

Joint email from Burgess Sports and Friends of Burgess Park - Objections to the proposals for the new sports centre.

Below we set out the comments that we would like to be considered before a decision is made about the planning application for the new sports centre and pitches (19/AP/1275).

Although the points below relate specifically to planning related matters our overall concern is that the new sports centre and pitches will cost a lot of money and a better design must be possible which overcomes the objections set out below.

1. The impact on **Metropolitan Open Land** and the protection provided in the Southwark core plan and new Southwark Plan, London Plan and new draft London Plan.

Burgess Park is MOL and the development leads to loss of MOL. The additional astroturf and re-positioned sports centre reduces the public access grass areas currently around the sports centre, these are open to the public and used as informal sports areas and an extension of the BBQ area; more open space will be fenced off.

The Sports Centre proposal was included in the 2015 Masterplan but it also included replacement of green space through the removal of Neate Street. The council could make a commitment to replace the loss of Burgess Park MOL in the future.

2. The **sports centre design** is not conducive to **achieving social and community objectives** the Southwark Core Plan Theme 2: Making the borough a better place for people Strategic Objective 2A. Create mixed communities Strategic Objective 2B. Promote sustainable use of resources or the New Southwark Plan – Regeneration that works for all.

Burgess Sports has specific concerns about the lay out and design of the building to achieve community engagement and the management and access arrangements for the community sports provision for young people and adults has not been confirmed.

Community sports needs facilities which:

- Have a social space for community use and parents to watch children play
- Storage facilities for community sports equipment – it's not possible for people to store at home in flats
- Cafe space does not look onto the pitches, not conducive for spectator/parents engagement
- Clear policies on costs of community use and access to the space planned over a three year rolling cycle to enable community sports groups to plan, budget and fundraise accordingly

Individual Decision Making (IDM) signed by Cllr Rebecca Lury does set out pitch fees but not for how the building will be used or priced for the community spaces and provision and charges for storage space.

3. The **sports centre design is not achieving environmental planning policy objectives** of the new draft London Plan for urban greening which will set higher standards and should be considered as a strong indication of direction of travel it is flagged up in the councils draft Biodiversity Action Plan.

This is a significant opportunity for the council to produce a showcase building demonstrating what can be achieved when a building is designed with high environmental standards on MOL taking forward the council policies on green spaces and biodiversity.

The new proposed sports centre does ***not*** currently:

- meet BREEAM top standard
- contribute to biodiversity through green roof or wall
- contribute positively to the park or conservation setting and character *and in fact, the design will “harm” the setting according to the planning committee report*
- have a good design solution for Loncroft Road relying on sound barriers which would be ugly and intrusive in the park and streetscape
- contribute additional public toilets to benefit the wider park
- adequately replace the tree canopy and planting with consideration of the MOL location.

The new lighting to Waite St is not justified since it is lighting a park path – *if* it is an essential requirement then the light level should minimise impact on park wildlife and be suitable low level lighting (Planning condition).

4. Other issues which need to be resolved as part of the planning approval:

- The Astro-pitch size is not correct for competitive adult rugby because it does not have adequate run-off space (Planning condition)
- Cricket fencing needs to be high enough to stop damage to nearby buildings as in recent Southwark News/Cobourg Road properties (Planning condition)
- Large events and competitive matches with audience attendance need to be integrated into Southwark’s Event Policy and the specific guidance for Burgess Park and travel plans/parking managed (Planning condition)
- The sports centre is increasing sports provision but reducing changing rooms from 8 to 6 with external lockers to maximise use of the changing rooms, which will need to be monitored
- Power sockets on the cricket pitch

The spoil from the building is being kept on site and creating the need for the mounds for spectator viewing. The mound alongside the pitch will be 2.3m tall and create a narrow footpath between the fenced pitch and the mound. The use of the mounds for viewing matches is untested and causes considerable impact to the park surroundings, minimising sightlines, possible noise disturbance and creating narrow paths. Tackling these sorts of problems were design objectives for the re-landscaping of the park. Was creating a narrow path a design objective? There needs to be clarification on how these new mounds would be built so they don’t become detrimental to the park. Existing mounds have become very dry and require suitable soil and maintenance and management. These new mounds are supposed to provide replacement biodiversity.