



Press Release - September 2015

## **Greenwich Primed for Growth as London's Fastest Growing Destination**

Visit Greenwich, the Destination Management Company for the Royal Borough of Greenwich, has welcomed its 100th business partner after just 18 months of operation. The company is responsible for promoting Greenwich and the surrounding area as a leading leisure and business destination in London. The 100th partner to sign up was announced as the InterContinental London The O2, the new 5 star hotel which officially opens on 1st December this year.

In just 12 months, Visit Greenwich has seen its commercial income grow by 50% to over £500,000 per annum under the watchful eye of Chief Executive, Barrie Kelly. This means that more than half a million pounds a year is being invested back into growing the industry further - by developing more business with the international travel trade, more national marketing and PR campaigns and improving the website and social media content.

Greenwich is now London's fastest growing destination and with an ambitious programme of events and initiatives planned for 2016/17 as well as a brand new box office available on the Visit Greenwich website, it is predicted that the destination will see a further 28% growth increase by 2018. The area's visitor economy has now hit an all-time high of £1.2billion and welcomes over 18.5 million visitors per year.

Chief Executive of Visit Greenwich, Barrie Kelly said:

"We are delighted with the response from the private sector in the Royal Borough and we see an exciting period of growth immediately ahead of us, including 400 new jobs at the new InterContinental hotel and the arrival of London's first cruise terminal to be located in Greenwich in 2017. We have seen the centre of London shift eastwards since the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics with major increases in growth and investment, highlighting the importance of the Greenwich Peninsula and the surrounding area."

Councillor Miranda Williams, Royal Borough of Greenwich Cabinet Member for Culture and Creative Industries, said:

“Tourism is such an important part of our local economy and is a vital contributor to the borough overall. We’ve always been proud of being a world-recognised destination here in Royal Greenwich and in recent years we’ve seen our tourist industry and status as a leading visitor destination really surge forward.

We have a wealth of attractions and activities to offer here and have the infrastructure and new hotels to support the local tourism industry which is benefitting residents and creating thousands of new jobs and new opportunities for local people.

The Council has had a clear vision to grow the local tourism industry and it’s very pleasing to see this is producing such positive results.”

This year saw the re-launch of the much-loved Eltham Palace with over 100,000 visitors forecast for the year, as well as major investment in an enhancement programme for Greenwich Market, London's only historic market set within a World Heritage Site, scheduled to complete by March 2016. The O2 continues to go from strength to strength with plans confirmed for a luxury retail development opening in 2017.

At the end of the year, Greenwich will welcome the arrival of a new 5 star hotel, the InterContinental London The O2, bringing 452 new bedrooms and generating more than 400 new jobs, including 25 apprenticeship opportunities in the area.

Riverside growth continues at pace with MBNA Thames Clippers investing £6.5million by introducing two new high speed vessels operating across London. Launching in October, the Galaxy Clipper and Neptune Clipper will provide additional capacity across the Thames river network.

Greenwich will see major investment in 2017 when London's first cruise terminal comes to Enderby Wharf, where up to 55 cruise ships a year will be expected to dock at the new terminal. The new scheme will create up to 500 new jobs and includes 477 new homes, a skills academy, restaurants, cafes and bars. Over in nearby Woolwich a major new cultural strategy, driven by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, will see the creation of a cultural and heritage quarter at the Royal Arsenal as part of the borough’s wider regeneration, along with

more than 50,000 sqm of new retail space created over 5 years; and Crossrail stations for Woolwich and Abbey Wood arriving in 2018.

These hugely significant developments taking place across the destination mean that visitors are keen to stay longer and spend more in the Royal Borough, and businesses are recognising the impressive potential of Greenwich and the surrounding area.

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Image Captions:

Image 01 - O2 In the Evening

Image 02 - The Cutty Sark

Image 03 - Greenwich Peninsula

Image 04 - Greenwich Market

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**Notes to Editors:**

[www.visitgreenwich.org.uk](http://www.visitgreenwich.org.uk)

About Visit Greenwich

Visit Greenwich is a private sector led destination management company, supported by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, with the aim of growing the visitor economy and raising the profile of Greenwich for the benefit of businesses, visitors and residents. A public/private partnership led by a board of tourism professionals, representing different sectors of the industry, with an independent chair, Visit Greenwich works with local visitor attractions, accommodation providers, transport operators, meetings and events venues, the hospitality and retail sector and local businesses to promote Greenwich as a visitor destination for leisure and business.

Set alongside the river Thames in south east London, the Royal Borough of Greenwich is one of London's most popular visitor destinations, stretching from the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, eastwards to cross the Prime Meridian of the world to Greenwich Peninsula for The O2, the Emirates Air Line cable car and new attractions and restaurants, and onwards to the historic Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, Eltham, Charlton and Blackheath.