Councillor Grace Williams
Leader of Waltham Forest Council

March 2025

Dear business owner,

Waltham Forest's businesses are at the heart of our borough's success. You continue to drive our local economy forward, and I want to thank you for the vital role you play in making Waltham Forest a thriving place to live and work.

Over the past year, we have worked closely with you to provide direct support and create opportunities for investment, as well as plan for a prosperous year ahead, despite the challenges of an uncertain economy.

The £1.5 million Productive Valley Loan Fund is empowering businesses to scale up, funding critical premises upgrades, cutting-edge equipment, and job creation—directly driving local economic growth.

Simultaneously, the Blackhorse Collective Creative Enterprise Zone is supporting the creative sector by offering tailored skills training, high-impact brand promotion, and exclusive retail opportunities through the London Made Me programme.

We're turning neighbourhoods into dynamic destinations. The William Morris Design Line Festival transformed Blackhorse Lane and the Argall Industrial Area into a cultural hotspot, delivering 62 events across 44 businesses and drawing over 4,000 visitors—proof of our ability to boost footfall and spotlight local enterprise.

Our partnership with the Argall Business Improvement District (BID) goes further, planning improvements to public spaces, amplifying recruitment, and championing businesses through tools like the Argall Industrial Area digital map, which connects over 100 local enterprises with new customers.

We've also secured transformative investments to make public spaces in our town centres safer and greener. In Walthamstow, our £17.3 million 'Culture for All' initiative is enhancing public spaces and cultural infrastructure, highlighted by the landmark Soho Theatre Walthamstow, set to open in May 2025 as a beacon for culture and creativity.

Meanwhile, 'Child-Friendly Chingford' is injecting £8.4 million into Highams Park and Chingford Mount, revitalising high streets, parks, and leisure facilities to attract families and entrepreneurs alike. Guided by our new Town Centre Framework, we're co-creating inclusive growth with businesses, delivering year-round markets, festivals, and cultural and local heritage programmes that position Waltham Forest as a destination for investment and a launchpad for small or medium-sized enterprises.

Through our dedicated Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) in Leytonstone, we've helped 360 residents take the next step toward self-employment, supported 33 small start-ups, and helped create 22 new local jobs.

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By partnering with organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses and Grow London Local, we've ensured that business owners have access to expert advice, funding opportunities, and specialist guidance.

Our Community Response Plan addresses shoplifting in the borough by working in partnership with business owners, residents and police through the installation of CCTV cameras in strategic locations and increased police presence in crime hotspots. And our Waltham Forest Connected digital business support hub continues to provide tools and resources to help businesses start, grow, and succeed.

We know that sustainability is an increasing priority for local businesses, and we are leading the way in providing free Carbon Literacy training to help you reduce costs, cut emissions, and future-proof your business. We've also worked with hospitality venues and breweries in Blackhorse Lane to consolidate waste collection, helping six businesses save an average of £1,200 per year while collectively preventing 43 tonnes of CO2.

However, we cannot ignore the growing financial pressures on our borough. Rising costs, reduced central government funding, and the broader economic climate are placing significant strain on local services and businesses alike. We are committed to doing everything we can to continue supporting businesses, but we also face difficult decisions in the year ahead.

Despite these challenges, we remain focused on ensuring Waltham Forest is a place where businesses can thrive. From pop-up markets to networking events, from sustainability initiatives to business support programmes, we are committed to working with you to drive innovation and success in our borough.

Thank you for being part of what makes Waltham Forest a great place to do business, and we look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Councillor Grace Williams
Leader of Waltham Forest Council
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Business rates support

Our website offers a range of information and resources to help you with your business rates and receive the support you need to thrive.

For more information visit:

www.walthamforest.gov.uk/business-rates

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