



PRESS RELEASE

October 2020: For Immediate Release

The Enfield Society today announces *Ever Stronger: Revising Enfield Council's Plans on Dugdale Centre/Thomas Hardy House*, a new alternative proposal to Enfield Council and Cabinet to avoid unnecessary planned changes at the Dugdale Centre / Thomas Hardy House.

Our proposal, *Ever Stronger: Revising Enfield Council's Plans on Dugdale Centre/Thomas Hardy House*, still brings Children's and Youth Services together at Enfield Town but crucially offers a reduction in planned costs and even brings in new investment. It is a compromise from the vision of one giant Children's and Youth Services office (creating instead a large new hub and secondary extension) but the priority here is finding solutions that improve all services, that work within limited resources, and offer the best value for money. In summary it provides the following major benefits:

- Reduce the planned costs
- Increase financial returns and attract new investment
- Factor in the vast shift away from fixed office working, post Covid-19
- Utilise the 1500 square metres of new office space soon available at the Civic Centre
- Future proof the Dugdale Centre for increased hire and shift in use of public space
- Avoid large costs of moving archives and fitting out new space
- Avoids large costs for permanent re-modeling of Thomas Hardy House / Dugdale centre
- Work positively with Council stakeholders
- Use Museums and Archives Services as part of the Council's post Covid-19 resilience

The new proposal paper has been presented to match the Council's own commitment to ensuring the active, meaningful and continued involvement of local communities and stakeholders. The document is titled *Ever Stronger* because that is what we collectively hope to achieve with the Council and we hope it offers them time to pause and reflect on current proposals and start renewed and revised discussions on the issue.

ENDS

Notes for editors

1. The Enfield Society was founded in 1936 as the Enfield Preservation Society and renamed as The Enfield Society in 2007. It has about 2000 members and is one of the most active amenity societies in the country. The Enfield Society has a record of vigorous action in defence of the local environment by practical conservation and campaigning. There is also a strong social section. The Society is a registered charity in England and Wales (276451) and is registered in England as a limited company (312134).
2. As a charity its Objects are the conservation and enhancement of the civic and natural environments of the London Borough of Enfield and its immediate surrounding area for the public benefit.
3. The existing Council proposal includes largely unannounced cuts to the local museum, completely axing a £0.5M conference suite and relegating the local Archives Service from its bespoke built space next to the Museum.

The current approach would also see an annual loss of income from the conference suite starting at £100,000 and 60,000 fewer visits to the Dugdale Centre and Enfield Town.

The drive behind Council changes is to turn over two complete floors at the Dugdale Centre / Thomas Hardy House to fixed office space and enable the Children's and Youth Services to move closer together, from three existing community hubs, and work centrally in Enfield Town.

Whilst the second floor already contains offices, the Council's plan now replaces the open first floor at the Dugdale Centre with fixed closed office space. In doing so the impact includes:

- * Cutting the public museum space by half
- * Cutting a half million pound conference suite facility
- * Subsequent loss in users and annual income from the conference suite starting at £100,000
- * Relegating a purpose built Archives Service space and moving it away from the museum
- * Losing over 60,000 visitors to the first floor at the Dugdale Centre and, consequently, Enfield Town

Significantly, the Council's current proposal fails to factor in the new dramatic shift away from office working and ignores the 1500 square metres of new free office space at the Civic Centre only 400 metres from the Dugdale Centre (noted in March 2020 Cabinet papers).

4. The Society has opposed LBE's current plans for the Archive and Museum on the level 1 of The Dugdale Centre since they were first revealed in the Spring. The Society has attempted both a direct approach with the Leader of the Council and more latterly, a public campaign to highlight the short-comings of the proposals.
5. The museum moved from Forty Hall into its current home on the ground floor of the Dugdale Centre in 2010 and the local studies archive was moved to its current first floor location from Palmers Green Library in 2009.

6. The Society has covered the issue in its last two quarterly newsletters, 218 (Summer 2020) and 219 (Autumn 2020), available from the web-site.
7. The Society's web-site is at enfieldsociety.org.uk where the report is available
8. Our social media pages are Facebook/[enfieldsociety](https://www.facebook.com/enfieldsociety), Twitter [@enfieldsoc](https://twitter.com/enfieldsoc) and Instagram [@enfieldsociety](https://www.instagram.com/enfieldsociety)