

## London Borough of Waltham Forest

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Report Title	Review of 10 Years of Enjoy Waltham Forest
Meeting / Date	Climate Scrutiny Committee 27 March 2025
Directorate	Neighbourhoods and Environment
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Wards affected	All
Public access	Open
Appendices	None

### 1. **Summary**

- 1.1. This report provides the Climate Scrutiny Committee with an update on the sustainable transport infrastructure schemes and behaviour change initiatives delivered through the 10 Years of the Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme, and the outcomes and benefits realised to date.

### 2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to review the information within the report, ask questions of witnesses and make recommendations as required.

### 3. **Background**

- 3.1. Waltham Forest was one of only three boroughs in London to be awarded 'Mini-Holland' funding from Transport of London in 2014, with an allocation of £27 million. This funding was used to deliver the initial Enjoy Waltham Forest programme which comprised 33 individual schemes.
- 3.2. Whilst the initial programme of infrastructure schemes was completed in 2019, subsequent walking and cycling schemes have built upon the ethos and design principles of the Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme to expand its reach, including 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' schemes in residential areas and new protected cycle routes around the borough.
- 3.3. In addition, behaviour change initiatives continue to be developed to encourage and enable a greater number and range of residents to try walking and cycling, improving their confidence and knowledge to

utilise the infrastructure that has been introduced and creating a lasting active travel legacy.

- 3.4. The Enjoy Waltham Programme has received interest from many organisations, local authorities and universities, and has hosted over 75 visits including from the All Party Parliamentary Group for Cycling and Walking, Active Travel England, the Embassy of the Netherlands in London, and Dame Sarah Storey.
- 3.5. To date the Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme has won 31 awards and has been commended for a further 16, including 'Transport Borough of the Year' at the London Transport Awards, the 'Clean Air in Towns and Cities' award at the Ashden Awards, and most recently, the 'Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure' award at the CiTTi Awards in November 2024.
- 3.6. In 2024 we celebrated '10 Years of Enjoy Waltham Forest' in which we hosted two events. On Tuesday 14 May we held four walking and cycling tours to showcase a range of active travel infrastructure, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and urban greening schemes. Following this, a conference was held at Big Penny Social on Wednesday 15 May in partnership with Landor LINKS to share knowledge and lessons learnt of project implementation and delivery. Over 200 industry professionals attended including Chris Boardman CBE.

#### 4. **Walking and cycling infrastructure**

- 4.1. The Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme underpins the Mission Waltham Forest Strategy by 'leading the way for a net-zero borough' and 'creating safe, green neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive'. The programme is also key in delivering the actions of the 'a place for people not cars' objective of the Climate Action Plan.
- 4.2. The Enjoy Waltham Forest programme brought together a set of measures to collectively encourage residents and businesses to use more sustainable modes of transport and reduce dependency on private vehicles. These included:
  - Lea Bridge Road – 'a street for everyone' – Construction of protected cycle tracks between Hackney and Whipps Cross roundabout with continuous footways across side roads to provide continuity for people walking. Whipps Cross roundabout was transformed into a double T-junction with safe, signal-controlled crossing points for people walking and cycling, creating a safer and more attractive entrance to Epping Forest.
  - Walthamstow Village schemes – The implementation of woonerf principles (a Dutch term meaning 'living streets', using modal filters to allow passage of pedestrians and cyclists but not motor traffic) in the four 'village' residential areas surrounding Walthamstow Town centre.

- Town centre schemes – Improvements in Leyton, Leytonstone, Chingford and Highams Park town centres for people walking and cycling to complement the north-south cycle routes across the borough and link residential areas to key transport hubs.
- A network of excellent cycle routes – Provision of safe space for cycling along direct routes from east to west and north to south across the borough, linking other town centres to Walthamstow and other destinations inside and outside the borough.
- Complementary measures – Implementation of additional measures to complement the cycling infrastructure including on-street cycle parking, residential Bikehangars, free cycle training, and innovative cycle wayfinding.
- Cycle Hubs – Establishment of Cycle Hubs at stations across the borough to provide secure and convenient cycle parking spaces with key fob entry and CCTV.

4.3. Over the past 10 years the following infrastructure has been introduced across the borough:

- Over 55km of protected and semi-protected cycle routes
- Over 85 modal filters on residential streets to remove through-traffic
- 180 new or improved crossings
- Over 900 trees
- Over 55 public spaces
- Over 45 new pocket parks and parklets
- 11 Cycle Hubs at Overground and Underground stations with 764 spaces in total.

4.4. Key schemes that have been introduced over the past decade include the pedestrianisation of Orford Road and Francis Road, protected cycle lanes on Forest Road, Ruckholt Road, Grove Green Road and Hoe Street, the Coppermill Area Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme and the South Leytonstone Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

4.5. 900 Bikehangars have been installed on residential streets across Waltham Forest since 2015, providing secure and convenient cycle parking spaces for 5,400 residents. Despite Waltham Forest having one of the highest levels of provision of Bikehangars across the UK, the facilities are in high demand with over 4,300 residents on the waiting list for a space. A further 300 Bikehangars will be installed by spring 2026, bringing the total in the borough to 1,200. Membership of a Bikehangar costs £39 per year which is one of the lowest rates across all London boroughs.

## 5. **Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point infrastructure**

5.1. 1,146 EV charging sockets have been installed on the public highway within Waltham Forest to date, comprising of the following types:

- 651x 5.5kW in-column charging sockets (operated by ubitricity)
  - 62x 7kW fast freestanding charging sockets (to be shortly operated by Ubitricity)
  - 429x 22kW fast freestanding charging sockets (operated by Believ)
  - 4x 50kW rapid freestanding charging sockets (operated by bp pulse)
- 5.2. In autumn 2024 we achieved the milestone of 1,000 public charging sockets within Waltham Forest, and we are now reviewing and updating our award-winning EV Charging Point Strategy to highlight and reflect on the infrastructure installed so far and provide a forward plan for delivery for the next five years, taking into account the changes in operators, technology and funding streams.
- 5.3. Residents and businesses can request a charging point on their street or in their area by completing an online request form. With over 2,000 requests received to date, there is significant demand from residents and businesses to provide on-street EV charging to enable more vehicle owners to shift to Low Emission Vehicles.
- 5.4. We aim to remove charging infrastructure as both a perceived and a real barrier to the adoption of EVs, and charging should be cheaper and more convenient than refuelling at a petrol station. Charging for many EV owners often starts at home, however the majority of properties in Waltham Forest do not have access to off-street parking and are subsequently much more reliant on on-street provision. We therefore need to ensure that more on-street EVCPs are installed in convenient locations at an affordable cost to the end user without impacting on other road users, and therefore charging points will be situated in the carriageway rather than on footway space.
- 5.5. We expect the majority of EVCPs in Waltham Forest to be slower models which facilitate overnight charging in residential areas. The next biggest EVCP category will be fast, freestanding charging points to support a range of requirements for residents, businesses and visitors alike. These charging points will also support Car Club operators to electrify their fleets. Car Clubs have the potential to reduce private car ownership in Waltham Forest, and the Council is supporting operators to be as sustainable as possible.
- 5.6. Waltham Forest was awarded £4,327,000 through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) programme in partnership with Redbridge and Newham which will be used in Waltham Forest to deliver approximately 280 fast and rapid EV charging points.
- 5.7. By spring 2026 we aim to have 2,500 EVCPs, which will be an increase of 525% compared to winter 2022/23. Whilst the existing EVCPs have been predominantly grant funded, we propose switching to a supplier-funded model to ensure a greater ownership and responsibility for the infrastructure, however will still use grant funding where appropriate. This approach for local authorities has been favoured in the

Government's 'Taking Charge – Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy'.

- 5.8. We are also lobbying with others for a VAT reduction on the amount payable when using public EVCPs as this disproportionately impacts residents who do not have access to private driveways; off-street EVCPs are subject to 5% VAT compared to on-street EVCPs which are charged at 20%.
- 5.9. Whilst there are several 'cross pavement' EV charging solutions on the market which could potentially reduce the impact of this charging discrepancy, there's currently insufficient guidance and policy from the Department for Transport on these to safely and legally introduce them.

## 6. **Behaviour change updates**

- 6.1. In order to increase awareness of and confidence in using the above infrastructure, an extensive behaviour change programme has been developed.
- 6.2. Free cycle training is offered to everyone who lives, works or studies in Waltham Forest, and cycles are available free of charge through the Community Cycle Loan scheme. Free cycle checks are offered through weekly 'Dr Bike' sessions and classes are held to provide residents with the skills to maintain their own cycles. Furthermore, weekly 'All Ability Cycle Club' sessions are held in Leyton Jubilee Park to provide opportunities for everyone to enjoy cycling in a relaxed park environment using a range of adapted and modified cycles.
- 6.3. Council Officers work closely with schools across the borough to develop school travel plans through the Transport for London (TfL) Travel for Life Programme (previously STARS), and School Street zones are introduced in the vicinity of schools to make it safer and easier for pupils to walk, cycle and kick-scoot to school.
- 6.4. The Sustainable Transport Team have delivered or facilitated the following benefits to residents and businesses:
  - Created 24 School Street zones
  - Supported 74 schools in achieving TfL STARS school travel plan accreditations
  - Trained over 24,000 residents in cycle skills
  - Maintained over 11,500 cycles through Dr Bike sessions
  - Developed 12 Waltham Forest Wanders cultural and historical walking routes
  - Held annual Mini and Teen Tour de Waltham Forest primary and secondary school cycling events
  - Held annual Tour de Waltham Forest family cycling events
  - Supported the ZED Waltham Forest service to deliver over 485,000 items
  - Supported road safety, pedestrian and kick-scooter training in schools

- Worked with three Car Club operators to host 66 fixed-bay vehicles in the borough
- 6.5. As more active travel infrastructure has been introduced to enable a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, the Sustainable Transport Team began to receive an increasing number of requests from community groups for support in setting up walking and cycling based activities in the borough. In order to assist as many groups as possible, we set up our own 'Community Walking and Cycling Fund' in 2019. Since then, 57 groups have received up to £4,400 each to deliver projects in their own communities to reach people that the Council would not ordinarily be able to reach. In turn, over 4,100 people have benefitted from the grants programme which has led to improved physical health and mental wellbeing, greater community cohesion, and an enriched awareness and uptake in walking and cycling across the borough.

## 7. **Outcomes to date**

- 7.1. As a result of the above, Waltham Forest has consistently been the highest ranked Outer-London borough on the Healthy Streets Scorecard which independently measures local authorities in London on a range of sustainable transport indicators. This ranking has been achieved through LBWF having the second highest proportion of roads with protected cycle lanes in London and the second highest proportion of schools with TfL STARS accredited travel plans, alongside the third highest density of low-traffic neighbourhoods.
- 7.2. Research by Dr Rachel Aldred of Westminster University showed that people living in neighbourhoods with 'Mini-Holland' interventions in Waltham Forest, Enfield and Kingston are walking and cycling more, compared to Londoners living outside the three mini-Holland boroughs. Her survey of 1,712 outer Londoners found that on average people were walking an extra 32 minutes a week and cycling an average of nine extra minutes across areas close to Mini-Holland interventions. The study found that residents are walking 270 minutes per week and cycling 52 minutes per week, therefore averaging 322 minutes of weekly active travel. The Chief Medical Officer suggests adults should aim for a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity per week. Guidelines for older adults encourage daily activity and 150 weekly minutes of moderate intensity activity for optimal health gains, therefore the programme has contributed towards residents exceeding these targets.
- 7.3. Based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), which estimates deaths prevented from cycling and walking, at this level we would expect at least a 10-11% reduction in death from any cause in these people, compared to the general population. This means at least 27 deaths per year are being

prevented just from the physical activity being done by cycling and walking.

- 7.4. Furthermore, Dr Rachel Aldred also found that the 20-year health economic benefit from TfL's Mini-Holland Programme was calculated at £1,056m, from a programme cost of around £100m. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) were deemed to be the most effective type of intervention and provide a 20-year per-person physical-activity related benefit of £4,800 compared to a per-person cost of £28–35 (LTNs implemented during 2020 as Covid-19 emergency interventions) or £112 (higher-cost LTNs with more features such as greening and crossing improvements).
- 7.5. In 2018, a study by King's College London showed that five-year-olds living in Waltham Forest were predicted to live for an extra six weeks thanks to improvements in air quality since 2013 – and that Waltham Forest residents would gain 41,000 years of life in the coming century, thanks to the changes made via the Enjoy programme. The same report showed the number of households in Waltham Forest exposed to levels of nitrogen dioxide that exceed EU guidelines had dropped from 58,000 in 2007 to 6,300 in 2017.
- 7.6. Alongside this, the number of cycle journeys recorded in the borough by the Council's permanent cycle counter network increased by 54% in 2024 compared to 2019, which demonstrates that the infrastructure is being well-received and used. This correlates with an average 29% reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations measured by the three automatic counter sites in the borough between 2018 and 2023.

## 8. **Future schemes**

- 8.1. Future infrastructure schemes for 2025 and beyond include the introduction of protected cycle lanes on Forest Road between The Bell Junction and Woodford New Road, on Whipps Cross Road and High Road Leytonstone.
- 8.2. Key targets for the upcoming financial year include introducing a further 300 Bikehangars, bringing the total in the borough to 1,200, and having 2,500 EV charging points by spring 2026.
- 8.3. These will contribute to our Climate Action Plan target of at least 80% of journeys in Waltham Forest being made by walking, cycling or other public transport modes by 2030, 11 years ahead of the Mayor of London's target.

## 9. **Conclusion**

- 9.1. In conclusion the Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme has delivered a vast range of active travel infrastructure and complementary behaviour change initiatives over the past 10 years which have led to a range of co-benefits for residents including healthier, more active lives, cleaner air, and greener streets.

9.2. We will continue to be at the forefront of transport decarbonisation and build on the legacy of the Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme to achieve the aims of the Climate Action Plan. By installing more active travel infrastructure and introducing an even greater range of complementary behaviour change initiatives, we aim to continue to inspire and enable the next generation of residents to lead active, healthy, and sustainable lives.

## 10. **Implications**

10.1. There are no implications as a result of this report going to the Committee, as it is providing an update on an existing programme of works.

### 10.2. **Finance, Value for Money and Risk**

10.2.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report as the delivery of projects mentioned within will be funded within existing budgets.

### 10.3. **Legal**

10.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

### 10.4. **Equalities and Diversity**

10.4.1 The increased accessibility to sustainable modes of transport and the subsequent health and environmental benefits have had a demonstrable positive impact on residents. No negative impacts on residents with protected characteristics are expected as a result of the Enjoy Waltham Forest Programme.

### 10.5. **Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder).**

10.5.1 The projects detailed in this report are expected to have significant positive benefits on sustainability and climate change, with the objective of them to reach net-zero by 2030.

### 10.6. **Council Infrastructure (e.g. human resources, accommodation or IT issues**

10.6.1 There are no implications for Council Infrastructure including human resources, accommodation or IT issues.

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

None.