

Strategic Planning and Design

Enfield Council

Re ; DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Dear Sir/Madam

Please would you consider my following comments along with all the other representations received on this vital issue for our Borough. It is truly difficult to know where to begin and so perhaps a few general comments may help set the tone of my concerns at the Councils approach.

We as a City have made mistakes in the past and that Urbanisation has caused many pressures to descend on the few remaining beautiful and diverse areas of London. One of those is Enfield. We are very fortunate to have such a great place to live and work. This plan puts that at risk for short term growth in housing and population. Any growth in London as a City should be focused outside the M25 boundary or it will simply become a continuous Urban environment. If this plan goes ahead those of us lucky enough to be able to move away may do so, others of us who are older can enjoy our present Borough for the rest of our days but will be saddened to know that future generations will be denied the benefits we have enjoyed. Enfield needs a long-term plan; this plan has short term targets that, as in the past, will in years to come be hugely regretted.

For the Council to gain the necessary local support for this plan the key challenge from me would be for the Council to 'Finish' a part of any plan to prove to a largely doubtful population that their vision can become reality. Meridian water is a classic example ; talked about for about 14 years, but so far with very few houses and renewed communities to show for the effort. Perhaps a smaller vision brought to fruition would allow a renewed community enthusiasm for future ideas.

The following points outline the mistakes that I believe this plan makes and that need serious reconsideration;

- The Council do not appear from the Plan as written to have seriously considered the possibility that Enfield is already at peak population. There is no consideration of encouraging relocation or for combining the ideas of reducing London's dominance and levelling up for the rest of the country.
- Rural Enfield, Crews Hill & Chase Park should not be included as development areas for housing as they are part of the Green Belt and should not be built upon. As part of the so-called London National Park this 'Green Lung' for London should be saved for the whole city, not simply devoured for Enfield only purposes. As they say "When its gone, its gone." Once lost this Green Belt can never be replaced. What is the point of Green Belt legislation if it folds under the first pressure of housing/industrial or even more bizarrely burial sites.

- Enfield does not need to be urbanised, its character is suburban and this is what makes it attractive. The plan should try to create a more spacious, feel to uplift those existing areas that have been allowed to become urbanised over the years. Southgate and other Suburban areas in the Borough are vital for keeping the feel of Enfield as a desirable place to live. If, for example it is correct that the 1930's style underground design is an iconic part of our London heritage then why ruin that low level/open design by building tower blocks to overshadow it. To build more high density blocks of housing will make it an Urban landscape not, suburban. If this is what the Council desire so be it, but it may drive the talented, ambitious and wealthy away from our area as has happened in previous suburban areas of London that are now wholly Urban.
- The Plan likes to call Enfield Town a traditional 'Market Town' and this is indeed its heritage value as chiefly shown in the Market Place, Church, Grammar School, Gentleman's Row, War Memorial Green areas of town. This image/reality is vital for Enfield's ability to attract talent, investment and the proposed plan puts this at risk. The second shopping centre development has I believe been shown to have been a mistake. It has reduced the viability of the high street and meant that the desirable regeneration of the Station/Genotin Road area was missed. These mistakes need to be acknowledged so that they are not repeated. A Tower block overlooking and therefore seen from this crucial heritage area is a folly that will ruin that 'Market Town' feel.
- There is only an implied acknowledgement that the past development of the Edmonton Green area was a mistake. The Tower blocks have removed the traditional feel of the area that made it a desirable place to live within living memory. The plan is in danger of repeating the same mistake notably in Enfield Town Centre. Ideally we should knock down the Tower blocks and relocate the community to the 'new' Meridian Water if this is indeed going to be such a desirable location, thereby improving the Edmonton Green area for the existing community rather than attempt to increase the population density yet again for the sake of meeting arbitrary targets.
- The environmental statements within the plan are at odds with the proposals for developing Green belt land. If Green Belt land is removed for housing now then how can anyone reasonably trust the plans pronouncements on the absolute nature of the Green Belt that then remained. Vicarage Farm should obviously be used once again as Farmland to keep Enfield, stated as desirable in the plan, as a Green Lung for London, one of the largest continuous open spaced areas within London. This particular Farm has been under used for many years now and one can only assume was purchased with regard to building potential rather than for agricultural use. Why enrich a property developer by using this land rather than existing council owned land. If this land is to be used can I assume it will be purchased as agricultural land and not as land with planning permission.
- The London National Park should obviously include the entirety of the existing Green Belt area. The Enfield Road/Chase Park area is the easiest 'Green' area for the less 'Green' parts of the Borough to access. The Plan wishes to use these access benefits to supply housing for the wealthy rather than easy access to support the wellbeing of those in poorer parts of our Borough. Do the council really believe that Chase Park will provide affordable housing rather than homes for the wealthy in the style of the Trent Park

Berkeley development. Are the new homes to be built over the next 20 years truly for our existing youngsters. I hope so, but will that be part of the plan?

The blunt truth is that people like me can afford to move away from Enfield if half of this plan is put into reality, but the vast majority of our community will be left trapped in an area poorer for the proposals. Enfield will no longer be a distinct part of our capital city but subsumed into it, part of the Urban sprawl. I would feel more able to support this Local plan if I felt there was some acknowledgement of past errors leading to a more humble approach to this particular one and it therefore becoming a truly local plan to benefit existing Enfield residents rather than already wealthy developers and newcomers. I appreciate the Council has an obligation to submit a plan but does it have to so enthusiastically at the risk of losing what we can all agree are the unique selling points of our Borough.

Thank you for considering these points as your Local Plan continues its development over the coming years.

Yours Sincerely