

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 2020

MEMBERS: Councillors Mahmut Aksanoglu, Maria Alexandrou, Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer (Chair), Edward Smith and Claire Stewart (Vice Chair)

Officers: Rebekah Polding (Head of Culture Services Development), Mark Bradbury (Director of Property and Economy), Bob Doyle (Head of Economic Development), Metin Halil (Governance and Scrutiny), Penelope Williams (Secretary)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leaver and Akpinar.

Each member introduced themselves.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CULTURE STRATEGY

Councillor Margaret Greer had to leave the meeting at this point and Councillor Claire Stewart took over the chair for this item.

The panel received a presentation from Rebekah Polding (Head of Culture Service Development)

1. Presentation

Rebekah Polding highlighted the following:

- A specialist team working both internally and with external organisations had been commissioned to put together a culture strategy for Enfield.
- The final strategy was due to be approved at Cabinet in November.
- The definition of culture had been taken to be broader than that of the Arts Council including creativity in its widest sense and cultural identity but with arts at its centre.
- The purpose of the strategy was to obtain a clear view of Enfield's strengths and weaknesses, to enable strategic support and planning, to

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harness the power of culture to support key borough agendas and to make more of the borough's existing cultural offer.

- The overall ambition was to connect Enfield through culture providing youth opportunities and celebrating shared cultures.
- Over the summer Enjoy Enfield had shown what the strategy could do in action.
- The policy framework would contain three cross cutting themes (sustainable culture, opportunity for young people, and culture every day) and five areas of focus (on the ground, right mix, celebration, supporting growth and cultural capacity).
- Ensuring sustainable culture to include financial sustainability as well as the involvement of stakeholders. Opportunity for Young People to involve the creation of opportunities across the future work of the Council and in the economy. Culture every day to emphasise that culture should be seen as an everyday part of everyone's life, woven through the fabric of the borough.
- The focus, on the ground focus seeks to ensure that culture would physically visible in town centres, parks and open spaces as well as in the open spaces to the North of the borough.
- The right mix focus seeks to address the culture gap - areas where Enfield has had historically less - creating spaces for artists and facilities such as music venues and independent cinemas.
- The supporting growth and providing opportunities for young people focus would aim to bring more creative jobs to Enfield. One in six jobs in London was in the creative economy. These jobs were less prone to automation and were critical to growth.
- Increasing celebration across communities, would involve working with local people from the grass roots up to develop new activities.
- Increasing cultural capacity from the top would mean creating sustainable networks and obtaining funding. Funds were already being directed from the Arts Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help support the covid recovery.
- The next steps in the development of the strategy would involve cultural and creative sector workshops, agreeing governance arrangements and refining an action plan, following Cabinet approval.

2. Questions/Comments

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- 2.1 In response to the query as to whether all ethnic groups had been involved in putting together the strategy, members were informed that a sample survey had been sent to over 60 organisations, followed up by sample interviews and attendance at workshops. Enfield was lucky to have such an incredibly diverse community.
- 2.2 This was a five-year strategy (2020-2025) but would be subject to regular reviews.
- 2.3 The impact of the pandemic which had already led to many people losing their jobs, especially in the creative industries, had been woven into the strategy.
- 2.4 Arts and culture could help revitalise the local economy. They were also essential to good mental health.
- 2.5 This was an overarching strategic framework. A detailed action plan would follow to be approved by the Cabinet member with responsibility for culture and the Executive Director Place.
- 2.6 The council would be a working partner with other organisations to encourage cultural activities.
- 2.7 Negotiations were taking place to link up with organisations like the Troubadour drive in cinema and other film studios to develop facilities at Meridian Water and to create local jobs. Enfield could have the largest purpose-built film studio facility in London.
- 2.8 In the last 6 days the Council had received three large grants for cultural activities. Two from the Department for Culture Media and Sport Cultural Recovery Fund and another from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. These included £137,000 for Forty Hall to support losses and enable the business to develop to make it more resilient and for £534,000 for the Millfield and Dugdale Theatres to cover anticipated revenue gaps and enable them to run small programmes of activity including the pantomime and to keep an audience connection. There was also a £200,000 grant to fund an officer to work with small organisations, offering small grant pots and building future resilience for arts in the community.
- 2.9 There were events taking place as part of Black History Month, but the aim was that every month should involve black history events. That everyone should be included and involved in bringing people together. This could be done through festivals and building on the success of events like Live Stock and at the Drum Sheds. The Council were also planning a Black-Lives Matter mini film festival at the Millfield theatre with the Enfield Caribbean Association.
- 2.10 The cultural infrastructure for Enfield would not necessarily involve one of everything, but there would be a clear route through residents, from grass roots to international events. For example Enfield had a fantastic

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youth music service and had held some large music festivals but there were not many pubs or clubs for emerging bands and young singers.

- 2.11 The Council was looking to encourage not only large enterprises like the film studios but also the smaller companies that provide the supply chain to the larger businesses. Companies of lighting contractors, carpenters, set builders and graphic designers. These could create good jobs for young people in Enfield. The Council needed to facilitate the spaces, people and businesses that were needed.

Councillor Claire Stewart summed up all that had been raised by saying different community groups including black and ethnic minority had been involved in drawing up the strategy, the response to the Covid 19 pandemic had been embedded, culture on the ground would be in town centres and parks and open spaces, an action plan would be produced to take forward the strategy, the developments at Meridian Water would foster greater cultural activity, grants had already been received, gaps in cultural infrastructure would be identified and new facilities facilitated. Culture was for everybody, every day.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The panel received a presentation from Bob Doyle (Head of Economic Development) on the Council's new Economic Development Strategy.

1. Presentation

- Over the last 6 months, there had been many successful economic achievements in Enfield, including helping businesses respond to the Covid situation, the outcome of the Good Growth Fund bid for Angel Edmonton, putting in place Town Centre Action Plans, inward investment from large companies such as Waitrose, the Beaver Town Brewery and OMA Film Studios and supporting the growth of existing businesses including SHL Stage Lighting, which had recently expanded their borough premises, creating more high quality jobs and 20 new apprenticeships.
- The Coronavirus has had a significant impact on Enfield with an increase of 164% in the numbers of unemployed since January, 52,000 people are currently on the furlough scheme - many of these may also lose their jobs, when the scheme ends. There have been significant rises in youth unemployment.
- The key objectives of the new strategy were to create an economy which worked for everyone, creating more high-quality employment, enhancing skills and connecting local people to employment, developing town centres and crafting a cultural offer.
- The strategy was about creating the right conditions for growth, designing for the emerging economy, capitalising on Enfield's unique strengths and building the right partnerships.

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- There were five key themes: people, work, places, investment and partnerships.
- Enfield has 17.1% of workless households which is high for London. The borough was getting younger, numbers of young people are growing, it is amongst the youngest of the London boroughs. It was important to invest in this future talent pool. In the past, the borough was over reliant on a lower wage economy, which did work for a while, but there is a need to put jobs on a more sustainable footing, with higher quality work.
- In Enfield 92% of businesses are micro businesses employing 1-9 people. These businesses are part of the community and reflect local needs and concerns. Amongst these there are many different types of business and it was important to channel support in the right direction.
- In town centres Enfield has a very low office space vacancy rate at 4%. Much space had been lost and there was a growing need especially for high quality office space. The underdeveloped night-time economy and shortage of leisure facilities has meant that Enfield has not been good at attracting visitors from home and elsewhere. This was an area with good opportunities for growth, particularly at the current time with more people working from home.
- Over the last five years, seventy percent of new investment in the borough has been in construction, professional services, business support services, information and communication and transportation and storage. The new Metaswitch building now owned by Microsoft was a good example of major investment in the borough. It is one of the largest in Europe.
- Enfield had good relations with local partners and had attracted significant funding such as the £156m for Meridian Water from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. The Council had attracted start-ups as part of the Innovation Corridor. It was an ideal place for life sciences, funding and investment were flowing in. Enfield had a wide range of businesses which they were looking to build upon, with major household names and were strong in food and drink, logistics and the creative industries.
- To conclude, the strategy lists eight things that Enfield could do better: promoting the borough to change perceptions, attracting new businesses and retaining and growing existing business, bringing in new start-ups (currently Enfield was below the London average), developing the film offer, working closely with new business and entrepreneurs, preventing the decline of office space, transforming industrial strategy away from low wage lower skills, ensuring diversification of the Town Centres, making them safe and welcoming and creating a better visitor culture, making sure the borough's attractions are more widely known. These actions should bring the strategy to life.

2. Questions/Comments from Members

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- 2.1 Thanks for the excellent presentation.
- 2.2 Glad to see appreciation and celebration of the large numbers of young people in the borough but concern about the fact that Enfield Town ranked 23 out of 34 for provision of pubs and restaurants. This needed to be addressed particularly for the younger generation. Enfield should rank in the top ten.
- 2.3 Concern that Microsoft might centralise their operations in Paddington and reassurance that the operation in Enfield focussing on cloud computing was a separate entity and that Microsoft was committed to the borough.
- 2.4 Support for the use of Meridian Water for festivals such as the recent Field Day festival which had brought thousands of young people and business into the borough. Such events were gradually moving out of the central London into the suburbs. Using facilities at Meridian Water was preferable to using Trent Park.
- 2.5 The need to incentivise more food and drink outlets which would meet the needs of more people working from home.
- 2.6 To acknowledge that some areas such as Cockfosters did have a thriving night-time economy with many pubs and restaurants.
- 2.7 Concern that former industrial areas such as Brimsdown were being taken over by housing development. Agreement that it was a shame to lose industrial space but a lot of the available industrial buildings were not fit for purpose. Better planning was required and some densities needed to increase.
- 2.8 Enfield had some of the best industrial spaces in London which was a real asset.
- 2.9 Bread, milk, beer and soft drinks were key industries. They had long term sustainability serving a third of UK consumers in the South East. Enfield needed to encourage them to stay.
- 2.10 The Council were pleased to have been able to have attracted high quality innovative businesses like Waitrose and Ocado. They wanted to foster companies with good employment practices.
- 2.12 Enfield needed to be better at promoting what was available and what they could do to provide support to business.
- 2.13 The Council wanted to work with occupiers to make better use of existing industrial space and to halt the decline of office space in town centres.

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- 2.14 London has had extraordinary success over the past few years in developing new industries. There are now 40,000 tech companies in London. These were gradually moving away from the centre as rents became unaffordable and could be encouraged to move further afield to areas like Enfield. Enfield needed to place itself to attract some of these companies.
- 2.15 Despite the move towards working from home, there were positives for working in an office, sharing ideas, building relationships. Places to meet would always be needed. Enfield needed more quality modern flexible space.
- 2.16 Enfield Town could be damaged by inappropriate housing development. It ought to be a more attractive centre for local people. Many people live nearby.

Councillor Margaret Greer summed up the discussion as follows:

The four key objectives in the new strategy will help provide the right conditions for emerging industries and capitalise on Enfield's unique strengths. The strategy will be looking to bring in the right people to pull in future talent and create work for people in Enfield. It would help to promote Enfield as a place to do business, bring in investors like the Microsoft building in Enfield Town and develop local town centres to meet future needs. Enfield could be a key part of the overall London offer. It also needed to celebrate its cultural heritage and diversity.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 were received and agreed as a correct record.

6. WORKPROGRAMME 2020/21

The panel noted the agreed work programme for 2020/21.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the dates scheduled for future meetings:

- Tuesday 8 December 2020
- Wednesday 3 February 2021
- Wednesday 17 March 2021

Tuesday 8 December 2020

- Local Plan – discussion on historic housing delivery, the housing delivery test, and new proposed policies and plans
- Meridian Water – review of how the project is supporting Enfield's economic development

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- Skills and Training - discussion on partnership with colleges and work with Local London to address unemployment in the borough

Wednesday 3 February 2021

- Estate Regeneration – discussion on the social, environmental and economic outcomes of Alma, Ladderswood, New Avenue and Electric Quarter
- Local Plan – discussion on emerging policies

Wednesday 17 March 2021

- Joyce and Snells – review of regeneration project structure and outcomes
- Meridian Water – discussion on how the project is addressing local needs and supporting resident health and wellbeing