



Results of consultation about redevelopment/ refurbishment of Ironmonger Row Baths (IRB) and Finsbury Leisure Centre (FLC)

1.0 Summary

Between 9 November and 10 December 2007 the Council, in partnership with EC1 New Deal, conducted a comprehensive and innovative consultation exercise on the refurbishment or redevelopment of Ironmonger Row Baths and the Finsbury Leisure Centre. This consultation elicited 914 responses. This report summarises the results of the consultation and the reasons given for supporting or opposing various approaches. The collated results demonstrate a net support for all of the options consulted on, and the analysis of the comments received provides an understanding of which elements of each option are particularly popular or unpopular.

2.0 Methodology

We used a range of promotional tools to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation.

The detail was contained in a 16-page brochure that explained the key objectives and ambitions for the project. It also included four indicative options for the refurbishment/ redevelopment of facilities at the current FLC/IRB site and the surrounding area.

A questionnaire was included in the brochure inviting people to set out their priorities for sport and leisure and community facilities in the area. They were also invited to express an opinion on the different options and explain what they liked and disliked.

The brochure was distributed directly to 20,000 Islington households in the old Finsbury area. This included all homes in the EC1 and WC1 postcodes in Islington and those in N1 south of Pentonville Road and City Road. Posters and brochures were also distributed to libraries,

estates, schools, nurseries, day centres, doctor's surgeries and a range of other public outlets in the area.

The brochure and questionnaire were also sent to over 4,000 leisure centre members and stakeholder groups that use the centre or the baths including schools, sports clubs, TRAs and community groups. An offer was also extended to all local organisations to attend a meeting of the group as part of the consultation process. The brochure and questionnaire were available online via the council's web site. The Aquaterra and EC1 websites also provided links to the council site.

Additional promotional tools included external banners on eight sites in the immediate area and two stages of press advertising in the local papers. A special tour, briefing and a photo opportunity were organised for the local press, to generate press coverage for the consultation. It was also featured in the EC1 newsletter.

An exhibition and copies of the brochures were made available at each site along with posting boxes to make it easy to return completed forms. The exhibitions were staffed at advertised times. Special 'behind the scenes' tours were also offered to provide further information.

To encourage participation, especially from local residents, door-knockers visited homes in the estates in the immediate area to ensure people had received the brochure and to encourage them to complete a form. A number of one off events including a swimming gala, a stunt involving stilt walkers and dedicated stall at the busy Whitecross Street food market were also used to engage local people and encourage participation. A prize draw was also used as an additional incentive.

The consultation period was just over four weeks, running from Friday 9 November to Monday 10 December. In total 899 single responses plus an additional submission on behalf of 15 young people whose individual views were recorded on a single response form. In total therefore 914 took part in the consultation. In addition, a 30-signature petition was received from a group of local residents. Overall this represents the largest response to any such exercise, other than the Council's budget consultation, which is Borough-wide.

The resulting data has been inputted and cross tabulated by an independent company, Snap Surveys.

3.0 Results

All the figures below are based on the percentage of people answering each question or expressing an opinion. In other words, non-responses to questions are not included in the quoted percentages.

3.1 Profile of respondents

Slightly more women (54%) than men (46%) responded. Around one in eight respondents said they had a disability

The age profile of respondents was broadly in line with the adult population profile of the borough, except for an under-representation of young people aged 16-24.

The ethnic profile of respondents was broadly representative of all groups in the borough except for black respondents, who accounted for only 6.5% of respondents compared to 13% of the local population.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

	Respondents (no.)	Respondents (%)	EC1 area profile (%)	LBI Profile (%)
Gender				
Male	413	46%	50%	48%
Female	459	54%	50%	52%
Ethnicity				
White	692	80%	70%	75%
Black	56	7%	13%	12%
Asian	32	4%	7%	5%
Mixed heritage	34	4%	11%	4%
Chinese and other	47	5%		3%
Disability				
Has a disability	103	12%	28%	18% (LLI)
Does not have a disability	747	88%	72%	82% (LLI)
Age				
16-24	77	9%	19%	16%
25-44	415	47%	50%	50%
45-64	226	26%	18%	22%
65+	135	15%	13%	12%
Takes exercise at least once a week				
Yes	681	79%	Not available	50%
No	176	21%	Not available	50%

- An additional 33 responses (4%) were received from under 16 year olds.

Unsurprisingly, respondents had a greater propensity to play sport or take exercise than the borough average. 43% of people took exercise most days or every day (compared to a borough average of 19% (source: LAA survey). A massive 79% claimed to play sport or take exercise at least once a week compared to about 50% of the borough population who had exercised in the last week (LAA survey).

Finally nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) said they used the facilities at FLC at least once a week with a further 10% using it “most weeks”. A higher proportion of respondents used IRB with just over a third (35%) using it at least once a week and half of all respondents (50%) being frequent users (most weeks or every week).

The profile of respondents by postcode shows that just over half (52%) the respondents who gave their postcode lived in the EC1 area and a further 4% lived in the adjacent WC1 area. A further 15% lived in the neighbouring N1 area, while just under a quarter (21%) lived outside of the immediate local area and largely consisted of centre users or members.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by home postcode

Postcode	Number	Percentage of known postcodes
EC1	436	52%
WC1	34	4%
N1	130	15%
N4	12	1%
N5	14	2%
N7	10	1%
N16	22	2%
N19	8	1%
Other	174	21%
Not given	74	
Total	914	100%

The profile of the 470 respondents who live in the surrounding EC1/WC1 area is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

3.2 Importance of services

Tables 3 and 4 overleaf summarise the responses in terms of the importance people gave to having the facilities/activities in the area.

The standout priority among sports facilities (Table 3 overleaf) was a swimming pool (with 90% of people rating it as important). Gym facilities scored 79% and space for exercise/fitness activities scored 78%.

Table 3: Importance of sports and leisure facilities

	Very important or quite important (%)	Very important (%)	Quite important (%)
Swimming pool	90	78	13
Gym	79	54	24
Space for exercise/fitness activities	78	51	27
Sports hall	72	44	29
Football pitches	65	42	23
Sauna	63	39	25
Turkish baths	61	41	20
Squash courts	51	24	27
Martial arts	42	18	24

In terms of other community facilities opinion was much more evenly spread with most facilities regarded as important by between 50-60% of respondents. However youth facilities and a Safer Neighbourhood policing base stood out as being the most important with 75% and 77% respectively, and sports related healthcare was viewed as important by 65% of respondents.

Table 4: importance of other community activities/facilities

	Very important or quite important (%)	Very important (%)	Quite important (%)
Safer Neighbourhood Police base	77	55	22
Youth facilities	75	49	26
Sports-related healthcare	65	27	38
Crèche/playroom nursery	62	40	22
Additional healthcare	61	35	26
Café	58	28	30
Advice services	58	30	28
Conference/function/meeting rooms	55	21	34
Computer//internet access	54	28	26
Affordable office space for community groups	54	22	32
Laundry	52	29	23
Parenting support	51	26	25
Community kitchen/bar	37	13	24

Respondents were also invited to suggest any other facilities or activities they would like to see as part of any future development. The most commonly mentioned were tennis/badminton courts (mentioned by 27 people), youth facilities such as a skatepark (25 mentions), other ball sports (such as basketball, netball and cricket) with 22 mentions, and diving facilities (20 mentions).

A number of imaginative suggestions were made by smaller numbers of people. For example an ice rink, a fencing sale, a hydrotherapy pool and a climbing wall were among the sport and fitness ideas that were mentioned.

There were also a number of suggestions for other community facilities such as a Saturday morning cinema for children, games consoles and literacy classes.

3.3 Options

Four options were set out in the brochure as follows:

Option 1: Repair of existing buildings

Option 2: Refurbishment of IRB and rebuild of FLC but no housing development

Option 3: Refurbishment and extension of IRB and rebuild of FLC with housing development in Central Street

Option 4: Refurbishment and extension of IRB and rebuild of FLC with housing development in Helmet Row and Mitchell Street

The consultation was not intended as a 'referendum' on fixed approaches but was designed to establish views on a range of issues and on potential design elements. Consultees were invited to express views on the options set out, with Option 2 receiving the highest number of favourable responses and Option 4 the least. 54% of all respondents however, favoured an approach with some level of housing development.

Looking at concerns over various options, Option 1 attracted the most concern (36% of respondents either strongly opposed or opposed it) with option 2 strongly opposed or opposed by 28% of respondents. However the levels of opposition to each scheme only varied by eight percentage points.

Table 5a: Support and opposition to the options

	Strongly support (%)	Support (%)	Oppose (%)	Strongly oppose (%)	No opinion (%)	No reply (%)
Option 1	26	23	22	14	9	6
Option 2	25	28	17	11	8	11
Option 3	22	22	12	20	12	13
Option 4	18	22	14	20	12	15

Focusing on the views of respondents who lived in the immediate EC1/WC1 area – 470 respondents – the pattern of support and opposition was very similar to the entire sample.

Table 5b: Support and opposition to the options from EC1/WC1 residents

	Strongly support (%)	Support (%)	Oppose (%)	Strongly oppose (%)	No opinion (%)	No reply (%)
Option 1	25	22	20	17	10	6
Option 2	27	25	15	11	10	12
Option 3	21	22	10	21	12	14
Option 4	20	21	11	20	12	16

The following paragraphs (and tables) set out the views on each option and the reasons given in the text responses. Comments have been grouped together and where at least 25 people mentioned a particular reason it has been included in the tables below. These views will be important in helping determine the forward shape of the project and in informing the detailed design stage.

Individual respondents may have mentioned several reasons for supporting or opposing a particular option and these are all included in the analysis.

3.3.1 Option 1 - Repair of existing buildings

This option was strongly supported by just over a quarter (26%) of respondents and supported by 23%. A disproportionate number of older residents (37%) and disabled people (39%) strongly supported it. Residents in the EC1 area were equally likely to support it as the overall pattern. A third (33%) of regular users of FLC strongly supported this option, as did 31% of regular IRB users.

Younger people (aged 16-24) and Asian residents were least likely to strongly support this option (9% and 13% respectively).

The most common reason given for supporting this option was that it minimises disruption to the facilities (mentioned by 212 people). Five other reasons were given by at least 25 respondents as set out in Table 6a (overleaf).

Table 6a: Most frequently given reasons for supporting option 1

Reason	Number of mentions
Minimises disruption to the current facilities	212
Lowest cost to public purse	57
Trees / green space protected	44
Keeps IRB as it is	41
Develops / extends current facilities	30
Keeps laundry	29

The main reason for opposing Option 1 was that it is a short-term solution (94 respondents). Two other reasons that were frequently given were not dissimilar. Over 60 people said it was a wasted opportunity and a similar number opposed this option because they felt it did not offer better or new facilities. Table 6b provides an overview.

Table 6b: Most frequently given reasons for opposing option 1

Reason	Number of mentions
Short term solution	94
Wasted opportunity	64
No new or better facilities	62
Not cost effective	50
Condition or appearance of current buildings	32
FLC needs major facelift/repairs	27
IRB needs major facelift/repairs	26

3.3.2 Option 2 - Refurbishment of IRB and rebuild of FLC but no housing

This option was strongly supported by a quarter (25%) of respondents and supported by a further 28%. A fifth of respondents did not express a view.

Support for this option was fairly equally split across all demographic groups. Non-users of the facilities were slightly less likely to support this option than users. Disabled respondents were the group most likely to strongly support this option

Seven different reasons were cited by at least 25 people for supporting this option, the main one of which is that it develops (or extends) the existing facilities. An additional 80 and 82 people respectively also gave this reason for supporting options 3 and 4.

Table 7a: Most frequently given reasons for supporting option 2

Reason	Number of mentions
Develops / extends existing facilities	112
FLC needs major facelift / repairs	52
Makes better use of space	50
Long term solution	43
IRB needs major facelift / repairs	47
More football pitches	37
Demolition / rebuild of FLC	32

The main grounds for opposing Option 2 was the length of disruption. The potential loss of the laundry was cited by 58 people.

Table 7b: Most frequently given reasons for opposing option 2

Reason	Number of mentions
Length of disruption	99
Loss of laundry	58
No provision for needed social housing	42
No private housing	26
Does not provide new or better facilities	25

3.3.3 Option 3 - Refurbishment and extension of IRB and rebuild of FLC with housing development in Central Street

Just over a fifth of respondents (22%) strongly supported this option and a similar proportion supported it. A further quarter of respondents (25%) did not express an opinion.

Support for this option was fairly equally split across all demographic groups, though the 16-24 age group were particularly supportive of this option. Non-users of the facilities were more likely to support it than frequent users. Local EC1 residents were in line with the overall pattern of support.

Nine different reasons were given by at least 25 people for supporting this option. The most frequently given reasons focussed on the need to improve the facilities and the need for more housing. Nearly fifty people expressly favoured the location of the proposed housing development.

Table 8a: Most frequently given reasons for supporting option 3

Reason	Number of mentions
Improves existing facilities	80
There is a need for social housing	62
Provision on new housing / mixed housing scheme	62
IRB needs major facelift / expanded facilities	56
Location of proposed housing development	47
Makes better use of space around buildings	39
Better design / improved appearance	34
Long term solution	29
FLC needs major facelift / repairs	25

The length of disruption was again the most frequently cited reason for opposing this option (88 people). Concerns over the proposed housing and the potential loss of the laundry also featured highly.

Removal of trees and the potential loss of public open space were also identified as concerns by several respondents (see Table 8b).

Table 8b: Most frequently given reasons for opposing option 3

Reason	Number of mentions
Length of disruption / takes too long	88
More housing is not needed	81
Loss of laundry	51
Location of residential development	35
Loss of some public space	33
Removal / loss of trees	29

3.3.4 Option 4 - Refurbishment and extension of IRB and rebuild of FLC with housing development in Helmet Row and Mitchell Street

Less than a fifth of respondents (18%) strongly supported this option with a further 22% supporting it. However over a quarter (27%) did not express a view.

Opinion was rather more divided across demographic groups on this option compared to option 3. There was an increasing amount of strong support by age with older respondents most likely to be strongly supportive of it. Disabled respondents were twice as likely as able-bodied respondents to strongly support his option.

Regular users were less likely to strongly support this option than non-users of Finsbury Leisure Centre.

Again the need to improve the facilities and support for additional housing were the two most frequently cited reasons in support of this option. This was the only option to attract over 25 people making the general observation that it was the “best option / like everything” (or comments to this effect).

Table 9a: Most frequently given reasons for supporting option 4

Reason	Number of mentions
Extends/improves current facilities	82
Need for social housing	45
New housing / mixed housing development	44
Best option – like everything	32
Location of residential development	29
Better design / improved appearance	26

Opposition to this option again focussed on the length of disruption (85 people) and resistance to housing development. There were more comments opposing the location of the proposed housing in this option than for option 3.

Table 9b: Most frequently given reasons for opposing option 4

Reason	Number of mentions
Length of disruption	85
Do not need more housing	81
Location of residential development	59
Loss of some public space	44
Loss of laundry	42
Loss of trees	27
Size of proposed residential development	27

3.4 Additional housing development

Two of the options, 3 and 4, involved additional housing development but in different locations. In order to understand views on additional housing development overall, an analysis was undertaken of the numbers of respondents supporting and opposing either or both options.

This shows that 54% of respondents expressed support for an approach involving an element of housing development, either Option 3 or Option 4 or both. 41% of respondents opposed one or other (or both) of the options involving housing development.

Over a third of all respondents (35%) supported both option 3 **and** option 4 whilst 28% opposed both options.

3.5 Other comments

Respondents were invited to make any other comments. These have been reviewed individually, but the following table summarises the main issues raised. Those listed were mentioned by at least 24 respondents. These are summarised in Table 10 overleaf.

Table 10: Other frequent comments and suggestions

Issue / comment	Number of mentions
Preserve swimming pool / Turkish baths	61
Priority to keep sports facilities / provision	55
Disruption caused to clubs/users	39
Importance of keeping the laundry	34
Need for new sports facilities	26
Community facilities / local people should get priority (not City workers)	25
Need more information / costs or timescale not sufficiently clear	24
Something for young people to do	24

Appendix 1: Supplementary table

Table A1: Profile of respondents who live in EC1 and WC1 postcode area

	EC1/WC1 respondents (no.)	EC1/WC1 respondents (%)	All respondent profile (%)
All	470	100%	100%
Gender			
Male	203	43%	45%
Female	250	53%	50%
Not stated	17	4%	5%
Ethnicity			
White	349	74%	76%
Black	42	9%	6%
Asian	23	5%	4%
Mixed heritage	16	3%	4%
Chinese and other	22	5%	5%
Not stated	18	4%	6%
Disability			
Has a disability	62	13%	11%
Does not have a disability	375	80%	82%
Not stated	33	7%	7%
Age			
Under 16	24	5%	4%
16-24	43	9%	8%
25-44	210	45%	45%
45-64	111	24%	25%
65+	73	16%	15%
Not stated	9	2%	3%
Takes exercise at least once a week			
Yes	312	67%	74%
No	130	29%	19%
Not stated	28	4%	6%