

Comments on Draft Local Plan -Enfield

General comments

Before considering specific issues in the plan, I would like to comment on the consultation process. I received a colour leaflet "Future Enfield" from Cllr Caliskan with information about the plan. I assumed this went to every household. I have since learnt that this was not the case and would like to know why. A flyer, or even a letter, to *all* households would be a much better way for the council to communicate with residents. It is a more inclusive method than merely sticking a notice on a random lamppost and expecting someone to read it, which is often the case with Enfield council. The fact that some households did not receive this flyer is unacceptable. However, the content of the flyer was not helpful; many of the points seemed to contradict what was stated in the plan itself. The one useful piece was to guide you on how to have your say, by using the Let's Talk platform. However, it did not mention you could email your comments, nor did it say you must be specific in your comments by stating the references for each part of the plan you wish to comment on.

Accessing the latter can only be done online. There are many people who do not have internet access so are denied the opportunity to answer these questions. It may be possible to access it on a smart phone using mobile data. However, it would use up a lot of data and it would be cumbersome trying to type in any comments on a small screen. Some people would also rather have a hard copy of the plan to read before making any comment. A friend's experience reveals that this was both difficult and costly as a charge of £87 would be levied. This is simply not acceptable. The council has effectively neglected those who are not IT literate.

The plan itself is far too long and the language used is flowery and over-optimistic. For many, myself included, much of it is unintelligible and subject to misinterpretation. What I conclude from this is that the council does not really want to hear the views of residents as they have made it so difficult to engage with the incomprehensible material presented. An inspector from the Plain English Campaign would have a field day with this document. To be honest it would be deemed unworthy of publication and need to be rewritten. It is quite simply not fit for purpose.

The Let's Talk survey (which I have attempted 4 times and given up in frustration) is not user-friendly at all. The whole thing is overwhelming and daunting. The questions are vague and confusing. "Vacuous waffle" would be an apt description.

Furthermore as I write this 2 days before the deadline for submission, I am still meeting people in the community who have never heard of the local plan and are shocked and surprised when I try to enlighten them. Enfield Council must do a great deal better in their engagement with residents and businesses.

The theme running through this 413 page plan which needs addressing is the continuous use of the phrase "sustainable and active travel". Whatever the council's vision, people will not readily give up their motorised vehicles. Therefore, a priority should be repairing and extending the road network.

Personally, I continue to feel disconnected from the democratic process, as I am sure do many others. This is very disappointing.

I object to the way this consultation has been presented.

Specific comments - in no particular order

12.4 SPCL4 Sporting Excellence p 278

12.4.1 "Enfield offers unrivalled access to sporting attractions including (i) golf eg. Whitewebbs", I would like to point out that the council closed Whitewebbs golf course in April 2021. Other examples of council-run golf courses should be listed, assuming there are any. I do not think there are.

New Southgate PL7

SA24 - Arnos Grove - 162 homes. I object to this development. I have already written in with my objections both at the initial stage and for the appeal. Building on the car park makes no sense. The reasons why have been well-documented by various groups and individuals. The plans were rightly overruled by the planning committee in December 2020. The appeal must also be overthrown.

SA31 – Cockfosters tube car park – I object to this development of 316 units for the same reasons as for Arnos Grove.

Southgate PL6 p62-63

3.6.6 Active travel – there is no need to enhance the pedestrian environment as it is already significant. What does need to be improved is the design of Southgate Circus which is a very difficult roundabout to navigate. It is not helped by the continual queues of traffic approaching it along Bourne Hill which are now caused by the negative impact of the Fox Lane LTNs. These should be removed with immediate effect.

New homes on the sites of Asda (165) and M&S (150). It is not clear whether the supermarkets will be demolished or whether you are “just” going to build on their already well-used car parks? I object to these developments. Both those stores are immensely popular, either as a walk by “pop in” or more frequently, as a drive in to load up heavy shopping.

I object to all the proposals for Southgate.

SA32 Sainsbury’s Green Lanes N21

This development consists of too many flats and insufficient family homes. There are already new blocks of flats locally eg. Capitol House. The 299 units is excessive. The infrastructure is not available to support new residents. The roads will be further congested and add to the already horrendous congestion caused solely by Fox Lane LTNs. Parking is at a premium currently, and with the loss of Ford’s Grove car park and its new development, parking will be almost impossible. The impact on small local businesses will be grim. I know the cycle lane is there but 5 years on it is still hardly used. I suggest you get rid of it and put meter parking spaces there.

The most important issue is the loss of a popular and well-used supermarket. If it goes people will have to drive further, adding to the already existing traffic problems. It will negatively affect all vulnerable groups.

I strongly object to this proposal.

Crews Hill PL9 p75-80.

This development of 3000 units plus a possible further 7500 is a worry. Destroying 8 horticultural centres is a folly. This strip of garden centres serves locals on a regular basis and attracts visitors from further afield. Further destruction of surrounding productive farmland must also be avoided.

I am troubled by East-West connectivity (p80 3.9.7) and again the mention of “sustainable” travel opportunities. On p78 point 15 “*active and sustainable facilities and services to sustain travel from all parts of the development*” will never happen. This is because of the poor public transport system. The train service currently has a meagre two trains per hour. The new bus service 456 is not frequent, and furthermore it does not actually terminate at the station! It turns in Rosewood Drive, a quiet residential road and a significant distance away. This should be rectified with immediate effect. Residents who may live in this new development will be almost totally dependent on a motorised vehicle for transport.

Point 6 p77 – glasshouses for every home? A charming idea but unrealistic.

Chase Park PL10 p 80-87

3.10.5 “*good public transport*”. This is not true.

3.10.6 “*vehicles do not dominate the streets*”. Why? People need to get to different destinations not just those along the 307 bus route. It is unrealistic to assume people will do without access to a car.

I object to everything stated for the redevelopment of the Crews Hill area including Crews Hill Golf Club and East Lodge Lane. I object to all the proposed developments on the Green Belt. The loss of this valuable landscape would cause great harm to the Green Belt and to the character of the borough.

Enfield Town PL1

St Anne's School SA1 – 7

Proposals include the demolition of the branch of St Anne's School on London Rd and building 326 new homes on the site. These 'homes' are intended to be provided within 'Tall Buildings' ranging from 7 to 17 storeys, in contravention of the guidance issued by the London Assembly Planning & Regeneration Committee.

The plans involve potentially building new flats on the private road that provides access to Chalkwell Park, yet again with no parking provided. Officers and Councillors should note that Enfield Town station remains served by a paltry 2 trains an hour service except during the two peak hours of service, very far from the excellent Public Transport Access Level claimed by TfL.

Removal of a school playing field (which needs permission from the Secretary of State) is a backward step. This could be retained for leisure and sport. This truly meets the word "active" which is so prevalent in the plan.

Also, instead of demolishing the school, how about renovating it and setting up a new school (primary) to take in all the many children of the families who will be residents in the "tall" non-family homes that are being proposed?

I strongly object to the proposals for St Anne's School.

SA2 - Enfield Town Palace Gardens

I object to the tall buildings policy as they relate to Palace Gardens precinct. The proposals to have tall buildings which are entirely out of character with the town will do nothing to enhance the town. Once again, the emphasis on a car-free existence is unrealistic. The two rail stations provide a barely adequate service never mind a truly "metro" style service that would befit a vibrant small suburban town. Once again, the increased demands on local services such as schools, medical services etc from a building of 26 storeys will be excessive.

SA3 - 100 Church Street

Similarly, although the developers have gone back to the drawing board with this development, they have only tweaked at the edges. Reducing the total number of units by a few is not going to make much difference. The units are too small for families. However, the major problem, once again, is the lack of car parking for residents. **I strongly object to the proposals.**

Conclusion

I reject the proposals and the Draft Local Plan itself.

My comments only touch on a few areas in the plan. This is because the document was too unwieldy and verbose for me to grasp everything. Next time I suggest you deal with each area separately and send out information in short discrete units – and in a timely manner. I have tried hard to find something to commend in this plan but sadly have failed. I hope the planners will take on board these objections, and the many others you no doubt will receive, and learn from them. The borough's residents deserve better than this. And Enfield needs family homes not just "units"!