

Public Document Pack



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 February 2022 at 7.00 pm
Conference Room, Civic Centre, Silver
Street, Enfield, EN1 3XA

Contact: Robyn McIntock
Governance Officer
Direct: 020-8132 1915
Tel: 020-8379-1000

E-mail: robymclintock@enfield.gov.uk
Council website: www.enfield.gov.uk

Councillors : Susan Erbil (Chair), Margaret Greer (Vice-Chair), Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel, Mahmut Aksanoglu, Elif Erbil, James Hockney and Derek Levy

Education Statutory Co-optees: 1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor Representative).

Enfield Youth Parliament Co-optees (2)

AGENDA – PART 1

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are invited to identify any disclosable pecuniary, other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests relevant to the items on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 1 - 18)

To agree the minutes of the meetings which took place on the 25 November, 1 December and 12 January 2022.

4. TOWN CENTRES (Pages 19 - 40)

Officers would welcome member feedback and comments on the report.

5. COMPLAINTS, MEQS AND FOIS (Pages 41 - 52)

It is proposed that the Committee note the performance of the Complaints team, and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on both incoming numbers of complaints and the ability to respond.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To agree the date of the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee Business Meeting as follows:

- Thursday 31st March 2022

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 25.11.2021

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2021**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer, Lee David-Sanders, Mahmut Aksanoglu, James Hockney, Derek Levy and Hass Yusuf

ABSENT Birsen Demirel and Elif Erbil

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

OFFICERS: Dudu Sher Arami (Director of Public Health), Philip Webb (Consultation Manager), Alison Asamoah (Community Food Coordinator) and Suzanne Connolly (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Mustafa Berk-Ak (Enfield Deputy Young Mayor)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Cllr Susan Erbil (Chair) welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Birsen Demirel and Cllr Elif Erbil (substituted by Cllr Hass Yusuf).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest registered in relation to any items on the agenda.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 8 September 2021 were AGREED.

4 FOOD POVERTY UPDATE REPORT

Dudu Sher Arami, Director of Public Health, and Alison Asamoah, Community Food Coordinator, introduced the report and highlighted the key points to note.

1. There had been an increase in emergency food aid, particularly during the pandemic. The aim was to provide food, as well as support with early help to achieve a more sustainable solution.

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2. A current pilot included plans around development and the impact would be closely monitored.
3. Food banks were not sustainable in the long term therefore Food Pantries had been introduced. Residents pay small membership fees and use them like a shop. So far feedback had been very positive. The pantries were currently located in the east of borough, with the 5th pantry due to open in Enfield library.

In response the following comments were made by panel members:

1. The Chair commended the detailed report and the work that was being done. The Chair asked about data collection and work with other departments. Alison Asamoah stated that they were currently reliant on organisations feeding back which could prove challenging. Work was taking place to improve working relationships and data feedback systems. This did however create some GDPR issues so an external organisation was being considered to collate the data. It was agreed that it was very important to have the information. Ade Aderemi stated that data ownership had been a challenge. An Impact Assessment Model was being considered to track how service users progress and their routes within the service.
2. All councillors requested copies of the leaflet which they were previously unaware of.
ACTION to forward copies to councillors and provide batches in pigeon holes.
3. Cllr Yusuf praised the council on it's fantastic work during the pandemic. However there were concerns that not residents that needed help were reached; some did not understand vouchers possibly due to language barriers.
Dudu advised that the food alliance was made up of a number of volunteering sector organisations who help to share information, however more work could be done to reach communities and any suggestions would be welcomed.
Ade stated that there were multiple referral pathways and lots of information on the council website. A promotional video was shared with the panel.
4. Cllr Aksanoglu felt this was a great initiative but needs to be better promoted. Councillors were happy to help in any way they can. Cllr Aksanoglu asked which data was used to determine the locations of the food pantries and then the impact once they were open. Dudu commented that the improvement works to data collation would help evaluate the impact. The locations were determined by a variety of data sources alongside an appropriate venue.
Alison stated that the biggest demand was in the east of the borough however a pantry in the town would give support to those living closer to that area.

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Ade added that some funding from the CCG had been secured to research demographics and the detailed needs of residents.

5. Cllr Greer asked whether the amounts members pay was means tested and could the promotional video be incorporated into ward forums. It was agreed to all work together to improve promotion.

Members were given tokens with values and could buy whatever they wanted. The local ASDA had been very good with donations. It was a weekly membership.

6. Cllr Hockney asked how the household support grant was going to be used. Ade stated it would be used for schools, children and energy bills.

ACTION Dudu to obtain more details.

As it was near to the school holidays there were concerns about the pressures on food banks. There were measures in place to support this and free school meals would be continuing through the holidays.

Exploring how to communicate with more community groups.

Cllr Hockney reported a personal story where the provision had helped someone and provided fast help. Thanks were extended to the team.

7. **ACTION** all information to be sent to Suzanne Connolly for collation and circulation.

5 CONSULTATION

Philip Webb, Consultation Manager, delivered a presentation related to Consultation.

The Chair extended thanks for a very detailed report and the following comments were received:

1. There were issues around the engagement of BAME and residents from the east of the borough and it was questioned what was being done to improve this. Philip stated they try to involve voluntary services and use non-English speaking press where possible.
2. Cllr Yusuf highlighting consultation verses engagement and people's understanding.
3. Cllr Levy said people say they know nothing about it and there was a lack of trust. Need to manage expectations. Philip agreed it was difficult and some feel consultations were referendums.
4. Mustafa (youth rep) asked if there was work to engage the youth. Philip advised that involving schools could be problematic as they require lots of notice which was often not possible.
5. Cllr Greer welcomed the information regarding "consultation" and "engagement".

6 UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIRS

Each scrutiny panel chair provided a brief update on topics discussed so far.

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1. Cllr David-Sanders, Crime – 1 meeting so far discussing lighting, hate crime, prostitution trends, domestic abuse and the impact of Covid/lockdowns, e-scooters. There had been good attendance from the police to date.
2. Cllr Hockney, Housing – 1 meeting so far discussing building safety (fire) leading to recommendations, temporary accommodation and the need for more family accommodation.
3. Cllr Levy, Health & Adult Social Care – lots of changes in the sector meaning items have taken a slightly different direction. 3 meetings taken place so far with attendance from the NHS, mental health services and the London Ambulance Service.
4. Cllr Aksanoglu, Environment & Climate Action – fly tipping, waste, missed bins, recycling, Meridian Water, wetlands. Holding an additional meeting in January.
5. Cllr Greer, Regeneration & Economic Development – housing development pipeline, Meridian Water – **ACTION** report to come to this meeting. There was an issue around receiving questions.
6. Cllr Erbil and Cllr Demirel absent and therefore to update at the next meeting.

It was agreed that two substantial items to scrutinise each meeting was an appropriate amount.

7 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

RECEIVED the report from Claire Johnson which was agreed to be taken to full council.

Cllr Levy highlighted issues around portfolio executive members attending scrutiny panels and asked for clarification around this.

8 WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Work Programme 2021/22 was noted with the following amendments:

1. Due to a national change the item would not be coming to the December meeting. Cllr Levy queried about the safeguarding case – this would be taken after the petition.
2. Complaints MEQs to move forward to the February meeting.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The future meeting dates were noted and agreed.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1.12.2021

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2021**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer, Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel, Mahmut Aksanoglu, James Hockney, Derek Levy and Hass Yusuf

ABSENT Elif Erbil

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

OFFICERS: Sarah Cary (Executive Director Place), Sue McDaid (Head of Regulatory Services), Peter Robinson (Environment), Tony Theodoulou (Executive Director People), Angela Bent (Head of Practice Improvement), Sharon Burgess (Head of Service - Safeguarding Adults, Complaints and Quality Assurance), Bharat Ayer (Development Manager), Claire Johnson (Head of Governance and Scrutiny) and Clare Bryant (Governance Manager) Jane Creer (Secretary)

Also Attending: Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Mahtab Uddin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)
Chris Ferrary (on behalf of Lead Petitioner)
Mustafa Berk-Ak (Enfield Deputy Young Mayor)

1

WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Councillor Susan Erbil (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the process to be followed in respect of receiving a petition.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Elif Erbil, who was substituted by Councillor Hass Yusuf. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Mahmut Aksanoglu.

2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in respect of any items on the agenda.

3

PETITION ON FIRS FARM CREMATORIUM/BURIAL SITE

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1.12.2021

RECEIVED a petition from members of the community which asked the Council to: remove from the Local Plan the proposal to build a crematorium / burial ground in Firs Farm.

NOTED the report of the Director of Law and Governance, confirming that the petition was compliant and had sufficient numbers of signatures to trigger a debate at Overview and Scrutiny Committee, having 2,259 verified signatures.

NOTED

1. The statement of Chris Ferrary (on behalf of the Lead Petitioner Toni Guiver and the Friends of Firs Farm).
 - a. Firs Farm was an important community resource. The site was valuable for flood prevention and for biodiversity. It was an environmental and social resource.
 - b. This proposal would undermine the work to improve the wetlands, and the ongoing campaigns for further improvement. The Friends of Firs Farm had worked with the Council on schemes which had received significant financial investment and a recent planning permission grant for a community hub on site. This investment of time and money would be wasted.
 - c. The proposal was not consistent with planning policies at a local or national level, including the London Plan. There would not be environmental gain. The special circumstances to justify development on Metropolitan Open Land would not be met. The proposal would be at odds with the draft Local Plan and the Council's vision and strategies. The need for a crematorium had not been demonstrated, or that Firs Farm was a suitable place.
 - d. The proposal would have a significant effect on a local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The boundaries would encroach into the SINC and compromise its status. There would be adverse effects from traffic and subsequent air pollution, and additional impacts on wildlife and biodiversity, and on residents' enjoyment of local spaces.
2. The response of Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council, and Sarah Cary, Executive Director Place.
 - a. Councillor Caliskan thanked the petitioners for the clear statement, and wanted to take the opportunity to hopefully provide reassurance to residents.
 - b. The site identified as part of the draft Local Plan did not include the wetlands, which were recognised as playing an important environmental role. Therefore, the commitments around the wetlands area, and the investments and planning permission, were not undermined. The Council would reiterate those commitments.
 - c. The draft Local Plan was at the draft stage and, following the planning policy requirements, it must identify sites to deliver a number of different things, including adequate after-life provision in the borough. At this stage of Local Plan development it was not expected that all the

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- sites identified would be appropriate sites. It was accepted that residents would want to feed back that some sites would not be appropriate, but the Council had to follow the legal process for consultation and the responses were being carefully considered by officers.
- d. The next iteration of the Local Plan would be released in Summer 2022. The likelihood was that some sites would be eliminated. The Local Plan was also subject to approval by the National Inspector, and anything which was not in line with National Planning Policy or the London Plan would not be approved, so it was not in the Council's interest to include plans which were outside the policies.
 - e. It was confirmed that no plans for a crematorium on the Firs Farm site featured in any of the Council's corporate plans, but it was acknowledged that the site was a proposed site in the draft Local Plan out for consultation, and feedback was being heard and was welcomed.
 - f. Sarah Cary, Executive Director Place, advised that a lot more work would be needed should a specific proposal be brought forward, and that there was no such proposal at this time.
 - g. Sue McDaid, Head of Regulatory Services, was asked to expand on what a modern crematorium could be: a facility around the size of one football pitch, in a woodland setting, often incorporated into a landscape with recreational use. It was confirmed that Firs Farm was Metropolitan Open Land and that any proposal for the site would have to make a special consideration case and very detailed plans would be needed for any planning application. At the moment, the draft Local Plan looked at potential sites that could be consulted on; and this petition helped with that consultation process. Officers had been asked to regard this petition as part of the feedback on the draft Local Plan.
3. Questions, comments and debate from Committee Members:
- a. Councillor Levy asked about the recent approval to proceed with the development of a burial ground at Sloemans Farm which may considerably negate the potential proposal for the Firs Farm site. He also commented that though it had been made clear the wetlands were outside the consideration site that many residents regarded Firs Farm as whole. In response, the Leader emphasised the consultation period of the draft Local Plan, and that it was reasonable to assume the Plan would look different in the next iteration. Remarks around Firs Farm were acknowledged but it was important to differentiate the wetlands and that it was not part of the potential site. Reassurance was also reiterated in respect of Council support for the community hub. National Planning Policy required sites to be identified in the Local Plan that would meet after-life provision and that consultation had to be gone through. The petitioners had made their views clear and the consultation period would allow that feedback to be assessed.
 - b. Councillor Hockney raised the Greater London Parks and Open Spaces Act 1967 which empowered London boroughs to facilitate recreation in open spaces and a recent legal case in respect of Wandsworth Council and the finding that grant of a lease on premises

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on open space land was not lawful. Officers confirmed that Councillors had already asked for this to be looked into, and legal comments had been requested. It was agreed this was an area for further investigation.

- c. In response to Councillor Hockney's query how the proposal could align with the Enfield Blue and Green Strategy, the Leader confirmed there was no plan from the administration which would bring the negative environmental impacts listed and no such proposal would be included in the Local Plan as it would not meet local or national policies. It was important to emphasise publicly that there was no specific plan. The Council was meeting legal obligations in identifying potential sites for after-life provision in the draft Local Plan and respecting the consultation period, and the public had the right to express their views. The feedback on the importance of open spaces to residents was acknowledged, and that after-life provision was also important.
 - d. Councillor Yusuf praised the Friends of Firs Farm organisation and valued the feedback on the draft Local Plan. He noted the legal requirements around development of a Local Plan, and other appropriate checks and balances on any plans.
 - e. Councillor Greer asked for confirmation in respect of the wetlands and Council commitments. The Leader confirmed that even if this site was included in the next iteration of the Local Plan it did not include the wetlands. The investment agreed to by the Council was not affected.
 - f. Councillor Levy asked for clarification from the Lead Petitioner on their request at this point, and it was advised that in the next iteration of the Local Plan they did not wish to see this proposal for Firs Farm included. Any statement to this effect which could be made now would be welcomed. Currently they were facing difficulties in volunteering and fund-raising while people thought efforts might be wasted. Also, no work had been done to assess the hydrology of the whole of Firs Farm and potential affects on the viability of the wetland. The Leader advised that work to assess suitability had not been done to the extent required and that this should give some comfort to petitioners. It was also hoped the financial investment and grant of planning permission for the community hub had gone some way to give reassurance to the public, and the Council would do more if they could.
4. The Chair summed up the debate, and the Committee was asked to determine the option to be followed after considering the petition.
 5. AGREED unanimously by the Committee the following recommendations:
 - 1) That the petition is included and considered in the consultation on the draft Local Plan.
 - 2) That the legal case raised by Councillors is considered by officers.
 - 3) That the need for after-life provision was noted and understood, but it was of critical importance to protect recreation grounds within that.

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SAFEGUARDING REPORTS

RECEIVED the reports of Angela Bent, Head of Practice Improvement, Sharon Burgess, Head of Strategic Safeguarding Adults, Partnerships, QA and DoLS, and Bharat Ayer, Safeguarding Service Manager (Adults and Children's Partnerships).

NOTED

1. The introduction by Angela Bent, providing an overview of Children's Social Care activities in 2020/21 and of the processes in place to scrutinise this work.
2. The Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) report was presented annually at Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. The update on the Safeguarding Children's Partnership was introduced by Bharat Ayer and Councillor Mahtab Uddin, Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The layers of scrutiny and assurance were clarified.
4. In response to the Chair's queries, the work of the domestic abuse team was highlighted, to safeguard children as well as victims. In respect of looked-after children during Covid-19 lockdowns, it was advised that there had been increased levels of contact and ensuring educational needs were met. It was confirmed that the social work apprenticeship programme had started, with the first cohort in September 2021.
5. In response to Councillor David-Sanders queries, the support given to newly qualified social workers during the pandemic was confirmed.
6. In response to Councillor Demirel's queries, the work done with care leavers and support towards employment and training was clarified.
7. In response to Councillor Aksanoglu's queries in respect of audits, the plans put in place to improve practice were set out, and the building of staff resilience during the pandemic, and future workforce recruitment provision.
8. In response to Councillor Levy's queries, the regular interaction between the executive officers and executive Members was confirmed, including shadow Cabinet Members. The Cabinet portfolio holder was invited to observe risk management panel meetings. Councillor Uddin confirmed the open communication and exchange of information.
9. In response to Councillor Greer's queries, the continued delivery of care and services during lockdowns was described. The diversity of the workforce was confirmed, and potential for overseas recruitment. The joint working in respect of youth offending was clarified.
10. Officers welcomed the political oversight on safeguarding and the Chair thanked them for the helpful reports and attendance at this meeting.

5

WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

NOTED the updated Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2021/22.

6

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1.12.2021

NOTED the future meeting dates and that the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be the Budget Meeting on Wednesday 12 January 2022.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12.1.2022

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2022**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer, Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel, Mahmut Aksanoglu, James Hockney, Derek Levy and Hass Yusuf

ABSENT Elif Erbil

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

OFFICERS: Melanie Dawson (Senior Solicitor), Matt Bowmer (Interim Director of Finance), Sarah Cary (Executive Director Place), Ian Davis (Chief Executive), Fay Hammond (Executive Director Resources), Bindi Nagra (People), Dudu Sher-Arami (Director of Public Health), Anne Stoker (Director of Children's Services) and Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services) Clare Bryant (Secretary)

Also Attending: Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Mahtab Uddin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)
Chris Ferrary (on behalf of Lead Petitioner)
Mustafa Berk-Ak (Enfield Deputy Young Mayor)

1

WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcomed members and officers to the Committee.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Erbil for whom Councillor Yusuf substituted.

2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12.1.2022

The Chair thanked officers and members for attending to present the item on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Councillor Maguire, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, introduced the item highlighting that they will cover the MTFP and the budget for next year (22/23). Councillor Maguire stated that the overall aim is to balance the Council's budget during a period of uncertainty regarding Government support and funding. She thanked officers for their hard work on this.

Matt Bowmer, Director of Finance, delivered a presentation on the MTFP which covered the below points:

- Key Messages
- Settlement
- Options to close the £3.732m gap
- Budget Engagement
- Next Steps

During his presentation he made the following key points:

- Budget resilience for the longer is a priority.
- The continued investment in Children's and Adult Social Care will create a net savings of £7.8m. The focus throughout setting the budget has been ensuring that vulnerable residents are protected.
- Costs relating to Covid are still ongoing. There is no expected further Government support after April 2022.
- Gap of £3.732m before the decision on Council Tax is taken by the full Council meeting.

Settlement

- There is potential for earlier implementation of Fair Funding/Business Rates Reset than was previously thought.
- 1.5bn allocated through: SFA £72m, Services Grant £637m and Social Care £822m
- There will be £162m for social care reforms
- There is an expected change in the method of distribution for service grants in future years which will benefit Enfield.

Spending

- Pressure come from the welcomed increased to national insurances and increases to minimum wage.
- The Council's ambitious capital programme needs to be funded which will increase over the next five years.
- There will be investment of £1.7m in services such as bulky waste, social worker apprentices and an Adult Social Care Regulatory Team.

Pressures

- There are £7m worth of pressures for the Council. These come from areas such as Homelessness & Emergency Accommodation, reforecast post Covid-19, and SEN Transport

Savings & Income

- There is a total of the new savings/income generation proposals of £8.614m in 2022/23 and £14.869m over the five year MTFP period.

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- £4.87m of the 2022/23 total will come from Efficiencies, Demand Management or Service Reduction.
- £3.740m of the 2022/23 total is from income generation initiatives.

2022/23 Budget by department

- There will be a continued approach of protecting services supporting the most vulnerable in the Borough
- Existing pressures in these Demand Led Services plus Housing will be met.
- Net increase of £4.2m for Adult Social Care will be achieved.
- Net increase of £3.6m for Children's and Education will be achieved.

Budget Consultation

- The budget consultation started on the 5th January 2022 and will run until 11th February 2022.
- The feedback from the consultation will be fed into the budget submitted to full Council on 24th February 2022, as will the feedback received from this Committee.

Next steps

- The consultation on the budget will continue until early February 2022.
- The Local Government Finance Settlement will be received later in January 2022.
- At the Council meeting on the 26th January 2022 the Council will make a decision on Council Tax/Business Rates Base
- The final MTFP Budget will go to Cabinet on 16th February 2022, from there it will go to Council on the 24th February 2022.

The Committee then asked questions of the Leader, Cabinet Members and Officers. A summary of the questions and answers are set out below:

Q: What grant is most helpful to the Council?

A: All are helpful to the Council, without the funding the Council currently receives the gap would be bigger. The Council has lost 60% of its funding over the last 10years making it difficult to close the budget gap without sufficient funding.

Q: Can clarity be provided on the £3.8m saving figure?

A: This figure is taking into account all savings. The new savings figure is in Appendix 2 of the report. There will still be a budget gap. Of the saving proposals, almost half come from income. The budget recognises the Council can generate income.

Q: What is the response rate for the budget consultation?

A: During the first week of consultation 70 responses were received.

Q: The Council is looking to double its debt which has to be repaid. How much is currently taken out for the frontline budget, and what about going forward?

A: there is £1b of borrowing. Currently, £240 is HRA being used to build houses, and supported renter payments. £300m is for Meridian Water which will pay back itself. The rest is for services and roads,etc. The five year plan ensures the Council can afford the borrowing.

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Q: What is the year on year, and end, of the MTFP?

A: £10m by the end.

Q: Lenders look at assets prior to lending. What will happen as the Council approaches its asset level?

A: The above was considered when setting the cap on borrowing. The borrowing cap is very important as it considers current and future assets of the Council. Currently borrowing is an investment in the borough which will produce affordable homes and generate jobs and additional skills in the borough. The Government and the Mayor of London support the Council's projects and have made funding available. Scrutiny will continue to robustly monitor the Council's spending and borrowing.

Q: The report provides confidence that the Government will fund Covid expenditure, however, it also states that Covid costs are a concern

A: For the current year Covid grants will fully support the Council. Past April 2022, there is no further funding.

Q: For the Council tax options, is this an area where consultation feedback will be considered? Concern was raised that as it is an election year there may be pressures to go for the zero-increase option.

A: the report is transparent and clearly sets out the options for Council Tax going forward. A decision will be made that is right for the whole borough and its residents.

Q: The consultation indicates that this will influence the final decision, how will this work?

A: The consultation is a statutory requirement, but the Council would consult on the budget regardless of this. A small number of residents respond to the actual budget consultation, but resident feedback is received throughout the year in other ways, such as public meetings, petitions, letters, etc. A balanced assessment will take place.

Q: How is slippage managed and what reprofiling takes place mid-year & its criteria?

A: Over the last few years there has been slippage within Council projects due to Covid. Projects are always reviewed and monitored which creates assurance. For the 10-year Capital Strategy, any borrowing will be a key decision and this will only happen once a project is ready, so there is no borrowing in advance of need. Officers and members are keen to ensure projects are delivered in good time. Work has taken place over the last two to four years to ensure all savings are deliverable. Each budget is set once reflecting on the previous years spend. Capital receipts are used for one of costs that are transformational to the borough.

Q: Pressure was reduced for SEN transport and emergency accommodation demand. How was this done?

A: During the last two years, work has been done to reduce the need for SEN transport by creating travel training and direct payments to careers for transport. The demand is still there. There is an increase in people with health

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care plans and this will continue to increase as better assessments take place. Cabinet reviews proposals for savings. For special educational needs it is beneficial for the Council to bring these services in house.

Q: As pressures continue, will the budget eventually say the Council will only be able to provide statutory services?

A: The Council would not want to see this happen. The budget is sustainable and resilient. If Covid had not happened, the Council would be in a better position. There will be difficult times ahead.

Q: What are the risks relating to climate change policies such as home insulation?

A: The aim is for the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030. Reprofiling of capital expenditure will support this. Energetik is leading the way across the country to meet objectives. The Climate Action Plan needs support and funding from the Government. Work is taking place to improve the Council's fleet vehicles. There is a national pilot taking place to retrofit Council homes although this will cost a substantial amount of money.

Q: Are there savings to be made from working from home arrangements which have occurred during the pandemic to close the budget gap?

A: There is no government funding for Covid past this financial year. The Council is required to produce a balanced budget and is very careful when using its reserves and capital receipts. There is no option not to close the budget gap. The challenge with staff working from home is the potential disconnect from frontline and face to face services. The Council aims to ensure there is a healthy and harmonious culture for staff. The build the change programme will seek to see council buildings used more effectively.

Q: Will the Council lose staff and what consultation takes place with the trade unions regarding this?

A: Impact on staff will aim to be minimal. Redundancies have been stabilised and ongoing agency spend is being reduced. It is expected that there will be a net increase in staff, and there are no plans to cut staff to save the budget. The Leader meets with trade unions every two months to ensure they are engaged in the Council's arrangements. The Council supports bringing services in house where possible as it is better for employment standards and services.

Q: Historically there have been Government funding cuts to local government funding. Could the Council Tax Support Scheme mean that the budget gap is an additional £5m?

A: The Council is proud of its Council Tax Support Scheme. During the pandemic the need for this has increased and will hopefully stabilise although it is unpredictable what the situation will be once the pandemic ends. The MTFP expects some recovery in 2022/23.

Q: Can an update on funding for integrated care system (ICS) be provided?

A: This falls under the NHS reorganisation and does not directly impact the Council budget. Discussions are taking place on equalising the funding of the

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12.1.2022

ICS which going forward will happen yearly. The fundamental issue is funding for the NHS and Enfield will fight for funding for Enfield's residents. The underfunding of Enfield is not sustainable.

Q: What is the saving for using LED street lighting?

A: Using LED lighting was a significant change for the borough with over 22,000 lamps being changed in borough.

Q: What other services are likely to be moved inhouse?

A: Over the last 18 months, many services have been insourced which has provided greater resilience for the Council. Services are continuously being looked at to see whether they can benefit from being brought in house, and the revenue implications associated with this. The Council is proud of the number of services it has brought in house so far. This year debt recovery services will be insourced which will increase savings in fees and gives the Council greater control about how these happen.

Q: How can traffic and transport loose income when Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) bring in income?

A: The pandemic caused parking incomes to plummet. The budgets for grant funding & Transport for London funding has been drip fed to the Council over the last year which has an impact?

Q: Why is it expected that sexual health pressures will increase post pandemic?

A: There are three sexual health services in the borough and an online service. The pandemic has changed the way these services are used and operate. Due to lockdowns and people not being able to attend investigation appointments there will be a hidden level of demand from previous years.

Q: Given the number of residents currently in temporary accommodation, where in the budget is there capacity to accommodate refugee families? Will there be a ringfenced budget?

A: Grant funding is received from the Government for initial resettling for refugees. The Council will continue to accommodate refugees from its own budget as this is the right thing to do. The Council is not accommodating more refugees than it can support.

Q: What are the future plans for social worker apprenticeships past 2023?

A: The Council will be investing on increasing the numbers. By the third year of the scheme there will be funding in the budget for these.

Q: Are the cost of funerals and grave digging is expected to increase further?

A: These costs are in line with inflation. Enfield's chargers are cheaper than the private sector.

Q: Prior to Covid the Council was going to a have £1.2m of debt which would then go into a surplus. Since there changes within the administration there will be a £2m debt. How was this decided?

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12.1.2022

A: The Leader became the Leader as she wanted to provide decent homes which will benefit Enfield residents. The housing crisis was a key feature in making the decision. The Cabinet share a collective vision to improve life within the borough.

Q: Are there targeted groups to promote equality at every opportunity?

A: Full equalities assessments are undertaken and considered for all savings and investments.

Q: What are the staff investments in Human Resources?

A: The Council currently has recruitment challenges and the investment will reduce these. On a per person ratio for Council staff HR are significantly under resourced.

Q: What is done to ensure Council owned land is used to the best of its ability?

A: The build the change programme is reviewing buildings to be more efficient which in turn will create better services for residents. Council buildings not being used have “meanwhile uses” such as Meridian Water.

The Chair thanked officers and members for their participation in this discussion and informed everyone that the minutes of this meeting will come to the 10th February 2022 business meeting and will then feed into the February Council meeting.

4

CALL IN: MERIDIAN WATER RESIDENTIAL DELIVERY PROGRAMME

Due to an administrative error it was agreed this item would be heard at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 20th January 2022.

5

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be the call-in meeting on the 20th January 2022.

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London Borough of Enfield**Overview & Scrutiny – 10 Feb 2022**

Subject: Town Centre Action Plans**Cabinet Member: Cllr Caliskan****Executive Director: Sarah Cary**

Purpose of Report

Discussion of Town Centre Action Plans for Borough's Priority Town Centres

Relevance to the Council Plan

1. AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE
 - 1.1. Develop town centres that are vibrant, safe and inclusive
 - 1.2. Craft a cultural offer for Enfield to support London's status as a world class city

Background

2. The Town Centres Development Team have developed Town Centre Action Plans (TCAPs) for our five priority town centres – Enfield Town, Angel Edmonton, Edmonton Green, Palmers Green and Southgate.
 - 2.1. These TCAPs have been prepared as a final draft and circulated to ward councillors on Monday 24 January. They are to be published on Monday 31 January.
 - 2.2. Drawing together engagement, research and best practice the TCAPs aim to respond to pre-existing trends such as the emergence of online retail and preferences for leisure and experience over traditional retail; as well as new challenges brought upon by the pandemic.
 - 2.3. The TCAPs are place specific and outline the opportunities, challenges, goals and themes for each town centre along with a vision and set of actions to support their future success.
 - 2.4. The TCAPs are designed to be live documents and will be hosted on a Let's Talk engagement page which will be used for ongoing engagement; hosting updates, news stories, images, a feedback map etc. They will be updated on a quarterly basis.

Main Considerations for the Panel

3. Officers would welcome member feedback and comments on:

- 3.1. The town centre visions for each of the five priority town centres
- 3.2. Future actions and opportunities around key themes taken from the economic development strategy for town centres:
 - 3.2.1. A public welcome
 - 3.2.2. An innovative, inclusive and resilient economy
 - 3.2.3. Connected communities
- 3.3. Opportunities and ideas to continue engagement with businesses and the community to refine action plans

Report Author: Andrew Catcheside

Date of report 25 January 2022

Appendices

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Enfield Town Action Plan
Angel Edmonton Action Plan
Edmonton Green Action Plan
Palmers Green Action Plan
Southgate Action Plan



Eddie's Meat Market

ANGEL EDMONTON ACTION PLAN

January 2022



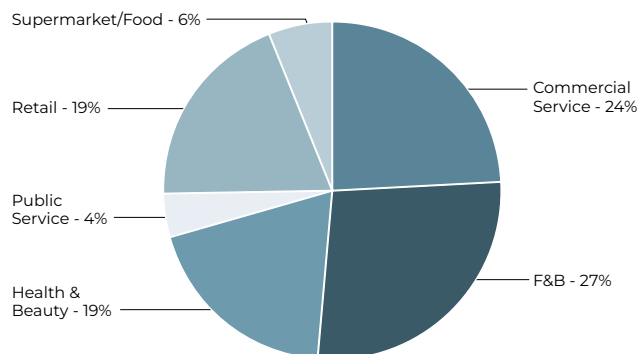
Angel Edmonton Action Plan

Enfield's Diverse and Local Town Centre

Angel Edmonton's commercial activity is centred on Fore Street, a well-used local high street with a significant proportion of independents whose broad offer reflects the cultural diversity of the neighbourhood. The town centre has a relatively large number of supermarkets and other food or convenience stores and a large number of food and beverage outlets, notably takeaways.

The area has had high population growth which will continue over the next decade, supported by major nearby residential development and regeneration, including Joyce and Snell's and Meridian Water.

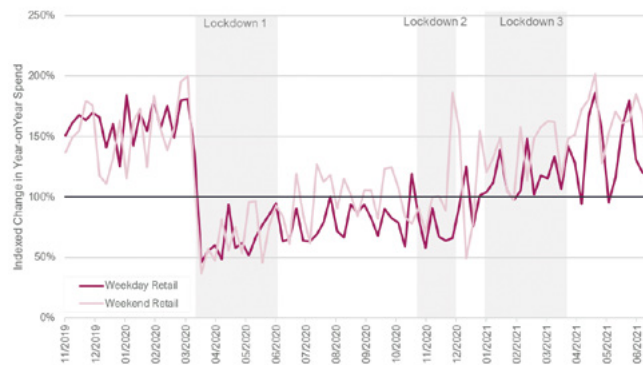
Types of Businesses Located in High Street Units



High Street Performance

The performance of Angel Edmonton's economy over the last five years suggests it has been a good location for small and micro businesses. The vacancy rate has remained consistently well below the London average.

Unlike the other centres, Angel Edmonton has shown strong resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown in the graph of Mastercard spend, spending was able to recover much more quickly after an initial fall in March 2020, and then remained at or above pre-pandemic levels for the rest of 2020 and 2021. A number of shops were able to continue trading through the lockdowns and reopened successfully, suggesting it has an economy largely focused on everyday essential services and convenience shopping – and potentially, a particularly strong loyalty from the local community to their town centre traders.



Source: Mastercard Retail Location Index Data, 2021

Key Challenges and Opportunities

The analysis of detailed evidence, as well as conversations with the community has revealed a number of key challenges and opportunities in Angel Edmonton. This action plan will need to directly respond to these challenges whilst recognising what is working well already and building on the opportunities that already exist.

Challenges:

- Poor quality public space
- Lack of space to dwell – public and private
- Severance, disconnection and traffic
- Limited cultural and food and beverage offer
- Deprivation and antisocial behaviour

Opportunities:

- Considerable council ownership of high street
- Major opportunities from large scale development
- Strong loyalty of the community to local traders
- High street investment through the GLA's Good Growth programme

Vision: Representation, Opportunity, Forum

From a place of retail transaction to a future town centre defined by the interaction of its brilliantly diverse communities. Filled with spaces and offers which celebrates and brings together all, including those arriving through new development.

This is an ambitious vision, and therefore a series of goals have been set to help guide and structure the actions that will be needed to achieve the overall vision.

Goals

Immediate Goals (3 months)

1. Campaign to promote Angel Edmonton
2. Shape delivery of new public spaces and places

Short-term Goals (3-12 months)

1. Shape long term development and regeneration plans
2. Maximise use of existing spaces and places where people can congregate
3. Ongoing engagement to continue to refine and develop vision and action plan with community

Medium-term Goals (1-2 years)

1. Prepare new masterplans
2. Deliver new developments
3. Renew the Angel Edmonton “brand”

Long-term Goals (3-5 years)

1. Deliver new public spaces and places
2. Public realm focused on the needs of pedestrians
3. An enhanced retail, hospitality and cultural offer

How will we know that the interventions have worked?

We will collect and analyse data from across all five town centres including high street spend, vacancy rates, and business mix, as well as qualitative insight from businesses.

In addition, in Angel Edmonton we will also look at dwell time and the diversity of town centre users to establish whether the impacts have been felt on the ground.

Themes

To address the key challenges and deliver on the vision goals, several actions have been identified and grouped under priority themes. These themes and a summary of the actions are included here.

Theme 1: Public realm and space to dwell

Theme 2: Aligning council owned assets with Angel Edmonton’s vision
Theme 3: Street markets

Theme 4: Silver Street and Pymmes Park

Theme 5: Culture

Theme 6: Housing and Regeneration

Angel Edmonton Action Plan: January 2022

Action	Detail	Relevant Theme(s)	Challenges being addressed	Delivery Team	Timeframe
Town Centre Welcomes	Cleaning, repairing, repainting to improve the general environment of the town centre including improving wayfinding, repainting bollards and guard railings at pedestrian crossings and improving lighting. Delivering murals and street artwork, including outside library, Trafalgar Place Alley - and other enhancements to the existing streetscape.	Theme 1: Public Realm and space to dwell Theme 4: Silver Street and Pymmes Park	Poor quality and unappealing public realm, fear of crime and ASB. Lack of spaces for people to congregate together Busy roads that create severance and a disconnected place	Council teams: Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development, Culture, Highways External: Good Growth Partners	Street scene improvements started Street art from Jan'22
Community Space	Refurbishing the Fore Street Library to deliver a community 'living room' for a wider range of uses.	Theme 1: Public realm & space to dwell Theme 5: Culture Theme 6: Regeneration	Lack of spaces for people to congregate together. Diversity of town centre offer	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Library Services, Housing and Regeneration External: Good Growth Fund Partners	Spring'22
Workspace	Delivering workspace and business support at Angel Yard to support 32 young local businesses and a wider engagement programme of events and support.	Theme 2: Aligning council owned assets with the vision for the place Theme 6: Regeneration	Need for destination New business support	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Property External: Good Growth Fund Partners, Launch It Trust	Summer'22
Culture	Winter programme of lighting, street performances and events. Stories of Enfield poetry walk from Fore Street to Meridian Water. Cultural event activation at the Fore Street Living Room and Angel Yard.	Theme 1: Public realm & space to dwell Theme 5: Culture Theme 6: Regeneration	Diversity of town centre offer Limited cultural and food and beverage offer Need for destination	Culture, Library Services, Town Centres Development External: Good Growth Fund partners, Fisher Cheng Architects, Fore Street for All	From Dec'21
Market	Developing public realm and support for Leeds Street Market to test then reintroduce a regular and expanded market.	Theme 3: Markets Theme 4: Silver Street & Pymmes Park	Diversity of town centre offer Need for authentic local offers, old and new Need for animation at station and improved public realm	Council teams: Town Centre Development External: Leeds Street Market traders, Good Growth Fund partners	Summer'22
Town Centre Engagement & Governance	Supporting community with successful High Streets for All Challenge funding. Support 'Fore Street for All' lates events. Support development of Night Forum for area.	Theme 1: Public realm & space to dwell Theme 5: Culture Theme 6: Regeneration	Diversity of town centre offer Limited representative cultural offer Need for destination Limited cultural and food and beverage offer	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Culture External: Fore Street for All	Oct'21 Dec'21

For ongoing updates and to share ideas and feedback please visit: [Letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/AngelEdmontonAP](https://letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/AngelEdmontonAP)



A Month of Sundays
Summer 2021

EDMONTON GREEN ACTION PLAN

January 2022



Edmonton Green Action Plan

The Shopping Centre

Edmonton Green is dominated by the Edmonton Green Shopping Centre, principally containing retail, including a bustling market, which represents well the considerable diversity of the area. Local employment is unsurprisingly dominated by this.

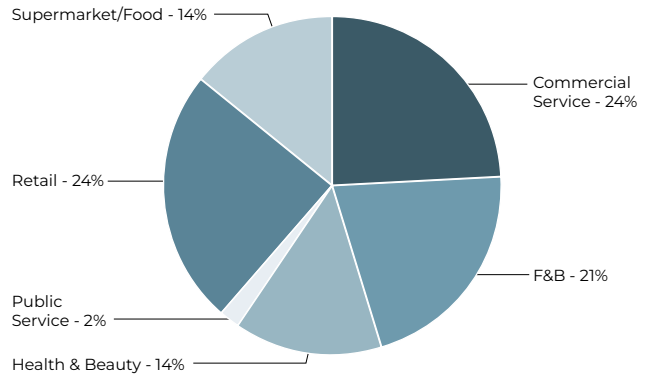
As well as the principal player in the town centre, the forthcoming redevelopment of the shopping centre by Crosstree Real Estate Partners will have the greatest impact on the future identity of the area. The masterplan for the site envisages 1,500 new homes, a new open high street, new market-place, enhanced library and community centre, and public space. Work is expected to begin in 2023 and take 10-15 years.

High Street Performance

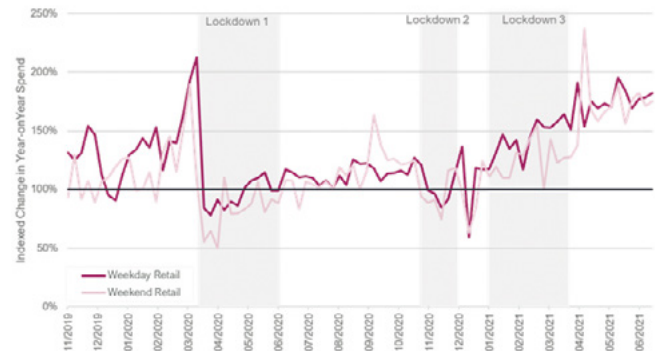
Government datasets on the economy suggest that Edmonton Green has struggled in recent years, due to the dominance of the retail sector in the shopping centre and changing retail trends.

More granular spend and management data suggests a more positive story however, with a resilience through Covid-19 and a strong subsequent bounce-back. As shown on the Mastercard spend graph, spending had an initial large fall in March 2020 due to the national lockdown, but recovered much faster than in our comparable centres, with particularly strong retail spend in 2021. Much like neighbouring Angel Edmonton, there appears to be a particularly strong loyalty from the local community to their town centre outlets.

Types of Businesses Located in High Street Units



Pre-pandemic voids in the shopping centre had been let by summer 2021, to diverse tenants including the Department for Work & Pensions.



Key Challenges and Opportunities

The analysis of detailed evidence, as well as conversations with the community, has revealed a number of key challenges and opportunities in Edmonton Green. This action plan will need to directly respond to these challenges whilst recognising what is working well already and building on the opportunities that already exist.

Challenges:

- Identity – dominated by shopping centre
- Retail dominance
- Lack of public spaces to dwell
- Impact on surrounding area of large-scale redevelopment

Opportunities:

- Redevelopment and reshaping of shopping centre
- Crosstree (shopping centre developer) as a strong local partner
- Considerable council ownership
- Underused public space

Vision: Integration, Partnership, Independence

Transformation from a centre for shopping to a place with an identified heart which links with and acknowledges all its elements—from the market to the station, the shops to the Green itself. It is a place with a diverse, independent offer which benefits from strong collaborative management.

This is an ambitious vision, and therefore a series of goals have been set to help guide and structure the actions that will be needed to achieve the overall vision.

Goals

Immediate Goals (3 months)

1. Get people back into Edmonton Green
2. Engage with the redevelopment

Short-term Goals (3-12 months)

1. Shape development at planning stage
2. Boost activity outside the shopping centre red line
3. Ongoing engagement to continue to refine and develop vision and action plan with community

Medium-term Goals (1-2 years)

1. Embed the joint approach with Crosstree inside/outside the shopping centre redevelopment boundary

Long-term Goals (3-5 years)

1. Establish a single place identity
2. Create a place with all the attributes of a town centre

How will we know that the interventions have worked?

We will collect and analyse data from across all five town centres including high street spend, vacancy rates, and business mix, as well as qualitative insight from businesses.

In addition, in Edmonton Green we will also look at the success of a single-place identity, visitor perception, and positive socio-economic impact on its neighbouring areas (Angel Edmonton).

Themes

To address the key challenges and deliver on the vision goals, several actions have been identified and grouped under priority themes.

Theme 1: Town Centre Welcomes

Theme 2: The Broadway/Railway arches

Theme 3: Edmonton Green redevelopment

Theme 4: Joint identity

Theme 5: Angel Edmonton impact

Edmonton Green Action Plan: January 2022

Action	Detail	Relevant Theme(s)	Challenges being addressed	Delivery Team	Timeframe
Town Centre Welcomes	Cleaning, repairing, repainting to improve the general environment of the town centre including wayfinding outside the station, cleaning and repainting community noticeboards and carrying out deep cleanses around bus stops.	Theme 1: Town Centre Welcomes Theme 2: The Broadway/ Railway arches Theme 3: Edmonton Green redevelopment	Activity outside the shopping centre Lack of spaces to dwell in the town centre	Council teams: Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development	Commenced
Edmonton Green Hub	Establishing dedicated community hub located within library to enable residents to access integrated support in one place.	Theme 4: Joint Identity Theme 3: Edmonton Green Development	Immediate activity & local engagement Activity outside the shopping centre	Multiple council services	Commenced
Edmonton Green Pavilion	Explore development of pavilion to engage residents and test new offers (workspace/urban growing etc) and build business case for permanent facility.	Theme 1: The Broadway/ Railway arches Theme 5: Angel Edmonton impact	Immediate activity & local engagement Retail dominance Activity outside the shopping centre Lack of spaces to dwell in the town centre	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Cultural Services, Healthy Streets, Property, Planning, External: delivery partner/s Crosstree,	Engagement spring'22
Railway Arches	Secured Section 106 funding for initial feasibility study into utilising the archways.	Theme 1: The Broadway/ Railway arches Theme 2: Edmonton Green redevelopment Theme 5: Angel Edmonton impact	Retail dominance and need for diverse offer Activity outside the shopping centre Lack of spaces to dwell in the town centre	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Strategic Property, Planning	Feasibility summer'22

For ongoing updates and to share ideas and feedback please visit: [Letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/EdmontonGreenAP](https://letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/EdmontonGreenAP)



Melissa, The Art House

ENFIELD TOWN ACTION PLAN

January 2022



Enfield Town Action Plan

Enfield's Historic Market Town

Enfield Town sits in the heart of the borough and is home to a market that was first established in 1303 which is still operational today. It is a civic and cultural hub for Enfield along with being home to 7% of the borough's jobs and 8% of businesses.

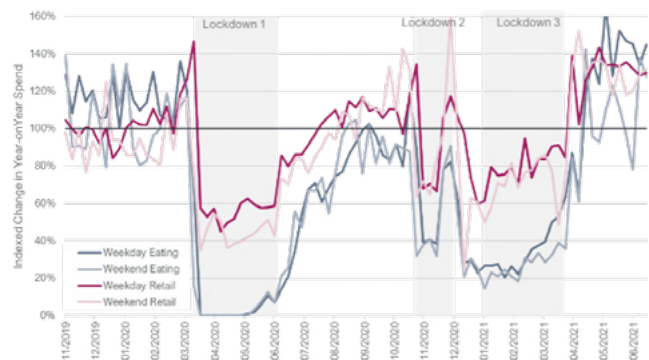
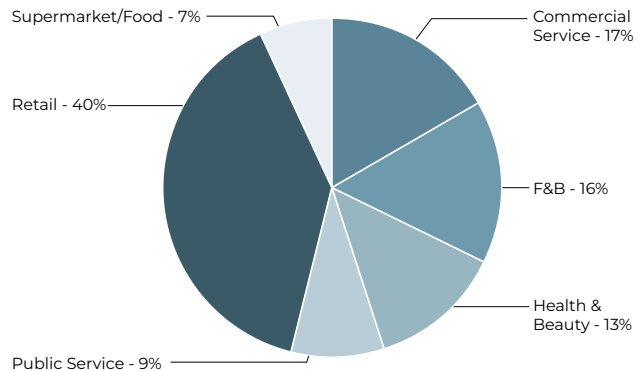
The town centre is heavily dominated by shops and is well served by banks and other services however given its size, has fewer pubs, bars and restaurants than might be expected. Town centre users tended to live nearby and use the centre regularly, with Saturday afternoons the busiest time of the week.

High Street Performance

Reliant on retail, Enfield Town was already struggling with the challenges facing the sector and high street decline before the Covid-19 pandemic. Vacancy rates have been consistently the highest in the borough at around 9-10% for the past five years.

There has been no net jobs growth over the last five years, and the economic impacts of the pandemic have further exacerbated these challenges. As shown on the graph of Mastercard spend data, the national lockdowns resulted in a significant fall in retail and eating spending in the town centre. Since then, activity has recovered, but traders tell us not to pre-pandemic levels.

Types of Businesses Located in High Street Units



Source: Mastercard Retail Location Index Data, 2021

Key Challenges and Opportunities

The analysis of detailed evidence, as well as conversations with the community, has revealed a number of key challenges and opportunities in Enfield Town. This action plan will need to directly respond to these challenges whilst recognising what is working well already and building on the opportunities that already exist.

A vision for Enfield Town has been developed to address these challenges and build on the opportunities. It focuses on the centre's heritage and the traditional idea of a market town as a place for social connection, interaction between different groups and cultures.

Challenges:

- Retail dominance
- High vacancy rates
- Lack of public spaces to dwell
- Dominance of traffic
- Limited social, cultural, food and evening offers
- Limited collaborative governance between stakeholders
- Poor quality arrival

Opportunities:

- Connectivity – Enfield Town and Enfield Chase stations
- Development opportunities and long-term council ownership
- Market heritage
- Existing green and blue spaces
- Existing cultural assets
- Upcoming investment in public realm through Liveable Neighbourhoods programme

Vision: Connection, Culture, Celebration

A focal point for the borough: the embodiment of the modern-day market town. A place with a strong identity which celebrates the diversity of the borough through commerce, culture, and heritage.

This is an ambitious vision, and therefore a series of goals have been set to help guide and structure the actions that will be needed to achieve the overall vision.

Goals

Immediate Goals (3 months)

1. Encourage people to come back into the centre with new pop-up activities and events
2. Make visitors feel welcome and comfortable again after social distancing

Short-term Goals (3-12 months)

1. Support governance with ongoing engagement
2. Test innovative new ideas and approaches for spaces across the centre

Medium-term Goals (1-2 years)

1. Test solutions to high vacancy rate
2. Have a better understanding of land ownership and build stronger relationships with landlords
3. Begin to deliver permanent placemaking improvements to public realm

Long-term Goals (3-5 years)

1. People spend more time in Enfield for cultural and evening activities
2. The town centre is known as a place of social connection in the borough
3. The heritage of the town is celebrated through culture and enhanced green and public spaces

How will we know that the interventions have worked?

We will collect and analyse data from across all five town centres including high street spend, vacancy rates, and business mix, as well as qualitative insight from businesses

In addition, in Enfield Town we will also look at footfall, dwell time and the number of cultural events, to establish whether the impacts have been felt on the ground.

Themes

To address the key challenges and deliver on the vision goals, several actions have been identified and grouped under priority themes. These themes and a summary of the actions are included here.

Theme 1: Market Town identity and promotion

Theme 2: Public realm and spaces to dwell

Theme 3: Active travel and wayfinding

Theme 4: Evening economy

Theme 5: Vacant units

Theme 6: Council ownership

Enfield Town Action Plan: January 2022

Action	Detail	Relevant Theme(s)	Challenges being addressed	Delivery Team / Partners	Timeframe
Town Centre Welcomes	Cleaning, repairing, repainting to improve the general environment of the town centre including replacing worn signage outside station and repainting guard railings, deep cleansing around bus stops and increased bin collections. Christmas programme of lighting, street performances and events and delivery of Winter Light Festival in February'22	Theme 1: Town Centre Welcomes Theme 2: Public Realm and Spaces to Dwell Theme 4: Evening Economy	Business & community perception – statement of intent Sense of town centre identities Community/stakeholder engagement	Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development, Culture	From Winter '21 – ongoing
Programme Library Green	Better utilise Library Green & test new events /activities: - large scale: programming of events, stalls, cinema, pop up food. - smaller scale: bringing library activities outside & connecting library better to the town	Theme 1: Market Town Identity and Promotion Theme 2: Public Realm and Spaces to Dwell Theme 4: Evening Economy	Lack of spaces to dwell in the town centre Limited social/cultural offer and reasons for people to come to the centre beyond shopping Low footfall in Library Green	Culture, Library Services, Parks and Open Spaces	Spring '22 – medium term
New approach to filling vacant spaces	Encouraging meanwhile uses in vacant units e.g. Culture Palace and artist studio / shop 'Field' to diversify uses in the town centre.	Theme 4: Evening economy Theme 5: Vacant Units	High vacancy rates in the town centre Barriers for community/cultural uses to access high street space Landlord hesitancy to adopt new approaches	Culture, Dugdale Centre, local community and business groups, , Artist Hive Studios, Palace Exchange and Gardens	Winter '21 - ongoing
Programme Fountain Island	Supporting outdoor trading opportunities and events on Fountain Island – reviewing for re-launch in spring'22. Support existing businesses and attract new ones to drive footfall and activity.	Theme 1: Market Town identity & promotion Theme 2: Public realm & spaces to dwell Theme 4: Evening economy	Lack of spaces to dwell in the town centre Limited outdoor trading opportunities in the town centre to attract people to come to the centre beyond shopping Underutilised space of Fountain Island	Town Centre Development Highway Services, Licensing, Culture	Spring '22
Public Realm and Active Travel	Liveable Neighbourhoods programme to deliver new and improved public spaces, alongside better pedestrian, bus and cycling facilities.	Theme 1: Market Town identity and promotion Theme 2: Public realm and spaces to dwell Theme 3: Active travel and wayfinding Theme 4: Evening economy	Lack of public spaces to dwell Dominance of traffic Limited social, cultural, food and evening offers Poor quality arrival	Healthy Streets, Planning, Culture, Town Centre Development Enfield Town Business Association Old Enfield Charitable Trust St Andrews Church Palace Exchange / Gardens	Ongoing

For ongoing updates and to share ideas or feedback please visit: [Letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/EnfieldTownAP](https://letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/EnfieldTownAP)



PALMERS GREEN ACTION PLAN

January 2022



Palmers Green Action Plan

Enfield's Growing and Dynamic Town Centre

Palmers Green, in the southwest of the borough, is a relatively diverse town centre, primarily driven by a mix of food and beverage, but with a more even spread of uses than others in Enfield.

Retail is the largest employment sector in the town centre, but there is also a strong concentration of knowledge economy and creative jobs, with a growing SME and startup business community. Palmers Green is the only town centre of the five that has a large working age population living in the catchment.

The town centre boasts an impressive number of engaged and active business and community groups, including the Action Team, The Green Lanes Business Association, Fox Lane and District Residents' Assoc. and the Friends of the nearby Broomfield Park.

High Street Performance

Palmers Green was performing relatively well before the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of jobs and businesses grew much faster than borough or London averages over the last five years, thanks to the range of the offer. Voids have been historically low, with the strong demand for space resulting in the overspill of high street business and knowledge economy services into residential properties on Green Lanes.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant economic impact. As shown on the graph of Mastercard spend data, the national lockdowns resulted in a dramatic fall in retail and eating spending in the town centre. Despite some eating recovery over the summer (likely boosted by Eat Out to Help Out), the second and third national lockdowns caused spending to fall again to 40-60% of normal levels.

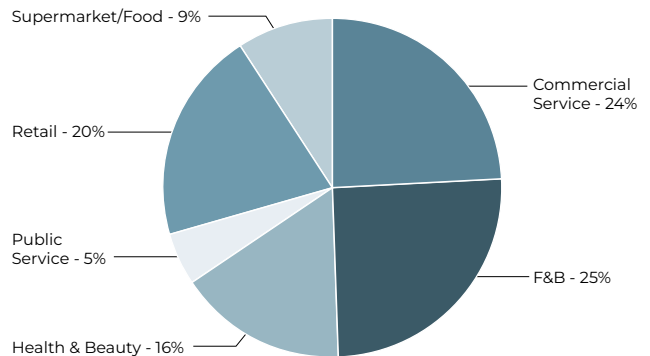
Key Challenges and Opportunities

The analysis of detailed evidence, as well as conversations with the community has revealed a number of key challenges and opportunities in Palmers Green. This action plan will need to directly respond to these challenges whilst recognising what is working well already and building on the opportunities that already exist.

Challenges:

- Lack of public spaces to dwell
- Lack of workspace / cultural venues
- Low levels of greening
- Lack of identifiable 'centre' of town

Types of Businesses Located in High Street Units



Recovery since has been sluggish with spending only reaching normal levels in summer 2021, though traders telling us that footfall still remains depressed.



Source: Mastercard Retail Location Index Data, 2021

Opportunities:

- Enterprise and economic growth
- Active community and stakeholders
- Low vacancy rates
- Broomfield Park
- Night-time economy
- New business interest

Vision: Green, Community, Enterprise

A town centre which grows and greens through involvement of its community, diversifying the economy, promoting cultural activity and improving the public realm. Empowering local people and businesses to take an active stake in their town centre.

This is an ambitious vision, and therefore a series of goals have been set to help guide and structure the actions that will be needed to achieve the overall vision.

Goals

Immediate Goals (3 months)

1. Get people to come back into Palmers Green
2. Make visitors feel comfortable again after social distancing

Short-term Goals (3-12 months)

1. Ongoing engagement to continue to refine and develop vision and action plan with community
2. Test innovative new ideas and approaches
3. Better understand the trading/commercial environment and test demand for new uses

Medium-term Goals (1-2 years)

1. Encourage greater diversification on the high street
2. Establish Palmers Green as a place of enterprise and employment

Long-term Goals (3-5 years)

1. Enable community-led high street development
2. Grow and diversify the economy through new business spaces and supporting the knowledge and creative industries

How will we know that the interventions have worked?

We will collect and analyse data from across all five town centres including high street spend, vacancy rates, and business mix, as well as qualitative insight from businesses.

In addition, in Palmers Green we will also look at business growth to establish whether the impacts have been felt on the ground.

Themes

To address the key challenges and deliver on the vision goals, several actions have been identified and grouped under priority themes. These themes and a summary of the actions are included here.

Theme 1: Area brand and governance

Theme 2: Evening economy

Theme 3: Workspace

Theme 4: Parks and greening

Theme 5: Vacant units/upper floors

Theme 6: Cultural offer

Palmers Green Action Plan: January 2022

Action	Detail	Relevant Theme(s)	Challenges being addressed	Delivery Team	Timeframe
Town Centre Welcomes	Cleaning, repairing, repainting to improve the general environment of the town centre including repainting and reinstating 'Welcome to Palmers Green' signs, repairing clock, repainting railings, replacing cracked pavements.	Theme 1: Area Brand and Governance	Lack of public spaces to dwell Appearance of public realm Lack of identifiable 'centre' of town	Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development	Underway and ongoing
Outdoor trading and dwell space	Creating of new outdoor space for trading / dining and events. Test Devonshire Road with opportunity for longer term / permanent square.	Theme 2: Evening Economy Theme 3: Workspace Theme 1: Area Brand and Governance Theme 6: Cultural Offer	Need for affordable and flexible workspace Constraints on growth of enterprise Lack of public spaces to dwell	Town Centre Development, Healthy Streets, Licencing, Environment and Operational Services, Culture Palmers Green Action Team, Friends of Broomfield Park, Green Lanes Business Association, Fox Lane and District Residents' Assoc.	Spring'22
Greening	Greening along green lanes with a focus on addressing lack of green infrastructure. Deliver 'Green Route' to connect to Broomfield Park.	Theme 4: Parks and Greening	Appearance Lack of identifiable town 'centre' Lack of public spaces to dwell	Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development Palmers Green Action Team	Commenced
New uses	Utilise an empty shop to test new uses on the high street and have dialogue with potential operators to deliver new workspace in the town centre. Possibility to use large vacant spaces as a meanwhile approach for culture and new businesses.	Theme 3: Workspace Theme 5: Vacant Units Theme 6: Cultural Offer	High demand for space and low vacancy rates Need for affordable and flexible workspace	Town Centre Development, Planning Workspace providers, local businesses, Palmers Green Action Team	Summer'22
Culture	Winter programme of lighting, street performances and events Stories of Enfield to thread the poetry of famous resident and poet Stevie Smith across Palmers Green High Street.	Theme 1: Area Brand and Governance Theme 6: Cultural Offer	Lack of public spaces to dwell Appearance	Culture, Town Centres Development, Street Lighting Palmers Green Action Team	From Nov'21

For ongoing updates and to share ideas or feedback please visit: [Letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/PalmersGreenAP](https://letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/PalmersGreenAP)



SOUTHGATE ACTION PLAN

January 2022



Southgate Action Plan

Enfield's Connected Town Centre

Southgate sits on the western edge of the borough and is the only one of Enfield's town centres on the main tube line, with a beautiful 1930s Grade II* listed station and concourse.

Alongside retail, the town centre has relatively high activity in the knowledge sector and a number of small businesses, but has suffered considerably from office-to-residential permitted development conversions. To date, seven schemes in Southgate have seen 12.6% of total borough floorspace lost, with more in the pipeline.

High Street Performance

Southgate was performing well before the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of jobs and businesses grew much faster than the borough or London averages in recent years, due to its diversified economy. Churn rates were high, but vacancies low.

The Covid-19 pandemic however, had a significant impact on the high street. As shown on the graph of Mastercard spend data, the national lockdowns resulted in a dramatic fall in retail and eating spending in the town centre, with Mastercard eating spending falling to just 20% of normal levels in March 2020.

Since the first lockdown, however, retail spend has been more resilient in Southgate and was able to recover to and sustain normal levels fairly quickly, though casualties included both the town centre's pubs.

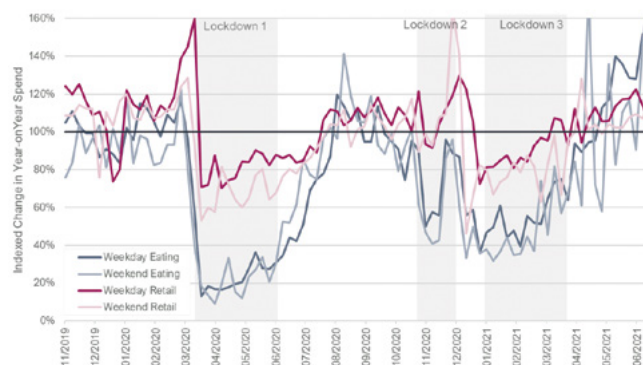
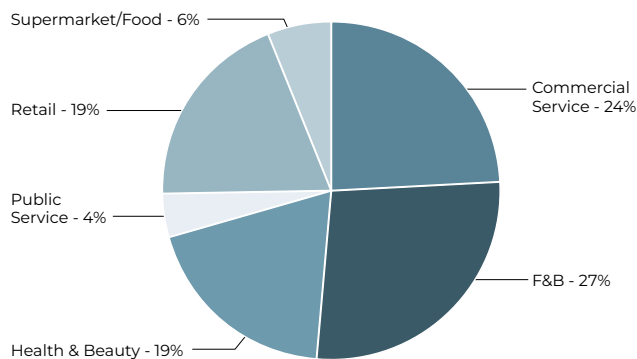
Key Challenges and Opportunities

The analysis of detailed evidence, as well as conversations with the community has revealed a number of key challenges and opportunities in Southgate. This action plan will need to directly respond to these challenges whilst recognising what is working well already and building on the opportunities that already exist.

Challenges:

- Poor state of public realm
- Lack of stakeholder voice until recently
- Lack of public spaces to dwell
- Loss of workspace to residential conversion
- Lack of evening economy
- High retail churn rate

Types of Businesses Located in High Street Units



Source: Mastercard Retail Location Index Data, 2021

Opportunities:

- Connections
- Strong 1930s heritage
- Low vacancy rate
- Strong local cultural partners
- Prominent assets with redevelopment potential
- High level of council ownership
- Nearby green spaces

Vision: Connection, Accessibility, Identity

The future Southgate will succeed through its connections. A place where the community comes together to enjoy the town centre's diverse offer and green and attractive public realm. Where the full range of businesses have a voice and an identity. Where active travel routes connect the town centre to green spaces and other parts of the borough.

This is an ambitious vision, and therefore a series of goals have been set to help guide and structure the actions that will be needed to achieve the overall vision.

Goals

Immediate Goals (3 months)

1. Encourage people to come back into the centre
2. Make visitors feel welcome and comfortable again after social distancing

Short-term Goals (3-12 months)

1. Build involvement from a broad range of stakeholders
2. Identify the opportunities to support a refreshed Southgate "brand"
3. Ongoing engagement to continue to refine and develop vision and action plan with community

Medium-term Goals (1-2 years)

1. Build a strong place identity
2. Empower stakeholders through decision-making and management
3. Focus on a mixed economy, reversing the loss of workspace
4. Build up the night-time economy
5. Restructure the public realm

Long-term Goals (3-5 years)

1. Connected stakeholders delivering alongside the council
2. Connected and thriving public spaces
3. A new "brand" / identity which celebrates heritage connection
4. Connected and integrated transport

How will we know that the interventions have worked?

We will collect and analyse data from across all five town centres including high street spend, vacancy rates, and business mix, as well as qualitative insight from businesses.

In addition, in Southgate we will also look at footfall and perception to establish whether the impacts have been felt on the ground.

Themes

To address the key challenges and deliver on the vision goals, several actions have been identified and grouped under priority themes. These themes and a summary of the actions are included here.

Theme 1: Public Realm

Theme 2: Cultural/evening partnerships

Theme 3: Southgate Group/identity

Theme 4: Active Travel

Theme 5: Workspace

Theme 6: Southgate Masterplan

Southgate Action Plan: January 2022

Action	Detail	Relevant Theme(s)	Challenges being addressed	Delivery Team	Timeframe
Town Centre Welcomes	Cleaning, repairing, repainting to improve the general environment of the town centre including damaged pavement slabs and parking lay-bys along the high street, repaint guard railings and bollards around the station and along Chase Side.	Theme 1. Public Realm Theme 3. Southgate Identity	Poor state of public realm Lack of public spaces to dwell	Council teams: Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development,	Commenced
Greening	Build on installation of parklet on Chase Side to find other areas to green and improve in the town centre.	Theme 1. Public Realm Theme 5. Workspace Theme 3. Southgate Identity	Poor state of public realm Lack of spaces to dwell Lack of evening economy	Council teams: Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development, Southgate Task Force	Commenced
Outdoor Trading	Support outdoor dining and trading throughout the town centre, working with local businesses to facilitate.	Theme 1. Public Realm Theme 3. Southgate Identity	Lack of evening economy High churn rate Diversity of high street offer	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Licensing Businesses, Southgate Task Force	Commenced
Culture	Christmas programme of lighting, street performances and events. Support partners to introduce new cultural activity and promote. Including Southgate Club, and cafés / bars. Involvement in borough-wide light festival	Theme 2: Cultural & evening partnerships	Lack of spaces to dwell Lack of evening economy High churn rate Diversity of high street offer	Council teams: Town Centre Development, Culture, Licencing, Street Lighting External: Businesses, Southgate Task Force	From Nov'21
Partnerships	Work with TfL to improve public realm outside the station (e.g. improve bins, planting grass beds etc). Work with the owner of the old police station to understand opportunities for meanwhile use. Work with Barnet and Southgate College to bring events and training onto high street.	Theme 2: Cultural & evening partnerships Theme 5: Workspace Theme 6: Southgate Masterplan	High churn rate Diversity of high street offer	Council teams: Environment and Operational Services, Town Centre Development, Planning, Strategic Property External; TfL, police station owner, Barnet and Southgate College	Ongoing – longer term

For ongoing updates and to share ideas or feedback please visit: [Letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/SouthgateAP](https://letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/SouthgateAP)

London Borough of Enfield**Overview & Scrutiny Committee****10th February 2022**

Subject: Annual Complaints & Information Report**Cabinet Member: Cllr Nesil Caliskan****Executive Director: Fay Hammond, Executive Director of Resources**

Purpose of Report

1. The Annual Complaints & Information Report was presented to General Purposes Committee on 13th January 2022. The same report is now presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
2. The report covers the period of **April 2020 to March 2021**.
3. The Committee is therefore referred to the annual report presented to GPC and is included as an appendix.

Main Considerations for the Panel

4. It is recognised that there are a number of improvements required to address long term challenges regarding reporting and responsiveness to complaints, FOIs (Freedom of Information) requests and MEQs (Member Enquiries). An improvement plan is in place that covers a range of activities set out below.

Service Improvements

5. Development actions are currently underway to improve the handling and organisational learning from complaints, MEQs and FOIs.
6. **Data insight:** generating better data insight to drive continual service improvement with service leads; in turn ensuring strengthening accountability.
7. **Processes:** guidance, training and templates are being reviewed and implemented to improve response quality and reduce demand failure.
8. **People:** reviewing structures and responsibility remits to identify more efficient models of service delivery.
9. **Technology:** developing replacement IT system for processing enquiries (CRM – Customer Relationship Management system) which will provide

enhanced digital capabilities increasing automation, data insight and improve reporting.

Annual Reporting – Planned Additional Insights

10. The following improvements will be implemented for future annual reporting:
 - a. Complaints, MEQs and FOIs: extent of late responses – volumes and length of time taken to respond
 - b. Complaints, MEQs and FOIs: enquiries with highest volumes
 - c. Complaints, MEQs and FOIs: 3-year trends analysis
 - d. Complaints: breakdown of complaint categories and volumes received
 - e. FOIs: learning from internal reviews (where requestor is dissatisfied with response) and additional information on ICO referrals (reasons and volumes)

11. Annual reports will be published for Q2 every financial year.

Report Author: Eleanor Brown
Head of Transformation
Eleanor.Brown@enfield.gov.uk
0208 132 1612

Date of report 31st January 2022

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Ombudsman Annual Report 2020-21:

Although the Ombudsman is mentioned in the Annual Complaints & Information Report, a separate annual update is produced. 2020-21 Report was presented to the General Purposes Committee in October 2021, which can be found on p.219 via the following link:

<https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/g13790/Public%20reports%20pack%2014th-Oct-2021%2019.00%20General%20Purposes%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Appendix

London Borough of Enfield

General Purposes Committee

January 2022

Subject: Annual Complaints and Information report

Cabinet Member: Cllr Nesil Caliskan

Key Decision: N/A

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview on the annual performance of the complaints team, including the impact of Covid-19 in relation to both volume and response performance.

Proposal(s)

2. Proposed that the Committee note the performance of the Complaints team, and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on both incoming numbers of complaints and the ability to respond.

Relevance to the Council's Corporate Plan

3. The complaints and information process aims to resolve any issues or dissatisfaction experienced by resident in use of the Council's services, thereby helping to ensure that individual residents receive services in line with the Council's corporate plan and quality commitments, as well as delivering elements of the Council's statutory duties in regard to transparency and oversight.

Background

4. This report sets out the performance of the Council in Corporate Complaints and information requests (i.e. Subject Access Reviews and Freedom of Information requests) and Members Enquiries. The performance for FOIs, MEQs is reported quarterly to Cabinet as part of the performance reporting this includes a specific annex setting out an action plan to address timeliness of the responses for MEQs and FOIs which requires improvement.
5. The Council's Corporate Complaints policy provides the framework for ensuring that complaints received across the Council relating to corporate services are handled consistently, fairly and effectively. There are different processes for statutory appeals (parking, housing, council tax, benefits, school admissions, school exclusions etc.), school complaints and complaints concerning children's or adult social care. This report focuses on the

Corporate Complaints. The timescales for responding to complaints is 10 workings following the acknowledgement (sent within 3 working days); for more complex complaints the deadline is extended to 20 days. For second stage complaint the timescales for response are 30 working days from acknowledgement. The link to the document can be found here

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/contact-us/are-you-unhappy-with-something/make-a-formal-complaint/>

6. There are Council policies for both Subject Access Reviews (SAR) and Freedom of Information requests (FOI) which provide a framework for officers to meet legal and corporate requirements in relation to information requests that fall within the scope of the legislation. These policies and can be found at the links set out below.

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/subject-access-policy-and-procedure-your-council.pdf>

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/freedom-of-information-policy-your-council.pdf>

Member enquiries timescales is 8 working days for response.

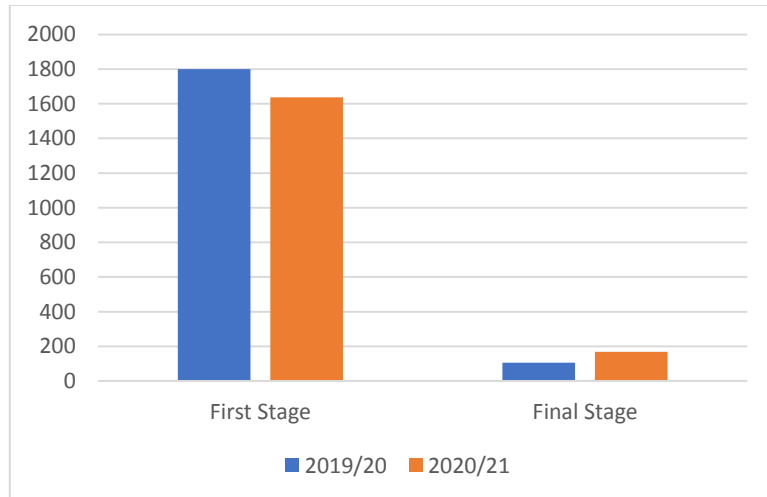
7. This annual corporate report covers the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. During this period the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on both performance and volume of complaints. Reduced staffing levels, the need to reprioritise other services and an increase in issues raised by residents have generally affected responses across all areas.

Main Considerations for the Council

Complaints Summary

8. The complaints policy promotes early resolution of complaints, so we initially aim to address issues informally, however from July 2019, these are no longer logged in this way. If matters cannot be resolved locally with services, complainants may then progress matters through the formal complaint's procedure.
9. During 2019, the complaints process changed from a 3-stage process to a 2-stage process, we no longer have a recorded early resolution stage. Therefore, a higher number of cases would show as First stage during 2019, than in 2020/21. All complaints are logged under First Stage or Final Stage.
10. Overall 79.8% (1308 of 1638) of 1st stage complaints were completed within timescale; which is a slight drop on 2019/20 where 81% (1458 of 1800) First Stage complaints were completed within timescale.
11. The number of Final Stages in 2020/21 has increased by 64 cases compared to 2019/20, with 68.6% (116/169) completed on time, compared to 55.2% (58/105) completed in 2019/20.
12. The following chart shows a breakdown of completed complaints by stage for each year.

Figure 1: Annual breakdown of first & final stage complaints



	2019-20	2020-21
First stage	1800	1683
Final stage	105	169

Ombudsman contact

13. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they can ask for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman (HOS) to review the Council's final response.
14. During the 2020/21 reporting period, the LGSCO contacted the Council regarding 102 cases which has significantly increased in comparison to last year where the LGSCO contacted regarding 68 cases. This will also be impacted by COVID, when the LGSCO closed in March 2020, so several cases from the latter part of 2019/20 were not dealt with until 2020/21.
15. In 2020/21, the HOS made contact for 15 cases, which has dramatically decreased from the 49 in 2019/20; 4 of these 15 cases were progressed to a full investigation. One investigation was determined to be outside of the HOS jurisdiction, and one case was upheld in part. The remaining 2 have yet to be determined.
16. The HO and LGSCO both closed during the 1st Lockdown in March 2020 and slowly reopened during the summer of 2020. Therefore, decisions from the HO and LGSCO are taking longer for them to determine. As such we are unable to give a 100% reflection on the case outcomes at this time.
17. The outcomes of LGSCO cases for 2020-21 were reported to General Purposes Committee in October 2021. The LGSCO issued one Public Interest Report in 2020-21, which was reported to Cabinet as required by legislation.

18. The following chart provides a breakdown of ombudsman cases for this reporting period.

Figure 2: Breakdown of all 2020/21 Ombudsman cases

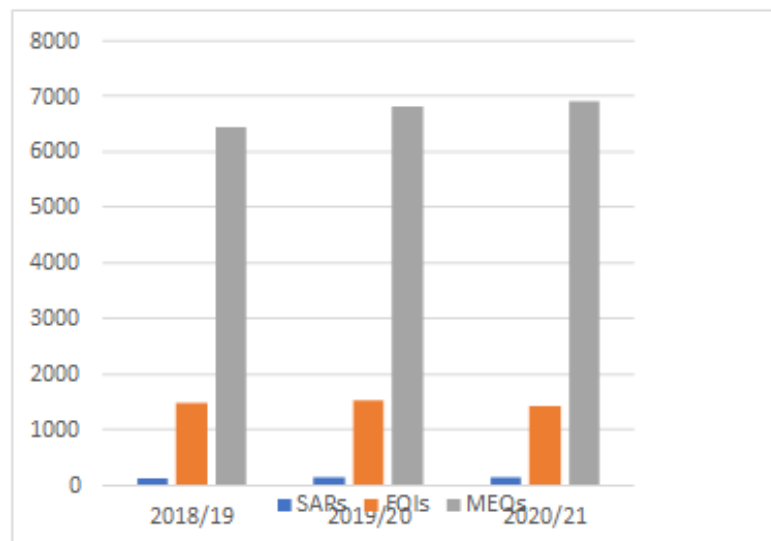
	Not Upheld	Upheld	Closed after initial enquiries	% of enquiries closed or not upheld	Total
LGSCO	3	17	82	83%	102
HO	*	*	11	73%*	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>117</i>

*The 73% figure does not include the upheld Figures as the HO have not yet made a determination on 2 of the 4 investigated cases

Information Requests

19. The following chart shows a breakdown of the Subject Access Requests (SARs), Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) and Member Enquiries (MEQs) each year.

Figure 3: Volume comparison of SARs, FOIs and MEQs



	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	% change in enquiries prior year
SARs	103	139	139	0%
FOIs	1485	1521	1429	(6%)
MEQs	6432	6816	6911	1.3%

20. The following table summarises compliance with response timescales and shows improving performance; however, improvement is required to meet the timescales.

Figure 4: SARs, FOIs and MEQs response times

	2019/20	2020/21
SARs	81% (113 of 139)	82.7% (115 of 139)
FOIs	82.2% (1251 of 1521)	84.5% (1208 of 1429)
MEQs	80% (5454 of 6816)	84.9% (5870 of 6911)

21. During 2020/21 there were 50 FOI reviews completed (the escalation stage when a requestor is unhappy with the information provided in an FOI). This data was not previously recorded, however, based on the team's experience, there has been an increase compared to previous years.

Learning from complaints

22. The Council welcomes feedback about its services as this provides valuable information about customers' experiences of the services that they use. We publicise details of how to complain on the Council's website and in areas where the public has access.
23. Complaints are taken seriously, investigated and responded to with appropriate redress. The Council can address complaints in several ways, and, at times, it is appropriate for meetings to take place between the complainant and the relevant manager to facilitate resolution.
24. Feedback from complaints is used for organisational learning and reports on complaint themes. Complaint action points are identified and monitored to ensure that any practice or service improvements are implemented, and that information is shared across the Council. Improvement actions have been identified within the corporate process, including the update of templates to provide a more effective process and ensure information to service users is not duplicated.
25. Further development will arise through the introduction of Verint, a new case management system, which will include a dedicated section in each complaint to record learning, which can then be captured and reported to services. This will provide the opportunity to improve data quality which in turn will support easier identification of thematic issues by service type or location than the current system.

Actions taken from complaints

26. Apologies were given to all the complainants and learning from these cases has resulted in the following summarised actions:
- Apologies and information given to complainants
 - Financial remedies

- Reminders, feedback, guidance and training given to staff
- Review of policies, procedures and systems
- Implementation of new procedures, practice and IT systems
- Updating of published information
- Adjustments of bills to customers
- Recruitment of more staff
- Reassessments of housing applications
- Appointments arranged for repairs and surveys

Quality Assurance

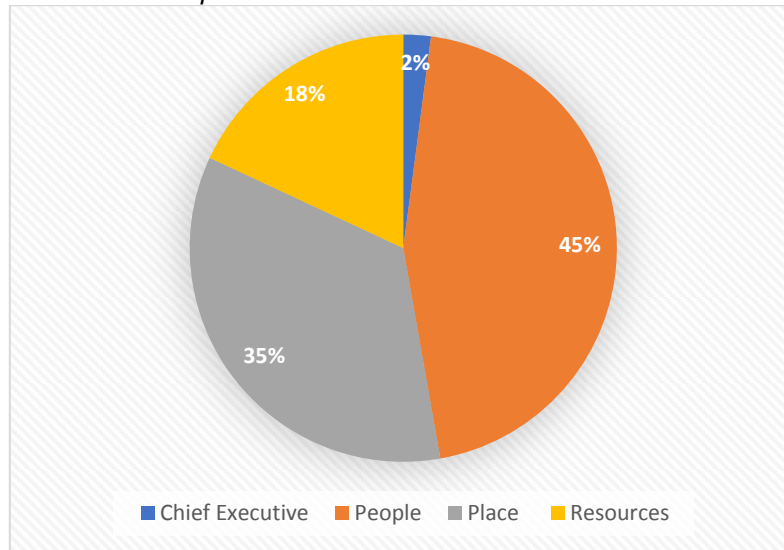
27. The Complaints Team have systems in place to ensure that response timescales are met. This includes sending reminders of the deadline for responses to the assigned managers; escalating to a senior manager if there is no response within the specified timeframe; reporting to Directors regularly and highlighting to staff the importance of compliance in training programmes. The Complaints Team also monitor and assist with complaint responses to ensure that standards are met, and all aspects of the complaint are addressed. The support offered by the Complaints Team includes:

- Quality checking responses
- Arranging and chairing complaint meetings
- Liaising with complainants regarding timescales and desired outcomes
- Identifying key themes from complaints, devising action plans and ensuring organisational learning is implemented
- Regularly providing management and performance information
- Service development to improve how we respond to and learn from complaints

Compliments

28. The Council welcomes compliments from its users. Compliments help to highlight good quality service and give staff encouragement to continue delivering service of the highest standard. The following chart shows a breakdown of the 144 compliments received across the Council. In November 2019, a link was added to the council website, enabling customers to raise a compliment centrally. These figures represent the compliments received via this link and compliments passed to the team from services. Therefore, there may be compliments that Services have received but not centrally logged.

Figure 5: Breakdown of all Compliments



Department	2020/21
Chief Executive	3
People	65
Place	50
Resources	26

Development plans

29. Key priorities for the year ahead are:

- Embedding staff structures into the team processes and cross-training across the department
- Progressing CRM development of new ICT systems including improving data analysis to be included from 2021-22 annual report
- Progressing the implementation of FOI Publication scheme
- Working with departments to improve compliance with response times
- Promotion of compliment recording centrally

Safeguarding Implications

30. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

31. There are no public health implications.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

32. The report is for information, therefore there is no equalities assessment required.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

33. There are no considerations.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

34. The proposal is to note the content of the report, therefore there is no decision carrying risk in either respect of being taken, or not taken. However, in the wider context, it is important that the complaints and information function is resourced and operates effectively. If it does not, then the Council will not comply with statutory requirements in regard to Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations; it will not so-operate as required with the Local Government or Housing Ombudsmen; and it will not offer an effective way for residents to resolve issues with the Council's services, all of which could result in substantial reputational damage, as well as legal risks and award of compensation or fines.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

35. The main risks in the operation of the service are failure to adhere to deadlines for responses for internal complaints, leading to further dissatisfaction and more difficulty resolving issues; or failure to comply with the deadline requirements of oversight bodies, resulting in the award of compensation payments, reputational damage, and failure to address the concerns of residents. In this respect, a recent reorganisation of the team has been undertaken to distribute caseload more effectively, and resource has been allocated specifically to manage co-operation with the Ombudsmen and Information Commissioner's Office.

Financial Implications

36. Compensation is sometimes paid to complainants in respect of service issues accepted by the Council. This is paid on a case by case basis at the discretion of management reviewing the complaint.

Legal Implications

37. The following types of complaints should be dealt with under a statutory complaints process relevant to the legislative provision that is applicable : Children's services, Adult social care, including blue badge assessments, School admissions, exclusions and transport, Housing benefit and council tax, Homelessness, Standards and Member conduct and Parking and traffic offences.

38. If a complaint does not fall under a statutory process, then the non-statutory complaints process should apply involving the right people with the robust oversight of complaint handling at the right stage. They may include, the section 151 Officer, the Monitoring officer and the Chief Executive officer. Any complaints policy must comply with all relevant laws and in particular, the Public Sector Equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The complaints policy should be open and accountable, ensure that all concerned act fairly and proportionately, put things right and all actions are entirely reasonable

and fair, with a procedure that is easy to follow. The outcomes from the complaints process ideally should be a learning experience to ensure matters do not happen again and this is where monitoring is essential with reports documented.

39. Early referral to the Ombudsman may be necessary for statutory complaints and reputational and financial risks should be brought to the attention of the Monitoring officer and other senior Executive council officers. In the event of a finding of maladministration under section 30(1) of the Local Government Act 1974, there is a specific requirement for that finding to be reported to a council's Members, and for a formal response to the that finding to be sent to the Ombudsman. The council's response must be sent to the Ombudsman within three months setting out the action that they have taken or propose to take, in response to the report. Section 5/5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 places a requirement on every council's Monitoring Officer to prepare a formal report on all Ombudsman complaint decisions.
40. This report appears to set out the performance of the Complaints team with incoming complaints and responses, as portrayed above, particularly, in light of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Workforce Implications

41. There are no workforce implications.

Property Implications

42. There are no property implications.

Other Implications

43. There are no other implications.

Options Considered

44. There are no other options considered. The effective operation of the complaints and information service is essential in providing an effective service to residents and enacting the Council's statutory duties.

Conclusions

45. This report sets out an improved performance on prior years timescales, however, the timeliness of responses remains an area of improvement. The action plan identifies now includes timeframes for these improvements to be progressed.

Report Author: Karen Wright

Complaints & Information Manager
Karen.wright@enfield.gov.uk
0208 132 2317

7 December 2021

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