

**Councillor Clare Coghill**  
Leader of the Council



March 2020

Waltham Forest Town Hall  
Forest Road  
London E17 4JF  
Email: [Leader@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Leader@walthamforest.gov.uk)

**Dear Resident**

2019 was a milestone year for Waltham Forest Council and we were proud to be London's first-ever Borough of Culture and the MJ Local Authority of the Year. We have been working hard to improve our services but, like all local authorities, we have faced significant financial pressure over the last decade as a result of changes made by central Government to the way councils are funded. This directly affects the amount of council tax we all pay.

Since 2010 the Council has had to make savings of £120m to our annual budget. Following changes in 2013/14, the proportion of our funding that is raised through council tax has increased rapidly as the Government has phased out the grants previously provided to fund local services.

Since 2010 we have reduced the number of staff employed by just under 1000 people (26%). At the same time the borough's population continues to increase and get older, placing more demand on services for our vulnerable residents such as social care, which now accounts for more than 50% of our total spend.

In this context, and in order to safeguard your vital services, council tax is increasing by a total of 3.92% for 2020/21. This breaks down as a 1.99% increase in core council tax, roughly in line with inflation. Also, in response to the rising demand for social care, and in the absence of a sustainable national solution, an Adult Social Care precept of 2% is proposed for 2020/21, ringfenced solely to be spent on social care. There will also be an increase in the Greater London Authority (GLA) precept, for the work of the Mayor of London which includes additional police funding. For an average household living in a Band C property this will mean an extra £1.13 per week.

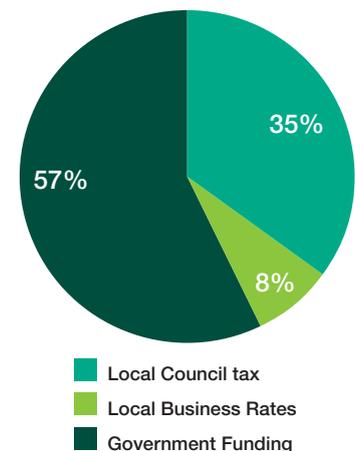
We are proud of the improvements we have made to our services but we know there is still more we can do. This is why we are consulting on our new customer experience strategy, and developing a shared vision for what our borough will look like in 2030. Waltham Forest is a great place to live, work and study, we will continue to do all we can to help improve our residents' quality of life.

Yours faithfully

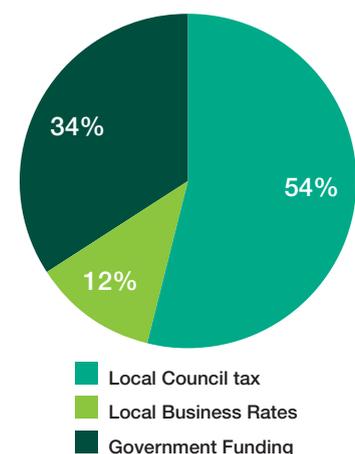
**Councillor Clare Coghill**  
Leader of Waltham Forest Council



**Waltham Forest Funding 2013/14**



**Waltham Forest Funding 2020/21**



## Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture

65% of our residents have told us they think culture should be a priority for the future



### What we've done

- As the first-ever London Borough of Culture we secured sponsorship and funding that enabled us to deliver over 1,000 different cultural events and activities that have collectively attracted more than 500,000 visits
- Every school in the borough was involved during the year

### What we're doing

- We intend to build on this legacy in the years ahead. The Council has bought the former EMD Cinema and is working with Soho Theatre Group to renovate it so it can be used as a 1,000 seater venue generating an estimated £52 million for the local economy over the next ten years
- Our Future Creatives programme is using the transformative power of culture to create opportunities and inspire our young people to pursue careers they otherwise might not have thought were open to them

## Keeping people safe

We know tackling crime is our residents' number one priority



### What we've done

- There has been a 29% fall in knife crime offences since we set up a Violence Reduction Partnership bringing together the police and other public sector agencies, housing providers, community representatives and voluntary agencies to tackle gang-related violence
- We've partnered with Hackney Council to be the first London boroughs to introduce the Safe and Together programme to support victims of domestic violence without fear of being separated from their children

### What we're doing

- Introducing a new chatbot to make it easier to report concerns about anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Holding our first Citizens Assembly on stopping hate incidents and ensuring everyone in our borough feels equally welcome and safe

## Climate Emergency

We received our largest ever response to a resident survey, 90% of people told us they are concerned about the climate



### What we've done

- We want to lead by example in taking action to tackle climate change and our work has already contributed to carbon emissions falling by almost 35% since 2005
- Retrofitted 10,000 council homes to make them more energy efficient
- Installed more than 1,000 solar panels on council buildings
- The Enjoy Waltham Forest programme – road improvements to promote walking, cycling and sustainable transport – has resulted in 27km of segregated cycle lanes being built, cycle usage increasing by 103%, and car usage falling by 7%
- Planted more than 1,800 trees in the last year alone, taking our total across the borough to more than 50,000
- 90% reduction since 2014 in the number of households exposed to more than the EU recommended levels of N02
- First public body to announce we are stopping investing pension funds in fossil fuels

### What we're doing

- Established an independent Climate Emergency Commission assessing the council's existing work to tackle climate change, and making recommendations on what more we can do, working alongside our residents, to tackle this global problem in a local context
- Investing £4.5m to refurbish the Suntrap environmental education centre

## Housing and infrastructure

84% of people are satisfied with their local area



### What we've done

- Delivered the highest proportion of affordable housing in London - 42% against the London average of 17% - over the last three years
- Brought forward the largest council housebuilding programme in Waltham Forest in a generation
- Worked with Network Rail to open a new station at Lea Bridge
- Worked with the England and Wales Cricket Board to develop the first Urban Cricket Centre in Leyton which provides facilities for the whole community and especially encourages more involvement in the sport by women and the Asian community

### What we're doing

- Working closely with Barts NHS Trust to successfully make the case to Government to invest in a new hospital at Whipps Cross, and are continuing to work with the NHS locally to ensure that we improve local health services
- Developing plans with Transport for London to expand capacity at Walthamstow Central and Leyton stations and introduce step-free access

