



Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Cabinet member for transport,
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Dear resident

You may have heard recently in the local press and on television about plans for the redevelopment of Burgess Park.

The council would like to take this opportunity to tell you directly about the next steps involved in unlocking the potential of the borough's largest green space.

For too long Burgess Park has been 'unfinished' and in the past improvements have been piecemeal and without a coherent vision. In December 2008, members of the public shared their ideas on how to improve Burgess Park through consultation and a Facebook campaign and helped support our bid to the GLA for money to invest in the park. In March 2009 it was announced that Burgess Park had won £2m from the Mayor of London, and it received a further £4m in match funding from the Aylesbury New Deal for Communities.

Since then Southwark Council's parks team has been busily working to turn the £6m into visible improvements to one of London's most deserving open spaces, extensively consulting with community groups and partners. Between May and October 2009 we ran a design competition for the park, and members of the public were invited to meet the two shortlisted designers, see their plans and ask questions. Based on residents' feedback, LDA Design was awarded the contract. In March the designs were sent out for public comment. The proposals you see now have been shaped by those comments and suggestions – there have been over 20 events, meetings and workshops since last December involving over 600 local people, plus a dedicated Facebook group.

We believe the development is an amazing opportunity to realise the full potential of Burgess Park. The plans to date propose:

- An increase in the amount of green space in the park for residents to enjoy
- The creation of new children's play facilities
- A new café in Chumleigh Gardens
- Improvements to the lake and sports facilities
- A safer park - improved entrances, redundant roads removed and a new path network created
- A park with richer and more diverse habitats, supporting existing biodiversity and helping new wildlife flourish

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Chief executive: Annie Shepperd

We are considering the environment at every stage of the project. Any trees, shrubs and lighting that are removed will be replaced elsewhere and land moved will be used to create new features elsewhere in the park. View the current masterplan and find out more at www.southwark.gov.uk/burgesspark.

The latest plan is not set in stone – there is still time for you to have your say on the future of the park, before any plans are finalised. We will also be providing you with a range of options for the phase one works, as well as the costs for each option. This will allow you to see the choices available.

Throughout July we will be holding events where you can drop in and talk to someone about the plans:

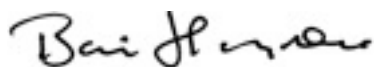
- **8 July** – walkabout and workshops, 6pm, Burgess Park sports club
- **10 and 11 July** – walkabout and workshops, 10am to 4pm, Chumleigh Gardens
- **20 July** – public consultation event, 7pm, Thurlow Lodge, 1 Thurlow St, London, SE17 2US
- **31 July** – consultation feedback drop in session, 10am to 4pm, Chumleigh Gardens

Times and locations for the events will be confirmed shortly. We will circulate these when available, and update our website at www.southwark.gov.uk/burgesspark.

You can also drop in to the Chumleigh Gardens café to see the plans for the park and leave your comments in the comment book there, or email ruth.miller@southwark.gov.uk.

We are aware that the park plays an important role in residents' lives. This plan may not reflect everyone's personal view but we are committed to including as many ideas and suggestions as we can, in order to meet the majority's needs. Your views are valuable in finding the best plan.

I'd like to thank you for your input and your future involvement during the consultation, in what is an extremely exciting scheme and one that will release the full potential of one of London's most important parks.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barrie Hargrove".

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Frequently asked questions

Why do we need a masterplan?

- Having a long term design plan for the park will help avoid the piecemeal development of the park that has been an issue in the past. We are actively seeking further funding and by developing a framework for the future we'll be ready for when additional money becomes available. The masterplan will help identify priorities for the first phase of the improvements, due to start early next year.

What is the £1.5m of fees I keep hearing about?

- This is not just fees. Just like any major project, a proportion is being allocated for vital work such as surveys into the quality of the soil, the quality of the water, flood risk assessments, wildlife habitats and other areas. Many of these surveys are not just common sense but are legally required. On top of that there are legal obligations to pay for health and safety advice as the work progresses. And of course, we went through a very thorough process to get the best possible architects for the project and to engage the public in how the park is shaped, so there will be costs there. From the onset, we have been clear that although £6m was awarded, the actual construction budget is £4.5m. The transformation of the park is going to make our biggest green space look fantastic, and it's only right that, like any other organisation carrying out a complex and ambitious piece of work like this, we make sure we get it right.

Who has been consulted with?

- Following the completion of a baseline report, which reviewed previous consultation studies on Burgess Park, further consultation was undertaken to gather feedback on the conceptual design that was submitted as part of the appointment competition. The initial feedback on the design collected during the competition process was followed up with presentations and workshops involving around 150 individuals and groups. This included Walworth, Camberwell and Peckham Community Councils. Meetings have been held with the stakeholder group, a council facilitated group including representatives from the various community and resident organisations local to Burgess Park. The community councils also provided an opportunity to engage with young people about what they are looking for within Burgess Park.
- The feedback from this first phase of consultation resulted in a revised design, taking many of the comments on board. This revised design was then used as the basis for a further phase of consultation which involved approximately 700 individuals. As well as further meetings with the stakeholder group and an information stand at Bermondsey Community Council, this phase involved meetings with specific interest groups (e.g. the Burgess Park Fishermen and Southwark Cyclists), a workshop with Southwark Council officers, focus groups on specific topics (e.g. biodiversity), two large scale public events in Chumleigh Gardens with an exhibition and model of Burgess Park, and meetings with Burgess Park Business Users and Friends of Burgess Park. The output from this phase of consultation has been used to inform the current phase 1 and longer term designs. Further consultation will occur throughout July 2010.

Do the plans include a purpose built amphitheatre to attract some of the largest festivals in Europe?

- The vision for the park in the masterplan document describes the space in the heart of the park which will be subject to new landforms as: "A purpose built space for some of the largest festivals in Europe with amphitheatre style viewing for over 100,000 people, a floating stage, and a dedicated cultural hub."
- This is misleading and should not have been included. The new landform, which will use some of the earth removed to make improvements elsewhere in the park, will give a better view of the area that is already used for sporting activities and events such as the Mix festival and Carnival del Pueblo. There isn't any seating proposed and no new large events are planned. Large events only happen a couple of times a year.

What are the timescales for the redevelopment of the park?

- Planning application will be submitted in September 2010. Work is due to start on site in March 2011 for completion in March 2012. We need time to work up plans and details so need agreement to principles of vision and phase one by end of this month.

I have seen 24 points from the Burgess Park Action Group criticizing the project. Are they true?

- Our response to all of these points is attached. Some are incorrect, but some do represent a different perspective on the project and where they are based in fact, we are looking at this.

Why is the council proposing so many earthworks?

- The design for the park was chosen after a public competition and many of the new features won significant support during the public consultation. The consensus was that the structure of the parks was not right as it had been done on a piecemeal basis and wasn't based on coherent plans. Most people also agreed that we needed to improve disabled access to the parks as well as improving cycle and other routes, which these earthworks achieve.