# Islington Council to withdraw plans for 200 new homes at Finsbury Leisure Centre amid community opposition



Plans to build 200 new homes on the site of the Finsbury Leisure Centre in Islington are set to be withdrawn following significant opposition from the local community. Islington Council is expected to formally abandon the redevelopment proposal, which also included constructing a new leisure centre and a medical centre, amid concerns about overpopulation and the impact on local facilities.

The original plans envisaged approximately 100 council homes alongside 100 flats for sale. However, the proposal faced fierce backlash from residents, who expressed strong opposition to the scale of development and the potential loss and reduction of recreational spaces that serve the community. Campaign group EC1, formed by local residents including footballers who use the leisure centre, played a key role in voicing these concerns. Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service earlier in 2024, EC1 member Eva Guerra said that residents and footballers were “enraged” by how the council had managed the project. Fellow campaigner Iana Petkova described the plan to increase population density in “a very tiny space” and to shrink football pitches as “disastrous” and “destructive” for the neighbourhood.

The council cited various factors behind its decision to withdraw the plans, including economic uncertainty marked by rising construction costs, inflation, supply chain disruptions, and global trade tariffs. Islington Council will consider the formal withdrawal of the proposal at a cabinet meeting scheduled for this evening.

Despite the setback to the redevelopment project, commitments remain to invest in improving local facilities. The council has stated that it will focus on modernising the existing leisure centre, protecting and enhancing the sports pitches, and exploring options for a new neighbourhood health hub. Additionally, Islington will seek to develop more “genuinely affordable housing” on alternative sites within the borough.

Cllr Una O’Halloran, Leader of Islington Council, remarked: “It’s no secret that councils across the country are facing significant financial challenges, and while Islington is on a strong financial footing, I’m not prepared to put this in jeopardy by pressing ahead with a project facing increasing risks from fast-changing global forces beyond our control.”

She added, “This was not an easy decision. Since I became Leader in November, I have spent a lot of time visiting the site, listening to local people and considering the risks this project faced, and I have decided that there are different ways to build the genuinely affordable homes our borough needs while protecting these open spaces.”

Cllr O’Halloran also emphasised the council’s ongoing commitment to affordable housing, stating: “Our commitment to building new genuinely affordable social housing remains undimmed, and we will look at alternative sites already in the early stages of development across the borough to deliver the new homes so many families need.”

Previously, Cllr Ward had defended the initial plan, stating, "Islington is facing a housing crisis. We need to make the best possible use of the space available to build life-changing council homes and fantastic new community facilities. Local people deserve decent places to live and better leisure facilities, and these proposals will deliver both."

The decision to pause the redevelopment plans marks a significant moment for residents and the council, balancing housing needs with preserving community amenities and open spaces. The outcome of the cabinet meeting will finalise the council’s approach moving forward.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.islington.media/news/finsbury-leisure-centre-site-plans-set-to-be-withdrawn-to-protect-open-spaces> - Confirms that Islington Council plans to withdraw the redevelopment proposal for the Finsbury Leisure Centre site to protect open spaces following community opposition.
2. <https://www.islingtoncitizen.co.uk/2025/04/24/islington-abandon-finsbury-leisure-centre-plans-10m-loss-council/> - Details the council's expected formal withdrawal of the redevelopment plans and highlights financial factors such as economic uncertainty and construction cost rises influencing the decision.
3. <https://www.instagram.com/islingtoncouncil/reel/DIyosCVBEBP/> - Features an official statement from Islington Council about withdrawing redevelopment plans for the Finsbury Leisure Centre site, showing the council's communication and engagement with the community.
4. <https://www.letstalk.islington.gov.uk/finsburyleisurecentre> - Outlines the original redevelopment proposals including 100 council homes, a new leisure centre with rooftop football pitches, a medical centre, and improved public spaces, corroborating the plan details and community consultation history.
5. <https://www.islington.media/news/finsbury-leisure-centre-site-plans-set-to-be-withdrawn-to-protect-open-spaces> - Supports claims about community opposition, including concerns over overpopulation, reduction of recreational spaces, and the role of local campaign groups like EC1 in voicing these issues.
6. <https://www.islingtoncitizen.co.uk/2025/04/24/islington-abandon-finsbury-leisure-centre-plans-10m-loss-council/> - Provides quotes from council leaders, including Cllr Una O’Halloran and Cllr Ward, reflecting the council's rationale for withdrawing the plans and their ongoing commitment to affordable housing and community facilities.
7. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/enraged-islington-residents-win-council-31502519> - Please view link - unable to able to access data