

## 5. SELECTION OF THE PECKHAM SITE FOR THE TRAM DEPOT

### Background to Choice of Site

In 2003/4, there were 2 studies of over 25 potential sites commissioned by TfL. Site 63P (now called Site 71P) was rejected in the first study, but was one of 5 sites on the second short-list.

- In 2004, the consultants' report compared the 5 sites for their suitability for the depot, and the regeneration impact the depot would have.
- The Peckham site 63P was assessed as 'derelict' and so locating the tram depot there was said to have only positive regeneration effects and no economic or social losses.
- This was compared with the losses in other locations where existing uses were properly acknowledged in the comparison.
- Peckham was chosen because it was said a depot could only be beneficial, because the site was derelict.

### Inspector on the Choice of Peckham (Site 63P)

The Inspector said:

- *"Surprisingly, the Depot Study .. refers to ... the existing derelict status of the site" ... "My detailed inspection of buildings and other land convinces me that that these descriptions are simply not true, and that the Study's findings ... are wide of the mark." [1.9.3.46]*
- *"... there is a serious risk that mis-information has resulted in the premature discarding of alternative sites and the doubtful selection of site 63P for a tram depot" ... "The comparative evaluation and site selection process have been defective" .."On this matter alone I do not endorse the Council's proposals for the land" ... [1.9.3.49]*
- *"I am not convinced that site 63P is the only feasible option for a single or principal tram depot" [1.9.3.49]*
- *"Better access to Peckham is not a strong argument in favour of the depot" [1.9.3.64]*

### Split-Site Depot

So, the Inspector rejected the original plan to locate the very big whole 'single-site' depot on Site 63P. He said there should be a smaller depot in Peckham, with another part elsewhere, called a 'split-site'. He recognised that a 'split-site' solution

- *"..would result in loss of existing jobs and attendant disruption, albeit less so. The extent of this harm would depend on the size of the depot and its arrangement within Site 63P" [1.9.3.61]*

But he said it would be possible for a partial 'split-site' depot to provide

- *"adequate space and suitable type and layout of buildings to ensure reasonable protection of the majority of the jobs and of residential amenity." [1.9.3.62]*

### New 'Split-Site' Plans

TfL's new plans provide stabling (parking) for 35 trams instead of 48, plus the same light and heavy engineering maintenance facilities.

- This is rearranging the depot, rather than making it substantially smaller: reducing it by less than half an acre from 6.9 acres to 6.5 acres.
- Most of the existing activities on the site would be destroyed, and many more homes would suffer disturbance.
- This does not reflect the spirit of the Inspector's report that a 'split-site' depot should give reasonable protection to the majority of jobs and residential amenity

### Redressing a defective decision

The choice of Peckham followed a flawed selection process in which the proposed site was wrongly described as 'derelict' and not compared accurately with others. New-split site plans have not addressed this, nor the impact of closing off a very large strategic area from town centre use. To redress this:

- TfL needs to do a comprehensive transparent review before the tram depot consultation of all the possible tram depot locations, including the accurate assessment of existing uses and respective roles of the sites.