

*With strong public support for the route now identified and the backing of the local planning authorities, Greenwich Waterfront Transit has now entered the detailed planning phase.*

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This case study supports RTPI GPN1: Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation available at **[www.rtpi.org.uk/item/325/23/5/3](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/325/23/5/3)**

Additional case studies relating to community involvement are available from

**[www.rtpi.org.uk/item/325/23/5/3](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/325/23/5/3)**

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# Effective Community Involvement and Consultation Case Study 4 Greenwich Waterfront Transit

**How to create meaningful dialogue, address complex issues  
and unlock local support for a major infrastructure project**

## Key Learning Points

- 1 Present all viable options
- 2 Don't exclude the opponents of favoured options
- 3 Bring consultees and decision makers together

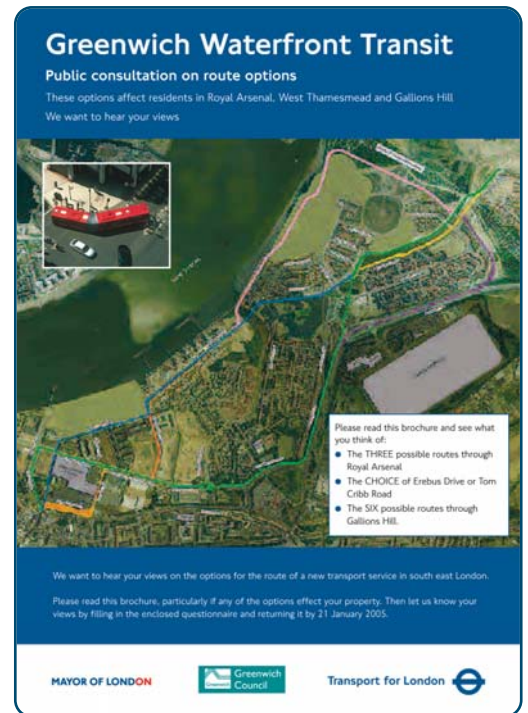
This case study supports RTPI GPN1: Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation. <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/593/23/5/3>

## Background

Greenwich Waterfront Transit is a new public transport route planned between Abbey Wood, London and Greenwich. Initially it will be a high quality bus route, with the intention to upgrade to a tramline when passenger numbers and resources allow. This case study looks at phase one in the London Boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich. An 'in principle' consultation had identified strong support before a detailed route option was presented. Local opinion felt a tram would contribute to regeneration in the area. Public consultation on a detailed route option was then undertaken in 2004.

## Project Description

- Transport for London developed the Greenwich Waterfront Transit and a number of other 'intermediate mode' transport projects as part of its plan to improve the public transport infrastructure in London, enhance the environment and aid economic regeneration;
- There was no further consultation carried out after the original 'in principle' consultation. There were significant differences of opinion between responsible officers at Transport for London and the London Boroughs affected by the route - relationships became strained;
- The route required land that was relatively flat and straight to allow for the future development of the tramline and in the meantime carry an 18 metre 'bendy bus'. The economic 'cost to benefit' assessments were very delicate; estimated passenger numbers were sufficient to justify a bus route, but were not large. The route needed to be as close as possible to where people lived, because the nearer a public transport route is to potential passengers, the easier it is to use and the greater the number of passengers likely to be served;
- The project had to have the support of the two local planning authorities to offset the possibility of delays in planning permission and road traffic orders likely to be required to implement the project.



# Greenwich

## The Role of Community Involvement

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- Nineteen individual leaflets showing overlapping sections of the proposed route in detail, accompanied by a letter and questionnaire were delivered to all named residents and businesses. Local voluntary and community organisations were sent the plan, which was also available to view in libraries and at planning authority offices. A DVD was produced to show the entirety of the route (in several languages). A website was also created;
- While residents liked the project 'in principle', objections were raised about three key areas. There were complaints about the narrow band of residents and businesses consulted, 16 alternative routes were proposed and Transport for London's willingness to listen was questioned, because only one option had been presented. As a result, a new community organisation was formed in Gallions Hill to oppose the project;
- In the light of this opposition Transport for London agreed to look at alternatives and re-consult on all viable options;
- Opponents were invited to suggest improvements at an early stage in the new consultation and face to face meetings were held with senior managers. A detailed 20 page brochure was distributed widely. Six local meetings were organised in community venues along the proposed routes. The website was updated. A team of canvassers checked the delivery and quality of consultation materials, encouraged people to attend public meetings and take part in the survey. A telephone hotline enabled people to contact the consultation manager personally;
- The response was significantly improved. Local meetings were good humoured and well argued, complex issues were aired and several areas were identified where Transport for London's assessment had been flawed (lack of consideration for business/commercial workplaces, the impact of new housing developments and road safety concerns.) Environment Agency input identified serious ecological and environmental concerns which ruled out Transport for London's preferred route option. The alternative route suggested by residents proved to have a stronger business case, was adopted by Transport for London and approved by the local planning authorities.