

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2024

MEMBERS: Councillors Hivran Dalkaya (Chair), Eylem Yuruk (Vice-Chair), Nawshad Ali, Alessandro Georgiou, Patricia Gregory, Joanne Laban and Nia Stevens

Officers: Perry Scott (Executive Director for Environment & Communities), Cheryll Wilson (Head of Rural Transformation), Vera Vajda (Climate Action and Sustainability Lead Officer), Sakinah Sutherland (Governance Officer)

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Gregory.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. UPDATE ON CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Vera Vajda, Climate Action and Sustainability Lead Officer, provided an update on the implementation of Enfield's 2024 Climate Action Plan and highlighted key achievements since 2020:

- Enfield Council has reduced its direct emissions by 30% from baseline levels, with a 6% reduction in borough-wide greenhouse gas emissions, as noted in the emissions review published in September 2023.
- Installed heat pumps in 10 Council-owned buildings.
- Installed 247 kWp of solar panels on Council offices, community facilities, and three schools.
- Introduction of 19 new School Streets

Enfield's climate initiatives depend on supportive national policies, a decarbonised energy grid, and significant regional and national funding. The 2024 Climate Action Plan now follows a structured approach aligned with the OnePlanet model, focusing on affordability, and securing necessary funding. The Council has extended its licence with the OnePlanet platform to publish

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an annual progress report and established a Climate Action Plan dashboard to streamline data collection across Council teams.

Since the revised plan was adopted in June 2024, Enfield Council has achieved several key milestones:

- Secured funding from the Greater London Authority (GLA) for two decarbonisation initiatives focused on social housing and schools. The Council is working closely with GLA-appointed consultants on design, cost estimation, and project delivery.
- Pursued additional funding for future projects through the GB Energy initiative, with support from Greater London Councils.
- Established a partnership with TRAIID to enhance textile collection and recycling across the borough.

Members had enquiries on the following points:

- Members asked about OnePlanet's role. Officers explained it is used to map Enfield's climate data and strategies on a cohesive eco-platform, a tool also employed by other local authorities.
- Members noted that Enfield's recycling rate is currently 33%, short of the 50% target. Officers explained that reaching this target in tonnage is challenging due to lighter packaging materials and highlighted food recycling as a significant area of focus. A recycling manager will be appointed to lead new recycling initiatives.
- Members suggested that developers should be required to install solar panels on new builds and make use of disused sites to maximise environmental benefits.
- Members proposed increasing resident engagement through climate-friendly events and e-newsletters. Officers responded that while they currently lack capacity for this, it is a strong consideration for future initiatives.

Further discussions included the establishment of repair cafes, the high cost of heat pumps (estimated at £25,000 per home), tree planting, and ways to discourage residents from unnecessary tree removal.

Action: Members requested environmental and pollution data to assess whether Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and School Streets have contributed to pollution reduction.

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4. GRANT FUNDING FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS

Cheryll Wilson provided an update on the management and allocation of grant funding for Enfield Council's ongoing rural transformation projects. Key initiatives include:

- **Woodland Creation:** Funded primarily by the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) grant, this project aims to expand Enfield's woodlands.
- **Beaver Expansion Project:** Set to commence this winter, this project has a budget of £70,000, including contingency funds, to support the reintroduction of beavers to the area.
- **Tree Planting Initiatives:** Additional tree planting is planned for this year to further enhance the borough's green spaces.
- **Eastern Gateway Project:** Currently on schedule and within budget, this project's two active phases aim to improve woodland accessibility and pathway connectivity to nearby stations, enhancing community access to natural areas.
- **Landscape Recovery Scheme Pilot:** Funded by a £155,000 grant from the Environment Agency, this pilot project focuses on restoring natural landscapes.
- **Countryside Stewardship:** Enfield Council has secured nearly £90,000 annually to support park and open space maintenance. Initially, seven parks have been selected for the scheme: Broomfield, Forty Hall, Grovelands, Hillyfields, Oakwood, Trent, and Whitewebbs.

Member Enquiries and Responses:

- Members asked how Enfield's costs compare to those of other boroughs. Officers could not provide specific comparisons but noted that Enfield's expenditures may be higher due to the extensive woodlands and green spaces in the borough.
- All grant funding is restrictive, requiring evidence of progress and capital receipts to meet funding requirements.
- The Council has engaged with local farmers, who have shared updates and feedback. The relationship between the Council and farmers is improving, and projects such as the Landscape Recovery Scheme are expected to benefit the agricultural community.
- Members noted steep slopes in the wetlands area. Officers confirmed efforts to reduce slope severity and mentioned that funding has been allocated for signage to inform residents about local wildlife and natural features.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED that the next meeting of the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Panel is Monday 25 November.

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