

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITIES BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 17TH APRIL, 2024

MEMBERS: Councillors Nia Stevens, Mustafa Cetinkaya, Hivran Dalkaya, Hannah Dyson, Patricia Gregory, Nelly Gyosheva and Ruby Sampson

Officers: Tinu Olowe (Director of HR & OD), Sarah Gilroy (Policy and Performance Manager), Chris Cole (Head of Strategic Transport Planning & Policy), Richard Eason (Programme Director, Journeys & Places), Shirley-Anne Wheeler (Equals Employment & Therapies Service Manager), Andy Johnson (Head of Post 16 Provision), and Jane Creer (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Councillor George Savva (Cabinet Member)
Pastor Nick Chanda (Enfield Faith Forum), Tim Fellows (Enfield LGBT Network), Mark Riley (Enfield LGBT Network)
Local Press representative

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Cllr Nia Stevens as Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Margaret Greer (Vice Chair) and Cllr Alessandro Georgiou. In Cllr Greer's absence, Cllr Hivran Dalkaya acted as Vice Chair.

Bevin Betton (Enfield Racial Equality Council) and Ginnie Landon (Enfield Women's Centre) sent apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29 January 2024.

4. PUBLIC AND ACTIVE TRAVEL ACCESSIBILITY

RECEIVED the slide deck 'Mobility Impaired Access to Transport' tabled at the meeting in addition to the report providing an overview of public transport in Enfield.

The presentation was led by Chris Cole, Head of Strategic Transport Planning and Policy, and Richard Eason, Programme Director, Journeys & Places, LB Enfield.

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Details were given in respect of access to the railway system across the borough, including accessible stations, noting that train operators must apply for funding to DfT for upgrades and that costs were very high for most stations, and sometimes prohibitive.

All of TfL's buses were compliant with all relevant DDA legislation, and Enfield's bus stop accessibility was high at 95%. Some stops in rural or difficult locations were still to be completed. Remaining sections of Hail and Ride were due to be converted in the next few years. Officers were aware of research on behalf of RNIB looking at bus boarder/floating bus stops, and that guidance would be taken into account when available.

For walking and wheeling, all new footways and new crossings had to comply with DDA guidelines. All transport and highways schemes must consider the impacts on mobility impaired people in their design. It was recognised there were issues with older footways and maintenance of footways.

The All Ability Cycling Hub was highlighted as welcoming people of all ages and abilities to ride on the many types of cycles available, with experienced cycle instructors on hand. The hub took place every Monday year round in Bush Hill Park and was a very popular service. Age UK and One-to-One Enfield also used the adapted cycles for sessions.

Eligibility for Blue Badge parking was set at a national level. In Enfield, blue badge holders could park for an unlimited time in car parks (disabled bay and pay to park bay) and on-street (pay to park bay and resident permit only bay). Where possible, formalised blue badge parking was incorporated in all traffic infrastructure schemes.

There was a Journeys and Places Disability Reference Group made up of deaf and disabled people who live, work or study in Enfield, and would meet three or four times each year with the purpose to ensure that the views of deaf and disabled people are heard throughout the design phases to inform our projects.

Questions were invited from Members.

Cllr Dyson asked about lack of accessibility at Gordon Hill Station, particularly given its location close to Chase Farm Hospital. Officers advised that an application had been made in respect of Gordon Hill and Enfield Chase to the Access For All Fund: when information was available the ward councillors would be informed.

Cllr Gregory raised the poor state of broken paths in Oakwood Park, which affected bicycle users. Officers clarified that Journeys & Places related to Highways rather than Parks, but they knew Parks Service was aware and following liaison with Parks colleagues a fuller response would be provided.

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Tim Fellows related difficulties in pushing a relative using a wheelchair on local pavements and roads. It was advised that new standards required a flush kerb, but many pavements were not up to the modern standard.

Trees overhanging pavements could also cause difficulties for people with visual impairment, especially if there was a need to go into the road to avoid the obstacle. It was advised that issues may be reported directly via the Council's website at [Tree planting, removal and problems | Enfield Council](#)

A further issue was misuse of Blue Badges. Fraudulent use could be reported anonymously via the Council's website at [Disabled person's parking permit \(Blue Badge\) | Enfield Council](#). Chris Cole agreed to find out further information regarding misuse of designated disabled parking bays.

In response to further queries regarding pavements, it was advised that the Council had an agreed level of maintenance, but resources were finite and inspections had to be used to prioritise areas to be addressed. However, it was always worth reporting an issue or raising an MEQ. The footway renewal programme used asphalt rather than paving slabs (except in town centres or heritage areas). The highest proportion of maintenance costs resulted from motor vehicles going onto footways where they should not, and in new schemes bollards etc were used to prevent this.

Cllr Dyson raised residents' concerns about the 456 bus being inaccessible to elderly and disabled people. Officers acknowledged that Enfield Transport User Group had also asked about this bus, which was a midi size and could be difficult to board. It had been discussed with TfL who consider it the appropriate vehicle for its patronage. If there was more residential development around Crews Hill, improvements to this service may be made, alongside improved railway station accessibility.

Officers advised that they wanted to investigate bus routes further, particularly in parts of the borough that were less well served, to further the evidence base to make stronger arguments to TfL. Chris Cole confirmed he had a liaison link with TfL.

In response to Cllr Cetinkaya's query, it was confirmed that mobility scooters may be driven in cycle lanes.

The Chair thanked the officers for the slide deck and attendance at the meeting.

5. LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

RECEIVED the report of the Executive Director – People, to update the Board on the Council's work to increase good quality employment opportunities for disabled people set out within the Fairer Enfield Policy.

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The report was introduced by Shirley-Anne Wheeler, Integrated Learning Disability Service Therapies and Employment Service Manager, LB Enfield. It was aimed to get adults with learning disabilities into jobs and maintain them in their jobs. The report contained details of what had been done and the successes in Enfield. The Equals Employment Service and ESF funding was highlighted.

There was also support for young people affected by SEND to be aspirational in their vocational pathways. A goal was to double the number of internships. Andy Johnson, Head of Post 16 Provision, provided detail on the supported internship programme.

Additionally, the Mental Health Enablement Service supported Adult Social Care clients into employment.

Officers worked hard for the Council to be a beacon employer, working with HR to make adapted roles, and be a model for other employers.

Questions were invited from Members.

In response to Members' queries, it was confirmed that this was a very person centred service, with each individual and their skills identified, and appropriate employment for them. Language and cultural needs were also considered, for example with interpretation, BSL, Makaton, etc.

Nick Chanda asked about the biggest employers of 16 to 24 year old clients. It was advised that SMEs tended to be more reluctant than large employers, so the majority traditionally went into organisations like B&Q, Homebase, and hospitals. Individuals were asked about their own aspirations and areas of interest, and now there was a local brewery, retailers, and hospitality businesses providing a broader employer base. Challenges were in getting employers or particular departments/managers to take a chance on a young person, and in encouraging parents that it was right to prepare for adulthood through employment. The employment ranged from high level jobs at top accountancy firms to stacking jobs with retail companies.

Cllr Cetinkaya asked about support to the employers and tax incentives. It was advised that they had access to work funding from the Department for Work and Pensions for support needed for the workers, such as for personal care needs.

The response from employers, once they had taken a chance on a person, they were frequently recognised as an asset to the company and it was likely they would go on to employ a further person the following year.

In response to queries on numbers, it was advised that this year, 58 young people were going through the Supported Internship Programme and it was anticipated 54 would complete the programme, which would be similar to the usual success rate of around 70%. Numbers in respect of the individuals

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referred via the Mental Health Enablement Service could be forwarded after the meeting.

The supported internships involved dedicated classroom staff and job coaches to support a young person in the workplace as necessary. For those not ready to apply, there was a supported preparatory internship to get to the required level. It was also important that those going through internships had an employer at the end of the programme, and it was difficult to scale up further. There was also an aspiration for more sheltered employment places, such as at Café 311 at Community House.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending and providing the update to the Board, which was noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

NOTED the completion of the 2023/24 work programme.

Members wished the items listed as proposed written briefings to the Board to be recommended for consideration in the 2024/25 work programme. Members also asked that representatives from TfL be invited to attend a Board meeting next year.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED that future meeting dates would be confirmed following Annual Council on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

The meeting ended at 8.29 pm.