



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (LCBB4002)

Assignment 2

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Introduction

Since the beginning of human evolution, we have strived to build a society. From the humble hunter-gatherer tribes working together to protect themselves from the dangers of the wild and to increase their chances of survival almost two million years ago (history.com editors, 2018), to the current modern megapolises which are only but a small part of the grand design of a functioning society on a national or world political level, we as a species have always strived to build a society that has common goals and values. Although we have achieved these colossal social structures, they lay on foundations made by smaller societal constructs. One of these constructs is the local councils which are semi-autonomous self-governing administrative bodies that operate on a small geographical scale by dealing with the administration of the surrounding area and dealing with the current issues or planning for the future of the local population.

In my previous assignment, I chose the local council of Enfield as my subject of research where I identified and discussed the prevailing social issues in the council and identified the procedures for stakeholders' consultation, communication, and strategic implementation of feedback. Based on those findings, in this reflective evaluation, I will reflect on the different principles, standards and strategies currently being adopted in the council and draft a forward-looking plan on what can be done differently to have a seamless process in their community engagement.



Figure 1 - Enfield Council Logo (Enfield Council, n.d.)

Reflection

In the main section of this report, I will reflect on the different principles, standards, and strategies that the council of Enfield has in place, and in addition, I will provide commentary from my personal viewpoint, which in no way represents anything other than my personal beliefs and understandings of the current state of the topics that I will be addressing. The purpose of my comments is to illustrate a picture of my perception of the council of Enfield, of which I am also a resident.

Principals

If one goes to read the “Leader’s Message” located on the website of the council of Enfield, one will find an inspiring message about what values and principles the current leadership holds. Equal opportunities for all its residents, safety, new business opportunities for the local or companies, securing a better future for the young people and of course the environment, because nothing says “we are the most trustworthy choice if we care even about the environment” than mentioning it in your message to the crowds (Enfield Council, n.d.). Although these are all the principles, people would expect from them to have, the reality of how they adhere to those same principles and what they do to support these claims is different. As with any political structure, the promise of a brighter future is the main and key pillar of every public servant. Personally, I believe that advertising nowadays your principles in politics or business has been so terribly polluted by backtracking on those same principles and promises that I firmly stand by the reasoning that actions speak louder than words, I will further elaborate on this in a later section where I will focus on the strategies and attempts of the leadership. Nevertheless, I do believe in those principles myself, but past experience has changed my perception of such statements, making me more critical and analytical.



Figure 2 - Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Local Government Association, n.d.)

Standards

As with every other council, the council of Enfield follows particular national standards or has its own standards set in place where needed. The leadership of Enfield has been trying to uphold these standards to a varying degree, using different tools or strategies available at their disposal. One of these standards is the customer service commitment which on their website describes the process and also shows some data on how well they are doing. One of the categories is “Complaints closed within ten working days” with the target set at 92% but the actual performance being at 52% (Enfield Council, n.d.). Indication of proof of this can also be found with a simple Google search and looking at the reviews users have left about the council, the majority of which are 1-star reviews addressing different issues the reviewers had to deal with, resulting in an overall score of 1,4 out of 5, paints a much more dire picture (Google, n.d.).

Another standard that the Enfield Council has been trying to uphold is the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), but that can be examined from different points of view depending on the nature of the query (Enfield Council, n.d.). Some examples are:

- Reports on the council’s spending. These reports date back to 2018 which shows that financial transparency is only but a recent initiative (Enfield Council, n.d.). The reports although comprehensive are too few in number to gain a better understanding of the financial situation of the council for the person interested in this information.
- Social housing statistics. When I tried to find data on the topic what I discovered is that although there is some information, this information hasn't been updated since 2015 (Enfield Council, n.d.). In addition, there is no clear guideline on what these standards are.
- Freedom of information. I decided to test this for myself by contacting the council directly and requesting information on how they engage the local community and what their principles are. Although I received a generic reply to my query, they did attach a file named “Consultation Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee” which essentially describes the process of community engagement of the council. This file can also be found online on the council’s website (Philip Webb, 2021). Furthermore, I will add proof of the email response in the Appendix section at the end of the report. Please, check Appendix 1.

Other standards that the council employs are the Employee Code of Conduct (Enfield Council, 2010) of which Cllr Caliskan was found in breach after the court investigated a bullying case filled by Cllr Brett (Enfield Dispatch, 2019), Equality in Employment Policy (Enfield Council, 2011), Housing standards and safety conditions (Enfield Council, n.d.) among others that they have set in place, but addressing all of them individually will require a longer and deeper analysis unfit for the format of this report.

Strategies

Part of the information I received in the email from the Council of Enfield representative was in regard to my query about the future plans of the council. The link sent me to a part of the council's website that addresses the key strategies they have set for a period starting from 2020 up until 2031 (Enfield Council, n.d.). I decided to check each and every one of these to better understand what the focus of their term would be. The key issues they are focusing on are:

- Housing and Growth Strategy 2020-2030 (Strategy, Partnership, Engagement and Consultation Hub, 2020)
The main takeout I gathered from analysing this strategy is that the council is attempting to create more affordable homes for local people, make those homes safe for the tenants, built to industry standards with quality in mind, and for those homes to be in a vibrant environment which also promotes inclusivity by being accessible even to people with special needs.
- North London joint waste strategy (North London Waste Authority, 2008)
From this document, I learned that the council works together with the London boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, and Waltham Forest and the NLWA on how to address waste collection and what steps must be taken by all of the participants.
- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 (Policy, Partnership, Engagement and Consultation Hub, 2019)
By analysing this document, I found out that the council is attempting to help all homeless people by finding accommodations for them and supporting them to plan their lifetime housing needs.
- Enfield Council Tenancy Strategy 2022-2025 (Policy, Partnership, Engagement and Consultation Hub, 2022)
The goal of this strategy is to inform tenants of their rights and make them feel safer this way so they can remain for longer there and establish a long-lasting community.
- Enfield Modern Slavery Strategy 2020-2023 (Adult Safeguarding Services, n.d.)
From my previous research on the council, I found out that it has been dealing with rising crime rates and the scope of this strategy is to address one aftereffect of those crimes and that is to identify victims, support them with their care and support needs. Have community safety services in place to disrupt gang masters and ensure local businesses' supply chains are free from modern slavery. Sadly, this strategy is still pending approval by the cabinet.
- Enfield Safeguarding Adults Strategy 2018-2023 (Adult Safeguarding Services, n.d.)
The purpose of this strategy is to inform people about the different types of abuse (physical, modern slavery, self-neglect, domestic, sexual, psychological, financial or material, discriminatory, organisational, neglect and acts of omission, hate crime, female genital mutilation), how to identify them, and how can they act against them.
- Empowering Young Enfield 2021-2025 (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2021)
This strategy is in place to make sure young residents of Enfield are healthy, educated, have accommodations and are safe by providing information and contacts to achieve its purpose.
- Enfield's Blue and Green Strategy 2021-2031 (Enfield Council, 2021)
While researching the strategy of which the intent is to protect, maintain and enhance the borough's network of blue and green assets in response to the development of more affordable homes strategy I didn't find any plans on dealing with problems such as water and air pollution.

- Enfield Hate Crime Strategy 2018-2021 (Safer and Stronger Communities Board, n.d.)

Both in my previous and this report I analyse what are the largest issues that the council is facing, and crime is one of the top 3 Enfield has to address. This strategy is only part of a larger scale of initiatives that the administration is undertaking and the goal of it is to reduce hate crime in Enfield by ensuring victims and witnesses of hate crime are supported, offenders are brought to justice and agencies have an accurate picture of hate crimes in the borough, so prevention work happens at the earliest opportunity.

- Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2025 (Safer and Stronger Communities Board, n.d.)

Another initiative towards fighting crime is this strategy which I discovered its purpose is to prevent it with the help of the Metropolitan Police, support and protect victims, organize coordinated community response (CCR) and promote partnership working, build trust and confidence in the community and hold perpetrators accountable.

- Securing Enfield's Future Commercial Strategy October 2018 (Enfield Council, 2018)
- From reading this document I found out that the government has been gradually reducing its funding of local councils and this is the council's attempt to remedy the problem by restructuring its operations, revising its spending, and planning on how to attract investors.

Although these are the main strategies they promote as their most important goals, I did investigate further and found many more in the council website's database. Some of those would address issues such as Energy Efficiency, Heritage Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Settings, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS), Looked After Children Strategy 2018-2021, Safeguarding Adolescents From Exploitation Strategy 2019-2022, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Partnership Strategy 2023-2027, Corporate Communications Strategy September 2008, etc. which are not the main focus of the current administration (Enfield Council, n.d.).

Conclusion

Researching and analysing many different articles and documents has painted a clearer picture for me to be able to see what issues the Enfield Council is facing and what are they doing to make life easier for the local community. Although they constantly are patching holes in the hull of this ship, some of them have proven to be quite the challenge.

- Repaying the £65m annual debt has proven to be one of the biggest challenges for the local government (Enfield Dispatch, 2023). Such lingering problems can only be resolved by creating an aggressive strategy for attracting larger businesses that will create new jobs and generate higher income for the locals. In addition, the investment made by those companies will directly contribute to the council's treasury.
- The aforementioned issue has led to further complications with the housing crisis that the council is facing. To repay its debt, the council has started selling land to businesses which could have been used for the development of new multistorey buildings that would have offered cheaper options for residents who don't own a property (Enfield Dispatch, 2023). This issue could have been easily resolved by directing businesses towards owners of office properties that have been left vacant due to the COVID-19 pandemic or by repurposing older buildings to serve either as office space or to be able to accommodate tenants. Either way will result in profit for the council in the not-so-distant future.
- Despite the slow but gradual rise in air pollution in the past couple of years the council is still struggling to implement its green policies and strategies. One of the factors that will contribute to resolving this issue is if the council joins the ULEZ. Despite several neighbouring councils opposing the expansion, the Council of Enfield sees that as a solution to both the pollution problem and the debt problem (BBC, 2023). The expansion of the ULEZ will reach Enfield on 29 August 2023, thus effectively becoming a solution to the problem (Transport for London, n.d.).
- Last but not least, local crime rates have been rising considerably in the past decade and the council has been struggling to adapt. Although strategies have been set in motion and solutions such as the installation of bright LED lights that will deter night crime have been some of the solutions (Enfield Dispatch, 2023), another thing the council can do is to collaborate with the Metropolitan Police and train volunteers to be community safety patrol officers. This will strengthen community engagement and make the council a safer and more attractive place for its current and future residents.

Although I have been quite critical in this report of my local council, I believe that only by addressing an issue and picking it apart we can truly understand its nature, and only then the right solution will present itself. Both of these assignments have made me engage with my community both with the research I have done and participating in community events (Appendix 2). By learning what makes Enfield, Enfield, I have concluded that, despite its problems. I love this place and its community and will continue to do my best to be part of this community.

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Appendix

Information Request - Community Engagement - Enfield Council [SEC=OFFICIAL]🔍

 Lucy Nasby <Lucy.Nasby@enfield.gov.uk>
To: Yavor Petrov (2110946)

👤 ↩ ↪ ⋮

Tue 11/04/2023 11:44

Consultation report for OSC (...)
48 KB

You don't often get email from lucy.nasby@enfield.gov.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

RHYBUDD: Deilliodd yr e-bost hwn o du allan i system E-bost Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant. Peidiwch ag ateb, na chlicio ar ddolenni nac agor atodiadau oni bai eich bod yn adnabod cyfeiriad e-bost yr anfonwr ac yn gwybod bod y cynnwys yn ddiogel.

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Classification: OFFICIAL

Dear Yavor,

Thank you for your email.

On our Council website, we have published our Council Plan which outlines our key priorities and our approach to creating a lifetime of opportunities for everyone in Enfield. Please click [here](#) to find out more about our Council Plan priorities and key strategies.

Engagement and consultation methods are selected following the consideration of a variety of factors, such as the intended outcomes, the population of interest (such as geographical spread and their needs, as identified by an equalities impact assessment) and budget. Please see the attached Overview and Scrutiny Report for more information.

Kind Regards,

Lucy

Lucy Nasby (she/her)
Policy and Performance Manager
Corporate Strategy Service
Chief Executive's Department

T: 020 8132 3001



'Enfield Council is committed to serving the whole borough fairly, delivering excellent services and building strong communities.'

Classification: OFFICIAL

Appendix 1 - Email response to my request for information on community engagement processes in Enfield Council





Appendix 2 - Celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III (My neighbours and me having a blast by having a party and playing games) 07.05.2023