

Notes on EGRA Open Meeting 31st March 2015 at the Star & Garter

Daniel Hayes welcomed everybody and set out the agenda. There were no outstanding points from the last meeting but plenty of updates. Dan pointed out that things are busy, so much so, that EGRA has designed a number of project teams to try and get things done. He urged all those present to consider joining EGRA or a project team as we are all pretty stretched.

Liner Terminal

Katherine Joeke talked us through the detail of the proposed new terminal at Enderby Wharf. Her talk was accompanied by visual representation of how the terminal and adjacent buildings 'might' look, these drawings have been created using dimensions gleaned from Morgan Stanley and Cruise Britain's own (provided) information. KJ was clear that these were not the developers own drawings.

KJ told us that the developers are seeking to alter the original planning permission granted in 2011 the original plans assumed that visiting ships would dock for a day, Greenwich being one of many destinations on the ships itinerary. These original plans included a hotel. The new plans assume that Greenwich will be the destination, i.e. the beginning and end of a cruise, and ships will remain in port for three or four days. As passengers will remain on the ship during their stay there is now no need for a hotel.

The terminal building will need to be substantially increased to accommodate baggage handling, customs etc. The terminal building will be 90% bigger than originally planned. Instead of a hotel the new plans include the building of three pencil towers of 30, 24 and 22 storeys; the community will benefit from the inclusion of a small skills academy, and a small raised terrace as part of the public realm/open space.

As the amount of affordable housing units has not been increased the affordable housing level now drops to 14% , this is against the Council's own stated objective of achieving 33%. EGRA take the view that the affordable housing level is unacceptable and the provision of green space is both inadequate and inaccessible.

EGRA believe that the financial viability of these new plans need to be looked at very carefully and have asked RBG for sight of this

KJ asked those assembled what they thought about the height of the buildings; most of those present thought the heights excessive generally agreeing that 10 storeys seemed about right.

KJ introduced Ralph Hardwick from Tower Hamlets to talk to us about the concerns from residents who live on the other side of the river.

Ralph told us that he used to be involved in testing marine diesel engines for the MoD and subsequently worked at the Ford Motor Company for many years. He told us that vessels on the River Thames, unlike road vehicles, have no emission control devices (such as catalytic converters). These vessels meander into the Mayor's Low Emission Zone without restriction.

Fuel used by ships outside control zones (at sea) use 'bunker' fuel with very high sulphur content. Since January 2015 vessels in the European area and using the River Thames must use diesel fuel with only 0.1% sulphur content, however this is still 100 times more sulphur content than road vehicles.

Usually ports which have pollution issues such as Los Angeles, Rotterdam and the Baltic States require ships to connect to a shore based electrical power supply from the grid. There is also an EU directive which recommends that ships connect to shore power when in port. The Cruise Terminal developers appear to have ignored this.

There were some comments from the floor, about water quality. Apparently water quality reports were conducted in the original planning application. Reports are online in the EIA.

RBG have admitted to Ralph that they have overlooked the environmental impact of any cruise ship moored in Greenwich. RBG has not consulted LBTH residents about planning applications despite a consultation protocol that became effective in 2009.

There were many comments from the floor about traffic, the re-provisioning of ships.

As the ships will lay alongside for three to four days and as they can use up to 20 tons of fuel a day this is equivalent to a huge industrial plant on our river.

Ralph told us that his goal is to ensure any ship mooring at the Cruise terminal should connect to a shore power supply and not run their engines whilst stationary, as well as not creating any more noise than currently exists.

He urged East Greenwich residents to write to the council to ask the same. CB to put a template or example letters on the website to assist residents in capturing the facts .

Follow the link for [details on the guidance for strategic planning across London boroughs](#).

It was suggested that we shine more light on this planning development, have we for example contacted BBC London? Surely a Cruise Terminal was a London-wide issue? CB responded that EGRA were working on a press release but would also investigate local news outlets.

Power Station

Daniel Hayes brought us up to date with all the power station news. Dan told us that the TfL consultation held at the Forum at the beginning of the month was very poorly attended. This seemed to be at odds with residents who had at the previous meeting seemed exercised by the thought of the a 24/7 operational power station. He suggested that we all need to wake up to the issues before it was too late.

TfL had been consistent in their communication and helpful with enquiries. TfL has offered a tour of the building to some residents , more details to follow.

Currently the plans allow for two new gas engines. This is to go ahead.

Plans to install a total of six engines is entirely dependent on the the council establishing a Heat Network. Although this is the quid pro quo, RBG have not yet communicated their plans on the Heat Network. In fact RBG have been poor at community engagement and communication when it comes to the power station. One of those assembled suggested that the Heat Network could power the ships.

Finally DH told us that although TfL had assumed that as an operational power station they did not need to apply for a permission for change of use. Some residents have queried this, as moving from a standby power station to a fully operational power station could be seen as a change of use. More information on this when it becomes available.

Public Realm

Tony Batten an EGRA member and Town Planner by profession presented to us the findings of his review of the poor state of the public realm in East Greenwich. Tony showed us a series of photographs detailing broken railings, scruffy and broken street furniture, poorly maintained pavements and highways, and unloved buildings such as East Greenwich Library, a heritage building. The peeling paintwork on street lamps, heavy littering, food stained walkways and cluttered pavements collectively made for depressing viewing.

Tony highlighted the juxtaposition of some of the new developments and the newly paved walkways (e.g. The Peltons) and the paths on the other side of the road (e.g. outside the Greenwich Town Social Club) and queried why the public realm in East Greenwich more widely is not benefitting from the significant quantum of new development that is taking place in the immediate area.

Tony also showed us some data from the London Town Centre health checks report (2014) which demonstrated the poor performance of East Greenwich compared to other District Centres in Greater London.

There was some discussion about street cleaning, some residents noting that often a call to Cleansweep will resolve the problem. Others commented that although individual street cleaners and pickers are obliging there does not seem to be a strategic overview by the council on keeping our streets clean.

There is also no longer a Town Centre Manager for East Greenwich and it was generally agreed that this would be a good start.

Mary Mills pointed out that the fast food takeaways have an obligation to keep the streets clean immediately outside their premises. This is obviously not being enforced. We agreed to put the Cleansweep number on the EGRA website and ask that residents become relentless in pursuing cleaner streets.

Finally Tony showed us some lovely images from LB Southwark and RBK&C showing how these local authorities had tackled congested and poor public realm by the removal of obsolete street furniture, careful placement of seats and flower boxes and tree planting along with the widening of pavements and the rationalisation of road carriageways. The improvement was obvious and immediate, showing how a modest investment but a clear focus could change our public realm.

There was considerable discussion about the monies that 106 agreements and now CIL payments could in future generate funding for town centre public realm improvements in East Greenwich.

It was agreed that EGRA would ask RBG to allocate resource for an East Greenwich Town Centre Manager or Officer. please write to your councillors. The presentation is on the website.

Air Tubes

Ian Blore a founder member of EGRA who has been championing the monitoring of emissions brought us up to date with the EGRA and Westcombe Society's joint initiative to install air monitors in a variety of locations through East Greenwich and Westcombe. Ian showed us a map with the locations of the monitors.

Ian explained that SOX (Sulphur Oxide) and NOX (Nitrous Oxide) and particulates are the toxins in our air that should be closely monitored. The air Tubes measure the amount of NOX in the air. The tubes were installed on March 4th and will be taken down on 4th April to conform with DEFRA standards. He appealed for further funding to run the monitoring for another month in summer. At £9.00 a tube it was an initiative that was well received. Funds were forthcoming (with Greenwich Society sponsoring four) so we have enough to continue into 2016!

The results from the March study will be analysed and the results published on the EGRA website hopefully at the end of April.

Ian also brought our attention to the newspaper headline 'Toxic London' and reminded us that there is a new consciousness about clean air. He concluded by suggesting that if we were interested we could take a look at the [Clean-air information](#) on line.

Silvertown Tunnel

Ian Blore also led the EGRA consultation with TfL representatives working on the Silvertown tunnel the previous week. A small group of us met TFL to run through the initial results of this consultation. It is early days TfL told us, they still had a considerable amount of work to complete before consulting more formally with the Londoners.

At the meeting we discussed, the other proposed river crossings at Gallions Reach (Thamesmead) and Belvedere, sound barriers, particulates, roundabouts and road layout of the feeder roads, the Woolwich Ferry (to be refurbished and guaranteed to run until 2020) amongst other things. Ian has written a précis of the meeting which is on the EGRA website blog. Interested parties can also review [the TfL report](#).

East Greenwich / Peninsula Forum

A number of us along with a range of other stakeholder groups went along to the first stakeholder forum organised by RBG. The forum is something that EGRA have been pushing for for the last six months, and that the Greenwich Society has been asking for over the years.

Our request to RBG and the developers was to provide a place to discuss and illuminate strategic issues, issues that are often pushed to one side as developers understandably talk only about their plot of land, their 106 obligations, traffic assessments etc.

Richard Baglin and EGRA member and Chair of The Greenwich Society pointed out that the developers meet with the council regularly, the developers fulfil their community obligation to consult on the specifics of their developments with residents; the third side of the triangle is not completed. i.e. we the local residents and businesses have no opportunity, save the planning meetings, to scrutinise viability and strategic planning issues. We asked for an opportunity to put our concerns on design, traffic, density and affordable housing to planners and elected representatives prior to the planning process.

The Forum was a great disappointment, it was not structured to give us the opportunity we sought. Although 50 or so people were gathered just a handful of us were from residents groups, the developers were well represented as were the council and TfL. However the council set the agenda, and took the opportunity to promote their piloted scheme on driverless cars, and Knight Dragon presented again their amended plans for their new planning application.

We expressed our disappointment and gave clear direction to RBG that this was not what we expected or needed. We hope that this import initiative continues in a more helpful fashion.

Knight Dragon

Many residents have recently received notification from RBG that Knight Dragon have submitted their new plans for the Peninsula. Richard Baglin took the floor to explain that there are 191 separate documents some of which are 200 pages long. The statutory deadline for community response is 21 days. This is too short. We discussed how it would be possible to scrutinise the plans effectively in this time. EGRA and the Greenwich Society have both written to Cllr Thorpe the Lead member for Regeneration to ask for an extension.

Richard Baglin wondered if it might be better to just reject the application. There was some discussion about this, we await a reply from the council.

Conclusions and next steps

Dan wrapped up by asking how often these open meetings should take place? Every six weeks seemed to be the consensus. Further thought on this welcome.

Actions are noted below.

Template letters to go on to website.

EGRA and residents to lobby for a Town Centre Manager for East Greenwich.

Cleansweep number to go onto website

Date for next open meeting to be published likely to be mid May.

EGRA to pursue access to the viability study for the Liner Terminal

EGRA to put together a response to KD planning permission