

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2023

MEMBERS: Councillors Mahmut Aksanoglu (Chair), Mohammad Islam (Deputy Mayor), Joanne Laban, David Skelton, Edward Smith, Nelly Gyosheva, Ahmet Hasan (Associate Cabinet Member (Enfield North)) and Nia Stevens

Officers: Brett Leahy (Director of Planning and Growth), May Hope (Plan Making Manager), Stacey Gilmour (Governance & Scrutiny Officer)

Also Attending:

Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)
Adam Messaili (Enfield Youth Council Member)
Ruth Mobenge (Enfield Youth Council Member)
Sevgi Rifat (Lead Youth Participation Worker)
Simon Allin (Local Democracy Reporter)

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hivran Dalkaya who was substituted by Cllr Nia Stevens.

Apologies for lateness were also received from the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nesil Caliskan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received regarding any item on the agenda.

3. UPDATE ON ENFIELD'S LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS - TO FOLLOW

Brett Leahy, Director of Planning and Growth introduced the report which provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing development and progress of the new Enfield Local Plan (ELP) as it advances through the various stages of planning. Enfield Council is currently in the process of updating its existing Local Plan, which is a crucial document that will guide the spatial development of Enfield Borough up to and beyond 2041.

Enfield Council's housing target in its Local Plan is set to be inflated from 25,000 to 35,000, with suggestions that at least 9,000 will now be allocated to the Green Belt. The original version of the document was designed to deliver 25,000 homes across the borough up to 2039, but the new version, which will

be examined by a planning inspector, significantly increases the housing target to 35,000 homes up to 2041.

The new Local Plan is currently being revised before a fresh round of consultation starts next month. It includes proposals to release around 13% of the borough's Green Belt land for development, including large sites at Crews Hill and Vicarage Farm in World's End.

The Green Belt covers around a third of the Enfield Borough and currently protects previously undeveloped land from being built on. Under policies set out in the Local Plan, which was approved in 2021, de-designating the Green Belt is only justified in 'exceptional circumstances'

Following questions on this issue from Members, Brett advised that the Local Plan involved balancing various elements, including housing need, employment, and economic growth. He went on to say that the current Local Plan is out of date and not fit for purpose because it fails the four statutory housing tests. He explained that the consequence of this is the London Plan (finalised in 2021) is also out-of-date as it also fails the four statutory housing tests as set by Government. He added that urban sites alone could not deliver the number of homes, affordable units and family-sized houses needed by the boroughs' residents.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nesil Caliskan said that while the London Plan was really critical, the authority also had to work within the framework of national requirements. She added that ultimately a national Planning Inspector would determine whether Enfield's draft Local Plan is adequate or not.

Under further questioning from Members, Officers advised that the new plans for Crews Hill involve building 5,500 homes on a 270-hectare site and that 50% of the site would be developed, with the rest being made up of open space. Vicarage Farm (referred to as Chase Park in the draft Local Plan) is set to deliver 3,765 homes over 167 hectares although landowner Comer Homes has itself suggested building 5,000 here. This would mean more than 9,000 homes being allocated to the Green Belt by the Local Plan in total, up from 6,430 in the previous version of the draft from two years ago. However, these numbers will be confirmed when the revised Local Plan is published next month.

In response to questions from Members regarding the housing mix plans, Officers advised that building on Green Belt sites would allow for greater provision of family homes. 37% of homes at Crews Hill would be three-bedroom and 16% would be four-bedroom, with a target of providing 50% affordable housing across the whole scheme.

In response to a question regarding the public consultation, and the numbers who were for and against building on the Green Belt, it was advised that the Council had received 7,267 responses on the Local Plan. However, a breakdown was not available because it was not a 'yes-or-no' type question.

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Following further discussions, May Hope, Plan Making Manager advised that there are plans to enhance and improve access to the northern part of the borough and to encourage development for recreational uses and leisure activities. She added that money raised from housing schemes would be used to fund projects, which could include local food production, forestry initiatives, landscape restoration projects, eco-tourism, sporting opportunities, natural burial grounds and education and recreational pursuits.

In response to a question regarding the longevity of farming, Officers advised that there was no direction in any of the Local Plan documents seeking to reduce the amount of farmland in the borough in favour of other land uses and said that initiatives such as tree-planting could take place alongside farming.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nesil Caliskan concluded by stating that one of the reasons why delivering a Local Plan for Enfield is so challenging is that the borough has the most amount of Green Belt in London but also one of the highest amounts of Strategic Industrial Land (SIL). SIL is protected by the London Plan and Officers said that any that was lost to housing development would have to be re-provided elsewhere in the borough.

The next version of the Local Plan, the Regulation 19 document, is set to be published on 6th December. Residents and Councillors will have twelve weeks to examine it before it is debated at the meeting of full council on 6th March 2024.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their informative update and their attendance at the meeting.

The Panel agreed:

- I. To note the report and looked forward to receiving further updates as the new Enfield Local Plan progressed.

4. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

NOTED the Regeneration & Economic Development Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2023/24.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the date of future meetings as follows:

Tuesday 30 January 2024

Tuesday 25 March 2024