

The Wren Wildlife and Conservation Group is a local group which is concerned about the protection of the remaining natural habitat in the south of Epping Forest. We are an active organisation of more than 300 members, mainly working on Wanstead Flats, Bush Wood, Wanstead Park and surrounding areas including Leyton Flats. We are a stakeholder member of the Epping Forest Consultative Committee.

Firstly we wish to make it clear that we support the proposal to rebuild a new hospital on the old site to serve our community.

It has been noted that there is a relatively low level of community involvement in the Leyton Flats area and we would like to make the case for ensuring that Leyton Flats, which already has the highest footfall of anywhere in Epping Forest, is not unduly damaged by the proposal for the construction of up to 1,700 new homes, with a probable population of 4,500 people, so close to the Flats. Quality green space for recreation and enjoyment is at a premium in this very urbanised area of London, with roughly one million people living within five miles. It is an area of open ground, woodland and ponds, designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and must be protected.

Without mitigating safeguards, the inevitable growth in vehicular traffic, especially during the construction phase, will result in increased levels of damaging air pollution, which adversely affects plants and wildlife as well as people. Increased use will put at further risk the biodiversity of the Flats, in particular the acid grassland and vulnerable plants and wildlife. Pressure on visitor facilities, paths and car parking zones, especially in the Hollow Ponds area, will create the need to spend more precious resources on maintenance, improved landscaping, alternative routes and improved interpretation.

Targets need to be set to increase environmental sustainability, working in co-operation with the landowners, City of London:

- 1) Commitment to zero net carbon for hospital and other development on site
- 2) Protection of 'green barrier' between new hospital/other development and Forest land
- 3) An important role for City of London in negotiations concerning policy protection for Forest land
- 4) Assistance with added financial implications of mitigating negative impact and improving visitor facilities (such as extra toilets, catering facilities, & new paths)
- 5) Mitigation strategy to reduce air pollution and prevent damage generated by increased traffic and emissions from building 1700 new homes
- 6) Action to combat climate change and to support valued green spaces
- 7) Provision of sites for Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS)