

What's happening?

Case Study: Community engagement at Bermondsey Dive Under

Background

The last quarter of 2015 was a period when large volumes of spoil were being removed from the Bermondsey Dive Under (BDU) site. This activity coincided with an increase in community concerns and complaints. These issues were addressed immediately, but the Network Rail team at BDU also decided to follow this up with a number of community engagement events to improve the relations with their neighbours. This included:

- **Letter to residents**

A letter was sent to residents to provide a general update on the project, to explain how concerns raised had been addressed, and to invite residents to an information session at the local Lewington Community Centre.

- **Information session**

On 25 January, an information session was held at the Lewington Centre. Thirteen local residents attended this session, which included an overview of the project and a time-lapse video of the works. Community concerns about noise, traffic, dust and the future use of the arches were addressed at this session.



NR Project Manager Greg Thornett presenting At the Lewington Community Centre

- **Site tour**

Local residents were also invited to a tour of the site, on Saturday 30 January 2016. This was attended by twenty-two local residents. They were guided around on an hour-long tour by six Network Rail staff, after which a free lunch was enjoyed by all.



Local residents on a tour of Bermondsey Dive Under

- **Engagement plan**

The team also developed an engagement strategy for 2016, with further engagement events planned up to project completion.

Benefits

To understand the impact of the engagement events, attendees of the open day were encouraged to use Twitter and were asked to fill out feedback forms, which were completed by 70% of attendees.

The survey showed that 100% of the respondents agreed to have a better understanding of the works as a result of the event. More importantly, 100% of respondents agreed that their questions and concerns were adequately responded to. Glowing feedback received included:

- *'Big thank you guys. Great way to engage with the community around your site.'*
- *'Awesome idea so we can see what is going on.'*
- *'Keep up the good work. You guys are invaluable!'*
- *'Another tour in six months!'*

Positive feedback was also posted on Twitter and one resident contacted Southwark Council to recommend the team for a community engagement award.



Some of the Tweets about the BDU Open Day

Additionally, at the time of writing, no further complaints have been received since the events.

Meeting TLP objectives & targets:

Community engagement is Objective 7 of the Thameslink Programme Sustainability Strategy, which states "To pro-actively engage with communities around the Thameslink Programme to minimise negative impact and to work in partnership to maximise our social contribution."

The feedback received clearly shows that these community engagement events have helped to:

- Build better relations between TLP and local residents;
- Improve community understanding of the need for the works to be undertaken; and
- Promote Thameslink and improve its image in the local area.



NR's Greg Thornett (far left) and Niyi Denloye (far right) with local residents at BDU