

Victory Community Park Project

January 2020 consultation report



Summary

1. Introduction

Southwark Council wants to improve Victory Community Park with high quality facilities and landscapes creating links with the adjacent newly developed Elephant and Castle public realm and open spaces, helping to improve the area for local residents, businesses and visitors. Creating a Master Plan for Victory Community Park will guide this future development using public consultation to create a more pleasant park to visit.

The park is located within the Borough, Bankside and Walworth area of Southwark. To the immediate west lies Elephant Park, a major new mixed use development under construction. To the east, south and north are a mix of residential properties and a school. The park is busy with children after the school closes.

The park forms a narrow 'L' shape restricting space and movement through the park. The Masterplan aims to address the issues caused by the long term closure of the bridge and general poor quality of the facilities and infrastructure.

This survey has been carried out at the beginning of the project to allow the public to shape the designs and direction of the project from the start.

2. Public consultation

This consultation has been carried out at the beginning of the project to allow the public to shape the designs and direction of the project.

This public engagement took place from Monday 13th January 2020 to Sunday 9th February 2020 with an online survey and two public drop-in sessions held in the park. Information provided at the event and online can be found appended to this report.

35 responses to the survey were received via the online form and the drop-in events. A summary of feedback is in the next section with full comments in part 2 of this report.

3. Executive summary

The key public viewpoints from the consultation and how we will take them forward are listed below;

- 1) The world planting border is a popular feature and respondents would like it to be retained and potentially enhanced.
- 2) Satisfaction with the existing play area is relatively high.
- 3) The trees and especially the blossom were mentioned frequently by respondents.
- 4) The fencing was often described as prison like, this suggests the fencing has a negative impact on visitors experience.
- 5) The seating should be reviewed, as respondents mentioned that the stone seating around the park was uncomfortable especially in winter.
- 6) Antisocial behaviour in the park is currently an issue.

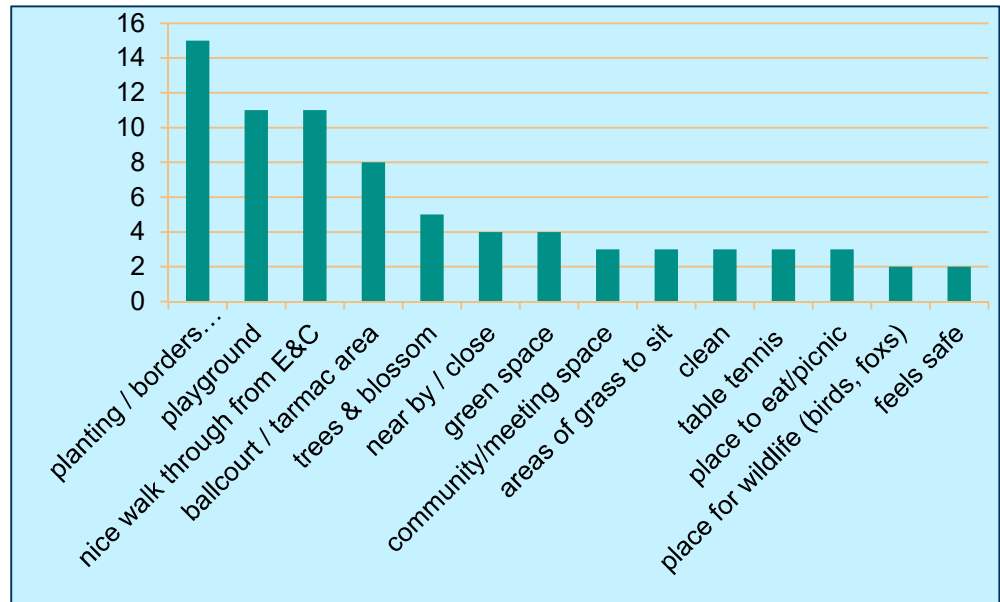
Part 2. Review of responses

Generally we asked open questions seeking public attitudes, opinions and priorities towards the park as it currently is. There were 35 surveys completed during the consultation period. The majority of 2000 leaflets delivered were to the new high-rise apartment buildings closer to Elephant & Castle. Occupancy rates of these new units is unknown and many of these residents may be new to the area and possibly unfamiliar at present with Victory Community Park.

Q1. What do you like about Victory Community Park that encourages you to visit/use the park?

This identifies the value local residents have placed on the world border in the park. Many commenting on the diversity of the unique plants in the park. The playground is a popular facility, many commenting that they like what is there at present. Residents identify the importance of the park as a route to other destinations, a feature picked up by the

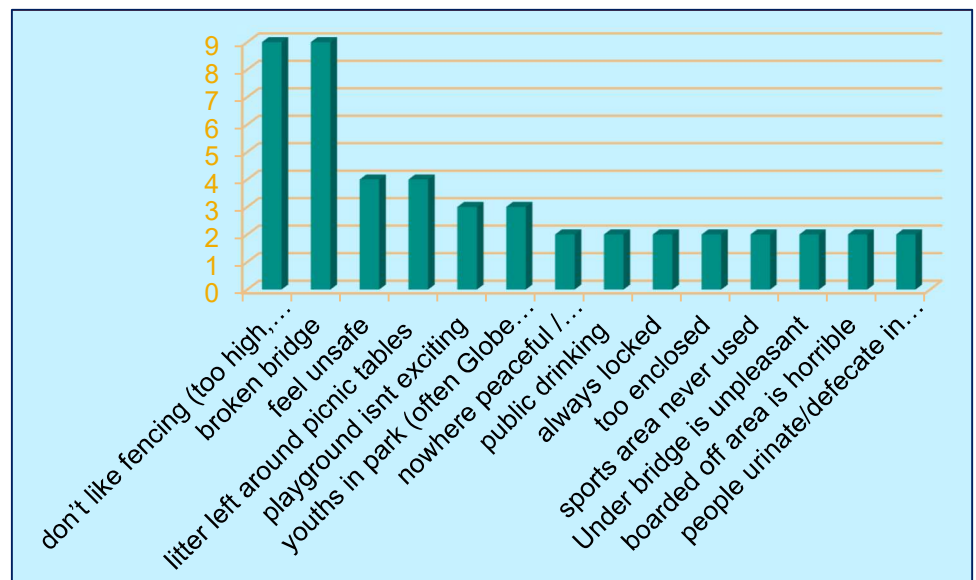
observation surveys. The trees especially the blossom from the cherry trees was identified as an important feature in the park. Few people mentioned that it feels clean and safe.



Q2. What don't you like about Victory Community Park that discourages you or puts you off visiting/using the park?

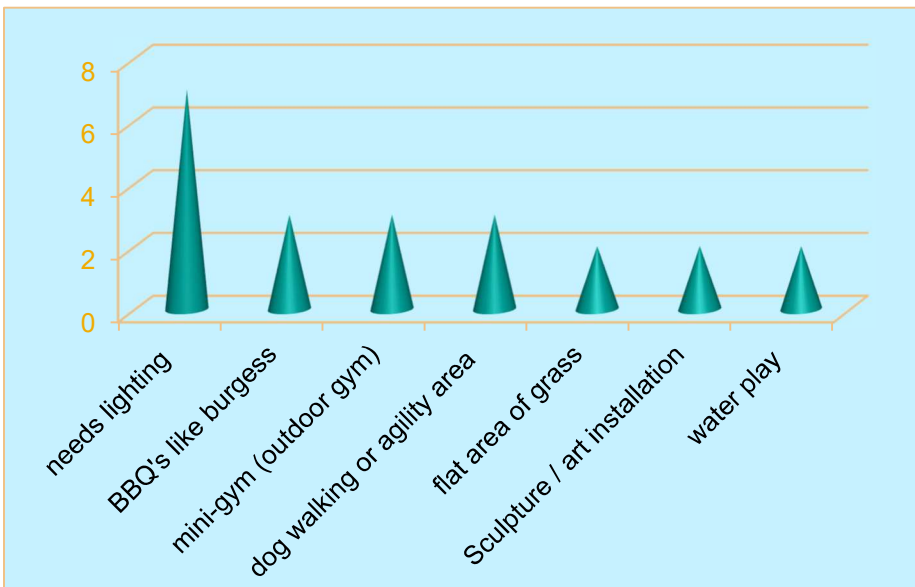
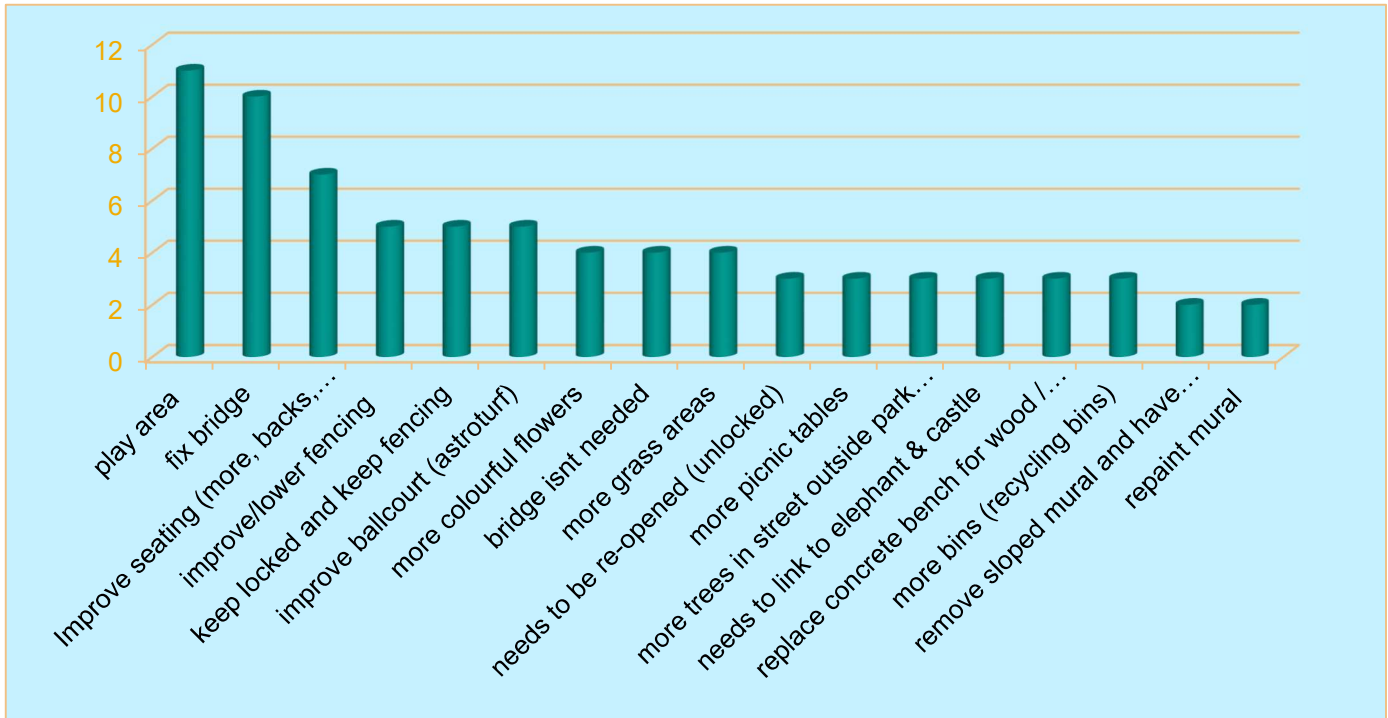
Two reasons stood out as factors in preventing visits to the park. The existing fencing is identified as too high and often 'prisonlike' the fact the bridge is broken discourages people from taking a pleasant short cut through the park. Feeling unsafe (reviewed in more detail later) and litter problems also are highly ranked concerns. Some

respondents did not like the fact the park was locked and antisocial behaviour was cited as an issue, which may be worsened by the closed-off feeling. The park may benefit from opening up and improvement of sightlines.



Q3. What existing facilities would you like to see improved in the park?

The play area, while identified as a key reason for visiting is also highest ranked amongst facilities which could be improved. Fixing the bridge is the second highest requested improvement. Some feedback suggested that due to it being closed for several years people had become accustomed to walking a different route. The construction hoarding detracts from the character of the park and respondents would like to see it removed. Improved seating was the next highest request, specifically the stone seating blocks were considered uncomfortable and more seating in general was requested including seating with armrests.



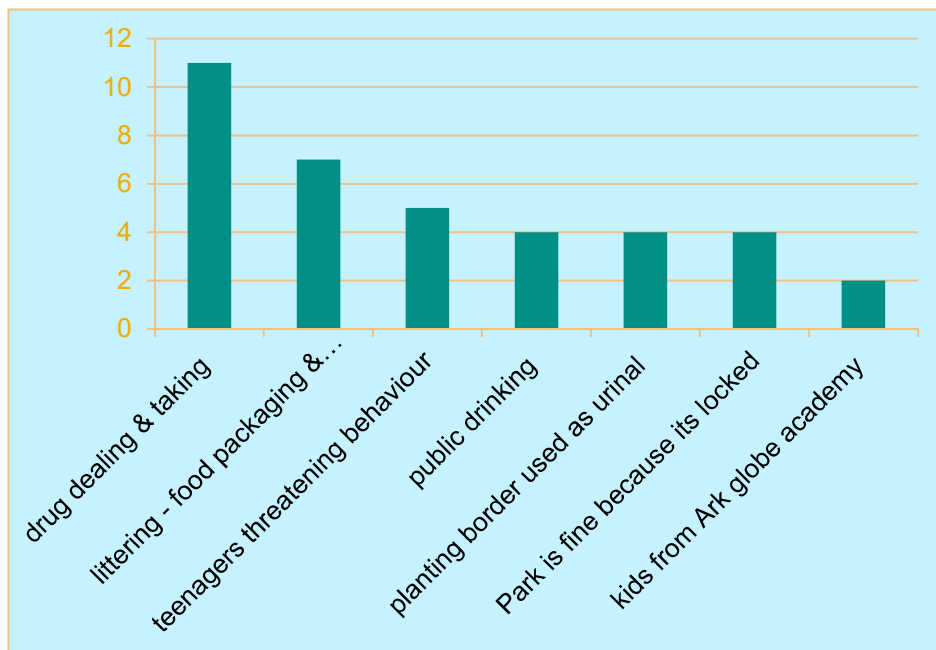
Q4. What new facilities (not currently in the park) would you like to see?

The most common request here related to lighting and council policy is generally not to introduce new lighting due to the negative effect on wildlife, and the potential to increase antisocial behaviour by encouraging use of the park at night. BBQ's were suggested however BBQing is not permitted in parks in Southwark, except in the designated area in Burgess Park. A dog exercise area was requested, however this cannot be

introduced. Experience has shown that dog exercise areas are not successful, and become muddy, smelly and unpleasant to visit. The park is small and needs to be shared by everyone and responsible owners should continue to be welcome to walk their dogs anywhere in the park under control.

Q5 & Q6. Related to sports provision in the park.

The general response was that the ballcourt was well used and a good facility for the park. There were no common ideas or suggestions given on how this area could be improved, opinion on outdoor gym equipment was split with three responses advising 'no outdoor gym' while three requested the 'addition of an outdoor gym'. Further consultation with young people was suggested and general improvements to the condition of the ballcourt.



Q7. What are the anti-social behaviour issues? (above)

The main concern was drug dealing and drug taking which has been witnessed in the park, along with littering mainly linked to the picnic tables. Threatening behaviour by youths/teenagers and public drinking also ranked highly.

Q8. Any other comments?

Below is a list of all comments and the number of times each was mentioned. These will be reviewed when creating the design

Number of responses	Comment
3	Fencing feels like a prison
3	The park is important because there are lots of homes nearby without outdoor space
2	The fenced off plot should be incorporated into park (land not owned by council)
2	Repairing the bridge would be a waste of money
2	Links to Elephant Park from this park should be considered,
2	Remove all fencing
2	The bridge needs to be repaired

2	No cycle routes in the park
1	Park is sometimes left locked during the day when it should be open
1	SINC status of the park needs to be recognised and protected
1	Incorporate and open up the nature garden area to the rest of the park
1	Do not use metal or stone seating
1	Park is locked too for safety reasons often during even light winds.
1	Needs more signage and information at entrances
1	Build more footpaths
1	Sports facility is too big
1	When un-used the empty space (ballcourt) and secluded corners create an unsafe atmosphere
1	no major changes needed
1	best spend of money is restore what is there
1	any money left should be spent on public realm on Henshaw St
1	Area around the park has been wonderfully regenerated, this park has potential to become a little gem if you get it right
1	keep fencing for safety
1	bug hotel
1	More event for local people
1	more rangers in the park - you don't see them
1	More flower beds - robust flowers
1	Maintenance - better lighting
1	what happening with pub site
1	Munton rd access must be maintained
1	more family orientated and kids focus
1	consider changing parks name to Locks Fields which links to name of whole area in 1800s

What's happening?

We want to provide top quality park facilities for all of the community, within a welcoming, safe and high quality landscaped environment. The project to improve Victory Community Park will see extensive public consultation, to identify priority improvements for the park, and construction works in the park.

The pedestrian bridge in the park, which is currently closed, may be replaced to reconnect the west and east ends of the park, depending on the wants and needs of the local community.

Why improve Victory Community Park?

The Elephant and Castle area around Victory Community Park is undergoing major redevelopment including new housing, highways, and parks and open spaces. These improvements highlight the need to improve the quality of Victory Community Park and to create new connections to Elephant and Castle.

When will this take place?

Consultation and public engagement will kick-start this project with drop-in sessions in January 2020. Later in 2020 we will consult again on concept designs and ideas for the park. Listening to what you have said, the draft designs will be based on your priorities and issues with the park.



To join the project mailing list please contact parks@southwark.gov.uk

Come and visit us at a drop-in session on:
Saturday 18 January from 12noon to 3.30pm

Victory Community Park near the play area

Thursday 23 January from 5pm to 8pm

67 Balfour Street opposite the park

To complete the park questionnaire or for more information visit southwark.gov.uk/victorycommunitypark



@lb_southwark facebook.com/southwarkcouncil



Victory Community Park

Have your say and help shape proposed improvements to the park

Please submit your comments by
Sunday 9 February 2020

Improved play area?

Places to picnic?

Nicer boundaries and entrances?

Victory Community Park

An illustration of a park scene with various activities and thought bubbles. At the top, a large green banner contains the title and a call to action. Below, a park landscape is shown with a winding path. On the left, a child is riding a scooter. In the center, a man is walking a dog. On the right, a woman and a child are walking together. In the background, there are trees and a building. Several thought bubbles contain questions about park improvements: 'Improved play area?' (with children on a seesaw), 'Places to picnic?' (with a person sitting on the grass), and 'Nicer boundaries and entrances?' (with an elderly person on a bench). A pink sign at the bottom right reads 'Victory Community Park'. The background is a mix of green and brown tones.

 @lb_southwark  facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

Southwark
Council
southwark.gov.uk