

Mission Waltham Forest: our plan for a more equal borough

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1. Foreword

In Waltham Forest, diversity is our greatest strength. In every corner of our borough, you will find people coming together and contributing to their communities in different ways. However, not everyone who lives in Waltham Forest has an equal chance in life.

Recognising need within our communities helps us understand the extent of inequality, but we must not lose sight of the consequences. Inequality is the barrier holding people back and preventing them fulfilling their potential.

The challenges we face are growing in size and complexity; however, there can be no complacency in accepting inequality. Every case of lost potential is a tragedy, and it must change. To fundamentally tackle inequality in an uncertain world, we must focus on ensuring every resident can achieve their goals and live the life they want to lead.

This will mean different things to different people. For some, it is living in a great home in a neighborhood where they feel safe. For others, it is having easy access to the help they need to make the most of their strengths and build resilience. And for our most vulnerable residents, it is having a safety net that enables them to live as independently as possible and contribute to their community.

As a Council, we are building on strong foundations. We have amazing staff, committed to shaping a more equal borough where everyone can thrive. But there is more we must do across every service we deliver, every neighbourhood we work in, and all our interactions with residents.

Today, we confront the pressing challenge of increasing demand and diminishing resources. We are not immune to the crisis in local government finances, and we must make difficult decisions to ensure long-term financial sustainability whilst ensuring we offer an outstanding service to our residents.

To do this, we need to fundamentally change the way we work and challenge ourselves to go further for our residents. We must continue to be ambitious, whilst making critical improvements to our services that address increasing need and tackles inequality.

We know there is only so much we can do to tackle the inequalities that hold so many back. Local businesses, the voluntary sector, other local public bodies, and our communities all have a crucial role to play.

Mission Waltham Forest is a call to action. It introduces a radical shift to a new way of working where our staff lead the way in delivering an outstanding experience for every resident who needs our help. And it sets a course for a brighter future where together we tackle inequality, creating a more equal borough for all.

Councillor Grace Williams, Leader of Waltham Forest Council
Linzi Roberts-Egan, Chief Executive of Waltham Forest Council

2. Our vision

Mission Waltham Forest sets out the Council's plan for more equal borough by 2030. It is our commitment to all our residents to tackle the fundamental challenges facing them and drive the change within the Council that is needed to achieve this.

At the heart of Mission Waltham Forest is our vision for the borough:

A more equal borough, where everyone can make the most of their strengths to live the life they want to lead.

This provides us with our core purpose and we must harness all our efforts and resources to achieve it.

To deliver our vision, we have identified a core set of Missions for the change we want for our communities and the change we need to make as a Council.

Our Missions are designed as challenges for ourselves as an organisation and serve as our commitments to our residents. They will organise Council activity and galvanise us to come together and work more collaboratively.

Beyond the Council, our Missions will enable us to build stronger bonds with our local partners and anchor institutions, driving us to work more closely together on the issues that matter most to those we serve.

Mission Waltham Forest is a testament to our unwavering dedication to putting residents at the heart of everything we do. It signals our relentless focus on equality and opportunity for everyone.

We all have a responsibility towards creating more equal borough where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Mission Waltham Forest sets out how we can and must achieve that together.

3. Our principles

Our principles will guide our work as we put Mission Waltham Forest into practice. They are rooted in Waltham Forest's proud history of public service and inclusion.

- ❖ **A more equal future.** We believe inequality in all its forms holds people back from being the best they can be. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure everyone can fulfil their potential and improve our understanding of the barriers facing communities.
- ❖ **Community powered.** We believe in the power of communities coming together to help each other. Communities will have more involvement in shaping the places they live and the services they use.
- ❖ **Every conversation counts.** We believe building strong relationships can be life changing. We will build trust with residents by ensuring we are there at the right time, when they need us and there are no closed doors for those who need our help.
- ❖ **Ambitious for our residents.** We believe in recognising residents for their aspirations and strengths, doing 'with' not 'to' them. We will help people to help themselves and each other, working alongside them to build their resilience and live the life they want to lead.
- ❖ **Strong and honest partnerships that last.** We believe in making a real and lasting difference by working as one with our partners. We will tackle the root causes of issues and take a longer-term, joined-up approach to supporting communities.

4. Our Missions

The challenges we face in Waltham Forest are big and complex, and the path to solving them is not always clear. A mission-based approach translates a big challenge into an ambitious, clear goal..

Our **Borough Missions** focus on the issues that matter most to our residents and set out how we will respond to these. They will help us to create a more equal future for Waltham Forest in 2030.

Our **Council Missions** set out how we must transform how we work deliver our Borough Missions and our vision. Our Council Missions do not mean business as usual. They will help us become an organisation that is more resilient, dynamic, and capable of adapting to the ever-evolving needs of our communities.

Borough Missions

To deliver our vision for more equal borough, by 2030 we will:

Ensure every family and every child are given every opportunity	Build an economy that works for everyone	Make Waltham Forest a great place to live and age well	Tackle the housing crisis head on	Lead the way for a net-zero borough	Safe, green neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive
We will ensure every family and every child can access the services and support they need so all children can thrive.	We will shape a more inclusive local economy that attracts businesses and talent while unlocking opportunities for residents.	We will ensure all residents can make the most of their strengths and live healthier, longer, and more independent lives.	We will deliver a new generation of homes that are affordable to buy and affordable to live in.	We will tackle the Climate Emergency head on, paving the way for net zero in Waltham Forest.	We will ensure every resident feels safe in their homes and neighbourhoods and feels included and welcome.

Mission one

Ensure every family and every child are given every opportunity

We will ensure every family and every child can access the services and support they need so all children can thrive.

The first 1,001 days from pregnancy and the first two years of a child's life create the foundations of cognitive, emotional and physical development. What a child experiences during this time has more influence on their future than at any other phase in their life. Including and beyond those first years, good health, safety and security, appropriate caregiving and opportunities for learning are all critical elements of raising the next generation of happy, healthy adults.

There are over 100,000 households in Waltham Forest - over half of those are families with children. Families of all shapes and sizes call Waltham Forest their home, each one offering a completely unique upbringing. Our diversity makes this possible and ensures that our borough continues to be one of the most culturally rich places in London to grow up.

One in four children live in relative poverty and Waltham Forest is 5th in London for children living in low-income families.

We know that all families face challenges from time to time – it is a natural part of every family's journey. However, entrenched inequality means some children experience higher levels of disadvantage than others right from the very start.

Some of our youngest residents are not receiving the nutrition they need to grow, which can have a knock-on effect on performance in their formative school years. This disadvantage is not equally distributed, with children from minority ethnic groups more likely to experience obesity and less likely to achieve the highest grades at school.

As children enter their teenage years, those from more deprived backgrounds are less likely to have the basic educational skills they need when starting secondary school. This is widening the attainment gap for many and causing young people to feel increasingly anxious about their futures. All these issues are compounded for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

"It's a privilege to work with colleagues who always go the extra mile. It's everyone's responsibility at the Council to give children and young people the best start in life. If we do our bit and act early, we can make it happen"

Francis Offiah, Team Manager Edge Of Care Service

Every family has the right to see their children grow up and reach their ambitions in life, no matter their background or circumstances. If we are to achieve this for all families, we, with partners, must make sure our support is more visible, available at the right time and within easy reach, whilst recognising the barriers to access that many face.

Most importantly, our support should never be one-size-fits-all. Alongside offering support tailored to each family, we will continue to celebrate the uniqueness of every family that calls Waltham Forest home.

Our Mission priorities for families and children

Support for families within easy reach of home

Embed our Family Hubs network across the borough to support families from pregnancy, through the child's early years and later childhood, and into early adulthood, giving all children the very best possible start in life.

Diverse opportunities for young people with additional needs

Build a culture of ambition and consistency across the local Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system, focused on getting the best outcomes and experience for all children and young people with SEND in every setting and meeting their aspirations for the future.

A strengths-based approach towards independence

Support and protect children and adults with longer term vulnerabilities, and their carers, promoting independence, building their strengths, and making safeguarding a responsibility everyone shares.

A network of interconnected support

Drive partnership working across organisations that supports more effective, joined up early intervention and prevention across every service in Waltham Forest that works with people and families.

Health equity and positive wellbeing at every age

Focus on intervening early and doing everything we can to prevent long-term conditions arising and being relentless in our work to address health inequalities through our decision-making and design of services.

Mission two

Build an economy that works for everyone

We will shape a more inclusive local economy that attracts businesses and talent while unlocking opportunities for residents.

The local economy plays a vital role in safeguarding the well-being and prosperity of our communities. A strong local economy creates secure jobs and reduces unemployment. It stimulates local businesses and builds town centres and community infrastructure. And it allows for greater investment into public services, such as education and healthcare. Taken together, these contribute to a healthier, happier society where everyone's needs are met.

Every resident should benefit from the local economy they contribute to; however, all too often benefits and opportunities are unevenly distributed, with too many local people experiencing poverty and disadvantage and too many local businesses struggling to overcome barriers to growth.

In recent years, the number of people in work has decreased, while those applying for unemployment related benefits has risen. This affects some communities more than others, with residents in the south the most affected. For those in work, nearly half are working in foundational economies that sustain vital infrastructure such as food, health and social care. Despite the critical nature of these roles, many find themselves in insecure contracts and receiving low pay, with few opportunities to progress.

Almost half of our working residents are in 'foundational economy' sectors such as food, health and social care.

We want to create a local economy that works for and benefits everyone, helping every resident satisfy their needs to live a happy and healthy life. To do this we must build a strong and dynamic local economy, with inclusivity at its heart.

For the economy to thrive, we must accelerate our offer of high-quality education and training, equipping every resident with the skills to secure good work now and in the future.

"I'm all about finding solutions. I'm looking forward to getting involved, sharing my ideas and learning from others – especially people I've not worked with yet. We have so much talent. We have the tools solve any challenge."

David Reece, Participation and Engagement Worker - Lead for Children in Care and Care Experienced People

This means adopting a more strengths-based focus that encourages every resident to harness their interests and passions, not just realise their economic potential. Our local businesses must receive the support, infrastructure and tools that allow them to nurture and develop their employees and build up networks of support with local peers. And

we must create inclusive places and spaces for work and education built on the bedrock of opportunity and equality of access.

Our local economy should be shaped by the ambitions of our communities, and the benefits should be shared and accessible. We will work in partnership with our residents, businesses and partners to tackle economic inequality and create an inclusive economy for all.

Our Mission priorities for the local economy

Build a strong foundational economy

Work closely with our anchor institutions and local businesses to fix the cracks in our foundational economy so that it provides decent jobs and services needed for underserved communities and the right conditions exist to meaningfully tackle entrenched inequalities.

Create ambitious employment, training, and apprenticeship opportunities

Foster a culture of lifelong learning through our Adult Learning and Employment services, supporting people to develop skills and knowledge to access work that matches their wants and needs.

Create workspaces that work for residents

Make full use Council buildings, and those of public sector partners, to create inclusive spaces for employment, education and commerce that inspire communities of creativity and collaboration.

Tackle childcare as an economic barrier

Invest in high quality, accessible and affordable childcare to address intergenerational poverty and unlock opportunities for parents, especially mums, to take on and sustain employment.

Invest in the next generation

Narrow the attainment gap for young people by creating opportunities to develop vital skills that are fit for the future. Offer more choice and opportunities to kickstart a career they love, especially in emerging growth sectors.

Mission three

Make Waltham Forest a great place to live and age well

We will ensure all residents can harness their strengths and live healthier, longer, and more independent lives.

Everyone in Waltham Forest, regardless of their age, deserves to live well. Healthy communities are places where people of all ages can live active and healthy lives, participate in a community that meets their needs, and feel valued for their contributions throughout their lives.

However, our extensive insight on health inequalities tells us that experience of ageing in Waltham Forest is becoming more unequal. Across the borough, a growing number of people are experiencing poverty and poor health with prospects worsening for the generation of residents currently entering later life. Income inequality significantly affects older residents.

Our residents can currently expect to live on average **16 years, or 20% of their lives**, in poor health.

This widening gap means half of the borough now demonstrates higher rates of poverty for older residents than the English average, most prominently in the south. Residents can expect to live in poor health for around 16 years of life, with those vulnerable to social isolation in older age most negatively affected.

“We get the opportunity to help residents have a good quality of life, we work alongside people to realise their strengths and what is possible. And that’s our job, to help, and put our residents at the heart of everything we do.”

Yasmin Awan, Social Worker

Waltham Forest should be a great place to live because of ageing, not despite it. Ageing well is about making a borough that enables everyone to transition into a good later life, with help available at the right time to support this. This means offering a hand when it’s needed whilst continuing to give people choice and agency in how they live their lives. And it means continuing to create

opportunities to participate so the door remains open to all.

Together, working with our partners and communities, we will become a borough where overcoming the challenges of growing older is a shared responsibility, and the contributions and histories of our older residents are not just recognised, but celebrated.

Our Mission priorities for living and ageing well

An Age-Friendly Borough

Make Waltham Forest a great place to live because of ageing, not despite it. Create a borough where older residents can continue to participate in their communities and be valued for the contributions they make.

Tackle pensioner poverty

Putting more money back in the pockets of our older residents by helping those most at risk and connecting them with the support to which they are entitled.

Inclusive spaces and places encouraging intergenerational connection

Break down barriers preventing people from accessing and enjoying the borough’s spaces for physical and active wellbeing, cultural venues and heritage assets, helping build relationships across generations.

Support for residents to navigate tomorrow

Help people to get the right health care and social support at the right time, from the right people. Empower residents to make choices about using technology, enabling them to live independent, healthy, and active lives for as long as possible.

Mission four

Tackle the housing crisis head on

We will deliver a new generation of homes that are affordable to buy and affordable to live in.

Having a good quality and affordable home is essential. It gives stability and security and is essential for overall health, happiness, and prosperity.

Waltham Forest has risen to the challenge of delivering homes and growth and is leading the way in London. However, we know our efforts have not kept pace with demand and affordability for many.

Housing is our residents' biggest overhead. The cost-of-living crisis, coupled with rent and mortgage rises, have increased pressure on residents and exposed precarious situations of many. With over 40% of our borough's carbon emissions coming from housing, the climate emergency has created an imperative to improve housing stock and revealed an urgent need to adapt homes for a more sustainable and affordable future. All these issues have fuelled the divide of inequality for our residents and left many behind.

Rents rose in London by **16% last year**, while Local Housing Allowance rates rose only 7%.

1,000 families are living in temporary accommodation.

A safe and affordable home supports people to actively participate in their communities, raise a family, and find good work. If we are to ensure housing security for our current and future residents, we must recognise our most complex challenge requires innovative solutions. This means developing actions that target our efforts towards supporting the most vulnerable and redressing the scale of inequality our residents face.

Our approach to tackling the housing crisis must use all the powers and resources available to us and our partners. This will involve upgrading our existing stock, building more homes, and embedding preventative approaches with our residents to spot issues and intervene early.

Our Mission priorities for housing

A sustained programme of housebuilding

Use all available resources, including through expanded partnerships, to maximise housing delivery, including a higher percentage of affordable homes.

A new deal for private renters

Act on the challenges facing private renters by improving affordability of homes, increasing tenancy security through a team of Tenants Relations Officers, and working more closely with landlords to provide secure, quality homes.

A preventative approach to homelessness and rough sleeping

Better identify those most at risk of losing their accommodation and taking a preventative approach to service delivery and support. Residents who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or sleeping rough will be supported through strength-based approaches to ensure that homelessness becomes rare, brief and non-recurring.

A new generation of climate-friendly homes

Energy efficiency and decarbonisation retrofit of all Council homes, with an extensive offer of support for homeowners and our private rented sector to achieve this.

A high standard of home for a good quality of life

Introduce a quality standard for housing that sets a clear expectation of providing safe and comfortable homes, ensuring our partners and the private sector are well-supported to uphold these standards.

Increasing the number of decent and genuinely affordable homes across the borough.

Housing affordability is one of the biggest challenges facing residents.

The independent Affordable Housing Commission, made up of housing sector experts, looked at how the Council could maximise delivery of affordable housing for residents and provided 27 recommendations. They helped shape our new Housing Strategy: Good Homes as the Foundation for a Happy and Healthy Life.

The Council can make a big difference to people's lives through housing. By increasing the supply of high-quality, affordable homes for residents, using the powers and resources available, and refreshing and resetting our approach across the Council with residents at the centre, the Council and our partners can provide a foundation for our residents to build healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Commission and our Housing Strategy are innovative ways to maximise the delivery of good quality, affordable homes for residents, to ensure people can reach their potential in our borough.

Read the [Waltham Forest Affordable Housing Commission](#) report to see how we are maximising the delivery of genuinely affordable housing.

Mission five

Lead the way for a net-zero borough

We will tackle the Climate Emergency head on, paving the way for net zero in Waltham Forest.

Climate change is happening now and is happening locally. National government cannot tackle climate change alone. Local Authorities have a vital role to play.

Waltham Forest is in the top thirty worst affected local authorities from heatwaves in England. Flash flooding is becoming more common and is impacting severely on people's homes and livelihoods. A combination of colder weather and rising prices has led to huge

increases in energy costs. And although we have made strong progress to reduce the impact of air pollution, further action is required to further improve health and prevent serious respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses.

With climate change becoming more visible every year, we must redouble our efforts to curb the worst of its effects. This means taking decisive steps as a Council to significantly reduce our carbon emissions by 2030 and pave a path towards net zero emissions. Carbon neutral homes, a more sustainable transport network and improved recycling infrastructure are just a few of the hurdles we must overcome.

As a Council we have the ambition to achieve this and we are turning that ambition into action.

A quarter of affordable homes in Waltham Forest have poor energy efficiency ratings (EPC B and D or below).

We aim for **80%** of homes across the borough to have the highest ratings (above EPC Band B) by 2030.

But we cannot reach our climate goals alone. The scale of the challenge we face demands every one of us change how we live as individuals and as part of our community, from the cars we drive and transport we use, to the food we buy and the waste it creates. Our residents overwhelmingly support action to reduce our climate impact and want to be part of the change. It is time for us to harness this passion by equipping every resident with the tools to make the impact they want to see.

“We work hard to understand inequality and what stops residents and staff enjoying walking, wheeling, and cycling. Enjoy Waltham Forest has improved safety and made the air cleaner, it’s improved lives – and we’re not done yet”

Jane Sherry, Head of Sustainable Transport

The threat of the climate emergency cannot be understated. But neither can the passion of our residents and communities. This is a huge challenge, but together, we will pave the way towards net-zero emissions.

Our Mission priorities for the climate

A green housing revolution

Create opportunities for households of every tenure to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, making homes warmer and bills lower. Housing estates will become centres for climate action, waste and recycling innovation and food growing.

A place designed for people

Expand safe streets and improve our pedestrian, cycling and electric vehicle infrastructure, so the majority of journeys in Waltham Forest are taken by sustainable means or zero emissions public transport.

Consuming less, recycling more

Lead the way on recycling in London by giving our residents the tools to reduce, reuse, and recycle all waste, from the clothes they wear to the food they eat.

A more natural, green borough

Ensure the benefits of nature, green and open spaces are available to everyone to improve health and wellbeing and help deal with the effects of a changing climate.

A collective approach to tackling climate change

Foster opportunities to drive civic action on climate, especially where consequences impact other outcomes, becoming a leading borough for collective, community-led climate action.

Mission six

Safe, green neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive

We will ensure every resident feels safe in their homes and neighbourhoods and feels included and welcome.

Neighbourhoods are the places we call home. They are the sanctuary where we find our community with whom we build connections and share our lives. Our local neighbourhoods should enable us to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives, no matter where that happens to be.

Waltham Forest is home to many thriving neighbourhoods – each has its own charm and characteristics. Combined, our neighbourhoods make our borough the diverse and exciting place it is today. Although we have made great strides towards improving our neighbourhoods in recent years, many have yet to reach their full potential.

47% of our residents are concerned about crime and violence.

Feeling safe and secure in your community is essential to enjoying your neighbourhood; however, with fear of crime rising in some parts of the borough, we know this is not the case for many. Our local environment and streets have a major impact on our communities and

recycling and reducing waste, litter and air pollution are priorities for residents across the borough, affecting their day-to-day lives. And for some residents, social isolation really impact daily life.

“I’m delighted by the positive impact the partnership between our Voluntary Community Sector and the Council has. Local partnerships have genuinely transformed lives and created a sense of belonging for everyone. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and achieving even greater outcomes in the future.”

Averil Pooten Watan Voluntary and Community Sector Leader and co-chair of Borough of Sanctuary

We want to see thriving, clean and safe neighbourhoods enjoyed by everyone. If we are to make our borough inclusive and welcoming for all, we need to adopt a partnership approach to shaping our neighbourhoods. Communities,

alongside our partners, and the voluntary sector and local businesses, are best placed to do this. Their voices must be the centre of every conversation and every design process, so they become the driving force for change.

Our commitment is not just to improve the look and feel of our local areas, but to create a shared sense of belonging where every resident can truly call their neighbourhood home.

Our Mission priorities for neighbourhoods

Enabling every community to be and feel safe

Implement a local problem-solving approach to keep all our residents safe, reducing crime and the fear of crime by working together across Waltham Forest and using every Council and partner lever to make neighbourhoods safer.

Clean streets, vibrant spaces

Keep our streets, green spaces and high-streets clean, attractive and welcoming through responsive services and a robust approach to licensing.

Inclusive neighbourhoods shaped by residents

Create more opportunities for every resident, including children and young people, to use their voice and actively shape their communities, neighbourhoods and services around their wants and needs, so no one is left behind.

A partnership approach towards connecting communities

Working with and supporting local voluntary and community groups towards a more well-established and visible presence in every neighbourhood, helping to create strong, nurturing communities and cultivate a sense of security and belonging.

A safe and welcoming space for new arrivals

Building on our official status as a Borough of Sanctuary to create a local, community-driven approach to inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers living in the borough, working with them to build their lives – safe from violence and persecution.

Council Missions

Our Council Missions set out how we must transform the way we work with residents and one another if we are to reach our goals for a changed borough.

Our Council Missions:

❖ **A focus on services designed around residents**

We will constantly work to improve the design and quality of Council services and push ourselves to provide experiences and services residents deserve.

❖ **A preventative approach for stronger communities**

We will have a joined-up approach to prevention, offering support in the right place, at the right time, in the right ways.

❖ **An inclusive workforce that reflects our community**

We will build a culture of inclusion by closing pay gaps; our workforce will be as diverse as our community at every level.

❖ **A firm financial footing**

We will achieve financial security by balancing the books and adopting a well-managed, sustainable approach to investment.

A focus on services designed around residents

We will constantly work to improve the design and quality of Council services and push ourselves to provide experiences and services residents deserve.

Residents are at the heart of everything we do. We are determined to be a Council that listens to and works for everyone because our residents deserve an exceptional experience. However, an increasing number of residents find our services challenging and time-consuming to navigate. This worsens when circumstances are more complex. In the worst cases it can mean some of our most vulnerable residents slip through the cracks and miss out on the support they need. We know we must do better.

We will continue to make sure residents benefit from opportunities that modern technology and systems developments, and insights, bring. By challenging ourselves to improve services everyone will have a fair chance to benefit from the support that meets their need.

Two in five residents who contacted the Council were not happy with the way their query was handled.

Accessible help and support

Deliver a scaled-up offer of truly accessible help and support that is culturally appropriate, inclusive for our diverse communities, responsive to local need, and makes best use of Council and community assets.

Relationships that drive change

Build strong and supportive relationships that seek to understand and respond to what matters and is important to residents, founded on trust and so they feel listened to and that their experiences matter.

Empowering all staff as leaders

Use the knowledge and expertise of our staff, who know what works and what gets in the way. Staff will have more opportunities to share ideas, design services, champion new ways of working and respond to challenges and opportunities, supported by a culture of learning so they are confident and equipped to lead.

Embracing innovation and change

Respond quickly and adapt, to make sure we keep doing the right things, at the right time, and in the right way, putting residents at the heart of everything we do.

A one-stop shop for families to access the support they need.

We want all families in Waltham Forest to have access to the services and support they need, building on family strengths.

Family Hubs are a one stop shop for families, from light touch advice to in-depth support, they bring family services together, with professionals working more seamlessly so families only have to tell their story once. Health, housing and employment support, creative play and educational activities, parenting programmes, and much more, all in one place.

Based in neighbourhoods and working with our partners, Family Hubs are welcoming and easily accessible, helping people feel safe and comfortable. Support is more easily accessible, available when families need it, at times that work for them.

Family Hubs are strengthening the relationships that carry us all through life. From pregnancy, through a child's early years and later childhood, and into early adulthood, Family Hubs give all children the very best possible start in life.

Every family needs some kind of support, no matter the age of their children. Have a look at what's on offer at our [Family Hubs](#).

A preventative approach for stronger communities

We will have a joined-up approach to prevention, offering support in the right place, at the right time, and in the right ways.

We pride ourselves on ensuring residents can access the right support when they need it. However, the complexity of challenges our residents now face is fuelling inequality and causing worsening outcomes for many. More residents than ever are approaching us for support, many with more acute need and at an earlier stage.

Continuing down this path is unsustainable and prevents people enjoying healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives on their own terms. If we are to reverse the upward trend, a robust approach to prevention is needed.

Prevention breaks the cycle of treating symptoms and addresses the root cause of problems earlier or stops them from happening. This means intervening earlier, making services more visible and better connected, working with partners to create a broad approach to prevention and a network of support in every neighbourhood, and always working to our residents' strengths, building their independence, choices and autonomy to shape their lives.

Demand for adult social care has risen **13%** in the past year alone, while the **cost** of care packages has risen **13%** as well.

We are looking after **1,000 more people** with complex needs since 2018/19.

We will always provide a strong safety net for those who need it most. A more targeted drive towards prevention will reduce the number of residents who need it in the first place.

Delivering high quality prevention

Shift our culture and behaviour across the organisation to focus on action that intervenes early, giving staff and partners the tools and resources better support before problems occur and prevent them from happening in the first place.

Building a resilient support network

Work with individuals and families to identify what they can do, working alongside them to expand their strengths, build their independence and resilience, and strengthen community connections which support people to find their own solutions to problems.

Establishing a network of open doors

Design and deliver accessible services of prevention in partnership, drawing on our collective experience, skills and resources. This includes specialist services, the important role of voluntary and community sector and other local anchor organisations.

High-quality data for the earliest intervention

Improving how we use data, insight and information to shape early intervention and prevention, forecasting effectiveness, tracking outcomes, joining up services and improving impact for our residents.

Tackling health inequalities and building the foundations of a healthy life.

We know people's chances in life are unfairly shaped by their background and postcode. The Institute of Health Equity report showed that by making changes to the conditions in which our residents live, learn, work and age, we can increase their likelihood of living a healthy life.

Building a Fairer and Healthier Waltham Forest is our response and sets out our bold commitments and ambitions to address the health inequalities within our borough.

We will go further than ever before to deliver a cross-Council response, where everyone understands their role, relentlessly embedding tackling health inequality in everything we do. We will also reshape our strategic partnerships across the borough and work more closely with our communities, to improve health and well-being for all.

This collective ambition to narrow the gap in health inequalities is essential for greater equity and social justice, so all our residents can thrive.

Explore our full findings and recommendations published in the report, [A Fairer and Healthier Waltham Forest: Equity and the Social Determinants of Health](#).

An inclusive workforce that reflects our community

We will build a culture of inclusion by closing pay gaps and ensuring our workforce is as diverse as our community at every level.

Our communities should see themselves in the Council. Greater levels of representation lead to stronger connections with our communities and the better design of services. While we have made progress towards more diverse representation in our workforce, there is still a considerable distance to cover. There is underrepresentation in senior positions and progress has been too slow to close gender and ethnicity pay gaps. We know that many staff do not feel they can bring their authentic self to work.

The median ethnicity pay gap at Waltham Forest is **12%**.

"I'm proud to work for an organisation that puts equality at the heart of everything it does. I'm excited for the potential Mission Waltham Forest has to bring for all of our residents, regardless of who they are and where they come from"

Bisi Oyekamni, Head of Commercial, Culture and Destinations

This is wrong and must be addressed. But culture change is not a tick-box exercise, nor can it be achieved overnight. We must be realistic yet ambitious, recognising the scale of the challenge, while challenging ourselves to change the practical ways we do things as well as the way we behave

and think – as individuals, as leaders, as services, and as an organisation.

Reflecting the diversity of our residents

Develop fair, equitable and consistent leadership and line-management for everyone, everywhere. Recruitment without bias will happen at all levels of the Council.

A culture of inclusivity

Create a culture where everyone is accountable for embedding compassion and inclusivity across the organisation and ensuring people feel safe to bring their authentic selves to work.

A nurturing work environment

Become an organisation where everyone is able to access good quality and suitable opportunities for learning, development and progression to meet the needs of our communities.

Fair and equitable pay for all

Implement ambitious policies that deliver equitable and inclusive practice and new, targeted approaches to tackling our ethnicity and gender pay gaps.

A firm financial footing

We will achieve financial security by adopting a well-managed, sustainable approach to investment and maximising income generation.

Local government is in a crisis of increasing demand and reduced supply. The number of those accessing adult social care is growing every year. More children are falling under the care of the Council. A housing crisis and cost-of-living emergency are forcing more and more residents to access our services. Long term financial security is therefore not a nice-to-

One fifth of council leaders expect to issue a Section 114 (bankruptcy) notice in the next year.

"It's so impressive hearing about how the Council and borough have transformed over the last 10 years. I'm excited to be somewhere people want to work because there's ambition bubbling in everything we do."

Katie Chambers, Apprentice Environmental Health Officer

have – it is an essential component of keeping our services running and our residents supported, particularly being able to use our resources to have the greatest impact and to help our residents with the greatest need.

If we are to continue to offer high-quality services in the face of growing demand,

we must adopt a more robust approach to financial management and move towards more sustainable models of service delivery.

Sound financial management

Make well-informed financial decisions, based on the best possible evidence, make prudent decisions to achieve savings, maximise income generation for the Council, and maintain a robust financial foundation to ensure stability in the Council's finances.

Strategic investments for the greatest impact

Plan carefully and take a long-term view to invest in services and activities that benefit our communities and have clear outcomes. We will drive continual improvement and open up opportunities for efficiencies and savings.

An empowered approach to budget responsibility

Make sure responsibility for the financial wellbeing of the organisation belongs to everyone. All budget holders will feel empowered for their role in financial planning and budgeting and there will be a culture where everyone feels accountable for their roles in financial planning.

6. Making it happen

The scale and cross-cutting nature of our missions requires a break from our business-as-usual. We know we need to work differently to produce different outcomes and as we face rising pressure on our services. A missions-based approach is very different from how we are used to working as an organisation to deliver services and support our residents. This will include continuing to develop new and more agile ways of working, which will benefit staff and our work.

We will invest in developing the skills and abilities our staff need, including those needed to work differently and more effectively with our residents. We prize collaborative approaches and know the great things happen when we work together and work across boundaries. As well as being more flexible, we will have to embrace innovation and creativity and we will not only learn together and share ideas, but trial new ideas and prototype possible solutions.

It will be important for us to respond quickly and adapt to changing circumstances and to work openly, sharing what we are doing and explaining why, with refreshed governance structures that allow us to review, reflect, evaluate and be held to account.

Engage and understand

Missions put residents at the heart of everything we do. We will listen and learn from our communities' lived experiences through accessible engagement, co-creation and co-design to shape new approaches to delivering our Missions.

Test and partner

Missions can only be achieved together. We will combine our resources with partners and communities, testing new ways of working to deliver more impact than we can alone.

Monitor and measure

Missions must be ambitious but attainable. They must have measurable outcomes that show us what success looks like. Better use of data, insight and evaluation, and a bespoke new dashboard, will enable us to understand our impact.

Promote and share

Missions put a spotlight on what it is we are aiming to achieve. We know how important it is to share our achievements, our learning and our challenges with residents. In doing so, we can enable residents to easily hold us to account and build trust.

7. Making a difference

How we approach our Missions is just as important as the Missions themselves. This involves us being more strategic and focused with where we target resources and the action we take across the borough, ensuring impact for residents. Missions provide a strong foundation for us to join up our efforts across the Council, and work collaboratively together with partners and our communities. We all need to play our part.

This will mean us working together across the Council, more so than ever before. It will also see more opportunities to tap into the expertise, knowledge, skill, and talent that makes our organisation such a special and lively place to work. Our staff are the people who know what works and what gets in the way. No matter where you work or what your job title says, we want everyone to feel empowered, to be bold and creative, to lead change, share responsibility and work even more collaboratively. Everyone who works at the Council should feel pride in their role, feel included, and understand and see how their work is essential to the change they are part of.

We have the greatest impact when we work in partnership. We need to go further and act more quickly to innovate and implement Missions together. By harnessing the power of our work with our communities and our partners, we will collaborate, innovate, and implement together. People are rightly proud to call Waltham Forest home and we know they want to be part of changing the lives of others and their own. Often, the best solutions are found in communities and active communities need to play a core role as part of and leaders of change.

Achieving our shared vision and ambitions for the future can only be done together, through a collective approach with our partners. As partners, we will work together to solve the biggest challenges facing the borough. This is a call to action for others too, to form new partnerships, spark innovation and join us in our commitment to tackle inequality.

Through Mission Waltham Forest, we will tackle inequality and the barriers it creates. We will open up opportunities residents need to realise their ambitions and live the life they want to lead.

Together, we can shape a better future for us all.