

Re-energising Enfield Town – filling the empty shops

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Enfield Town is the central shopping area in the borough¹.
- 1.2 At the time of writing there are over 20 vacant units. The highest of the two main shopping centres in Enfield.
- 1.3 Empty shops are the start of a downward spiral for a high street. They put off consumers and highlight that a town or parade is struggling. This makes it harder for high streets and parades to secure further investment from developers and new businesses.²
- 1.4 The state of Enfield Town shopping area is a concern for residents which has been proven by the many online discussions and the number of times it was raised during the recent local election.
- 1.5 The Conservative Group recognises that there are many factors that cause vacant shop units in town centres and that some are outside of the council's remit. However, this does not mean that Enfield Council cannot help with the re-energising of Enfield Town as a shopping destination.
- 1.6 This OPB paper includes eight recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Investigate the potential for rate relief for new retailers who wish to come to Enfield Town.
- 2.2 Establish an Empty Shops Taskforce with representatives from the Administration, Opposition, EMT and the business community serving on the panel. The task group would have the sole remit of bringing new retailers and restaurateurs to Enfield Town.
- 2.3 Submit a bid to the Growing Places Fund to deliver a comprehensive inward invest programme for Enfield Town linking to the work of the Empty Shops Taskforce.
- 2.4 Carry out regular enforcement against those landlords who allow their units to become untidy spoiling the aesthetics of the high street.
- 2.5 Hold more events to increase footfall.
- 2.6 Reverse the decision to increase the price of parking.

¹ <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/planning/enfield-town-framework-masterplan-planning.pdf> Page 16

² <https://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/ACS-Rate-Relief-Guide---Future-High-Streets-Forum.pdf>

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- 2.7 Invest in Christmas lights for our high streets and town centres.
- 2.8 There should be flexibility if a new owner of a unit wishes to change from A1 to A3 use if it means that an empty shop gets filled.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Enfield Town is the main shopping and commercial centre in the borough. However, Enfield Town Centre faces strong competition from nearby out of town centres, such as Enfield Retail Park on the A10, Brent Cross, Brookfield and Stratford Westfield. The result has been a steady decline in retail offer, particularly along Church Street, Burleigh Way and the east side of London Road.³
- 3.2 Enfield Town as a shopping and leisure destination consists of 5 key areas Church Street, Palace Gardens (built in the 1982), Palace Exchange (built in 2006), Cecil Road and London Road/Genotin Road/Genotin Terrace.
- 3.3 Since the 2008 economic crash Enfield Town has been struggling especially when just two years earlier more retail units were built.
- 3.4 Enfield Town was one of the areas that was affected by the 2011 riots which had an impact on footfall.
- 3.5 The events mentioned above occurred at the same time as the rise of online shopping.
- 3.6 Enfield Town retailers did not benefit from the discretionary rate relief that a former Cabinet Member for Finance awarded to businesses in Edmonton Green ward.
- 3.7 A cross-party workstream was carried out during the last term that concentrated on empty shops across the borough. Most of the recommendations were never taken on board by the then Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

4.0 Past Regeneration Schemes

Impact of Palace Exchange

- 4.1 Palace Exchange is the newest addition to the infrastructure of Enfield Town as a shopping destination.
- 4.2 Built in 2006, just two years before the economic downturn it provided Enfield with a modern extension to Palace Gardens.

³ <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/planning/enfield-town-framework-masterplan-planning.pdf> Page 16

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- 4.3 However, once built some retailers moved from Palace Gardens into the new units in Palace Exchange including Next, Dorothy Perkins, Burton, and River Island.
- 4.4 Next vacated two units in Palace Gardens into one larger unit in Palace Exchange.
- 4.5 Dorothy Perkins and Burton had separate units in Palace Gardens but moved into one larger unit in Palace Exchange.
- 4.6 Topshop and Topman at one stage had individual units in Palace Gardens. Topshop relocated into one larger unit in Palace Exchange.
- 4.7 JD Sports left its shop on Church Street and took a unit in Palace Exchange. A unit that has remained vacant ever since.
- 4.8 Superdrug moved into Palace Exchange from its previous unit on Church Street.
- 4.9 Stores such as Holland and Barratt relocated to a spare unit in Palace Gardens.
- 4.10 Palace Exchange due to circumstances beyond anyone's control did not provide a complete new offer for consumers but opportunities for many existing retailers to move around Enfield Town shopping area. The Palace Exchange was developed by the then Labour Administration and it did not obtain the large anchor stores required to develop the precinct around which is why it took a long time to fill the empty store spaces. The result being a lot just moved in from elsewhere in Enfield Town so there was very little gain in the variety of shopping.

5.0 Enfield Town Current Offer

- 5.1 The vitality and viability of a high street or local parade is tied up with its diversity of premises; retail, independents and multiples, food and non-food, leisure, office space and public services. All of these industries and services in one place make high streets attractive and convenient to consumers.
- 5.2 Enfield Town has a modest mix of mid-range multiples and independents with its two anchor stores being Pearsons, Marks and Spencer and Waitrose. There are concerns that if Pearsons, Marks and Spencer and Waitrose were to leave it would effectively kill off Enfield Town as a shopping destination.
- 5.3 Due to rumours online, the Leader of the Conservative Group has written to the Chief Executive of Waitrose to get clarity on the long-term future of its Palace Gardens store. She stressed how important the Waitrose store is to Enfield Town.

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- 5.4 The evening economy offer in Enfield Town is currently limited, based around several family restaurants in the Enfield Town station area, and a small number of local restaurants, pubs, bars and one nightclub.⁴
- 5.5 Enfield Town had at various times a cinema, bingo hall and nightclubs but they have either moved or closed down.
- 5.6 When the leisure centre opened in 2002 and then subsequently the cinema it attracted restaurants to move there as well. The night time economy of Enfield Town to some extent shifted to the leisure park.
- 5.7 The Dugdale Centre provides the only leisure/cultural facility other than eateries and pubs where people will spend time in the evening.
- 5.8 Enfield Town without reinvestment and incentives for new businesses to enter the area will continue to struggle to attract visitors⁵.

6.0 Parking

- 6.1 Parking is an issue raised by many of the independent shop owners as it has an impact on both visitors and staff.

6.2

Off Street Charging

Separate tariff increases

Tariff structure	Current Enfield Town car park charges	Proposed Enfield Town car park charges	Current Outer Enfield car park charges	Proposed Outer Enfield car park charges
Up to 1 hour	£1.20	£1.40	£1.00	£1.20
1 to 3	£2.40	£2.80	£2.00	£2.40
3 to 5	£3.00	£5.00	£4.00	£4.00
Over 5	£5.00	£8.00	£5.00	£6.00
Monthly	£66	£80	£33	£40
Annual	£660	£880	£330	£440

In July 2018, a decision was made to increase parking to pay and display charges (KD Num:4697). The decision paper stated that

‘The provision of car parking is a discretionary service provided by the Council and it is recognised that in the London Borough of Enfield, the supply and availability of accessible, safe and good quality parking is a key element of the transport infrastructure supporting the vitality of the Borough’s town centres’⁶

However, the affordability of parking also plays a part especially when competing retail centres provide both free or cheaper parking.

⁴ <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/planning/enfield-town-framework-masterplan-planning.pdf>

⁵ <https://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/ACS-Rate-Relief-Guide---Future-High-Streets-Forum.pdf>

⁶ <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s69738/PL%2018.003%20P%202.pdf> Page 5

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6.3 The increases from KD Num: 4697 were as follows⁷

On street charging

Increasing the parking charges in the Enfield and outer Enfield areas

	15 mins	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours
Current charges in Enfield Town	40p	80p	£1.50	£3.00
Proposed charges in Enfield Town	50p	£1	£2	£4

	15 mins	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours
Current charges in outer Enfield	30p	60p	£1.20	£2.40
Proposed charges in outer Enfield	40p	80p	£1.50	£3.00

6.4 You could argue that the increases were only moderate, but the paper failed to compare the prices to competing retail outlets that are located both within the borough and outside of it in Hertfordshire. The paper only concentrated on other London Boroughs.

Charges at car parks are listed below:

Charges apply Monday-Friday, 7.30am-6.30pm
Saturdays, 7.30am-5pm

Newnham Parade and Community Hospital, Cheshunt, Eleanor Cross Road and High Street, Waltham Cross, Burford Street, Taverners Way and (North and South) Hoddesdon car park charges.

Up to 1 hour	90p
Up to 2 hours	£1.60
Up to 3 hours	£2.40
Up to 4 hours	£3.40
More than 4 hours	£4.40
Sundays and Bank Holidays	Free

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A10 Great Cambridge Road/Southbury Road retail parks provide both a leisure and retail offer which Enfield Town does not. The price to park at both the retail and leisure parks is free making it more affordable to visit.

The Brookfield Centre in Chestnut, Hertfordshire has many of the shops that Enfield Town has but they are larger stores. The parking is also free of charge.

⁷ <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s69738/PL%2018.003%20P%202.pdf> Page 5

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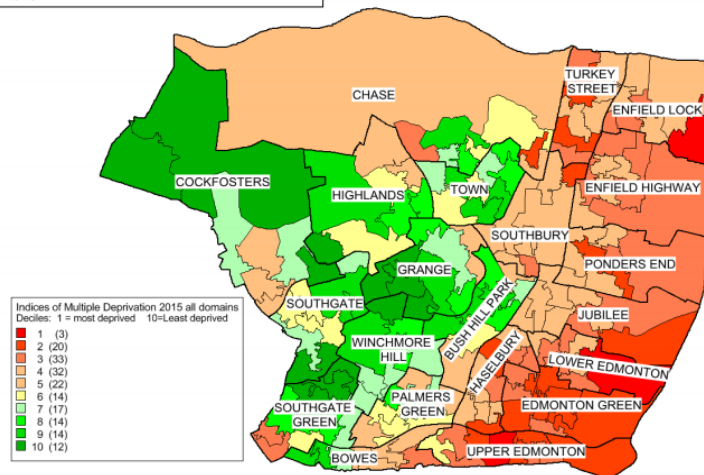
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Broxbourne

Waltham Cross and Hoddesdon shopping areas have lower parking charges than Enfield Town.

- 6.5 The recent decision failed to make any reference in the key risks about the effect parking has only high streets and town centres that are struggling.

- 6.6 © Crown Copyright and Database rights 2015



The deprivation map⁸ on the previous page shows that our most deprived wards are in the eastern corridor. If residents in the east of the borough wanted to access certain shops that are not located closer to home, why would they choose Enfield Town to shop and pay for parking when they could visit the A10 retail parks or Brookfield (which depending on the level traffic can take just as long to travel to as Enfield Town) where parking is free? The price of parking influences the choice residents make on where they shop. The decision paper did not take into consideration how increasing parking charges affected families on restricted incomes.

- 6.7 The Conservative Group understands that it would be unfeasible to offer like for like free parking like the retail and leisure centres on the A10 and Brookfield. However, a limited number of pop and shop free parking bays would be helpful along with the reversal of the recent decision to increase charges would aid in boosting Enfield Town.

7.0 Enfield Town Masterplan

- 7.1 The Enfield Town Masterplan was adopted in March 2018.
- 7.2 The Enfield Town Masterplan is a long-term planning document that provides a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development.

⁸ <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/about-enfield/borough-and-wards-profiles/about-enfield--information-borough-profile-2017.pdf>

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- 7.3 The issue with the masterplan is that Enfield Town needs work to be done in the short term to place it on a programme of recovery, so the vision established in the masterplan can potentially be realised.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Enfield Council should submit a bid to the third round of the Growing Places Fund⁹ to deliver an inward investment programme to re-energise Enfield Town to fill the empty shops.
- 8.2 The new Director of Commercial should be tasked within her existing budgets to increase the number of events held in Enfield Town which at the same time would achieve income for Enfield Council.
- 8.3 The income from events could be used to fund Christmas lights.
- 8.4 Officer support for the Empty Shops Taskforce could be provided via existing CEO unit budgets.

9.0 Equalities

- 9.1 Enfield Town has not benefited hugely from outside funding directed at regeneration and high streets over the last 8 years like other areas. Below are just a few examples.

Outer London Fund

Round 1 Ponders End £278,000¹⁰
Round 2 A1010 Corridor £715,000¹¹

High Street Fund

Enfield Thinks – Enfield Town (lasted 2 months) £20,000¹²

Mayor's Regeneration Fund

£600,000 for Market Gardening¹³

⁹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/funding-opportunities/good-growth-fund-supporting-regeneration-london#acc-i-51983>

¹⁰ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/regeneration-project-north-east-enfield>

¹¹ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/regeneration-project-north-east-enfield>

¹² <https://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/regeneration/what-weve-funded-so-far/high-street-fund>

¹³ <https://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/regeneration/what-weve-funded-so-far/mayors-regeneration-fund#acc-i-43934>

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NB: The London Regeneration Fund was created after the riots in 2011. The fund was used to boost the areas where riots occurred. Ninety eight percent of boroughs chose to bid for funding to improve their town centres where the riots were mainly located. Enfield Council made an active decision to bid for funding for a project located nowhere Enfield Town with many local businesses losing out in the process.

9.2 Enfield Town did not benefit from the discretionary rate relief that was offered a couple of years back to existing businesses located in Edmonton Green Shopping Centre.

9.3 Improving Enfield Town and attracting more visitors will boost the local economy. New retailers and restaurateurs will increase the number of local job opportunities.

10.0 Impact on Enfield Council's own priorities

10.1 Fairness for All

Maintaining and improving Enfield's town centres and high street shopping areas will ensure that the majority of residents have access to accessible quality shopping area.

10.2 Growth & Sustainability

Attractive, vibrant shopping areas encourage residents to shop locally and attracts visitors from outside of the borough strengthening the local economy.

10.3 Strong Communities

Improving the town centre by working with existing local businesses will strengthen the relationship between Enfield Council and the business community.