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Ealing Cabinet Release

Feasibility Study



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Executive Summary

Overview

Mikhail Riches were appointed by The London Borough of Ealing in Spring 2022. The team behind this Feasibility Study include specialists in delivering sustainable, financially viable Leisure Centres around the UK, as well as experts in delivering sustainable affordable housing. It includes Mikhail Riches, GT3 Architects, Gleeds, FMG Consulting, Tibbalds, Expedition Engineers, ITP Transport, and Aspinall Verdi.

A previous planning application was refused planning in 2019, on various grounds including its excessive height and scale, as it included 17 story high residential towers of enabling development. The purpose of this study has been to find an alternative approach to assist Ealing in its aim of replacing this important local amenity with a sustainable, state of the art leisure complex, one that will be planning compliant, and to do so as soon as practicable.

It starts by considering the pros and cons of retaining and refurbishing the existing Leisure Centre, and then explores a series of spatial options for the delivery of a new leisure centre on land associated with the existing site and its environs. It concludes by proposing alternative strategies, each with its own specific approach to the enabling development. Financial models are also included, as each has its own impact on the amount of development. Finally, we talk about next steps and how to make this all happen.

As part of this study, the team has developed a revised Leisure brief in close consultation with the council and wider stakeholders. This is larger than the previous scheme and this is reflected in the funding and delivery numbers.

The team has approached the masterplan from base principles. In initial consultation with GLA, we have reassessed the approach to Metropolitan Open Land to allow the masterplan to look beyond the previously defined brownfield land. One potential option proposes an alternative location of the Leisure Centre, which would provide the required enabling development to be achieved in a way which is sensitive and low rise, minimising impact on the MOL, whilst creating a new people-focused, community and landscape led neighbourhood.

The team have considered various aspects of programme and procurement to achieve the target opening date. Further detail on programme, delivery and planning strategies would be developed in consultation with all stakeholders at the next stage.

The two strategically different options can be summarised as;

Option 1:

- 300-500 homes
- Leisure centre on brownfield land

Option 2:

- 500 homes
- Leisure centre on Stockdove Way

OPTION 01



OPTION 02



What have we been asked to do?

Briefing and Context of Feasibility

Feasibility Study

Mikhail Riches and the team have been commissioned by LB Ealing to undertake a Feasibility study for the Gurnell Leisure Centre to provide an exemplar leisure centre, landscape and enabling housing development.

The Leisure Centre has been closed since July 2020 and has been subject to a previous planning application process with a developer partner that was refused at committee in March 2021 on the ground of scale and height of the residential enabling development.

The brief to the team seeks to *“develop an agreed masterplan, and options for delivery of a new state of the art Leisure Centre and related enabling housing development which would help fund the new leisure facilities. The output of this study would be a Feasibility Report which recommends an exemplary masterplan that promotes sustainable development, includes advice on viability, funding/delivery models, and indicates the timescale for delivery of a new leisure centre”*

The key areas of consideration are highlighted to the right and have guided the process outlined in the following report

MASTERPLAN	LEISURE	FINANCE & DELIVERY
Exemplar Zero Carbon Sustainability	Review and consult on Facilities Mix	Advise on cost of leisure and housing
Innovative urban housing typologies	50m pool to be re-provided	Advise on viability
Planning Compliant Affordable Housing	Self-contained leisure to allow flexible delivery	Advise on financing methods
Optimise mix of housing and leisure	Review Leisure provision and need	Advise on Delivery Models
Maximise site for residential development	Consider Operational and Running Costs	Consider timescales for delivery of Leisure

“
 DEVELOP A PROPOSAL THAT
 IS EXEMPLARY, SUSTAINABLE,
 PLANNING COMPLIANT,
 FINANCIALLY VIABLE FOR THE
 SHORT AND LONGER TERM
 AND DELIVERABLE WITHIN A
 REALISTIC TIMESCALE
 ”

1.0 Site Analysis

1.1 Site & Context

1.1 Site and Context

Location and Context

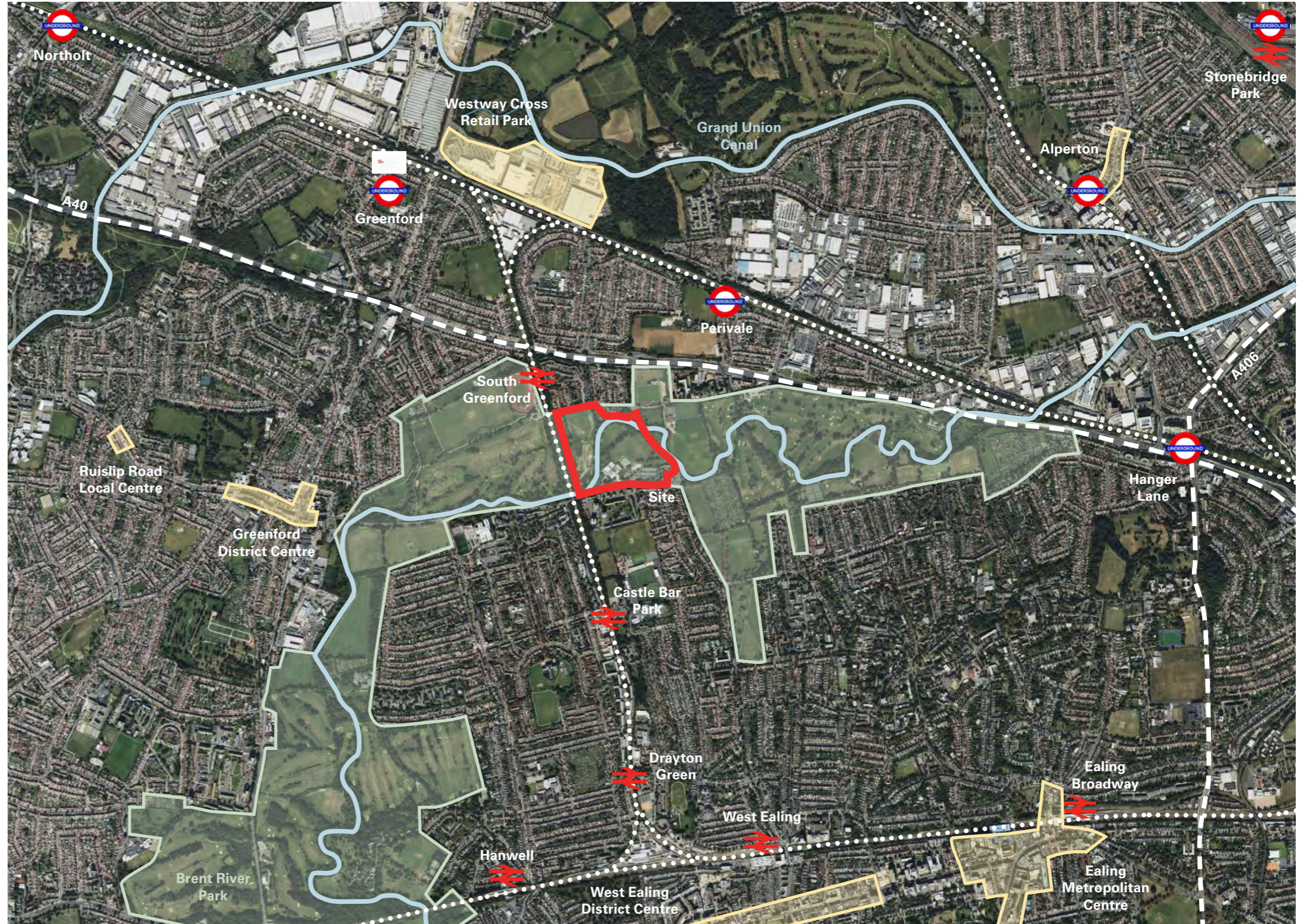
Urban Context

The site is located in the Pitshanger and Perivale wards within the London Borough of Ealing.

The site forms part of the Brent River Park North with the river Brent running through the site and defining the boundary between Perivale at the north western section of the site and Pitshanger to the south east.

The site accommodates the existing Gurnell Leisure Centre and sits within a wider landscape of sports facilities. To the north and south of the site are predominantly low rise residential communities dating back to the inter war years. To the south east, there are residential buildings which extend to 11 storeys.

The nearest district centre is Ealing which is located 2 miles to the south east.



Map of London Borough of Ealing within London

1.1 Site and Context










Leisure Landscape Context

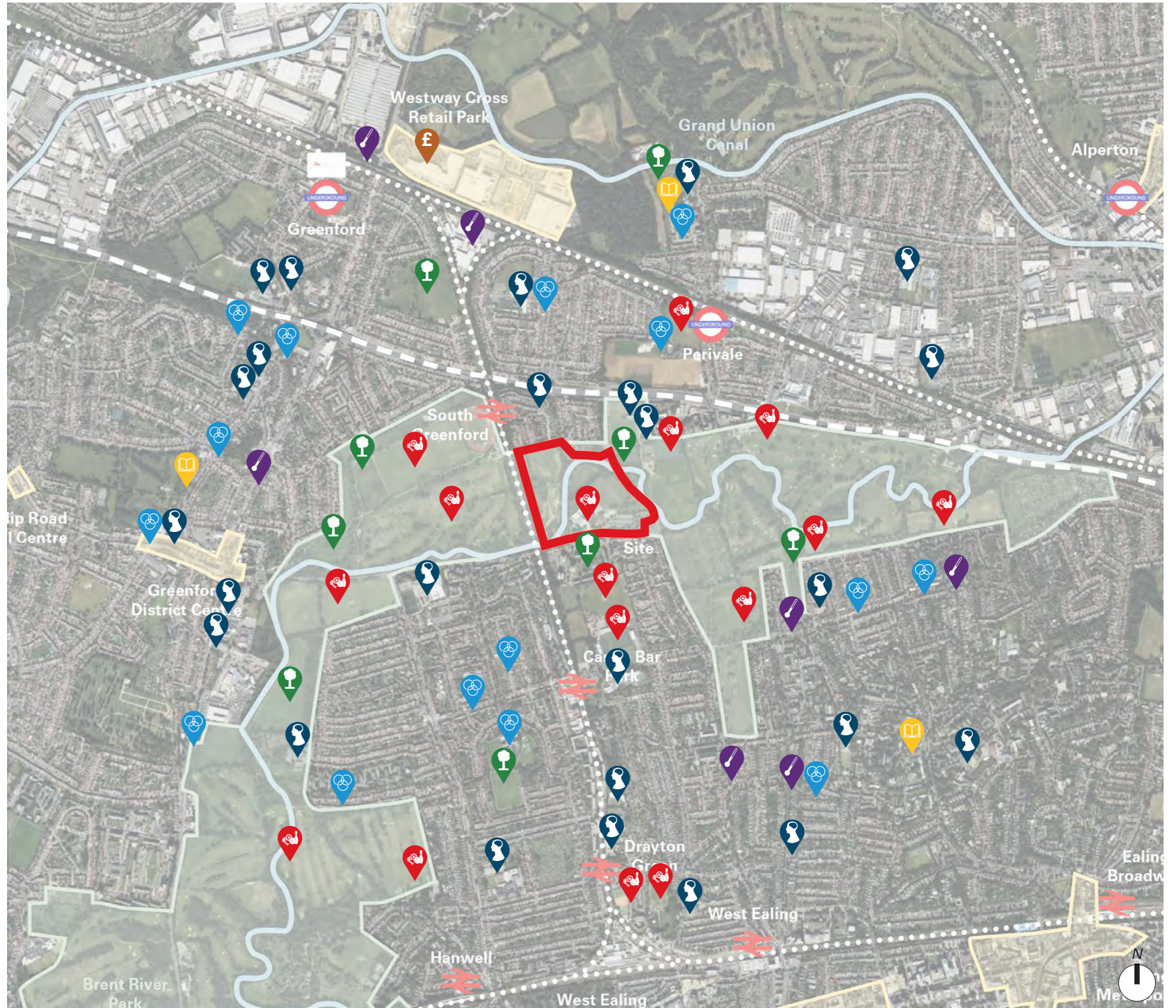
A Wider Network of Leisure Uses

Leisure centres can benefit from being in close proximity to surrounding uses and other community uses and facilities.

Residents are more likely to use a new facility if it is located centrally near other local amenities for convenience and accessibility. Co-located and nearby facilities also support families and other user groups where individuals may wish to take part in a variety of activities in the town.

KEY:

-  Site Location
-  Education
-  Health
-  Sport & Leisure
-  Community
-  Civic
-  Outdoor Recreation Space
-  Library
-  Major Shopping Hub

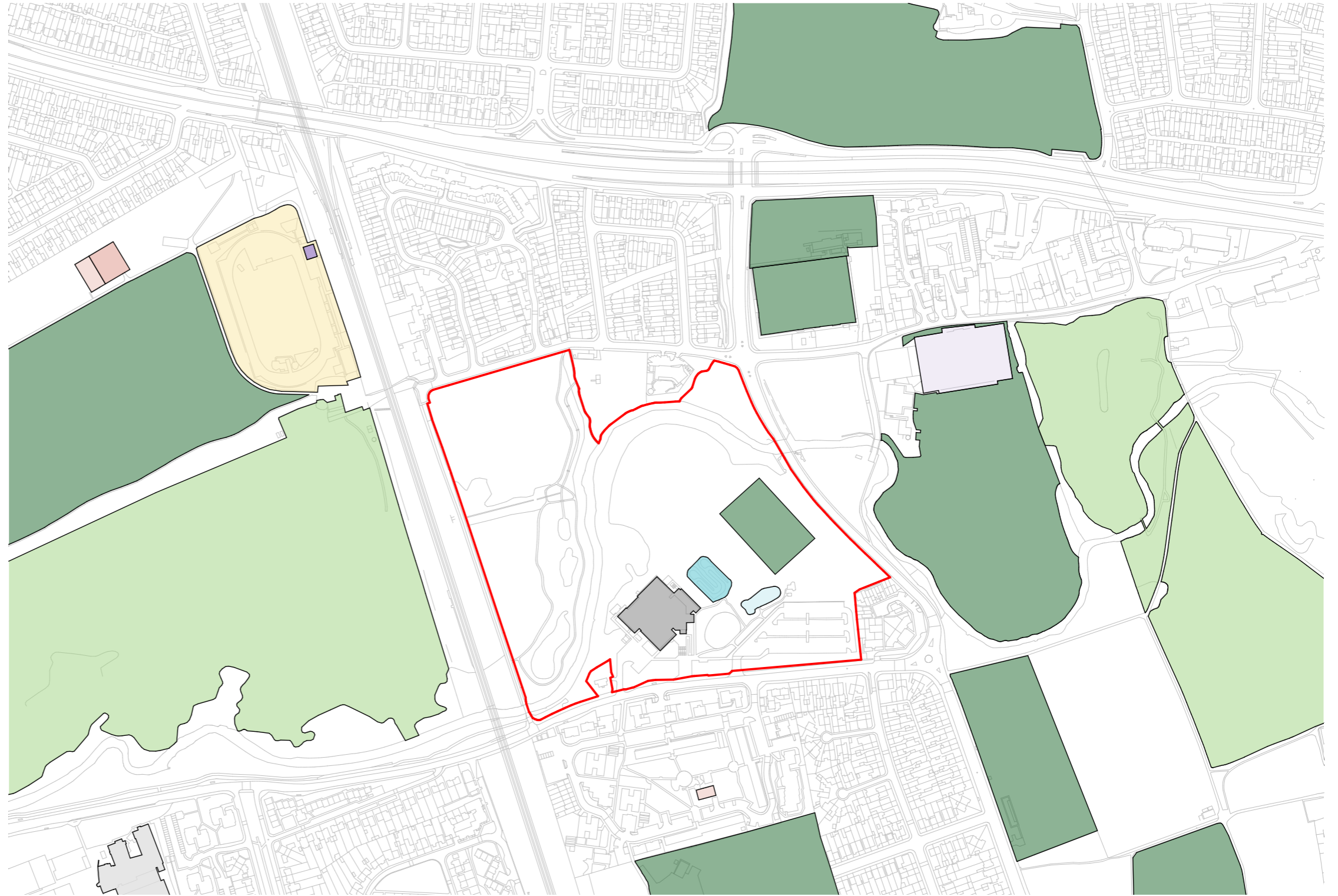


1.1 Site and Context

Leisure Landscape Context

KEY :

- Playing Fields (football, rugby, cricket)
- Golf Course
- Tennis Courts
- Multi Use Games Area
- Athletics Track
- BMX track
- Skate park
- School Sports Hall
- Leisure Centre
- Weightlifting Club
- Artificial Grass Pitch (hockey)



1.1 Site and Context

Existing Site

There is one existing building and a number of landscape interventions on and in the immediate context of the site:

- ① Gurnell Leisure Centre
- ② Gurnell BMX Track
- ③ Play Area
- ④ Gurnell Playing Fields
- ⑤ Gurnell Outdoor Gym
- ⑥ Gurnell Concrete Skatepark and Bowl
- ⑦ Gurnell Leisure Centre Car Park
- ⑧ Perivale Meadow Wetlands
- ⑨ Longfield Meadows
- ⑩ Athletics & Golf Overspill Car park
- ⑪ Perivale West Allotments
- ⑫ Brentside Cottage (supported living)
- ⑬ Perivale Park Golf Course
- ⑭ Perivale park Athletics Track
- ⑮ Hanwell Town Football Club
- ⑯ Ealing Hockey Club
- ⑰ St. Benedict's School Sports Fields
- ⑱ Peal Gardens



The key existing users were visitors to Gurnell Leisure Centre (closed since March 2020), sports users of the outdoor facilities and a hand car wash company operating in the car park. Members of the public also use the open spaces for recreation.

1.1 Site and Context

Existing Site Photos

Gurnell Playing Fields and The River Brent

1. The River Brent running through the site.
2. Gurnell concrete skatepark and bowl.
3. Looking along informal footpath through site towards Argyle Road .
4. Looking west towards existing Leisure Centre building.
5. Looking east towards Peel Gardens.

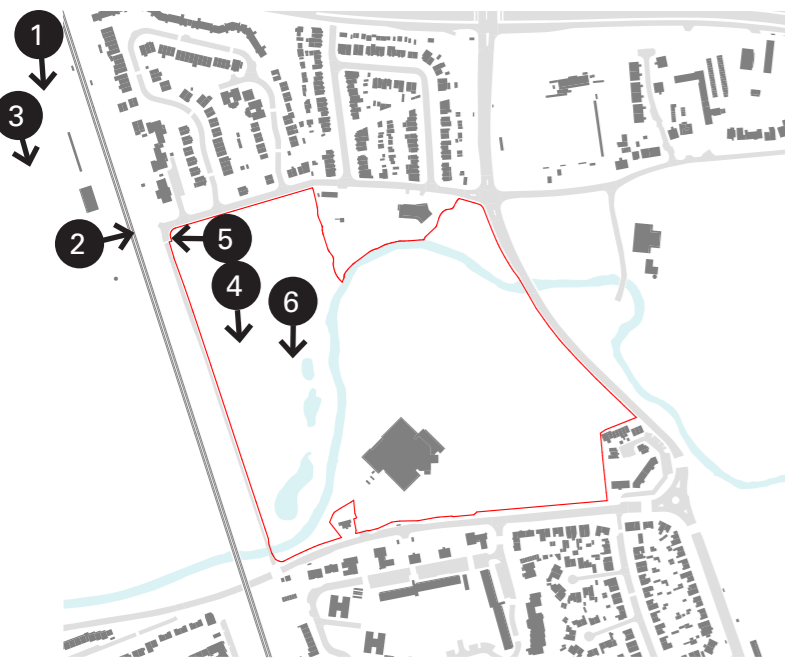


1.1 Site and Context

Existing Site Photos

Perivale Park and Longfield Meadows

1. Perivale Park Athletics Track to the west of the site.
2. Underpass connecting Perivale Park to Stockdove Way, with the train line running overhead.
3. Treed avenue running alongside Perivale Park Athletics Track connecting South Greenford rail station to the northern edge of site.
4. View looking south over Longfield Meadows with Gurnell Grove towers in the distance.
5. Overspill car parking for Perivale Park Golf Club located to the west of Longfield Meadows.
6. Newly landscaped path as part of the Greenford to Gurnell Greenway.

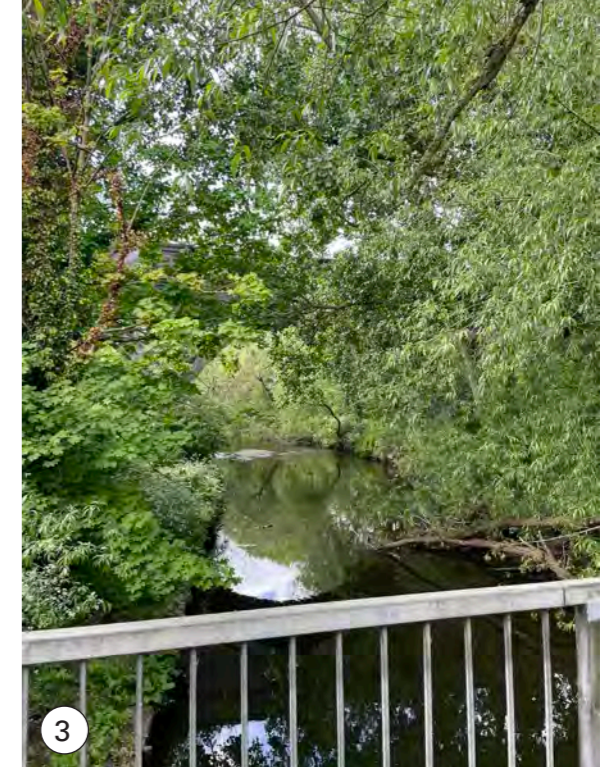


1.1 Site and Context

Existing Site Photos

Sixty Tree Lane and Longfield Meadows

1. Sixty Tree Lane, a pedestrian and cycle route to the western boundary of the site connecting Ruislip Road East and Stockdove Way.
2. Newly landscaped wetlands as part of the Greenford to Gurnell Greenway. Gurnell Grove towers can be seen in the distance.
3. The River Brent, viewed from Sixty Tree Lane.
4. View looking west over Longfield Meadows with the railway embankment in the distance.
5. Greenford to Gurnell Greenway.



1.1 Site and Context

Existing Site Photos

Neighbouring Buildings and Car Parking

1. Purpose built flats to the south of Gurnell Leisure Centre with four storey blocks backing onto Ruislip Road East in the middle ground and 11 storey Gurnell Grove towers in the background.
2. Leisure Centre parking and with two storey semi-detached houses in the distance, dating back to the 1950s.
3. View north up Argyle Road with the site to the left of the photo.
- 4 & 5. Houses in the Peal Gardens cul-de-sac front onto Gurnell site.

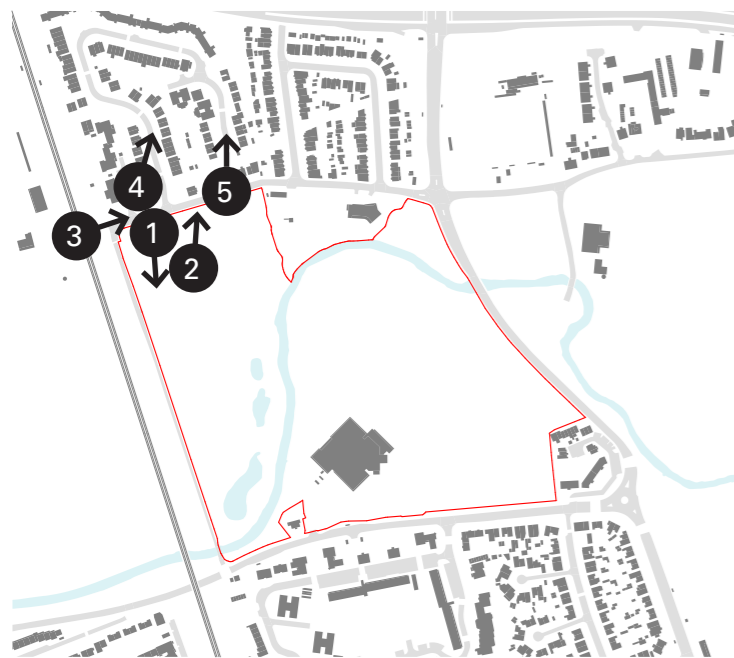


1.1 Site and Context

Existing Site Photos

Stockdove Way

1. View south from Stockdove Way looking over Longfield Meadows with Gurnell Grove towers in the distance.
2. View north from Longfield meadows towards houses on Stockdove Way
3. View west along Stockdove Way showing wide carriageway with pavements to either side.
4. View up Haymill Close showing 2 storey house. Houses are set back from Longfield Meadows and have very few windows overlooking the meadows.
5. View up Haymill Close.



1.1 Site and Context

Land Use

KEY :

- ① Overflow car park for Perivale Park Athletics Track and Golf Club.
- ② Longfield Meadows
- ③ Drain
- ④ Footpaths
- ⑤ Wetlands
- ⑥ River Brent
- ⑦ Broadleaved Copse
- ⑧ Gurnell Football Pitches
- ⑨ Gurnell Leisure Centre Staff Car Park
- ⑩ Gurnell Leisure Centre
- ⑪ Gurnell BMX Track
- ⑫ Gurnell Outdoor Gym
- ⑬ Gurnell Concrete Skatepark and Bowl
- ⑭ Play Ground
- ⑮ Gurnell Leisure Centre Main Entrance
- ⑯ Visitor Car Park Access and Egress
- ⑰ Gurnell Leisure Centre Visitor Car Park
- ⑱ Coach Drop Off
- ⑲ Brentside Cottage
- ⑳ Sixty Tree Lane
- ㉑ Great Western Railway
- ㉒ Perivale West Allotments

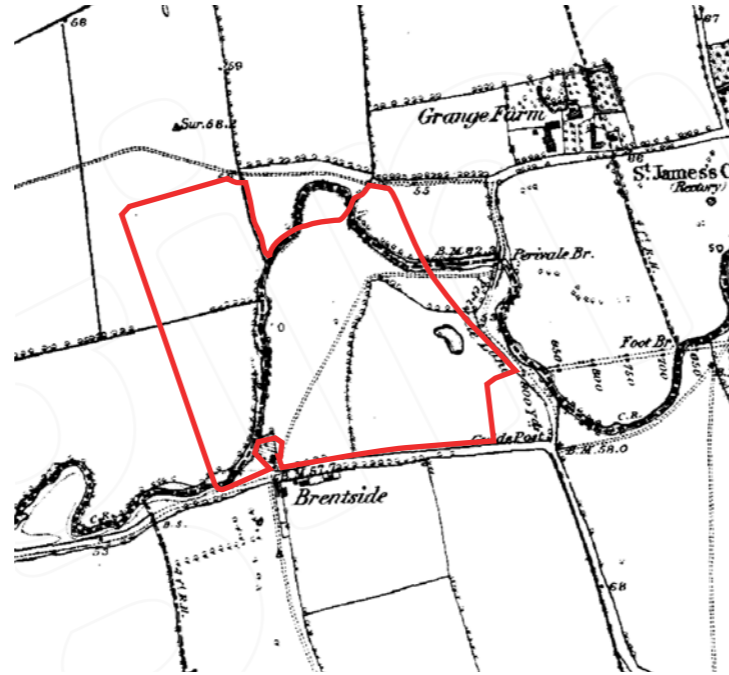


1.1 Site and Context

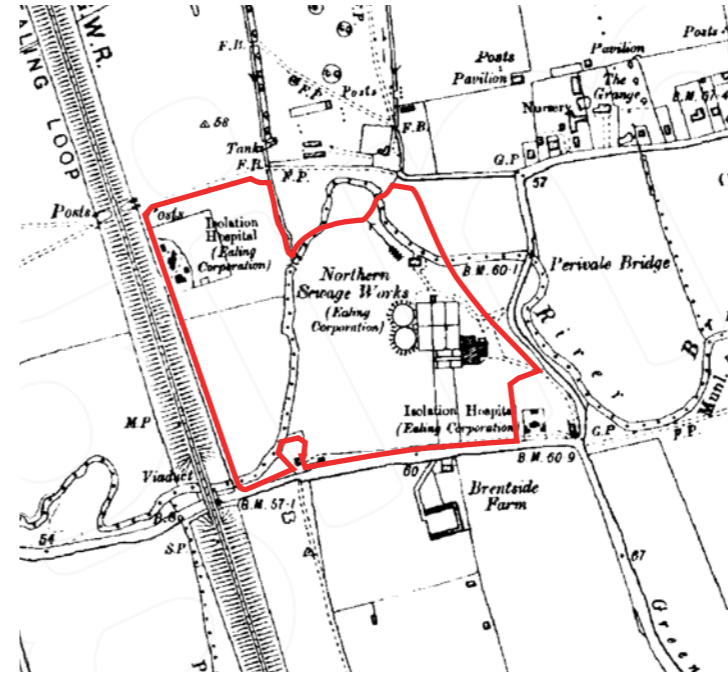
Historic Maps

Historic Development

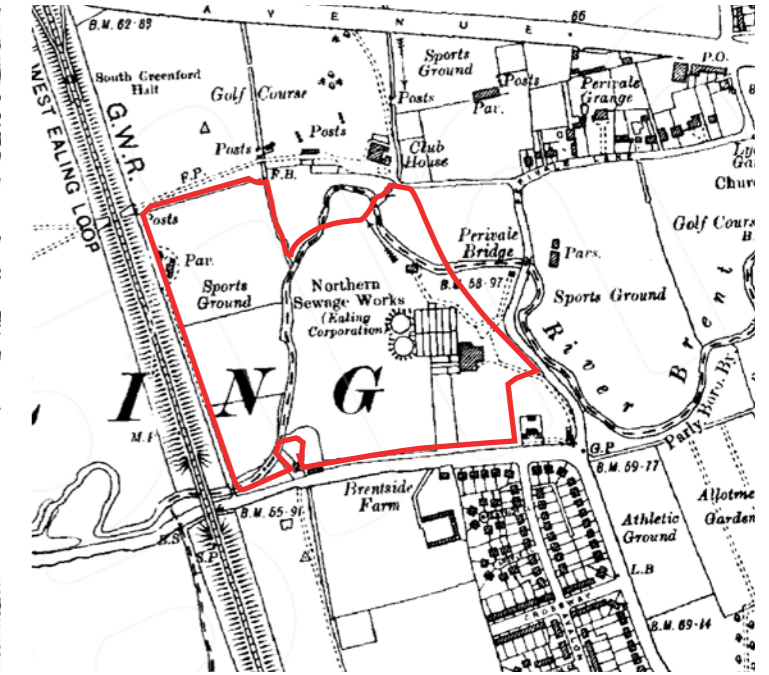
- The area was predominantly arable agricultural land growing wheat in the 16th and 17th centuries. Land was then used to produce hay for London's working horses during the Victorian era.
- The Greenford Branch Line of the Great Western Railway opened in 1903, flanking the western boundary of the site.
- Brentside cottage (now a supported living home) appears notched out of the site's southern boundary from the 1910s.
- The A40, Western Avenue, was built in the 1930s. The proximity to central London and the good transport links (canal, rail and road) meant that the area was earmarked for residential expansion. This began in the 1930s in the form of two storey semi-detached houses.
- Tight rows of housing to the south of the site appear on maps from during 1960s and then disappear a decade later.
- The population of Perivale grew from 114 to 9,979 people in the thirty years between 1921 and 1951.
- The site has accommodated several buildings since the 1890s, beginning with sewerage works (1890s) and isolation hospitals (1920s).
- The network of sports facilities characterising the area dates back to the inter war years, with golf courses and athletic grounds enveloping the site on the 1930s map. Sports grounds and pavilions have been located on the northern portion of Longfield Meadows since the 1930s and the existing leisure centre was built in 1981.



Historic Map from the 1860s



Historic Map from the 1920s



Historic Map from the 1930s



Historic Map from the 1950s



Historic Map from the 1960s



Historic Map from the 1980s

1.1 Site and Context

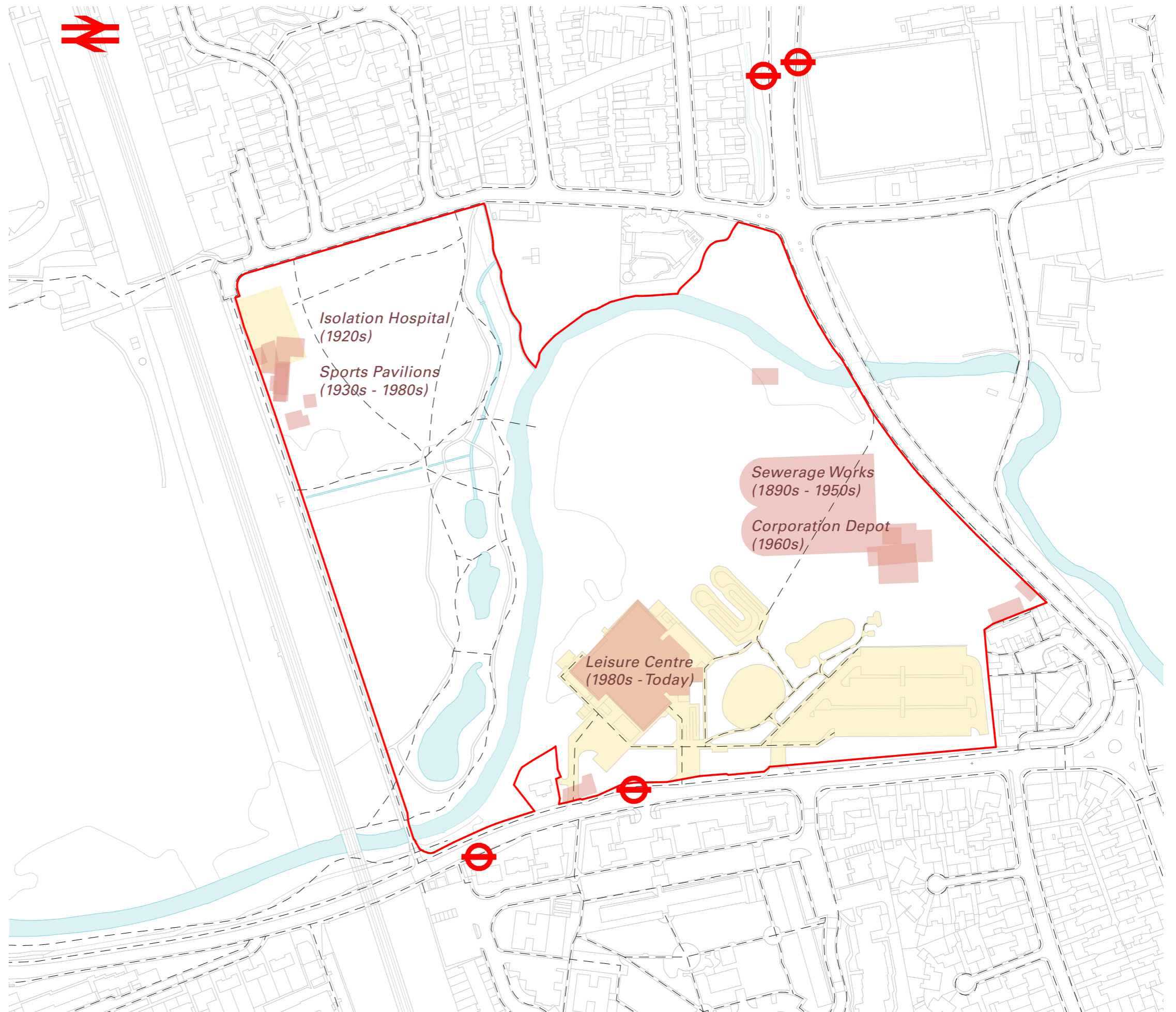
Built Environment

Historic Overlay

A site map showing built structures through time demonstrates the history of uses on a site which is today open land.

KEY :

- Existing Hard Landscaping
- Historic Building Footprints (1890s to today)
- Footpaths
- Greenford Station
- Bus Stop



1.1 Site and Context

Built Environment

Building Heights

The surrounding context is relatively suburban in character and prevailing heights are 2-3 storeys. However, to the south of the site there is a pattern of late twentieth century development which uses taller buildings and characterises the context along Ruislip Road East. Heights here range from 4-5 storeys, up to 11 storeys in point blocks set amongst landscaping.

KEY :

- 1 Storey
- 2 Storeys
- 3 Storeys
- 4 Storeys
- 5 Storeys
- 11 Storeys



1.1 Site and Context

Built Environment

Building Fronts

Building Fronts are generally aligned with secondary routes in the area with limited frontages facing the site itself.

There are building fronts along the south side of Ruislip Road East, however these are mostly set generously back from the road.

Along Stockdove Way to the north most houses are set perpendicular with front doors off side roads, while blank gable ends limit overlooking of this route.

Peal Gardens located to the south east of the site has a variety of building orientations with a terrace along it's north edge orientated to face the park. These homes are accessed via a path which runs south of the site boundary and are mainly obscured by large hedges along this boundary.

KEY :

— Building Fronts



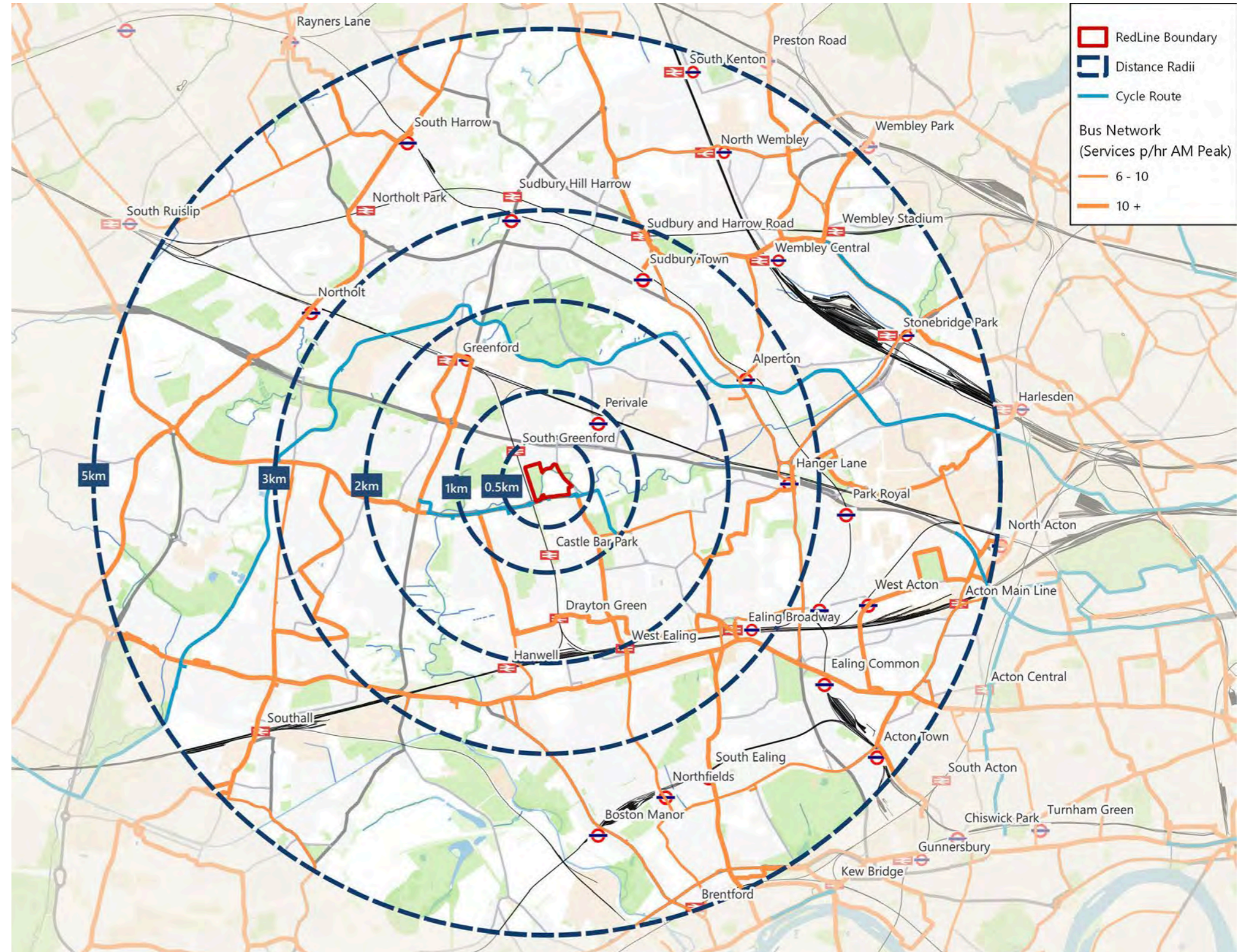
1.2 Connectivity

1.2 Connectivity

Site Location

The existing leisure facility is situated off Ruislip Road East, served by existing sustainable transport infrastructure links, including bus and cycle routes.

The current Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) rating of the current site is 2/3 and so deemed to have an average level of public transport accessibility.



1.2 Connectivity

Transport Networks

Gurnell Leisure Centre previously benefited from:

- **Frequent bus services** (one service at least every 10 minutes) including the E7 route along Ruislip Road East and the E5 route along Argyll Road. Bus stops are located immediately in front of the former entrance.
- **Rail connectivity** with a short walk or cycle to South Greenford railway station and Perivale underground station(Central line).
- **Extensive signed cycle routes** including Quietway links to Greenford local centre and shared footway/cycleway provision along Ruislip Road East.



1.2 Connectivity

Car Trips - Catchment Analysis

To understand where trips are most likely to originate, catchment analysis has been undertaken.

Following a review of existing sports and leisure facilities within London Borough of Ealing, 10 Census areas have been identified for further assessment. These are areas where Gurnell Leisure Centre is the first or second closest facility.

As generally the closest areas to the site, they offer the best opportunities to encourage a shift towards sustainable transport and in turn reduce the car parking demand and necessary supply.

An accessibility assessment of each area based upon the below considerations has formed the basis of our calculations.

Private Car

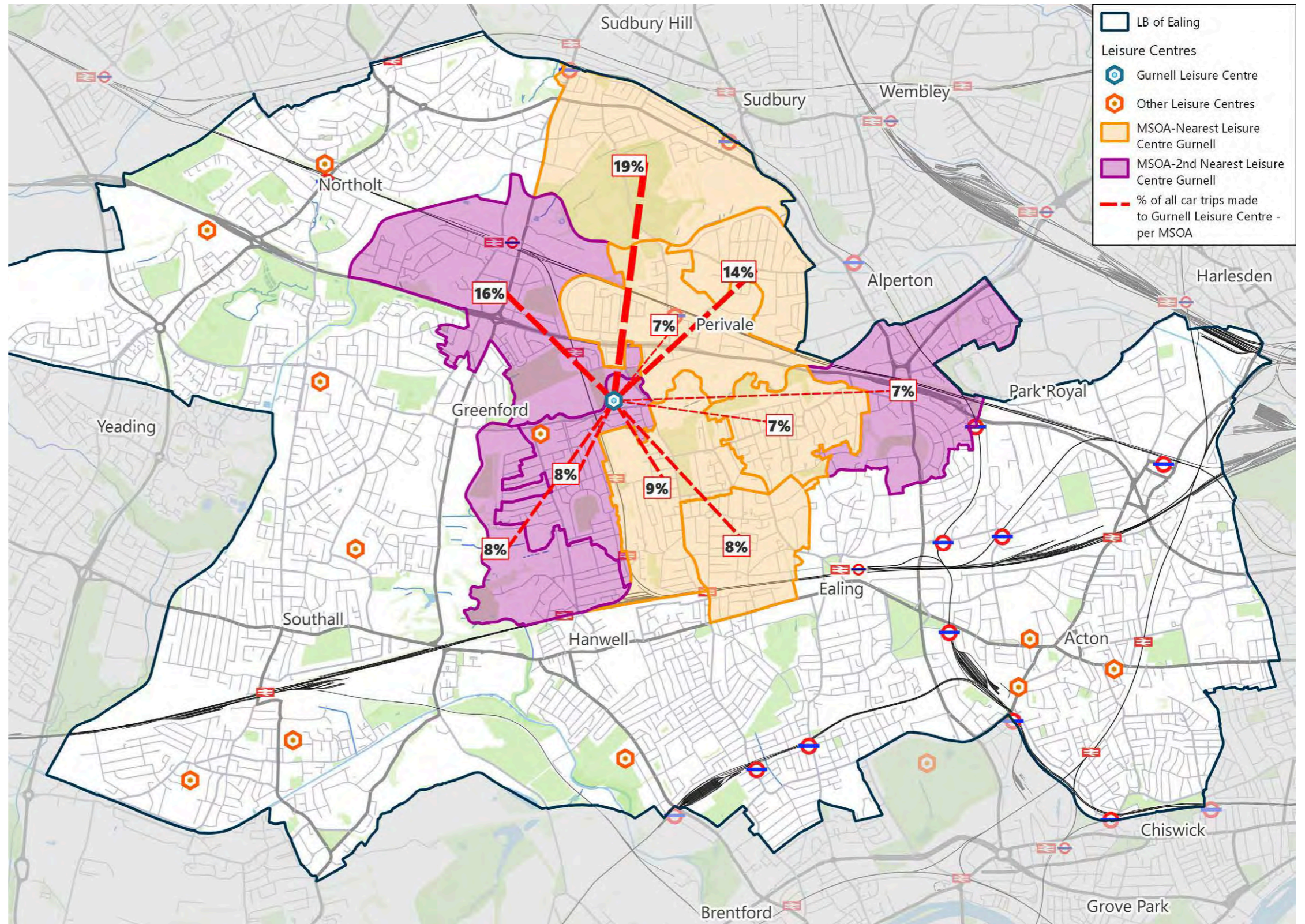
- Does the infrastructure constrain car movements?
- What proportion of households have access to a car?
- Is the area more than 2km from the site?

Public Transport

- What percentage of the population travel to work using public transport?
- Is there a direct bus route?
- Does the rail network provide a useful connection?

Active Travel

- What percentage of the population travel to work using active travel?
- Are there attractive walking and cycling routes?



1.2 Connectivity

Pedestrian Routes

Active travel will form a key part of the development of a sustainable proposal at Gurnell. There are bus stops located both to the north and south of the site, whilst Greenford station is a 6/7 minute walk to the north east and Perivale Station 14 minutes to the north.

There are a number of pedestrian routes through the site, both formal, such as the Greenford to Gurnell Greenway, and informal, where desire line paths are worn into the grass.

KEY :

- Existing Footpaths
- - - Proposed Footpaths as part of the Greenford to Gurnell Greenway
- Proposed Footbridge as part of the Greenford to Gurnell Greenway
- - - Desire Path
- Greenford Station
- Bus Stop

