

# 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  
[www.londonforum.org.uk](http://www.londonforum.org.uk)

## In this issue

Spotlight on the Old  
Chiswick Protection  
Society Page 10

- 1 **Is the Government's National Planning Policy Framework fit for purpose?**
- 3 **Will design considerations make densification acceptable?**
- 4 **Environmental standards and Brexit**
- 5 **Skyscrapers wreck cities**
- 6 **HS2 at Euston**
- 8 **Railways in London**
- 9 **London Forum news - Tribute to David Lewis**
- 10 **Spotlight: the Old Chiswick Protection Society**
- 12 **Open Meeting: Trees, Green**

- Spaces and Biodiversity**
- 13 **Protecting Trees**
- 15 **Open Meeting on Waste**
- 16 **Round the Societies**
- 18 **News briefs**
- 20 **Events and meetings**

## The draft replacement NPPF and the draft New London Plan

# Is the Government's National Planning Policy Framework fit for purpose?

**Michael Bach**, Chairman of London Forum's Planning, Environment and Transport Committee weighs up the implications of the revised draft replacement NPPF and the draft New London Plan

Despite our criticism of the draft new London Plan (Newsforum: Issue 87 Spring 2018), the publication of the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes us pleased that London has its own spatial planning strategy. The London Plan, whether we like it or not, does at least provide a vision for the future pattern of development in London, whilst the proposed revised NPPF has no vision.

### Delivering a more sustainable pattern of urban development

Our main criticism is that it is a missed opportunity to paint a picture of what the planning system in England is trying to achieve and how it should seek to achieve it. Sustainable development is no more than a concept, but what does it look like when most of the development in 20 years' time is already here today? Having referred in previous documents about getting "the right development in the right place", this is not explained and there is no storyline running through the draft revised NPPF that explains how and where new development should be located to produce a more sustainable pattern of urban development. This is a missed opportunity to explain what it is all about and, more particularly, describe how it will shape how our urban areas look and function in future and what the direction of travel should be for harnessing growth

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and change.

This is particularly important for new housing development which will require the most land and will have the biggest impact on the shape of our towns and cities. The most sustainable places for new housing are sites within urban areas, followed by planned extensions – essentially places which have good access to public transport, jobs, education, health, shopping, but particularly easy access to local services, amenities and social facilities. Essentially it means plugging into the existing infrastructure. The new NPPF does not project a clear picture of what the "right place" means. We suggest that could be fixed quite easily by explaining the aim and what ensuring the "right development in the right place" means both for shaping the

development of our towns and cities and which sites we choose for development.

### What does it mean for London?

At one level, we could say that the London Plan provides all the policies that London needs, and, as long as it complies generally (ie not necessarily in detail) with the NPPF, the London Plan provides the planning policy framework required. It paints a picture of where development should take place, and provides a clear statement of how it should be achieved.

### How does the NPPF help and does it hinder?

The main problem with the NPPF is its "one-size-fits-all" approach. It does not recognise that England is highly urbanised, that it contains major cities, and, especially, that London is different. London's challenges and opportunities require more specific or different policies to reflect our particular circumstances.

The area of most concern to London is that of housing need and housing delivery. The NPPF proposes a standard methodology for assessing housing need to be applied across the country at the level of the individual local authority, which for London means the London Borough. The GLA already produces London-wide housing need figures. However, whereas outside London these are translated directly

# Is the Government's National Planning Policy Framework fit for purpose? (continued)

into housing targets, in London the overall target is distributed across London boroughs in relation to their capacity to accommodate the growth. This capacity-based targets approach reflects the particular circumstances of London. We support retaining a "London approach" for plans in London.

More worrying, however, is the Government's intention to penalise local authorities for under-delivery of housing. If they consistently deliver less than their target – i.e. completed homes - they will need to increase their target by up to 20%. Most London boroughs will be stretched both to identify sites and to deliver their targets since the rate of completions is beyond their control, and so increasing their target will merely make the situation worse. This new system will cause problems for many London boroughs, where finding additional sites would be very difficult.

## Wrong definition of affordable housing

Most serious, however, is the Government's definition of affordable housing – below 80% of the market price or rent - which is in direct conflict with that of the draft London Plan. The issue of genuine affordability when it comes to housing in London is totally different from most of the rest of the country. As Sadiq Khan has pointed out – 80% of new housing is only affordable to 8% of the population. The draft London Plan states that 47% of all new homes in London need to be for low-cost rent, similar to rents for social housing. The proposed definition in the draft revised NPPF does not recognise that the situation in London is very different to that in the rest of the country.

Identifying employment sites for release for housing is also a potential area of conflict. The draft new London Plan is very conscious of the need to retain employment land, because of the scale of recent losses. It seeks to allow developments which combine both employment uses and housing, whereas the revised NPPF proposes a much cruder approach of encouraging the use of "retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres".

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## *Several recent reports show the damage that permitted development rights have done to town centres in London*

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It is a pity that the Government did not apply this test to permitted development rights introduced for change of use of offices to housing in town centres. Indeed, the draft revised NPPF while not addressing this issue by name, says that the use of Article 4 directions to remove these rights "should be limited to where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of the area" and should not be used "unless there is clear justification for doing so."

## London town centres

Several recent reports show the damage that permitted development rights have done to town centres in London – a significant number of boroughs now have less than a year to get Article 4 directions approved to give them the protection they need for their town centres.

In the revised NPPF, town centres are still a key theme but the attempt to promote them is half-hearted. This is no longer a "town centres first" policy – originally developers were required to demonstrate that they could not find more central sites, especially for retail and leisure schemes. The 2012 NPPF effectively reversed the policy by requiring local authorities to identify sites to accommodate the full 15-year need for sites, which would enable developers to come forward with large-scale schemes which, conveniently, could not find town centre sites. This has been cut back to 10 years' worth of sites – twice as demanding as for housing which has a less demanding locational requirement for sites.

Unfortunately, as mentioned above, whilst the revised NPPF does include the need to choose town centre sites for new offices, it does not see the contradiction of not encouraging local authorities to retain existing key town centre uses, such as offices, within town centres.

## Densities

Some policies, such as housing densities and parking policies, have been established and refined in successive plans for London, whereas these are "new" issues for the NPPF. For example, London has had minimum density policies since 1975, to avoid very low-density housing development. The NPPF now suggests it to encourage higher densities but only in town centres and in places well-served by public transport.

For car parking, the NPPF discourages maximum parking standards for both residential and non-residential developments. This would be in direct conflict with parking policies in London, where maximum parking standards have existed since the 1970s.

Potentially one of the most threatening changes is the proposal to encourage "upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of the neighbouring properties and the overall streetscene, is well designed and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers". The Government is now proposing a further consultation on extending permitted development rights to enable upward development where this provides new homes.

All of this demonstrates that:

- the latest revisions seem unrelated to what is appropriate in London or, indeed, other major cities;
- London has a long history of developing planning policies appropriate to its planning strategy rather than a "national", "one-size-fits-all" approach which has little obvious spatial strategy; and
- London should not have to demonstrate why it should be different – rather it should be seen as an example for policy development for urban areas in England.

## Would the revised NPPF make a real difference to London?

As long as the draft new London Plan conforms generally to the revised NPPF there should be no problems. London Forum hopes that some of the "rough edges" of the proposed revised NPPF will be removed, and that the draft revised London Plan will be found sound by the Secretary of State.

# Will design considerations make densification acceptable?

**Peter Eversden** considers how the new criteria on design in the draft London Plan and NPPF might not be as effective as people hope and may not limit development density sufficiently.

Overall, London Forum suggests that the revised NPPF should be restructured to provide a much clearer spatial strategy for creating a more sustainable pattern of urban development, clarify what getting the right development in the right place means and develop a much clearer storyline to paint a picture of the desired direction of travel. It is time to restore the classic dimension of planning – location, location, location. ■

London Forum's covering letter and recommendations for changes to the draft revised NPPF (dated 15 May 2018) can be seen at

[www.londonforum.org.uk/responses.php](http://www.londonforum.org.uk/responses.php) ■

## Questions on density

Questions the politicians need to answer if they wish to increase densities in London's Suburbs:

- Will the supporting infrastructure be in place?
- Will water supply, sewage disposal, electricity and gas provision be sufficient?
- How will already overloaded bus, train and Tube links into central London cope with accelerated suburban residential development, especially as office space in the suburbs is also being converted to housing, which tends to concentrate rather than disperse employment across London?
- Are all the protections such as overlooking, daylight / sunlight, conservation and all the other usual constraints – to be abandoned? ■

In the last edition of Newsforum, concerns were expressed about the draft replacement New London Plan and the way in which the Mayor's density policies are proposed to be changed to allow more intensification of land use, particularly in outer London.

### Reservations about design-led approach

London Forum has reservations about a new design-led approach by the Mayor. Boroughs may not have the skills to specify design requirements in their plans nor to negotiate on design in new developments. Good design can be significant in placemaking and in introducing change and higher densities in a way that respects local context and character and earns community approval but the design process needs strong Government and GLA support.

The draft replacement National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published recently and we looked critically to see how its policies describe the importance of design and support the Mayor's new approach. We were disappointed.

The sections on 'making efficient use of land' and 'achieving well designed places' are at the end of the document and we recommended they should be put before chapters on plan making and on the criteria for making decisions.

The policy to "use tools such as area-wide design assessments" is applied in the draft NPPF to small sites but should be required for any site.

The document has no references to placemaking, tall buildings, townscape or the urban skyline.

Its design paragraphs should be rewritten for high quality design to be a necessity and not just an advantage. It should require local authorities to have the appropriately qualified design staff; this should now be possible with increased planning application fees ring-fenced to planning and development control.

The draft NPPF or associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) needs to state how design requirements should be built into local site allocations and how design workshops and reviews should be resourced and conducted. Paragraph 125 in the new draft is encouraging in this respect but should recommend the use of 3D visualisation.

Guidance could help local authorities to understand how design should be applied to higher density developments.

It is surprising that design is not included in the list of strategic policies in the draft NPPF paragraph 20. It should be additional to local authorities having "an overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development." which is the first policy.

An essential paragraph 56 on design in the current 2012 NPPF has been omitted in the new draft and should be restored. The words are "The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."

It will take a while to see what will result from suggested changes to the draft New London Plan and the draft replacement NPPF and how London's boroughs will use design in their planning and decision making. If they specify their design, height, density and infrastructure requirements for allocated sites and areas and apply design reviews, it should give a justifiable basis for refusal of applications which do not conform to their development plan.

Hopefully, they would be supported then by Inspectors if there are appeals.

Essentially, Councils must engage communities in specifying their design requirements. ■

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# Environmental standards and Brexit: Clouds hang over the future

By Daniel Instone

Over the last few years, London Forum's Planning Environment and Transport (PET) committee has considered many proposals for environmental changes, for better or worse, in London. These have come variously from central government departments, the Mayor and other bodies.

What isn't always appreciated is just how many environmental changes being proposed derive from EU legal requirements, which all member states, including, to date, the UK, have had to apply. Part of the reason for the obscurity is that government ministers have nearly always wanted to suggest that the environmental improvements are their own idea rather than, as is so often the case, what has been agreed in Brussels. Ministers prefer to try to take the credit for improvements themselves.

## Key environmental policies

Some key environmental policies which affect London significantly, but which have been instigated by EU requirements, are:

- The Thames sewage tunnel now under construction – the impetus for this was the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, which regulates sewage discharges – the UK was threatened with legal action from the EU if action were not taken to address this in the case of London.
- Major improvements in recycling levels, where the driver over the last 20 years has been EU waste and recycling requirements, where otherwise the UK could well have been subject to EU legal action. This has led to a large reduction in waste sent to landfill, including in London.
- Several different EU air pollution requirements, which limit the exhaust emissions road vehicles can produce, how much pollution we can produce across the country, and how much air pollution there can be in any given geographical area. London has greater challenges on air pollution than anywhere else in the UK.
- EU noise requirements, which require us to map just how much environmental noise there is in different areas across the country, including in London, and produce action plans.

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But now we are faced with the question: what happens to all these requirements and policies after Brexit? There are many areas of uncertainty.

First, will existing EU environmental requirements remain UK legal requirements after Brexit? Probably yes at least in the short term. The Government's consultation, published this May, on environmental principles and governance after Brexit says: "As a baseline the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, will convert existing EU environmental law into UK law." Nevertheless, with possible changes in UK approaches, and governments, over time, there are certainly risks that this could come unstuck for the future.

Second, will the government put into UK law new EU environmental requirements as they are made? This seems a far more risky area. In the EU these requirements are being constantly updated, nearly always to make them more demanding as citizens' expectations increase and technology improves. Sometimes legal limits are simply made tighter; at other times completely new kinds of environmental requirements are introduced. But the government has made no commitment at all to following new EU environmental requirements as they are introduced. It has, in the consultation above, talked about enshrining a set of environmental principles into law. But this is quite different from accepting new detailed legal requirements.

This uncertainty over new requirements is already having a significant impact in London and more widely. For example the government's draft revised national planning policy framework (NPPF) says

that new development needs to meet 'relevant' legal requirements on air pollution, without saying what these requirements are; so the commitment seems of little value. And in its proposals for a third runway for Heathrow, the government merely says that new runway capacity will not be released unless it is clear that 'legal' requirements on air pollution will be met (whatever they are). In both cases, and no doubt in many others to come, the uncertainty is because the government doesn't want to commit itself to turning into UK law future EU requirements after Brexit.

Finally, how would any legal requirements be enforced? The Government's consultation document referred to above discusses this, in the context of its strong wish to end the oversight over the UK of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). It proposes a new body to act as watchdog; but wavers on whether it could impose binding notices or only advisory notices on the Government in the event of failure to meet requirements; and indeed says: "Government believes that advisory notices should be the main form of enforcement, and should always be applied in the first instance before any further steps are considered."

If the watchdog's notices were not binding, that would be a big departure from current arrangements, where the EU Commission can refer member states to the ECJ which can in turn issue large fines on governments. It might also leave non-governmental bodies (NGOs) with a much bigger and more expensive task in having to take on part of the EU Commission's current role in taking government to court. And even if the watchdog is allowed to issue binding notices, the consultation document proposes the right of appeal by the government against them, which does not currently apply to ECJ rulings.

So there are big challenges, and big risks, ahead. A number of environmental bodies are monitoring, and lobbying, on these issues, including a coalition of environmental groups known as "Greener UK" (<http://greeneruk.org>).

London Forum intends to continue to watch this area closely. ■



# Skyscrapers wreck cities – yet still Britain builds them

**Michael Bach** responded in support of an article in the Evening Standard by Simon Jenkins on 29 May

On 29 May Simon Jenkins wrote in the Evening Standard: “Around 500 towers are proposed for London. They’re not just ugly: they symbolise Britain’s greedy pandering to developers. No plan for this proliferation has ever been published. No mayor has ever put it to the voters. Unlike any other European country, skyscrapers can go up wherever developers want, provided only that they do not spoil a view of St Paul’s Cathedral.\* It is ‘wild west’ planning.” London Forum’s Michael Bach agreed:

By any planning metrics – before we talk about such emotive things as their impact on local communities – tall buildings perform very badly. Some people talk about tall buildings having “a role to play” in housing delivery, but where is the evidence that they contribute anything substantial to creating the kind of London that Londoners want let alone the housing that Londoners need?

The NLA/EG annual survey of tall buildings is not much more sophisticated than a “crane index” – a crude indicator of economic activity. It is not an indicator of housing delivery. It does not show that tall buildings make a substantial contribution towards meeting the need for affordable housing. The idea that it could possibly have “trickle down” benefits, by loading in housing at the top end of the market and hoping that something trickles down to those in housing need, is far fetched. The rigidities in the housing market ensure that this does not happen.

Worse still is the high opportunity cost of pursuing this route to housing delivery. In London every site counts – using sites for this type of housing exemplifies what James Murray, when in Islington, called “wasted sites” – sites that could have produced both more housing and housing that Londoners could afford – rather than just buildings which did little to meet the need to house Londoners. The opportunity cost of using up scarce sites is what we could have had instead – higher-density, medium-rise developments with a significant proportion of affordable housing.

NLA/EG/GL Hearn may not have the evidence to assess the contribution that tall buildings make or could make to meeting London’s housing needs, let alone

the specific need for affordable housing, but Peter Murray did acknowledge that future surveys will need to provide a critical assessment of what tall buildings contribute to London’s growth and its housing needs. At present their database may not include details about the contribution of tall buildings to affordable housing, but the Mayor of London has no such excuse. Every single 20-storey building would have been notified to the Mayor – mainly the previous Mayor/Deputy Mayor from 2008-2016 – so all the data is available in London Development Database. A key test is not only how much (or how little) affordable housing was included in the consents, but what has actually materialised. The 510 tall buildings in the “pipeline”, far from being an indicator of success or even just economic activity, may be a record of missed opportunities – whilst the products may be part of the unfortunate planning and development legacy since 2000.

So before insisting that tall buildings have a role to play in delivering London’s housing, let’s see what role they have played to date in meeting the housing needs of Londoners and, in particular, the need for affordable housing. Would any of them meet the Mayor’s 35% test?

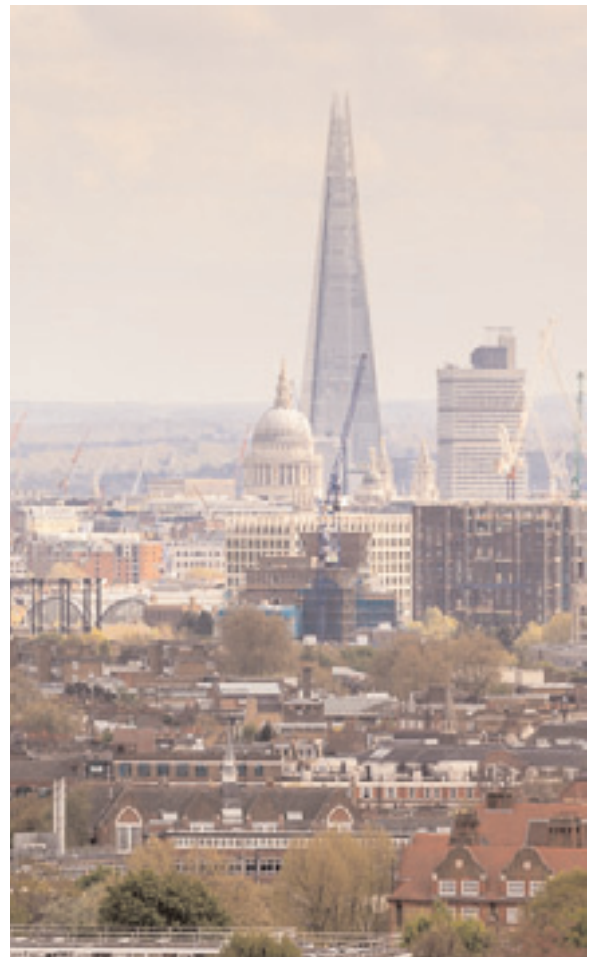
It is time for the Mayor and his Deputy Mayors to take a more critical look at the evidence of what tall buildings have contributed and will contribute to delivering of homes for Londoners and supporting the types of communities that the new London Plan proposes. ■

*\*But of course even this has been ruined as in this photo (R) of St. Paul’s from Parliament Hill, Hampstead Heath; a three hundred year old protected view destroyed. Sir Simon wrote a brilliant article about it at the time - see Newsforum 58 Spring 2011.*

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*Where is the evidence that tall buildings contribute anything substantial to creating the kind of London that Londoners want let alone the housing that Londoners need?*

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# HS2 at Euston

Fifty-six years after the first time, another urban atrocity is threatened at Euston.  
**John Myers** reports

The glorious 19th century Hardwick buildings at Euston were demolished in the 1960s to make way for today's unfriendly structures, which later accretions have compromised further. Since then, the Government seems to have learned nothing. The Government of the day is now blamed for what happened in the 1960s. That will happen again without a rapid change of heart.

## Secret Masterplan

It took multiple Freedom of Information requests to extract the secret Euston Stations Masterplan. Residents were lied to and told that no masterplan existed. Secret board meetings between the Department for Transport and other bodies exclude any resident representative. The London Borough of Camden is allowed to attend but is bound to confidentiality, bullied by the threat of having its 'qualifying authority' status to monitor HS2 works removed, and placed in a situation of impossible conflict by its shortage of money and strong need for more business rates.

The loss of heritage buildings was the tragedy of the 1960s. The loss of green spaces and unnecessary overshadowing due to poor design will be the mistake of this decade, unless something is done quickly. In both cases, failures to listen, of imagination and of humility caused the problem.

The 168-page Masterplan – still heavily redacted – is shocking. The proposed development is crammed around the edges of the station with no stepbacks, massively overshadowing nearby deprived communities and heritage assets around the station, but leaving most of the space above the station, in the middle, almost entirely unused. This is the exact opposite of all principles of good urban design.

## Working with local people requires a conversation

Local communities understand that Euston will change. It has to, now that so much to the west of the Station is being demolished. More customers for local retail and more affordable housing will be welcomed. But far better for that to happen by working with local people, planning and building a better place

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*Historic parks such as St James's Gardens and Euston Square Gardens have been seized – the latter for a temporary rank for black cabs, after various 19th century plane trees were chopped – and swathes of city are being knocked down*

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together, than to revert to old discredited practices and imposition by force.

Residents can only hope that the newly appointed Master Development Partner, Lendlease, will take a more enlightened view than the Department for Transport. There are plenty of constructive ways forward, but that requires a conversation.

## Historic parks seized

Historic parks such as St James's Gardens and Euston Square Gardens have been seized – the latter for a temporary rank for black cabs, after various 19th century plane trees were chopped – and swathes of city are being knocked down. The construction will take until at least 2026 and will involve an HGV every three minutes along residential roads for much of that time: 650 HGVs per day, with only a small fraction carried away by rail. Camden Council believes that HS2 has already breached some of the Assurances given during the Parliamentary process.

One ray of light has been Grimshaw Architects working with Arup on the RIBA 3 stage of designing the new HS2 station, including the foundations but not the development above the station. They are trying to meet the desires of local communities to see their lost parks at least partly replaced and to retain direct access from the station to the well-known restaurants of Drummond Street, all of which have escaped demolition but lost business since HS2 closed nearby hotels.

Residents around the station 'throat',

where the tracks lead north from the station, face profound uncertainty as HS2 has sought to improve upon the original design, but has published almost nothing about the new proposals, which may reduce impacts for some but worsen them for others.

Urban residents were excluded from the compensation scheme offered to people in the country, but the House of Lords Select Committee indicated that compensation was required for residents around Euston under human rights laws given the colossal scale of the disruption for such a prolonged length of time. The Government has recently released a scheme for discussion. HS2 has confirmed that on its current projections, no-one near Euston is likely to qualify for it.

## Flaws in the system

Several flaws have also been revealed in the system for assessing cumulative impacts of works done by other parties on HS2 and other projects, including Network Rail in preparation for HS2, as well as works done by TfL and Camden in relation to a Cycle Superhighway and the West End Project to revamp Tottenham Court Road. HS2 has - hitherto- also failed to show that it is making any effort to budget to make sure that it will not massively exceed the total impacts over time that it forecast to Parliament, although it has recently made some moves in this direction.

## Loss of green space and air quality

As well as having little green space, Euston has among the worst air quality in Europe, and the loss of parks and scores of glorious 150-year-old plane trees is making that worse. HS2's undertakings to provide 'replacement' trees for those lost in Euston are resulting in saplings being planted as far away as Primrose Hill, which do nothing to mitigate the losses. The current version of the new station design proposes a 'replacement' green space for St James's Gardens on overdeck to the north, where no large trees will ever grow, and much further away – beyond walking distance for parents with toddlers. The area that Camden had designated for a replacement park is currently proposed to be covered with a taxi rank, a design that Grimshaw Architects are working to improve.

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### **Fundamental failure to work with residents**

With the notable and recent exception of Grimshaw/Arup and the design of the new HS2 station itself, as opposed to the oversight development, HS2's professed willingness to engage with local residents has so far resulted in little progress. There seems to be a fundamental failure by management to work with residents, rather than viewing them as an obstacle to be bulldozed. Easy, low cost measures – such as fitting promised noise insulation as soon as practicable as HS2 had promised, rather than leaving it until after Network Rail's overnight works at preparation for HS2, causing needless sleepless nights – have been ignored. HS2 has, without consultation, backed away from testimony given under oath in Parliament about fitting ventilation in historic buildings. Lessons about good and bad practice from Crossrail have apparently evaporated. There continues to be a lack of trust. Hard-working and well-meaning engagement staff have little visible backing in terms of action from operational management.

### **Evicted residents left uncompensated**

Most unforgivably of all, HS2 has failed promptly to pay the residents evicted from their homes by compulsory purchase, leaving people with no funds to find a new home. HS2 claims to be hamstrung by Treasury rules. That needs to be reviewed urgently.

Residents remain keen to work with HS2 to find constructive ways forward. So far there have been generally warm words from the other side, but little action. ■

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*There seems to be a fundamental failure by management to work with residents, rather than viewing them as an obstacle to be bulldozed.*

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*This tree is supposed to 'replace' a seven-storey 150-year-old plane tree lost half a mile away.*



# Railways in London

2018 was to have been the year in which we were to reap the benefit of years of disruption with a transformation of the railways.

**Andrew Bosi** reports on disappointing delays and failures

With the introduction of the May rail timetable, there are indeed significant changes in the south-east and the north of England, but in both cases not quite what was envisaged.

When the Great Western electrification scheme commenced five years ago, it was envisaged that there would be a reduction in diesel emissions along the route out of London by now. That ambition disappeared some time ago. New bi-mode trains are appearing, but the forty-two year old HST train sets will be with us a while longer. Some may even see further service out of St. Pancras or King's Cross.

## Removing diesel

A more modest electrification scheme was to remove diesel locomotion from north-east London. Electrification between Gospel Oak and Barking also linked long distance freight routes largely under wires but compelled to use diesel traction to navigate this short stretch of track. The wires were supposed to be in place two years ago but some catastrophic miscalculations by Network Rail meant the work was only finished in April this year. However, this delay (apart from extending the period of bus replacement) is of little matter because the new electric trains have still to appear. Uncertainty about what rolling stock would be available when, delayed publication of the new timetable until a day before it came into force. The currently used two car diesel trains are promised elsewhere for December. The new trains have to be tested on the line and drivers have to test run the trains before they can be entrusted with passengers.

## London Bridge station transformed

Better progress has been made towards amalgamating the Thameslink and Southern services. London Bridge station has been transformed out of all recognition. New through services, such as Horsham to Peterborough, began running in advance of the new timetable. Unfortunately, the belief that "everyone" carries a portable telephone with ready access to train timetables and everything else, has meant that posters setting out the service as it was in December last with

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*The biggest game changer in the south-east is the long awaited Crossrail, or Elizabeth line ... set to transform east-west travel across London*

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a currency of "until May 19th" have continued to be displayed at stations. And despite the advance running of some of these train services, Govia Thameslink was unable to operate the new published timetable. Numerous cancellations, at one time attributed to stock in the wrong place, continued throughout the weeks that followed. The explanation "due to an operational incident" would more accurately have been reported as "due to a lack of operational incident".

There has also been a delay to the arrival of rolling stock here. The narrow tunnels into Moorgate, and the switch from overhead to third rail at Drayton Park, limits the type of train that can be used on the stopping trains. The current class 313 trains are the oldest EMUs (electric multiple units) still in service, so they are not wanted elsewhere, though in an emergency it is possible they could return temporarily to the Watford line.

There is no sign of the new Azuma trains which Virgin East Coast were promising on the reverse of their seat reservation tickets more than a year ago. Virgin East Coast have been relieved of their obligations, and a precedent set for any train operating company whose deal offered payments to government in the latter years of the contract. Those payments were based on anticipated increased revenue from the new trains and signalling upgrades to allow more frequent trains, both of which are delayed. Please listen for further announcements.

## Crossrail - the game changer

However, the biggest game changer in the south-east is the long awaited Crossrail, or

Elizabeth line. New trains began to appear between Liverpool Street and Shenfield nearly 12 months ago, but they run alongside the aged stock inherited by TfL Rail. Services to Heathrow are introduced with the May 2018 timetable. The biggest transformation is scheduled for December 2018, when the central tunnel is scheduled to open adding trains from Paddington to Abbey Wood. Shenfield trains will reach Paddington in May 2019 and the complete scheme, serving Reading and Heathrow terminal 5 should happen from December next year.

## An explosion at Pudding Mill Lane

A transformer explosion at Pudding Mill Lane when the electricity was switched on last September, and problems getting different signalling systems to communicate with one another, have threatened these deadlines. TfL and Network Rail have pulled out all the stops to prevent embarrassment on this score, and a recent Sunday Times report suggested that an extra £500m would have to be found.

The platforms are not long enough to take 12 car trains, as originally planned, because the cars are longer than envisaged. The Elizabeth line will start with nine car trains (current Shenfield trains have only seven) and later extend to eleven. I would have preferred to see them start with a lesser frequency of eleven car trains, which would make it easier to recover from any delays and would obviate the need to take trains out of service to add two more cars at a later date. Many of the stations are long enough to serve two pre-existing stations, so utilising the full length of the platform is important.

Despite this minor disappointment, the Elizabeth Line is set to transform east-west travel across London, even if the resultant hike in house prices reduces still further the stock of what is "affordable". ■

See the latest HS2 news at <https://www.topicaltalk.co.uk/hs2/news>



# David Lewis 1940 - 2018



London Forum is deeply saddened to learn of the death of David Lewis, one of our Vice Presidents.

David grew up in Surrey, studied at New College Oxford and pursued a career in the civil service where his responsibilities ranged from environmental protection, nuclear waste, rural affairs, housing and water. By the 1990s he had risen to be Secretary to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, for ten years overseeing work that still shapes Government policy today.

He was a stalwart of the Battersea Society, Sir Walter St John's Trust, and the community forum for Battersea Power Station.

His Welsh roots were also important and he became first a member and then Chairman of the Snowdonia Society. This was alongside his role as a Vice-President of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies, a legacy of his life-long interest in the way place can shape people's lives. David brought much wisdom, knowledge and intellectual contribution to London Forum and its direction of travel. He commissioned our current web site and was one of London Forum's team gathering evidence for and contributing to the Examinations in Public of previous versions of the London Plan. We will greatly miss him. ■

# London Forum

## Invitation to members

### Are you interested in how Government and the Greater London Assembly work?

By joining one of London Forum's Committees you could help make a difference.

It is a rewarding role for anyone who wants to influence how policy is made for London.

You would help develop the Forum's ability to be represented and seek changes when required. There are opportunities to meet and work with Assembly members and GLA officers, MP's, heritage bodies, and a wide range of other organisations, to discuss policies that affect London, and to attend conferences and debates.

London Forum's members are asked to consider if one of your committee members, or a local person that you feel has the right experience and skills, might be interested to join the London Forum team as a trustee, adviser or administration assistant.

Other areas of interest that might appeal are helping to organise events, developing London Forum's publicity and producing Newsforum.

We are fortunate to have attracted several new trustees recently but would welcome more.

**Please contact the Chairman**

**Peter Eversden**

at

[chairman@londonforum.org.uk](mailto:chairman@londonforum.org.uk)

preferably before the AGM on October 30

if you would like to become involved.

# London Forum P E & T Committee

John Myers reports

Much of the London Forum Planning, Environment and Transport Committee's time and energy since the last Newsforum has been devoted to the review and comment on the draft National Planning Policy Framework, reported elsewhere in this edition of Newsforum.

### Heathrow

The Government announced in early June that it intends to press ahead with a third runway at Heathrow. The PE&T Committee has consistently made clear its profound concerns about that decision, set out in Daniel Instone's article in the Spring 2018 edition of Newsforum.

### Brexit

The PE&T Committee is becoming increasingly concerned about the very serious environmental consequences of a badly managed Brexit. (see Daniel Instone's article page 4)

### Advertising panels on telephone kiosks

The Committee is also concerned about the proliferation of advertising panels purporting to be telephone kiosks in order to benefit from advantageous planning rules. Those kiosks can obstruct the pavement in a dangerous fashion and create unnecessary street clutter.

### Deputy Mayor for transport

Heidi Alexander has succeeded Val Shawcross as Deputy Mayor for transport. Crossrail is £500 million over budget, and the issues between Heathrow Express and TfL have been resolved in favour of TfL.

### Heritage Alliance

Lizzie Glithero-West, chief executive of the Heritage Alliance, came to the Committee to discuss the Alliance's activities and how they were relevant to members of London Forum. ■



# Spotlight on the Old Chiswick Protection Society

One of London's older societies celebrates its Diamond Jubilee

By **Patricia Langley**

Sixty years ago, the Old Chiswick area was certainly not a destination. It was down at heel, grotty and at times rather smelly. Floods were regular. There was bomb damage. Take a look at the book by the late Anthea Craigmyle of her mother's war correspondence where she vividly describes the community of artists and designers who lived here. The area has changed immeasurably in 50 years. Most notably of course, as with so many areas of London, has been the disappearance of industry and its replacement by residential developments. The old county of Middlesex doesn't really exist any more and we're all part of London. But it was a very distinct area.

Bounded by a particularly leafy section of the Thames to the south and the busy A4 to the north, the church of St. Nicholas and the Old Cemetery to the west and Hammersmith to the east, Old Chiswick contains the last remaining old London Brewery and many historic buildings.

## A fascinating heritage

The need to protect it became obvious post war. It was originally a fishing village which became fashionable as a suburban refuge from central London with its smoke and risks of plague. It was and is an important mix, with a fascinating heritage in architecture, political and social history, painting and literature from the 17th century to the present day. The mixture of buildings, Jacobean, Georgian, Victorian and modern is unique in London. For example, Walpole House is a Grade 1 listed building. It was built by the notorious Duchess of Cleveland. It passed later to the family of Sir Robert Walpole. Then Thackeray's Vanity Fair immortalised it in the opening sentences describing Miss P's Academy. There are also historic public houses some still in existence like the George and Devonshire, and the Mawsons Arms. Others, such as the Old Burlington in Church St and the bargemen's Red Lion on the old draw dock are now homes.

The handsome and historic church dates back nearly a thousand years. The tombs of Hogarth, Whistler, de Louthembourg, Foscolo, are there. It is rumoured to be Cromwell's last resting place. The Challoner monument is here. In more modern times artists such as Victor

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*It has a fascinating heritage in architecture, political and social history. We have a very positive and welcome cooperation with Hounslow Council, who take trouble to support and maintain the Conservation Area*

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Passmore, Eric Ravilious, Julian Trevelyan, Mary Fedden, and Anthea Craigmyle lived here. But it still retains an air of mixed residential and industrial: with Fullers Brewery still remaining here. A partnership between Fullers and OCPS, basically as good neighbours, helps to maintain the area's vital mix. The Brewery is a landmark within the Old Chiswick area. Some of the industries which have disappeared include some old household names: Cherry Blossom polish, Bemax, the Lep wharves, Valor stoves and even the Submerged Log Company, immortalised in a song by Flanders and Swan. The Thornycroft family had their shipyard on the river below Church Street until the First World War. That family combined heavy industry with art, as the sculptor Hamo Thornycroft sculpted the famous statue of Boadicea on Westminster Bridge in a shed at the back of Greenash, the family home on the Mall.

All this rich heritage and the views of the river have rightly made Old Chiswick one of the most popular amenity areas in the borough, appreciated in all seasons by walkers, cyclists and joggers. The OCPS works to keep it that way.

## The origins of the Society

The Society was established back in 1957/8 by local residents when faced with a plan by the heirs of the Thornycroft family to pull down a row of Georgian terrace houses on the Mall adjacent to the large grounds of the family home and to erect flats on this large area – the new society managed to stop the demolition and to see the grounds used for houses built around an attractive courtyard. That is today's Eyot

Green, which is an award winning development.

## The Society's broad remit

The aims for the Society provided a broad remit to protect the area. Ever since, the Society has sought with success to achieve these aims in flexible fashion. We by no means seek to preserve the area in aspic, as the present mixture of development shows. Our overarching objective remains to protect the character and the amenity value of Old Chiswick and its heritage, as well as its very special sense of community. This includes our concern to retain its traditional and beneficial mixture of residential and commercial properties and its scope for employment too. This is what gives life to a community. The Society has a close and positive relationship with the brewery as it carries forward its investment in development. Where would we be without the seductive atmosphere of hops and malt barley that tickles our noses when the westerly or northerly winds blow? We have a very positive and welcome cooperation with the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH), who take trouble to support and maintain the Conservation Area

## Major London planning inquiries

OCPS has been involved directly in several major London planning inquiries over the years. Three in particular: the proposal by Richmond council to build housing on the former water reservoir lands along the towpath on the south side of the river. Consent was eventually refused and the area is now a woodland and wildlife lake.

Next came the five year Layfield Commission inquiry into plans for major new arterial roadworks in west London. These would have involved much destruction for Old Chiswick with a spaghetti junction at the Hogarth roundabout and encroachment on Chiswick House and a new bridge across the river on the Dukes Meadows. OCPS gave a day of evidence in opposition and mercifully the government rejected the proposals.

Ten years later came an inquiry over Terminal 4 at Heathrow with further proposals to open up the A4 for increased traffic. We continue to be vigilant as

## Old Chiswick Protection Society



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website: <http://www.ocps.btck.co.uk/>

Penny Barltrop

pressures for transport and housing growth increase within our protected area. All this runs alongside regular correspondence over minor planning and maintenance tasks for the benefit of the area.

### Present concerns

One activity of particular concern for the society is the upkeep and protection of Chiswick Eyot. The island served until some 60 years ago as a source of withies for basket making, which were cut each spring from its coppiced osier willows. In the 1960's the island became neglected and overgrown, and its banks had begun to erode to the point where LBH proposed bulldozing the whole island into the river. OCPS arranged to maintain the island and its vegetation on the borough's behalf: we have done so ever since in association with various Thames and wildlife groups.

The Executive Committee meets bimonthly. The AGM is a bibulous affair courtesy of Fullers in their famous Hock Cellar and more recently at the George and Devonshire, and we now also hold a very popular summer drinks party in a member's garden. We also have our website and newsletter and our historic archives. We have an annual bundling operation to gather cut withies to form protective barrier against erosion, and lunch to follow. It's a fun event and good exercise. ■



Top right: Old Chiswick Protection Society logo  
Left: Swans on the River Thames  
Below: Georgian terrace houses on the Mall saved from demolition



Age: 60

**Circumstances of Birth:** Proposal to destroy 5 Georgian houses and replace with over 50 flats. Vicar noted this proposal with alarm.

**Biggest Successes:** Saved five Georgian houses and oversaw award winning development in its place. Resisted further Spaghetti Junction at the Hogarth Roundabout and destruction of Dukes' Meadows. Saved the Eyot from being bulldozed into the Thames. Oversaw renovation of the drawdock near St Nicholas Church. Oversaw replacement of old maternity home with 11 homes, where 58 units had been proposed.

**Biggest Frustrations:** Conservation Area status has not prevented some inappropriate development such as pavement crossings, and windows out of character. But we're working on this.

**Working Details:** 14 members of Executive Committee. Five sub-committees: Planning & Conservation, Traffic & Roads, Communications, River, Neighbourhood Watch. Executive Committee meets every other month. Sub-committees meet as and when needed.

**Special Characteristics:** Unique mix of Jacobean, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings, set along the River Thames in a former fishing village. Mostly listed.

**Last Word:** We will always be vigilant in protecting this unique corner of London. This takes time, effort and will. But it is so special that it will always be worth the effort. ■





# Trees, Green Spaces and Biodiversity

Open Meeting, 19th April

Guest speakers: **John Parker** (Arboriculture & Landscape Manager at Transport for London), the Chair of the London Tree Officers Association, **John Massini**, Principal Green Infrastructure Officer at the Greater London Authority, and **Tony Leach**, the Chief Executive of 'Parks for London'. **Peter Pickering** reports

The meeting began with a presentation by John Parker who said that the old attitude that there was 'No Space for Trees', that they were a liability and a risk to be managed, was changing; first to regarding them as an amenity and now as an actual asset - a key component of green infrastructure bringing quantifiable benefits. Trees were good for health and there was public engagement and political support for them (in Exeter there were notices near trees telling passers-by about them and explaining their benefits). They had a good place in the Mayor's environmental and transport policies; there was a canopy cover target, for retaining trees as well as planting new ones. It had been alleged that there was no space for trees (though there was for lampposts and traffic signs) because it was so congested beneath the surface of roads and pavements in London (with pipes, cables etc.) that trees roots were inevitably on the surface, and caused inconvenience and danger. But these problems could be solved, e.g. by redirecting services or using planters. Mr Parker gave examples, including the redesign of Blackfriars Road. Speaking about tree officers and their position in local authorities, Mr Parker observed that, trees being slow-growing, the results of their efforts was far longer-term than their individual time-spans.

## The GLA policy framework

John Massini described the Greater London Authority, policy framework. The greenery of London was the envy of many European cities. The planning system was quite good at protecting green spaces but they often became just open spaces between buildings; they could function better, (recent changes in the management of the Royal Parks should improve ecology.) Challenges being faced included the need to express the health and other benefits of green spaces to convince hard-nosed economists, the growth in the population of London, and the likelihood of more storms and heatwaves as the climate changed. The new London Plan retained and added to existing green infrastructure policies. 12% of open space in London was taken by roads; but attitudes to car ownership were changing, and Transport

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*"Trees are an asset - a key component of green infrastructure bringing quantifiable benefits."*

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John Parker of TfL

for London's policy was changing, e.g. to increase the proportion of walking. An old policy which was now being reversed had been to concrete and even culvert watercourses; another had been to pebble over rather than plant areas to discourage walking on them. Car parks could become more active spaces. Green roofs could become publicly accessible roof gardens.

## The Friends Groups

Tony Leach described his charity, which now covered 600 Friends Groups. It sought to break down barriers between such groups, elected members and practitioners. It studied the different strategies and expenditure levels in different boroughs, using a technique called 'National Capital Accounting'. Dedicated park staff were almost extinct, and bedding was being replaced by the monoculture of grass. Peripatetic teams were universal - split half and half between in-house and contracted-out - recently the number of contractors had declined, as margins were cut. Some 40% of boroughs were looking to dispose of some parks. Other threats were encroachment (e.g. by school expansions, - academies did not have to have their own playing fields) and use for events; though there were only a few really major events, many parks departments had been set income targets, and the proceeds often did not come back to the park. Events in London Fields attracted people from all over the capital, who left litter that was very expensive to clear up. Fly tipping was increasing and picnics were simply abandoned. Commercial dog walkers, 'park runs' and professional fitness trainers created problems for other users and increased the costs of park maintenance but brought in

no income. All this needed management. Mr Leach saw benefits in having more concessions, like cafés, in parks; vertical planting could become more frequent; and litter could be reduced by removing litter bins. He referred to Chapter 8 and Table 8.1 of the Draft New London Plan, and the renewed emphasis on place-making.

## Questions to Mr Parker

Q: The Highgate Society observed that Haringey tree officers were overworked and not within the planning system. How can good practice and good enforcement be achieved?

A: these were serious problems, made worse by the natural timescale of trees. He emphasised the need to get local councillors interested and involved.

Q: In some areas there had been a 250% increase in housing and a 72% reduction in trees, and those which were planted were often of the wrong species.

A: it was necessary to quantify the benefits of trees (air quality, water storage etc.) to get them properly appreciated within the planning system.

Q: The Wimbledon Society suggested that the policy for replacing trees should be based on the concept of 'tree years'. It was not satisfactory to plant two flowering cherries instead of one plane tree, which had a 125 year life. Other criteria could be monetary value or canopy cover.

Q: The Telegraph Hill Society was unhappy at the 'castration' of trees by pollarding - thinning by removing too-low branches would be adequate.

A: On clay soil trees could cause subsidence, and surgery, perhaps repeated surgery, might be required. But the removal of trees could itself cause subsidence.

Q: The roots of Canadian maples could invade basements.

A: That this was very rare with properly constructed basements; tree roots did not damage pipes, though they exploited pipes that had already been damaged.

## Questions to and discussions with the other speakers.

A question about the maintenance of pocket parks led to a discussion. Mr Leach encouraged local people to take ownership



# Protecting Trees

**Diane Burridge** looks at some of the quantifiable benefits of trees and action by Societies to protect them

of pocket parks; 'Parks for People' or other third sector organisations might be able to give some back office support. Some local authorities might be worried about the risks involved in such a transfer of responsibilities, but attitudes were becoming more relaxed. The use of herbicides was controversial; the alternative - killing weeds with heat - was very expensive. Berlin, apparently, allowed weeds to grow up even on streets, but that might not be acceptable in London.

## Memorialisation of parks

The memorialisation of parks was discussed. The Holocaust memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens was the most prominent case, but there was a proliferation of plaques on park benches. Local authorities (who might welcome the revenue) should have a clear policy. The London Parks and Gardens Trust was a source of advice.

## The role of Friends Groups

Some participants wondered whether there was too much reliance on Friends Groups, which could not be a substitute for a proper budget. Mr Leach accepted that there were limits to what Friends Groups could be expected to do. Mr Massini said that there would have to be a radical reexamination of the funding of parks (as of other local authority services). He noted that developers benefitted from having public parks nearby (indeed they were infrastructure necessary for a successful development); this could be a source of finance. Mr Eversden saw a way forward in the new emphasis on urban design in the planning system; but he feared outsourcing could be a problem, since it required much more professionalism, in drawing up water-tight contracts and in monitoring, than local authorities seemed to possess.

Mr Ball described his experience with Churchill Gardens, where the Residents Association could not be persuaded to take any interest in their open space and the wild-life garden in it. Getting real public involvement was difficult. Mr Leach said that people were often motivated by a perceived threat; for many the motivation was the implication for them personally, not the more abstract community. Mr Massini said that the need was to discover people's real motivation - emphasising perhaps air quality, effect on one's children and grandchildren etc. Mr Coupe said that inspirational leaders were required. Schools should be harnessed. ■

Recent articles in the press highlight the increasing threats to trees in London. Some societies have reacted to protect and increase these, and Bromley Council has challenged the destruction of trees by Network Rail using Tree Preservation Orders. To support such action, a range of quantitative and qualitative tools have been developed to measure the value of trees.

## Action by Societies Finchley Society

The Finchley Society examined trees in some streets which had been studied by Barnet Council's tree officers in 1996 and again in 2015. Data was available for 49 of the 110 streets in two wards; in these 49 streets, a total of 994 trees were recorded in 1996, and 889 trees in 2015 - a loss of 105 trees, over 10%. Presuming that these two wards are representative of all the streets in the borough's 21 wards, then there has been a loss of about 2,000 trees since 1996.

## Highgate Society

The Highgate Society offered to update the list of Tree Preservation Orders for Haringey Council, as this list was last updated in 1996. And areas with a group 'Blanket Tree Preservation Order' were last reviewed in the 1950s, even though local authorities are required to keep their lists updated. Haringey Council has not as yet responded to this offer, nor clarified how decisions on trees are made, as requested by the Society. The Society also objected to several applications to prune or fell ancient trees, with some of these applications having no tree report. This is not helped by Planners and Tree Officers being in different departments, and the easy acceptance at times of developers' arboricultural reports.

## Enfield Society

The Trees Group of the Enfield Society has a tree nursery in Trentwood Side where over 100 saplings are being grown for future planting. This Group reports in the Society's newsletter that:

'fewer trees are currently being planted in England than at any time since the end of the Second World War, even though England has the lowest level of woodland cover in Europe, with only 10% cover compared to a European Union average of 38%. The Society works closely with Enfield Council, agreeing where trees need to be removed and replaced, and plans to provide trees to the borough's Friends of Parks Groups.

## Bromley Council leading the way for boroughs

Much news coverage was given to Network Rail's chopping down of thousands of trees alongside railway tracks. Perhaps catalysed by a citizens' on-line campaign called StopTheChop!, Bromley Council took the initiative on 16 May 2018 and placed a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on trees along tracks in the borough.

Network Rail now has to apply to the Council for permission to chop down the trees and force the removal of this TPO, stating their reasons for wanting to do this. Several societies in London are involved in urging their councils to do likewise. Even the Department for Transport has ordered an investigation into Network Rail's tree felling.

## iTree - measuring the value of trees

David Nowak of Treeconomics developed this software tool in 2006 to price the environmental services that trees provide - for example, the pollution that they remove, the carbon they store, the run-off prevented from going into the sewage system, the energy saved when trees cool buildings. Species of trees can be ranked for particular areas.

The i-Tree Eco Assessment Project in 2015 found that Greater London has 14% tree coverage with a total of 8.4 million trees - 57% in private ownership and 43% in public ownership. 1.6 million of London's trees are situated in Inner London and a further 6.8 million within Outer London. Tree density is 53 trees per hectare, this is lower than densities recorded for other towns and cities in

# Protecting Trees (continued)

the UK, which have an average of 58 trees per hectare (two and half acres).

Trees with a diameter at breast height of less than 15cm constitute 35% percent of the population (42% for Inner London and 34% in Outer London). The three most common species across London are sycamore (7.8%), English oak (7.3%), and silver birch (6.2%).

Just over 86% of the trees assessed in Greater London were considered to be in either excellent or good condition. The percentage of trees considered in excellent condition varied between Inner London (63%) and Outer London (77%) The percentage of trees considered dead or dying was 3.6% across London.

The Project report concludes that the most effective strategy for increasing average tree size and the extent of tree canopy is to adopt a management approach that enables existing trees to develop a stable, healthy, age and species diverse population.

## Valuing London's Urban Forest

Results of the London i-Tree Eco Project, first published by Treeconomics, 2015.

(Treeconomics is a social enterprise based at Exeter University.)

## Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT)

This toolkit, developed by Chris Neilan, measures a tree's worth as an amenity. He multiplies the cross-section area of a tree's trunk by a unit price (£15.88). This price relates to what the tree currently costs to buy. The price is augmented by the tree's species, visibility of the tree to the public, local population levels, the size and condition of the leaf canopy, the suitability of the species for the site, and the tree's life expectancy.

Treeconomics and the Urban Forest Research Group (part of the Forestry Commission) have used iTree and CAVAT to calculate the worth of urban trees in Hyde Park. This park has 3,174 trees with 104 species, and these are calculated as being worth £208,916 per year, mainly due to their prevention of pollution. Trees provide more value as they grow and so the emphasis should be on preservation, not replacement.

## The Woodland Trust's Starter Kit

As noted, Britain lags behind other European countries on the amount of urban canopy cover and, in response, the Woodland Trust has produced a Street Trees Celebration Starter Kit to encourage local communities to plant trees.

It is obvious that more trees are needed in London - to cool the air, absorb pollutants, reduce risks of flooding, absorb noise, improve biodiversity and the appearance of streets etc. The Government has pledged to plant one million more trees in towns and cities nationally, and has given councils new duties to consult with residents before any felling can take place.

Societies may wish to ask their councils how many trees they will be planting with this Government pledge, and the consultation process that they will follow. ■

<http://stories.woodlandtrust.org.uk/streetfighters/> ■

## Noise in Parks - research by CPRE London May 2018 - Diane Burridge reports

Recent research by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (London branch) has found that almost a third (29%) of the 885 London parks that they surveyed are severely impacted by traffic noise. This is defined as when a park experiences traffic noise greater than 55 decibels.

### Lambeth

Brixton Society has noted that Lambeth Council is allowing sound levels of between 75 and 90 decibels for some events in Brockwell Park. And many other parks are holding major music festivals over the summer months. Where can one go for tranquillity and peacefulness?

### Sutton

Sutton has the fewest parks (7%) severely impacted by traffic noise and Enfield has the most (57%). All South London

boroughs except one, Lambeth, have a figure below the median for the percentage of parks severely impacted by noise. Fewer than half (44%) of the 885 London parks surveyed are completely free from traffic noise, and around one in five (18%) are completely noisy: that is, they have traffic noise of 55 decibels or above which can be heard everywhere in the park.

### Impact of noise on health

The impacts that noise can have on health can be significant. As the London Mayor says in his Environment Strategy: 'In cases of prolonged exposure to excessive noise, health impacts include cardiovascular and physiological effects, mental health effects, hearing impairment, reduced performance and communication and learning effects.'

## Environmental noise the second largest health risk in Western Europe

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises environmental noise as the second largest environmental health risk in Western Europe behind air quality. And the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2017 states that: 'The annual social cost of urban road traffic noise in England is estimated at £7bn- £10bn.'

And yet, due to cash restraints, boroughs in London are agreeing an increasing number of large and noisy events in parks, just adding to the stress experienced by children and others needing to have quiet, green, open space in which to relax and play. ■

For more information see:

[www.cprelondon.org.uk/resources/item/2391-noiseinparksreport](http://www.cprelondon.org.uk/resources/item/2391-noiseinparksreport) ■

# Open meeting on Waste

21st May 2018

Guest speakers: **Councillor Champion** of Islington Council scrutiny committee; **Andrew Richmond** outgoing Policy and Strategy Manager for Waste and Green Economy at the Greater London Authority; **Bruce Bratley** of First Mile.

**Peter Pickering** reports

Councillor Champion spoke about the work her scrutiny committee at Islington had done. There were as many different waste-collection regimes in London as boroughs. Islington's recycling rate was, at 31%, among the lower, but that could in part be ascribed to there being relatively few gardens, (whose refuse was easily recycled) and to the prevalence of flats, often with inconvenient steps and little space to separate recyclable from other waste.

Television programmes like 'Blue Planet' had created concern about some types of waste, but may not have emphasised the importance of recycling food waste, and avoiding contamination. It was important to convince people that the effort they put in to separating waste was worthwhile - volunteer 'recycling champions' could be a help, as could getting refurbishment of furniture on estates for resale.

Some boroughs collected recyclable waste weekly, and residual fortnightly. This created a problem for small flats, and Islington was not changing from weekly collections; despite cost pressures its collection system was in-house. Bags were obtainable from libraries; not all estates had food-waste collected, and there was no doorstep collection of clothes (though there was a recycling depot near Holloway Road Underground station). Islington was a member of the North London Waste Authority, with an anaerobic digestion plant in Edmonton; the ability of sorting by conveyor belt to separate out types of plastic was remarkable.

## Questions

In reply to questions Councillor Champion expressed concern at the amount of plastic waste that went abroad for recycling; did not see more than a limited role for punishing those who did not recycle properly (better to get people to feel that they were doing the right thing), and had some doubts about recycling bins in parks and other public places (as in Germany), because of the danger of contaminating one type of waste with another.

## The Mayor's Environment Strategy

Andrew Richmond talked through the waste component of the Mayor's

Environment Strategy, which had that day been before the Assembly. He mentioned the unintended consequences of looking primarily at carbon and ignoring e.g. diesel and particulates. The Mayor's target was the recycling of 65% of municipal waste (over 7 million tonnes) by 2030, but progress had recently stalled (indeed all regions of England were flat-lining and London was among the worst) and the target for 2025 was 50%; composting and recycling must be maximised and landfill minimised.

There were great differences among boroughs - Bexley was currently the best borough for reuse, recycling and composting. He emphasised the problem of contamination - food waste reduced the value of other recyclables - the need was not to waste food.

## Economics

It was not technology (it was possible to tailor recycling services to individual differences in type of waste) but economics that prevented growth in recycling. Waste moves around the world; China's ban on importing plastic waste might change what was used. It was not clear whether Brexit would have an impact.

Mr Richmond saw a future in a Responsible Procurement Policy and in the 'circular' economy (rather like car clubs), in which domestic appliances continued to be owned by their original supplier and leased to users - the supplier would then have the incentive to construct them to last (rather than making his profit from obsolescence and replacement). The concept was similar to having reusable bottles of water, to be refilled at water fountains.

## Questions

In reply to questions Mr Richmond said that garden and similar waste was on average 20% of the whole. Although the quantity of household waste per person was declining (as things became lighter) population growth meant that the overall amount was not reducing. The following points were made:

- It would be helpful to publicise successes, since people liked to be following a winning team.
- At present the GLA was concentrating

on household waste, but there would be merit in widening their efforts to cover e.g. hospitals. But some health-care waste was hazardous, and not recyclable.

- There seemed to be more plastic packaging used in Britain than in other countries - the need was to make supermarkets realise what the customer actually wanted.
- Incineration, though preferable to landfill, was not as good as recycling - its efficiency was only 23%.
- Lighting technology was evolving rapidly. Low-energy bulbs were hazardous waste, and Lambeth Council, for one, had ceased dealing with them. It was important to give the public clear guidance.

## Recycling services for businesses

Bruce Bratley explained the nature of the business of which he was the founder and chief executive. They provided recycling services for businesses and local authorities - they were the first step in the collection chain. It was hard to keep up with the ever-changing types of waste. Much of the plastic waste in the sea came from the erosion of landfill sites in low-lying south Asia. Like Mr Richmond, he had hopes of the 'circular economy'. But as virgin resources become cheaper and recycling more expensive he feared that it would become cheaper not to recycle; recent falls in oil prices, coupled with the Chinese bans, made the incentive to recycle very small. Food waste was highly recyclable, provided it was not contaminated. Some plastic substitutes, though themselves bio-degradable, were hard to distinguish from plastics, and could render recycling impossible. There was still too much overprocessing and unnecessary packaging. ■

# Round the Societies

A round-up of news from our member societies.

By **Diane Burridge**

## Neighbourhood Forum and local Societies-clarifying roles?

As Neighbourhood Fora are increasingly being set up around London, some are having to clarify respective roles with local societies.

The Localism Act 2011 gave neighbourhoods an opportunity to apply to the local council for their area to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area, as the first step in setting up a Residential or Business Neighbourhood Forum. This Forum would then be responsible for Neighbourhood Planning.

To remind readers, the key stages are:

- Stage 1: Designating a neighbourhood area and, if appropriate, a neighbourhood forum.
- Stages 2 and 3: Preparing and then consulting on a draft neighbourhood plan or order.
- Stages 4 and 5: Submitting this to the local planning authority, for an Independent Examination.
- Stages 6 and 7: Holding a Referendum and, if approved, bringing the neighbourhood plan or order into force

The **Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum**, for instance, was designated in October 2014, by Westminster City Council, as the Forum for the Belgravia neighbourhood area. A programme of consultation is being undertaken (Stage 2) to inform a draft plan to be submitted to the Council.

How does this Forum fit in with **The Belgravia Society** and other associations? In a recent Belgravia News, the Chairperson of the Forum stated that this Forum will deal with overarching issues of planning and development, and only rarely would an individual planning application be considered, acknowledging that these are better directed to the respective societies. How this works in practice will be of interest to those societies concerned about wider planning matters.

The **Highgate Neighbourhood Committee**, working for the Forum, has completed all seven stages and had its Plan adopted by Camden and Haringey Councils, and it now forms part of the statutory planning process in each borough. This Forum will have access to a percentage of the Community Infrastructure Fund. Ideas for projects are progressing, and include support for small play areas, investment in the Holly Lodge Community Centre, improvements to Pond Square, and the development of a tourism strategy with London Metropolitan University and the University of Westminster. **The Highgate Society** is actively involved in these developments.

The **Knightsbridge Association** is encouraging people to vote in the forthcoming Referendum to approve the Neighbourhood Plan drawn up by the **Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum**. If approved, this Plan will become part of the formal development plan for the area until 2037. The submitted Knightsbridge Management Plan proposes 85 specific actions to address matters that are not land use matters, and so these will not be part of the planning process. Anyone who lives, works or studies in the designated area can apply to become a member to vote.

It will be of interest to see the breakdown of registered members for each Forum, and how these new initiatives work with local civil and amenity societies over the next few years.

## Putney Society Discount Scheme for Local Shops

Recent redevelopments in Putney have seen office space mainly converted into residential units. The Putney Society has estimated that over 800 day-time office/business workers have been lost to the town centre, which has had a negative impact on local businesses. The Society also found that residents were unaware of how many independent businesses there are in Putney, and were shopping in other town centres such as Richmond. To promote awareness of what fantastic independent shops there are locally, the Discount Scheme was born with, to date, positive feedback from local people and shops. Quantitative evaluation of the impact of this scheme will be of interest to many town centres.

## Street Clutter in Islington

Despite Islington Council having a policy of reducing street clutter, there is now more! Firstly, telephone boxes have been installed in the borough, to the publicly-expressed dismay of the **Islington Society**. Some 130 applications have been made by companies including BT Link, Euro Payphone and JC Decaux. To the credit of the Council, many of these have been rejected but the applications continue to come. The BT InLink machines offer internet, charging pods and free calls, as well as Tube updates and weather forecasts. A great service one might think, but the gawdy advertisements on these are visually distracting and potentially dangerous, and often block passage on the footpath.

British Telecom, in response to criticism, stated that on average for every new InLink unit installed, two telephone boxes are removed. The company has offered to work with community and conservation teams, as they are keen to increase the numbers - not surprising with the lucrative revenue they will get from these.

Secondly, the lead Councillor for the Environment and Transport in a recent press release championed the installation of 'smart benches', installed by Strawberry Energy. Later council planners rejected retrospective planning permission for four of these five benches, belatedly appreciating that the Council could not be seen to contradict its own policies on reducing street clutter.

## New Riverside Path and Railings in Isleworth

After a hard-fought campaign by **The Isleworth Society**, a continuous riverside path from Heron's Place to Richmond Road opened late 2017, as part of the planning consent for the development of the former Nazareth House site. The Society started off as the Friends of Old Isleworth and, in their 1954 Annual Report, it stated that the Council's policy was to acquire land for the purpose of a public footpath! Nearly 70 years later, this has finally happened. The Society also helped prevent two lime trees being cut down and campaigned for Tree Preservation Orders being placed on these.

And, after a comparatively mere two years of requests by The Isleworth Society, the neglected railings along the river front from Ferry House's wall have received attention, with the eroded wooden posts replaced by metal and other wooden ones painted. These railings were decked with bunting to celebrate a project launch aiming to restore Isleworth Ferry.



### Closure of the Lambethans Society.

Founded in 1949 as the Lambeth Civic Society, the Lambethans Society has closed, with the modest bank balance passed to the Lambeth Local History Forum. There is an extensive network of amenity societies in Lambeth, including the Balham Society, Brixton Society, Camberwell Society, Clapham Society, Dulwich Society, Herne Hill Society, Streatham Society and Vauxhall Society. And so the borough is alive with resident-led societies, most of whom are members of the London Forum.

### Conservation Areas at Risk in Greenwich

Four of Greenwich's 20 conservation areas have been put on an up-dated register of conservation areas at risk by Heritage England. These include: East Greenwich Conservation Area and Westcombe Park Conservation Area. The factors which are risking these areas include: inappropriate change, the extent of vacancies and dereliction, lack of maintenance and the condition of the public realm. The Greenwich Conservation Group are discussing these matters with the Royal Borough of Greenwich's conservation staff, and the **Greenwich Society** will be playing an active role here.

### Cleaning up Blackheath Village

Fly tipping by shops and others in Blackheath Village created such eyesores that the **Blackheath Society** met with the Commercial Waste Department at Lewisham Council to walk around the Village to identify areas needing cleaning. A letter followed from the Council to businesses giving details again of the newly - negotiated times for waste collection. Disused strings of Christmas lights left draped over shops, over-flowing commercial bins and dirty listed red telephone boxes were highlighted also as needing attention. One telephone box has been removed, but a second one would cost £2,500 to remove. The Society is calling for its corporate members to support them in improving the general appearance of the Village and is, in the meantime, asking members for their ideas on improvements needed.

### Input into Merton Council's Local Plan

The **Wimbledon Society's** Planning and Environment Committee sent in specific and measurable suggestions to Merton Council as part of the consultation to draw up a new Local Plan, which will not be ready before 2019. Suggestions, which may interest other societies, included:

- The Council should adopt the Trees' Years replacement approach, where the total age of lost trees is matched by the ages of new tree plantings, either at the same site or elsewhere in the vicinity.
- A High Buildings policy should restrict the height of buildings in the town centre to six storeys.
- There should be action to prevent the loss of garden greenery to car parking and paving in front gardens.

If these suggestions are adopted, other councils may become bolder in improving the environment.

### New Promontory Garden at Battersea Park

The **Friends of Battersea Park** contributed £30,000 towards £95,000 needed to develop a new Promontory Garden, with Wandsworth Council meeting the remaining costs. The area had been fenced off and full of nettles for many years. In 2013 the Society of Garden Designers selected David Keary of Keary Design Associates as the designers. After much discussion, since then, he has successfully used coloured pavers, traditional benches and ground - sculpted mounds to integrate the Promontory with the rest of the Park.

### Local Listing News

#### Bell Green Gasholders Lewisham

After petitioning and an extensive campaign, by the **Sydenham Society** and the 'These Streets Belong to Us' group, Lewisham Council has approved the Local Listing of the Bell Green Gasholders. These two surviving gasholders were designed by Charles Gandon and were built in 1882 and 1890. They are considered to be of significant historical, social and architectural value, and are the only remaining gasholders in the borough. They are positioned within the setting of three Grade II listed buildings – the Livesey Memorial Hall, the War Memorial and the wall surrounding the hall - providing intrinsic group value and being an integral part of the history of Sydenham.

#### Sewer Vent Pipes in Merton

Merton Council, as with many other councils, keeps a Local List of buildings which contribute to the local scene or which are valued for their local historical associations. This List is undergoing a periodic review, and the **Wimbledon Society** proposed that local Stink Pipes be included. The Council asked the Society to undertake research into these. Sir Joseph Bazalgette had established the sewer system in the mid-nineteenth century, but by 1887 the 'emission of foul smells' from some of these sewers, mostly from older houses which did not have traps, was such that children were encouraged not to go outside. This prompted William Santo Crimp, who was Engineer and Surveyor to the Wimbledon Local Board to devise ventilation pipes, in the early 1890s. These Sewer Vent Pipes look like old-fashioned cast iron lamp posts but without the lamps.

#### Nominations to Hounslow Council's Local List

The **Isleworth Society** has submitted 10 nominations for the Council's Local List, which was last updated in 2012. These include plaques sited outside the West Middlesex Hospital which chart the evolution of the Brentford Union Workhouse into the hospital. Over the years, the Society has nominated about 100 buildings and structures for the Local List, ranging from cobbles in Linkfield Road to a George VI pillar box. After a lengthy assessment programme, the final outcome for this round of updating is expected in 2019.

### HS2 Impact on Euston Communities

**Camden Civic Society** are pressing for the objectives of the Euston Area Plan, adopted in 2015, to be realised in the redevelopment to accommodate High Speed 2. (see more on the problems caused by HS2 on page 6) ■

# newsbriefs

News and issues of interest and concern to note.

## Business squeezed out by housing

The ill-advised policy of allowing office space to be converted to housing is beginning to affect London's economy. Now the government is trying to boost manufacturing and rebalance the economy, but a shortage of space threatens those aims. Available industrial floorspace in Greater London fell 60 per cent in 2010-17, according to Colliers International, property agents. Acres of industrial land are being lost to residential development, with rents soaring on what is left. In the rush to house a swelling population, businesses that do everything from car repairs to food processing are being squeezed out. Mark Brearley, a professor at London University's Cass Business School, said planning policy focused on housing at the expense of other uses. "Businesses are being expelled — priced out and evicted — and even owner-occupiers are under pretty intolerable pressure sometimes to cash in," he said. London does not have the policies or zoning framework to accommodate the emerging technology companies which will be vital to the future.

## Isle of Dogs and South Poplar OAPF

An Integrated Impact Assessment was commissioned in May by the Greater London Authority from Peter Brett Associates LLP in respect of the emerging Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF).

It examines how health, equalities and community safety objectives have been addressed in the OAPF

<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/isle-of-dogs-and-south-poplar-oapf>

## More traffic in London's Green Belt?

The **Campaign to Protect Rural England** (London branch) recently published new evidence showing the impact on traffic and congestion of proposals to build around 159,000 dwellings across 443 residential and commercial developments in London's Green Belt.

To quote (abbreviated) Alice Roberts, Head of Green Space Campaigns at CPRE London, 'Green Belts exist to help maintain compact cities where public transport can operate efficiently and people can choose to walk and cycle. Building new housing in low density areas means people often have no option but to use a car for most of their weekly journeys. If development proposals go ahead, an extra five million car journeys per week will be made and there will be an extra 225,000 cars on the road. This is in direct opposition to the Mayor's aspirations for four out of five trips in London to be made by public transport, walking and cycling by 2041.'

Official Government and Mayoral policy is to protect London's Green Belt, even though local councils are now planning widespread development within it, and the Mayor has limited powers. The allocation of Green Belt sites for development in draft Local Plans needs to be challenged, and Planning Inspectors should 'call in' Local Plans to prevent the loss of Green Belt.

## Thames water to repay £120m

Thames Water has been ordered to pay back £120m to customers after failing to control leaks. Ofwat said that it will result in customers receiving £15 each in compensation over the next two years. After an investigation Ofwat concluded that Thames Water's board and management did not pay enough attention to reducing leakage even though it claimed to Ofwat that it was meeting its statutory obligations. The company has now promised the regulator it will publish monthly performance statistics, monitored by an independent adjudicator, and will reduce its leaks by a further 15 per cent by 2025.

## Who makes government policy?

There is increasing unease about government policy being influenced by vested interests. A report in the Times on May 12 finds that leading charitable think tanks have earned millions of pounds from private organisations that want to have influence in Whitehall. Think tanks are being paid by companies to write policy reports in areas that are of interest to their corporate sponsors, and to gain access to senior politicians. The reports tend to draw conclusions favourable to the companies concerned.

## Carillion

The National Audit Office (NAO) and the Public Accounts committee (PAC) have published reports on the Carillion collapse. They find that ministers had failed to monitor Carillion effectively before its collapse and ignored advice that the company was in difficulties.

Despite a profit warning last July and evidence that Carillion was in a crisis the Cabinet Office delayed action "following representations from the company", and continued to grant it contracts including one for work on HS2. When it was liquidated on January 15 it had £7bn in liabilities but only £29m in cash. It raises yet more questions about Government's "revolving door" relationship with the companies who work for it.

The Government also failed to take account of the fact that investors were betting on the collapse of Carillion's share price; it had been the most shorted stock on the London stock exchange for a number of years.

The cost to the taxpayer so far, since Carillion went into Official Receivership in January, is £148 million, including costs from the auditor PwC of £50 million for the first six months. That bill is expected to rise as the liquidation process continues. The company had 420 public-sector contracts covering a vast range of work from providing services, such as school meals and hospital cleaning to road and rail building. PAC chair Meg Hillier, criticising the Government's role, said "we are concerned about the lack of transparency and its potential to create an environment where poor practice takes root." Frank Field MP said he had written to PwC requesting further information over how "PwC's conflicts of interest arising from their long history of work on Carillion are being managed".

*Reports: The Times, the FT, January, May 23, June 7, and 15, 2018*

# newsbriefs

## Local authorities assets sold to developers

A shocking sell-off of community assets that belong to the public is taking place by local authorities, who are denying future generations access to them. Libraries, swimming pools, youth and community centres, town halls, parks and other open spaces were among more than 4,000 public assets sold by local councils to developers and other private buyers last year. They are owned by the public and they're being sold off for short term gain to fill holes in council budgets.

Locality, a national membership network supporting community organisations, submitted freedom of information requests to all 353 local authorities in England asking about asset sales. 240 responded and the results showed that councils sold 4,131 buildings or plots of land last year.

Local Government has received cuts of 40% over the last eight years, and is said to be facing a funding gap in excess of £5 billion a year by 2020, but the FOI responses showed that less than half of the councils approached (41%) have a strategy to support community ownership. Locality believes that many local authorities are just selling these assets off, without even investigating whether they could be transferred to community groups that could run them on a not-for-profit basis. Local community groups are stepping up and fighting for community ownership, but they need support and help with start-up costs if they are to compete with the commercial developers. Richard Watts, of the Local Government Association, said: "Before a decision is made to sell an asset, the cost of selling it versus the benefit it could bring is considered carefully."

Locality have published their findings in a report entitled *The Great British Sell Off*.

[w https://locality.org.uk/policy-campaigns/save-our-spaces/](https://locality.org.uk/policy-campaigns/save-our-spaces/)

## Property prices contiuing to fall

House prices continue to confound the theories of the pundits. Official figures from the Office for National Statistics and Land Registry confirmed that house prices in London are continuing to fall. But according to received wisdom this should not be happening. Prices were rising because there was a shortage of dwellings; the shortage was caused by the planning system which stops builders from building; remove the planning barriers to build more and the prices will fall. But none of it adds up. Prices are falling anyway yet builders and ministers are still complaining about the planning system, and that not enough houses are being built - even as the House Builders Federation admits that the 351,169 permissions granted in England last year is the highest since 2006. What excuse they will come up with next? Anything rather than admit that the sell-off of public housing has contributed a great deal to the problem; it is affordable housing that is required, not commercial development.

A study by Filipa Sá, of King's College London, which examined Land Registry data, provides further explanation. It found that one of the factors behind house price growth in countries such as the UK, Australia and Canada, is demand from foreign investors; the huge amount of foreign cash invested in the British property market has driven up house prices and put homeownership out of reach for a generation of buyers. The report found that overseas buyers now own close to 10 per cent of the UK's housing stock.

## CPRE Survey on Preferred Environmental Actions, April 2018

500 London residents in April 2018 were asked by CPRE (London) to choose the top three things (of 11 choices given) that they would like their Council to do relating to environmental matters. These were: reduce traffic on streets and backstreets; reduce and control litter; and green streets with trees, flowers and planting. See: [w www.cprelondon.org.uk](http://www.cprelondon.org.uk)

## The 'Chiswick Curve' development

London Forum is supporting members in Chiswick, Brentford and Kew who are opposing the 'Chiswick Curve' development, and has submitted objections to the Inspector conducting the appeal inquiry. The application involves a high-density 32 storey building which would have only 25% affordable rent units, compared with the New London Plan target of 41%. The bottom part of the building would be covered on three sides by advertising panels to attract the attention of drivers on the elevated M4 and on the North Circular Road.

## Problem of Web deliveries

The sharp rise in the popularity of online shopping is putting immense pressure on the roads. The level of traffic generated by vans has increased by a fifth in five years, analysis of official figures found. The study, by the Local Government Association, published in March, showed that light goods vehicles travelled 49.1 billion miles on the road network in 2016, compared with 41.4 billion miles in 2011.

## Reviewing local government finance

Parliament published a briefing paper in May about the Fair Funding Review and business rate retention in English local government. It covers how business rate retention works, the Government's proposals for changes to the system, and the 2017-19 Fair Funding Review.

## London National Park City Week

The the first ever London National Park City Week will be taking place from 21 - 29 July 2018, opening with a National Park City Fair on Saturday 21st July at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has given his backing and 346 wards across 33 boroughs have declared their support so far. Working with the National Park City Foundation and other partners, the Mayor is calling on Londoners to get involved. Community groups, businesses, boroughs and local networks can all organise their own events. The aim is to declare the capital a National Park City. It is hoped that London will become a National Park City in 2019.

## New face at GLA

John Finlayson, currently Head of Planning Regeneration at the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, will be joining the Greater London Authority as its new Head of Service for Development Management. ■

### Membership records

Please keep London Forum's membership system up to date for your society by using the new membership renewal facility on the web site:

[http://www.londonforum.org.uk/member\\_login.php](http://www.londonforum.org.uk/member_login.php)

Do make sure to amend your data so that the right people are receiving post and email bulletins, otherwise societies might not be kept informed. The way in which members can amend their details is secure, as is the information we hold.

**Queries** can be sent to [admin@londonforum.org.uk](mailto:admin@londonforum.org.uk)

### The Newsforum team would be delighted to hear from members

Please send us your newsletters - pdf by email preferred - so that any items of interest can be featured in

#### Round the Societies:

[dianeburridge@btinternet.com](mailto:dianeburridge@btinternet.com)

### Delivering Newsforum by email

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# Dates for your diary

## London Forum events

### London Forum Open Meetings 2018

#### Save the Dates

#### Wednesday September 26

Town centres - (to be confirmed)

#### Tuesday October 30 AGM

#### Wednesday November 28

Watch out for emails and consult the website nearer the time for more information

#### Meetings are held at The Gallery,

75 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6EL, (Farringdon station)

All meetings begin with refreshments at 6pm

for a 6:30pm start

### London Forum on Twitter

#### Don't forget the London Forum Twitter site.

Stories; updates on the latest news as it comes in; useful web addresses.

Do pass on the address to all your amenity society contacts.

Twitter can reach far beyond London Forum's e-bulletin list of contacts.

[http://twitter.com/London\\_Forum](http://twitter.com/London_Forum)

NB - note the underscore: \_ in the name

### newsforum

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