

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 2020

MEMBERS: Councillors Mahmut Aksanoglu (Vice Chair), Anne Brown, Katherine Chibah (Chair) and Lindsay Rawlings

Dennis Stacey (Bush Hill Park Study Group)
Andrew Newman (Clay Hill Study Group)
John West (Enfield Society)
Carol Cragoe (Enfield Town Conservation Area Study Group)
Ann Bishop Laggett (The Federation of Enfield Residents and Allied Associations)
Juliet Barnett (Trent Park Conservation Area Study Group)
Robert Wilson (Hadley Wood Conservation Area Study Group)
Chris Horner (Southgate District Civic Trust)
Paul Hutchinson (Grange Park Conservation Area Study Group)

Officers:

Marcus Harvey (Senior Operations Manager), Ian Russell (Principal Engineer), Jon Sharkey (Head of Public Realm Services), Philip Wadsworth (Infrastructure Delivery Manager), Metin Halil (Governance and Scrutiny) and Penelope Williams (Secretary)

Also Attending: Martin Capstick and David Cullen (North London Waste Authority)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Rex Bourne and Denise Gandhi.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. DISCUSSION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER PLANNING POLICIES

1. Planning Applications

Members noted the procedure for referring items for discussion at the forum, as attached to the agenda. There were no applications due to be considered at this meeting but the applicants for the Palace Gardens Shopping Centre proposals in Enfield Town would be invited to make a presentation to the next meeting.

Members also requested a presentation on the proposals for Edmonton Green Shopping Centre. They argued that they would like to receive a presentation at the earliest opportunity in order to have the chance to shape

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developments before a planning application was submitted and not to have to wait until after the plans were already at an advanced stage.

Councillor Chibah agreed to feed this view back to officers.

4. WASTE DISPOSAL AND NORTH LONDON HEAT AND POWER PROJECT

The Forum received a presentation from David Cullen (Programme Director North London Heat and Power) and Martin Capstick (Managing Director) of the North London Waste Authority. Copies of the slides are available on the Council website.

1. Presentation

The following points were highlighted during the presentation:

- The North London Waste Authority is the waste authority for 7 North London boroughs, serves over 2 million people, deals with 3% of the waste in the UK and is the second largest waste authority in the country.
- Their main objective was to minimise and avoid waste. They run a large waste reduction and recycling programme.
- Collection of waste has been key during the pandemic and they were proud to have been able to keep waste services running throughout.
- The authority ran the largest waste prevention programme in London including innovative schemes such as clothe swaps and low plastic zones. This had been estimated to reduce waste by 10,000 tonnes per year.
- The current eco-park facility first opened in 1970 and is one of the oldest in Europe. Work started on a replacement in 2019 following a public consultation. The replacement is due to be completed by 2025.
- The project was aligned with Enfield's ambition to make Edmonton an area of high quality industrial activity. It will also supply heat to the Council's company Energetik.
- The new facility will help tackle the climate emergency, reducing carbon emissions, promoting recycling and energy recovery. It was a priority to avoid landfill.
- The new facilities will efficiently remove toxic substances from the air, equivalent to taking 200,000 cars off the road, improving air quality.
- The district heating network is a very efficient use of energy. The new plants will meet current and future standards.
- There are three elements to the proposals:
 - A resource recovery facility which will enable more materials to be sorted for recycling and will have the capacity to manage 135,000 tonnes of material a year.
 - The Ecopark House (a two storey pavilion next to the River Lea) which will act as a community hub for the circular economy including a visitor centre, education and community facilities and a base for Enfield sea cadets.

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- The Energy Recovery Facility – using the latest technology to create energy with clean emissions.
- Construction started in 2019 and the preparatory stages are now coming to an end. The old and new facilities will be running along side each other. The whole programme will be complete in 2031. A local company, Galldris Construction, has been employed to carry out the preparatory works.
- Part of the work involves diverting the path of a large sewer. This is being done by a specialist tunnel borers Barhale.
- Taylor Woodrow are designing and constructing the Eco Park House and the Resource Recovery Centre.
- Construction work was paused in March, because of the pandemic and the authority's determination to put safety first. Since then they had made a concerted effort to ensure that they were covid secure and have avoided transmission in the workplace.
- This was a publicly owned asset, following best employment practices. Over 2,500 jobs and a minimum of 100 apprenticeships, 225 training opportunities would be created over the 10 years of the project.
- This was an opportunity to be carbon negative and help with the UK's overall carbon reduction targets.
- There had been a large amount of public consultation on the project with regular newsletters and strong local authority governance, accountable to the public.

2. Questions/Comments raised by forum members:

- 2.1 Air quality from the facility was measured by the operator themselves internally and externally by London Energy. There are also regular air quality monitoring activities which compare air quality from all sources.
- 2.2 The contingency budget had been increased following the preparatory works when it was evident what work would be needed particularly in relation to the sewer diversion. Work was currently forecast to be on budget.
- 2.3 It was not possible to go through black rubbish sacks to sort out recyclable from non-recyclable waste. It was more efficient and effective to persuade people to sort the waste before it was collected.
- 2.4 The population of North London was predicted to grow significantly which will mean more waste. At the present time, London exports a proportion of its waste. The aim is to keep all waste in London. While bringing waste down through recycling, it was still estimated that there would be enough residual waste to provide the energy required for the heat and power facility.
- 2.5 A lot of local people, particularly in the New Southgate area, felt very strongly about the new facility. They feared that it would be too big and would result in too much waste being transported into the borough from other areas. The response was made that the development was crucial for North London and it was essential to make sure that capacity was available to meet current and future needs. Current behaviour had matched predictions so far.

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- 2.6 Improving communication about the recycling facility and educating people about the way that it worked could help to reduce opposition. The authority was working to counteract negative publicity and had tried very hard to get across a positive message, using social media creatively, modernising the website and working with the councillors from member authorities.
- 2.7 There was some fear that the coronavirus pandemic would decrease recycling, but recycling rates had improved by 0.5% this year. They were however aiming to be much more ambitious than this in the future.
- 2.8 The Government's 2018 Environment Bill should provide an incentive to encourage manufacturers to produce less packaging. Deposit return schemes would also help reduce waste.
- 2.9 Community engagement and education were key to encouraging recycling and reuse.
- 2.10 The district heating scheme is captive, but the electricity generation is not. Any excess electricity can be fed into the grid. Power could be provided to 127,000 homes.
- 2.11 The new vehicle access will be in the same place as the old.
- 2.12 There were no current plans to move waste along the river, although this might be considered in the future.
- 2.13 The new facility will be able to deal with up to 700,000 tonnes of waste. Capacity of the existing facility is 540,000 tonnes.
- 2.14 Construction was being carried out as quickly as possible. It was not possible to speed things up because of the need for sequencing.
- 2.15 The responsibility for changing over to collection vehicles powered by electricity belonged to the individual boroughs. Enfield was looking at the possibility and would be considering this when the refuse fleet had to be renewed in 2-3 years time.
- 2.16 Using pyrolysis had been considered but there was no confidence that it could currently work at a sufficient scale.
- 2.17 As the authority is owned by the boroughs, any profits generated by the facility is used by the boroughs to keep council tax rates down.

The Chair thanked the representatives from North London Waste for their presentation. They offered to return at a future date if more information was required.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS STRATEGY

The Forum received a presentation on the Council's new Blue and Green Strategy. A copy of the presentation slides are available on the Council website.

1. Presentation

The following points were highlighted during the presentation given by Philip Wadsworth (Infrastructure Delivery Manager).

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- This was an update to the previous Parks and Open Spaces Strategy which ends this year and the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- The strategy is about to go out on consultation.
- It presented a holistic approach to plans for blue and green spaces.
- It should be seen in the light of the coronavirus pandemic, the response to the climate change emergency and the growing acknowledgement of the value of our waterways and open spaces.
- Spaces have multi-functional benefits and can be used for many different types of cultural events.
- The plan was to expand blue and green spaces and to provide greater access for all. It is an ambitious programme.
- Enfield has the second largest expanse of park and open space (900 hectares) and the greatest length of waterway (over 100 kilometres) of any London Borough.
- The long term vision, by 2031, is to be London's greenest borough at the heart of a London national park. There will be three parts to the strategy: the strategy itself, standards and requirements and an action plan. To create a more integrated multi-functional network within the spatial framework.
- There are seven aims including achieving a 25% increase in blue green infrastructure, to enable all residents to access green and blue space within a 15 minute walking distance, to make places more distinctive, healthier, attractive and culturally inclusive, to achieve a fairer distribution to overcome deficiencies, to create wilder, more natural spaces to enable biodiversity to thrive, to create a healthy water environment with increased resistance to flooding and drought, to provide innovative and multifunctional spaces and activities to meet the needs of all users.
- The Council will seek to improve connectivity across the network from east to west. They are seeking to redress the balance between the east and the west, improving quality and creating new spaces where needed looking to de-culvert some of the rivers and underground drains, bring in public realm improvements and create new cycle and footpaths.
- A full audit of all assets will be undertaken using an integrated mapping tool to identify where the opportunities are.
- There will be external consultation on the draft strategy between November 2020 and January 2021. It will be adopted by Cabinet and full Council in early 2021 with a post adoption review in late 2021.

2. Comments/Questions

- 2.1 There was some concern expressed about the very large festivals held in Trent Park and elsewhere, the damage and restrictions on access that these entailed. Officers would welcome feedback on this as part of the consultation. There was also concern about smaller events which could be very disruptive to local residents. A constructive meeting with those concerned about concerts in Trent Park had taken place and mitigating measures put in place.

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- 2.2 Any typing and grammar mistakes would be corrected in the final version of the strategy.
- 2.3 All crossovers are required to have a permeable surface to allow water to drain away. It was felt that the public should be made more aware of the need to apply for permission to build crossovers to prevent them installing them illegally.
- 2.4 Support for the development of the green loop and the work at Enfield Chase. Improved signage was planned. More work was needed on Salmon's Brook.
- 2.5 Some concern about what was meant by surplus open space.
- 2.6 Support for work on rights of way.
- 2.7 Many targets from the previous strategies had been addressed. Those that had not would be incorporated in the new strategy. They would be set out in the detailed action plan which would follow final agreement of the strategy.
- 2.8 Members felt that it was essential that the action plan be properly resourced and that in any new project, funds for maintenance was built in. It was acknowledged that council resources in this area were strained and that there was a skills deficit, but the Council was looking at ways to use grants and funds that were on offer including initiatives such as the apprenticeship levy. The Council was keen to work collaboratively with other organisations.
- 2.9 The proposals would be implemented gradually as resources allowed.
- 2.10 Councillor Chibah offered to repeat her meeting in Trent Park or other parks, in the New Year with anyone who was interested.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and encouraged everyone to take part in the consultation, which would be live on the Council's website on Monday 30 November 2020. A link would be circulated.

6. MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 were received and agreed as a correct record.

7. REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Forum noted the following changes to the work programme;

- Another session on Enfield's housing need strategy and the types of housing planned in the borough would be included in the work programme, as this item had been rushed at the last meeting.
- It was felt that the Council needed to make clear its strategy and provide a 5 year land supply document, looking at what the borough needs rather than responding to applications submitted.
- The item on Whitewebbs had been deferred, as there was no update to give at this time. It will be scheduled for a meeting later in the year.
- The applicants for the planning application on the Palace Gardens Shopping Centre will be invited to the next meeting on the 10 December.

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- The developers for Edmonton Green will also be invited to present to a future meeting.

An item for Any Other Business would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The forum noted the dates agreed for future meetings:

- Thursday 10 December 2020
- Wednesday 13 January 2021
- Tuesday 16 February 2021
- Tuesday 30 March 2021
- Wednesday 28 April 2021