

Enfield's Climate Action Plan: The EnCAF response

The Enfield Climate Emergency Forum's response to the Council's Climate Strategy.

The Enfield Climate Emergency Forum (EnCAF) was founded in 2019 after the Council passed its Declaration of Climate Emergency. Its members are nearly 50 local organisations including schools, environmental groups, churches, mosques and community organisations. It exists to support and reinforce the Council's efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

The Council's Climate Emergency plan is a decent plan. Unfortunately it's a plan to solve the wrong problem.

The Council plans to reduce its own emissions to zero by 2030. That's worthwhile but it's just 2% of all the emissions in the borough. What's needed is a plan to reduce **all** the Borough's emissions. And although we need to eliminate all emissions it would be better to cut 50% of borough emissions than 100% of Council emissions.

We need the Council to engage with people and businesses in Enfield and to take the lead in addressing THIS emergency.

A whole borough approach

Each year people, businesses and vehicles in Enfield are responsible for greenhouse gas emissions of 1.1 million tons. That's about 3.5 tons per person. Enfield Council itself is responsible for no more than 25,000 tons – just 2% or 70kg per person.

We won't avoid catastrophic climate change by addressing the 2%. We must address all emissions and it's the job of our elected leaders to take the lead!

The Council's plan does have a section on *Influencing Others* (p25) but it's weak. The Council should set an example and insist on its suppliers first estimating their own emissions and then making plans to reduce them. It should make it clear that, increasingly, it will only buy from suppliers who succeed in reducing their emissions and it should combine with other councils to increase its leverage.

Public engagement

The changes needed will require the active co-operation of residents, businesses and the public sector; in fact of the whole community. So far the Council's planning has involved an external consultant and an internal task force from which even most councillors are excluded!

That's not a good way to create a plan and it's a very poor way gain community co-operation. The time for openness is NOW.

Construction

The Council is both a planning authority and a developer. It can use its powers and purchasing to set the highest standard – passivhaus – for energy efficiency and for the carbon emitted in building new homes.

That last, the embodied emissions, is often neglected but at 50 tons per house its far too big to ignore. The Council can address this by:

- a. Requiring developers to include embodied carbon estimates in planning applications.
- b. Requiring developers to report actuals at project end with sanctions for exceeding the estimates.
- c. Encouraging the use of low carbon materials.

It also needs to improve its retrofit programme, seeking government funding, aligning with independent retrofit co-ordinators and raising standards. Most of today's housing emissions – and most of those in 2030 – come from existing buildings.

The Council should ensure that its proposed landlord licensing scheme covers energy efficiency and should enforce a minimum standard – which must be higher than the government's suggested band E.

It also needs to improve training for both craftspeople and managers.

In doing this it can help local builders and developers prepare for the low carbon world that has to come. It can give them a competitive advantage – adding strength for the future.

Roads

Much of the traffic on minor roads is fairly local and, since the Council has control of the minor roads, it can act. It should establish the principle that roads are primarily for people not cars. Specifically it should:

- Set targets for the reduction of miles travelled by car.
- Make Low Traffic Neighbourhoods the norm throughout the borough.
- Impose a 20 mph speed limit on all roads except trunk roads.
- Encourage and support cycling. For this it should agree an action plan with Better Streets for Enfield and the Enfield Cycling Campaign.

Aviation

The Council has no direct control over flying and airports but it does have the right to express its opinion over plans by City, Luton and Stanstead airports. Consistent with the recent decision in the Court of Appeal it should oppose all airport expansion.

Airport expansion doesn't even make economic sense. Every serious study shows that the government's ZC2050 target, and still more the Council's own ZC2030 target, cannot be met without a large reduction in flying. (The Centre for Alternative Technology and the Green Party have both estimated the required reduction at c70% by 2030.)

As the fossil fuel tide goes out airports will become stranded assets – a burden on their owners and a temptation to take environmentally damaging flights.

And the 2%

And it should address its own emissions – the 2%. It should

- Reduce energy use
- Stop buying fossil fuel energy
- Replace fossil-fuelled vehicles with electric vehicles
- Shift procurement to low-carbon suppliers
- Expand its woodlands.

Internally, it should make emissions reductions part of every plan and a factor in every decision. So here we want to praise the commitments to:

- Require a calculation of the carbon/climate impact of decisions from May 2020 (p12)
- Develop and test a price for carbon associated with the Council's decisions and activities (p25).

These changes, and the staff education that goes with them, may be the most important policies in the strategy.

Clarity

Finally the Council needs to speak more clearly. The strategy contains a lot of promises to “Achieve significant emissions reduction”, “Review and update our approach” or “Develop our approach”. None of those is wrong but they are so vague!

Yet not everything is vague. The plan does include some strong policies eg plant 100,000 new trees by winter 2021 (p23), evaluate the environmental impact of goods and services (p25) and hold a school climate summit in autumn/ winter 2020 (p26).

It is specific commitments with dates that turn talking the talk into walking the walk.