# Woolwich’s growing station congestion highlights failure to prioritise infrastructure upgrades



Greenwich councillors have approved the Armourer’s Court development, a housing scheme that seems more focused on appeasing the developers than addressing the transportation chaos already looming over Woolwich’s heavily overburdened station. Positioned above the eastern end of Woolwich’s Elizabeth Line station, this project—collaboratively pushed by Berkeley Homes and Transport for London (TfL)—plans to add 575 new homes in towering structures up to 26 storeys, all while ignoring critical infrastructure needs that would serve residents in years to come.

Despite Woolwich’s surging passenger numbers, the decision not to include a second station entrance is telling. TfL’s explanation—that current demand doesn’t justify such an investment—falls flat in the face of growing frustration among local commuters. The truth is, TfL’s focus remains on penny-pinching rather than future-proofing a station that, by their own surveys, is increasingly congested during peak hours. Instead of investing in real capacity upgrades, TfL has chosen to trial queuing systems, which are mere band-aids that do little to tackle the underlying problem: no clear plan to handle expected future growth.

Berkeley's development director, Paul Pritchard, has attempted to offer some reassurances, suggesting that a second entrance might still be possible in the future on land located east of the development. But this is little more than a token gesture, with land acquisition hurdles and mounting costs serving as roadblocks. The history of Woolwich station's development is a testament to shortsighted planning; both the council and central government previously dismissed the need for a properly funded station, dismissing it as an unnecessary expense. Now, Woolwich is the 33rd busiest mainline station in Great Britain—a reflection of its rising importance—yet those in charge still refuse to plan adequately for its growth, prioritizing short-term economic gains over long-term infrastructure resilience.

Local residents voiced their concerns during the planning meeting, warning that current plans do not account for future demand. Thamesmead resident Jane Amantula urged officials to think ahead, emphasizing that space must be reserved now for future enhancements like a second entrance—before Woolwich becomes even more congested and housing developments like Berkeley’s Lombard Square intensify the demand. Councillor David Gardner echoed these concerns, highlighting that a second entrance could dramatically improve access and boost the commercial prospects of nearby developments. Yet Berkeley’s representatives refused to commit, citing TfL’s control over station infrastructure, revealing yet again that profit and convenience are governing decisions rather than community needs.

While the development provides some affordable housing—138 social rent units and 49 shared ownership—this does little to address the broader transportation failure that is obvious for all to see. The promised Community Infrastructure Levy of over £7 million will fund local projects—from cycling routes to employment initiatives—yet this isn’t enough to fix the fundamental problem: Woolwich station needs serious upgrades now, not in a distant future, if residents are to avoid being trapped in overcrowded, inefficient transport links.

Support for the scheme was unanimous among councillors, but even supporters conceded that the plans are limited. David Gardner called the Armourer’s Court project an “excellent scheme,” yet acknowledged that building heights are excessive and that infrastructure improvements—like a second station entrance and a proper taxi rank—are essential. These are not optional extras but necessities if Woolwich is to cope with its increasing population.

TfL’s glaring absence from the decision-making process exposed the stark reality: the authority has no real commitment to expanding Woolwich station in a meaningful way. Greenwich Council has stated it would support a second entrance if TfL proposed one, but such a move currently seems unlikely given their dismal track record of underfunding key infrastructure projects. The fact remains, Woolwich, once dismissed as low-value and unworthy of investment, is now a rapidly growing hub that demands urgent, decisive action—not half-measures and delays.

This development takes place amid Woolwich’s controversial exclusion from the original Crossrail plans, exposing how little regard has been given to the area’s true potential. Local authorities and developers have been forced to step in to fill the gaps left by government neglect, but it’s clear that without a fundamental shift in transport policy—prioritizing local communities over short-term profits—the district will continue to suffer from inadequate infrastructure, congestion, and missed opportunities for sustainable growth. The question remains: are those in charge willing to finally listen to the voices calling for real change, or will Woolwich’s future be dictated by bureaucratic indifference and financial shortsightedness?

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://greenwichwire.co.uk/2025/10/22/woolwich-elizabeth-line-second-entrance-armourers-court-approved/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://greenwichwire.co.uk/2025/10/22/woolwich-elizabeth-line-second-entrance-armourers-court-approved/> - Greenwich councillors have approved plans for the Armourer's Court development, which involves constructing 575 new homes atop the eastern end of Woolwich's Elizabeth Line station. The development, a joint venture between Berkeley Homes and Transport for London (TfL), includes towers up to 26 storeys high. Despite concerns about overcrowding, TfL has stated there is insufficient demand for a second station entrance, attributing the crowding to passengers predominantly using the rear carriages of trains. The developers have assured that the project will not prevent the addition of a second entrance in the future.
3. <https://www.fromthemurkydepths.co.uk/2025/05/03/woolwich-elizabeth-line-station-development-changes-above-site-proposed/> - Revisions to the Armourer's Court development above Woolwich's Elizabeth Line station have been proposed, including slight height increases and changes in massing. The project, a joint venture between TfL and Berkeley Homes, aims to build 575 homes. Despite being public land, only 187 of these homes are designated as affordable. The development does not include plans for a second station entrance, a concern given the station's increasing congestion and the completion of thousands of new homes in the vicinity.
4. <https://www.fromthemurkydepths.co.uk/2025/10/14/woolwich-towers-above-elizabeth-line-to-be-decided-with-no-second-station-entrance/> - Plans for towers above the eastern end of Woolwich's Elizabeth Line station are set to be approved without a new station entrance. The Armourer's Court development, a joint venture between TfL and Berkeley Homes, proposes 575 homes in towers up to 26 storeys high. Despite the station's popularity and existing overcrowding, a 2024 survey indicated no capacity issues, leading planners to conclude that a second entrance is not currently justified.
5. <https://greenwichwire.co.uk/2025/10/14/woolwich-elizabeth-line-crossrail-station-second-entrance/> - Greenwich Council's planning officers have determined that there are too few passengers to justify a second entrance at Woolwich's Elizabeth Line station. Despite complaints about crowding, a 2024 survey showed that the station is not operating at full capacity. The proposed Armourer's Court development, which includes 575 new homes, does not incorporate plans for a second entrance, as the current passenger numbers do not support the need for one.
6. <https://ianvisits.co.uk/articles/decision-tonight-could-seal-the-fate-of-a-second-entrance-at-woolwichs-elizabeth-line-station-84843/> - A planning meeting is set to decide whether the Armourer's Court development above Woolwich's Elizabeth Line station will prevent the addition of a second entrance in the future. The development, which includes 575 new homes, is not intended to include a second station entrance, raising concerns about future capacity and passenger flow at the station.
7. <https://www.fromthemurkydepths.co.uk/2025/06/03/no-second-entrance-for-woolwichs-elizabeth-line-station-under-new-towers/> - Developers behind the Armourer's Court project above Woolwich's Elizabeth Line station have confirmed that they do not plan to build a second entrance. Despite Greenwich Council's interest in a new station access, the developers state that the station was not designed to accommodate a second entrance, and no plans are in place to add one.