

24 September 2007

Home visits underway on Blackwall Reach development

As part of the ongoing community consultation, local residents are taking up the offer of home visits to find out more about proposals for the regeneration of the Blackwall Reach area of Tower Hamlets

A team of fieldworkers has begun home visits in Blackwall Reach to explain ideas behind the far reaching Blackwall Reach Draft Development Framework. This set of principles for the regeneration of the area has been prepared by national regeneration agency English Partnerships in collaboration with Tower Hamlets Council.

The Draft Development Framework was approved by the Council's cabinet in August signalling the start of a three-month consultation with residents and businesses in the area bounded by East India Dock Road to the north, the Blackwall Tunnel Approach and East India Docks to the east, Aspen Way to the south and Cotton Street to the west. It also includes Robin Hood Gardens, a residential complex comprising two blocks of flats.

Residents have been calling the freephone helpline on T:0800 055 6340 and logging on to the Blackwall Reach website www.blackwallreach.co.uk to book their appointments and find out more about the proposed regeneration. All homes and businesses in the area have been informed about the visits and Scott Wilson, the company leading the fieldwork and community engagement team, has so far made direct contact with over 70 residents.

Tower Hamlets Council and English Partnerships have commissioned the public consultation programme to hear what local people think would best benefit their community. To help gather the broadest range of views and aspirations from residents, the consultation will also include a public event on Saturday 20 October at Woolmore Primary School starting at 10am.

Steve Oakes, Area Director of English Partnerships said:

“English Partnerships works across a wide range of regeneration areas, each one presenting different challenges, opportunities and ways of working with our partners and local communities.

“We want to be sure any regeneration in Blackwall Reach will provide lasting benefits and opportunities for existing residents. To achieve this, we want to hear from people who live and work in the area and we hope to see as many people as possible at the community event on 20 October”.

Stuart Woodin, leading the fieldwork team from multi-disciplinary consultants, Scott Wilson, said:

“The response of the community has been great with the offer of home visits snapped up by many residents who've been keen to use this opportunity to talk

about their aspirations for the future as well as voice any concerns they have about the proposed changes. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage any other residents or businesses who have not yet got in touch to do so. We want to hear, and register, the broadest possible range of views from this community”.

Councillor Rupert Bawden, Lead Member for Development and Housing, Tower Hamlets Council said:

“The Council's starting point is very much focused on the lives of current tenants and residents, listening to your hopes for the Blackwall area. We want to build on the strengths, bonds and networks within the current community and, in time, a fair and practical re-housing policy will be developed specifically for this regeneration - but we can't do this without your help”.

Residents that would be keen to have a home visit are encouraged to call the freephone helpline on **Tel: 0800 055 6340** or visit www.blackwallreach.co.uk

- ENDS -

For further press information please contact:

Sarah Webster/ Seamus O Keefe

ING Media, PR agency for English Partnerships

Tel: 020 7247 8334

Email: sarah@ing-media.com/ seamus@ing-media.com

OR

Eloise Clarke

Tower Hamlets Council Communications Officer

Tel: 020 7364 4754

Email: Eloise.clarke@towerhamlets.gov.uk

NOTES TO EDITOR

1. Tower Hamlets Council

Tower Hamlets is a diverse, intense and fascinating place. Major opportunities such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Thames Gateway, Crossrail, City Fringe and the Docklands developments are all taking place within the borough.

At the time of the 2001 census 58% of the population in Tower Hamlets belonged to an ethnic group other than White British. A third or 33% of the population were Bangladeshi, 7% came from African/Caribbean backgrounds and the total White British population was 42%. The borough has the second youngest population in the country, with over 28 per cent of the population under 19.

2. English Partnerships is the government's national regeneration agency delivering high quality, sustainable growth in England. We do this by developing our portfolio of strategic projects and acting as the government's advisor on brownfield land. We also ensure that surplus public sector assets are used to support wider government objectives, especially those contained in the Sustainable Communities Plan. English Partnerships helps create communities where people can afford to live and want to live. Information on projects and programmes can be found at www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation are working with the Department for Communities and Local Government to establish the Homes and Communities Agency.

3. Scott Wilson Group plc, with over 5,500 members of staff, is an international consultancy offering integrated professional services in the transportation, property, environment and natural resources sectors. The Group has doubled in size over the past few years and from its UK headquarters currently controls a worldwide network of 80 offices, of which 40 are in the UK. The main international centres are located in China, Hong Kong, India, SE Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Southern Africa.

Within London's large Planning and Environment Group is a specialist Social Regeneration and Engagement team providing a full range of stakeholder engagement, social impact assessment and equalities impact assessment services, as well as specialist input to master-planning and policy development processes. This group has worked on a number of high profile projects including: Skills for Sustainable Communities Training, Woodberry Down Regeneration and Sherford New Community, West Hendon Regeneration and Elland Area Action Plan.

Scott Wilson was awarded 'New Company of the Year' at the 2007 UK PLC Awards, 'Major Firm of the Year' at the 2007 NCE/ACE Consultants of the Year Awards, 'Best Investor Relations for a New Issue' at the Investor Relations Magazine Awards 2007 and 'IPO of the Year' at the 2006 Shares Magazine Awards. www.scottwilson.com

4. Draft Development Framework sets out a draft framework for consultation on the regeneration of the Blackwall Reach area. It contains information on the existing challenges facing local people and the opportunity this area provides for the creation of a new sustainable community where people want to live and which respects the needs of the current and future generations

A copy of this document is available on www.towerhamlets.gov.uk with translations available in the 22 different languages most commonly spoken in the area, other than English, via Newham Language Shop on Tel: 020 8430 6291. Please quote reference number THDD/14/07.