



## London Borough of Enfield

<b>Title:</b>	Portfolio Report for the Enfield Chase Eastern Gateway Access Improvements and Woodland Creation
<b>Report to:</b>	Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy in consultation with Cllr Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Environment and Cllr Ergin Erbil, Deputy Leader of the Council
<b>Date of Report briefing:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>Directors:</b>	Cheryl Headon, Interim Director of Leisure, Parks and Communities
<b>Report Authors:</b>	Ian Russell <a href="mailto:Ian.Russell@Enfield.gov.uk">Ian.Russell@Enfield.gov.uk</a> Jamie Kukadia <a href="mailto:Jamie.Kukadia@Enfield.gov.uk">Jamie.Kukadia@Enfield.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Ridgeway and Whitewebbs
<b>Key Decision Number</b>	5616
<b>Implementation date, if not called in:</b>	
<b>Classification:</b>	Part I Public

### Purpose of Report

1. As part of the wider Enfield Chase Landscape Restoration project it is proposed to create 50 hectares of publicly accessible woodland with enhanced access connecting to nearby urban areas and transport hubs. This builds on the 80 hectares of woodland and 3.3km of new footpaths that have been created through previous phases of the project. The new footpaths and cycleways will create a network of green links that improve access to all of Enfield's new woodlands. By focussing on enhancing the 'Eastern Gateway' to this new green space, improving connectivity to Crews Hill and Gordon Hill Stations, Hilly Fields Park and the Lee Valley beyond, these proposals will help to ensure that residents from across the borough will benefit.

## Recommendations

- I. Approve the scheme in principle to convert 50 hectares of Council-owned farmland to publicly accessible woodland, subject to finalisation of the woodland creation plans and confirmation of funding.
- II. Approve the proposal to deliver access improvements to the woodlands at Enfield Chase.
- III. Agree to accept £500k of funding from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and seek additional funding contributions from the Forestry Commission and other sources.
- IV. Approve the proposals to integrate Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures, such as ponds and wetland scrapes, into the new woodland landscape to reduce flood risk in urban areas downstream as described in Enfield's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2016).
- V. Approve an addition of £1.6m to the capital programme fully funded by £1.1m of external grant, £0.1m of section 106 money and £0.4m of CIL.
- VI. Delegate authority to the Head of Parks and Open Spaces to authorise the placing of orders through any of the Council's existing relevant term contracts or to invite and evaluate tenders/quotations and, where suitable tenders/quotations are received, to award contracts for the works as part of the delivery of the Enfield Chase Eastern Gateway Access Improvements and Woodland Creation project in compliance with the Council's procurement rules.
- VII. Agree to continue working with Strategic Property Services and other internal Council teams to explore opportunities and develop plans and funding bids for woodland creation and associated landscape restoration measures.

## Background and Options

2. The project forms part of the Council's wider ambition to restore the landscape of Enfield Chase, building on the Salmons Brook Natural Flood Management and Woodland Creation schemes. This report follows the Portfolio Reports PL 19/107 P, PL 20/034 P and PL22/081 P, which proposed the creation of 80 hectares of woodland.
3. As part of the Enfield Chase landscape restoration, several distinctive gateways (i.e. access points, transport hubs and other key locations) to this nature space have been identified including Cockfosters, Trent Park and Hadley Wood to the west, and Crews Hill, Gordon Hill Station, Rectory Farm and Botany Bay to the east.
4. In previous phases of the wider Woodland Creation project, 80 hectares of publicly accessible woodland has been created and a 3.3km section of the

London Loop has been improved linking the western gateways to the western half of the new woodland.

5. The recently created woodland at Rectory Farm is not so well connected to the eastern gateways. Specifically, there is no formal path connecting to Crews Hill station, no access from Gordon Hill station, and there is no formalised path linking to Botany Bay. Access to these woodland habitats is therefore very limited from the built-up areas of Crews Hill and Gordon Hill as well as for areas further east which have the greatest deficiencies in access to good quality green space. These routes have been pre-planned as part of earlier phases of the project, this was achieved by retaining open spaces along key corridors within the new woodland. Creating these new green links will significantly increase accessibility to the 80 hectares of woodland created so far.
6. There are five key elements in improving access to the Eastern Gateways, outlined below (see Appendix 1 – Enfield Chase Eastern Gateway Proposed Green Links):
  - Botany Bay Farm to Salmons Brook Valley (0.6km) – this involves the constructing a 3m wide track through Botany Bay Farm, the site is within Council-owned leased land and a provisional route has been agreed with the tenant farmer; the tenant is supportive of this proposal as will increase access to the farm shop, this link also improves the project by linking to local amenities such as the shop, nearby public house and bus stops on The Ridgeway
  - Rectory Farm to Botany Bay (1.7km) – this involves the improvement of existing permissive paths on tenanted farmland and creation of new paths within recently created woodland by constructing a 3m wide gravel track
  - Rectory Farm to Crews Hill Golf Club (0.6km) – this includes constructing a new 3m wide track through recently created woodland making use of space that was set aside as part of the original woodland planting plan; this link to Crews Hill Station via an existing footpath through the adjacent golf course
  - Hillyfields Park to Rectory Farm (0.5km) – this link involves the creation of a new path beneath the Rendlesham Viaduct; this link will connect to the eastern gateway of Gordon Hill and provide an improved continuous route to the Lee Valley in the east of the borough via the London Loop (this will avoid the existing steep climb up to Strayfield Road from the Turkey Brook valley floor, making the route more accessible and attractive to a wide range of walkers and cyclists)
  - Wayfinding and amenity – these measures include signage, interpretation features relating to the landscape restoration project, and amenity features such as seating areas
7. The Rendlesham Viaduct is a 75-foot high railway viaduct with 14 arches constructed in 1910. It is a significant part of Enfield's transport heritage but is currently inaccessible to the public, due to fences installed by Network Rail, and largely hidden by trees. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the 1960s the area below the arches, which is adjacent to Hilly Fields Park and Lavender Hill Cemetery, was easily accessible and enjoyed by the public for recreational purposes. Network Rail have

confirmed that there is no reason in principle that this link alongside the Turkey Brook river cannot be restored – a feasibility study is currently underway to identify the preferred route and enable detailed design to be carried out.

8. As part of the project opportunities to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists crossing busy roads such as The Ridgeway will be explored. In an earlier phase of the project a pedestrian island was installed on Hadley Road where the London Loop footpath crosses it. This has made the crossing much easier and safer. Installing similar measures at other locations on the expanding network of green links will encourage more people to use these new facilities.
9. The project has been awarded £500,000 grant funding through the GLA's Green & Resilient Spaces Fund (GRSF). The funding agreement commits the Council to creating 50 hectares of new woodland and delivering the access improvements by March 2025.
10. The woodland creation component of the project is a key requirement of the GLA's financial contribution as GRSF aims to address climate and ecological emergencies within London and will contribute to the Council's ambition to plant 1 million trees. The location of the new woodland is currently under consideration – a feasibility study has been initiated with financial support from the Forestry Commission through a Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG). The Council's Watercourses team are working with Strategic Property Services and other internal Council teams to explore opportunities and develop plans for this next phase of woodland creation.
11. It is critical that these plans are developed and are finalised by March 2024 to allow sufficient time to submit a funding application to the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) to enable planting to carry out in the winter of 2024/25 (the tree planting season runs from November to March). The GRSF funding agreement therefore includes a key milestone to secure 50 hectares land for woodland creation secure 50 ha by March 2024.
12. The EWCO funding is designed to cover all of the cost of planting a new woodland, previous experience and analysis of the funding criteria indicates that this amount of woodland creation will attract £710k of Forestry Commission funding which will support planting of an estimated 80 to 100,000 trees and maintaining them for the first 10 years. Further revenue funding will be explored through the Enfield Chase Landscape Recovery project (report ref. PL2223\_001). Where opportunities arise and can be demonstrated to enhance or support the project, additional funding from other sources, such as the Environment Agency, will be sought also.
13. This process will be overseen by the Council's Blue and Green Strategy Board. Finalisation of the 50 hectares of woodland creation plans will be agreed by Director of Leisure, Parks and Culture (Chair of the Blue and Green Strategy Board) through a Record of Decision (ROD).

## **Preferred Option and Reasons For Preferred Option**

14. The project has secured significant levels of funding from the Greater London Authority (£500k) and will attract further funding from other partner organisations such as the Forestry Commission (estimated £610k) with the common aim of increasing public access to important high-quality blue and green spaces. The previous phases of the Woodland Creation project have demonstrated high levels of public support – this is evidenced by the 2,000 volunteers who have taken part in previous planting events and the formation of the Friends of Enfield Chase community group, who are playing an integral part in planting and establishing the woodland – this group of volunteers meet regularly and carry out a wide range of woodland management activities working with Enfield Council tree officers. The project also helps to support these groups in reconnecting with nature. Through better access improvements to the Eastern Gateway, and therefore to the east of the borough, the Council hope to attract a wider variety of volunteers, school groups, care homes, youth groups as well as more pedestrians and cyclists that can enjoy the nature space.
15. The proposals contribute to mitigating climate change by offsetting carbon emissions, as supported by the Enfield Climate Action Plan. In addition, the project provides opportunities to enhance biodiversity through the creation and extension of the network of lowland deciduous woodland habitats, a priority habitat as identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Tree planting will contribute towards reducing flood risk in the lower catchments of the Turkey Brook and Salmons Brook through the interception of rainfall from the rural catchment. Opportunities to enhance flood risk management and other water outcomes further will be enhanced by seeking to include Natural Flood Management measures such as ponds and wetland scrapes within the new woodlands – as has been done during previous phases.
16. In addition, the area forms part of the wider Enfield Chase, the former ancient woodland, therefore the project will contribute towards the restoration of this historical area.

## **Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies**

17. These proposals align with several key Council plans and strategies. Priority one in the Council Plan states, “We will aim to become the greenest borough in London by...creating new woodlands and introducing new wetlands and wildlife programmes across the borough”. Enfield’s Climate Action Plan states that by 2030, Enfield will have a natural environment that enhances biodiversity, provides significant protection against flooding and which helps to mitigate overheating in London. By 2040 the ambition is to achieve a net increase in green infrastructure of 25% compared to today. The Blue and Green Strategy (2021) aims to create wilder, more natural spaces to enable biodiversity to thrive, support the restoration of ecosystems and increase interest among people – this project makes a specific contribution to the Blue and Green Strategy target of creating 300 hectares of new publicly accessible woodland.

18. The Council's emerging Local Plan also acknowledges the need for more, publicly accessible nature spaces, with growing pressure on existing parks and future pressures through increased development. The strategic objectives include delivering green infrastructure improvements, including accessible new woodland, rewilded river corridors and new parks and open spaces to support growth.
19. The importance of providing access to nature is also recognised within the Blue and Green Strategy to address health inequalities, it is imperative that better access to nature is made available to those that live in the east of the borough, who have the highest socio-economic and access to nature deprivation. The proposed eastern gateway measures create a clear link between the east of the borough and therefore enable better access to good quality nature spaces to those that need it most.

## **Financial Implications**

### Summary

20. This report is requesting approval to add £1.6m to the capital programme for the creation of a new woodland, installation and improvement of footpaths and signage, and installation of natural flood management measures in the Enfield Chase area of the Borough. This expenditure will be fully funded from external grant (£1.1m), Section 106 (£0.1m) and CIL (£0.4m) monies.
21. There is an additional £30k of expenditure for the works already included within the capital programme which is funded through borrowing. This was included in the capital programme as approved by Council in Feb 2023, and is necessary to secure external grant.
22. £50k of expenditure for natural flood management measures will only process if additional grant monies are secured from external bodies.
23. In addition, the project has received £130k of grant for the maintenance of the woodland and pathways from EWCO, which will be spent over the next 10 years. This will form part of the revenue budget.

### Revenue Budget Impact

24. There will be additional revenue expenditure of £13k a year for 10 years from 2025/26 for the maintenance of the new woodlands. This is fully funded from the England Woodland Creation Offer grant of £130k.
25. No other revenue impacts.

### Capital Budget Impact

26. Approval of this report will result in an additional £1.6m added to the capital programme funded by a combination of external grant and S106 and CIL monies.

27. The table below sets out the addition to the capital programme for each financial year and how it is funded:

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
Capital Expenditure	287,000	1,313,000	1,600,000
<i>Funded by:</i>			
England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO)	0	580,000	580,000
Green & Resilient Spaces Fund (GRSF)	162,000	308,000	470,000
S106	100,000	0	100,000
CIL	0	400,000	400,000
External Grant TBC	25,000	25,000	50,000
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>287,000</b>	<b>1,313,000</b>	<b>1,600,000</b>

28. There is £50k of expenditure on the installation of natural flood management measures which will be subject to securing external grant. There are grant bodies inviting Enfield to apply to fund works of this nature, which is in progress.

29. A breakdown of the capital expenditure is set out in the table below:

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
50-hectare woodland creation	30,000	530,000	560,000
Access improvements 3.4km new/upgraded footpath	199,000	421,000	620,000
Fees & Contingency	29,000	231,000	260,000
Wayfinding and interpretation	34,000	106,000	140,000
Natural flood management measures	25,000	25,000	50,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>317,000</b>	<b>1,313,000</b>	<b>1,630,000</b>

\*£30k included in the capital programme for 2023/24 approved by Council in Feb-2023

30. Total cost of the works is £1.63m with £1.6m to be added to the capital programme as requested in this report. £30k is already included in the capital programme as approved by Council in Feb-23.

#### Borrowing Impact

31. No impact on borrowing. The expenditure to be added to the capital programme is all funded from external grant or S106/CIL money.

#### Taxation

32. The council will reclaim all VAT on expenditure through its regular submissions for input VAT. No other known tax implications.

#### Accounting Treatment

33. Costs will be accounted for in compliance with the Councils capitalisation policy. Any costs that cannot be capitalised will be charged to the revenue budget.
34. All costs identified within the report contribute towards the enhancement of public land owned by the Council and therefore meet the criteria for capitalisation.

### **Legal Implications**

35. The Council is required as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
36. The Council also has a general power of competence under section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals may do, provided it is not prohibited by legislation. This includes, pursuant to section 1(4):
- (a) power to do it anywhere in the United Kingdom or elsewhere,
  - (b) power to do it for a commercial purpose or otherwise for a charge, or without charge, and
  - (c) power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.
37. The Council may exercise the general power of competence for its own purpose, for a commercial purpose and/or for the benefit of others. The Council, moreover, has power under s.111 Local Government Act 1972 to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions (which would include childcare functions). The recommendations within this report are in accordance with these powers.
38. The Council has statutory powers in relation to open spaces under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, including wide powers to provide recreational facilities. Pursuant to the Open Spaces Act 1906 the Council shall hold and administer open space in trust to allow the enjoyment of it by the public and shall maintain and keep the open space in a good state.
39. The Council has a general duty under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) to have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and



- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

40. The procurement of works and professional services arising from the proposals in this report should be carried out in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR), Council's Constitution, the public procurement regime and the Council's obligations relating to the obtaining of best value under the Local Government (Best Value Principles) Act (1999).
41. When commissioning public services, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires the Council to think about how it can also secure wider social, economic, and environmental benefits.
42. The Council will need to ensure that all funding received from the GLA or other external bodies is managed and utilised in accordance with subsidy control law and in accordance with the terms and conditions of any grant agreements entered into by the Council.
43. The Council has powers under the Highways Act 1985 to create the new footpaths and cycleways referred to in this report.
44. Pursuant to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority and the proposals set out in respect of the NFM measures are in accordance with its duties.
45. A variation to the tenancy for Botany Bay Farm will need to be entered into to permit the creation of the track through the Farm mentioned at paragraph 6 of this report
46. The Council must ensure that all legal agreements entered into in consequence of the approval of the proposals set out in this report must be approved by Legal Services on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance.

### **Equalities Implications**

47. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to support the project.
48. The Equality Impact Assessment demonstrates that the project is expected to have a positive impact on Enfield residents and has identified several mitigation measures to further recognise opportunities to reduce inequalities. This includes consideration for visibility and disability access and safety for women in the designs, and measures to attract different age groups and volunteers from more ethnically diverse background.

49. It should be noted that any contracts awarded should include a duty on the successful applicant to assist us with meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Implications**

50. The Council has committed to being a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2030 and Carbon Neutral Borough by 2040. Natural offsetting through green infrastructure - including wetlands, tree planting and expansion of the natural environment was a key strategy of the Council's Climate Action Plan. An appropriate accounting system to capture the sequestration of the land change over time will be established in-line with approved methodologies.

51. The Climate Action Plan includes key actions around tree planting, woodland creation and flood defences which this proposal supports the delivery of.

52. As reported by the IPCC, the effects of change are now unavoidable, and we must be prepared for climate hazards including a future with extreme weather, heat waves and flooding events. In addition to mitigation through carbon sequestration this proposal supports adaptation of the borough and the ability to respond to climate hazards and extreme weather events such as flooding.

### **Public Health Implications**

53. Climate change is the greatest threat to the health of the public in the 21st century, this project should help to mitigate this threat whilst providing more opportunity for physical activity for Enfield residents.

### **Planning Implications**

54. The additional connections and publicly accessible open space would align with the strategic objectives of the Council's existing and emerging statutory development plan.

55. The majority of the physical infrastructure necessary to support the restoration project, such as the creation of new footways, is likely to constitute permitted development and will not require planning permission.

### **Property Implications**

56. The path proposals cross Council owned holdings known as Rectory Farm and Botany Bay Farm.

### **57. Rectory Farm**

- The route area could be excluded from the proposed 2023-5 FBT or break notice served at any time during the tenancy
- Route area would not restrict existing access to Rectory Farm, subject to a secure crossing point in the design to retain agricultural access to northern parcel.

- The decrease in rent budgeted at less than £1,000 per annum.
- The risk of increased trespass off the route should be managed with appropriate design mitigation measures such as natural vegetation and signage.
- The proposed route will run along Turkey Brook, to the other side is Rectory Farm Shooting Ground which are not permitted to shoot over Turkey Brook. The risk of trespass and health and safety concerns (i.e. shot fall) will be satisfied subject to appropriate mitigation measures.
- Access rights along East Lodge driveway should be satisfied or consider re-aligning route along LBE farmland. The latter would better distance the public from neighbouring occupants.
- Proposed route crosses an area submitted by Strategic Property Services for Call For Sites (plan not in public domain). It is understood from the Local Plan team that no part of the route is highlighted for development in the next Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, any design and route of the permissive path should take into consideration the longer term development potential of the area. This should include suitable mitigation measures including low level shrubbery and restricting extensive planting/permanent buffers.
- The creation of new footpaths may facilitate the re-routing of the shared PROW (public right of way) down the Rectory Farm driveway which may alleviate the existing access issues.

#### **58. Botany Bay Farm**

- It is estimated that the route area would decrease rent by less than £1,000 per annum.
- It is understood the tenants are in support of this proposal. The Strategic Property Service recommendation is to complete the new tenancy before any proposals are put to the tenants to avoid risking the current tenancy negotiations being compromised.
- Appropriate design mitigation should be used to prevent trespass off the route such as natural barriers and low level shrubbery.

#### **Procurement Implications**

59. Any commissioning to action any initiatives within the Plan must be carried out within the Councils governance and the Contract Procedure Rules.
60. Any existing contracts used must deliver what is in line with the core of the contract, and not materially different as to avoid additional procurement.
61. Any procurement over £100k or £2.5m for works must come through Procurement Services via a PIF and presented at the Procurement Assurance Group. Currently this is not on the workplan, so early engagement is important for any over threshold procurement.

## Other Implications

62. The works will be designed and managed primarily by in-house team members of the Parks and Open Spaces service, supported further by external specialist consultants, where required. The anticipated fee cost is £130k – this covers a range of activities related to project delivery including design and site supervision of the footpath construction works, woodland creation planning and management of associated tree planting.
63. The proposed woodlands will be managed by Parks and Open Spaces service, as performed on new woodlands from previous phases of the project, working with the Rural Transformation service. The Parks and Open Spaces service has set up a successful arrangement working with Friends of Enfield Chase and other volunteers to help the newly planted trees to establish by managing vegetation and carrying out other activities, as well as tackling issues such as litter and minor incidences of vandalism. This approach will be replicated on the proposed new 50 hectares of woodland. The maintenance costs for the first 10 years are covered by the £130k of maintenance funding provided by EWCO, additional funding will also be sought from external sources to provide enhanced maintenance where possible.

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<b>Report Author:</b>	Ian Russell Principal Engineer Watercourses <a href="mailto:Ian.Russell@Enfield.gov.uk">Ian.Russell@Enfield.gov.uk</a> 020 8132 0964	Jamie Kukadia Senior Engineer Watercourses <a href="mailto:Jamie.Kukadia@Enfield.gov.uk">Jamie.Kukadia@Enfield.gov.uk</a> 020 8132 0965
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## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Enfield Chase Eastern Gateway Proposed Green Links  
Appendix 2 – Enfield Chase Eastern Gateway Equality Impact Assessment