

Enfield Council is avoiding scrutiny of its new town bid

The government has recently confirmed that the proposal to build up to 21,000 homes at Crews Hill and Chase Park is being taken forward in its New Towns Draft Programme.¹ Enfield Council submitted a proposal to build a new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park to the government's New Towns Taskforce in late 2024.² **However, the council has refused a request from the London Assembly to publish it.**³

Enfield Council is avoiding scrutiny of its new town submission.

At the start of this year, the **London Assembly Research Unit**, working on behalf of the **London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee**, asked each London council to provide the submissions they had made to the New Towns Taskforce.⁴ The information was requested to support the Committee's current investigation to "... explore why new towns are being proposed for London, how they would work in practice, and what planning policies and governance arrangements may be needed."⁵

The responses have now been published and tell their own story.⁶

In short, other London councils disclosed their new town submissions, but Enfield Council refused to disclose its submission, even in redacted form.

So, while Enfield Council was willing to submit a bid to the New Towns Taskforce, it does not want the public, or the elected members of the London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee, to be able to read it and assess it properly. **Why not?**

What has Enfield Council got to hide?

If the case for the Crews Hill and Chase Park new town is strong, why keep the initial submission hidden? Why not let the public and the London Assembly assess it and question it?

Instead, we are being asked to trust Enfield Council's claims about the new town, without being allowed to see its original submission. **That is not openness or transparency. It is hiding from scrutiny and avoiding accountability.**

Enfield Council's reasons for withholding the submission do not stack up.

Enfield Council told the London Assembly Research Unit that disclosure of the information could introduce land value speculation, distort land assembly negotiations, and prejudice value for money. It claimed that even a redacted version could not safely be disclosed.⁷ **This is not at all convincing.**

For a start, the broad location and scale of the proposal are already in the public domain, not least through the council's own statements and messaging, and now through the government's New Towns Draft Programme itself. Landowners in the area already know that their land may be worth more than it was before and will already be factoring that into negotiations. On any common-sense view, that horse has already bolted.

If there were details that were too sensitive to publish, the council could have redacted the information. This is how these things are usually handled. Instead, Enfield Council's position appears to be that nothing can be shown at all. For a proposal of this scale, with so much public interest, that is a very hard line to defend.

Misleading claims flourish when the evidence is withheld.

When key information is withheld, weak or misleading claims become harder to challenge. Statements can be made to fill the gap and then accepted as reality without question. Public debate and scrutiny become distorted because one side has the documents and the other does not.

There have already been misleading claims from the council leadership about the new town, including about the type of homes that will be built, whether they would have driveways, and the accessibility and ecological value of the land. These claims contradict the known evidence and statements made by the GLA.^{8,9} In that context, **the council's refusal to provide even the basic submission information to a London Assembly committee is concerning.**

Part of a wider picture.

In our view, Enfield Council's refusal to provide basic information reflects a wider and increasingly familiar pattern in Enfield. Freedom of Information requests get refused, delayed for months, or answered poorly.¹⁰ Questionable claims are allowed to go unchallenged or uncorrected.¹¹ Overview and scrutiny has been eroded to the point where, in many respects, it no longer meaningfully functions.¹² Proper overview and scrutiny is not just a nice-to-have. It is a vital part of local government and a legal requirement.

The new town proposal for Crews Hill and Chase Park should be assessed openly in public, not hidden behind confidentiality claims that do not withstand much scrutiny themselves. If Enfield Council thinks its case is strong, it should publish the submission. If it will not, people are entitled to ask why.

Footnotes

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-towns-draft-programme/new-towns-draft-programme>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/new-towns-taskforce>

³ <https://www.london.gov.uk/media/112331/download>

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/media/112331/download>

⁵ <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-work/london-assembly-current-investigations/new-towns-london>

⁶ <https://www.london.gov.uk/media/112331/download>

⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/media/112331/download>

⁸ <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/ergin-erbil-finally-deletes-misleading-social-media-post-about-golf-club/>

⁹ <https://betterhomes-enfield.org/2026/01/30/what-type-of-homes-will-be-built-at-crews-hill-and-chase-park/>

¹⁰ For example: <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/council-served-enforcement-notice-by-information-commissioners-office-over-foi-failures/>

¹¹ For example: <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/ergin-erbil-finally-deletes-misleading-social-media-post-about-golf-club/>; <https://betterhomes-enfield.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/what-type-of-homes-will-be-built-at-crews-hill-and-chase-park-final.pdf>

¹² For example: <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/this-is-not-the-time-to-be-dodging-scrutiny/>; <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/row-over-reduction-to-number-of-scrutiny-panels-at-enfield-council/>; <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/is-this-the-death-of-scrutiny/>; <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/fresh-row-over-meridian-water-environmental-impact/>