

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2022

MEMBERS: Councillors Chris James (Vice-Chair), Hannah Dyson, Nia Stevens, Margaret Greer and Tom O'Halloran

Officers: Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services), Brett Leahy (Director of Planning & Growth), Ian Russell (Principal Engineer), Stacey Gilmour (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Cllr Rick Jewell (Cabinet Member, Environment), Lindsay Rawlings (Edmonton Hundred Historical Society), John West (The Enfield Society), Paul Hutchinson (Grange Park Conservation Area Study Group), Neil Paddon-Smith (Meadway Conservation Area Study Group), Dennis Stacey (Bush Hill park Conservation Area Study Group), Richard Beaumont (Forty Hill and Bulls Cross Area Study Group), Andrew Newman ((Clay Hill Area Study Group), Juliet Barnett (Trent Park Conservation Committee), Dave Cockle (Enfield Transport Users Group) 2 members of the public.

Observing: Councillor Edward Smith

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Cllr Nicki Adeleke (Cllr Margaret Greer substituted) Cllr Stephanos Ioannou (Cllr Tom O'Halloran substituted), Chris Horner (Southgate District Civic Voice), Denise Gandhi (Southgate Green Association) and Mustafa Ibrahim ((Enfield Town Conservation Area Study Group). Apologies for lateness were also received from Cllr Greer and Cllr Jewell. The Vice-Chair, Cllr Chris James chaired the meeting.

The Chair agreed to amend the running order of the agenda to accommodate the request of Ian Russell, Principal Engineer as he needed to leave the meeting early, therefore agenda item no:6 was taken first. However, for clarity the minutes are shown in the order of the published agenda.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. AGREE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

The meetings of the meeting held on 22 September 2022 were reviewed.

NOTED

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- (i) Amendment to the attendance details. Cllr Reece Fox had not attended the meeting. However, Cllr Lindsay Rawlings had been in attendance as an interested member of the public.
- (ii) Comments were made with regards to the accuracy of the minutes as it was felt that some information was somewhat confusing with other comments having been omitted entirely. Cllr James (Vice-Chair) reminded the community representatives that the minutes were not intended to be a verbatim record of the meeting. She also advised that the minutes had previously been agreed by the Chair of the Environment Forum, Cllr Adeleke. She would however feedback the comments and concerns raised. Action: Cllr James

4. UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN

RECEIVED a progress update on the Enfield Local Plan 2019-2039.

NOTED

1. Key points were highlighted by Brett Leahy, Director of Planning & Growth.
2. The Local Plan will have a new spatial vision, spatial strategy, 10 x place-based policies, 36 x strategic policies, 57 x non-strategic policies and 62 x draft site allocations.
3. Further information was provided on the Local Plan 2020-2021, where it currently stands (2021-22) and the next steps.
4. The Local Plan is very much a technical study that will help to inform strategic policies as well as the infrastructure delivery plan.
5. Following consultation there had been 7,267 Regulation 18 responses. Information was not available on where all the responses had come from, however postcodes were known for about three quarters of responses and a breakdown of these were included in the presentation.
6. Details of the high-level summary-borough wide were discussed which included the need for additional housing, support for proposed affordable housing targets, opposition and support for Green Belt release, opposition to tall buildings (particularly in Enfield Town) as well as support and opposition to Crews Hill and Chase Park polices. Full details of the summary could be found in the presentation attached to the agenda for this meeting.
7. Following consultation work has been ongoing to analyse, digest and correlate over 7,000 responses and these responses will shape the Local Plan.
8. Work continues on the preparation of the draft Enfield Local Plan, with further workstreams being undertaken on a number of key evidence-based documents including an update to the Housing and Economy Land Availability Assessment (following the most recent Call for Sites in July 2022), Employment Land Review, the Transport Assessment and continued cross boundary working.

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9. An updated Local Development Scheme will be published in early 2023 providing updated timescales for the publication of the proposed submission plan (Regulation 19), and submission timetable.
10. Details were included on the next steps which included further engagement with stakeholders, refinement and testing of Plan, April-September 2023, seeking approval to consult on Regulation 19, October-December 2023, and consultation on Regulation 19 in early 2024.
11. Brett concluded by encouraging everyone to engage in the consultation progress as it was very much a listening exercise, and it was important to hear from local experts to shape and refine policies to progress to Regulation 19.
12. Questions and comments were invited.

Comments/Questions.

Q. At a previous meeting of full council it was agreed that they would be full consultation, debate and a vote. Is that on Regulation 18 and the statement?

A. Consultation on Regulation 18 had been completed with just over 7,000 responses received. The next key stage in terms of consultation will be Regulation 19. Whatever is finalised from the Reg-19 consultation will then be presented to full council to vote on the next stage. If approved, it will then be forwarded to the Government Inspectorate. It was hoped that a roadmap of timelines would be available to share in March 2023.

Q. Has a cross-party committee now been organised?

A. This is in the progress of being organised. A date has not yet been finalised, but it is endeavoured that the first meeting will take place before Christmas.

Q. When and where will you produce a summary of the Reg-18 consultation?

A. This will be available by March 2023 on the Enfield Council website.

Q. How are you engaging/consulting with the harder to reach groups in the parts of the borough which have the highest need?

A. This is a universal challenge for all consultations as often the harder to reach groups do not have the means to respond. However, any approach put forward will be supported by the technical need.

Q. Cllr Rawlings commented on page 11 of the presentation – Placemaking areas in Enfield – and requested that the reference to ‘rural Enfield’ be changed to ‘Green Belt’. **Action: Brett Leahy**

A. What is the ‘drop dead’ date for finalising this Local Plan and submitting it to the London Mayor’s Office or will it roll on for ever?

Q. No, we do not foresee it rolling on for ever as successive governments have always supported strategic local planning. It is hard to predict a definitive final date, but it is hoped that a new Local Plan could be in place by 2025, however, they do take time to finalise and implement.

Q. With regards to the Reg-18 consultation responses, can a breakdown of the ‘for and against’ data be provided?

A. Yes, this data can be circulated. **Action: Brett Leahy**

Q. Is there a mechanism to feedback now or do we have to wait for the next consultation period?

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A. Wait until Regulation-19 as this will ensure that you are responding to the updated addition.

Q. There needs to be some forward thinking with regards to the next stage of the consultation as it is very disappointing to see the low response to the Reg-18 consultation from the Eastern side of the borough. Consideration should be given to holding community events and roadshows to encourage more engagement and response as this is something that will fundamentally affect everyone in the borough. There needs to be a collective/cohesive response to inform the Local Plan going forward.

A. Brett agreed to feed this back to his team and acknowledged that there were lessons to be learnt when it came to engaging with the hard-to-reach groups/communities in the borough. **Action: Brett Leahy**

The Chair thanked Brett for his informative update.

5. ENFIELD TOWN CENTRE

RECEIVED a verbal update from Brett Leahy, Director of Planning & Growth on plans for the Enfield Town Centre,

Dennis Stacey, Bush Hill Park Conservation Area Study Group had submitted questions to officers prior to the meeting to which Brett provided detailed responses. Full details of the questions and responses can be obtained by contacting the Governance Officer Stacey.gilmour@enfield.gov.uk

6. NEW RIVER LOOP

RECEIVED an update on the New River Loop and the works taking place.

NOTED

1. Key points were highlighted by Ian Russell, Principal Engineer.
2. Information was provided on the current problems and the actions completed to address these. This included upgrade of pumps, clean petrol interceptor at Chase Green, chalk treatment (annual activity), de-silting of selected areas and improving footpaths and repairing revetments.
3. Ongoing actions taking place included an upgrade of the Parsonage Lane pumps (due to be completed in November/December), installing remote water level monitors (scheduled for December) and interpretation features – designs are being developed with input from The Enfield Society.
4. A feasibility study is also underway for Chase Green Wetlands, with public consultation taking place in October/November 2022.
5. Questions and comments were invited.

Comments/Questions.

Q. What would the wetland area do to take the pollution out of the system?

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A. Lowering the ground level of pipes would help with the pollution. It would also provide native plants which would create the right sort of environment to help the filtering process and allow management of any pollution.

Q. Will the upgrade works scheduled for December at Parsonage Lane help to increase the water flow in this area?

A. Yes it will help, but it will never seem like a big flow in this area.

Q. Areas of the New River Loop (NRL) through Enfield Town Park, where it abounds the Golf Course are totally unmaintained and not been touched for several years. One of the heritage bridges is obscured by growth across the river and there appears to be years of leaves on the riverbed that need to be cleared. Is this a case of having capital expenditure to install things such as the Wetlands at Chase Green, but no resources for regular and ongoing maintenance of the NRL?

A. To de-silt this section would be a huge undertaking. However, we need to make sure we are working closely with the Operations Team that manage trees and vegetation and it is hoped that more funding will be secured to allow for work on the New River Loop to continue. Doug Wilkinson, Director of Environment & Operations Services acknowledged that there is a lot of work to be done. A maintenance programme started last year and was going well. However, he said that it was important to manage peoples' expectations when it came to the challenge of finances. It was acknowledged that this was a key environmental issue for the borough but there must be a balance of what is feasibly possible

Q. Will birds be able to build nests in future years following de-silting?

A. Yes, they will.

Q. There has been a lot of local opposition to the proposed Chase Green Wetlands. Is there the possibility of a different approach being taken which could just involve replacing the petrol interceptor with something different?

A. Other options have been looked at, but these are expensive to install and maintain. Wetlands do not need much maintenance as they only need to be cut back once a year and are therefore nice, passive systems which are very easy to maintain.

Q. A lot of residents are against the Chase Green Wetlands as many families gather here in the summer, therefore if this green space is taken away people cannot use it as they traditionally would. Would the Wetland not be better placed at Hillyfields which would be more feasible?

A. The key reason for creating a wetland at Chase Green is to help reduce the flood risk. The wetland will take up 650m² which is only 2% of the area, so there would still be a lot of green space left at Chase Green for residents and families to enjoy. We are thinking about protecting homes and the town centre in extreme weather conditions which we are experiencing more and more. Consultation is ongoing and all responses and views will then be captured, and decisions made.

Q. With regards to repairs is there a strong management link between Enfield Council and Thames Water?

A. Our links are much stronger now than they were eighteen months/two years ago, and confidence has increased.

The Chair thanked Officers for their interesting and informative update.

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7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dennis Stacey, Bush Hill Park Conservation Area Study Group raised concerns regarding Telecommunication Masts in the borough. Brett Leahy, Director of Planning and Growth said that he would be happy for a member of his team to provide a presentation on this topic at a future meeting of the Environment Forum.

AGREED to consider this as a future item on the Environment Forum Work Programme: **Action: Chair/Governance Officer**

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED the date of the next meeting as follows:

- Thursday 26 January 2023

This meeting will commence at 7:00pm and be held in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.