

Question 1 from Councillor Chris James to Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council

Can the Leader provide an update on the Government's latest announcement regarding changes to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and what impact it will have on our ability to provide a safe and decent home for Ukrainian refugees?

Answer:

Last year the Government announced a 12-month extension of the Homes for Ukraine scheme – a welcome announcement, and I have been proud that Enfield has played its part in supporting refugees fleeing Putin's inhumane war.

To date, 102 Enfield households have opened their hearts and homes to a Ukrainian refugee or family, and we welcome the additional funding that hosts will receive.

But alongside the additional funding for hosts, the Government also announced the per person tariff provided to local authorities for supporting the scheme and other Ukrainian refugees would be slashed from £10,500 to £5,900 per individual from 1st January 2023.

This cut will severely impact our ability to support Ukrainian refugees into employment and training, funding childcare, and providing financial advice and support. The new tariff will not cover the cost to deliver the service going forward.

More significantly, the per person tariff does not come close to covering the cost of providing temporary accommodation for a Ukrainian refugee family. So far, 15 Ukrainian households have presented as homeless to the Council, including 3 from the Homes for Ukraine scheme who are being housed in temporary accommodation.

While the Government has announced an additional £150m funding to local authorities for refugee support, there is currently no detail on how this will be broken down or what the restrictions will be placed on the funding.

Should more breakdowns in relationship between refugees and hosts happen, this will be yet another burden on the Council's already stretched budget and Enfield's stretched housing market. The Government must do more to support councils to provide safe homes for migrants and refugees, and tackle the housing crisis.

Question 2 from Councillor Julian Sampson to Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Economy

What plans are being made for the celebration of HM The King's Coronation in May

2023?

Answer:

The Coronation of a new monarch is a unique moment for our country. I am pleased to be preparing celebrations for this historic occasion, working with communities across the borough.

Proposals for the celebrations will be developed at a cross-party working group of Councillors which I will chair. Holding dates for this meeting have been shared with Councillors Joanne Laban, Julian Sampon, Sabri Ozaydin, Suna Hurman, Kate Anolue and George Savva

A project team of officers across the Council has been assembled given the importance of this event. A draft action plan for the coronation celebrations will be drawn up and will be presented to the cross-party working group of Councillors and will include details of how we will engage and enable our residents, communities and businesses in celebrating this event.

Question 3 from Councillor Eylem Yuruk to Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council

Following backbench rebellion and division, the Government has launched a consultation on changes to national planning policy. Will the Council be responding to the consultation, and how will the proposals help deliver much needed new homes for Enfield residents?

Answer:

Last year, this Government's landmark Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill was delayed yet again due to a rebellion over housing targets through the Planning system, and subsequently the Secretary of State has amended the Bill.

Enfield faces a housing crisis of supply and affordability, both of which will be tackled by building more homes. What we need is a national plan from the government for delivering the housing numbers we need to tackle the housing crisis.

Our ability to deliver much-needed homes for Enfield residents is not expected to be impacted by the Government's current proposals. The government proposals seek to support and incentivise Local Planning Authorities to continue progressing their Local Plans and whilst the housing targets are advisory this does not change the position for Enfield as the housing target is set by the London Plan and the proposed changes seek to strengthen housing delivery in urban areas such as London and Enfield.

Despite the proposed changes appearing at face value to limit delivery of housing through tightening green belt restrictions and restricting high density development where there is an impact on character, they still allow Local Planning Authorities to

review green belt boundaries through their local plan where circumstances justify doing so and for higher density development to provide housing, where supported by local design code documents.

The Council will be responding to this important Government consultation on proposed changes to national planning policy and supporting a planning process that delivers high-quality homes in sustainable neighbourhoods.

Question 4 from Councillor Michael Rye to Councillor Tim Leaver, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement

How much money has the Council invested in Energetik so far, how many homes are connected to this Council run energy company, when might this company be in profit and at what date is the Council Taxpayer likely to see their investment repaid?

Answer:

To date, the Council, the Greater London Authority, and central government have invested in Energetik as follows:

- £17.75m equity, financed through grant funding sourced from Greater London Authority and the Government's Heat Networks Investment Project
- £32.88m loan capital, sourced between European Investment Bank, the Government's Heat Networks Investment Project, and the Mayor of London's Energy Efficiency Fund.
- £345k grant from Greater London Authority

Moving forward, the Council's Treasury Management Strategy will report at the Council meeting in February and include further information on the Council's investments.

So far, 865 homes and commercial properties have been connected, including social tenants and privately-owned properties.

The agreed company business plan is 40 years; and a continuous net profit is projected to be made from year 2026-27. In 2021-22 the business returned a net profit of £100k. The full payback of loans as at the 2021 approval was projected in 2049. This is subject to regular business and operating plan reviews as required in the shareholder agreement.

Question 5 from Councillor Kate Anolue to Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council

Last June, a government inquiry to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was set up. Can the Leader state whether the Council will be submitting evidence to this inquiry, and whether it has done its own assessment

into the impact and response to the pandemic in Enfield?

Answer:

The coronavirus pandemic was the greatest challenge our borough has faced since the second world war, requiring significant resource and capacity from across the public and community sectors.

Local councils and their staff were vital in helping get their communities through the crisis, with Enfield Council delivering 40,000 emergency food parcels, 10,000 prescriptions, and working with the NHS on local testing and vaccinations.

Sadly, we have lost hundreds of neighbours, friends, and family to the virus. Care home residents, care workers and Enfield's diverse communities were all disproportionately affected.

Therefore, it is right that every level of government takes stock and reflects on their work during the pandemic – celebrating what we did right, being honest about what we did wrong and taking forward everything we learnt.

This includes national government, with issues ranging from hospital discharge to care homes, a lack of testing and PPE availability to name but three elements that curtailed local efforts to manage the pandemic and risked the lives and health of Enfield residents.

So far, we have been contributing to the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Public Health's engagements with the National COVID Inquiry which was established on 28th June and chaired by Baroness Heather Hallett.

The inquiry is set up of several 'modules,' the first of which were on Resilience and preparedness, core UK decision-making and political governance, and impact of Covid-19 pandemic on healthcare systems in the 4 nations of the UK.

Future modules which have not yet started will include the care sector, PPE procurement, testing and tracing, and the impact on other public services. We will look to ensure Enfield investigates all avenues to contribute to these modules.

However, as Members will be aware, the Council has produced its own review into the impact of COVID-19 which was presented at Overview and Scrutiny on 21st March 2022.

Officers have compiled several reports that have reflected on the Councils response to the COVID pandemic and its impact on residents. ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 21/03/2022 19:00 \(enfield.gov.uk\)](#) – page 100

Over the coming weeks, and as we head towards the third anniversary of the first

lockdown, we will look to republishing this report and consider further engagement with Enfield residents on what we have learned.

Question 6 from Councillor Michael Rye to Councillor George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

How much has the Council invested in Housing Gateway Limited? So far, how many homes has the company built, how many has the company purchased (thus adding nil housing stock to the borough), how much profit has the company made, and at what date is the Council Taxpayer likely to see their investment repaid?

Answer:

The private rented sector is extremely difficult for some residents to access. This includes those that are on welfare benefits, that do not have the funds for a deposit and rent in advance or that have a poor credit history. The Government's attacks to the welfare system, including cutting the Local Housing Allowance, has only exacerbated this challenge.

The purpose of HGL's purchasing programme, is to step in providing a solution that addresses these barriers. In doing this it prevents homelessness and reduces the costs of temporary accommodation delivering value for the Council Taxpayer.

The Council has invested £127m in HGL for the acquisition of 623 homes delivering a £11.5m cost avoidance to the council to date which it would otherwise have spent on Temporary Accommodation funded by the General Fund. HGL had a profitable year in 21/22 and has an accumulated profit position of circa £5m retained in the business.

We are seeing a dramatic shift in the private rented sector as landlords exit the market as a result of tax changes, increased mortgage costs and new requirements arising from the Private Renters Bill. Retaining access to rented homes at LHA rates is vitally important for residents that can not access social housing and that can not afford to pay market rates. The level of cost avoidance generated from these homes is likely to increase further in line with the higher costs of meeting our statutory homeless duties.

Question 7 from Councillor Thomas Fawns to Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council

Following the National Fire Chiefs Council's calls, can the Leader set out the steps the Council is taking to ensure development in the borough is built with the best possible fire safety standards and in line with national legislation?

Answer:

Five years after the Grenfell tragedy, stronger building safety regulation is still needed. I am pleased the government has listened to calls from the National Fire

Chiefs Council and others and is currently consulting on making new buildings safer, including mandating second staircases for new tower blocks over 30 metres and sprinkler systems for new care homes.

Officers are currently reviewing the council development pipeline and are talking to our development partners about revising designs to include additional staircases and meet the emerging new regulations. I have also asked officers to engage with private sector developments above 30 metres which are not yet on site, to ensure they are aware of the emerging new regulations and can prepare accordingly. Where changes are sufficient to require revisions to homes which already have planning permission, normal procedures will be followed regarding alterations or variations to the grant of planning.

Officers have been in conversation with the GLA about transitional support for affordable grant-funded homes which are currently under design or construction, so that new homes will continue to be built in good time for local residents.

Question 8 from Councillor Lee Chamberlain to Councillor George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

Would the Cabinet Member for Social Housing set out the timeline for events related the problems with Cheshire House's structure and gas supply including the dates and pertinent details for the following:

- The date/dates the building was structurally surveyed in the last thirty years.
- The date when any safety concerns were first identified.
- The date at which the structural questions were raised in respect of the building.
- The dates any safety concerns have been raised.
- When the decision was made to schedule the replacement of the gas-based systems.
- The times when residents were offered alternative accommodation and what types of accommodation on which dates.
- The date the gas leak was reported.
- The date the gas leak was detected.
- The date the gas supply was withdrawn by the supplier.
- The original planned gas replacement start date.
- The original planned gas replacement completion date.
- When will all residents have their heating and cooking facilities permanently replaced?

Details in this timeline should include annotations on:

- The named decision makers, i.e., the officer, senior officer or Cabinet Member who made the decision, at the point noted.

- References to the reports, emails or memos detailing the decisions made attached as annexes, in hard copy at members rooms as well as electronically via URL links.

Answer:

I have asked officers to respond to your detailed questions. In the meantime, what I can say more generally about Cheshire House is that full power was restored to the block from the 18th December to the 24th December. From the outset of the emergency, we knew how difficult conditions would be for residents and offered significant support with officers, Ward Councillors and I knocking on every door in the block and speaking to tenants.

This included immediate offers of alternative accommodation, providing every household with temporary heaters, hobs, blankets, cooking equipment, and financial support to help with increased energy costs.

Question 9 from Councillor Hivran Dalkaya to Councillor Ergin Erbil, Deputy Leader

What steps has the Council had to make to be prepared for voter ID for elections, and what representations has the Council made to government and policymakers regarding its introduction?

Answer:

Despite significant concerns raised by local councils and charities, the Government have pushed ahead with voter ID, set to disenfranchise millions from voting, particularly those that already face barriers and discrimination in society.

London already has one of the lowest voter registration rates across the country, with one in five Black Londoners and one in three EU Londoners not registered. The requirement to present ID at the polling stations will only add to this disenfranchisement.

Half a million Londoners do not have a passport, more than 2.6 million do not have a driving licence and 12% of LGBT+ people do not have any useable photo ID.

And while the Government has set out a list of useable ID, this itself contains discrepancies, including the fact that 18+ Oyster cards are excluded, but Freedom Passes and Oyster 60+ cards are included as suitable ID.

At the same time, presenting any form of photo ID, even those on the list of suitable identification set out by the Government, will create barriers. For example, only around one in five disabled Londoners would be able to present a Freedom Pass as ID, if required.

Meanwhile, 61% of Londoners are not aware of the forthcoming requirement to present ID at a polling station, according to London Councils. Despite this, the

Government have failed to support councils with the resources required to run a full awareness campaign.

Despite the lack of resource, Enfield Council has started to get ahead and promote awareness of Voter ID to local electors through internal and external comms that mirror the national campaign by the Electoral Commission. Electoral Services has setup a process to enable electors to submit a paper-based application for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) if they are unable to do it online.

- The Council website has been updated to include information on Voter ID
- The intranet page for staff has been updated to include information on Voter ID. This also contains a short video for additional information.
- Customer Service team are aware of Voter ID and have been provided with the necessary FAQs should they get enquiries from the public.
- Libraries will have leaflets/posters. Also, Electoral Services are holding Q&A sessions at the four main libraries in the up-coming months to promote Voter ID awareness.
- All the current Enfield comms have the necessary contact details for Electoral Services should Electors wish to contact them directly.
- Electoral Services are engaging with social groups who are more likely to be affected by Voter ID (Anonymous Electors, Elderly, Homeless, Gypsy, Roma & Travellers, LGBT+ residents) to ensure they are aware of Voter ID, and aware that they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if they do not have a valid form of photographic ID.
- Electoral Services are also engaging with stakeholders to identify additional events they can attend to further engage with the Enfield residents.
- Staff have been trained and familiar of the processes using the Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) Portal that electors can use to make an online application for a VAC.
- Council Digital Services have tested and confirmed connectivity with the ERO portal prior to launch, and again on launch day to ensure there were no access issues/problems to the ERO portal.
- A designated room has been prepared so Electoral Services can book appointments for Electors to have their photograph taken in private and uploaded to their VAC application.

Question 10 from Councillor Lee Chamberlain to Councillor George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

Would the Cabinet Member of Social Housing inform of all of the Council buildings over 18m tall using gas for any purpose, setting out the following points in particular:

- Identified as not suitable for gas.
- Replacing gas with electric.
- The date of the building's last structural review.

- If that building has any questions raised regarding the gas supply and its ability to resist explosions.
- Any decisions made regarding replacement of gas services and the time until replacement is expected.

Details should include annotations on:

- The named decision makers, i.e., the officer, senior officer or Cabinet Member who made the decision, at the point noted.
- References to the reports, emails or memos detailing the decisions made attached as annexes, in hard copy at members rooms as well as electronically via URL links.

Answer:

I have asked Officers to provide a briefing to the Shadow Cabinet member on this subject and I can confirm that aside from Shropshire House which has commenced works to install an interim electrical solution, no other buildings have a gas disconnection notice.

As lead borough for the London Retrofit programme, we are committed to the reduction of carbon emissions from our housing replacing gas supply with alternative, sustainable solutions. This includes through our Energetik District Heating solution providing low carbon, affordable energy and through ground and air source heat pumps.

Retrofitting homes will help lower bills and create over 100,000 jobs across London, so as the lead council across the capital, we will be developing options and proposals for an Enfield retrofit programme as soon as possible, recognising that the Government has not provided any funding for councils to start this work.

Question 11 from Councillor Bektas Ozer to Councillor Ergin Erbil, Deputy Leader

Can the Deputy Leader provide an update on the external engagement currently taking place regarding the Climate Action Plan Review and share any of the feedback so far?

Answer:

The external engagement is part of the commitment to review the Climate Action Plan every two years.

The purpose of the external engagement, as well as being part of our commitment to review the Climate Action Plan every two years, was to reflect on the original 2020 version, receive feedback, coordinate our actions with actions of external stakeholders, reach out to a wider group of stakeholders, explore new partnerships and gather new ideas.

Council officers have worked alongside councillors to develop and deliver a robust and effective engagement strategy both with a strong in person and online presence. This external engagement included officer presence at libraries and in shopping centres at 7 locations across the borough and in addition, an effective social media campaign reaching almost 3,000 people and getting 671 clicks, and most of the engagement took place in November and December last year.

There have been a number of insightful and helpful comments to the survey which will remain open until the 30th of January, with some more targeted engagement events still ongoing including opportunities for school's engagement, youth group and attendance at Landlord forum.

Engagement responses are still being gathered and analysed, but initial feedback is that:

- Travel –Overall resident support for the role out of EVs. In other areas, and working with partners on improvement of existing public transport and barriers to active travel are emerging priorities
- Buildings – there is a lot of interest in building insulation including support for retrofit of social housing and public buildings, and the council piloting and sharing best practice
- Natural Environment – high area of interest for residents with support for ongoing rewilding and nature-based solutions programme, new interest in food planting to be considered
- Energy – high levels of interest in solar panels on various building types
- Waste – high level of interest in doing more to work with businesses on packaging, reducing plastic and more community offerings around sharing

Officers are scheduled to share more of this preliminary feedback at the Environment Forum on the 26th January.

Question 12 Councillor Maria Alexandrou to Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Environment

Would the Council review gritting routes before the next snow fall and consider gritting roads with steep slopes and when there is a prolonged freeze of more than 3 days include larger side roads?

Answer:

The Council's approach to gritting is set out in its Winter Maintenance Plan. This establishes priorities for gritting, with the initial focus being on the primary road network, bus routes and key emergency service routes. Once this 'Priority 1' network is functioning safely, the 'Priority 2' network is treated, which includes

streets serving more than 50 dwellings with a gradient over 1 in 20. Finally, if the stock of grit allows, minor roads are treated.

The Council will continue to keep the Winter Maintenance Plan under review with changes made in the light of operational experience.

Question 13 from Councillor Josh Abey for Councillor Tim Leaver, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement

What steps has the Council had to take to balance its medium-term financial plan following the drastic rise in inflation?

Answer:

The impact of the inflation increases that have not been seen since the 1980s are also impacting on Council costs. This includes inflationary cost pressure from energy (e.g. street lighting, civic buildings), fuel (e.g. waste trucks and SEN transport) and staff costs and contractual costs (e.g. impact of the national living wage increase of 9.7% for care homes). The total 2023/24 budget gap is over £40m, of which the forecast inflationary requirement is £21m. The government grant of £12m for Adult Social Care is welcomed but our demographic and inflationary costs exceed this (£14m ASC demographic and inflation pressures excluding the council staff costs) grant provided. This means that the Council has identified how it can spend less (i.e. make savings) and increase income generation to reduce its total spend to meet these costs.

The Council has taken a number of steps to balance the budget in 2022-23 these include making over £15m of savings proposals for 2023/24 and the need to increase council tax to support closing the budget gap of over £40m in total. These savings include a mixture of service areas and cover demand reduction strategies £1m in adult social care; £5.9m on staffing restructures throughout the Council; £5.6m efficiency savings (such as procurement savings from digital services contracts); £2.9m income (such as increasing income from visa verification service).

The Council has made over £221m of savings since 2010, and therefore, making ongoing savings is challenging ask in this wider context.

Question 14 Councillor Maria Alexandrou to Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Environment

Will the Council look at giving permits to the carers of residents to enable them to enter and exit the roads in the LTNs to provide care to the vulnerable?

Answer:

The Council have introduced a permit system for Blue Badge holders with respect to both the Fox Lane and Bowes Quieter Neighbourhood areas, where a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) approach has been taken. This enables Blue Badge

holders to nominate one vehicle to pass through the camera enforced modal filters within the Quieter Neighbourhood area without receiving a Penalty Charge Notice.

The permit could either apply to the Blue Badge holder's own vehicle or another nominated vehicle where the user of that vehicle has a role in the care of the Blue Badge holder.

The Council is reviewing this initial approach to exemptions and liaising with other London boroughs, with the potential to develop further eligibility criteria.

Question 15 from Councillor Nicki Adeleke to Councillor Alev Cazimoglu, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

There are a record number of people in NHS hospital beds. Can the Cabinet member explain what the Council's Adult Social Care team is doing to support the NHS free up beds through hospital discharges?

Answer:

As we know, the NHS faces significant pressures again this Winter. We often read reports that 'bed blocking' is a major cause of waits for a hospital bed. However, I fear that recent Govt announcements about additional funding are too late to support discharge this Winter.

Nevertheless, I am pleased to say that Adult Social Care's Hospital Discharge team, with support from other ASC teams and its partners in Enfield Community Health service, continues to discharge local residents in a timely fashion. Local discharge 'performance' is regularly the best in the North Central London (NCL). This is a great achievement and I am pleased to see it recognised by our NHS partners.

To support this good work the team

- maintains an on-site hospital discharge team at North Middlesex University Hospital and thus benefits from a close working relationship with Hospital staff
- works 7 days a week to support the hospital discharge patients with managers and staff working closely with NCL Integrated Care Board (ICB) colleagues to plan and effect discharges.

The role of the team is backed up by other ASC teams, such as the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES), which provides equipment to support discharges 7 days a week. As an in-house equipment service, ICES provides ASC with a flexible and responsive service the envy of those with outsourced equipment contracts.

The Brokerage Team and its commissioning of services are integral to hospital discharge. ASC has a flexible approach to the commissioning of local care homes and home care providers. This guarantees that extra placements in care homes

and extra care hours for those living at home are available.

The flexibility, professionalism and 'presence' of all ASC teams involved in discharge, I am pleased to state, support our local hospitals to return our residents to where they will live.

I think it is also worth saying that whilst getting people out of hospital safely and quickly is the right thing to do, there does also need to be a focus on work to help keep people out of hospital in the first place. That will require further partnership work to improve access to health services in the community, and the Government reversing cuts to Public Health budgets.

Question 16 from Councillor Maria Alexandrou to Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Environment

Please confirm how many blue badge holders are registered in Enfield?

Answer:

There are 11,758 Blue Badge holders registered in Enfield as at 5 January 2023.

Question 17 from Councillor Margaret Greer to Councillor Abdul Abdullahi, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Can the Cabinet Member set out how the Council is supporting schools facing falling rolls, and what impacts it is having on Enfield's school community?

Answer:

Many Enfield schools are and will be facing a challenging time over the next 5-10 years as the number of children attending school in the borough is declining. The picture isn't totally clear as it isn't always easy to predict population movement and how fast building projects will be completed. The main factor though is that the birth rate nationally has declined over the past 10 years from around 5000 live births a year to approximately 4000 – a 20% decline. There has also been an impact from COVID and Brexit with some families moving out of London or leaving the UK.

This is a challenge felt across the capital, with data from London Councils showing that 29 London boroughs are expecting a drop in demand of over 4% for reception places between 2022-23 and 2026-27, with total reception numbers predicted to decline by over 7%.

Local authority officers are supporting schools in many ways and a Schools Place Planning working group with representatives from maintained schools, academies, the church of England and Catholic Diocese and the DfE have been monitoring and advising on our strategy. This has meant some schools reducing their admission number and we expect more to do so in the future. Reducing pupil numbers also has a financial impact on schools as schools are funded on the number of pupils they have. HR and finance teams have been supporting schools to save money, readjust staffing and look at how they use the spare school site capacity for

example for additional special needs provision. We now have 3 special needs units and 19 alternative resource provisions for SEND pupils.

Question 18 from Councillor Chris Dey to Councillor Gina Need, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion

Please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on Police Numbers in the Borough? How many officers do we have now compared to May 2018? Will the Cabinet Member join me in thanking the Government for providing the funding for 20,000 additional police officers and in so doing confirm how many of these have been allocated to Enfield and how they are being deployed?

Answer:

I have asked council officers to follow up with Cllr Dey in writing to provide him with the information requested, as data on policing numbers in Enfield sits with the Metropolitan Police.

What I can clarify is that nationally, there are still 8,000 fewer police officers in 2022 than there were in 2010. Regionally, thanks to the Mayor of London, there are an additional 1,200 officers on London's streets with funding for an additional 500 PCSO being delivered in the Mayor's upcoming budget.

Question 19 from Councillor Mahym Bedekova to Councillor George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

December saw freezing temperatures and icy conditions on Enfield's streets. How did the Council support people sleeping rough in our borough who were at serious risk from the cold snap?

Answer:

The cold weather in December meant that Enfield Council activated the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). When SWEP is activated, local authorities have a duty to provide access to emergency accommodation for all rough sleepers, including those who would not normally be accommodated. In December, we accommodated 15 rough sleepers as part of our SWEP response. Of these, 13 people had no recourse to public funds.

Question 20 from Councillor Chris Dey to Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy

I have received a complaint from community groups in my ward that there is no longer a community notice board in the refurbished Dugdale Centre for Community Notices.

Please could the Cabinet Member review this ridiculous decision reversing it to install a Community Notice Board in this Community Building so this and other such

initiatives can be advertised in the future?

Answer:

The Dugdale Arts Centre has recently undergone a significant refurbishment and we are currently in mobilisation phase, setting up the exhibits, planning the programme and snagging issues from the refurbishment. The Community Noticeboard came down as part of the build programme. We will of course reinstate a noticeboard for community groups, as was always planned.

Question 21 from Councillor Gunes Akbulut to Councillor Susan Erbil, Cabinet Member for Licensing, Planning and Regulatory Services

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the number of private-rented sector licence applications received, and what work is currently being done to engage with landlords that have failed to licence their property so far?

Answer:

So far, Enfield Council has received over 16,000 private rented sector licence applications – just over half the number of PRS properties we predict in the affected Wards.

If we identify an unlicensed property we give the landlord 14 days to licence and then a final 7 day reminder is sent before we instigate enforcement action. We continue to widely publicise the licensing schemes and the requirement to licence. A landlord forum is also being held on 19/1/23.

For those landlords who evade licensing, we have been carrying out unannounced visits and tasking of areas where we have intelligence of suspected unlicensed properties. So far, we have 14 cases put forward for prosecution, 2 cases have recently been sentenced and 4 cases are awaiting sentencing. We have executed 9 warrants where we suspect an unlicensed property where the landlord has failed to give us access. Over 70 cases have been issued with financial penalties for housing and licensing offences and 15 cases have been referred for rent repayment orders where landlords have failed to licence, and the tenants may be able to claim up to 12 months' rent back.

As we saw from the recent census data, the PRS is growing in Enfield so we will need to be more proactive to ensure a decent standard of home for all. We continue to support calls to reform the sector, including better rights for tenants and stronger licensing and enforcement powers for local councils.

Question 22 from Councillor Emma Supple to Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy

Arts Council for England has identified a paucity of provision of the Arts in the borough of Enfield.

Would the cabinet member advise what measures is she putting in place to ensure

that Enfield meets the Arts Councils concerns now that Enfield provision is so poor as to be placed in special measures.

Answer:

Enfield Council has not been placed in special measures. The Arts Council has identified that Enfield receives less support than other areas, and as a result made Enfield a "Priority Place for 2021 – 2024". This has meant that the borough is made a priority for grants. For example, recently £227K funding has been granted to the Council to deliver on our Culture Connects strategy, specifically around a Festival of Industry. This will be implemented during 2023.

Question 23 from Councillor Elif Erbil to Councillor Susan Erbil, Cabinet Member for Licensing, Planning and Regulatory Services

Damp and mould is affecting people in all tenures, including private rented properties. Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on what the Council is doing to ensure residents in private rented properties are living in safe and well-managed homes?

Answer:

We welcome the review being undertaken by Government on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System which is the system used to assess hazards including in the private rented sector. This should provide the needed increased clarity on health risks associated with damp and mould to inform how these are assessed and responded to.

Our successful licensing scheme is demonstrating effective work with landlords to support, encourage and where necessary enforce appropriate housing conditions in the private sector to be free from damp and mould.

In our role as a landlord and lettings agency via Housing Gateway and in our statutory duty to provide Temporary Accommodation, officers have established a specific Mould Task Force. This is reviewing our approach to damp and mould, making this something that is an urgent priority to take remedial action such as mould washes, alongside assessing the underlying causes in a property which could include structure, heating, ventilation and how these work in combination to keep the property free of condensation which leads to damp and mould.

Officers are also developing a training programme for all council staff and partners that provide support to residents in their homes to identify damp and mould issues and to provide Information, advice, and guidance on how to resolve any issues.

Question 24 from Councillor Emma Supple to Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy

The circa £7million change of use of the Dugdale centre to incorporate office space means a reduction in space for Enfield Museum and archive. What measures are in place to ensure Enfield Museum space across the borough is safeguarded and where possible enhanced?

Answer:

The refurbishment of the Dugdale Arts Centre has made the new exhibitions are in a more accessible and prominent position. They are more flexible display spaces and enable officers to regularly refresh the exhibits at the DAC. They will also ensure that there is the opportunity to set up “pop up” exhibitions in other Council venues. This may include Forty Hall, Libraries and Community Centres. Officers are exploring digital opportunities for residents to access our catalogue of exhibits. Satellite displays are already in place in the Hub Libraries, and these will be refreshed during 2023.

Question 25 from Councillor Nawshad Ali to Councillor Gina Needs, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion

Residents are always keen to encourage the installation of cameras, where funding allows. Will the Council continue to invest in the Enfield Public Safety Centre and promote the great partnership work with the police in relation to cameras?

Answer:

Despite the financial constraints faced by all public services the Council is continuing to invest in new cameras and maintaining the Public Safety Centre.

The centre now monitors over 1000 cameras 24/7 and the great work they do is captured in an episode of “Shoplifters and Scammers” to be aired imminently on Channel 5.

The programme shows how the Council Operators have supported the Police in intervening to prevent an escalation of violence and how the centre has supported the police with evidence in more than 700 incidents. The evidential value of this resource has been noted by the BCU Commander.

Question 26 from Councillor Emma Supple to Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy

On the Dugdale Centre website, the suggested parking for the Dugdale Centre omits use of the Genotin Road car parking at the Microsoft Offices. Does the Cabinet Member agree to look at this and the signage issues that are misleading the general public on when they can or cannot use this public access car park?

Answer:

Palace Gardens multi-story car park is immediately adjacent to the Dugdale Arts Centre. The Sydney Road car park is also nearby. The DAC website will be

updated to reflect the fact that the Genotin Road Car Park is also nearby. Councils Parking Services have ordered extra signage to be installed in Enfield Town to further advertise Genotin Road Car Park. This will be installed in due course.

Question 27 from Councillor Mahmut Aksanoglu to Councillor Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy

What impact will the Government's replacement of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme with an "Energy Bill Discount Scheme" from April have on local businesses, charities, and the public sector in Enfield?

Answer:

The details of the new Energy Bill Discount Scheme were announced on the 9th January 2023. Whereas the old scheme effectively provided a price cap on each unit of energy used for non-domestic users, the new scheme applies a threshold of energy usage before a per megawatt discount is applied, this threshold applies differently for different types of users, with high energy using businesses having a lower threshold and therefore greater support.

Because of this change from a price cap to a usage-based discount, coupled with a dramatic drop in the wholesale cost of gas, it is difficult to know the effect on individual businesses. However, as the overall allocation of funds for non-domestic energy cost relief has dropped from £18bn over a six-month period to £5.5bn over a twelve-month period we believe that it is a fair assumption that many businesses, charities and the public sector across the UK could face dramatic increases in energy bills from April 2023. It is also likely that smaller organisations, and/or those businesses who are already struggling will be disproportionately affected should energy rates remain high.

Enfield Council and its local partners are committed to supporting individuals affected by the cost of living crisis both through lobbying for support and change from Central Government as well as on the ground in our communities. Full details of the range of support that we are able to provide can be found on the council's website by visiting the home page and clicking 'cost of living support'

Question 28 from Councillor James Hockney to Councillor Ergin Erbil, Deputy Leader

Can the Portfolio Holder in relation to the Administration Priorities provide individual costings for each of the priorities that have been costed?

Answer:

I am pleased to report that despite this being the first year into this administration, we have already identified resources and a plan to deliver 29 manifesto pledges that the people of Enfield voted for.

27 of the pledges can be progressed within existing budgets. 2 are progressing at additional cost, which is the replacement of bins (estimated to cost £200k a year, £100k revenue and £100k capital).

As set out in the medium term financial plan, the costs for the introduction of a community law enforcement function have been costed and included in the budget (£600k in 23/24, £1.2m in 24/25 and £600k in 25/26).

A further 12 pledges are at varying stages of review. As proposals are developed these will form part of the council's medium-term financial plan and capital programme and progress will be reported transparently through this process.

Question 29 from Cllr Nia Stevens to Cllr Chinelo Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy

The Council has recently been awarded funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to improve access to the museum collection and work with community volunteers. Please can you let us how the funding will impact residents and visitors to the borough.

Answer:

I am pleased that the NLHF has awarded Enfield Council £124,887. The project that the funding supports will result in a more relevant museum collection and online catalogue, enabling residents and visitors to engage with and contribute to Enfield's past and future heritage. The Museum has roughly 20,000 objects in the collection, the information of which is currently only available via an outdated system. As with all museums and galleries, not all of the collection is on display. A digital database with online catalogue are vitally important to ensure the public have greater access to the collection at all times, not just when objects are on display.

The funding will allow for an updated system, when fully implemented, residents and visitors, will be able to browse the collection, seeking objects of interest or relevance thus creating more interest in the borough's heritage as well as encouraging more visitors to Enfield. This will also ensure local schools and community groups have improved access to museum collection resources.

The 18-month upgrade will ensure that Enfield provides the same level of public access and service already in place at other national, regional, and local museums and galleries.

Question 30 from Councillor James Hockney to Councillor Tim Leaver, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement

Can the Portfolio Holder detail external spending on consultants and solicitors for the last four financial years and current financial year to date?

Action: James Newman/Neil Goddard

Answer:

Due to the analysis required to produce the information for the current financial year, it has not been possible to produce this in the timeframe needed for Council questions. However, in terms of information readily available, this question on consultants was previously answered in February 2022 Council questions as set out below and the information will be provided.

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Actuals	Actuals	Actuals
£000s	£000s	£000s
2,749	2,847	1,449

The external lawyer spend is set out below. Further analysis is being undertaken to identify the different elements of the total legal spend.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 YTD Apr- Dec
	£	£	£	£	£
External Solicitor Spend	1,748,213*	1,954,625*	1,067,678	1,338,731	562,932

*Contains external solicitor spend, barrister/chambers fees and compensation/settlement payments