
Council

Minutes of
16 October 2025 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Mayor: Councillor Tony Bell

Councillors:

Afzal Akram, Shumon Ali-Rahman, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Karen Bellamy, Kastriot Berberi, Marsela Berberi, Emma Best, Catherine Deakin, Shabana Dhedhi, Rosalind Doré, Paul Douglas, Rhiannon Eglin, Marion Fitzgerald, Kizzy Gardiner, Mitchell Goldie, Jenny Gray, Kisha Green, Justin Halabi, Jemma Hemsted, Whitney Ihenachor, Sazimet Palta Imre, Kay Isa, Tim James, Johar Khan, Kira Lewis, Khevy Limbajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Zafran Malik, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, John Moss, Sam O'Connell, Jonathan O'Dea, Yusuf Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Keith Rayner, Sebastian Salek, Catherine Saumarez, Richard Sweden, Steve Terry, Katy Thompson, Sharon Waldron, Terry Wheeler, Jennifer Whilby and Grace Williams

20. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elizabeth Baptiste, Roy Berg, Tom Connor, Andrew Dixon, Crystal Ihenachor and Ahsan Khan,

21. Declarations of interest

None.

22. Minutes of the council meeting held on 17th July 2025

The minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council held on Thursday 17th July 2025 were **AGREED** and signed by the Mayor.

23. Announcements from the Mayor, Council Leader, Portfolio Lead Members and Chief Executive

The Mayor shared his highlights of the civic events that he had attended including the Tamil Celebration event, Epping Forest Big Walk and the Haven House Half Century Bike Challenge, which he completed with the Youth Mayor, Adwoa Owusu. The Mayor commended those who had been nominated for the Pride of Waltham Forest awards, including John Struthers for the 'Time to Grow' initiative. The Mayor also noted the Macmillan Coffee morning hosted by Councillor Douglas and the Autumn donation drive for the Highams Park good bank.

The Mayor then highlighted that October was Black History month, Breast Cancer awareness month and Domestic Violence awareness month, noting the visible solidarity for these from councillors in the room. The Mayor invited councillors to the Remembrance service on the 9th November and informed them of the upcoming events such as the Mayor's Quiz Night and the Christmas Appeal for children looked after.

Councillor Asghar made an announcement in reference to the 16 Days of Activism and reiterated the Council's commitment to improving safety and wellbeing for survivors of all forms of violence against women and girls. She commended the work of organisations such as Ashiana, Stay Safe East, Furnishing Futures, Solace Women's Aid, Eastern European Resource Centre and the East London Rape Crisis Service.

Councillor Limbajee made an announcement in relation to the launch of the "Together we are creating Safer Streets" Campaign which showcased community-led safety initiatives and encouraged broader participation from residents, community groups, businesses and partners. Councillor Limbajee called on all councillors to support this vital work.

24. Public statements

The Council received three requests for public speaking.

The first speaker was Ms Beste Kaylar, representing Ashiana, who spoke on behalf of black and minority women and girls experiencing gender-based violence and the challenges that survivors face. She stressed the importance of specialist organisations who brought community-based knowledge and the need for meaningful partnerships with the Council to address structural inequalities.

Councillor Asghar responded acknowledging the critical work of organisations such as Ashiana and committed to further collaboration and regular meetings to discuss local issues.

The second speaker was Mr Mihai-Alexandrou Radoi, who submitted a statement as they could no longer attend the meeting. The statement was read out by Councillor Akram. The statement addressed the drop in sales for businesses on Cherrydown Avenue expressing frustration in the decreased footfall.

The third speaker was Ms Sevine Adil, who spoke on the decline of footfall for businesses on Station Road, including her own, linked to the changes to parking charges. She highlighted that clients were unwilling to pay for parking for short visits leading to reduced trade and shop closures, expressing concern for impact on local employment.

Councillor Loakes responded to the two statements noting that officers were familiar with the issues raised by businesses in the area, which were believed to have been resolved, and committed to following this up. He added that the modal filter on Cherrydown Avenue was an experimental traffic order and feedback from residents and businesses would be considered as part of future progression of making Chingford more child-friendly. He added that the parking changes were also an experimental traffic order and a decision on progressing these would be made in due course.

25. Members' questions

Council **NOTED** the written responses to Members' questions as set out in the Order paper at Appendix A

The following supplementary questions were asked. In the absence of Councillor Ahsan Khan, Councillor Grace Williams responded to the relevant questions.

Question 1

Councillor Jonathan O'Dea to Councillor Kizzy Gardiner

Why were EHC plans at Whitefields School in 2017 lacking in detail, as found by Ofsted, potentially hindering intervention in child abuse?

Councillor Gardiner said that she would respond in writing.

Question 2

Councillor John Moss to Councillor Ahsan Khan

Can I have additional information on the cost of acquiring, adapting, operating and disposing of a specific unit?

Councillor Williams said that Councillor Khan would provide the information in writing.

Question 3

Councillor John Moss to Councillor Paul Douglas

Will an evaluation of the trainers performance be published?

Councillor Douglas referred to the response in the Order Paper, noting the reasons for non-publication still stood.

Question 4

Councillor John Moss to Councillor Ahsan Khan

Can I request a breakdown of the income and costs explaining how the income of £190,00 is generated from letting 17 properties?

Councillor Williams said that Councillor Khan would provide the information in writing.

Question 5

Councillor Emma Best to Councillor Grace Williams

Does the Leader agree with the Government's changes to indefinite leave to remain?

Councillor Williams said that concerns were being raised about the impact on changes to the social care workforce and wider council workforce, raising these concerns with the Government.

Question 6

Councillor Afzal Akram to Councillor Clyde Loakes

Why has the missed bin collection rate increased despite the increase in bin collections?

Councillor Loakes said that this has been attributed to massive service changes, including the introduction of food waste collections and fortnightly black bin collections. He noted that some residents forgot or were unsure of the new arrangements leading to them misreporting them as missed collections. He noted that there had been high participation in food waste collections, reduced residual waste and an increase in dry mix recycling.

Question 7

Councillor Jemma Hemsted to Councillor Clyde Loakes

What metrics are being used for the ongoing consultation?

Councillor Loakes that the experimental traffic order had a six-month statutory consultation, with feedback being considered. He added that the rate of PCNs tailed off as people became more accustomed to the change, suggesting that any figures quoted were disingenuous.

The following oral questions were asked

Councillor Afzal Akram to Councillor Clyde Loakes

Can officers investigate how the service for reporting pothole and road repairs, as residents are reporting that requests were being closed before work was carried out?

Councillor Loakes said that he would look into how residents could report issues to ensure positive outcomes.

Councillor Mitchell Goldie to Councillor Clyde Loakes

When will the consultation on the experimental traffic order on Station Road and how can residents and business owners express their views?

Councillor Loakes clarified that the statutory consultation had concluded and officers were now considering the views that had been submitted. He added that these orders could remain in place for up to eighteen months.

26. Notices of motion

27. Conservative Group Motion: Support for Local Businesses

It was moved by Councillor Jemma Hemsted and seconded by Councillor Kay Isa that;

This Council notes:

There are 5.5 million small businesses across the UK, making up over 99% of businesses, employing over 12 million people with a turnover of £1.4 trillion. It is clear that these businesses are the cornerstone of our economy and it is therefore vital that we support the borough's small independent businesses to the fullest extent possible. The Council is concerned about certain recent developments that have impacted negatively on local businesses, including:

- The increase in employers' national insurance which has increased the cost of employing staff and led to higher unemployment.
- The new parking controls in Waltham Forest which have resulted in a drop in trade.
- Businesses being stung with unfair rent rises, leading to businesses closing and the Council losing Business Rates revenue.
- Uneven distribution of resources in particular from the Metropolitan Police Service.
- Closures of roads such as Cherrydown Avenue at Chingford Mount, causing difficulties for business deliveries and costing local residents tens of thousands of pounds in fines.
- The proposed reform to the business rates system, which is predicted to negatively impact businesses in London disproportionately.

The Council therefore recommends:

- That the Chief Executive write, on behalf of the Council, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlining our opposition to the NI increase and recommending that the increase be reversed.
- That the cabinet rescinds the experimental Traffic Order no ET2(25) at the earliest opportunity to restore the old parking controls when the temporary traffic order comes to an end.
- That any rent rises the council imposes should be fair and reasonable for our local businesses.

- That the executive has discussions with the MPS to ensure a fair spread of resources across the borough.
- That the Council takes the effects on business fully into consideration when proposing road closures and consider reversing those that are adversely affecting local businesses.
- That the executive lobbies government for a fair deal from any changes in business rates and ensures that London keeps what it raises.

There were no amendments submitted.

There was debate in which Councillors Naheed Asghar, John Moss, Caramel Quin, Emma Best, Catherine Deakin and Afzal Akram spoke.

Councillor Hemsted exercised her right of reply.

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 18.4, a recorded vote was requested by the Conservative group on the motion in the names of Councillors Jemma Hemsted and Kay Isa.

When put to the vote the motion in the names of Councillor Jemma Hemsted and Councillor Kay Isa **FELL**.

For the motion: Councillors Afzal Akram, Roy Berg, Emma Best, Marion Fitzgerald, Mitchell Goldie, Jemma Hemsted, Justin Halabi, Kay Isa, John Moss, Sam O'Connell, Szimmet Palta-Imre and Catherine Saumarez

Against the motion: Councillors Shumon Ali-Rahman, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Karen Bellamy, Kastriot Berberi, Marsela Berberi, Catherine Deakin, Shabana Dhedhi, Rosalind Doré, Paul Douglas, Rhiannon Eglin, Kizzy Gardiner, Kisha Green, Whitney Ihenachor, Johar Khan, Khevyn Limabajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Zafran Malik, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, Jonathan O'Dea, Yusuf Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Keith Rayner, Sebastian Salek, Richard Sweden, Steve Terry, Sharon Waldron, Jennifer Whilby and Grace Williams

Abstentions: None

28. Leaders Autumn Statement

Councillor Williams began her statement addressing the current times, highlighting a rise in hate crimes and the impact of global events. She gave commended the examples of the community coming together to reject hate crimes and anti-immigration marches.

Councillor Williams then discussed the council's financial challenges, such as the portions of the budget allocated to support for SEND, temporary accommodation and adult social care, outlining 'Mission Waltham Forest' which focused on tackling inequality and building fellowship with communities. She detailed the achievements

in helped residents secure support, keeping families in homes and supporting children in care, and highlighted partnerships with organisations such as Leyton Orient, South Chingford Library, the Metropolitan Police and the Homemade Community Café to improve outcomes. She called on a fair funding settlement from the government.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Williams for her statement and invited Councillor Best to respond.

Councillor Best criticising the closure of police stations across the borough and the lack of lobbying efforts to keep them open. She questioned the economic figures presented and council's spending on rebranding. Cllr Best raised concerns about the Council's financial situation, adult social care, SEND transport and temporary housing.

Councillor Williams exercised her right of reply.

29. Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25

It was moved by Councillor Yusuf Patel, seconded by Councillor Steve Terry and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Council **NOTED** the Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25.

30. Annual Treasury Management Review

It was moved by Councillor Marie Pye, seconded by Councillor Steve Terry and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Council **NOTED** the Annual Treasury Management activities and performance against targets for the financial year 2024-25.

31. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report

It was moved by Councillor Marie Pye, seconded by Councillor Yusuf Patel and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Council **AGREED** the Treasury Management activities from 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025 as detailed in 2025-26 Treasury Management Mid-Year report.

32. Calculation of political balance (proportionality) and arrangements for committees

It was moved by Councillor Steve Terry, seconded by Councillor Mitchell Goldie and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Council:

- **NOTED** at the political balance of the Council is:
 - 45 members of the Labour Group
 - 12 members of the Conservative Group

- 3 ungrouped members:
 - 2 independent members
 - 1 member of Reform UK
- **NOTED** the committees set out for the municipal year 2025/26 listed in Appendix 1 as agreed at the Annual Council Meeting held on 22 May 2025
- **AGREED** to vary proportionality as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and adopt some arrangement other than that prescribed by the Act or Regulations.
- **AGREED** any changes to the memberships of those committees as tabled at this Council meeting for approval.

33. Amendments to the constitution: Council Procedure Rules and Councillors' Code of Conduct

It was moved by Councillor Marie Pye, seconded by Councillor Steve Terry and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that Council **AGREED**:

- The proposed changes to the Council Procedure Rules at Appendix 1, and
- The proposed changes to the Councillor's Code of Conduct at Appendix 2.

34. Use of emergency provisions

The report was provided as an information report to Council on the use of emergency provisions.

Council **NOTED** the report.

35. Appointments

Council **AGREED** the appointments set out in the order paper.

The meeting closed at 9.29 pm

Chair's Signature _____

Date _____