

Appendix A

Burgess Park Action Group

November 20th 2009

Dear Everton

Re: The Burgess Park Action Group would like to request a deputation to speak at the December 15th meeting of the council's Executive on the discussion of the Aylesbury Area Action Plan.

Thank you for your time on the phone last week.

Whilst grateful to the council for already agreeing to restore various sections of the park removed from previous maps used to identify the boundary of Burgess Park in the AAAP following our representations, there are a number of outstanding issues that we would like to see addressed in how the AAAP impacts on Burgess Park and on the local environment.

We wish to request the executive to consider three items:

1/ We request the deletion of the section of the AAAP which inadvertently destroys the open space protection for the park provided by its current Metropolitan Open Land designation

2/ We request the maintenance of the Southwark Plan's provisions opposing high-rise tower blocks along the Albany Road and support the deletion of changes to this policy proposed in the AAAP.

3/ We request the Executive to postpone approval of the AAAP, until such time as officers are able to provide you with independent evidence on the potential catastrophic CO2 implications of the project, by outside independent analysts such as AEA or others.

Item 1/

We request the deletion of the section of the AAAP which inadvertently destroys the open space protection for the park provided by its current Metropolitan Open Land designation

i.e.PL8 states "***improvements in the park will encourage and celebrate sporting activities, education, bio-diversity and cultural diversity***".

without stating clearly that such improvements would be in relation to open space provision rather than built and thus significantly weakens the MOL open space

protections provided to the park by the current Southwark Plan.

The head of planning has already stated that any applications for building in the park would take both this policy and the MOL policy into account.

This is a real problem, as the Burgess Park Action Group over the last 17 years has fought off successfully 48 out of 50 proposals for building on the park; these included everything from huge indoor private tennis centres to the relocation of entire schools. It was only the precise wording that we along with the Peckham Society and The Camberwell Society fought to get into the two previous UDPs that saved the park from being covered numerous council related buildings.

We are sure you would agree that it would be tragic if lax language were to open the floodgates to successor administrations building on the park. As the council says it is genuinely committed to the planning protection of the park, then it should stay with the proven existing planning MOL status that the park enjoys and not compromise it with language that can be abused.

Item 2/

We request the maintenance of the Southwark Plan's provisions opposing high-rise tower blocks along the Albany Road and support the deletion of changes to this policy proposed in the AAAP.

The AAAP proposal to break from the provisions in the Southwark Plan for high rise housing to be only situated in Central Activities Zones and instead to allow the lining of almost the entire north boundary of Burgess Park with 10, 15 and 20 storey high-rise blocks has profound implications for the hundreds of thousands of annual users of the park.

Peckham and Walworth have thankfully among the lowest car-ownership in the UK. However, this means that for many of us, Burgess Park is the nearest we get to open countryside and parkland. To have the park's boundary destroyed by over-bearing huge tower blocks would be a travesty to the vision established so long ago by the Abercrombie Plan for a green lung for the inner-city. If not changed, the council will be in effect turning a precious and valued green-lung into an iron lung.

Indeed over 70% of written responses on this issue to the consultation on the AAAP opposed such high-rise landmark buildings.

To get across our point, we would like the executive members to take a moment to honestly imagine Dulwich Park boundary being lined with such 10-20 storey tower-blocks and what their response to such a proposal would be?

Item 3/

We request the Executive to postpone approval of the AAAP, until such time as officers are able to provide you with independent evidence on the potentially catastrophic CO2 implications of the project, by outside

independent analysts such as AEA.

We have serious concerns that the proposed demolition and rebuild of an estate only completed 32 years ago, has massive implications for the borough's carbon emissions that officers have completely failed to alert the executive to.

The carbon debt incurred by the original demolition and rebuild of the Aylesbury Area 30 years ago, will remain in the atmosphere for another 70 years.

The huge carbon debt proposed for yet another comprehensive demolition and rebuild will remain for 100 years.

At the recent public inquiry, council officers agreed that their definition of the proposed AAAP was a "zero carbon growth project" actually meant that the emissions from the estate after the demolition/rebuild would be the same ie zero carbon growth means the same as zero carbon reduction.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that officers had no idea whether the carbon emissions resulting from the demolition/rebuild would result in thousands or millions of tonnes.

It is therefore our view that the AAAP as proposed will potentially guarantee that Southwark instead of succeeding as a 10:10 council or of achieving its 2050 targets would be impossible.

Officers in response to submissions to the Core Strategy have so far refused to agree that large projects like the AAAP should have carbon projections for the existing buildings to be refurbished placed against the carbon projections for the demolition/ rebuild.

We therefore request the Executive to postpone approval of the AAAP, until such time as officers are able to provide you with independent evidence on the huge CO2 implications of the project, by outside independent analysts such as AEA.

Otherwise you are in danger of placing the council and the local Bermondsey MP in the ridiculous position of advocating CO2 reduction targets, whilst refusing to count one of the largest sources of CO2 emissions in the Borough, over the next two decades.

We look forward to a constructive outcome on these issues on the 15th December.

Many thanks

Donnachadh McCarthy
pp Burgess Park Action Group