made the decision to redevelop the site of the current St George's Leisure Centre and bring forward improvements for the wider area including St George's Gardens.

At today's consultation event, we are presenting our initial concept designs for the redevelopment and collecting your views on the proposed uses and facilities, landscape preferences and suggestions for the wider park area and which will inform our detailed designs.

Current St George's Leisure Centre Building

The existing Leisure Centre building has been closed since the Covid pandemic in March 2020.

Several inspections have been carried out for the Council to assess the existing building and what would be required for

it to be operational again. These reports highlight significant issues and costs to reopen the current building.

These reports raise safety concerns for the public and identify extensive evidence of asbestos material in the building.

The Centre was built between 1965-69. This is over 50 years ago with buildings of this kind having a limited lifespan due to the high-humidity, corrosive environment associated with a swimming pool. The current building is beyond its expected life and as outlined above would need extensive work to serve the community again.

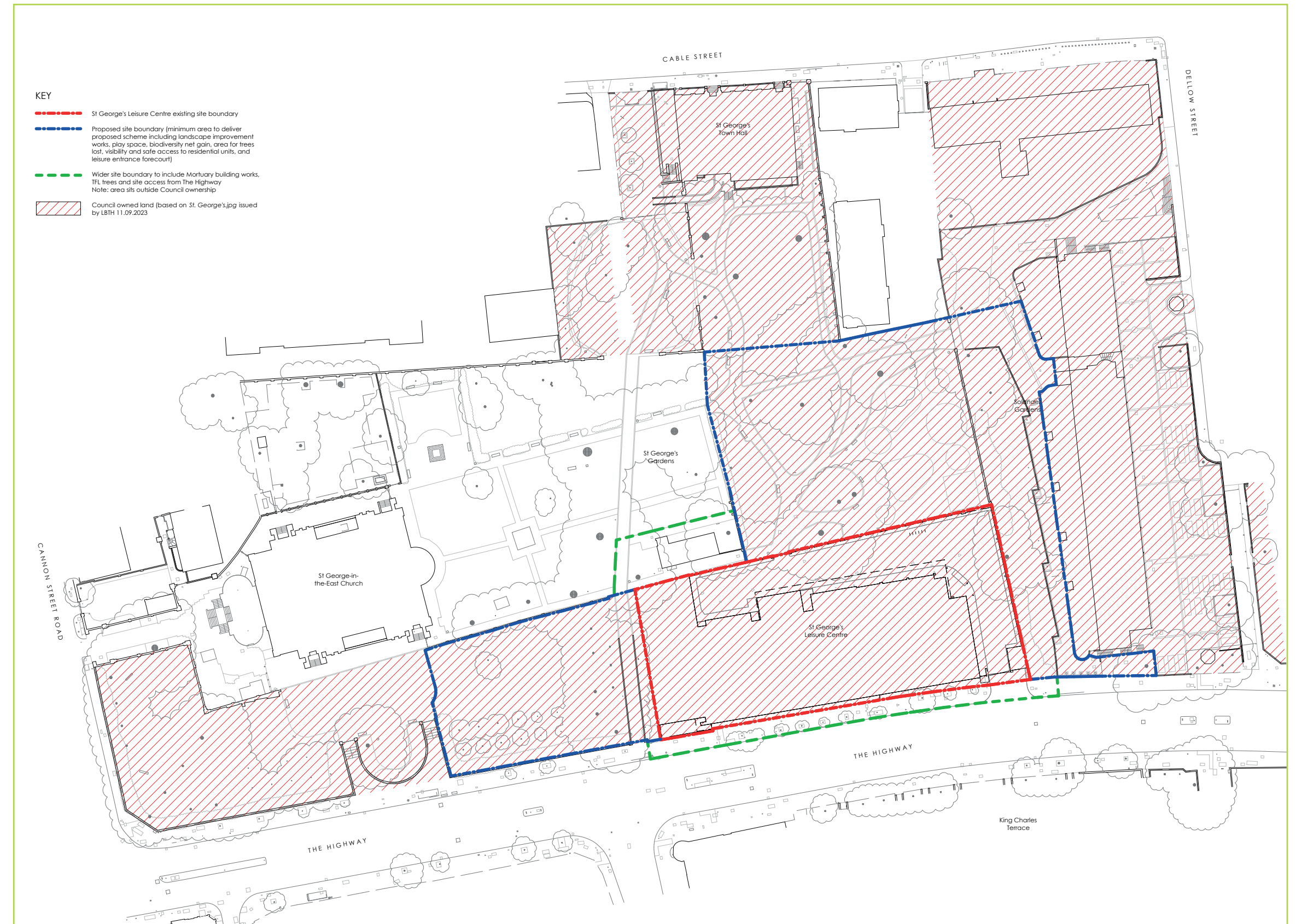
In January 2023, the Cabinet made the decision to redevelop the site having explored options to refurbish the current building which were not deemed to provide value for money. Furthermore, this included the decision to also include much needed family housing at the site.

Demolition Application Update (You said, we did)

At our last engagement event in October 2023, we came to the community to talk about an early demolition of the current building ahead of the redevelopment.

You let us know that an early demolition without knowing what would replace the existing building was not favoured.

We have listened and the application to demolish the current building will be submitted with the planning application along with proposals for the redevelopment of the site so that it is clear what will replace the existing building.



The site

About the site

The St. George's Leisure Centre site is located in Shadwell. It lies on the north side of the Highway, a major arterial route serving the City of London. West of the site is St George-in-the-East, an 18th Century Grade I Listed church designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, the grounds of which extend to form St George's Gardens, a public park which wraps around the west and north of the Leisure Centre site.



St George in the East

It is located to the south of Shadwell Overground and DLR Stations and lies in the St George-in-the-East Conservation Area, which alongside the church, encompasses several historic buildings, structures, and monuments of note, in and around the Gardens.

The Cable Street Mural on the gable of St George's Town Hall commemorates the Battle of Cable Street in 1936 and frames the northern entrance into St. George's Gardens.

Key Design Considerations



- Opportunities and Constraints**
- 01 Combined residential access to new and existing units.
 - 02 Enhance the civic hub by connecting to the surrounding civic buildings at the centre of the civic block
 - 03 Provide connections to the surrounding gardens and public realm
 - 04 Redesigned green space providing integration to entrance
 - 05 Dynamic facade activating the highway
 - 06 TFL red route provides constraints
 - 07 Prominent entrance into Leisure Centre with visual connection to church
 - 08 Key townscape views
 - 09 Enhance pedestrian routes
 - 10 Restore existing mortuary chapel

Key Heritage Considerations

- The architectural value of the existing St George's Leisure Centre building is modest. It is considered to make no more than a neutral contribution to the conservation area.
- The significance of the Church of St George in the East (listed Grade 1) is by far the most important heritage consideration. Managing its setting provides both challenges and opportunities for the developments..
- The churchyard was first converted into a public garden in 1875 and it continues to be an important public open space. Through planned improvement works as part of the redevelopment.
- There is an opportunity to preserve the character of the grounds and improve features to celebrate St George's Gardens. For example, opportunities for further activity connected to the new leisure centre and strengthening the relationship between the new buildings and the public spaces around the site.
- The gravestones that currently line the boundary wall of the site are not listed, but they are historically important and require careful handling if they are to be re-sited.

- Redevelopment offers the prospect of a more positive presence on the Highway. The new leisure centre can act as a beacon.
- If redevelopment spurs the rescue and re-use of the derelict former mortuary building, that would be an added heritage benefit.



Cable Street Mural



A new leisure and wellbeing facility

Improving what the site can provide for residents

The current leisure centre building was constructed over 50 years ago to serve the population of that time. Since then, Tower Hamlets has changed along with the needs of its residents. A new leisure and wellbeing centre here will provide for and reflect the needs of modern-day Tower Hamlets. Once built, this facility will be Council owned and operate allowing for competitive pricing which works for Tower Hamlets.



Some of the key benefits which a new facility will bring include:

- A new modern leisure facility
- Affordable leisure options for the local community
- Refreshed and modernised facilities for swimming
- Increase separate swimming and other activity options for women & girls
- High quality design which carefully considers sustainability and accessibility

Feedback from the community (You said, we did)

At the October engagement event we asked local residents what their priorities were for a new leisure and wellbeing facility at the St George's site. The top four answers were:

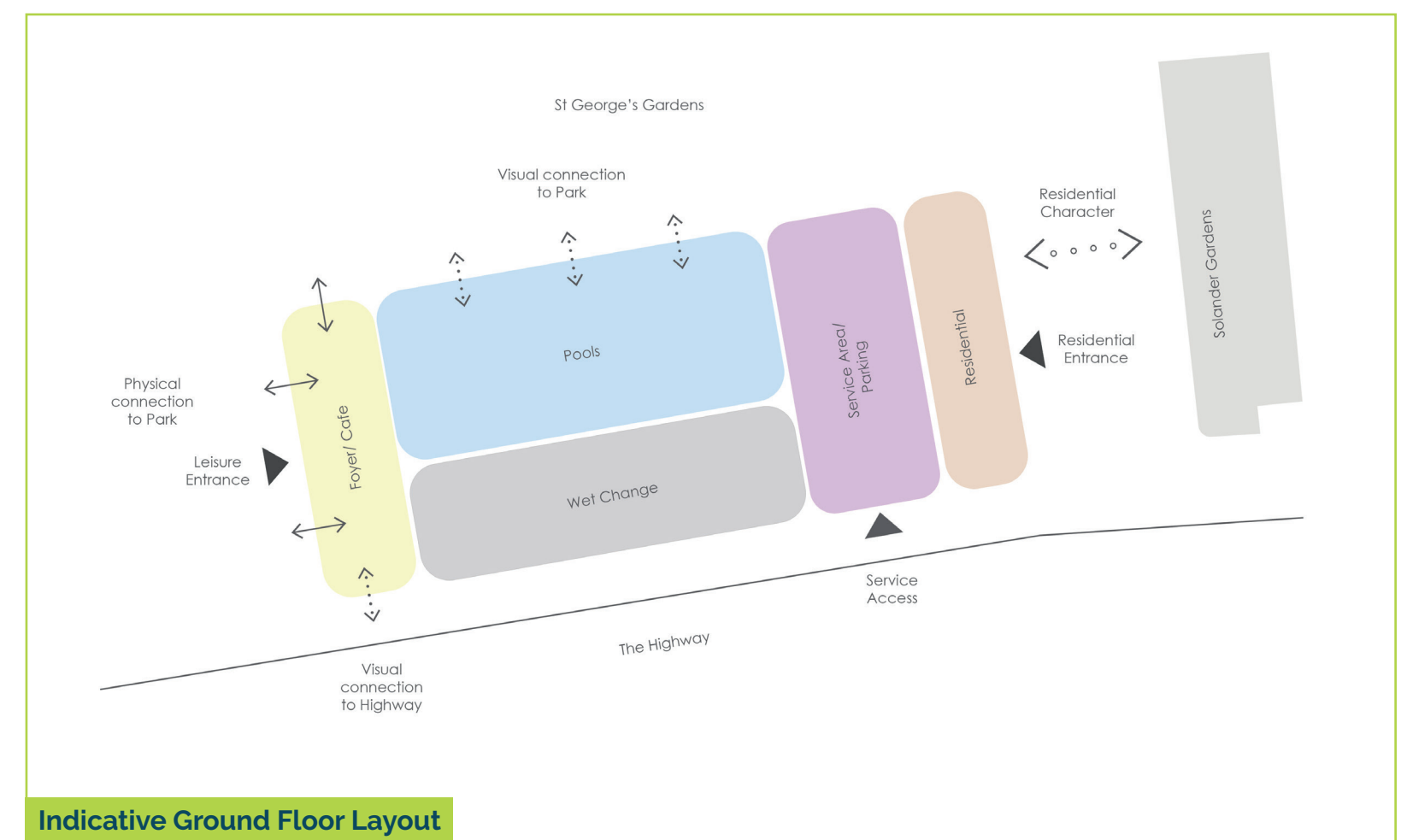
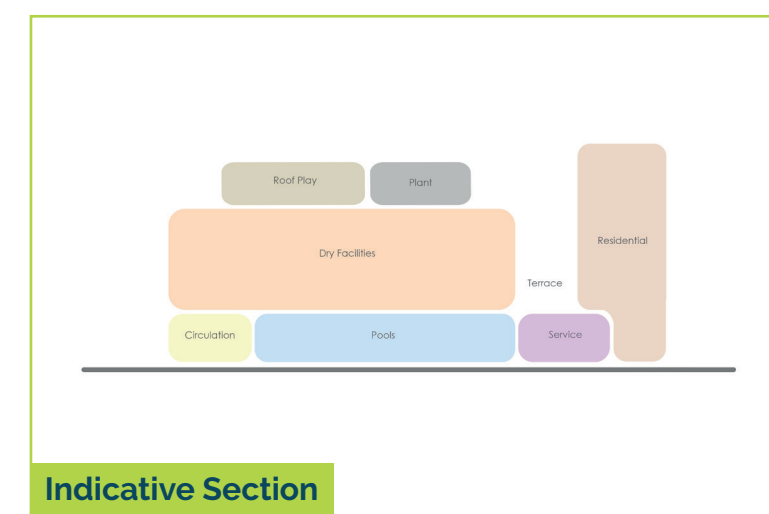
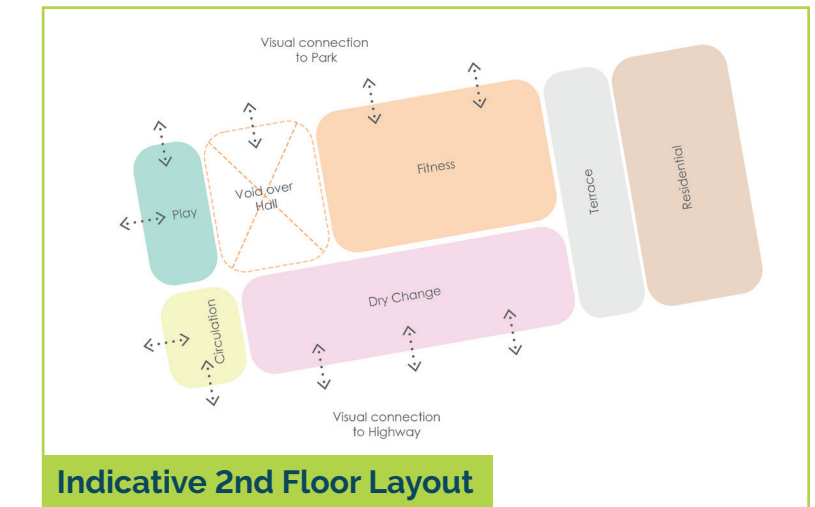
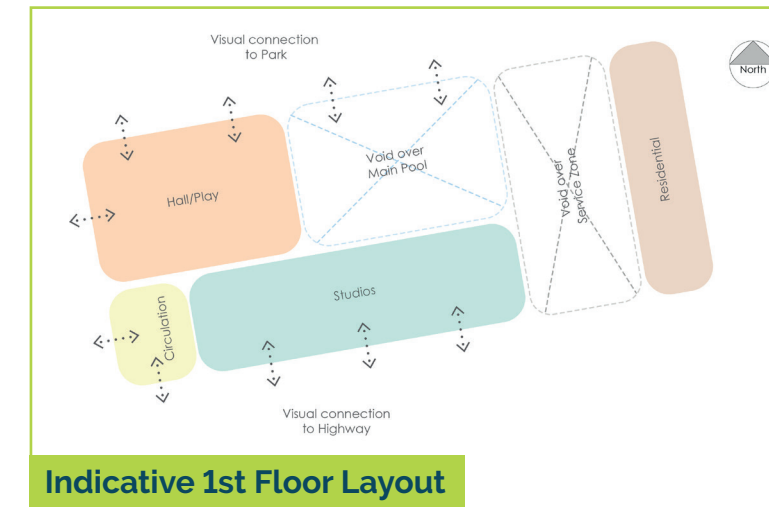
- High quality pool
- Gym/studio
- Affordable swimming – sauna /spa pool (Tied 3rd)
- Children's pool

We have listened to this, and previous engagement sessions hosted by local community groups, and our initial concept designs look to incorporate these priorities in the new building.

Initial Concept Designs

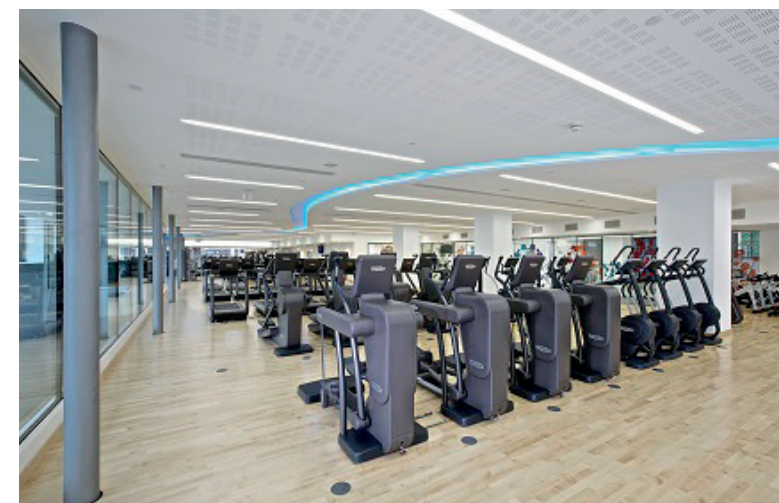
Informed by the challenges and opportunities of the existing site and the feedback provided by the community, we have followed a number of key design principles to inform the layout of the new leisure and wellbeing facility and housing:

- Placing leisure and housing elements at each end of the site, separated by the service zone.
- Arranging leisure facilities to activate the ground floor of the building and connect the building to its surroundings.
- Reinforcing the character to the east of the site as housing facing Solander Gardens.
- Using the redevelopment as an opportunity to connect with the existing St George's Gardens to

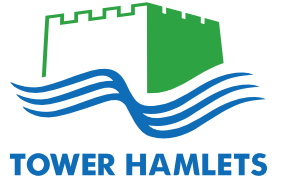


What is important to you in a new leisure and wellbeing facility?

Please put your ideas on a post-it and stick them on this board.



New Homes for Tower Hamlets



Improving what the site can provide for residents

Redevelopment of the St George's Leisure Centre site also provides the opportunity for new affordable housing on site. We are working to provide a minimum of 27 homes at the site. This will help to meet a significant shortfall in the Borough for family homes. This is a benefit which the site as it currently is cannot provide.

Some of the key benefits which new housing at the site will bring include:

- Delivery of new family sized affordable rented homes for local people
- A Local Lettings Policy will be adopted to provide certain number of homes to residents in the immediate area in housing need.
- Contribution towards a reduction in overcrowding
- High quality design which carefully considers sustainability

Why is providing housing at the site important?

- There are more than 24,000 households on the Housing Register in need of an affordable home, of which more than 2,000 households are living in temporary accommodation.

- Tower Hamlets has experienced the fastest population growth in England over the last decade without the number of new homes to support it. This means 4000 new affordable homes are needed each year to meet demand.
- Tower Hamlets must use every opportunity it can to build affordable housing to support its residents.

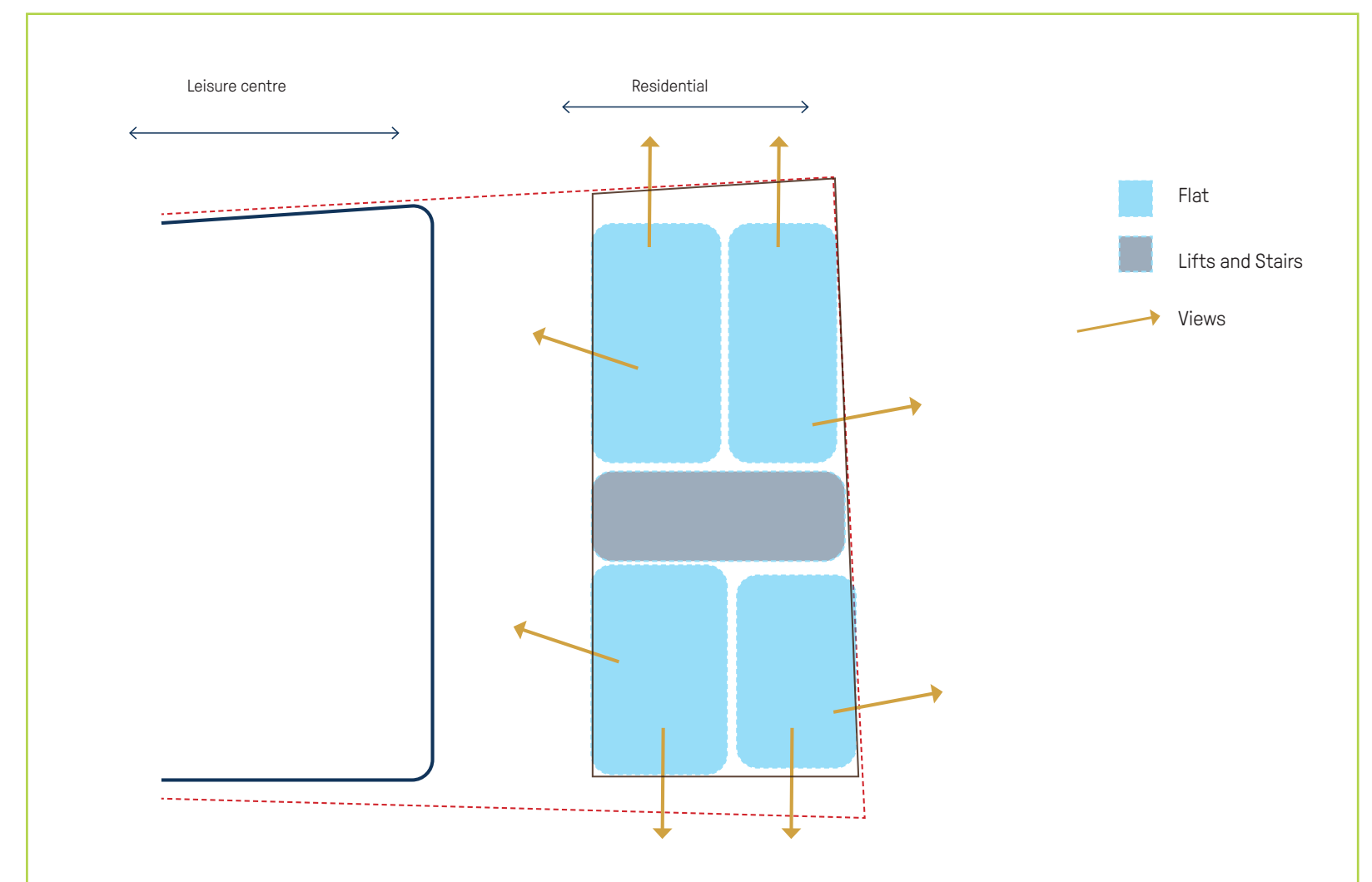
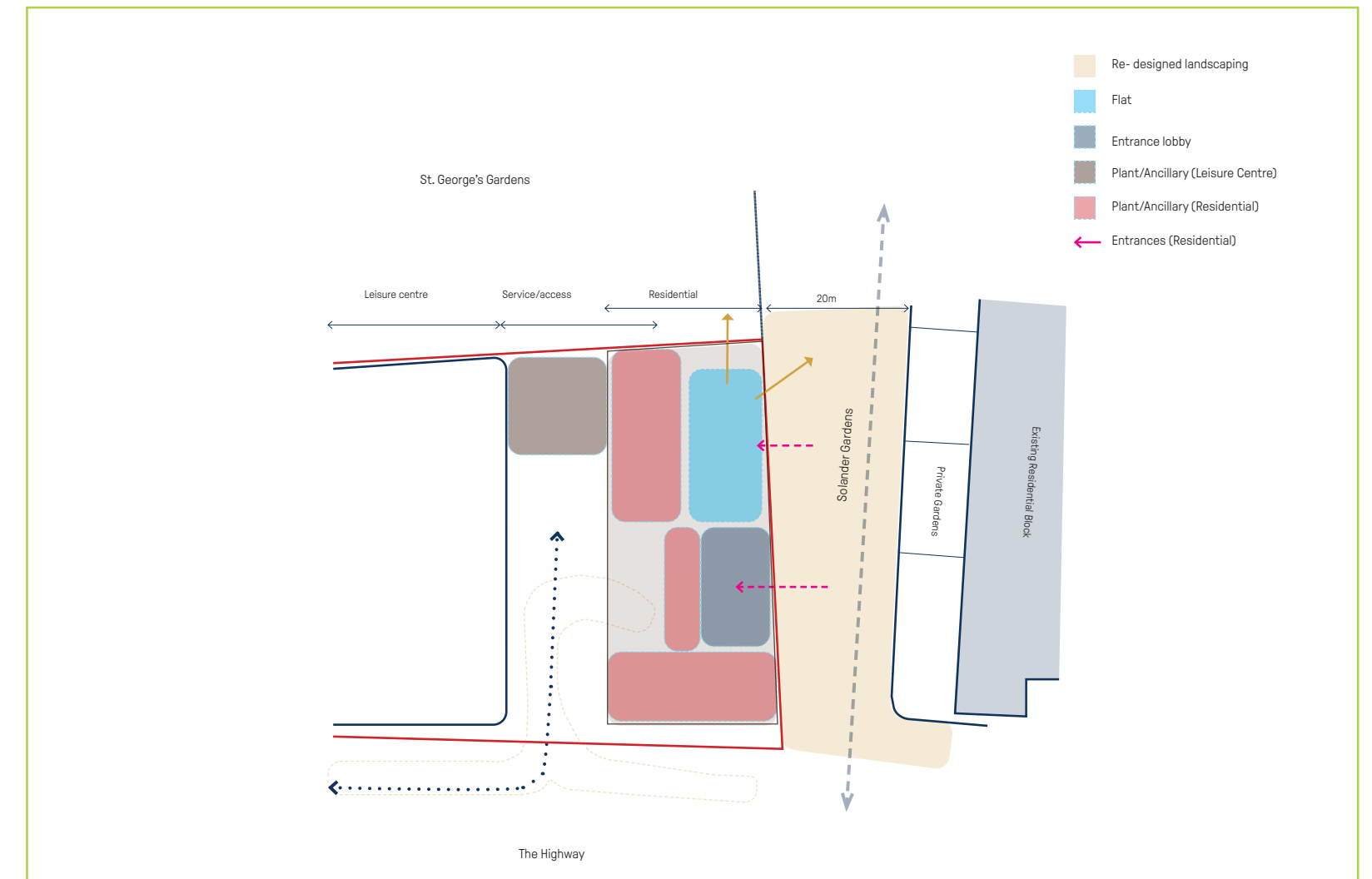
Housing to support those in medical need at the site

- In Tower Hamlets, around 13,000 people of working age (18-64) have a moderate or serious physical disability. A further 9500 people aged 65 and over have a limiting long-term illness.
- The housing proposed at St. George's aims to support families and these residents with medical needs. It will be:
 - Family sized accommodation (3 and 4 bedroom flats).
 - Designed to meet the specific needs for families with autistic or other medical needs.
 - Meet the requirements for category A wheelchair accessible flats as far as possible.

Initial Concept Designs

Informed by the challenges and opportunities of the existing site and the feedback provided by the community, we have followed a number of key design principles to inform the layout of the new leisure and wellbeing facility and housing:

- Placing leisure and housing elements at each end of the site, separated by the service zone.
- Arranging leisure facilities to activate the ground floor of the building and connect the building to its surroundings.
- Reinforcing the character to the east of the site as housing facing Solander Gardens.
- Using the redevelopment as an opportunity to connect with the existing St George's Gardens to create a greater community asset.



Sustainability, Servicing and Transport

Servicing and Transport

The site is located within a PTAL 5 zone indicating a very good provision of public transport in the vicinity of the site including Overground and DLR services from Shadwell Station, which is within 250 metres and regular bus services along The Highway and Cable Street.

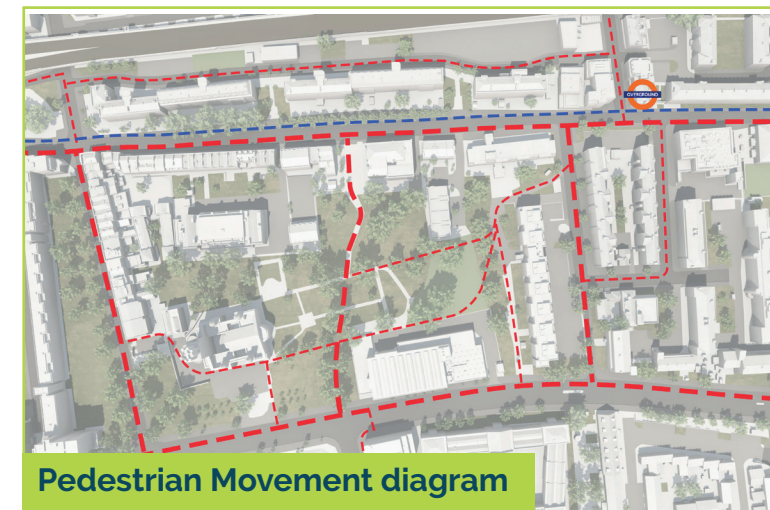
In addition, Cable Street which is to the rear of the site is part of London Super Cycle highway 3.

Given the high level of public transport and ability to travel to site via non-car methods, the site will be car free, except for blue badge spaces replacing the existing disabled parking provision.

The proposals will result in the loss of 20 spaces on site, which will be in accordance with London Plan policies. The Highway is a red route preventing parking at any time and stopping between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday except for the existing coach bay adjacent to the centre which allows pick up and set down between 10am and 4pm.

This bay will remain to enable schools to still visit the new centre.

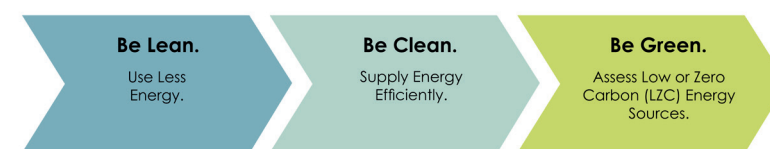
An on-site delivery and service area will be provided, enabling vehicles to enter and leave in a forward gear.



Pedestrian Movement diagram

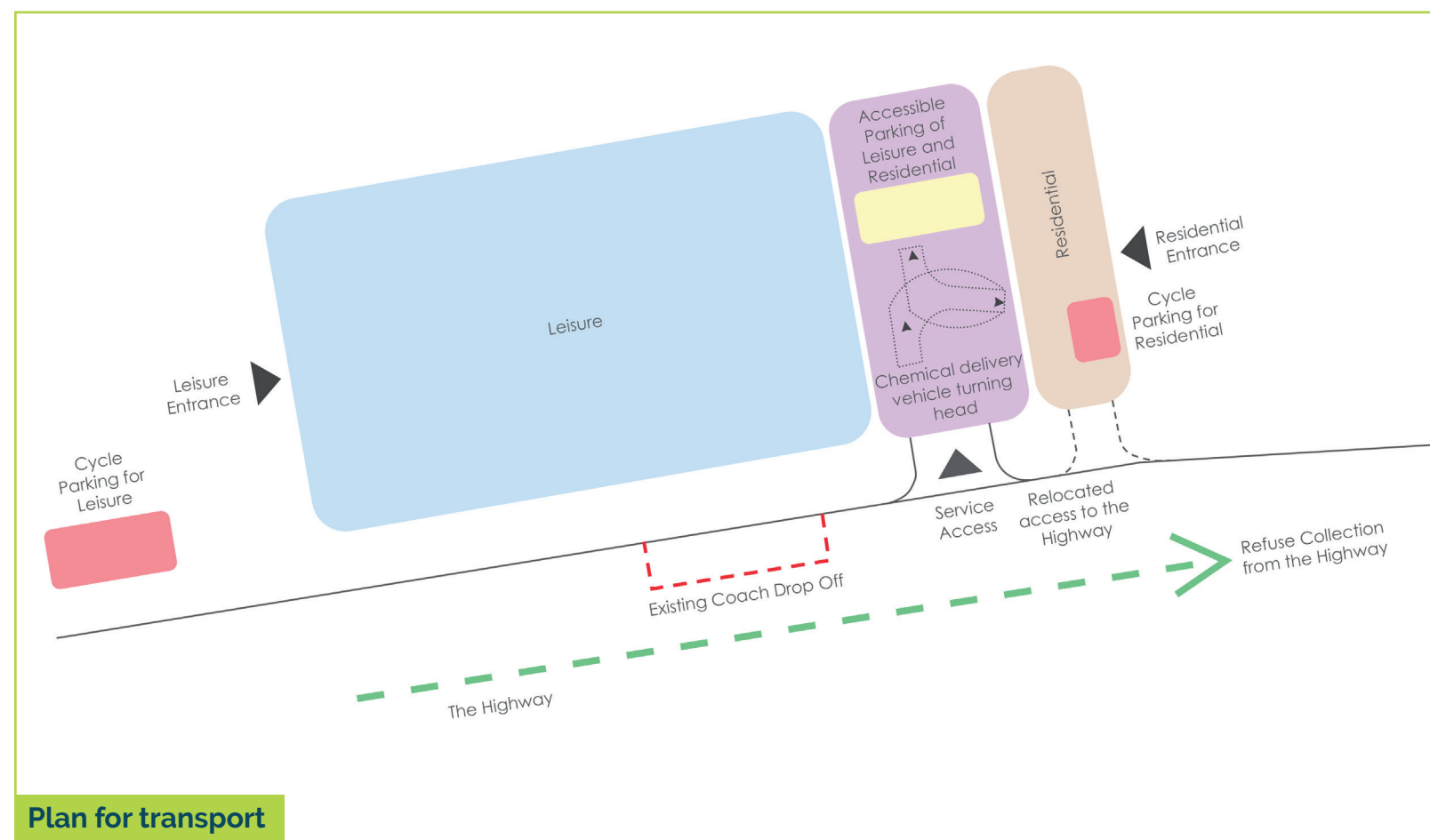
Sustainability

We are still at concept design stage and the energy strategy will be developed as the designs evolve. They will follow a fabric first approach in line with the Energy Hierarchy.



Current sustainability considerations include:

- Likely use of mechanical ventilation for the homes to ensure comfort levels can be achieved where acoustic constraints require windows to be closed.
- Use of heat pump technology to service the leisure centre and apartments separately.
- Infrastructure to future proof the development for heat network connection should one come forward in the building lifetime.
- The development will look to optimise opportunities for rooftop solar panels.
- A whole life carbon assessment for the development to determine the proposed up front and whole life embodied carbon associated with the development.
- Initial feasibility has been undertaken to refurbishment of the existing building, however given the age of the building and level of upgrade required, it has been confirmed that refurbishment would not be fit for purpose in this case.
- Opportunities to reuse demolition materials on site.
- A circular economy strategy to be developed to support the application in line with the London Plan guidance.



Thank You and Next Steps

Thank you for attending this community consultation event about the future of the St George's Leisure Centre site and wider improvements in the area including at St George's Gardens.

We hope that you found the information presented and discussions you have had today useful. Your views matter to us and we would welcome your feedback today via voting for preferences and leaving feedback on our boards as well as filling in our feedback form available today at the event.

Next steps

Following this event, the information presented here will be put onto the Let's Talk Tower Hamlets webpage available at <https://talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk> where residents will also be able to leave their feedback. The information will also be available via www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/leisure_and_culture/sport_and_physical_activity/St-Georges-Leisure-Centre.aspx

We will also be carrying out further consultation on the designs in 2024 with further engagement.

If you have any further questions in the meantime, please email the dedicated project email address: sglcredevelopment@towerhamlets.gov.uk or telephone **0207 364 1143**.



Landscape

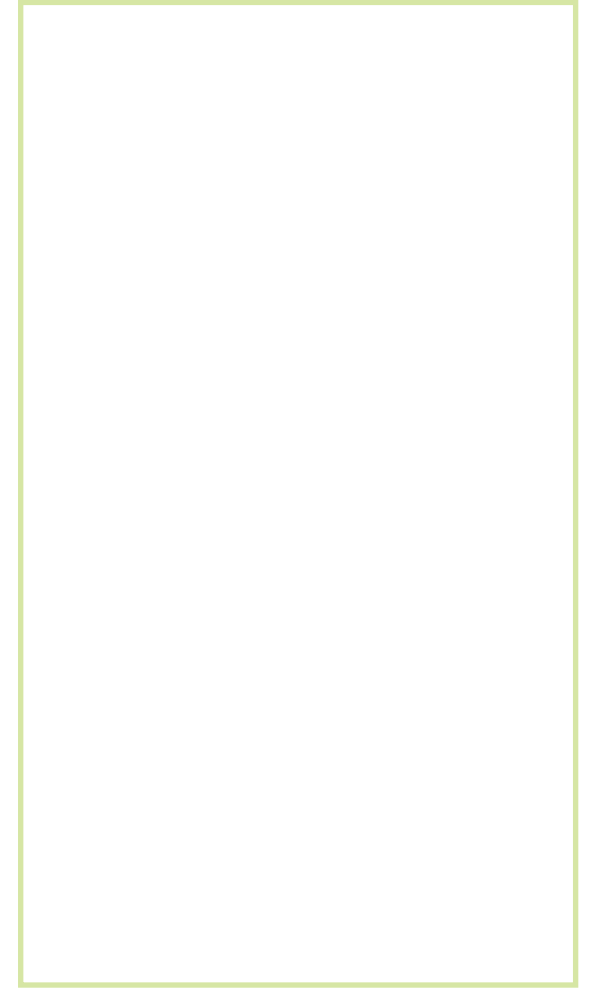
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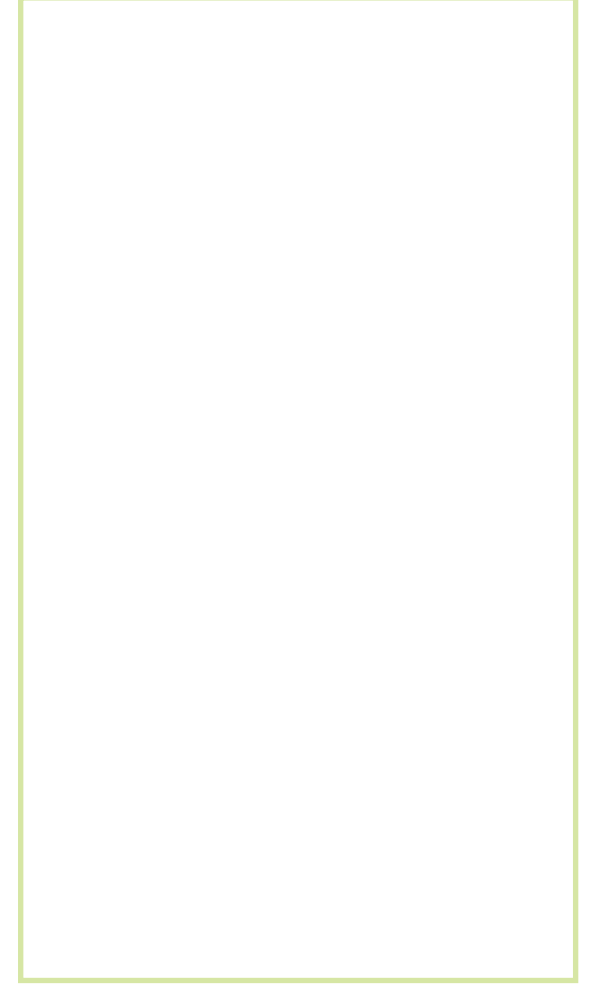
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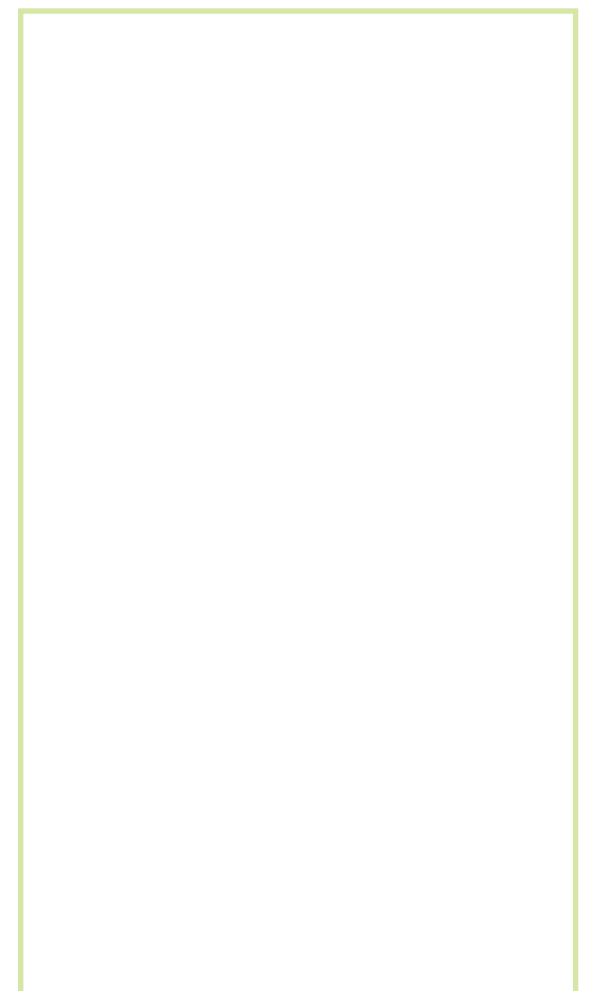
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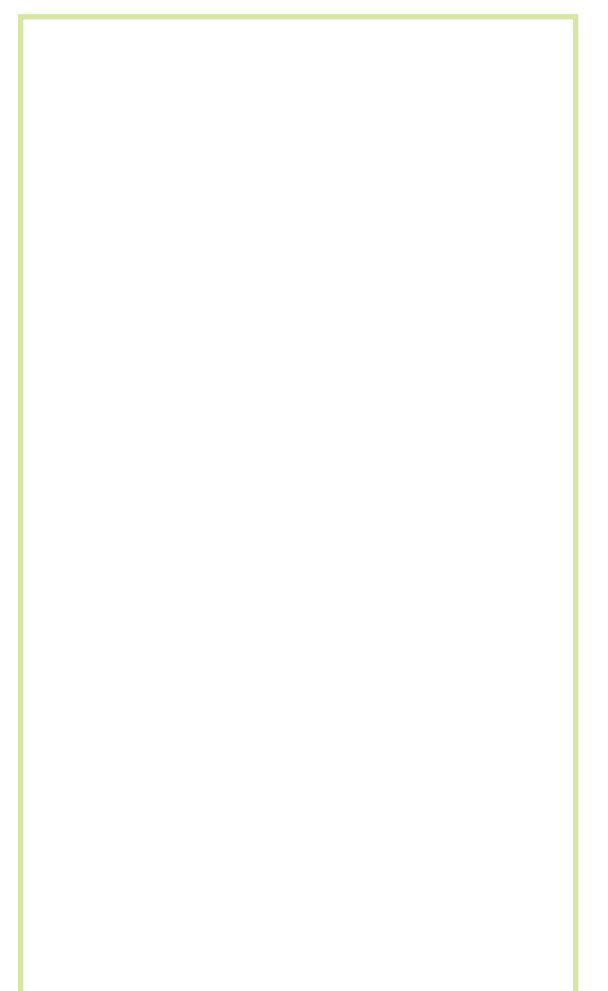
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The Old Mortuary Building

As part of our work exploring opportunities for wider improvements, we are looking at what can be done to bring the old mortuary building into use.

The building is owned by the Diocese of London, not the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. However, we are currently engaging with St George in the East Church to explore the possibilities for the building.

Solander Gardens

With proposals for housing on both sides of Solander Gardens, we want to establish a clear entranceway to new homes and make landscaping and other improvements to this route. Issues we are considering include:

- Having clear views of destinations from entrances for improved safety
- Including light canopy tree planting
- Creating front gardens through low level perennial planting
- Including a wildflower meadow
- Improving lighting
- Resurfacing in light colours to maximise the value of natural daylight



Let us know your favourite space in the Gardens!

Shadwell Overground Station
Shadwell DLR Station (50m North)



How would you like St George's Gardens to be used? (Please sticker as many as you would like below)	
No change	
Playing	
Exercising	
Relaxing Outdoors	
Enjoying Nature	
Enjoying some peace and quiet	
Spending time with friends / family	
Caring for others outdoors	
Opportunities for Learning	
Gardening / Growing Plants	
Walking the dog	
Community Events	
Supporting the Environment	
Other (Let us know!)	

