

Enfield Council
Planning Department
Civic Centre
Silver Street
London
EN1 3XA

Date: 13 September 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Response to Enfield Local Plan (Submission Plan-Regulation 18) on behalf of Capel Manor College, Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, EN1 4RQ

We write on behalf of our client, Capel Manor College, in relation to the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation and in the context of its main campus at Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield.

Below we provide some background information to Capel Manor College and explain the need for investment and change to support its future. Specifically, we comment on policies in the emerging Local Plan with a view to informing a planning policy framework that is supportive of necessary change and which will help to secure a long-term future for this important educational and visitor facility.

About Capel Manor College

Capel Manor College is London's leading environmental college with six campuses across the Capital. It offers a diverse range of full and part time courses in further and higher education for school leavers and adults. Its main campus is located to the north of Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield. The campus is bound by the M25 to the north, New River to the east, and Bulls Cross and Gilmour Close to the West.

Capel Manor has a long and rich history dating back to the 12th Century. In the mid-20th Century much of the estate had become neglected. Frances Perry, a local and highly respected horticulturalist, fought to save the estate and with the support of the Council, it was transformed into a horticultural college.

Capel Manor College now offers apprenticeships, full-time, part-time, higher education and industry training in a diverse range of land-based subjects, including arboriculture, conservation, farming, floristry, garden design, horticulture, landscaping, veterinary studies, and zoology. The College has a range of learning facilities including state-of-the-art greenhouses, polytunnels, laboratories, Victorian stables, workshops and classrooms. Additional training is provided at the College in the form of business skills, dog grooming, floristry and event styling, foundation learning, saddlery and shoemaking, and wildlife and environmental conservation. It has approximately 3,500 students and 300 staff.

Capel Manor itself is a Georgian house set within 30 acres of gardens. It contains 60 colourful gardens, a zoo, a restaurant and the College. The Gardens are open to the public and can be hired out for events, such as weddings and filming. A florist and dog grooming facility are also accessible to the public. The Gardens are

an important local amenity and significant visitor attraction. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, approximately 40,000 people visited annually.

In addition to the on-site facilities, the College has two local farms, which offer additional opportunities for learning and community activities. Brooks Farm in Leyton provides farm-based learning for the wider community and a well-equipped outdoor learning centre for schools, groups and parties. Forty Hall Farm is located a short distance from the College. It is an organic certified farm with a variety of animals, including many rare breeds. The farm is home to London's only organic commercial vineyard, a community orchard, market garden, a local veg bag scheme and a Farm Shop. Capel Manor College and Gardens combined with nearby Forty Hall, Myddleton Hall and the garden centres at Crews Hill form a highly significant set of attractions in the north of the Borough. In fact, Trip Advisor identifies Capel Manor Gardens as no. 2 in its Top Things to do in Enfield, second only to Trent Park.

Capel Manor College is the leading environmental college in London. The College and Gardens are very important facilities for the local and wider community. It makes a valuable contribution to the local economy in terms of jobs and visitor spending. It offers a wide range of subjects at different levels and it combines education with practical training. The College's facilities such as the gardens, zoo, shop, florist and farms provide opportunities for students to interface with the public in a professional capacity.

It is within this context and having had time to consider the impacts of Covid-19 that the College is consider how the College might need to adapt over the coming years. In particular, it is looking to progress a masterplan, which includes sensitively designed new visitor centre and teaching accommodation to service demand for environmental and land based studies.

The College is also looking to improve and increase both study space and toilet provision at Forty Hall Farm to meet legislative requirements. This would be achieved through sensitively and architecturally contextual extensions.

Comments on the Regulation 18 Local Plan

Having regard to the Regulation 18 Local Plan, there are a number of policies that we would like to comment upon, as identified below.

Draft Policy BG6 Open space

We note that the emerging Local Plan proposes to allocate the entirety of Capel Manor College as designated 'Open Space'. This adds an extra layer of protection from development as draft Policy BG6 'Open Space' seeks to resist development that would result in the loss of any designated open space across the Borough.

The policy sets out several exceptions where the Council would permit loss of open space. These exceptions include proposals for ancillary facilities that will enhance the function, use, accessibility and enjoyment of the existing open space. These exceptions are supported.

Notwithstanding, we object to the allocation of Capel Manor College in its entirety as 'Open Space'. Instead, we propose that the designation extends to the Capel Manor Gardens only and not to the cluster of established development to the north and east of the site. This is because this development area does not constitute open space and it's an area that is the focus of change for the College over the coming years and the College needs the flexibility to change and adapt to secure its long-term future.

Draft Policy DM CL2 Leisure and Tourism

Draft Policy DM CL2 'Leisure and Tourism' seeks to encourage proposals that continue to develop a high-quality visitor experience within Enfield. It supports new and enhanced visitor attractions and leisure developments. This draft policy is supported as it aligns with the College's own objective to improve Capel Manor College and its experience for visitors.

Draft Policy DM RE2 Access to Countryside and Green Corridors

Draft Policy DM RE2 'Improving access to the countryside and green corridors', requires new development to protect, maintain and improve the Borough's network of walking and cycling routes. The policy gives priority to improving public access to key attractions including Capel Manor and connections between them. Our client supports this emerging policy, as it will improve sustainable access to Capel Manor.

Conclusion

Capel Manor College is eager to progress with proposed improvements and expansions of its existing facilities, which aim to enhance the overall visitor experience at this important educational and visitor facility. Against this background, our client supports emerging Policy DM CL2 Leisure and Tourism and Policy DM RE2 Access to Countryside and Green Corridors but objects to emerging Policy GB6 Open Space, which seeks to allocate the entirety of Capel Manor College as designated open space. Instead, we propose that the boundary is amended so that only Capel Manor Gardens is designated as open space.

We trust the above comments are helpful in informing the next stage of the Local Plan process. If you would like to discuss any aspect of this or the College's plans, please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague

Yours faithfully