

Regeneration Committee site visit to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, 15 October 2014

Attendees

Assembly Members	Gareth Bacon AM (Chairman), Navin Shah AM (Deputy Chair), James Cleverly AM, Len Duvall
Assembly staff	Richard Derecki, Jo Sloman, Adam Wildman, Emma Gray
Visiting	Neale Coleman (Deputy Chairman, LLDC) Dr Paul Brickell (Executive Director, Regeneration and Community Partnerships) Mark Robinson (Head of External Affairs, LLDC) Roz Collings (Public Affairs Officer, LLDC) Greg Smith (Project Sponsor, Olympic Stadium, LLDC)

Overview of visit

The Committee visited the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to receive an update on progress of transformation works for the post-Games legacy of the Park and venues. The Committee visited the ArcelorMittal Orbit, the Olympic Stadium, and the Aquatics Centre. This site visit was held in advance of the Committee's meeting with the LLDC and other guests on 26th November 2014.

Venues and locations

Olympic Stadium

- The LLDC told the Committee that progress on the stadium transformation is on schedule. At the time of the Committee's visit, the roof was being tethered to the ground and circa 500 construction workers were on site for the stadium transformation works. During transformation, the athletics track has been covered with a membrane and 1m-deep concrete to prevent damage. Contractors cannot work on the ground beneath work being undertaken on certain stages of the roof erection. Between January and June 2015, the roof will be clad to provide good acoustics for concerts. The new seating will be installed in April 2015.
- Responding to speculation about the costs of the roof works, the LLDC said that it will require a little more than the contingency funding currently available in the stadium budget. The stadium works are going to cost more due to structural issues. The transformation works are a longer project than originally planned by the Olympic Delivery Authority (original plans would have involved demolishing the entire upper bowl leaving a 25,000 athletics only Stadium), and therefore the transformation works are different to ensure a viable multi use stadium.
- The lower bowl of seating will hold circa 20,500 spectators during athletics and football/other pitch sports modes. In athletics mode, the new aluminium seating will sit around the track. In football mode, the seats will be pulled forward and moved across the track, using hydraulics and cranes. 29 bridges will be in place to enable spectators to walk from the podium to the lower tier seats.
- The field of play will host rugby as well as football, and there is also scope for cricket and US sports.
- The first part of the stadium transformation works are due to be completed in time for the Rugby World Cup in summer 2015. The LLDC told Members that some preliminary events will be required to test the venue.
- The stadium operator will be responsible for operating the 'halo' surrounding the stadium, which will accommodate food, beverage, and retail units.

Aquatics Centre

- The Aquatics Centre was handed over to operator Greenwich Leisure Limited in December 2013 and the venue opened to the public on 1 March 2014. Since then, 530,000 people have visited the venue, which has exceeded forecasts. The venue can split into six pools, if required – its movable floors allow for a flexible programme. The former training pool (during Games time) is now used by schools and the local community. A boom and movable floors separates the two pools.
- The centre hosts:
 - A Swim School programme, used by 2500 children per week;
 - A learn to dive programme which 415 children and adults use on a weekly basis
 - A Diving Academy, which 300 schools have visited to date;
 - A Training section, containing a 12ft dry diving pool, trampoline and practice diving boards;
 - An on-site crèche;
 - Audience seating for 2500 people;
 - A community access gym which has 1800 members to date. Membership is available from £29.95 a month, rising to £45 a month for an all-inclusive membership deal. Members can access any GLL gym.
- Swimming clubs from local boroughs and others can book out swimming lanes in the evenings and at weekends.
- The Aquatics Centre hosted a FINA Diving World Series event in April 2014, the Invictus Games in summer 2014, and it will host the European Championships in 2016. It also aims to host galas and other large events in 2015.

'Olympicopolis'

There are several sites near the Olympic Stadium which have been earmarked for economic uses as part of the Mayor's 'Olympicopolis' vision.

- The **Stratford Waterfront** site is on the site of the Gamestime temporary water polo venue. The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is looking to build a 26,000m² venue at the end of the site nearest the Aquatics Centre. Sadler's Wells is looking to build a 600 -seater dance theatre where it can host choreography and a hip hop school. The LLDC is in discussion with other overseas museum operators. It is also in advanced discussions with London College of Fashion, which currently operates across 6 sites. The LLDC plans to use the northern end of the Waterfront site for a residential scheme. The site as a whole is expected to be completed in 2023/24, though some elements should be ready significantly earlier. An international design competition has been launched for the scheme.
- An area to the **south of the ArcelorMittal Orbit** (south lawn) is intended to be the first of two sites University College London (UCL) will develop, for a new campus which when fully built out would provide 100,000 sqm of academic and ancillary space. Construction could begin on initial phases of the project in 2016/17, for occupation in 2019/20. A UCL campus on this part of the site is likely to focus on creative disciplines such as technology, engineering, and design. The LLDC has developed a heads of terms agreement with UCL, and it is expected to develop planning proposals in 2015. The LLDC is considering building the university campus development itself, and UCL may build any residential component accompanying the scheme.
- Some government funding will be required to facilitate both the construction of the university and cultural institutions. The V&A need to know they can attract enough revenue to fund the running of the site. The LLDC will be looking to progress its plans after the Autumn Statement (3 December 2014).

Other issues

Housing

- Developer Taylor Wimpey has started on site at Chobham Manor and sold 100 units. 75 per cent of the units planned for the site will be family housing. The LLDC told the Committee that it is building good quality houses with attractive public realm. Several of the units are houses with adjoining single room apartments, which will be suitable for families wishing to live with older or younger family members.
- The LLDC is generally achieving 30 per cent affordable housing. It is also providing some housing at social rents as it has rehousing obligations agreed arising from Games time relocations.
- The LLDC is holding discussions with developers for residential development at the Sweetwater and Eastwick sites, which it aims to deliver in the mid-2020s. The next phase of housing will be predominantly apartments; however, there are plans for family and news-style housing near Here East.
- On the neighbouring International Quarter site Lend Lease is currently constructing two tall office buildings for the Financial Conduct Authority and TfL which will be in complete in 2017 providing 5,500 new office jobs. Lend Lease are also building a residential scheme and a hotel. They are engaged in discussions with other potential tenants for the International Quarter development which could eventually provide 25,000-30,000 new jobs.
- The LLDC told the Committee that it may review options for development of the Pudding Mill Lane site (the site of the fifth neighbourhood on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park). The LLDC has planning permission for housing, but it is not due to be built until the 2020s, and therefore, it is in the early stages of looking at possible other uses that would contribute value to the long term regeneration of the area. Such uses would attract other housing developments in other areas of the Mayoral Development Corporation area.