

Enfield Council: Introducing the Local Plan

Good morning, everyone,

I'm Brett Leahy, Strategic Director of Planning, Growth, and Infrastructure at Enfield Council. On behalf of the Council, I'm pleased to welcome you to the Council's civic centre for the independent examination of our Local Plan.

This plan is the result of nine years of hard work from Officers of the Council, a current £7 million investment, and the invaluable contributions of residents, businesses, and partners. It's critical to shaping the future of our borough.

Enfield's Challenges and Opportunities

Enfield is a borough rich in history, vibrant character, and vast opportunity. Yet, like all London councils, we face significant challenges:

- A housing crisis and rising homelessness.
- Persistent economic disparities.
- The urgent need to combat climate change while achieving net-zero targets.

These challenges demand bold, innovative solutions, and Enfield is meeting them head-on. Through our regeneration program at Meridian Water, we're delivering one of England's largest regeneration projects: a £6 billion, 25-year initiative creating thousands of homes and jobs. Similarly, our estate renewal programs, such as Joyce and Snells, are transforming neighbourhoods with affordable housing, safer communities, and improved facilities.

Enfield is also pioneering rural transformation. In partnership with DEFRA and the GLA, we've introduced London's only Head of Rural Transformation to drive green belt restoration. This includes planting 100,000 trees, enhancing biodiversity, improving access, and implementing flood mitigation measures.

Additionally, our borough is home to London's largest district heat network, delivering sustainable, affordable energy to residents.

HOWEVER, while these initiatives are significant, much more is needed. An up-to-date Local Plan is absolutely essential to unlocking Enfield's full potential.

Why This Plan Matters

Enfield is more than just a borough—it's people's home. It's a place brimming with potential and opportunity, where a diverse and growing population, thriving businesses, and ambitious regeneration projects reflect the vibrancy of our community. Over half of Enfield comprises green and blue spaces, making it a crucial part of London's natural heritage.

However, alongside these strengths, we face significant challenges. Like many parts of London, Enfield is grappling with a housing crisis, slow economic growth and persistent income inequality. These challenges aren't abstract; they impact families, businesses, and our community every day and will continue to do so if not addressed.

For example, London's housing shortfall is stark: in 2022/23, just 37,000 new homes were built—far below the target of 52,300, the assessed need of 66,000 annually, and the new target of 88,000. The consequences are real: rising homelessness, overcrowded housing, and a high cost of living that

squeeze household incomes, our continued failure to meet our 5 Year Housing Land Supply and Housing Delivery Test and stifles business growth.

Housing isn't just about buildings. It's about health, education, economic growth, and creating strong, connected communities. That's why our Local Plan is so essential.

Our Vision for Enfield

The Local Plan is our roadmap to deliver 34,710 new homes by 2041, with a strong focus on family housing, affordable options, and homes designed for people at every stage of life—an area where many Local Plans fall short. But this plan is about far more than housing; it's about building thriving, resilient communities:

- Expanding access to clean, green spaces.
- Investing in schools, healthcare, and transport.
- Supporting a vibrant and inclusive local economy.
- Addressing climate change and protecting our natural environment.

We see Enfield as London's green lung—a borough where new homes, jobs, and opportunities empower future generations to thrive. By focusing on urban growth, carefully balancing grey and green belt land, and enhancing biodiversity, we're laying the foundation for a healthier, more sustainable community.

Soundness of the Plan

This Local Plan has been developed in strict accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It has undergone rigorous consultation, evidence gathering, and analysis. It is:

- Positively prepared.
- Justified.
- Effective.
- Viable.
- Deliverable.
- And consistent with national policy.

The Council is confident that this bold, ambitious strategy will address Enfield's significant challenges while ensuring that growth is sustainable and beneficial for everyone.

Closing

This Local Plan represents a carefully considered framework for delivering planned, sustainable growth. It ensures the provision of much-needed homes, including family and affordable housing, while addressing the long-term needs of our borough.

Importantly, the Plan takes a bold and transparent approach, engaging in an honest and mature conversation about the release of green belt land. It strikes a balance between the need for growth and our responsibility to protect Enfield's environment and character, and we have the exceptional case to do so.

In Enfield, we deeply value and understand the importance of the green belt. Yet, we also recognise that our borough faces unique challenges as an outer London area. Far too often, we are expected to meet the demands of inner London policies, which fail to reflect the distinct character and needs of our borough. This Plan embraces Enfield's identity, leveraging its strengths and addressing its challenges in a way tailored to our community.

If the Plan is not adopted, we face a stark reality - a cliff-edge moment. Without a five-year housing land supply, there will be speculative developments on grey and green belt land. These would be unplanned, uncontrolled, and fail to meet our policy aspirations. Adopting this Local Plan isn't about choosing development or no development - it's about choosing managed, sustainable growth over speculative, inappropriate development that would erode our community's future.

In closing, this Local Plan delivers on its promise of a sound, positive, and strategic approach to sustainable development. It ensures that Enfield remains a borough where everyone has the opportunity to live, work, and thrive, continuing to be a vibrant part of outer London.