

Dear Ms Renwick

## **Forest Hill Pools**

I am writing to provide the response of the Tewkesbury Lodge Estate Residents' Association to the proposals for Forest Hill Pools as presented to the stakeholder group on 5 February. We would like you to ensure that our views are included in any submission to the Mayor and Cabinet on 25 February. As you will be aware, the Association represents residents in around 650 homes of whom the majority are members of the Association. This submission is made after consultation with representatives of the Association.

We totally reject the proposal to move the Pools to Willow Way, a site in Sydenham. We believe that this is contrary to Mayor Steve Bullock's long held position that he is committed to the provision of swimming facilities in Forest Hill. The move increases the provision for swimming in Sydenham at the expense of Forest Hill and, in the medium term, threatens the viability of Sydenham's swimming facility at the Bridge. From the viewpoint of our members, the Willow Way site is about 3 times further from the centre of Forest Hill and thus would be less accessible, particularly since there is no parking provision in the immediate area.

We believe that moving the Leisure Centre to Sydenham would leave the Library isolated and reduce its attractiveness to users. By reducing footfall in the area, it would further threaten the numerous small businesses in this area of Dartmouth Road.

We are completely unconvinced by the argument that planning considerations zoning the Willow Way site for employment use mean that the site cannot be used for housing. The site could be developed with mixed use or, taking note of the London Plan, could be re-zoned for housing. We draw your attention to the London Plan which after saying that Boroughs should promote policies that seek to exceed housing targets provides policy 3A.2:

DPD policies should: ...

- identify new sources of supply having regard to: ...
  - to secure mixed use residential development
  - change of use of surplus industrial or commercial land to residential or mixed use development, while protecting land supply for projected employment growth and required waste facilities (see also Policy 3B.5)
  - redevelopment in town centres

We believe that such a policy provides full support for the use of Willow Way for housing, particularly since additional employment will be being created on the Forest Hill Pools site.

It is apparent that the development options for the site are greatly constrained by the decision to retain the Laundry Building. Although this building is mentioned in passing in the listing of Louise House it is clearly not central to the listing decision and English Heritage should be approached to clarify this point. If the architects consider that they could offer a better solution to the Community by demolishing the Laundry Block, then we believe that it should go.

We believe that Option 1 in its fully developed form with housing on the Pools site is an unacceptable over-development of the site. We accept the argument that it is unlikely to be built in the current environment. However, we fail to understand why, if Option 2 can be considered with a housing subsidy from Willow Way, the same consideration does not apply to Option 1. Indeed, although not clearly stated at the Stakeholder Meeting, such a subsidy appears to have been considered in the Cost Summary table on page 34 of the presentation

which shows the same (low) receipt from Willow Way for Options 1 and 2. We believe that Option 1, without the housing on top as illustrated on page 10 of the presentation is a valid option for consideration.

With the level of detail available at present we are not able to make a considered judgement as to whether unacceptable compromises have been made to preserve the old Pools frontage. The Option 2 proposal appears sympathetic but may not make best use of the site. We would like to see the more detailed plans, including those for the upper floors of both Option 1 and Option 2, before making a judgement between these options. We are assuming that if A&M are seen to be the better architects for this project, they could be asked to undertake a design for Option 1 since the options are only preliminary at this stage.

In summary, we wish to see a new Leisure Centre on the existing site. If retaining the existing Pools frontage excessively compromises the quality of the facility to be provided then we are prepared to lose it. We are unable to decide between option 1 (without housing) and option 2 on the basis of the information available to us at present.

Yours sincerely