



# Waltham Forest's Economic Recovery Action Plan





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**Foreword from Cllr Simon Miller  
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Housing Development**

For a number of years there has rightly been a real buzz about our part of London. People want to live here. They want to raise a family and start a business here. The area bursts with culture and energy and is recognised for this not just across London but beyond.

For us 2019 was a watershed moment, Waltham Forest was London's first Borough of Culture, and we were awarded the Municipal Journal's Local Authority of the Year. Now we are building on our success in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

COVID-19 has had an impact on all aspects of life. As a Council, we have adapted at speed to deliver vital services for our businesses and residents during these difficult times. To support Waltham Forest to recover quickly from the challenges of COVID-19, we are launching our new 'Economic Recovery Action Plan'. A clear statement that Waltham Forest is open for business, a place of opportunity in which to invest and grow a business.

This Economic Recovery Action Plan sets out how this Council will invest in the recovery and future prosperity of Waltham Forest.

This Plan focuses on three key themes:

- Business and Economic Recovery – Supporting our High Streets and Businesses to re-open, recover and thrive.
- Home Building – Restarting our housebuilding, increasing the pace of delivery and ensuring our new homes have access to open space and local amenities.
- Living Well – Supporting climate change and investing in sustainable transport.

Our Economic Recovery Action Plan is built around three key phases of activity. First, we need to re-open the borough and support businesses and high streets to do so safely. Second, to harness the spirit and tenacity of our people and our businesses and celebrate all that makes Waltham Forest unique. Finally, to look to the future, to set out the measures we intend to take over the next 12 months and beyond as we build our way to a better future for our people and businesses.

For Waltham Forest to continue to succeed, I know we need to maintain confidence for our residents, businesses and investors so that both our local economy and the people who live here prosper.



# OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN



## FOR EVERYTHING WE DO, WE WILL





## RE-OPENING THE HIGH STREET - ACTION PLAN

We are expecting a changed economy to emerge as a result of COVID-19 and we need to adapt. Our recently launched [High Streets Action Plan](#) sits beneath this Economic Recovery Action Plan as a key driver of how we as a Council will help address the damage done to our local economy. There will be a period of rebuilding as we re-open our town centres and high streets and help local businesses adapt to be ready to trade. This is our opportunity not just to make things right but to make them better for the future.

### We Have

- Opened our high streets, ensuring they enable social distancing and are safe for businesses and shoppers.
- Opened safe high-streets which encourage cycling and walking.
- Enabled safe street trading.
- Planned creative uses for vacant spaces, supporting businesses operate and attract visitors.

### Our Next Steps

- Supporting our food and beverage industry to re-open, innovate and operate safely.
- Investing in cultural events and social distancing measures to make the high street fun for all.
- Offering online business support so businesses are prepared and ready to trade as lockdown is lifted.

### Our Vision

- Reviving our high streets.
- Re-imagining our vacant shops and public buildings for use, with:
  - pop-up shops and space for local businesses
  - cultural and arts use
  - or to build new and affordable homes.
- Ensure that vacant sites are put to use for business, cultural purposes or to build new homes.



## HELPING OUR BUSINESSES AND WORKERS

### We Have

- Established a team of Business Experts, supporting local businesses to re-open, rebuild and thrive.
- Introduced a 'rent holiday' for business tenants in Council property, supporting them through lockdown.

### Our Next Steps

- Launch a new toolkit, supporting local businesses with creative planning and implementing the physical measures needed operate safely during COVID-19.
- Free employment support including a 'Rapid Jobs Brokerage Service', getting people back into work.
- Free business start up support to kick-start new businesses in to life at pace.

### Our Vision

- Increased access to our Adult Learning Service and Construction Skills Centre – helping local people to up and re-skill.
- A free re-skilling service. Giving you new skills to move into a new career at pace.
- Tailored support for young people. An opportunity bank including:
  - Apprenticeships
  - Job skills to support your next career steps



## BOOSTING THE BUILDING OF NEW HOMES

### We Have

- Restarted safe construction on all building sites delivering over 600 new homes, including 350 affordable.
- Introduced fast supplier payment turn-around to contractors and subcontractors to support businesses.
- Cabinet approval for the preferred investment approach to regenerate the Avenue Road Estate, potentially delivering 550 homes.
- Supported our development partners to recommence building new homes safely.

### Our Next Steps

- Accelerating Council homebuilding by bringing forward investment and sites to deliver over 700 new homes, 350 affordable.
- Increasing our virtual reach to enable residents to safely engage with our projects.
- Commence Community Led Housing pilots, increasing the delivery of new affordable homes.
- Bringing forward new sites at pace, to build new homes and help the local economy

### Our Vision

- Fast track identified investment opportunities capable of delivering new homes.
- Ensuring our new developments are resilient - enabling home working and providing access to outdoor space.
- Exploring new technology to deliver new homes faster.
- Work with our development partners to deliver the 18,000 homes identified for delivering in the new Local Plan.



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## We Have

- In April we launched our new [Capital Investment Strategy](#), committing to £0.58 billion investment up to 2024.
- Secured Planning Permission for 750 new homes, including over 300 affordable homes, and 200 jobs at Coronation Square.
- Enabled delivery continuity major development schemes in a safe environment for construction workers.

## Our Next Steps

- Ramp up of construction works at our major sites such as the EMD cinema, Juniper House and the Town Hall Campus. Combined our major schemes have the potential to deliver c. 5,000 homes across the borough. 50% of these will be affordable.
- Re-imagine our major development schemes, to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for our residents in the 'new normal' we live in.

## Our Vision

- Ensure that our development programme delivers the greatest return on investment for our residents and businesses.
- Continue to work with our NHS partners to deliver a new 'world class' hospital at Whipps Cross and a new community of 1,500 homes.





## INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

### We Have

- Delivered c.30km of safe cycle routes across Waltham Forest through our Enjoy Waltham Forest Cycling and Walking Infrastructure programme.
- Increased accessibility and delivered additional public space, safe cycling lanes at Walthamstow Central and Bus station.

### Our Next Steps

- Work with our key transport providers, including Transport for London and Network Rail to ensure local transport is safe and enables social distancing.
- Continue to work with Transport for London to secure the investment needed to deliver upgrades to Leyton Underground and Walthamstow Central Stations, reducing overcrowding and increasing accessibility.

### Our Vision

- Increased investment in sustainable transport.
- Investment in new transport infrastructure that improves the transport network and accessibility of our major growth areas in the borough.



## INVESTING IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN SPACES

### We Have

- Nurtured increased cycling rates by improvements in cycle infrastructure and safety.
- Ensured that Walthamstow Wetlands and our network of parks have remained open to the public for exercise and wellbeing.
- Adapted the Climate Emergency Commission so that the outcomes support a post COVID environment.
- Ensured that environmental social value is a key element of our business support measures.

### Our Next Steps

- Expand our Enjoy Waltham Forest (walking and cycling) programme. Ensuring they are primary transport methods for re-opened high streets.
- Expand our jobs re-skilling and up-skilling offers to support opportunities for the low carbon sector.

### Our Vision

- Building energy efficient new homes.
- Developing a package of support which enables residents and employers to implement energy efficiency measures in their homes and local businesses.



## ENSURE THAT CULTURE LED REGENERATION IS DRIVING OUR PLANS

### We Have

- Built on the success as the first ever London Borough of Culture, launching our new [Virtual Culture Programme](#). So far we have delivered over 40 events, with over 5,000 participants.
- Continued to ensure Walthamstow Wetlands remained open for exercise for all
- Ensured that Culture is a key enabler for re-opening and recovery of our High Streets, ensuring they are vibrant, safe places our residents want to visit.
- Re-opened our cultural spaces and venues (such as the William Morris Gallery, 1 Hoe Street, Vestry House), whilst ensuring they are safe to visitors.

### For All Our Future Plans We Will

- Continue to make sure culture is a vital component of our new residential and development programme. This includes working with our partner Soho Theatre Company to deliver an exciting and vibrant programme for the opening of the former EMD Cinema.
- Develop and launch an exciting arts and events programme for 2020 and 2021, which is open to our residents and show cases the unique strengths of Waltham Forest.



## KEEP MAKING THE BIG DECISIONS THAT ALLOW WALTHAM FOREST TO QUICKLY RECOVER AND PROSPER

### We Have

- Established virtual decision making quickly and effectively.
- Held Virtual Planning Committees that have given outline approval for c.1,000 new homes of which 50% are affordable.
- A Virtual Cabinet approved the Council's Capital Investment Strategy and £0.58 billion of investment.
- Progressed key decisions virtually to schedule. Planning permission has now been given for the EMD Cinema redevelopment in June 2020.

### For All Our Future Plans We Will

- Ensure that effective virtual decision making continues to be delivered across key Council functions, such as Planning and other democratic decision making functions.
- Ensure that residents, businesses and investors are clearly sighted on the decisions which are being made.



## PROMOTING WALTHAM FOREST IN LONDON

(promoting local industry, businesses and attracting investment)

### We Have

- An ongoing engagement with investors to provide them with certainty over our approach and opportunities, showing that Waltham Forest remains 'Open for Business'.
- Holding regular 'Virtual Investment Briefings, Networks and Forums'.
- Regular development updates.

### For All Our Future Plans We Will

- Actively promote our local industries and support them to 'Do Business Locally'.
- Look to enhance our distribution facilities to support local industry.
- Help local industry to re-mobilise and prosper, showing that Waltham Forest is a great place to do business.
- Continue engagement with investors to keep them informed of key opportunities.
- Supporting sustainable transportation including zero emissions vehicles as new ways of working.
- Forge closer partnerships with people who want to invest in Waltham Forest, to continue to show we are 'Open for Business and Investment'.