



# Golden Lane Leisure Centre Renewal

## Engagement Feedback Report

June 2026



# 1. Executive summary

The City of London Corporation has undertaken an engagement process on the renewal of Golden Lane Leisure Centre, with a choice between the two current design options. Option A is a full refurbishment that keeps the current layout and mix of uses, including the multi-use sports hall. Option B refurbishes and reconfigures the building, moving the gym into the sports hall and turning the current gym into new studio spaces. As the designs are at an early stage, this feedback is helpful in understanding preferences as it evolves.

The questionnaire asked respondents to choose between these two options, but the engagement also gave people space to raise wider experiences, concerns and suggestions, including views that go beyond the two options as presented. This report sets out what the engagement has heard, including wider feedback, to inform the Community and Children's Services Committee's decision on 30 June 2026.

Feedback was gathered through a questionnaire, two in-person drop-ins, an online webinar, three targeted roundtables for specific user groups, and written correspondence. The consultation closed on 18 June 2026. In total, 218 people completed the questionnaire.

## Key takeaways

- **A clear preference for Option A.** The most consistent message, across every part of the engagement, was support for keeping the existing sports hall. Of the 206 questionnaire respondents who chose an option, 173 (84%) chose Option A and 17 (8%) chose Option B; the remaining 16 had no preference.
- **The pool and the sports hall were rated most important.** On a five-point scale, the swimming pool was rated highest (mean 4.3), followed by the multi-use sports hall (4.2), then the badminton (3.7) and tennis (3.5) courts. The treatment space (1.6), sauna (1.8) and power-assisted studio (1.8) were rated lowest.
- **Questions about the proposed changing rooms.** Both the questionnaire and the roundtables raised concerns about the proposed changing arrangements, with a preference for single-sex provision and questions about safeguarding and how the layout would work for schools, groups and users with additional needs.
- **Poolside seating area seen as essential by some users.** SEND parents and carers said that being able to see their children in the pool is essential, and that losing the viewing area would prevent many of them from using the centre.



- **The decline in usage was attributed to the way the centre was run and managed, rather than just because of the building quality.** Many participants linked the fall in use to programming, opening hours, pricing and maintenance under the previous operator, rather than to the building itself.



## 2. Introduction and background

### 2.1 The centre and its renewal

Golden Lane Leisure Centre sits at the heart of the Golden Lane Estate, one of the country's first post-war urban villages. The estate and its landscape are listed. The centre has always combined a swimming pool, a multi-use sports hall and flexible studio and club rooms. Its facilities have aged, use has fallen, and it is currently closed. The Corporation's aim is to renew it so that it is more accessible, more efficient and better suited to current needs, while respecting its heritage.

A full refurbishment of the building fabric and of the mechanical and electrical systems is proposed under either option. The engagement concerns the choice between two approaches to the internal layout and mix of uses, while gathering further information about the preferences of people who shared their thoughts.

### 2.2 The two options

- **Option A: refurbishment.** Restore and upgrade the existing building and facilities to modern standards, broadly keeping the current layout and range of uses. The sports hall is retained as a multi-use space.
- **Option B: refurbishment and reconfiguration.** Refurbish and reconfigure the inside of the building, moving the gym and fitness equipment into the existing sports hall and converting the current gym into new, flexible studio spaces.

Both options involve the same extent of refurbishment and the same overall floor area, and both include common improvements to accessibility, environmental performance, the pool hall and the entrance glazing.

### 2.3 Purpose of this report

This report brings the feedback into one anonymised record, so that the Community and Children's Services Committee has a clear picture of what respondents said, with the supporting data, ahead of its decision on 30 June 2026.

### 3. Consultation methodology and reach

The consultation used a mix of methods and formats, in person and online, to reach as many users and residents as possible.

#### 3.1 Consultation activities

- **Questionnaire.** An online and in-person questionnaire setting out both options and asking for a preference, importance ratings for ten facility types, and open comments. 218 people completed.
- **In-person drop-ins.** Two events at St Luke's Community Centre, on Wednesday 3 June (5:00pm–8:00pm) and Saturday 6 June (10am–2pm), where residents could view the proposals and speak with the team. A presentation of the plans and Q&A was held from 5:30pm-6:30pm on the Wednesday session. Across these two events, 88 people attended.
- **Online webinar.** A public webinar on Tuesday 9 June (6pm–7pm), with a short presentation and questions. 38 people attended this session.
- **Targeted roundtables.** Three smaller online sessions to hear from groups that can be under-represented at general events: SEND users and representatives (Wednesday 10 June, 9 attendees), Young at Heart and over-50s users (Thursday 11 June, 13 attendees), and wider user groups (Monday 15 June, 12 attendees). Each combined a short design presentation with an open discussion.
- **Written correspondence.** Residents and groups could also write in. Emails were logged and themed, with personal details removed.

#### 3.2 How the feedback has been anonymised

In line with data protection, this report and its appendices are fully anonymised. Names, email addresses, postal addresses and any reference numbers have been removed from the survey data and the correspondence. Everyone is referred to by role or by a short description rather than by name, and where a respondent named someone else, that name has been removed.

## 4. Questionnaire findings

### 4.1 Who responded

Respondents were predominantly current and recent users, most of whom live locally. Around three in five used the centre at least once a week before it closed.

| Relationship to the centre (more than one could be selected) | Responses |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Regular user (at least once a week)                          | 116       |
| Occasional user (a few times a year)                         | 55        |
| Carer or parent of a centre user                             | 24        |
| Represents a user group or organisation                      | 13        |
| Lives nearby but has not used the centre                     | 11        |
| Uses the centre as part of a referred programme              | 3         |
| Other                                                        | 18        |

Of those who indicated how often they used the centre, 128 used it at least weekly. A further 23 had stopped using it and 12 had never used it. On location, 123 said they live in the Golden Lane area and a further 22 both live and work there. Many identified with a particular activity or group, including badminton clubs, the Young at Heart and over-50s programme, lane and disability swimming, tennis, pickleball and tai chi.

### 4.2 Preferred option

The preference for Option A was clear. Of the 206 respondents who chose an option, 173 (84%) chose Option A and 17 (8%) chose Option B, with 16 expressing no preference.

NOTE: At the request of attendees, the wording of the introduction to this question was clarified after the first engagement event. The original introduction to the question read:

“The City of London Corporation is considering two options for the renewal of Golden Lane Leisure Centre. Please read the brief descriptions below before answering.

Option A: Refurbishment:

Restore and upgrade the existing building and facilities to modern standards, maintaining broadly the current layout and range of uses.



Option B:

Refurbishment and reconfiguration: Refurbish and reconfigure the internal layout of the centre to improve the mix and quality of spaces, potentially changing the balance of facilities provided.”

These were changes to “The City of London Corporation is considering two options for the renewal of Golden Lane Leisure Centre. Please read the brief descriptions below before answering.

Option A: Refurbishment

Restore and upgrade the existing building and facilities to modern standards, maintaining broadly the current layout and range of uses. The sports hall would be retained as a multi-use space.

Option B: Refurbishment and reconfiguration

Refurbish and reconfigure the internal layout of the centre, relocating the gym and fitness equipment into the existing sports hall and converting the current gym into new, flexible studio spaces for fitness and wellbeing activities.”

Those who had already answered the question received an email explaining the change and offering them the opportunity to answer the survey again. For those who filled in the survey multiple times, only the most recent answer was accepted.

| Preference                                  | Responses | Share of those who chose |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Option A: refurbishment                     | 173       | 84%                      |
| Option B: refurbishment and reconfiguration | 17        | 8%                       |
| No preference                               | 16        | 8%                       |
| Not stated                                  | 12        | n/a                      |

The comments accompanying this question repeatedly returned to one point: keeping the sports hall. The following are illustrative.

*“Because otherwise the Sports Hall would be lost.”*

*“The existing hall is used and needed by community groups. It needs to stay open.”*

*“Keep the badminton court, please! It’s essential for the community.”*

### 4.3 Importance of facilities

Respondents rated ten facility types from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). The results are consistent with the option preference: the pool, the sports hall and the indoor courts were rated highest, while the studio, sauna, power-assisted studio and treatment spaces that feature more in Option B were rated lowest.

| Facility                                   | Mean (out of 5) | Rated important (4–5) |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Swimming pool                              | 4.31            | 83%                   |
| Multi-use sports hall                      | 4.15            | 74%                   |
| Badminton courts                           | 3.72            | 64%                   |
| Tennis courts                              | 3.51            | 60%                   |
| Gym / fitness space                        | 3.23            | 50%                   |
| Studio space                               | 2.61            | 36%                   |
| Wellbeing studios (yoga, pilates, classes) | 2.56            | 36%                   |
| Power-assisted studio                      | 1.82            | 20%                   |
| Sauna and/or steam room                    | 1.82            | 23%                   |
| Consultation / treatment space             | 1.55            | 16%                   |

*“Mean” is the average rating; “rated important” is the share giving a 4 or 5. Two facilities can have a similar mean but a different share, because the mean reflects the full spread of scores. The online survey also gave “0” as an option; this is treated as “not important”.*

### 4.4 Themes from the open comments

484 open comments were submitted across the questionnaire’s three free-text questions, with 201 of the 218 respondents leaving at least one comment. The main themes were consistent with the option preference and the roundtables.

- **Keep the sports hall.** The most common point. Respondents valued it for badminton, pickleball, table tennis, tai chi and general community use, and many described it as a rare bookable indoor court with few alternatives nearby.
- **The decline attributed to management, not just the building.** Many respondents linked falling use to maintenance, opening hours, pricing and the operator, and asked for a proper maintenance budget and better day-to-day running.



- **Community value and affordability.** Respondents noted the centre's role as an affordable, welcoming space, particularly for older residents, people on lower incomes and those who find a commercial gym off-putting.
- **Retain the pool and courts.** Support for keeping the swimming pool and the tennis and badminton courts, and concern about losing any of them.
- **Limited demand for more gym and studio space.** Few respondents prioritised additional gym, studio, sauna or treatment space, and several questioned the case for competing with the commercial gyms nearby.
- **Suggestions for a more sociable centre.** These included a café or coffee area with seating, longer opening hours, and better use of the outdoor space around the building.

*"It was fine as it was and I stopped my membership because it was not maintained."*

*"Keep the prices low for residents and seniors in comparison to commercial clubs."*

## 5. Roundtable and targeted engagement findings

The three roundtables produced detailed qualitative feedback. Views differed on some points, but there was broad agreement across the SEND, Young at Heart and wider user-group sessions. The themes below bring together what participants said across all three.

### 5.1 Strong support for keeping the sports hall

This was the clearest point of agreement, most prominent in the Young at Heart and user-group sessions and echoed by SEND participants. Participants valued the hall for badminton, table tennis, pickleball, tai chi, SEND sport and a wide range of community activity. One long-established badminton club said its members had played there for around forty years, and several participants described the single bookable court as rare or unique locally, with one noting that a national governing body had previously supported a campaign to retain it. There was a widely shared view that the proposed studio configuration would not replace the hall, and that the hall should be kept.

### 5.2 Concerns about the proposed changing rooms

Both groups expressed reservations about the proposed changing arrangements. The main points were:

- A preference for keeping single-sex changing provision.
- Questions about safeguarding and how practical the layout would be, including for adolescents using the centre independently.
- A view that larger group changing spaces remain important for schools, SEND groups and organised activities.
- A preference for upgrading the existing arrangement and adding a small number of family or unisex cubicles, rather than a complete redesign.

SEND attendees also raised the accessibility of the proposed accessible changing provision, asking for features such as a hoist, a changing-places facility with an adult-sized bench, wheelchair storage during pool use, and better access between the accessible changing room and the poolside.

### 5.3 Poolside seating identified as a critical requirement

The SEND session in particular emphasised retaining poolside seating. Parents and carers explained that being able to see their children is essential for many users with

autism, epilepsy, anxiety and other additional needs, and several said that losing the viewing area would prevent them from using the facility. Alternatives such as benches in the pool hall were generally not supported, on grounds of accessibility, safety and practicality.

## **5.4 Sauna and reception seating seen as lower priorities**

Across both sessions there was limited support for the proposed sauna or the larger reception seating area. A common suggestion was to use that space for higher priorities instead, particularly retaining or improving poolside viewing and increasing changing capacity.

## **5.5 Accessibility improvements**

SEND participants raised a number of practical points: better access between the accessible changing facilities and the pool, step or level access into the water, a hoist and an accessible changing bed, wheelchair storage during pool use, and ensuring the facilities can accommodate users with complex physical needs. In the wider user-group session, a swimming club argued for converting the pool to a deck-level design to improve access and reduce the number of lifeguards required. The design team explained that the listed pool tank and the existing drainage place constraints on this, and that access would instead be improved through measures such as pool pods and movable steps, to be developed at the next design stage.

## **5.6 Programming and operational points**

A recurring view across all sessions was that the previous fall in use related more to how the centre was programmed and managed than to the building. Participants recalled a busier centre before the pandemic, with family swims, children's activities and evening sessions, and noted that the previous operator had reduced early-morning and evening opening. Suggestions included reviewing programming and scheduling, keeping prices affordable for residents and older users, and ensuring the renewed centre continues to support the range of activities valued now.

Two operational points were put directly to the Corporation. First, several participants asked whether the works could be phased to keep parts of the centre, and the outdoor tennis courts, open and shorten the full closure; the team explained that this would be worked through with the contractor, who joins at the next design stage, and that no firm answer could be given yet. Second, a question was raised about whether public-health funding could contribute to running the centre, which the Corporation said would need



to be explored. The Corporation also confirmed that it is testing the market on the future operating model and intends to set up a user forum to involve people in designing the new services.

## 6. Correspondence received

Alongside the questionnaire and events, the team received a substantial amount of written correspondence from residents and user groups. Each item was logged and themed, with personal details removed. It ranged from short statements of support and personal testimonials to formal representations from group representatives.

### 6.1 Themes in the correspondence

- **Retaining the sports hall and badminton provision.** As elsewhere, this was the most common theme, with many writers describing a long association with the hall and the lack of comparable facilities nearby.
- **Community, wellbeing and affordability.** Writers noted the centre's contribution to physical and mental health, social connection and affordable access for residents of all ages.
- **Specific design and accessibility questions.** These included the feasibility and cost of a deck-level pool conversion, table-tennis provision, the case for the proposed sauna, venue and pool accessibility, and the needs of users with long-term health conditions.
- **Operation and funding.** Several writers raised the future operating model and asked whether wider public-health or healthy-ageing funding could support the centre, referring to recent national policy on physical activity for older people.

## 7. Cross-cutting themes

Reading the questionnaire, the roundtables and the correspondence together, the same themes recur.

- **The sports hall dominated the feedback.** Across every channel and every group, retaining the multi-use sports hall was the most frequently raised point. It is reflected both in the comments and in the questionnaire preference for Option A.
- **A clear order of priority among facilities.** The pool, sports hall and indoor courts were rated highest; the gym in the middle; and the studios, sauna and treatment spaces associated with reconfiguration lowest.
- **Operation and maintenance seen as a major cause of past decline.** Respondents consistently attributed the centre's earlier problems to management, programming, pricing and upkeep, and sought assurance that the renewed centre will be run and maintained properly.
- **Accessibility and inclusion central for some groups.** Several SEND participants said that poolside viewing and appropriate changing provision determine whether they can use the centre at all.
- **Some recurring concerns sit outside the design choice.** The length of the closure and the case for phasing, the future operator and funding, and programming decisions were raised repeatedly. These are matters for the Corporation, and are recorded here so that members have the full picture.

Across the questionnaire, the roundtables and the correspondence, the same priorities recur, providing members with a consistent picture ahead of the decision on 30 June 2026.

ENDS