

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2018**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Derek Levy (Chair), Gina Needs (Vice-Chair), Ian Barnes, Vicki Pite, Hass Yusuf, Lee David-Sanders and Edward Smith

ABSENT Huseyin Akpinar, Tolga Aramaz and Susan Erbil

STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES: *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), Mr Simon Goulden (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Vincent Lacovara (Head of Planning), May Hope (Local Plan Lead)

Also Attending: Councillor Ahmet Oykener (Cabinet Member Property & Assets), Councillor Joanne Laban (Leader of the Opposition), Councillor Daniel Anderson (Observing), Councillor George Savva (Observing), Councillor Rick Jewell (Observing), Councillor Charith Gunawardena (Observing)

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WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Councillor Levy welcomed all attendees to the meeting. The following substitutes were noted:

Councillor Ian Barnes for Councillor Susan Erbil;
Councillor Vicki Pite for Councillor Huseyin Akpinar;
Councillor Hass Yusuf for Councillor Tolga Aramaz.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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CALL IN OF REPORT: ENFIELD'S NEW LOCAL PLAN 2036 DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Governance outlining details of a call-in received on the Local Plan Cabinet Sub-Committee Decision taken on 24/10/2018 – ‘Enfield’s New Local Plan 2036 Draft for Public Consultation).’

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The Chair invited Councillor Laban to outline the reasons for call-in. He reminded everyone that discussion at this meeting would focus on the specific reasons for the call-in.

She outlined the reasons for call-in and highlighted the following:

- The Local Plan, which was about to go out for consultation, was an important document which would shape the future development in the borough until 2036. If we got it wrong, there would be consequences.
- The main arguments for calling in this decision related primarily to green belt issues and these are detailed in points 2, 3 and 4 of the reasons for call-in. although points 1 and 5 should also be considered.
- Local Plans must be in general conformity with the London Plan. The Policies regarding Green Belt release included in this draft Local Plan would not be in general conformity with the Mayor's London Plan.
- The London Plan is very robust with regards to the Green Belt. It states that the extension of the Green Belt will be supported where appropriate however its de-designation will not.
- Building on the green belt did not conform to the Mayor of London's draft London Plan and opposition members therefore queried why such proposals had been included in the consultation document.
- Great emphasis in the report is placed on the projected figure for population growth. Enfield's population projections indicate that the population will grow from 339,000 to 380,000 by 2036, compounding major housing and other pressures. These latest government figures translate into a requirement for new homes of 1876 per annum according to the GLA but 3,500 per annum according to the Government. This large discrepancy is not explained within the covering report or the draft plan itself raising concerns that the statistical basis for the Local Plan is questionable.
- Point 9.3.7 of the draft plan states that there will be a Green Belt Boundary Review that will run in parallel with the local plan process. There is not a requirement to do this and the green belt has firm protections under the London Plan so again, why is this included.
- With reference to 9.3.8, Crews Hill is located deep within the Green Belt yet the draft Local Plan states that there are strong arguments for housing growth in this area but fails to go into much detail. The document also fails to set out forward why building on Crews Hill could be defined as coming under exceptional circumstances.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that altering green belt boundaries should only be done in exceptional circumstances. There are no exceptional circumstances in Enfield so why is this relaxation being proposed and consulted on.
- The Leader of the Council has indicated that the Council wishes in future to allow tall residential buildings in town centres and adjacent to local tube and railway stations. If this is the case, this should be made clear in the draft Local Plan going out to consultation, particularly in Section 7- Planning for Vibrant Town Centres.

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The Chair invited Councillor Oykener as Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, Vincent Lacorva, Head of Planning and May Hope, Local Plan Lead, to respond to the points raised.

Councillor Oykener praised officers for their work so far.

The following responses were given:

- The Council is required to have an up-to-date Local Plan under the National Planning Policy Framework. The draft new Local Plan for Enfield 2036 is required to establish a much-needed planning framework to provide the basis for good growth in Enfield including securing key infrastructure and investment projects.
- Going forward with the present status quo will not be deliverable. The need to deliver for an ever-increasing population and actually meet local housing delivery needs and employment needs and opportunities will require a radical approach and challenge our thinking beyond any plans we have seen before. This must be addressed, and residents advised accordingly, hence the early consultation on the draft plan/proposals
- This Regulation 18 document represents the first of two formal stages of consultation that the new Local Plan will go through before it is submitted for independent public examination (anticipated in 2020).
- Chapter 2 of the draft plan sets out all possible, explores all the opportunities and sets out realistic options for growth. It clearly states that at this stage the Council has not come to a decision about which options(s) to progress with and this is now the opportunity for everyone to have their say.
- At this stage, the Council has not come to a view about which strategy (or strategies) is the most appropriate. This consultation seeks the views of residents and stakeholders before coming to decision.
- At this early stage of plan preparation, the document does not need to confirm a housing target, but rather this is to be provided through robust local evidence base information that will be gathered as the Local Plan progresses.
- The new Enfield Local Plan is an opportunity to undertake for the first time a proper and comprehensive review of the borough's Green Belt which is entirely in accordance with national planning policy and will form an important piece of evidence base work integral to the overall Local Plan process.
- Recognition of the positive contribution that can be made by well-designed and located tall buildings is given in Chapter 4 of the draft plan: Design and tall buildings.

Other issues were raised by members:

- Councillor Smith felt that the statistical analysis of housing need is a genuine worry and the fact that a housing need assessment has not taken place was a real concern.
May Hope confirmed that the new revised NPPF (published in July 2018) has set out for the first time ever that local authorities who are at

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the start of a new Local Plan making process will now need to use a standard methodology to assess housing need for its local area. Central government is due to issue the standard methodology early next year (2019), which the Council will use to assess and pinpoint what the actual housing need figure should be for the new Local Plan. It will be through the Local Plan process to evidence and justify Enfield's future housing target for the life of the plan period.

Councillor Smith's feeling that the Labour administration believed that the borough's population was due to rise substantially, increasing housing need, leading to the need for more building. His concern that the administration was proposing to allow building on the green belt in areas such as Crews Hill, to increase back land development and to permit high rise blocks in town centres.

- The Chair questioned whether, without a housing need assessment having yet taken place, were officers confident that now was the right time to proceed with this draft plan.

May said that it was important to be realistic in providing some guidance to all council departments. It is absolutely necessary to progress an up-to-date Local Plan

- It was no good questioning population growth figures or thinking that migration would be reduced because of BREXIT. Most migration was domestic; people would continue to come to London whether BREXIT happened or not. All predictors indicated that population would continue to grow.
- With regards to tall buildings Councillor Oyken advised that we are governed by the Government telling us to build where transport links are and to 'go up'. Without a Local Plan it will be easier for the Government to dictate where these buildings take place. The Local Plan deals not only with the number of buildings but also achieving design high quality design
- He went on to say that the pressures are such that we now have to be open minded. The draft Local Plan document places great importance on delivering high quality, well designed places across the borough. He emphasised that the Council has established a Design Review Panel to support its aspirations to raise design quality across the borough and respond to the local characteristics. The Panel will play an instrumental role in developing the Council's design framework.
- Councillor Smith replied that he was not opposed to tall buildings per se. The key point however as detailed in the call-in is the impact such buildings would have on the borough and urban centres within Enfield. These new proposals if they went ahead he thought would change, for the worse, the character of Enfield for ever and would change the quality of life of Enfield residents.
- Councillor Barnes asked for clarification as to what would constitute an 'exceptional circumstance' in relation to the NPPF and how this would affect Enfield. Officers provided a detailed response.
- In response to a question from Councillor Pite, Vincent Lacovara, Head of Planning provided clarification on a type of site within the green belt called 'previously developed land (PDL)' and how some of the disused green houses in Crews Hill, for example, may fall into this category.

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Councillor Laban summed up by stating that many people were concerned about building on the Green Belt. The Mayor of London had a zero-tolerance policy to building on it and the opposition believed that these proposals would put the Council on a collision course with this policy.

Councillor Okyener again emphasised that the draft new Local Plan document is at 'Options' stage i.e. first of two formal stages and it was important that residents were given the opportunity to express their views on all the possible and realistic options so that the Council could get the plan right. He asked members to encourage their residents to engage in the consultation process and said that all members could also build their own personal views in to the consultation.

The Chair concluded by confirming that as this was the first stage of the consultation process any points and concerns raised would be addressed through various platforms during the whole consultation process.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the reasons provided for the call-in and responses provided. Having considered the information provided the Committee agreed to confirm the original Local Plan Cabinet Sub-Committee decision:

Councillors Barnes, Needs, Pite and Yusuf voted in favour of the above decision.

Councillors David-Sanders and Smith voted against

The original decision was therefore **agreed**.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING 23 OCTOBER 2018

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2018.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted the dates as follows:

Provisional Call-Ins:

Thursday 6 December 2018

Thursday 20 December 2018

Tuesday 15 January 2019

Thursday 7 February 2019

Tuesday 12 March 2019

Tuesday 26 March 2019

Thursday 11 April 2019

The business meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Tuesday 12 February 2019

Wednesday 3 April 2019

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The Overview & Scrutiny Budget Meeting: -Thursday 31 January 2019.