

1 March 2009

Dear Resident

Please find enclosed your council tax bill for 2009/10.

We are very aware of the financial difficulties that everyone is currently facing and so the Council's part of council tax will be rising by 1.9 per cent this year – the borough's lowest increase for a decade.

An increase of 1.9 per cent means an extra £21.48 per year at Band D, or 40p per week. Your own bill will tell you the Band property you live in and how much you will have to pay.

In the current economic climate it is particularly important you understand how your council tax is spent and how we are working to ease your financial burdens.

In January the Council announced a number of initiatives to help residents in the recession. This year, if you pay your council tax by Direct Debit you can pay over 12 months instead of ten, to help reduce the strain on monthly family budgets.

For those who are struggling, the Council has put in place a Mortgage Rescue Scheme and is investing more money in the local Citizens Advice Bureau to recruit extra mortgage and debt advice caseworkers.

We know council tax levels are very important to our residents so we are keeping costs down by constantly looking to provide better value for money. In 2009/10 alone, we are going to make savings of more than £16million. Because of these efficiencies, we can invest a further £5.7million on improving services.

We are putting extra money into supporting vulnerable residents with £1million for children's care placements and £1million to reduce the number of families placed in temporary accommodation.

We are investing in our local environment, improving street cleaning, parks and tackling fly-tipping. We have funded a better deal for Freedom Pass users to allow free travel on most buses, tubes and trains 24 hours a day. And for over 60s we are introducing free swimming and are going to provide a free CPZ visitor permit book for all over 70s.

Remember, if you have a query about any council service, or if you need to claim benefit to help you pay your council tax bill, you can call Waltham Forest Direct 24 hours a day on 020 8496 3000.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Clyde Loakes
Leader of Waltham Forest Council



Councillor John Macklin
Deputy Leader of Waltham Forest Council

How your council tax is allocated 2009/10

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Council tax increase of 1.9 per cent

New investments in 2009/10:

- **£1m** to support the Government's drive to reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation, by providing them with opportunities to get permanent tenancies in the private sector.
- **£1m** to improve how the Council supports the most vulnerable children in the borough.
- **£430k** towards improving the cleanliness of the borough, meaning every street is deep cleaned and washed over the next two years on top of the daily street sweeping programme. Money will also be spent on removing graffiti and fly posting faster.
- **£410k** to support people with learning disabilities, providing appropriate levels of care according to their individual needs.
- **£250k** will be spent on developing the regeneration projects for key parts of the borough including Walthamstow Town Centre and Blackhorse Lane.
- **£200k** towards a number of cultural and creative schemes to deliver excellent cultural experiences in the run up to the London 2012 Games and beyond.
- **£150k** to increase the Council's ability to catch and prosecute fly-tippers by ensuring enforcement officers are on duty at night when fly-tipping is most likely to happen.
- **£40k** to support free swimming for people over 60 and encourage them to take regular exercise and lead healthy, active lives.

Mayor of London and Greater London Authority

Precept increase of zero per cent

New investments in 2009/10:

- Funding for the continued roll out of more than 500 uniformed officers on public transport.
- Extending the half-price bus and tram fare concession to those on income support for a further year.
- Extending the half-price fare scheme to include those on Job Seekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance.
- Extending the Freedom Pass to allow travel at any time.
- Introduction of a new off-peak period to allow cheaper Oyster travel during the day.
- Scrapping plans to charge £25 for large family cars to drive into central London.