

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title	Mission Waltham Forest Delivery Update
Meeting / Date	Cabinet, 2 nd December 2025
Cabinet portfolio	Councillor Grace Williams, Leader of the Council
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Wards affected	All.
Public access	Open.
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Mission Delivery: Mission Waltham Forest Delivery Update Appendix 2 - Equality Analysis Screening



1. Summary
 - 1.1 Since the launch of Mission Waltham Forest in March 2024, the council has taken concerted action across services to deliver towards our borough missions, driven by our vision for a more equal borough.
 - 1.2 While Waltham Forest faces significant challenges that put pressure on our communities and services, it's important to reflect on the progress we have made together with our partners and communities in improving outcomes for residents and delivering towards Mission Waltham Forest.
 - 1.3 As we look to the next phase of delivery, our journey so far provides important learning to take forward our missions in a challenging financial context, while remaining committed to the ambition of Mission Waltham Forest.
 - 1.4 The Mission Delivery: Mission Waltham Forest Delivery Update report (Appendix 1) provides a snapshot of early progress across each borough mission, demonstrating how we are delivering for our residents, working alongside others, learning from what works and building momentum so we can deliver more impact where it matters most.
 - 1.5 The report also provides an outline of the next phase of Mission Waltham Forest delivery as we look to build on the foundations that have been established since launching Mission Waltham Forest.
2. Recommendations
 - 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Note the content of this report which provides an update on the early successes of Mission Waltham Forest delivery over the past 18 months, outlined in Appendix 1.
- 2.1.2 Note the ambition to build on our progress as we move into the next phase of Mission Waltham Forest and strengthen our commitment to delivering together with communities and partners.
- 2.1.3 Reaffirm the commitment to the missions set out in Mission Waltham Forest and the core values that underpin Mission Waltham Forest to relentlessly focus on tackling inequality, deliver together and prioritise where we can have greatest impact for our residents.

3. Proposals

3.1 Mission Waltham Forest: Delivery to Date

3.2 Mission Waltham Forest is our plan for a more equal borough. It was launched in March 2024 to focus council efforts on the key issues that shape residents' lives. It aims to bring together services, partners, and communities around shared borough missions – from housing to community safety and climate action – with a relentless focus on reducing inequality.

3.3 These borough missions are:

- 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

3.4 Since its launch, Mission Waltham Forest has been a clear statement of our ambition and values, reflecting who we are as an organisation but also setting our intent to tackle the key challenges facing our residents and the inequality that is pervasive across all of these.

3.5 Over the past 18 months, we have tested new approaches, strengthened how we use insight and data, and equipped staff and partners with the tools to work in more collaborative and mission-based ways. Services across the council are aligning around shared priorities like housing, financial resilience, and community safety. Partners are co-designing new responses to shared challenges with us. And more of our residents are shaping solutions to the issues that matter most to them.

3.6 Mission Waltham Forest is a shared effort – we couldn't do it alone. From the start, our staff have shaped (over 400 helped with the design) and are now driving Mission Waltham Forest with many going beyond their roles such as the 30 staff who have trained as Financial Health Champions to help put more money in residents' pockets. Our partners are integral to taking action towards our borough missions and we have

seen this in our place-making progress such as the success of Soho Theatre Walthamstow that is a huge milestone for our local cultural economy while creating jobs and opportunities for local people. Across our missions, we're embedding resident voices through initiatives like Community Advisory Panels, which are shaping cultural venues such as Vestry House Museum. Together, staff, partners and residents are creating the conditions for real change.

- 3.7 The Mission Delivery: Mission Waltham Delivery Update report (Appendix 1) provides an overview of our progress over the past 18 months, showing how mission-based working is making a real difference for residents across our six borough missions and how we are changing the ways we work as a council through our four council missions.
- 3.8 The report highlights how we are responding to issues that matter most while recognising achievements that demonstrate our ambition and commitment towards a more equal and thriving borough. Crucially, these examples show how a more mission-led and focused approach can deliver for our residents who need us most while navigating a challenging financial climate.
- 3.9 For example, it shows how we have kept more families together through support such as our Edge of Care service, which has led to a 20% reduction in children in care. We are maximising financial entitlements, whether through the more than £0.5 million generated for schools through auto-enrolment or the hundreds of eligible adults we are trying to support to claim Attendance Allowance. We are maintaining our proud record of affordable homebuilding through direct delivery of 519 new homes in the borough and delivering new approaches to support households in temporary accommodation to secure settled homes. And we are driving forward regeneration which supports a more inclusive economy and more resilient households, such as the 180 jobs created through the construction and opening of Soho Theatre Walthamstow.
- 3.10 The report sets out the council's ambition for the next phase of Mission Waltham Forest delivery including a sharper focus on prevention, targeted support, collaboration and aligning services around missions to maximise impact. It outlines how we will use the foundations from Mission Waltham Forest so far to shape this next phase of delivery. This will inform our budget and planning for 2026-27 alongside ongoing delivery of our medium-term financial strategy.
- 3.11 In the next phase of Mission Waltham Forest, we will learn from our experience of mission delivery and embed this learning in the way we tackle key challenges as a council and in partnership. Crucially, we will equip ourselves with the data and insight to understand and strengthen our impact towards our missions. This will mean building on our current insight and impact frameworks to define our key outcomes and measures of success for the next phase of Mission Waltham Forest.
- 3.12 The report concludes by reinforcing the importance of collective action in achieving our borough missions. Through our Together We Are Waltham Forest campaign, launched in September 2025, we are making

our missions more visible and accessible by showcasing to our residents the positive change happening in our borough and inviting them to help shape what comes next.

- 3.13 Delivering meaningful change for Waltham Forest requires all of us – staff, partners and communities – working together to create a more equal borough.

4. Options and Alternatives Considered

- 4.1 This report presents an update on key achievements towards Mission Waltham Forest delivery since its launch in March 2024. It speaks to the council's learnings as well as a response for the next phase of delivery. No options or alternatives have been considered in relation to Mission Delivery: Mission Waltham Forest Delivery Update.

5. Council Strategic Priorities (and other National or Local Policies or Strategies)

- 5.1 Mission Waltham Forest is the council's plan for a more equal borough and sets out its commitment to tackle the fundamental challenges residents face, together with partners and communities.
- 5.2 The Mission Waltham Forest Delivery Update directly supports the council's overarching priority: creating a more equal borough where everyone can make the most of their strengths to live the life they want to lead. Mission Waltham Forest is the council's strategy for tackling inequality and addressing the most significant challenges facing residents.
- 5.3 Mission Waltham Forest and the council's mission-based approach is helping drive change, service improvement, and transformation in key areas.
- 5.4 The council's focus on missions is aligned to the growing interest in mission-orientated government and mission-based approaches being adopted across London, at a national level, and internationally. The council continues to engage with a range of other local authorities and organisations to understand best practice and thinking elsewhere and to explore opportunities to further deepen local impact.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 No formal consultation is required for this report.
- 6.2 Mission Delivery: Mission Waltham Forest Delivery Update is informed by and aligned with completed and ongoing resident and community engagement, including the council's Resident Insight Survey, as well as engagement with staff and outputs from the recent All Staff Survey.
- 6.3 Consultation, engagement and participatory approaches with council staff, partners and communities will continue as missions, projects and interventions are developed.

7. Implications

7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk

- 7.1.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
- 7.1.2 One of the missions in Mission Waltham Forest is to put the council on 'a firm financial footing'. This maintains focus on achieving on-going financial security for the council as a key priority.
- 7.1.3 Mission Waltham Forest and the approach the council has developed to mission-based working is a transformational approach for the council.
- 7.1.4 Mission Waltham Forest gives the council information to most effectively target our resources. This contributes to ensuring funding available to the council is optimised to deliver best outcomes from investment. The council's mission-based approach is helping the council to work better with partners, creating and supporting innovation and collaboration with residents, public sector organisations and the private sector in shaping communities and services provided to them.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Equalities and Diversity

- 7.3.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 7.3.2 The vision for Mission Waltham Forest is "a more equal borough, where everyone can make the most of their strengths to live the life they want to lead". This focus on equality is reflected in our work to deliver our missions, demonstrating a clear commitment to strengthen our approaches to improving and promoting equality in the borough as well as advancing equality and inclusion in the council.
- 7.3.3 Action to tackle inequality is embedded across Mission Waltham Forest delivery, from building financial health and resilience to creating safer streets. In addition, the council recognises the need to address health inequalities in line with the Marmot recommendations, implementation of the Cultural Action Plan to ensure equitable access to cultural opportunities, advancing the Inclusive Growth and Economy Framework to create an economy that works for everyone in Waltham Forest, and making progress toward the goals of the council's Inclusion Action Plan.

These initiatives form part of broader delivery across the council to address inequality and create a fairer, more inclusive Waltham Forest.

- 7.3.4 An Equality Analysis screening was undertaken, attached at Appendix 2, and at this stage there is no impact on the council's Public Sector Equality Duty. This will continue to be assessed, and further Equality Analysis will be completed.
- 7.3.5 An easy-read version of the report will also be published on the Council's website.
- 7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)
 - 7.4.1 Sustainability is at the heart of Mission Waltham Forest and our missions are a frame for achieving wider sustainability goals.
 - 7.4.2 Waltham Forest is responding to the climate emergency and our commitment to reaching net zero carbon emissions and recently declared a nature emergency, launching a blueprint to tackle declining biodiversity. The council is leading by example and continuing to inspire collective action, placing climate and environmental sustainability at the core of Mission Waltham Forest. This includes accelerating climate initiatives, adapting to environmental changes, and enhancing local biodiversity and natural assets. Community engagement has and will continue to help shape specific goals and generate ideas to raise awareness and promote lasting behaviour change among residents, businesses, and partners.
 - 7.4.3 Good health and wellbeing are essential for residents to lead fulfilling lives, and our ambition is for Waltham Forest to be a place where everyone is supported to achieve this. However, not all communities experience the same benefits, with some groups facing consistently worse outcomes across multiple health indicators. Mission Waltham Forest aligns with Building a Fairer and Healthier Waltham Forest, our response to the Marmot recommendations, through initiatives focused on tackling health inequalities and improving wellbeing for all.
 - 7.4.4 Fear of crime remains a top concern for residents. Being or feeling unsafe impacts health, employment, income, opportunities, and relationships. Mission Waltham Forest makes community safety a shared responsibility across the council, communities, and partners. Reframing crime prevention allows us to embed safety into everything we do, intervening early to support young people, designing safer homes and public spaces, delivering licensing and regulatory functions, and providing support services. We are working collaboratively to enhance community safety through co-design and co-production to put power in the hands of our communities, especially young people, to lead change on the issues that matter most to them.
- 7.5 Council Infrastructure
 - 7.5.1 Mission Waltham Forest sets out how the council must transform as an organisation. It is shaping and informing work to deliver the Inclusion Action Plan, as well as staff communications and engagement, to help

staff to share the council's ambitions, develop collective commitment and responsibility, and equip everyone to play their part.

- 7.5.2 Mission Waltham Forest is aligned with the council's ambitious transformation agenda and will continue to inform priority areas identified to orientate and guide work around the council's service improvement and transformation.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None