

# A Great Place to Be

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## Key Messages

- VisitGreenwich: New Destination Management Plan for 2019-2023 being drafted; Visitor figures are holding well and economic impact is increasing.
- Arts and Culture: Royal Greenwich Festival programme delivered; Woolwich Creative District all planning permissions and listed building consents grants for the five buildings; Chair appointed with Trustee and Chief Executive being appointed Dec/Jan 2018/2019;
- Libraries and Leisure: Both library and leisure centre visits down – attributable to hot weather; Plumstead Library closed for a £16m refurbishment in July 2018 and work is progressing well on the combined new Plumstead Centre.

## External Updates

- London Mayor, analysis on mapping and supporting a creative industries corridor along the Thames continues
- Government announces establishment of 9 creative clusters as part of UK Industrial Strategy. London centre is at University of the Arts
- London domestic tourism is down. Research shows that perception of security and price are factors. Furthermore, London & Partners does not have a remit to deliver domestic marketing campaigns, with its target markets being US, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, China and India.
- Inbound visits to London remain strong, with growth from USA, Germany, Spain and France.
- Brexit – uncertainty has pros and cons for the UK tourism industry. Currently, on the positive side, the exchange rate is low therefore a good value destination for inbound tourism.

## Service Updates

### VisitGreenwich

- The current Destination Management Plan runs from 2016 to 2019, therefore work has begun by the VG Board to draft a new DMP to run 2019 to 2023. This time period falls in line with RBG's 4-year planning. At the VG Board meeting in September it was agreed to hold a visioning session in October, to be led by an external facilitator to help steer and agree on Board members' collective ambitions for 2019-2023 and specifically the role of VG within this. Outcomes of the session will be used to draft the DMP for presentation at the next VG Board meeting, 4th Dec.

### Arts, Culture and Events:

#### Royal Greenwich Festivals

- In 2018 the Royal Greenwich Festivals programme delivered a series of high quality cultural events, with the main events taking place from May through to July in open spaces, parks and historical venues. The Festival offer aimed to further highlight undiscovered areas of the Borough with key events taking place in Thamesmead, Eltham and Woolwich. The Festival strands delivered over 1,000 performances and included the Greenwich Book Festival, The Family Arts Festival, Greenwich + Docklands International Festival, The Greenwich Music Festival, Parksfest, and the World Cultural Festival.

- The spectacular season of performances and family entertainment provided unique opportunities for high levels of cultural engagement, with unique opportunities for local residents to celebrate and enjoy the borough. Public engagement and community/schools participation continued as a key element of this year's offer with the delivery of 400 workshop and activities (including a range of school and community participatory projects) delivered across the strands.
- In 2019 we will aim to further cement the Royal Borough's reputation as a place with a thriving cultural and creative offer.
  - We will provide support for a distinct range of festivals and events with a broader focus on community participation and activation as part of the overall festival offer.
  - We will capitalise on opportunities to highlight the diverse range of activities and events taking place across the borough
  - We will work closely with Visit Greenwich to highlighting the range of external Festivals and events delivered by external providers
  - We will increase opportunities for a more significant community offer by our delivery partners and external providers

### Woolwich Creative District

- The project is on budget and due to open in March 2020
- Planning permission and Listed Building Consent has been obtained for all five buildings
- Lead contractor Mace has been appointed and is on site and has started survey and initial work ahead of the main works which start in January 2019
- Detailed designs (RIBA stage 4) to allow the full build to take place, have been received and are being verified
- The Chair of the Woolwich Creative District Trust has been appointed and two places have been allocated for councillors. A Chief Executive is being recruited and they will start to book the events spaces from Spring 2019
- A business plan has been written and has been validated by external reviewers
- Leases are being negotiated with cultural tenants to include benefits for local residents including jobs, training opportunities and apprenticeships, programmes in schools and free tickets.

### Events

- The Great Get Together 2018 was held on 30th June 2018 and focused on activating both The Royal Arsenal and Woolwich Town Centre by joint programming and encouraging footfall across both sites. The event was a great success with an estimated 30,000 attendees and is an excellent evidence base upon which to build for 2019.

### Leisure Centres

- The Greenwich Centre visits dropped by 20,428: from 109,541 during Q2 2017 to 89,113 in Q2 2018. This drop is attributed to new gyms being set up (now 14 units). In addition, new parking restrictions in the surrounding streets has had an affect with the most cited reason for cancelling their membership
- The Waterfront Leisure centre saw visits drop by 7,941: from 160,635 during Q2 2017 to 152,694 in Q2 2018, this is mainly due to the loss of the Car park, and the increase in local competitors

- There is now a new marketing and promotion programme in place and there has been a gym equipment refresh across all the sites including Waterfront, Greenwich and the Eltham centre undergoing additional lighting, flooring and decoration.

### Leisure Events / Activities

- New refresh programme at the Eltham Centre new gym equipment, new spinning bikes - £120k upgrade
- Sutcliffe Park Sport centre has hosted 33 athletics events in Q2
- Sutcliffe Park Sport Centre first summer holiday programme, great success, with over 130 young people per week.
- New Higher Saver Card 439 new residents signed up and number of visits using a Higher Saver Card during Q2 was 3,755
- The Adventure Centres summer holiday programmes were a great success; this was enhanced with all the centres being involved in the Holiday Hunger Food Programme 'Summer Feast' that was supported by the Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency.

### Libraries

- The hot weather in July - September had an impact in visits to all branches which saw a year on year reduction
- Similar drops in visitor numbers were seen nationally and amongst other GLL Library Partnerships
- All branches had a Hardware Refresh of People Networks PCs

### Plumstead Library and Leisure Centre: Background and progress since March 2018

- The development of Plumstead Library includes improvements to the library, as well as the addition of high quality leisure facilities in a sensitively designed extension at the rear of the building. The centre will retain the unique historical character of the library, while adding a café, upgraded gym and badminton areas as well as flexible leisure and cultural spaces for the local community.
- The redeveloped centre will also bring the upstairs areas of the library into use for a variety of activities and provide access to meeting rooms for hire. Public toilets will also be available. The centre will be able to offer extended opening hours for the library, giving residents more opportunity to access this much loved service. A public consultation on the plans was carried out in July 2017.
- The current facility closed in July with a new temporary library opening the following day. As part of the £16m refurbishment the library and leisure offer will be significantly improved including a new Fitness suite, café, art and dance studio and racquet hall. All staff and the outreach service are now accommodated at Eltham Library. It is expected to reopen at the end of 2019.

### Library events/activities

- Charlton House Fun Day
- Kids Festival in Woolwich Library
- Nigerian Traditional Dance Performance at Woolwich Library
- Summer Reading Challenge – Dennis the Menace theme
- Creative Space Workshops at Woolwich Library

- Author Event by Tom Gregory “A Boy in the Water”
- Heritage Centre Fauna and Flora Art workshops throughout June/July
- Adult Learners Week June 18th-24th including Creative Writing with Natalie Kleinman and craft group creating Postcards to New Zealand (Eltham Library New Zealand have linked up)

Subject Area	Indicator	Value	Previous Value	Difference	
Leisure Centres	Total visits to RBG leisure centres	490,324 (Q2 18/19)	506,811 (Q2 17/18)	-16,487	
	Total visits to RBG leisure centres – Adults / Children	459,746 / 30,578 (Q2 18/19)	471,799 / 35,012 (Q2 17/18)	- 12,053 / - 4,434	
Libraries	No of individuals who have visited a Council library in a reporting period	620,450 (Q2 18/19)	700,767 (Q2 17/18)	-80,317	
	No of individuals who made a withdrawal from a council library	18,457 (Q2 18/19)	16,489 (Q2 17/18)	1,968	
	Total number of withdrawal from a council library	243,279 (Q2 18/19)	244,542 (Q2 17/18)	-1,263	
Higher Saver	No of residents with a Greenwich Higher Savers Card	13,007 (Q2 18/19)	12,568 (Q1 18/19)	439	
	Total visits by Greenwich Higher Saver Card holders	315,441 (Q2 18/19)	311,686 (Q1 18/19)	3,755	
Subject Area	Indicator	Value	Previous Value	Target	Comparator
Tourism	Visitors to attractions in the borough (calendar year to date)	9.7 m (Sept)	5.2 m (June)		9.8 m (Sept 2017)
	Economic impact of visitors to Greenwich (£m)	£1.386 bn (2017)	+5.6% on previous year.	£1.4 bn (2018)	£1.312 bn (2016)
	Number of jobs in the borough supported by tourism	16,088 (2017)	+1.6% on previous year	17,371 (2018)	15,836 (2016)
	Number of visitors	19.37 m (2017)	+1.2% on previous year		19.14 m (2016)
	Average length of stay in the Borough	1.08 days (2017)	+0.6% on previous year		1.07 (2016)
	Average spend of stay in the Borough	£244 (2017)	+1.7% on previous year		£240 (2016)

## Analysis

### The Woolwich Creative District

- Developing a narrative that binds the military provenance of the site with its industrial and social heritage during the First World War is essential as the site once contained 80,000 workers many of whom will have descendants still living in the borough. This military, industrial and social context will provide a rich stimulus for the creative sector and its story will be told on the fabric of the buildings and accessible from the public spaces.
- The Creative District is intended to unite Woolwich by providing public access to cultural and employment opportunities for local people through the development of a world class facility. A globally significant cultural offer yet one that is sensitively designed for all sections of the local community, with opportunities for personal fulfilment and career opportunities, could provide Greenwich with a seminal example of the positive local impact of cultural and creative regeneration. The plans that have been developed are sensitive to the needs of world class creative organisations but also provide access to the public as well as enhanced outdoor events space.
- A full design team, led by Bennetts Architects have produced plans up to RIBA Stage 4. The focus is now on finalising detailed plans within budget and phase I planning permissions have been agreed. Mace has been appointed the main contractor and they now control access to the site in terms of health and safety.
- A Trust has been established to manage the site with places for two councillors, and a high profile and experienced Chair has been recruited. A business plan has been developed, and independently reviewed, that seeks to attract world class cultural institutions, host events, offers performance and rehearsal space for local community and cultural groups and delivers tangible benefits for local people including opportunities to access skills and jobs. The business model for the District is based upon 30 per cent use at commercial rates and extensive validation of the London market place has been conducted with the conclusion that our revenue estimates are conservative in nature. The remaining 70 per cent will be for local community and cultural uses.
- Advanced conversations continue to be had with arts bodies, such as Punchdrunk, who will lead (subject to lease) programmes that actively provide jobs, enrichment opportunities for school children and pathways into work for local residents. Lease discussions with Punchdrunk are expected to conclude shortly and will bring 186,000 visitors annually to Woolwich. This is expected to have a significant economic impact on the Town Centre.