



Enfield – a poster child for threats to green spaces

Carol Fisk, Enfield RoadWatch
enfieldroadwatch.co.uk

Multiple threats to Enfield's green spaces

- Enfield is currently 35% Green Belt. Most of it is attractive rolling countryside, the remnants of the historic Enfield Chase.
- The borough also has about 123 parks, many of which lie outside the Green Belt.
- Most of the green spaces are owned by the London Borough of Enfield.
- **Much of it is under threat!**



The Threats!

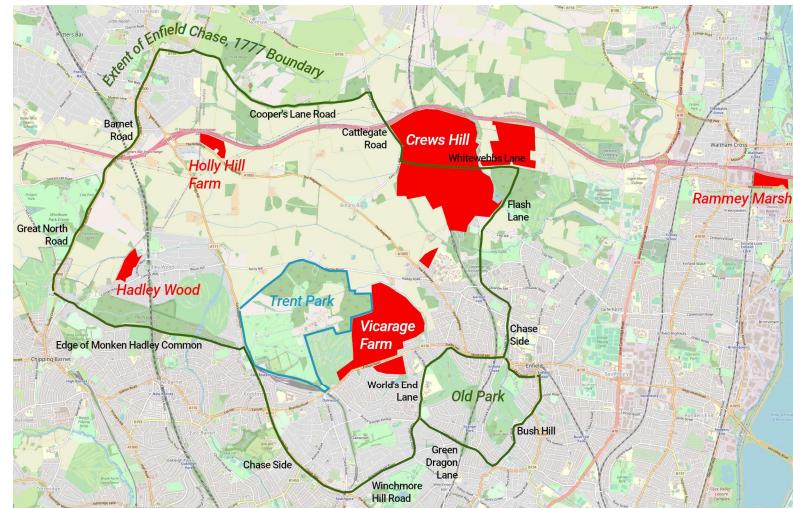
Commercialisation

The future of Whitewebbs Park remains uncertain. Tottenham Hotspurs have yet to sign the lease and legal challenges continue, but the likelihood is that it will be lost to a women's football academy. [53 hectares]



Housing Target

Enfield's new local plan remains in the examination phase, with the Inspector's report expected any day. The Council has proposed several Green Belt releases, the largest being Crews Hill [286 hectares] and Vicarage Farm [166 hectares] for approximately 9,600 homes



The Threats!

Crews Hill New Town

The New Towns Taskforce report, released last September, identifies 884 hectares [one-third] of Enfield's Green Belt as one of the three most promising sites in England for a new town.

The proposal is for 21,000 homes.

The report contains a misleading description of the area and its alleged connectivity.

It is even hard to tell from the blue-green blob exactly where they propose to build - but it will include the Crews Hill garden centres and a vast area of countryside.

It is much more extensive than the Council's own proposals in the Local Plan.

New Towns Report

Crews Hill and Chase Park, Enfield

The new town proposal in Enfield offers a unique opportunity to create a new, family-centred community within the Greater London boundary; leading the way in releasing poor quality Green Belt land for sustainable, quality development. It has the potential for up to 21,000 homes, across c.884 hectares, with an ambition for 50% of those homes to be affordable, helping to address London's acute housing need.

The London Borough of Enfield is located on the northern fringes of London. The proposal brings together and expands two sites to the north of

the borough at Chase Park and Crews Hill. It is supported by both the London Borough of Enfield and the GLA, and the Taskforce has been impressed by their collaborative approach.

Much of the proposed site is currently low value land, comprising commercial nurseries, garden centres, a golf course and lower quality greenfield land. The Enfield Chase landscape recovery project proposes a woodland and nature restoration initiative, and so with careful management of any overlaps the Enfield



The Threats

Crews Hill New Town

The site seems to have made the list for two reasons:

1. Enfield Council submitted it
2. It has a station

At a New Towns Taskforce meeting on January 13, questions from MPs to Taskforce Chair, Sir Michael Lyons, and Matthew Pennycook, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, made it clear that decisions were made on **flimsy evidence** and that remedies to transportation and other issues could be **decades in the future**.

Mr Pennycook stated that sites were chosen to meet the objectives of: *unlocking potential economic growth and productivity, and accelerating housing delivery.* However, the loss of Crews Hill as an economic hub and visitor attraction and the lack of local infrastructure had been totally ignored.

It also became clear that affordable housing targets and quality are likely to be rolled back in response to viability issues and the need for speed.



The Threats

New NPPF

The draft NPPF, which is out for consultation until March 10, 2026 states:

Building homes around stations.
We want to establish 'in principle' support – a "default yes" – for suitable proposals that develop land around rail stations within existing settlements, and around 'well-connected' train stations outside settlements, including on Green Belt land.

This would be problematic for Enfield, which has numerous stations. Very little of the borough would be exempt.

For instance, a large area of Trent Country Park and an adjacent golf course and equestrian facility could be targeted because of their proximity to Oakwood and Cockfosters Stations. Parts of other parks, such as Pymmes and Arnos, and two golf courses are also at risk.



The Threats

Critical National Infrastructure

While Enfield's draft local plan is still going through its examination, Enfield Council voted on January 14 to sell an area of Green Belt, previously earmarked for a logistics hub, to an undisclosed purchaser for a data centre. This would be one of three or four data centres in the area, all needing power and water.



Critical National Infrastructure covers a wide range of installations, including: energy, water, transportation, communications, health and finance. Most of these projects have minimal consultation and a strong presumption in favour of development.

A threat that is likely to increase.

Meanwhile, brownfield sites, such as Meridian Water, in urban areas that need regeneration, continue to be ignored or developed very slowly.

