



Dear resident,

I want you to be confident that your council is managing taxpayers' money wisely and carefully, investing in local people and protecting the things that are important to you.

And you have my personal commitment that I am fighting harder than ever for you and your family against a backdrop of a nationwide funding crisis affecting local councils.

Despite the odds, we are securing investment for our borough. Last year we were the third largest social home builder in England and amid a national housing crisis, we've built on our proud record of delivering affordable homes and regeneration.

Last year, we received £40 million of funding from the Government because of our track record delivering what residents want. This is being used to upgrade Leyton Underground Station, create the new cultural quarter in Walthamstow, and make town centres and parks in Chingford and Highams Park safer and more welcoming.

Year on year we have taken care to provide a dogged focus on value for money for our residents, and on balancing our budget. And we are already gripping the situation hard, making savings of £23.3m, including £15.6 million in-year.

By law we must deliver services to support homeless families, look after older people and protect children at risk. Following fifteen years of reduced Government support, these pressures are growing, and costs are spiralling.

We are caring for more children and young people than ever before. The cost of providing social care for adults has risen at twice the rate of inflation in two years alone. And an acute housing shortage in London means we are helping more and more households who are homeless and need temporary accommodation.

All of this means we have no responsible alternative but to put up Council Tax so we can best protect a full range of essential services for local people.

This year we will be raising Council Tax by 2.99 per cent, as well as a further 2 per cent which is permitted exclusively for funding adult social care.

The element of Council Tax collected on behalf of the Greater London Authority to help fund the Police, Fire Service and Transport for London, will rise to £490.38 for a Band D property. That means a total overall increase of 4.78 per cent for a Band D property to £2,277.65.

For the average family in Waltham Forest in a Band C property that means an extra £1.78 per week, and Council Tax bills per resident will remain slightly below average for London.

This year we have committed to protect what matters most to you, including but not limited to: street cleaning and waste collection; keeping our streets and communities safe; providing family and youth hubs; leisure centres; adult education and skills; and library services in each neighbourhood. We will also continue to deliver free school meals thanks to funding from the Mayor of London.

We are improving waste collection – introducing weekly separate food waste collections and moving to fortnightly black bin collections to increase recycling rate. **This is still great value – costing residents £1.28 a week – less than the cost of a first-class stamp.**

In the coming year, our plan, Mission Waltham Forest will address the borough's most pressing challenges and fundamentally change the way we serve you, while also helping us to make efficiencies.

Communities know what is best for their local area. Through Community Ward Funding we want to support you - local people and community groups - to set up initiatives and events that look to strengthen community ties, empower fellow residents, and realise potential within your neighbourhoods.

Waltham Forest is not immune to the funding challenges every borough, town, and city right across the UK is facing. But I want you to be sure that we will continue to make responsible decisions about how we provide services with your money and be transparent with you about our finances.



Councillor Grace Williams
Leader of Waltham Forest Council
Email: Leader@walthamforest.gov.uk



Get help with your Council Tax

We offer a range of support with your Council Tax if you are struggling during these challenging times. To see if you are eligible for a reduction in your Council Tax bill, visit our website:

walthamforest.gov.uk/CouncilTaxSupport

