



February 2016

Dear Members

Firstly, thank you all for your support during 2015. The East Greenwich Residents Association (EGRA) relies entirely on the voluntary work and contributions of its members and its executive team, in ensuring that we get a voice in the big decisions that affect our local community.

Planning applications

The pace of urban development in The Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) is one of the fastest in the UK. This is exciting for the community but also brings many challenges. The RBG Local Plan calls for 26,000 new homes between 2011 and 2021 and a further 2,500 per annum thereafter. Consequently, Greenwich has one of the highest housing targets of all the London Boroughs, reaching a total contribution of 38,000 homes by 2028.

This past year was a busy year for planning applications in the local area. Major planning proposals across the Borough - and in particular East Greenwich - meant that our members have been busy trying to influence the outcomes on a number of projects. We voiced our concern at various Planning Board meetings about the developments by Alcatel/Cathedral, Enderby Wharf Cruise Liner Terminal (CLT), Knight Dragon on the Greenwich Peninsula, and Ikea, to name but a few of the major schemes. Several themes emerged from all of these campaigns. The levels of affordable housing are consistently missing targets set by the Borough (in some cases as low as 15% of the developed property vs RBG's stated aims of 35%). Housing densities are pushing beyond the limits as set out in the London Plan, and this in turn is set to put increased pressure on local infrastructure.

Our members may also be aware of our call for Cllr Denise Hyland, the Leader of the Council, to step down from her role as a member of the RBG Planning Board. No other borough Leader is a member of their respective planning committees and we see this as a clear conflict of interest when it comes to being impartial when voting on planning decisions. EGRA wrote to Cllr Hyland calling for her to step down from the Planning Board, however, in a written response Cllr Hyland asserts that she is impartial.

Air Quality

It is well known that Greenwich has one of the worst reputations from the perspective of air quality compared with other London boroughs. The negative health effects of poor air quality are now coming into sharp focus. The Royal Colleges of Physicians and Paediatrics and Child Health - in a report released recently - state that outside air pollution is contributing to 40,000 early deaths a year in the UK alone. Air pollution (largely from road traffic) has been linked to both heart disease and lung problems. When we set this against the backdrop of London's failure to meet EU targets for air quality this gives us continued cause for concern.

The Cruise Liner Terminal (CLT) received final planning approval in October 2015, despite strong local criticism of the scheme's execution and in particular its negative impact on the air quality of the local environment. The diesel engines used to generate power whilst ships are at berth have been estimated to be the equivalent of several hundred idling diesel-powered heavy goods vehicles. Despite RBG's decision to approve this "dirty scheme", EGRA continue to fight on to ensure serious mitigation measures are implemented to offset the harmful effects of this development in a residential area.

We are campaigning for on-shore power, something that is a legal requirement in the United States and many of the ports of Western Europe. If it's good enough for our European and American friends, it should be good enough for Greenwich.

EGRA have also learned that a legal challenge to the CLT planning decision has been lodged by a resident of East Greenwich, who is represented by the Environmental Law firm Buxton & Partners.

EGRA's Air Quality team have been lobbying members of parliament and Mayoral candidates to try and bring RBG and the developers once again to the table to come up with a practical solution to the air quality issues raised by the Cruise liner terminal. More broadly EGRA continues to campaign for higher standards of air quality across the borough. Surveys carried out by the EGRA Air Quality team show that pollution levels consistently break guidelines. Several EGRA members 'adopted' an air quality tube to measure levels of pollution throughout East Greenwich. The EGRA air quality manifesto has been submitted to the Council and we look forward to working with RBG proactively in 2016 to address these issues.

Green Trafalgar Road

EGRA is not just about protest, however, and 2015 saw the implementation of the Green Trafalgar Road Project. This is an initiative that hopes to breathe new life into the physical landscape of a part of the Trafalgar Road, using trees and plants to enhance the environment. This was a project instigated by dedicated EGRA members, who sought funding and raised £6509 from local residents, businesses and developers. This project then won matched funding from the Mayor's Office to raise in excess of £25,000. In the next few months we shall see the results of the investment of these funds.

Looking ahead...

The year ahead looks to be another busy year for EGRA and the residents of East Greenwich. Many of the development schemes flagged above are extremely large scale and multi-year in execution. Consultation has begun on the Silvertown Tunnel River crossing, something the EGRA membership has voted against in its recent public meeting. Plans are also underway to convert the Greenwich Power Station to 24 hour full time operation from its current standby function. This in combination with an associated district heating scheme will have major implications for local and borough wide residents. Further planning applications may be made for development in East Greenwich (e.g. the Arches?) and we need to stay alert to these.

EGRA in 2016 will also aim to launch a Neighbourhood Plan. This is a local community planning framework that seeks to establish the local community in the planning process.

The decisions taken today concerning our local environment will impact all residents for the next generations. We want to make a positive contribution to the development of our community. We hope that you, our members, will continue to support The East Greenwich Resident Association in its bid to make sure that all our voices are heard.

We look forward to your continued support in 2016. Please help us in recruiting new members, and if you can, come along to our public meetings (held every four to six weeks at the Star and Garter - see Events <http://www.egra.london>). Please note we are always looking for new additions to our executive team so make your voice heard!

Yours sincerely,

East Greenwich Residents Association Executive Committee.

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