

The Enfield Society's submission in response to Outer London Commission questions to inform the full review of the London Plan

The questions posed are general to Outer London and our answers should apply in general to the area but there are some specific references to Enfield. Overall, we considered the impact of development on existing infrastructure, quality of life and planning policies. We felt the vagaries of the NPPF allowed for inappropriate development.

Although we have answered the questions as given, the committee did query the premise upon which they were based. Growth is not inevitable and policy should not be made on the assumption that it is.

The papers make no reference to the desirability of a population growth, by 2050, of the order suggested. It is hard to see how London's infrastructure (sewerage, drainage, etc), despite upgrades, can deal with it.

G questions

G1 It is very important to minimize the distance between work and residence for environmental and personal well-being but the current development of CR2 and enhancement of existing rail services continues the trend of commuting into inner London from outer London and beyond.

G2 n/a

G3 Is London "post-industrial"? Substantial plots are required to cater to service industries like warehousing and there should be scope for light engineering. Future digital industries should not only be centred on Cambridge and inner London and a "digital corridor" should not be created to simply facilitate these centres because it might undermine the integrity of boroughs like Enfield. Digital industries and home working will need the appropriate digital infrastructure.

G4 Point 1 Increasing outer London densities is acceptable provided they are not less generous than the level recommended in the London Plan. (Currently, too many developments are less generous). Increased densities should be well designed and in keeping with the existing townscapes.

We wish to avoid poor development, such as that along the A406 in Enfield (Green Lanes to Bounds Green Road) where high density housing is being built alongside the main road on land previously safeguarded for road widening. The development has no green space, little community infrastructure and is unsympathetic to the surrounding residential community.

Points 2&3 Town centres: high rise developments are not the the answer where they create a sense of oppression for existing low rise housing.

Infill, of suitable quality, of existing sites and the use of empty commercial premises, like shops, for small scale industry and housing should be encouraged.

Point 4 Arguably of greatest concern to the society: there should be no incursion into Green Belt land. Indeed, with the intensification of densities, infill etc, Green Belt land (and other open spaces) will be more vital than ever for all the reasons often given before-- well-being of the population, biodiversity, flood control, food security. Economic growth is not an exceptional circumstance and, therefore, no excuse for encroaching on Green Belt land.

Indeed, Green Belt which is deemed low grade should be upgraded. The Green Belt should not be nibbled away at the edges until it becomes a series of green wedges, in reality, the destruction of the Green Belt.

G6 “Growth corridors” --the term is redolent of ribbon development which the Green Belt was created to prevent. CR2 will affect Enfield but should not be the cause of further erosion of the Green Belt along the Lee Valley.

Consideration should be given to the impact on E-W road links which are already at capacity in Enfield.

G7 The Meridian Water development should provide much of the accommodation and industrial needs close to CR2.

G8 Density is a vexed question, requirement to meet a certain level can mean cramped sites and homes.

There should be no need to bargain for quality housing, social infrastructure, the provision of affordable housing; these should be a requirement for any developer.

G9 With regards to Meridian Water, Edmonton town centre should be enhanced and links between it and the development should enable it to become an attractive hub for eastern Enfield. Further west, the town centres of Southgate and Palmers Green should be refurbished and developed as in G4, points 2 and 3.

R questions

R1 Managing growth needs to be looked at on a wider basis, not just London and the south east, especially in regard of road and rail links. But cross boundary groups can lead to riding roughshod over local interests.

The danger for outer London boroughs from the interests of towns beyond, like Cambridge and Harlow, is that outer London becomes only a corridor, thus undermining the boroughs’ individual characters and economic viability.

R2 to R7 n/a

R8 The membership should include community groups who represent the local population to avoid it becoming a coalition of lobby groups and consultants supported by developers whose interests are often contrary to those of the principle of localism.

R9-12 n/a

H questions

H1 We would argue that some barriers should exist to counteract blanket housing, notably the Green Belt which must be maintained and augmented.

H2 Land banking is a major problem and should be subject a “ use it or lose it” policy (H4). There should be a mix of providers so that a range of homes is produced. More blocks of flats should not be the only option.

H3 Estate regeneration can be beneficial, especially when undertaken by the local council, as in the Alma estate, Enfield.

The delivery of higher densities in town centres should not result in the appalling mismatch of high rise and low rise buildings which too frequently scar London and the south east.

H4 Councils need to have greater powers to ensure that 106 conditions are met promptly, often not the case now.

Councils need to build on the brownfield sites which they themselves own.

CPO powers are always contentious and should not be more widely used.

Companies which have land banks should be obliged to keep a public register of their sites.

Corporate owners should not be allowed to keep properties empty.

Large sites should be subdivided and the local council keep an overview to achieve an harmonious whole.

H5 There is scope for local councils to commission house building. They will need funds for architectural consultants to ensure high quality design and site layout.

H6 and H7 n/a

Submitted by The Enfield Society
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