

**Please find below comments from Friends of Burgess Park in relation to some aspects of the draft New Southwark Plan.
March 2015**

What do you like about the vision for your area? • How could we improve the vision for your area?

Burgess Park stretches across the middle of the borough reaching into many areas. Whilst the park is designated in the Walworth and Aylesbury area of the borough it needs to be referenced and given consideration across all of the neighbouring planning areas.

As the Southwark population increases with higher levels of density for new dwellings the pressure on open space will increase. It is vital that parks and open spaces continue to be protected and adequately maintained through both capital budgets including any planning gain as well as revenue budgets.

Do you think the Cross River Tram should remain in the New Southwark Plan?

The proposed route through Burgess Park was opposed by the Friends of Burgess Park. Any transport improvements should be routed through existing roads i.e. Wells Way.

How can we make our streets and places more attractive, safer, and encourage more walking, cycling and social opportunities?

The paving around Burgess Park is poor in many places with the remains of old entrance and roadways leaving unnecessary kerbs etc. This means the pavement is difficult to navigate especially for people in wheelchairs or with walking problems.

Careful design needs to be implemented where walkers and cyclists share entrances to the park and where they are negotiating with vehicle traffic.

FOBP agree with the Southwark Plan proposal that there should be improved green spaces to link to Burgess Park. This is particularly important as the Aylesbury site undergoes major redevelopment. Redevelopments will be of varying heights and increased density in order to accommodate more people.

The cycling and pedestrians routes which will be implemented will need careful planning for shared spaces.

Throughout Burgess Park there is a need for more natural play, or incidental play. These small areas of play opportunities would provide more interest in the park for families with small children and encourage walking. They would also be used more by residents of the immediate area and so provide social opportunities.

Both of these can be ideas for the project banks for planning gain.

Burgess Park is used for a wide range of social, leisure and sport activities and many people cycle through the park. However, the over-arching purpose of the park is not to provide cycle routes.

The Southwark Plan mentions the provision of improved cycling and walking opportunities and infrastructure which FOBP do support. This is to encourage improved health through exercise and a reduction in air pollution.

The Southwark Cycling Strategy proposes direct routes for cyclists but this should not be to the detriment of pedestrians and park users.

Cyclists through the design of cycle routes to and from the park need to be encouraged to use certain routes. FOBP oppose new cycling routes cutting through the park which will destroy the newly implemented unity of the spaces or cause hazards.

Cycle routes also need to have the capacity for the number of cyclists. Whilst the Surrey Canal Route was a suitable shared route when first established it is become too small for the number of cyclists. This is now detrimental to pedestrians. The alternative quiet road route must be improved and adequately sign-posted for cyclists.

Access through Burgess Park is already provided by a number of roads. These should also provide safe routes for cyclists.

We have made a detailed response to the Southwark cycling strategy.

Which places, buildings and features are important to you in your neighbourhood and why?

All of the buildings and roads in and around the park now need to be considered in light of the park. For example the Willowbrook building is within the footprint of the park and so any future use should consider the location. The vacant site near Peckham Library faces onto the Surrey Canal Walk and will have an impact on Peckham Square.

Any proposed development around the edges of the park should consider if there is an opportunity to enhance the park or add to the completion of the park. Due to the purchase of land over an extended period of time some areas of the park are disjointed and fragmented. This is especially so on the Old Kent Road side of the park.

FOBP are concerned that developments in the park take into account current use for all users of the park. Changes such as extending fenced sports pitches should not be considered where it would reroute paths which are used by school children to walk to Cobourg School, for example.

Current roads in and around the park provide sources of parking and cycling and access routes. Closing or re-routing roads needs careful planning to consider where parking will be provided for people attending activities occurring at the community sports centre, events lawn, the BMX track or churches.

FOBP are very pleased to note that promotion of community gardens and increasing the tree canopy are encouraged in the Southwark Plan.

The Community Garden which has been established at Glengall Wharf has significantly improved a previously neglected area of the park and enhanced the provision of outdoor activities for the local and wider community.

The trees in the park need to be preserved and the canopy increased following the reconfiguration which occurred during the recent improvements in the park. Mature trees were lost and are continuing to be cut down where they have decayed. Suitable replacements must be planted.

There need to be proper feasibility studies carried out before any major new interventions are planned so that changes take place in the right place with in-depth consideration. Lessons should be learned from the errors made regarding siting of the BBQs in Burgess Park, where with careful planning prior to implementation, much money and maintenance could have been saved. Due care and attention must be followed at pre-planning/design stages.

Should we consider alterations, new designations or de-designations to our open spaces?

Burgess Park including Surrey Canal Walk is identified as MOL and as such the area should continue to be protected. As noted in the plan, open spaces contribute to Londoners' quality of life and vital biodiversity and there should be no de-designation. Proposals to protect additional spaces are to be welcomed.

In the Southwark Plan there are provisions for development on MOL land in the extension or alteration of existing buildings which is not disproportionate or is a replacement building. In the case of listed buildings, development may be permitted if it does not spoil the special features of the building.

FOBP would not support overdevelopment of structures in the park where there would be a loss of open space e.g. enlarging the maintenance depot or providing major new sports building extensions or enclosing more land for restricted sports access. We consider that these possibilities could have damaging effects on the extent and quality of open space and have an adverse impact on the openness of MOL. FOBP do support the better use of buildings already in the park rather than new development (see below).

Jowett Street Park does not seem to be designated as Metropolitan Open Land and Friends of Burgess Park would urge that it should be. (In the Southwark Open Space Strategy Jan 2013 it is identified as a small local park and it is recommended that it should be Borough Open Land.) The Peckham area has less open space than other areas of the borough and this park is ideal for the immediate residential area. The park is also within a conservation area. The park also provides an added feature to the Surrey Canal Walk which should provide play opportunities along the walk.

Where are appropriate locations for new places of worship or flexible use community buildings?

The Friends of Burgess Park would like to see the Passmore Edwards old library / bath / washhouse on Wells Way developed as a flexible space for community use. The building which is of historic interest is in the heart of the park and could support many park-based activities as well as the old library being a large venue for the wider community. We would want this facility to be taken into consideration when planning provision across the wider area.

The building is already used by a church, as is space at two buildings in Chumleigh Gardens. Within a park setting there is need for consideration of the impact of amplified music and speech coming from these buildings into the park and impacting on other park users.

As noted above, FOBP support the use of buildings already in the park rather than adding new locations or moving locations.