



Waltham Forest Town Hall  
Forest Road  
E17 4JF

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## Council

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Minutes of  
11 December 2025 at 7.30 pm

**Present:**

**Mayor:** Councillor Tony Bell

**Councillors:**

Shumon Ali-Rahman, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Elizabeth Baptiste, Kastriot Berberi, Marsela Berberi, Roy Berg, Emma Best, Tom Connor, Catherine Deakin, Shabana Dhedhi, Andrew Dixon, Rosalind Doré, Paul Douglas, Rhiannon Eglin, Marion Fitzgerald, Kizzy Gardiner, Mitchell Goldie, Jenny Gray, Kisha Green, Crystal Ihenachor, Whitney Ihenachor, Sazimet Palta Imre, Kay Isa, Tim James, Ahsan Khan, Johar Khan, Kira Lewis, Khevyn Limbajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, John Moss, Sam O'Connell, Jonathan O'Dea, Yusuf Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Sebastian Salek, Richard Sweden, Sharon Waldron, Terry Wheeler and Jennifer Whilby

**36. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Afzal Akram, Vicky Ashworth, Justin Halabi, Jemma Hemsted, Zafran Malik, Keith Rayner, Catherine Saumarez, Steve Terry, Katy Thompson and Grace Williams

**37. Declarations of interest**

None.

**38. Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 16th October 2025**

Council **approved** the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2025.

### **39. Announcements from the Mayor, Council Leader, Cabinet Members and Chief Executive**

The Mayor reflected on the year, marking sixty years since the creation of Waltham Forest as a London borough. He thanked councillors and officers who had taken part in the Christmas Jumper day, raising money for the Mayor's charities. The Mayor and Council extended their condolences to Councillor Steve Terry and his family who had recently experienced a family tragedy.

The Mayor then reported on his civic engagements including the Twinning Association's Black History month event, the Leytonstone over fifties yoga events and the Jack Petchey "Speak Out" challenge. He also reported of his engagement at the Long Service Awards ceremony which had officers with up to forty years of service to the council.

The Mayor announced that the Mayor's Christmas card competition had been won by Olive Bowyer from Stoneydown Primary School. He also thanked all of those who had contributed to the Mayor's Christmas appeal, providing presents for care-experienced young people.

Councillor Loakes announced that Waltham Forest had received additional funding of £1.4 million for the Warm Homes programme, following the previous success in improving the energy efficiency of forty homes in the borough. The Council had also received additional funding of £350,000 from the London Mayor's Green Routes fund for supporting the "Wild Ways through the Ching" project. Councillor Loakes also announced that a School Streets trial would be set up for Handsworth Primary School and Oak Hill Primary School. These trials would not require a CPZ to allow consultation to take place. Councillor Loakes added that the borough had also installed it's one thousandth cycle higher placing Waltham Forest as the second highest in the country for number of hangers.

Councillor Mitchell announced that the CQC had completed its inspection of the Adult Social Care team and had provided the borough with a 'Good' rating. She thanked officers for this achievement and noted that improvement planning had already begun for highlighted areas.

Councillor Dixon announced the establishment of the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS), which would help strengthen the sector by providing a coordinated voices, support building skills and capacity, attract funding, and supporting collaboration. Initial council funding had supported two part-roles for the CVS and the operational infrastructure. Councillor Dixon thanked officers from the Communities team and the leaders from the voluntary sector.

### **40. Public statements**

The Council received two requests for public speaker.

The first statement was from Tariq Hussain, Chairperson of the Waltham Forest Blind Association. Mr Tariq had sent apologies as he could no longer attend the meeting due to extenuating circumstances but submitted a written statement that was read out by the clerk. The statement concerned the Chingford Road Corridor Scheme and called upon the council to review the scheme as the proposals were unsafe and disorientating for the blind and partially sighted.

The second statement was from Mr Gary Wiggins, a volunteer with the Waltham Forest Blind Association, who shared his experience of being knocked over by cyclists while alighting a bus into pavements in the borough with incorporated cycle lanes.

Councillor Loakes responded to the speakers noting that the scheme had been designed with the latest guidance and said that the recent consultation would be reviewed. He confirmed that a meeting would take place with officers and the Waltham Forest Blind Association to discuss any concerns.

#### **41. Members' questions**

The Council **noted** the responses to the questions in the order paper.

The following supplemental questions were asked;

##### **Question 3**

##### **Councillor Emma Best to Councillor Clyde Loakes**

Can we have a break down of the “Pay-to-Park” takings between the Council, parking provider and pay-by-phone service for the period of April 2024 to October 2025?

Councillor Loakes said he would provide this in a written response.

##### **Question 4**

##### **Councillor Emma Best to Councillor Clyde Loakes**

Can we have more information on the installation of a PM2.5 air quality monitor at the Crooked Billet, which had been promised in the 2023 Air Quality report?

Councillor Loakes confirmed that this would be installed in the 2026/27 financial year.

##### **Question 7**

##### **Councillor John Moss to Councillor Ahsan Khan**

Can you clarify the net cost of temporary accommodation, particularly the direct cost paid to providers?

Councillor Khan confirmed that he would respond in writing.

## **Question 11**

### **Councillor Elizabeth Baptiste to Councillor Rosalind Doré**

Can you explain how the “Million More Days of Health Active Life to do the Things We Love” campaign would be implemented in Chingford?

Councillor Doré confirmed that various free and inclusive activities had been planned for Chingford and Highams Park, including multi-sport sessions, feel-good walks, tea and table tennis, and other events and initiatives for older residents co-designed with the community.

## **42. Notices of motion**

## **43. Labour Group Motion**

It was moved by Councillor Louise Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Khevyn Limbajee that;

### **This Council notes:**

- Gambling addiction is a growing national issue with serious social and economic implications. According to Public Health England, the estimated annual cost to society now exceeds £1 billion.
- Gambling harms extend far beyond the individual, affecting families, public services, and communities and particularly affect areas of socio-economic deprivation.
- Many local authorities are now witnessing a concerning proliferation of betting shops, adult gaming centres, and casinos along their high streets and are effectively powerless to stop it due to outdated legislation.
- Section 153 of the Gambling Act 2005 enshrines the ‘Aim to Permit’ principle, which requires councils to approve gambling licenses where minimum criteria are met, regardless of local community opposition or concerns over public health, crime, or social impact.
- The surge in online gambling and the widespread nature of gambling advertisements across the sporting world has only deepened these harms and normalised gambling in everyday life.
- At the Budget last week, the Chancellor raised the remote gaming duty, levied on online casinos, from 21% to 40% and noted that this increase was among measures to fund the end of the two-child benefit cap.
- When last surveyed, almost three quarters of the British public (73%) suggested that they would not want a betting shop on their ideal high-street.

- The Government's Men's Health Strategy recognises the health consequences of gambling harms and the need for a public health approach to tackling gambling harms.

### **We believe that:**

- For too long, the house has always won – with the gambling industry extracting ever more profit from our high streets, while leading to serious financial addiction amongst individuals and families.
- Waltham Forest Council is proud of and ambitious for its great places, high streets and neighbourhoods, supported by rigorous licensing and enforcement on our high streets.
- Our ambition is thwarted by the current legal licensing regime for betting shops, bookmakers and adult gaming centres which makes it extremely difficult to refuse a gambling license.

### **This Council resolves to:**

- Join the growing coalition of over 40 other local authorities, led by Brent Council, that have now written to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport calling for urgent reforms to tackle the harms caused by gambling and to restore decision-making powers to local authorities.
- Support the Social Market Foundation's Six Recommendations for Gambling Reform, which call on Government to:
  1. Grant greater licensing powers to local authorities, including the ability to carry out cumulative impact assessments for gambling premises.
  2. Include Directors of Public Health in the gambling licensing process, just as they are for alcohol licensing, ensuring public health is at the heart of local decision-making.
  3. Review the current premises licence classifications, particularly where Adult Gaming Centres operate under bingo licences, to close loopholes.
  4. Increase the cap on annual licence fees for gambling premises from £1,000 to at least £2,000 and require annual reviews so that fees reflect the true cost of enforcement and regulation.
  5. Clarify the balance of responsibilities between local authorities and the Gambling Commission on enforcement and inspection, ensuring accountability and local capacity.
  6. Review and ultimately remove the 'Aim to Permit' rule from the Gambling Act, restoring genuine local democratic control over gambling premises.

- Write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and other relevant government departments expressing our full support for these proposals and urging immediate legislative reform.
- Join and promote the Coalition to End Gambling Ads (CEGA) and support the campaign to end gambling advertising across the Transport for London network.
- Work with our anchor institutions and raise awareness of gambling harms.
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- Local health and voluntary sector partners to raise awareness of gambling harms and signpost residents to gambling addiction support and education initiatives.
- Use our new Local Plan to assess proposals for new betting shops with regards to existing clusters, proximity to areas of deprivation, health impacts and implications for community safety, crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Support the key recommendations of the cross-party Greater London Authority's Health Committee's report on Gambling related harms in London.

There was debate in which Councillors Sally Littlejohn, Sharon Waldron and Mitchell Goldie spoke.

Councillor Mitchell did not exercise her right of reply.

When put to the vote Council **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that:

**This Council notes:**

- Gambling addiction is a growing national issue with serious social and economic implications. According to Public Health England, the estimated annual cost to society now exceeds £1 billion.
- Gambling harms extend far beyond the individual, affecting families, public services, and communities and particularly affect areas of socio-economic deprivation.
- Many local authorities are now witnessing a concerning proliferation of betting shops, adult gaming centres, and casinos along their high streets and are effectively powerless to stop it due to outdated legislation.
- Section 153 of the Gambling Act 2005 enshrines the 'Aim to Permit' principle, which requires councils to approve gambling licenses where minimum criteria are met, regardless of local community opposition or concerns over public health, crime, or social impact.

- The surge in online gambling and the widespread nature of gambling advertisements across the sporting world has only deepened these harms and normalised gambling in everyday life.
- At the Budget last week, the Chancellor raised the remote gaming duty, levied on online casinos, from 21% to 40% and noted that this increase was among measures to fund the end of the two-child benefit cap.
- When last surveyed, almost three quarters of the British public (73%) suggested that they would not want a betting shop on their ideal high-street.
- The Government's Men's Health Strategy recognises the health consequences of gambling harms and the need for a public health approach to tackling gambling harms.

**We believe that:**

- For too long, the house has always won – with the gambling industry extracting ever more profit from our high streets, while leading to serious financial addiction amongst individuals and families.
- Waltham Forest Council is proud of and ambitious for its great places, high streets and neighbourhoods, supported by rigorous licensing and enforcement on our high streets.
- Our ambition is thwarted by the current legal licensing regime for betting shops, bookmakers and adult gaming centres which makes it extremely difficult to refuse a gambling license.

**This Council resolves to:**

- Join the growing coalition of over 40 other local authorities, led by Brent Council, that have now written to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport calling for urgent reforms to tackle the harms caused by gambling and to restore decision-making powers to local authorities.
- Support the Social Market Foundation's Six Recommendations for Gambling Reform, which call on Government to:
  7. Grant greater licensing powers to local authorities, including the ability to carry out cumulative impact assessments for gambling premises.
  8. Include Directors of Public Health in the gambling licensing process, just as they are for alcohol licensing, ensuring public health is at the heart of local decision-making.

9. Review the current premises licence classifications, particularly where Adult Gaming Centres operate under bingo licences, to close loopholes.
  10. Increase the cap on annual licence fees for gambling premises from £1,000 to at least £2,000 and require annual reviews so that fees reflect the true cost of enforcement and regulation.
  11. Clarify the balance of responsibilities between local authorities and the Gambling Commission on enforcement and inspection, ensuring accountability and local capacity.
  12. Review and ultimately remove the 'Aim to Permit' rule from the Gambling Act, restoring genuine local democratic control over gambling premises.
- Write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and other relevant government departments expressing our full support for these proposals and urging immediate legislative reform.
  - Join and promote the Coalition to End Gambling Ads (CEGA) and support the campaign to end gambling advertising across the Transport for London network.
  - Work with our anchor institutions and raise awareness of gambling harms.
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  - Local health and voluntary sector partners to raise awareness of gambling harms and signpost residents to gambling addiction support and education initiatives.
  - Use our new Local Plan to assess proposals for new betting shops with regards to existing clusters, proximity to areas of deprivation, health impacts and implications for community safety, crime and anti-social behaviour.
  - Support the key recommendations of the cross-party Greater London Authority's Health Committee's report on Gambling related harms in London.

#### **44. Council tax support scheme for 2026/27**

It was moved by Councillor Paul Douglas and seconded by Councillor Andrew Dixon that Council:

- **Agreed** that the proposed income banded Council Tax Support Scheme be continued whereby the maximum award available to working aged people receiving support remains at 85% for the Council Tax billing year 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- **Agreed** that the Council continue to make £750,000 available for a Discretionary Hardship Fund under section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012, to offer additional help and support to those suffering the



greatest financial hardship as defined in the Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Hardship Scheme published on the Council's website. The current scheme is attached at (Appendix 2).

- **Agreed** there be delegated authority to make any minor and consequential changes necessary to the detailed provision as a result of any changes in the regulations upon which the scheme is based, is given to the Strategic Director of Resources following consultation with the Portfolio Lead Member for Finance and Resources.
- **Noted** that the income banded scheme treat earnings and self-employed earnings as income to determine a households level of income against the proposed income bands. All other income should be disregarded.
- **Noted** that the scheme will continue with two charges for non-dependant adults within households. £20pw for those in work & £8pw for those out of work.
- **Noted** working-age residents would be entitled to support of up to a maximum of 85%, depending on a person's level of income, household composition and level of capital and whether they fall within one of the protected groups: households with limited capability to work; households with children aged 5 and under.
- **Noted** other eligible working-age residents, support would be given up to a maximum of 57%, depending on their level of income, household composition and level of capital.
- **Noted** that the remaining provisions of the Council's scheme for 2026/27 will be as published on the Council's website.
- **Noted** that the projected cost of the whole scheme is identified as £19.53 million which is £0.93 million more than the current scheme. This will be reflected in the calculation of the council tax base for 2026/27 and included within the next MTFS as part of the budget setting process.
- **Noted** that before any significant changes to the scheme reducing or removing support could be made that a statutory consultation would need to be carried out.

There was debate were Councillor Emma Best spoke.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Emma Best and seconded by Councillor Mitchell Goldie that all of the words of the decision are replaced with the following words

That:

- Council **refer** the report to the Budget and Overview Scrutiny Committee for examination, with Cabinet discussing any recommendations before presenting them to Council.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 20:33 to allow political groups to discuss the proposed motion.

The meeting reconvened at 20:41

Councillor Paul Douglas exercised his right of reply.

The Conservative Group requested a recorded vote on the amendment in the names of Councillors Emma Best and Mitchell Goldie.

FOR: Councillors Roy Berg, Emma Best, Marion Fitzgerald, Mitchell Goldie, Sazimet Palta Imre, Kay Isa, Tim James, John Moss and Sam O'Connell

AGAINST: Councillors Shumon Ali-Rahman, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Elizabeth Baptiste, Kastriot Berberi, Marsella Berberi, Catherine Deakin, Shabana Dhedhi, Andrew Dixon, Paul Douglas, Rosaline Doré, Rhiannon Eglin, Kizzy Gardiner, Jenny Gray, Kisha Green, Crystal Ihenachor, Ahsan Khan, Johar Khan, Kira Lewis, Khevyn Limbajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, Jonathan O'Dea, Yusuf Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Sebastian Salek, Richard Sweden, Sharon Waldron, Terry Wheeler and Jennifer Whilby

ABSTENTION: Councillor Tom Connor

The amendment in the names of Councillors Emma Best and Mitchell Goldie **FELL**.

The Council **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**:

Council:

- **Agreed** that the proposed income banded Council Tax Support Scheme be continued whereby the maximum award available to working aged people receiving support remains at 85% for the Council Tax billing year 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- **Agreed** that the Council continue to make £750,000 available for a Discretionary Hardship Fund under section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012, to offer additional help and support to those suffering the greatest financial hardship as defined in the Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Hardship Scheme published on the Council's website. The current scheme is attached at (Appendix 2).
- **Agreed** there be delegated authority to make any minor and consequential changes necessary to the detailed provision as a result of any changes in the regulations upon which the scheme is based, is given to the Strategic Director of Resources following consultation with the Portfolio Lead Member for Finance and Resources.
- **Noted** that the income banded scheme treat earnings and self-employed earnings as income to determine a households level of income against the proposed income bands. All other income should be disregarded.
- **Noted** that the scheme will continue with two charges for non-dependant adults within households. £20pw for those in work & £8pw for those out of work.
- **Noted** working-age residents would be entitled to support of up to a maximum of 85%, depending on a person's level of income, household composition and level of capital and whether they fall within one of the protected groups: households with limited capability to work; households with children aged 5 and under.

- **Noted** other eligible working-age residents, support would be given up to a maximum of 57%, depending on their level of income, household composition and level of capital.
- **Noted** that the remaining provisions of the Council's scheme for 2026/27 will be as published on the Council's website.
- **Noted** that the projected cost of the whole scheme is identified as £19.53 million which is £0.93 million more than the current scheme. This will be reflected in the calculation of the council tax base for 2026/27 and included within the next MTFS as part of the budget setting process.
- **Noted** that before any significant changes to the scheme reducing or removing support could be made that a statutory consultation would need to be carried out.

#### 45. Fees and charges 2026/27

It was moved by Councillors Paul Douglas and Ahsan Khan that:

Council:

- **Agreed** the schedule of Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
- **Agreed** the proposal to uplift fees and charges by 1st February 2026 and at the latest 1st April 2026. The exception to this is academic related charges which are uplifted in line with the academic year

A recorded vote was requested by the Conservative Group.

FOR: Councillors Shumon Ali-Rahman, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Elizabeth Baptiste, Kastriot Berberi, Marsella Berberi, Tom Connor Catherine Deakin, Shabana Dhedhi, Andrew Dixon, Paul Douglas, Rosaline Doré, Rhiannon Eglin, Kizzy Gardiner, Jenny Gray, Kisha Green, Crystal Ihenachor, Ahsan Khan, Johar Khan, Kira Lewis, Khevyn Limbajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, Jonathan O'Dea, Yusuf Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Sebastian Salek, Richard Sweden, Sharon Waldron, Terry Wheeler and Jennifer Whilby.

AGAINST: Councillors Roy Berg, Emma Best, Marion Fitzgerald, Mitchell Goldie, Sazimet Palta Imre, Kay Isa, Tim James, John Moss and Sam O'Connell.

ABSTENTION: None.

It was **AGREED** that:

Council:

- **Agreed** the schedule of Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

- **Agreed** the proposal to uplift fees and charges by 1st February 2026 and at the latest 1st April 2026. The exception to this is academic related charges which are uplifted in line with the academic year

#### **46. Proposed new smoke control order**

It was moved by Councillor Clyde Loakes, seconded by Councillor Louise Mitchell, and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that

Council:

- **Agreed** the consolidation of the existing SCAs into a single SCA comprising the whole area of the London Borough of Waltham Forest and all waterways.
- **Agreed** the publication of the Notice in respect of the London Borough of Waltham Forest Smoke Control Revocation Order 2026 and New Smoke Control Order 2026.

#### **47. Corporate Parenting Board annual report 2024/25**

It was moved by Councillor Kizzy Gardiner, seconded by Councillor Tim James, and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that

Council:

- **Agreed** the contents of the report and supports the continued strategic priorities of the Corporate Parenting Board.

#### **48. Protocol for honorary alderperson**

It was moved by Councillor Uzma Rasool, seconded by Councillor Mitchell Goldie, and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that.

Council:

- **Adopted** the Protocol at Appendix 1 of the report;
- **Amended** the responsibility for functions within the Constitution to make explicit that decisions to make awards under that protocol are reserved to the Full Council;
- **Noted** that existing statutory powers to confer the titles of Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman be noted and the addition of a title of Honorary Alderperson be made in accordance with the Council's equality commitments.

Councillor Goldie commended the work of officers for the report.

#### **49. Long and distinguished service awards**

It was moved by Councillor Jenny Gray, seconded by Councillor Emma Best, and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** that

Council **conferred** a Long and Distinguished Service award to the following Member:

- Councillor Marie Pye (elected July 2005)

The Mayor paid tribute to Councillor Pye.

#### **50. Appointments**

None.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meetings at 21:07.

**The meeting closed at 9.07 pm**

**Chair's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_