

NATIONAL PARK CITY FOUNDATION*

Councillor Nesil Caliskan
Leader
London Borough of Enfield
Civic Centre
Silver Street
London EN1 3XA

By email

14 July 2021

Dear Councillor Caliskan,

London Borough of Enfield and London National Park City

We write on behalf of the National Park City Foundation, the charity behind London National Park City to point out recent remarks which we consider inappropriate and misrepresent London National Park City and its status, and to ask that you and Council colleagues rectify so that future references to London National Park City and its aims and status are accurate.

We should be pleased to meet you and colleagues to explain the points in this letter. Equally, should there be any questions arise we should be pleased to discuss and clarify those to overcome any misunderstandings and reach a position where we can work together productively.

Our concerns centre on the London Borough of Enfield's preferred option to de-designate considerable areas of London Green Belt for housing and its use of London National Park City in justifying and making the case for that policy.

As we understand the proposal, the London Borough of Enfield has justified its proposed loss to development of Green Belt in the borough on the basis that remaining Green Belt would be improved as part of London National Park City.

That is a misreading of London National Park City, which is about the entire urban realm and fabric, not just parks, green spaces. We appeared at the Examination in Public (EiP) into the new London Plan in defence of London's Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Space, attending the same session as Enfield Council representatives. It should therefore be clear to anyone at Enfield Council that London National Park City does not support the loss of green space not least Green Belt. It is therefore misleading for the London Borough of Enfield to refer to London National Park City in writing or verbally as part of justifying its proposals for the loss of Green Belt.

We note numerous references in Enfield Council's Local Plan to London National Park City including the dedicated policy 3.7 on page 70, which we would normally be pleased to see. While the Council's proposals for the restoration of Enfield Chase appear laudable and the planned enhancements for public access seem ambitious, they are not a justification for the loss of Green Belt, which we do not support, and which both government planning policy and the new London Plan aim to avoid.

Paragraph 3.8.8 on page 71 of the Enfield Local Plan states that "The designation is not strictly a national park...". To be both clear and correct, London National Park City has no formal planning or legal status and neither has nor seeks the kind of planning role of the established National Parks.

Any comparison with England's 10 National parks established in law is only valid in terms of applying the kind of thinking at the heart of National Parks to start reversing London's declining environmental conditions which have a bearing on learning, health, fitness, recreation and community. Planning policies must start improving life in London, including protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems, not finding new ways to justify deliberate choices to allow their further erosion.



Along with all Local Planning Authorities in London the London Borough of Enfield already has the powers in planning rules to set the policies and supplementary guidance to ensure protection for existing green and blue spaces, including both Green Belt and London's unique designation of Metropolitan London Land (MOL).

It is incorrect and misleading for anyone to imply or state that London's National Park City status can provide any form of protection for land, features or natural assets either extant or in the future. London National Park City does not confer any protection of existing or remaining Green Belt neither does it provide any assurance that future threats either from further development pressures or from the application of Local Planning Authority policies.

It is also not clear to us from reading the Local Plan how future Green Belt in Enfield borough would not also come under pressure for the very same reasons used in the recent justifications.

Paragraph 3.8.9 also on page 71 adds that "The National Park City designation has the potential to achieve a net increase of 25% green cover in Enfield...". Serious application of London National Park City thinking can and should lead elected members, officers and others involving in forming, setting and applying policy, to make better decisions, but it cannot make up for political decisions which require the loss of green space, space for health, recreation, learning and nature.

As London National Park City is also about the entirety of London, not just the parks, green spaces and Green Belt, the London Borough of Enfield and all Local Planning Authorities in London should be examining the entire urban fabric and should avoid using National Park City as a bargaining chip to justify loss of Green Belt and green space.

We very much welcome where Local Planning Authorities seek to make the most of London National Park City. We can help LPAs do that well in ways that fully respect and avoid misappropriating the purpose and aims of London National Park City, including the contribution of the many thousands of people, organisations and companies that made it happen.

On 21 and 22 July we mark two years since London became the world's first National Park City and you and your colleagues would be very welcome to join in any or all of the events to find out more: <https://www.nationalparkcity.london/week2021>

We look forward to hearing how you and your colleagues will rectify matters and ensure accurate references to London National Park City from now on to our satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,



Paul de Zylva

Chair

National Park City Foundation

Daniel Raven-Ellison

Founder

National Park City

cc:

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London / Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor, Environment

Ruth Knight, GLA

Elected Members, London Borough of Enfield

Ian Davis, LBE Chief Executive

Sarah Cary, LBE Executive Director Place

London Green Belt Council

London National Park City network contacts in Enfield borough

