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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20.7.2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 20 JULY 2021

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Susan Erbil, Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel, Elif Erbil, James Hockney, Derek Levy, Kate Anolue and Ayten Guzel

ABSENT Margaret Greer and Mahmut Aksanoglu

STATUTORY CO-OPTES: *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Sarah Cary (Executive Director, Place), Claire Johnson (Head of Governance & Scrutiny & Superintendent Registrars), Clare Bryant (Senior Governance Officer), May Hope (Plan Making Manager), Helen Murch (Head of Strategic Planning and Design), Edward Jones (Principal Planner), Natalya Palit (Area Plans Manager)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest registered in respect of any items on the agenda.

3 TO AGREE MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING OF OSC - 2.6.2021

The Committee agreed the minutes from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Business meeting which took place on the 2nd June 2021.

4 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

The Chair advised that the consultation on the Local Plan is still ongoing. The Officers will present on four main areas, namely:

- The process - local plan preparation process, future stages of the Plan preparation, and the current consultation approach.

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- Green Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change
- Housing Need
- Spatial Options and Green Belt

1. The following comments were received from Officers:

- There is a requirement by law to produce a spatial plan, which will then be examined by the Planning Inspectorate. This sets out the development needs of the borough, details and sites.
- Enfield's planning process is currently at Stage 1 where evidence is being collected and issues identified. The initial consultation started in 2019 but can be repeated if required, with a proposed submission plan expected next year. Examination and implementation phases take place thereafter, with a long-term strategic approach over the next 50 years.
- The spatial strategy sets out the strategic direction where several areas were looked at. Option 1 where 25,000+ homes, investment in green infrastructure and economic development was opted for. Options identified included train stations, Crews Hill and Chase, managing industrial estates, promoting sports and recreational needs, providing affordable housing (include mixed housing units).
- Challenges identified included limited green belt release, investment in infrastructure and exceeding environmental capacity.
- Two growth areas are being examined:

Crews Hill Station: the vision is to make the most of the station and surrounding areas, improving green space access and creating family housing by making good use of the undeveloped land whilst creating a gateway for rewilding.

Chase: providing access to green spaces, promoting active travel, creating suburban homes and a useful link between stations, maximising use of Trent Park.

- Rural Enfield will allow for more rewilding, promoting further UK tourism an eco-tourism, encourage food growing and horticulture and improve overall wellbeing. 60,000+ new trees will be planted during the winter. This will allow for diversity of usage and encourage greater resilience, with further access to green and open spaces.
- Site Allocations: site selection methodology created a process which called for a sites and land availability assessment. Although many smaller sites were put forward, the focus was more geared to larger areas, e.g. 50 homes or more. There are 62 proposed site allocations covering housing employment, sports, burial and nature. At present

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only areas have been identified and going forward more work is needed to move to the next stage of the plan.

Reasons why certain areas are avoided may involve flood risks, non-availability, unsustainable location, expired planning permission.

- Policies: All policies are grounded in spatial vision, to include a range of land uses and growth to focus on the strategies in the plan.
- Housing: Housing is unaffordable for many with a rise of nearly 20% in the last 20 years and costs 12 times the average earning in the borough. The consequence of this is overcrowding and lack of choice and has a knock-on effect for renters and first-time buyers. Enfield have been delivering 500 new homes per year, with the government target being 4,397. There is clearly an urgent need for larger homes, with wheelchair access to accommodate the aging and growing population, aiming towards the baseline of 17K dwellings.
- Climate Change: sustainable travel must be seen, together with enhancements to green and blue networks. The current policies include the promotion and protection of nature in an immediate response to climate change.

2. In response the following comments were received from Committee Members:

- Clarification was sought in respect of transport facilities around the Crews Hill area and will the current status be improved and how much will be done to support the infrastructure at Crews Hill and Chase Park and how can these areas become more viable.

In response, there are still consultations going on in respect of these areas and more master planning is required with transport assessments being looked at. The aim is to source self-sufficient areas or enhance areas already available nearby.

- Is consultation robust enough in this area, as residents want to see further consultation.

In response, the next stage of consultations will involve more detailed evidence finding to include transport assessment and the creation of correct infrastructure in respect of housing pockets. All policies have been looked at as a whole and the aim is to promote active travel and change behavioural habits in this respect with the inclusion of overall sustainability and climate change.

Active communications with the GLA and partners are in place to resolve issues and find suitable solutions. Changes are expected from the feedback received from consultations. There are several tasks (and risks) required that are still being worked on to adopt the Local

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Plan. There is a checklist from the Planning Inspectorate before submitting to the Secretary of State.

- Why is only one option being considered? Perhaps investigating the Eastern Corridor, perhaps building in east/west travel in the Borough? Lessons learnt from Enfield Island Village.

In response, it was agreed that the option chosen was preferred as it included 7 places making areas faster in the Borough, with all land being considered, whilst allowing for optimisation of density to meet housing growth targets. The green and blue strategy focusses on the west/east connection and it is helpful to study what has worked in the Borough in the past.

- Eastern and western corridor should be included in Enfield to ensure good relationships are formed with TFL to ensure regular trains and transport links are in place to cut down car use.
- How does the “National Park City” apply to Crews Hill?

In response “Rural Park City” is about working with rural areas. Crews Hill is not within this designation and is labelled as a gateway.

- Of the 62 proposed sites, what percentage of these will go to the next stage and will this be allocated.

In response the results of this will be based on feedback and the intention is to develop all sites going forward to the next stage, unless there are any serious implications.

- The lifespan of the Local Plan is 20 years, is there a risk that the vision is currently too routed in present and the future is not being considered?

In response, NPPS requires plans to be updated every 5 years which would help look forward. Officers are providing their professional judgement and what is provided is based on this.

- How are these messages being relayed to residents and what are the methods of consultations?

In response, the consultations focus on choices having to be made and offering explanations to the background of these choices. The “character of growth” study has helped to inform site allocations and the growth to meet needs means having to develop outside of town centres. The consultations process is on-line and advertised on social media, going into different language publications and two local newspapers. There are also drop in sessions with 110 representations so far.

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- Are the questions in the consultation straight forward?

In response, there have been some concerns raised and some of the jargon/clarifications have since been changed. Responses are monitored weekly, with emailed responses accepted.

- How are template responses handled compared to detailed letters sent in?

In reply, all responses received are all given equal weight.

- Concern was raised that the target of homes expected seems impossible to accomplish. The size of the properties is also a concern in that they are not big enough for families who often need 3 or 4 bedrooms. Children need to have space to play in their homes, with a greater need for smaller green spaces which are affordable.

In response, achieving the delivery of affordable housing is a challenge and within the “affordable housing policy”, the Council will try to deliver as much housing as possible, especially 3 bedroomed homes which are in high demand. There is a team of planners looking at the viability of every scheme and the plan aims for smaller green spaces. Residents are encouraged to engage with us to ascertain what they want to see.

- Does the Local Plan have a housing mix expectation, for example 60% two bedroomed properties etc.

In response, the priority for sizing of the properties is based on affordability and the aim is to keep the decision making flexible whilst considering need but adhering to the policy.

- Enfield has the highest number of temporary accommodation cases in England. How much will this be reduced in the Local Plan?

In response, it is known that Enfield has a high number of houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's) as many houses have been converted to these. Temporary housing is a tenure and building more houses will not fully alleviate the housing crisis. The reasons for temporary accommodation are very complicated and a need further analysis is needed in this respect to achieve discounted housing rents.

- What parts of Enfield have responded to the consultation so far?

In response most responses have come from the EN2 area, but all residents must be reached.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked all the Officers for their clear presentation. She will circulate the letter from the lobbying group as requested. **Action: Cllr Susan Erbil**

5
SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced this item, noting that each work programme.

It was agreed that fly-tipping will come to OSC and circulated to the Environment and Climate Action Scrutiny Panel to monitor.

Claire Johnson will contact the Committee Chairs over the next few weeks to develop terms of reference. **Action: Claire Johnson**

6
DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates of future meetings were agreed.