



WOOLWICH DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

An Emerging Cultural Destination 2018 - 2022

(v4)

Prepared for Visit Greenwich
by



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1.1 Destination Management Plan

This destination management plan outlines a strategic way forward for Woolwich, with a detailed action plan to achieve the aim of transforming Woolwich to become a place where people want to live, invest, work, do business, and, ultimately, visit. It makes recommendations to build on significant, imminent improvements in public transport to Woolwich and emphasises the role of the proposed new 'Creative District' in transforming both the physical infrastructure and perceptions of Woolwich.

1.2 Urban Transformation

Woolwich is on the cusp of economic, social and cultural transformation. The primary driver is the advent of Crossrail in Dec 2018. With travel times from Woolwich to central London in 20 minutes and Canary Wharf in less than 10 minutes, this will make Woolwich very accessible to commuters, boost the number of residents, and change the population mix. This will drive a demand for new and different services in terms of retail, entertainment and leisure facilities in Woolwich.

In addition to attracting new residents, the Royal Borough of Greenwich, Berkeley Homes and other partners in Woolwich have joined forces to make Woolwich an appealing place to live, work, do business and, eventually, visit, through the creation of a 'Creative District'. This drive to attract organisations in the cultural performance and creative industries will add a new and unique dimension to Woolwich, which will bring skilled jobs, opportunities for local employment and the development of new skills. This should also inspire a 'cluster effect', making it appealing for businesses in the creative industries' supply chain to relocate to Woolwich, where they can be closer to their clients, keep in close touch with new creative ideas, and participate in London's new creative cauldron.

Perhaps even more significantly in terms of image and economic regeneration, once Woolwich establishes a critical mass of such businesses and creative performances, this should contribute to the transformation of Woolwich's image as a unique and different part of London, which pushes the creative boundaries, welcomes new businesses, puts on exciting and ground-breaking events, has a deeply embedded and creative cultural soul, and is well-connected – both culturally and physically. In time, this regeneration of Woolwich's image should also put it on the map as a place worth visiting.

In the early days, visitors to Woolwich are likely to be driven by business and cultural events. But, as Woolwich's reputation grows, the opportunity to widen the visitor audience, through more curious leisure visitors, a more diverse range of culture-seekers, and conferences, will grow. This is when the next step change in economic regeneration will happen, as different types of business spring up to meet the demands of a growing number of visitors throughout the year – in retail, food and drink, transport, tours and guiding, and

ancillary businesses in the visitor economy supply chain to service these expanding tourism-related businesses.

1.3 Economic Impact

The Creative District is expected to be a significant game-changer for the Woolwich economy. By 2022 **£35.9 million** is expected to be spent in Woolwich by visitors in the Creative District and associated creative industries supply chain.

1.4 The Way Forward: Vision and Objectives

The **vision** for Woolwich's successful regeneration is as follows:

"Woolwich will be recognised as a vibrant place to live, work, and invest, particularly by the creative industries and largely because of the economic, cultural and social regeneration, which has been driven by the Creative District."

Woolwich will become a byword for creativity and cultural innovation, largely thanks to the range of creative organisations, who have chosen to call Woolwich home and to its reputation for staging creatively ground-breaking events and its commitment to community engagement from production to performance."

Key **objectives** for Woolwich are to:

- **Reinvigorate Woolwich's visitor economy**, using the creative district as a major driver of regeneration.
- **Develop a new narrative for Woolwich**, which builds on its tangible and intangible heritage and incorporates opportunities presented by the new creative district.
- **Position Woolwich** as a vibrant, appealing place for both residents and visitors.
- **Double visitor revenue (direct expenditure) by 2022:** from £17.5 million in 2016 to £35.9 million by 2022 (+105%).
- **Increase visitor economy-related jobs (direct and indirect) by 133% by 2022:** from 230 in 2016 to 538 jobs by 2022.

1.5 A New Narrative for Woolwich

Importantly, Woolwich's regeneration is not about creating a 'new Woolwich' from scratch. Woolwich is fortunate in that it has an extensive heritage, epitomised in the former Royal Arsenal and in the generations of different people who have come to Woolwich to work and live and call it home. This provides a solid and fascinating bedrock upon which Woolwich can build its future.

The challenge will be to develop and communicate a Woolwich narrative, which incorporates Woolwich's fascinating industrial and social heritage, includes both existing and new residents, and symbolises a dynamic future for Woolwich, while still remaining true to its roots and its people, and retaining its authentic character. The new creative district will help put Woolwich on the map of London's 'happening places'. But the narrative must also incorporate the historic thread of Woolwich's industrial, cultural and social heritage, and use this to project an exciting future. The ambition is to enable the Army to do for Woolwich what the Navy did for Greenwich. This will underpin a sustainable, long-term identity for Woolwich as a vibrant and desirable place to live, work, invest and visit.

The proposed new narrative incorporates a set of brand characteristics – authentic/real, creative, diverse, open and inclusive – which define the character and spirit of Woolwich. This will guide the way Woolwich develops, the story it tells about itself, and, ideally eventually, shape the way people think about Woolwich.

1.6 Critical Success Factors

Challenges are inherent in every opportunity. Balancing the needs of Woolwich's existing residents with those of new residents will be a major challenge. Woolwich must remain a place for all, not just for those with economic influence.

As new residents create different demands, in terms of retail, food and drink, entertainment and leisure facilities, and new businesses spring up to serve them, it is important that every effort is made to retain a mix of affordable and culturally distinctive outlets for all sectors of the community. Similarly, cultural programming should aim to involve and inspire the entire community. This means a diverse programme range, not that every event should appeal equally to every sector of the community, which would be unrealistic.

Apart from ensuring the ongoing authenticity of the place and integration of communities throughout Woolwich, key factors have been identified as being critical to the successful achievement of the vision for Woolwich:

- Successful delivery and viable ongoing development of the **Creative District**.
- Positioning Woolwich as a distinctively 'happening' cultural place and **creative cauldron**.
- Widespread take-up and intelligent communication of the **Woolwich narrative** – in marketing and everyday communications, residents' acceptance, and in infrastructural and public realm developments.

- **Community engagement**, not just so that every community feels involved; but, more importantly, so that the diversity of every community in Woolwich is celebrated.
- Maintaining the **energy, commitment, and positive attitudes** of key players to Woolwich's future.
- Managing the **traffic flows** (pedestrian and vehicular) that increased accessibility to Woolwich will bring.

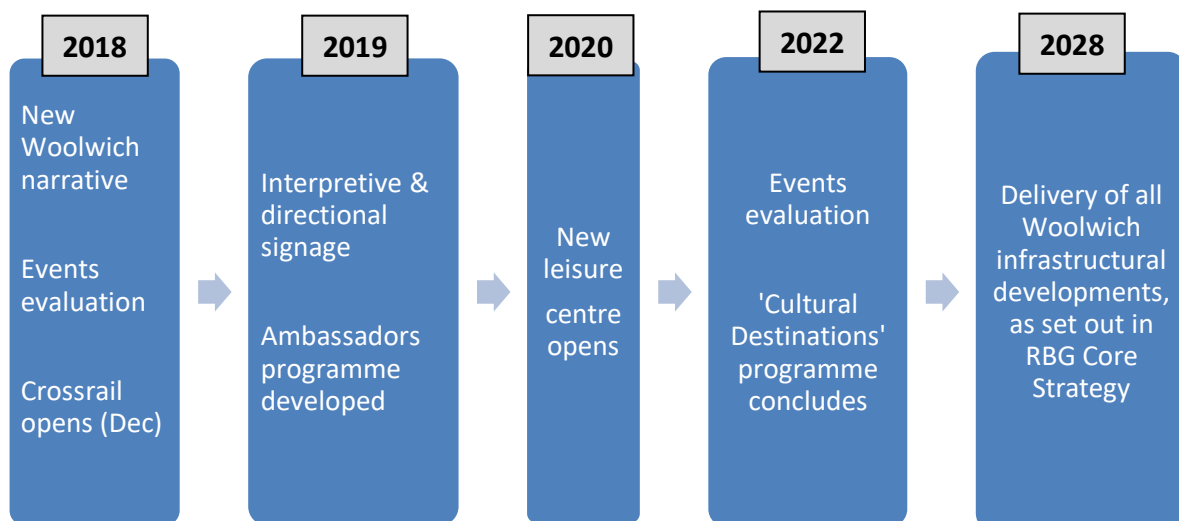
1.7 Action Plan

Activities are proposed to achieve the objectives outlined above in an **action plan**, covering five priority areas over the short-term (1 year), medium-term (2-3 years) and longer-term (4-5+ years):

- Priority # 1: Ensure the 'Creative District' is delivered.
- Priority # 2: Woolwich brand and brand narrative
- Priority # 3: Cultural and events programme
- Priority # 4: Product development and skills
- Priority # 5: Destination marketing

1.8 Timeline

The chart below outlines the timeline for key events to the end of the 'Cultural Destinations' programme in 2022, and to the delivery of all developments identified for Woolwich in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Core Strategy by 2028.



Ongoing activities:

- Experimental events programme development
- Visitor economy marketing (PR, social media, advertising, trade marketing et al)
- Woolwich infrastructure developments (Creative District, Royal Arsenal, Beresford Square, New Woolwich Centre, Spray St., Thomas St., Woolwich Estates)