

# newsforum

The London Forum working to protect and improve the quality of life in London



The London Forum of  
Amenity and Civic Societies  
Founded 1988

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## Chairman's remarks

# The Planning System is failing Londoners

Democracy in decision making is breaking down.  
Can a new London Plan make a difference?



In the last issue I reported Urban Task Force comments on lack of affordable housing and exclusion of local representatives and community groups from the decision making process. The problems continue.

### Housing

Affordable housing in new developments in London is closer to 30% than the London Plan aim of 50%, with few affordable dwellings for families. The Mayor directs refusal of very few schemes. The ones he supports fail to meet the mix of housing needed by boroughs and often contain sub-standard affordable housing quality.

Excessive housing density is being approved. Two thirds of all permitted housing schemes over 15 units were above the 'appropriate' range in the London Plan, in many cases with active support of the Mayor. Very dense developments may not be sustainable. They are rarely context sensitive.

Problems arise where public transport, local jobs, social infrastructure, play space and access to retail, health, education and leisure facilities are lacking.

We must use this year's London Plan review to strengthen and improve policies for the future. A return to effective masterplanning is needed.

London's Housing Capacity Study demonstrated the homes we need can be achieved if the average density is at the mid-point of London Plan ranges. There are draft Plan alterations and new guidance.

Unfortunately, we are seeing decisions made now that seem to ignore planning policy.

### Planning decisions

Many people were concerned when the recommendation of a planning Inspector to refuse permission for the Vauxhall Tower was rejected by John Prescott.

Then came the recent decision to approve tall twin towers at Lots Road by Chelsea Creek. The inquiry Inspector concluded that the scheme would not conform to a dozen planning policies. He recommended refusal but that was overturned. John Prescott wrote that "the height of any new building should not necessarily be restricted by the height of other buildings in the area". It sounds like a basis for Hong Kong architecture in the capital and Tom Ball writes about this on page 2.

A year ago a large-scale development, Chiswick West, which would have been twice the suitable density for its location, was refused planning permission after an appeal inquiry. It had the Mayor's support. However, boroughs may find it more difficult now to have their decisions upheld.

### New powers for the Mayor

The Mayor wants to stop all that nonsense. He asked for new powers to influence local policies and to approve applications referred to him. The Government listened, and David Lewis reports our views on their consultation in more detail on page 3.

### Local democracy

Increasing the Mayor's planning powers under the circumstances above hardly seems to accord with ODPM publications about neighbourhood empowerment and the local:vision programme. The Government consultation on Local Strategic Partnerships also carried some mixed messages and a White Paper is expected soon on another reform of local government (see Helen Marcus' article on page 4).

A public inquiry can cost £10m but is it worth it if decisions are based on opinion rather than policies? Councils and residents may ask what is the point in devising policies to fulfil the Community Strategy, only to see them put to one side. Boroughs may not have the will or the funds to make and pursue their own decisions. They are being warned in writing by the Mayor, on some schemes he considers, that a Council planning refusal would result in him supporting the developer at an appeal inquiry.

It's a crucial time and we must fight for our democratic rights. If the content of this newsforum sounds like a wake-up call – it is!

**Peter Eversden** Chairman ■

## Is the Planning System failing London?

# Tall buildings – the rape of the community

It has never been more important to be vigilant in protecting our London against the increasing authoritarianism of the Mayor and the Government. A personal view by **Tom Ball**.

It is in my opinion a most regrettable outcome of the policies created by the Mayor for London, that towers of housing are not only considered by him to be desirable but essential. Towers of unthinkable heights are being proposed by developers, welcomed by the Mayor, while all who protest are 'trampled under foot'.

We have the most recent example at Lots Road, where despite the Inspector's report arising out of the Public Inquiry, the Secretary of State – John Prescott, overruled his Inspector and agreed with the Mayor, that 37 storeys and 25 storeys as proposed, are to be accepted. Where is there any respect for the wishes and concerns of the local community, or those who have a wider interest in the quality of life in London?

Previously we saw the same disrespect for local concerns at Vauxhall, where in a similar scenario, a 55 storey tower was given permission by Secretary of State John Prescott (see further comment on Deputy Prime Minister's attitude to planning in Newsbriefs). The Mayor's reaction in these cases could be said to be dictatorial, coupled with his alleged statement that such public inquiries are a waste of time and money since he knows best, otherwise he would not have created his policies!

Two points we should pay very great attention to, and take action where possible. The Mayor for London is seeking much greater powers over planning which amongst other things would reduce the opportunity for the community to object to proposals, let alone have an inquiry. He has already gone on public record that he knew public consultation over the extension of the Community Charge area, was a complete waste of time and money – but only because he did not want to know what citizens of London thought. The second is that at the same time as gaining acceptance for the Lots Road project, in east London, a number of tower blocks of flats were being blown up, to be replaced by low rise housing development – at the request of the community. We should remember that the Secretary of State is causing many structurally sound and some potentially highly desirable dwellings in the 'north' of England to be demolished.

It might be thought by the innocent, that the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), would look after

the interests of the community. How wrong can you be?. Their demonstrated concern is about "architecture", and very little about the "environment", while the community interest is not to be found; it is not their remit. And what about their concerns for urban or civic design. I doubt that they have once said that in the local context the tower is completely out of scale with the 'urban grain'.

I can't see the proposed 68 storey housing tower at Blackfriars Bridge being anything but a complete urban design rape of its surroundings. The disastrous escalation of towers is a result of overriding the community by the Secretary of State, when approval was given for the 1000 feet tall 'Shard' at London Bridge Station – a massive mixed use tower. The Mayor's advisor Richard Rogers told all that the quality of the architectural design overruled any other considerations, while CABE concerned themselves with how the building 'met the ground'. Singularly detailed architectural considerations only; nothing about the crude massing, the overblown size in relation to its context and city scape.

Convinced by Rogers – CABE, the Mayor for London, and the Secretary of State have been set on a course which means no community can be safe. Even the ODPM's recent Consultation Paper 'Planning Policy Statement on Housing' (PPS3) is a major threat where "residential gardens are defined as brownfield land" – you may not have known that! A developer will already have his eyes on your garden - and most certainly on allotments, playing fields and the nice area where you walk the dog!

The 'Community' have no funded organisation to champion its interests against such formidable odds – but remember who actually pays for the Mayor and Government. There is something about who pays the piper calls the tune! At best English Heritage has at times been a champion on Civic design and local environment aspects, but the Government prefers to fund CABE rather than EH, thereby reducing its abilities to act on our behalf. The fight for community interests in planning, urban and civic design, are fought by volunteers, as demonstrated by our Chairman Peter Eversden at Lots Road. Never has the threat to our local urban environments and the reduction in real democracy been greater.

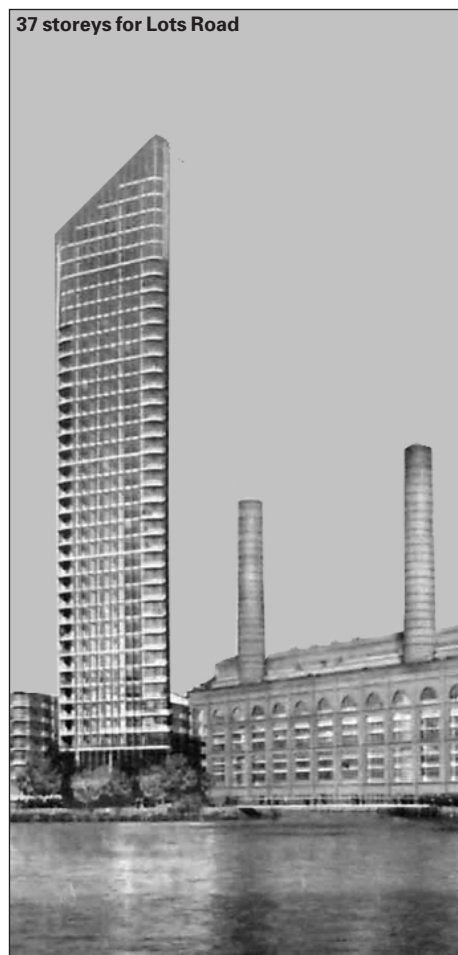
There are a considerable number of

*"Towers of unthinkable heights are being proposed by developers, welcomed by the Mayor, while all who protest are 'trampled under foot'."*

tower proposals, and more to come – not only along the Thames : Coin Street – 60 storey; two more at Vauxhall Cross; massive scheme at Waterloo Station; Elephant and Castle; Greenwich; etc etc – not to mention the City and Docklands. Watch the press and immediately let your Council know your objections.

Remember, that patch of recreation area where you walk the dog could be the next example of the rape of London – with major consequences to your quality of life ■

37 storeys for Lots Road



## The Mayor and the Assembly

# More powers for the Mayor?

by **David Lewis.**

Following a commitment in the Labour Party manifesto to review the powers of the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone made a pre-emptive bid for more powers in July 2005. The government published a consultation paper at the end of November, covering nine different policy areas and setting out a range of options. The London Forum has backed some proposals, but strongly opposes others.

The government wants to transfer to the Mayor the role the Government Office for London has hitherto played in drawing up a housing strategy for London and distributing Housing Capital Allocations. We support that, as a desirable rationalisation; and believe the Mayor should be free to make the distribution without seeking the approval of Ministers.

We also back the Mayor's view that there should be a single waste management authority for London. That does not mean we back what he has so far said about waste management; the London Forum has criticised the draft Alterations to that part of the London Plan, which will be the subject of an Examination in Public later this year. But there is a pressing need for more effective policies and more effective organisation to increase the proportions of waste recycled and phase out dumping in the ground. We believe this requires a unified approach across London, and that giving the Mayor executive responsibility for managing wastes will ensure he gives this issue the necessary priority and takes a realistic approach; the boroughs would remain responsible for collecting wastes.

We are opposed, however, to giving the Mayor sweeping new powers over planning. At the moment boroughs have to refer a limited category of large planning applications to the Mayor, who can direct them to refuse an application. The Mayor wants to be consulted on a wider range of planning applications, and have power to direct the borough to grant planning permission. He also wants a power of direction over borough development plans. And he is seeking a review of the government's role in the planning of London, although he has not been specific about changes in that respect. The government's consultation paper floats the further possibility that some 'strategic' planning applications might go straight to the Mayor.

The London Forum wants a review of the way the Mayor exercises his present powers.

We want to make sure he keeps his role in promoting development separate from his quasi-judicial responsibility in planning. We are concerned at the lack of effective scrutiny by the London Assembly in this respect. We have come down strongly against the draconian new powers the Mayor is seeking, or any fundamental change in the present balance of responsibilities between the Greater London Authority, the boroughs and the government. There is no precedent anywhere for the proposed powers of direction — they would sweep away legal safeguards and democratic accountability, and sow the seeds for bitter conflicts in future.

We have emphasised that planning responsibilities for waste facilities should be kept separate from responsibility for waste management. The locations selected for waste facilities must make sense in terms of land use planning and comply with general planning criteria. The Mayor's strategic planning responsibilities already cover waste. We are strongly opposed to giving him powers to allocate actual sites for new waste facilities and decide the related planning applications.

The London Forum also opposes the Mayor's bid to take responsibility for training from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This has not been properly thought through. We back moves to improve co-operation and co-ordination between the LSC, employers and the economic development role of the London Development Agency. But the LSC's responsibility for adult training needs to remain attached to its responsibility for training and education at 16-19, including funding of school Sixth Forms.

There are some other fields in which the London Forum thinks the Mayor should take more responsibility. The strategy he produced for London's use of energy ought to become a statutory document, linked to his other Strategies. His key instrument for implementing it is Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Sustainable Design and Construction. This was originally scheduled to appear in April 2004; it has now been promised for this spring, and we hope it will not be further delayed. But issuing SPG may not be enough. We think consideration should be given to enabling the Mayor to set higher standards of energy efficiency for all new buildings in London than would be required by the national Building Regulations.

We also believe the Mayor's existing

statutory duty to promote improvements in the health of Londoners should be reinforced by requiring him to produce and keep under review, jointly with the new London Strategic Health Authority, a Health Improvement Strategy for London. As Health Adviser to the Mayor, the Regional Director of Public Health should be appointed jointly by him and by the London Strategic Health Authority.

In the case of culture the two points the London Forum has emphasised are the need to reflect a wide range of viewpoints and the vital role of non-professionals in the community in organising and undertaking cultural and sporting activities.

This is a summary of key points from a more detailed submission by the London Forum; until our website is commissioned, an electronic copy of that can be obtained by emailing [email@londonforum.org.uk](mailto:email@londonforum.org.uk)

The Mayor's proposals are on his website, and the government's consultation paper is on the ODPM website ■

### Assembly calls LDA to account

An all party resolution calling on the London Development Agency (LDA) Board to conduct its business in as open and transparent a manner as possible in order to gain the trust and confidence of Londoners, has been agreed by the London Assembly. It accuses the LDA, the Mayor's key development body, of not being open with Londoners in its handling of London's plans.

Sally Hamwee said that most of its meetings were held behind closed doors and, unlike other GLA bodies, it does not even share with the Assembly the budget submission it makes to the Mayor.

Information should be provided openly and meetings held in public, unless there is some major reason dictating otherwise. With the LDA it seems to be the reverse. It was particularly worrying given their involvement with the Olympics. Londoners need to know how public money is being spent.

Seconding the motion, Bob Blackman said that it is difficult to get information from the LDA. Selected external observers are allowed to attend their meetings, but most Assembly members are excluded ■

## Local Strategic Partnerships – what will they mean for the future of London?

# LSPs and the future of local government

The government recently published a consultation paper, Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future. In addition a report has been published drawing together and commenting on, key findings from the National Evaluation of LSPs. In this personal view **Helen Marcus** a member of Camden's LSP during its first two years, examines the new proposals.

A "consultation" has just taken place on government proposals for a further review of the role and future of LSPs.

The inconsistency and muddle that permeates this document raises mounting concern. As the powers of local authorities are inexorably draining away this paper can only be seen as a further step towards the undermining of any semblance of democratic accountability begun by Local Government Act 2000.

LSPs will become involved in the planning and environment issues that most of the London Forum member Societies concentrate on, as is made clear by paragraphs 60–64, Local Development Frameworks. The aim is: "To ensure that the (Local Development framework) LDF can become the spatial expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy". The RTPI has apparently been commissioned by OPDM to provide advice for LSP partners on "how to make the most of opportunities presented by reforms to the planning system".

The LSP Evaluation\* identifies: "tensions between conservation and development in one place, dealing with conflicts between competitiveness and cohesion in another." Or put another way, as we are beginning to discover to our cost, sanctioning a developers' charter to fill London with tower blocks and cover the country with concrete, despite warnings by the experts that what they are doing will worsen environmental damage.

At a meeting held at Jeff Rooker's office as long ago as June 2004, for voluntary sector representatives from across London, Lord Rooker (Minister for Regeneration and Regional Development) stated, and I quote from the minutes: "Government wants to see LSPs continue – are currently reviewing their role, which may possibly change to the LSP becoming a 'delivery agency'".

So it is no surprise to read in the appropriately Orwellian paragraph number 101 of this paper: "As all LSPs begin to move towards a greater delivery co-ordination role, as opposed to operating in a purely advisory capacity", and again at Paragraph 72: "As LSPs move from advisory bodies to commissioning bodies – effective governance arrangements become increasingly vital".

Thus this paper is not a consultation. They have already decided. "Delivery co-ordination" is simply a euphemism: they mean "delivery".

Yet such is the confused thinking behind this document, that this is contradicted at Para 109 which tells us that: "LSPs are voluntary unincorporated partnerships which do not discharge any statutory functions... we have no plans to make LSPs statutory bodies".

Which is it? How can unelected, unaccountable bodies with no statutory functions commission, coordinate, much less deliver statutory services? What democratic mandate is there for moving LSPs from advisory bodies to commissioning bodies?

Para 95 admits that: "Concerns have been expressed by non-NRF LSPs about representation of... the voluntary sector" – that is to say the majority of citizens up and down the country. The LSP Evaluation\* identifies "a lack of clarity on a number of aspects including the accountability of the LSP to partners, and the accountability of partners to the LSP, as well as wider public accountability." But then we are told at paragraph 82 that nevertheless: "LSPs are best placed to decide the partnership arrangements that are most appropriate to their local circumstances".

More contradiction is revealed over the role of local councillors. Paragraph 122 assures us that: "Elected members of local authorities have a unique role in carrying responsibility for the overall balance of governance... and being directly accountable to citizens. As such their support to the LSP and Community Strategy process is crucial to achieving success." It is immediately contradicted by paragraph 123 which admits that "the precise role of elected members of the local authority, both the executive and backbenchers, is currently not understood".

At paragraph 126 there is even a suggestion that of members of Parliament should become involved. Yet MPs have always been insistent that it is not their role to get involved in local government.

The document is shot through with the inevitable meaningless "commitments" to "empowerment of local people", and "greater involvement of citizens and communities in the improvement of policies and services", which have become a such a hallmark of this government.

Thus: "LSPs help to ensure the views of neighbourhoods... can influence strategic local service delivery" (para 3).

*"This paper is a further step towards the undermining of democratic accountability begun by Local Government Act 2000."*

*"The Government has also set out its commitment to greater involvement of citizens and communities in the improvement of policies and services..."* (para 9).

*"...provide opportunities for neighbourhood engagement"* (para 54). And on and on as if by constantly repeating it, it will eventually become true.

The truth is that after 5 years of this, things have only got worse. Local people have no powers and even the ability of their elected local councillors to intervene on their behalf has been removed. It was clear from a recent meeting of my local voluntary sector Network that people felt things had got worse and that the official voluntary sector representatives on the Camden LSP were still being marginalised.

Without a trace of irony, Para. 128 recommends: "It is crucial that local residents are involved in a coherent way..." How, when many local authorities won't set up neighbourhood forums to facilitate this and the government insists that it is not their job to make them. Yet Annex A 4 of this paper admits that: "Sustainable communities offer: a sense of place..."

The many Societies like ours: registered charities with constitutions, proper elections to committees and AGMs, who have that "sense of place", and know their areas well, are only too willing to be involved "in a coherent way". But when they try to make a contribution they are at best ignored and at worst insulted by being labelled as "usual suspects", or "unrepresentative", even, in my personal experience, by officers from GOL. Having attended national conferences while I was a member of Camden's LSP, I was struck by the unanimity of dissatisfaction on this issue expressed by people from all over the country and from all levels of the voluntary and community sector.

It is worth noting that many local amenity groups have far more members than any of the political parties either locally or nationally. Why are their views therefore deemed less representative than those of the politicians?

Many local councillors and MPs have held their posts for decades – does that not make them “usual suspects” too?

The LSP Evaluation\* recognises this problem, recommending that “*More effective involvement of the voluntary and community sectors would be enhanced by more consistent messages from government departments to their local agencies*”.

Claims are made at paragraphs 74 and 108 about: “*The local authority’s democratic mandate and accountability*” and that “*The LSP is accountable... to local people through the democratic process*”.

How, when the introduction of LA2000 has destroyed any accountability? The LSP bypasses the democratic process: elected councillors have no role and no power. Most people have a pretty hazy idea at best of what Local government is about. They do not even know that the LSP exists. How can it possibly be accountable to them?

This is acknowledged in the LSP Evaluation report\* which says: “*A key issue is the relationship of the LSP to local democratic processes, where the lynchpin role is that of the local councillor, yet many are not closely connected to, or in sympathy with, the LSP, and it is not clear that even where (mostly senior) councillors are actively and positively engaged with the LSP that they necessarily prioritise issues of democratic accountability.*”

The phrase “democratic mandate”, is trotted out unthinkingly as justification for everything. What democratic mandate, on the basis of 30% turnouts in local government elections, declining membership of political parties and a ruling party in government that holds power on a minority vote? What accountability in Local Authorities dominated by one party, where the “Cabinet” need listen to no-one except themselves, and the other local councillors now have no discernible role?

As two recent reports, the one by Richard Rogers, (mentioned in our Chairman’s report), and Helen Kennedy’s report for the Power Commission, suggest, the legitimacy of that democratic process is itself in question.

The LSP Evaluation\* acknowledges that: “*The issue of party politics may also need more attention in order to improve cross-party working in relation to the LSP.*” However it then goes on to say:

“*To be effective LSPs need to be more clearly related to the management and*

*political management systems of local authorities.*” But that simply takes us back to the all-powerful party political Cabinet.

The muddled thinking inherent in all this is exemplified by the next piece of prize-winning jargon from the LSP Evaluation\*:

“*At the same time, there is a need to balance the democratic accountability of councillors with other accountability mechanisms such as other elected (eg MPs) and non-elected partners (eg community representatives, chambers of commerce, voluntary umbrella organisations.)*”

Such confused thinking shows how unsafe these proposals are. Would it not have been better to have clarified all this before introducing these measures?

The truth is that another layer of bureaucracy has been inserted between the government and the governed, diminishing what was left of any notional democracy still further.

I can do no worse than end with another quote from the document itself: “*Research\*\* conducted with LSPs in London highlighted a lack of clarity, for many LSPs, about their overriding purpose*” (paragraph 35)

You have been warned!

\* *LSP Evaluation - Executive Summary a report drawing together key findings from the National Evaluation of LSPs. Jointly commissioned by three ODPM research divisions (LRGRU, NRU and RAE) and the Department for Transport (DfT), the first 3 years of the programme has been undertaken by the Universities of Warwick, Liverpool John Moores, West of England, Bristol and the Office for Public Management. (March 2002 – March 2005).*

\*\* *LSPs and Neighbourhood renewal in London: the story so far. Association of London Government. 2003* ■

## Tall Tales?

The Deputy Prime Minister makes his views clear at a CABE conference.

### Inspectors’ decisions

In a recent speech the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, said “I’ve only gone against the Inspector’s decision in 10% of the cases which I decide. I take this responsibility seriously and when I open a planning case file, I always look for what the advisers say. I look for CABE’s advice... you have been set up to be the Government’s adviser on architecture, urban design and public space. So it’s frustrating that, once CABE has offered a view to a planning inquiry, it can’t offer me supplementary advice when I make a decision. I have to rely on what you have already said publicly, which may not address my questions or concerns when I come to take the decision, weighing all the evidence. This makes it even more important that CABE intervenes early on in the planning process and states its case comprehensively and clearly.”

Mr. Prescott made this statement in the face of widespread criticism of his decision to overrule the Planning Inspector’s upholding of refusals of tall buildings at Vauxhall in April 2005 and, this January, at the Lot’s Road power station. The latter was covered in an article in the Evening Standard and in the Financial Times in February, in which the London Forum was quoted as registering its dismay.

The Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are considering seeking a judicial review of the decision. This was followed the next day by another article relating to the prospect of a scheme for three new tower blocks, the highest 460 feet high, at Waterloo. The Forum was once more quoted as expressing its concern that the previous two decisions by the DPM would make it more difficult to resist proposals such as these which clearly go against established London plan policies. available at [www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163048](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163048)

### What about water?

A correspondent to *The Times* on 1st February asks how the Deputy Prime Minister can reconcile the massive proposed scale of development in the South-East with the likely acute water shortage from which the region is suffering and is likely to suffer on an ever-growing scale ■

## Spotlight on a member society

# Spotlight on Highgate Society

Going on 40 – and still vigorous in defence of a real village.

Unlike many London amenity societies, the Highgate Society was founded not to defeat a threat to its local environment, but on the strength of having just seen off such a threat. The successful battle to prevent transport minister Ernest Marples' scheme for designated lorry routes through Highgate - northwards up Highgate Hill and through the historic Village, southwards along traffic-burdened Archway Road – had sparked off a remarkable explosion of community spirit. Leading activists therefore concluded they ought to make the most of it by founding a permanent organisation to stand guard over the Highgate environment and fight threats great and small.

## A wide range of activities

That was in 1966, and the society – now "going on 40" – has been standing guard (and launching tactical defensive sorties) ever since. It covers a notably wider range of activities than most London Forum member organisations, from carol singing, life drawing and running a Monday social club for seniors to publishing a Good Tradesman Guide and publishing the highly professional Buzz, which is as much a general interest magazine as a campaigning newssheet. The core and bedrock of its work is, nonetheless, the defence of Highgate, and that task the society's council largely devolves to its environment committee, chaired until recently by London Forum activist Michael Hammerson.

"Until recently" because Michael, having devoted much of his spare time over the last 20 years to defending the part of London where he grew up and went to school, thought it right to give others the chance to take up the burden – which they did, but managed to draw him in too. A vice-president of the society, he is now secretary of the environment committee and, he says resignedly, doing as much as ever.

## Dealing with four boroughs

One of the reasons for Highgate's heavy workload is that its territory falls into no fewer than four London boroughs – the bulk in Camden and Haringey with smaller areas in Islington and Barnet. This means there are four sets of planning applications to monitor, four sets of planning policies, and separate – often conflicting – borough policies on a whole range of issues, too often creating anomalies across borough boundaries. The society has

around 1,300 members whose subscriptions (at £19 per family, among the highest among London Forum societies) enable it to rent a headquarters in South Grove, in the heart of the Village, from its neighbour the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution. Here it holds meetings, keeps files and runs advice surgeries every Saturday on planning and related problems.

## More than just the Village

But Michael Hammerson is keen to stress that the Highgate the society fights for is more than just the Village. Its area of interest and membership stretches from Ken Wood in the west to the edges of Crouch End in the east, from the fringes of East Finchley to the north to Archway tube station in the south. And what it strives to protect is not just buildings and streetscapes but green spaces – including Hampstead Heath, Highgate and Queens Woods, the Parkland Walk created out of a disused railway line, and a couple of extensive golf courses. It also includes names. These are, says Hammerson, as much a part of the history and character of a place as its buildings. He therefore takes considerable pride in the return to their traditional names of three pubs whose owners had previously abandoned them – one of them, The Wrestlers, dating from 1548, became a Slug & Lettuce for a fortnight before conceding defeat.

## Battle against roads and traffic

The society's battle against roads and traffic did not stop with the abandonment of the lorry route scheme. There followed a plan to turn the Archway Road through Highgate into a motorway-style dual carriageway, demolishing all the homes on one side. Again widespread local opposition forced abandonment. More recently the society has been at odds with Transport for London. TfL, in an ill-conceived attempt to meet complaints about tree felling, erected an acoustic screen which is both an eyesore and, says Hammerson, ineffective. One notable success was the dismantling of a tortuous 1960s one-way system. The society would now like to persuade Haringey and Camden to install well-designed "gateways" to the Village to reinforce its identity and further calm traffic.

The high street contains many attractive old buildings, predominantly Georgian and Victorian but, hiding behind a decorous

Georgian front, at least one timber-framed structure of medieval origin. One cross the society's planning team has to bear is dealing with a few property owners who are convinced they know better than town planners, conservationist and English Heritage and proceed to act on their ignorance in breach of the law. Another is a recent reorganisation of Haringey's planning team which moved all the officers with Highgate knowledge and expertise to other areas. Another is the seeming waywardness of English Heritage officers who have had listed a decent but unexceptional 1930s building but turned down historic buildings of much more importance to the conservation area.

## Problems with developers

Another problem is some developers' and architects' preconception about amenity societies. "They assume we are against anything new," says Hammerson. In reality, he explains, the Highgate Society would like more good modern buildings, but the quality of much new build is too often second-rate. High profile architect Ron Arad was angry with the society after it successfully opposed his plans for a "space house" in Courtenay Avenue. "We told him we would like to see it built somewhere else where it didn't involve damaging demolition". The defence of the village has also involved fighting off development proposals on the "Highgate bowl", an area of sloping, wooded land at the back of the High Street which, seen from the north and east, frames the village in green. Hammerson believes that setting is now secure.

Indeed, contrary to what critics like Arad seem to believe, much of the society's time and effort is spent it trying to facilitate development of the right kind. An outstanding example is Athlone House in Hampstead Lane, recently remodelled and developed after hospital use ceased. "We got on really well with the developers and the architects, David Chipperfield; we got a good scheme and a hectare of land donated to Hampstead Heath".

Protecting and reinforcing the character of an area means, for the Highgate Society as for most of London's amenity societies, more than just the "hardware" of the place. The proliferation of estate agencies – now 16 in Highgate, 13 of them in the Village alone,



## Highgate Society

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**w** [www.highgatesociety.com](http://www.highgatesociety.com)

is of increasing concern, especially given a recent planning approval for change of use of one unit from retail. without notice. Defence of the character of a place has to do with the way buildings are used – keeping a mixture of useful shops and local businesses, for instance, and avoiding the “clone high street” effect.

But it is also about maintaining the facilities that make life agreeable and convenient for residents and visitors. Camden's closure without notice of public lavatories in Pond Square, conveniently at the heart of the village, is certainly a serious abridgement of practical “amenity” and quite the reverse of real “public convenience”. Aware that other local authorities have steadily been closing loos to cut the expense of maintaining them, the society is nonetheless arguing strongly that this is a cut too far, and is now hopeful that that they will soon be reopened. The vanishing loo syndrome should be strongly resisted wherever councils try it on ■

*“It strives  
to protect not  
just buildings  
and streetscapes  
but green spaces  
– including  
Hampstead  
Heath,  
Highgate and  
Queens Woods,  
and the  
Parkland Walk.”*

10a, the Society's headquarters



## Society profile – Highgate Society



**Age:** coming up to 40; born 1966.

**Circumstances of birth:** the people of Highgate, having defeated transport minister Ernest Marples' scheme for lorry routes through the area, decided to build on the community spirit that *ad hoc* campaign had unleashed to establish a permanent environmental watchdog.

**Biggest successes:** (1) Defeat of a subsequent scheme for a motorway-style highway. (2) Fighting off successive attempts to build on the “Highgate bowl” – the wooded hillside sloping down to the north of Highgate High Street. (3) Keeping the high street looking – and working - like a real village centre. (4) Successfully negotiating on the development of Athlone House, a redundant hospital, to avoid damage to the environment and achieve gains for the community. (5) Getting owners of three local pubs to reinstate their traditional names. (6) Working with the Heath & Hampstead Society to protect Hampstead Heath.

**Biggest disappointments/ frustrations:** (1) Dealing with four different planning authorities, often with conflicting policies. (2) Haringey's recent planning reorganisation, with officers with Highgate expertise and knowledge drafted to other areas. (3) Reluctance of English Heritage to list important buildings while eccentrically listing less worthwhile ones. (4) Coping with a huge workload of planning applications in four different boroughs.

**Present preoccupations:** (1) Proliferation of estate agents businesses at the expense of shops. (2) Increase in paving over of front gardens for parking. (3) Spread of the “clone high street” effect. (4) A recent tendency to merge several dwellings into one – worrying because of a desperate shortage of affordable housing.

**Working details:** The society's council chaired by Robin Fairlie presides over a wide range of society activities from walks and talks to carol singing in Pond Square, community services to water colour painting, but traditional amenity society functions are bedrock. These are largely devolved to the society's Environment Committee and its five sub-committees, covering planning, open spaces, transport & traffic, litter and graffiti, and future projects. The society has its own headquarters in heart of village, and publishes substantial, wide-ranging quarterly magazine, Buzz. Membership; around 1,300; subscriptions £19 family, £14 individual, £9 senior.

**Special characteristics:** Highgate Village retains a rare village atmosphere and feel, with buildings from medieval and Georgian onwards; but the society covers and fights for a wider Highgate, including the traffic-battered Archway Road.

**Last word:** “We want to make Highgate High Street into a much more shopper- and pedestrian-friendly environment which will attract a wider range of individual traders rather than multiples.”

## The new Licensing Laws

# Pub Wars

How one Society dealt with applications under the new Licensing Law.

By **Tony Hillier**, Chairman of the Heath & Hampstead Society.

Realising that hard work, expertise and vigilance would be needed to respond effectively, a small working group was set up. We briefed ourselves thoroughly on the new Licensing Bill. Our aim was to give members and others timely warning in areas potentially affected by applications, and to identify where the risk of further late night disruption to the peace and quiet of residents might come from, whether existing trouble makers or premises looking for flexibility to compete in future or simply to enhance their potential sales value to a new owner. We worked closely with our local authority, Camden, benefiting from their excellent early briefings.

Early experience in spotting applications on the Camden website and in local newspapers, composing effective letters of objection compliant with a quite complex new law, and working within the quite intricate regulations covering the preparation for and conduct of the 15 minutes of punchy, spoken representation needed for the Camden Licensing Panels, was disseminated to the dozen local residents' associations. Around twenty applications to extend hours have been responded to since April 2005 with some success; around 250 residents so far have played an active role. We have only objected to applications when requested to do so by members or neighbours. At six hearings residents clubbed together to appoint and pay for a professional representative. The Society joined in two that we considered particularly troublesome and central.

### 'Conversions'

Many premises have either applied to continue their current licence conditions under a process known as "conversion", which neighbours were not permitted to object to. Others failed to apply on time and had to apply for a new licence after 24 November 2005, to continue trading lawfully, at which time local objections could be heard. If the on-going operations of licensed premises cause serious nuisance to neighbours, whether under new, converted or varied licence conditions, the local authority (LA) can be asked to "Review" the licence and modify the conditions to prevent such nuisance. It is recommended that you wait at least six months to build a suitable case before doing

so. In some cases it will be better to wait until this summer to collect really telling evidence.

### How to Prepare a Case

An application for Review must be based on well supported, hard evidence and documented history is crucial in preparing the case for Review. It is extremely important to take a look also at the terms and conditions of all previous planning approvals and rejections for any premises being reviewed. Under the new law each case (i.e. premises) must be considered on its own merits. No concerns about your area in general or, say, your High Street in particular, will be listened to.

Residents must keep written and witnessed diaries in the official format which are duly sent and reported, incident by incident, to LA's Environmental Health Officers (EHO). If the worry is crime and disorder inside or outside a pub, restaurant or bar, an up-to-date record of past formal complaints to the police must also be kept, sent in writing and produced at the hearing. Individual letters (not petitions) of unacceptable personal experience and, where appropriate, photos, are essential. Formal measurements of noise levels can be very helpful, and can be requested from local Authority Environmental Health Officers or done by individual householders.

### 'Future risks'

It is, however, the future risks that Licensing Panels have to make their decisions about. Their duty is to assess the probability that public nuisance or crime and disorder will not be prevented (this sounds tortuous, but that is what the law says). It is to these, therefore, that your argument must be addressed. It is important to know how long a manager has been there, how experienced he or she is, how long present owners have been in place and how much capital they have spent on refurbishment. In particular the management's record of genuine responsiveness to residential neighbours' proper objections and concerns had a big impact on the decisions of the Licensing Panels in Camden. They looked at what type of customers are attracted, how they are controlled by management, and up to what time of night. Applications have an Operating Schedule and space for the applicant to say how they address the risks

of public nuisance and crime and disorder. These of course need to be monitored by neighbours up to the time of the Review.

Some big companies like Mitchells and Butlers and the Laurel Pub Company have hoped, unsuccessfully, to rely on the fine words of their corporate policies, rather than actual performance on the ground. In some cases managers have shown weakness in controlling their customers.

### Alternative Legal Approach

If householders are not able to get satisfaction from a Review, they may still be able to seek private redress for protection against public nuisance by suing the owners of adjacent or nearby premises under Section 82 of the Environment Protection Act 1990.

### What is a Public Nuisance?

The obvious ones that break the EHO statutory noise limits: noise or smells from machinery, such as air conditioners or extractors, bottles binned outside late at night or very early in the morning; deliveries or rubbish collections that take place during unsocial hours. Late, loud conversation in the street outside your house can seem intolerable. By 11.30pm pretty well everyone wants to get to sleep; it is as simple as that. The ideal situation is to persuade your local to close any garden or outside terrace at 10pm and any inside licensed area at 11pm for alcohol, refreshments and any form of entertainment, all of which are noisy. That is after all the latest acceptable time for normal residential neighbours to be disturbed. Provided you make a strong case, and have made concerted efforts to review your proper concerns directly with the licensee, local Licensing Panels should show sympathy, within reason, to protecting residential amenity, if the licensee has ignored your efforts to get proper consideration.

However, one of the greatest causes of nuisance is largely outside the control of even good managers: customers going through the streets looking for their cars or calling taxis after public transport has shut down. It is very important, but can of course be quite difficult, to verify which premises the offenders have come from.

### The Need for Strong Local Associations

To do all this effectively needs a good street or block organisation, and if you do not already have one, you are strongly advised to put



## Pub wars Continued

together an Association to undertake these tasks collectively. This can help tremendously in spreading the work, expertise (and sometimes legal financial) load. It is also helpful in confronting your local licensee and his or her bosses. There is definite strength in numbers.

### A Good Neighbour Award for the Good Guys

Against this background it is particularly gratifying to report that some local premises elected to respect the residential quiet enjoyment of their neighbours. They did not apply for extended licence hours and made consistent and effective efforts to persuade customers to leave quietly.

We have considered the idea of starting a Good Neighbour Award, based on comments by local associations, and some sort of scoring system to encourage residents to take their custom to the good guys.

### Local authority support

We were fortunate that Camden responded strongly to local concern on this particular issue. Their Licensing Team were courteous, helpful and efficient in dealing with the continuing massive burden of applications. They have of course made some mistakes, but they have dealt well with the huge burden placed on them by Central Government without receiving adequate financial resources. No doubt we the local tax payers will be called upon to make up any short fall. This will be in addition to the huge and in some cases legally expensive efforts we are being forced to make, simply to stay in the same place as far as our peace and quiet are concerned.

### Conclusion

The traditional closing times made complete sense and many people in Hampstead feel they have to be restored on a case by case basis, whichever legal route is followed to get there. In some instances where management continues to be lax, hours may actually have to be reduced. The argument used by defenders of the new legislation, that extending pub leaving times will spread the burden on police and deter drunkenness is deception or at best delusion on the part of the drinks lobby. 'Later hours' simply extend often unacceptable nuisance into unacceptably late hours ■

## Orbairail – a key transport project

# What Chance Orbairail?

by **David Lewis.**

A key transport project, mentioned in policy 3C.11 of the London Plan but with no date for completion, is Orbairail. All the attention and investment has normally gone to the railway routes radiating from central London. Orbairail will link and upgrade the Cinderella lines that encircle inner London: the North, East, South and West London Lines. At the moment these have substandard stations, relatively infrequent trains, poor connections with other routes and modes, and often inadequate capacity at peak periods. Improving them will ease pressure on public transport in central London and make a number of town centres and regeneration areas more accessible.

Some pieces are falling into place. The East London Line from Shoreditch to New Cross and New Cross Gate, previously part of the Underground, is being converted to a metro-style Overground service, and extended to Dalston Junction in the north and Crystal Palace and West Croydon in the south. Completion is scheduled for June 2010.

In February it was announced that Transport for London (TfL) has taken responsibility for the North and West London Lines (between Stratford and Richmond/Clapham Junction) and other inner suburban services hitherto operated by Silverlink. These will be known as the North London Railway, and will be covered by a new franchise granted from November 2007. The Mayor has promised additional staff at stations, and that Oystercards will be accepted. Over the next five years TfL's plans include new trains and £25 million of station improvements.

Meanwhile, Network Rail, which owns and controls the lines, has been consulting on a draft Cross London Route Utilisation

Strategy to accommodate both passengers and freight up to 2016, and the London Forum has responded to that. We have criticised the absence of any discussion of how the different orbital services will connect with each other, and how the revamped East London Line will fit in. This is a glaring omission in relation to phase 2 for the East London Line, which (although not yet programmed) will extend it to Highbury & Islington in the north (over the North London Line) and to Clapham Junction in the south (over the South London Line).

The good news is that TfL and Network Rail seem able to agree that services will be more frequent, with a total of 5-6 trains an hour on the West London Line and 8 trains an hour between Stratford and Willesden Junction. On the central section of the East London Line there will be 12 trains an hour. But no changes are proposed to the twice an hour South London Line, except to divert it at the western end from Victoria to Clapham Junction.

The London Forum welcomes the major improvements TfL is planning, and we shall press for a firm commitment to phase 2 of the East London Line project. But the potential of Orbairail will only be realised when there are high-quality orbital services on all sides of inner London, with attractive stations and either through trains or easy interchanges ■

## 'Shanghai-on-Thames?'

### Ellis Woodman attacks the Mayor's high-rise policy

A seven-page article in *Building Design* for November 11th by Ellis Woodman launched a fierce attack on the Mayor's high-rise policy, calling it 'fuzzy and fragmented' and in danger of turning London into Shanghai-on-Thames. He holds the 2002 London Plan responsible for transforming the sky over the capital;

into 'gold rush territory' since there is no city-wide plan to address the impact of tall buildings on the skyline. Though the plan identifies broad locations where tall buildings might be encouraged, it is only a policy, not a plan, and there is no vision of what London might look like in 20 years' time ■

## Round the Societies

# Round the Societies

A round up of news from our member societies.

By **George Parish.**

### Restoration

The Enfield Preservation Society reports that at long last progress is being made towards the restoration of Broomfield, an important Grade II\* Listed Building which featured in a successful BBC television documentary three years ago but is still little more than a scaffolded shell. A project planning grant application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to part cover the cost of employing consultants to prepare all the necessary requirements for a full application for a Lottery grant for repairing the house.

### Local Agenda 21

The Finchley Society has appealed for volunteers to conduct a survey of front gardens in Barnet to record the extent to which grass and trees are being replaced by hard-standing, with consequent effects of water run-off, flooding and loss of local character.

### Ally Pally for sale

Not quite for sale actually, but the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association reports that an advertisement inviting indications of interest in buying the lease of Alexandra Palace has appeared in the UK property press. The Park is not for sale but "a management and/or maintenance arrangement of the parkland may be considered on condition that public access is maintained."

### A Teulon masterpiece

The Heath and Hampstead Society is strongly supporting the appeal by the St. Stephen's Restoration and Preservation Trust to complete the works needed to restore St. Stephen's, Pond Street, and open it to the community. The Grade I Listed Church on the corner of Rosslyn Hill and Pond Street is a prominent local landmark and is regarded as one of the most important works of its architect, Samuel Teulon, with a particularly fine interior.

### New River

The Amwell Society circulated with its December newsletter copies of Islington Council's guide to the New River Conservation Area, which was in part subsidised by the Society. The full colour fold-out leaflet illustrates the wide range of listed buildings in the area, from the C18 and early C19 New River and Lloyd Baker estates to Lubetkin's Spa Green and Bevin Court. The special character of the area is explained and guidance is given on when to seek planning permission and Conservation Area consent.

### Sustainable suburbs

The Bedford Park Society's annual Betjeman lecture was given last November by Professor Sir Peter Hall, who lived in Bedford Park from 1973 to 1984 and served on the Society's Committee. His subject was the Victorian suburb as a sustainable model of urban development for the 21st century.

### Croydon towers

The Croydon Society's journal, "Croydon Focus", will never win a media award but it does have a picture cover. The Spring 2006 issue depicts Lunar House, perhaps Croydon's best-known building, and asks whether the next generation of tower blocks, some of them twice as high, will be any more acceptable.

### Care in the community

The Putney Society is unusual among amenity societies in having a Community Panel as one of its working groups, covering such issues as postal services and hospitals. This Panel has recently concluded that the impending changes to postal charges are a recipe for confusion and disaster and that extended licensing hours are having an equally disastrous effect on hospitals, extending A&E "rush hours" to as late as 4am.

### BedZed

One of the two winners of the Sutton and Cheam Society's 2005 Design Awards was BedZed (the Beddington Zero Energy Development), a Peabody housing scheme designed to demonstrate how high density sustainable development can be achieved. It has won many other awards but is controversial locally, some seeing it at best as a useful reminder of how we may all soon be forced to live if we do not solve our energy problems.

### John Evelyn tercentenary

The Wimbledon Society was founded in 1903 as the John Evelyn Society and so is taking a special interest in the tercentenary of this pioneer horticulturalist and celebrated gardener. The Society has made a Spring visit to Wotton House with its Italianate garden which Evelyn designed on his return from ten years travelling in Europe and has invited Gillian Darley to address it in November, when her new biography of Evelyn is to be published.

### Crystal Palace Matters

The Winter 2005/6 issue of Crystal Palace Matters is a relaunch of a publication that has been intermittently available since 1980. It is one of two journals published by the Crystal Palace Foundation and has a strong historical emphasis.

Of particular interest to Croydon readers is a profile of Audrey Hammond, a well known local artist and community activist. Her beautiful book, "Crystal Palace – Norwood Heights: A Pictorial Record", published by the Croydon Society and the Crystal Palace Triangle Community Association in 1988, is still available from the Foundation's shop, together with a range of her greeting cards.

### Sir Peter Hall comments on 'densification'

Following a talk to residents in West London Sir Peter Hall made the following comments in an article for *Regeneration & Renewal*. 'Currently, London is unique: the only part of the country where a democratically elected authority has powers not only to make a regional plan but to enforce it through development control powers. ...the Mayor can reject proposals the boroughs want, but he can't impose decisions they don't like. Ken would now like that extra power. And the implications are momentous. Ken's plan, specifies huge increases in housing: 458,000 new homes over twenty years, of which 50% should be "affordable". This can only be achieved by massive densification. What's emerging here is Shirley Porter in reverse – this time legally: Ken will not soon be decamping to some non-extraditable destination. As pennies drop in voters' heads, watch for this to emerge as the big issue in the mayoral election of 2008 ■

# newsbriefs

Some key issues of concern to note.

## Don't ditch the Routemaster

A poll by the Policy Exchange suggests that 90% of Londoners, including 87% of disabled respondents, who prefer the help of a conductor, want the Routemaster brought back. Only 15% thought bendy buses were better, and 57% worse - 59% in the case of disabled respondents, 25% of whom said they were now less likely to use buses.

## Heritage Link: Making Consultation Matter

Coinciding with National Heritage Day, Heritage Link published the findings of its Why Bother survey, based on responses of nearly 200 heritage groups. This survey of voluntary sector experience of Local Authority planning consultation brings together comments from civic societies, CPRE groups, local archaeology groups and others. The overwhelming point was that heritage groups want to be involved in the planning process. They spend a great deal of time and effort responding to consultations on a huge range of proposals.

They believe they can make a positive difference to the quality of local and regional planning outcomes but confidence in the consultation process is variable. Effective participation is limited by capacity, poor communication, poor quality consultation documents and off-putting language. Regional Spatial Strategy and Highway proposals consultation are perceived as the least satisfactory and consultations over Conservation Area matters are a particular concern. But the report finds that the capacity and resources of heritage groups often lags behind their aspirations and investment in these areas is critical to sustaining community involvement. Heritage Link's will use the findings to draw up a strategy to improve the engagement process. Hard copy is available from [mail@heritagelink.org.uk](mailto:mail@heritagelink.org.uk) or on its website [www.heritagelink.org.uk](http://www.heritagelink.org.uk)

## Virtual Waterways

The new on-line database of 60,000 waterways records went live on 16th February 2006, enabling researchers to search through more than 60,000 waterways records from the 17th century to the near present day. The completion of the Waterways Virtual Archive [www.virtualwaterways.co.uk](http://www.virtualwaterways.co.uk) marks a major milestone for The Waterways Trust in opening up access to its collection.

## The Mayor's award for best Built Project

The Mayor's award for best Built Project contributing to London's Future was awarded jointly to:

(1) Bishops Square, Spitalfields: The project exemplifies high quality solutions to knitting modern high density buildings into the historic fabric of London. The mix of uses, respect for original street patterns and the inclusion of archaeology are excellent. The thorough approach to sustainability is embedded in the design, for example, the green roof and its use as open space for employees and inclusion of photovoltaic panels.

(2) Imperial Wharf: This development has set a standard of high quality mixed use combined with the provision of 50% affordable housing. The scheme introduces a wide range of retail, employment, leisure and open space in an area previously isolated from its surroundings. The new railway station, an integral part of the development, will bring a long awaited improvement in local accessibility.

## Heritage White Paper: progress

Publication of the Heritage White Paper is likely before the summer. DCMS reports that the Heritage Protection Review team has completed a number of workstreams since the autumn and are now agreeing their final conclusions. A series of consultation seminars reached over 500 representatives from the sector, mainly at practitioner level, though most attendees wanted to see further detail in order to consider the impact of HPR on resources. The public consultation on the new Principles of Selection for listing buildings has closed and responses are being analysed. It is hoped that the final Principles will be published alongside the White Paper.

The evaluation of 8 of the HPR pilot projects is ongoing, and the final evaluation will be completed by late February/ early March. The priorities for the HPR team in the New Year were to complete a Regulatory Impact Assessment for the project, and to work on the draft White Paper. To support this, the DCMS had set up a new cross-Whitehall group comprising relevant Departments.

## Climate change and its effect on trees

More new advice on climate change encourages woodland owners and managers to start taking steps now, to protect woods and forests. *Living with climate change and its effect on trees and woodland in the East of England*, produced by the Forestry Commission, with the Climate Change group of the East of England Sustainable Development Round Table, offers practical guidance to help plan for the effects of climate change, both in terms of minimising its adverse impacts and taking advantage of potential biodiversity opportunities created by a warmer climate.

The guidance also illustrates practical ways in which trees and woods can reduce some of the negative effects of climate change. The full document is available on the Sustainable Development Round Table's website [www.sustainability-east.com](http://www.sustainability-east.com). Copies of a summary for woodland owners and managers are available, free from the Forestry Commission, Santon Downham, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0TJ. Tel 01842 815544 and on the Regional Woodland Strategy website [www.woodlandforlife.net](http://www.woodlandforlife.net)

## Development on back gardens

In a statement issued on 2 February 2006, the ODPM pointed out that, although back gardens have been designated as brownfield since 1985, they have made clear in their planning policy that this does not mean that all gardens are up for grabs. Local planning authorities can already turn down applications for buildings in gardens if they are inappropriate or out of character with the local community. Well designed communities should involve high densities alongside attractive garden spaces as well. See [www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id+1163375](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id+1163375)

## Blooming parking lots

Concerned at the loss of front gardens to parking, the Royal Horticultural Society has produced a leaflet, *Front Gardens*, giving advice on how to achieve green off-street parking and showing how to mix paving with plants. They point out that only two paved tracks, after all, are needed to take the car wheels. The advice also covers dustbin and recycling box enclosures.

➔ *Continued on page 12*

## News briefs Continued

## newsbriefs

**More Guidance on Community Involvement**

The title of the Royal Town Planning Institute's 25-page Good Practice Note 1 for planners is Guidance on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation. Members may download it from their website [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk), and should also ensure that their local authorities are aware of it.

**New guidance on outdoor advertisements**

The ODPM is seeking assurances from companies advertising illegally that this practice will cease. The Planning Advisory Service will publish examples of action taken by LPAs to prevent and remove illegal roadside advertising.

Outdoor advertisements facing motorways and major roads require express consent from the relevant LPA and the landowner before they may be displayed. To do so without consent is an immediate offence, including on vehicles. Local authorities should remove illegal adverts and prosecute those involved where necessary.

The Highways Agency must be consulted by LPAs on any applications for advertisements near motorways and trunk roads. Outdoor advertisements are controlled by the Town and Country (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. LPAs have powers in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to take action against advertisements displayed in contravention of the Regulation, which are open to prosecution under S.224 of the Act. LPAs also have powers under S.225 of the Act to remove any illegally displayed placard or poster after giving two day's notice.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 increased the maximum fine to £50 for each day during which the offence continues.

Advertisements which may be displayed without consent include temporary advertisements publicising an event; short-term use such as announcing a sale of goods or livestock; and local events being held for charitable purposes. Size and the length of time the advertisement can be displayed are limited.

**Crossrail Update on the web**

A second Supplementary Environmental Statement has been posted on Cross London Rail Links' website [www.crossrail.co.uk](http://www.crossrail.co.uk) and on the Department for Transport's website [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

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## Publications and events

**English Heritage publications**

A raft of colour publications has come out of English Heritage recently; items of interest to members include:

- Growing Places: Heritage and a Sustainable Future for the Thames Gateway (30pp)
- Heritage Counts: The State of England's Historic Environment 2005 (84pp; regional versions are available separately, including Greater London, in the preparation of which the London Forum had some input. All can also be downloaded from [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk))
- Retail Developments in Historic Areas (28pp)
- English Heritage in London 2006-08 (12pp)
- Changing London, Issue 7 – Markets (12pp)
- Why Your Authority should appoint an Historic Environment Champion (6pp)
- Climate Change and the Historic Environment (8pp)
- Wind Energy and the Historic Environment (12pp)
- The Park Keeper – a Brief History of Park-Keeping (20pp)
- London Region Archaeology 2005 – Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service Annual Review (16pp)

Copies of all these can be obtained from English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 333 1181 or email [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)

**London's Local History Fair  
Guildhall, Saturday 18th March, 10 till 4**

This year, The London Maze, the City of London's free Local History Fair at the Guildhall, will be held on Saturday 18th March. The fair will be opened by author Peter Ackroyd and there will be talks on a wide range of subjects including the Great Exhibition of 1851, black people in Victorian and Edwardian London, and the early history of the London Underground.

Other events will include tours of the Roman amphitheatre, re-enactment of the Napoleonic wars, guided walks around the City, and up to fifty information and publications stalls from local history groups around London.

The Fair is at the Guildhall, Guildhall Yard, London EC2P 2EJ, from 10am to 4pm. For further information call 020 7332 3700, or visit [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/londonmaze](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/londonmaze)

**newsforum**

**Editorial team** Michael Hammerson, Helen Marcus, George Parish, Tony Aldous

**Design** Ross Shaw

**Print** Express Printing. Telephone: 01733 230 800

Published by the London Forum, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. Telephone: 020 7250 0606

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