



London Borough of Enfield

Report Title	Rewilding and Tree Planting
Report to	Environment Forum
Date of Meeting	5 th December 2023
Cabinet Member	Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy
Executive Director / Director	Cheryl Headon, Acting Director of Leisure, Parks and Communities
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Ward(s) affected	Cockfosters, Ridgeway, Whitewebbs
Classification	Part 1 Public

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on rewilding and tree planting being carried out as part of the Enfield Chase Landscape Restoration project.

Background and Options

Beaver Reintroduction

2. This report follows the Portfolio Report PL 21/021 P – Enfield Beaver Reintroduction Project which is being delivered in partnership with Capel Manor College at Forty Hall Farm.
3. The pair of beavers that were introduced to the site in December 2022 have settled in very well as demonstrated by successfully raising a young kit – the first baby beaver to be born in London for 400 years. They have transformed the site dramatically by building dams, felling trees as well as creating a lodge to live in. The new wetland landscape they have created provides habitat for a wide range of wildlife including insects, amphibians, birds and small mammals.

4. To build on the successful establishment of the beavers it is now proposed to seek funding to improve the project from the Mayor of London's Rewild London fund. If successful, this will be used to expand the area of the beaver enclosure to provide additional habitat and install a number of access and interpretation features to enhance opportunities for public engagement and learning.

Conservation Grazing

5. This report follows the Portfolio Report PL2223_023 – Introduce Conservation Grazing to Selected Parks in Enfield which is being delivered at Forty Hall Park in partnership with Capel Manor College who manage Forty Hall Farm next door.
6. Conservation grazing uses lower stocking densities than traditional grazing, this reduces competition from faster growing vegetation and creates varied sward heights which cannot be achieved with mowing, helping to restore wildflower meadows that support a much wider variety of insects, birds and small mammals. The project also restores historical land management practices and reduces the use of heavy machinery which will mitigate the risk of damaging archaeological artefacts within the Forty Hall Scheduled Ancient Monument site.
7. The cattle at Forty Hall have now been grazing a small area for several weeks as part of Phase 1 of the 12-month trial. As this has gone well it is proposed to extend the grazing area across a larger region of the park in accordance with the project plan.

Wetlands

8. Further rewilding measures are being implemented through the creation of wetland habitats at key locations. As well as providing valuable habitat for a wide range of wildlife these wetlands will slow the flow of water by storing it and releasing it slowly – this helps to reduce the risk of flooding in urban areas downstream and also cleans the water by filtering out pollution. Where appropriate wetlands are being integrated into the new woodlands – see section below on tree planting for further information.

Landscape Recovery

9. This report follows the Portfolio Report PL2223_001 – Enfield Chase Landscape Recovery Project which describes the proposals to investigate opportunities for landscape restoration measures in rural areas of Enfield by working with land managers in parks and tenanted farms to evaluate the potential restoration of rivers, wetlands, woodland and grassland habitats with the ambition to reduce downstream flooding, improve water quality, create and improve habitats for wildlife and reconnect people with nature.
10. Over the next 18 months Enfield Council will be working with partners including Thames21, tenant farms (such as Capel Manor College/Forty Hall Farm, Beech Barn Farm, Botany Bay Farm and Chase and Slopers

Pond Farm), Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Natural England and The Rivers Trust, to develop a series of plans for the long-term restoration and enhancement of the rural estate, these will include:

- Project Management and Governance Plan – agreement on the processes and services that will support delivery of the scheme
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan – a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan – raise awareness of the project among local stakeholders and enable them to raise their views
- Site Access Plan – review existing access and identify opportunities for improvement, includes development of a recreation and health infrastructure strategy
- Blended Finance Plan – agreement of how and what private and public funds are involved in the project
- Land Management Plan – a description of what the project is expecting to achieve across the whole site over the lifetime of the agreement and beyond, including analysis of potential carbon emission reductions and offsetting opportunities.

Tree Planting

11. This report follows the Portfolio Report PL 22/081 P – Enfield Chase Restoration Project Woodland Creation Year 3 which led to the creation of a 20-hectare area of woodland on land that was formerly part of Rectory Farm. This most recent phase of woodland creation involved planting 34,000 trees and was carried out in early 2023. In combination with the first two years of the woodland creation project, which involved planting 100,000 trees over a 60-hectare area, this means that a total of 134,000 trees have been planted in the Enfield Chase area since 2020 to create 80 hectares of new woodland.
12. The new woodlands require management to ensure they establish successfully. A new Woodland Officer role has been created to carry out this work with funding support from the Forestry Commission. The Woodland Officer has been working with volunteers such as the Friends of Enfield Chase to carry out a range of tasks to help the new trees establish. A significant amount of tree planting is planned for this winter, potentially up to 10,000 trees, in areas where trees have not established successfully. It is always expected that not all the young trees will survive; however, the drought of Summer 2022 resulted in higher tree losses than would normally be expected so a larger programme of re-planting is needed this year.
13. Future phases of woodland creation are currently being explored. This involves engaging with the Forestry Commission, woodland design experts, tenant farmers and other teams within the Council – this aspect is led by the Council's Blue and Green Strategy Board and the new Head of Rural Transformation who will be updating the Council's Rural Strategy over the coming months.

Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies

14. These projects are closely aligned with Priority 1 of the Council Plan, which aims to enhance biodiversity and protect our parks, open spaces, woodlands, watercourses, wetlands, trees and shrubs. By improving biodiversity, reducing the impact of pollution and flooding and encouraging people to spend more time in Enfield's parks and open spaces they also contribute to measures in the Council's Climate Action Plan, Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Blue and Green Strategy.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

The following Portfolio Reports provide further information about the projects described in this report:

- PL 21/021 P – Enfield Beaver Reintroduction Project
- PL 22/081 P – Enfield Chase Restoration Project – Woodland Creation Year 3
- PL2223_001 – Enfield Chase Landscape Recovery Project
- PL2223_023 – Portfolio Report to Introduce Conservation Grazing to Selected Parks in Enfield