
Council

Minutes of
17 July 2025 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Mayor: Councillor Tony Bell

Councillors:

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

11. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elizabeth Baptiste, Roy Berg, Tom Connor, Catherine Deakin, Rhiannon Eglin, Mitchell Goldie, Ahsan Khan, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Jonathan O'Dea, Sazimet Palta Imre and Caramel Quin

12. Declarations of interest

None.

13. Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 22nd May 2025.

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council that took place on the 22nd May 2025 were **AGREED** by Council and signed by then Mayor.

14. Announcements from the Mayor, Council Leader, Cabinet Members and Chief Executive

Announcements began with a pause to honour the memory of those lost in the 7/7 attacks and a moment of silence was observed. Condolences were expressed for the loss of Tyler Hayward and Lord Norman Tebbit. The Mayor then shared updates on various events attended, including the Borough Commander's Commendation Ceremony, Chingford Heritage Festival, Haven House Charity Sparkle Walk, Armed Forces Day event, 'This is Carmen' Children's Opera event, and the Leytonstone Festival. Recognition was given to the Highams Park Hub, Haven House, and Walthamstow Wetlands charities. Adwoa Owusu was announced as the Youth Mayor. Thanks were extended to organisations and community groups for invitations to events.

Councillor Grace Williams reported on the council's financial management, highlighting challenges in adult and children's services and ongoing transformation actions. She mentioned an LGA peer review report and achievements in social housing and Ofsted inspections. Despite these efforts, the financial outlook is worsening, potentially leading to a need for exceptional financial support. The impact of funding cuts since 2010 was noted, and the Fair Deal for Waltham Forest campaign was mentioned. Councillor Williams announced actions to respond to local government finance reform consultation, including a meeting with the Minister for Local Government.

Councillor Naheed Asghar discussed the borough's growth and redevelopment and the unequal distribution of benefits. The launch of a new Inclusive Growth and Economy Framework was announced, aiming to build an economy that works for everyone. Partnerships with education, NHS, housing, creative, digital, and VCS sectors were highlighted. The focus was on residents in temporary accommodation, with learning difficulties, and young black men and black and South Asian women. Plans for a new Inclusive Growth and Economy Mission Board starting in September were shared, with three core aims: access to support for people in poverty, access to good work for everyone, and economic growth benefits for all communities.

Councillor Rosalind Doré announced that Waltham Forest Pride would take place on July 19th in Lloyd Park. The event, supported by the council and Elop, will feature local performers, LGBTQ+ run businesses, and activities for all residents. The importance of creating safe and supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals was emphasised, given the rise in hatred and discrimination. The council's commitment to inclusion and equality was reiterated.

15. Public statements

Alexandra Martinelli-Kinmonth, founder of the Together Space, spoke about the importance of inclusive play for disabled and non-disabled children, sharing her personal experience with her daughter Violet. She highlighted the need for continued investment and policies supporting community-led inclusion. Wendy Fields, CEO of the Lloyd Park Children's Charity, discussed the charity's work supporting children and families in Waltham Forest. She emphasised the essential role of play in

children's development and called for accessible, inclusive, and community-powered play opportunities.

Council **AGREED** to vary the order of the agenda to take **Agenda Item 7 – Notices of Motion** as the next item.

16. Notices of motion

17. Labour Group Motion

It was moved and seconded by Councillors Kizzy Gardiner and Rosalind Doré that:

This Council notes:

- That play and creativity are an integral part of childhood and fundamental to the way all children learn, develop, and grow.
- That play stimulates cognitive development, supports language acquisition, enhances problem-solving skills, and encourages creativity.
- That the last National Play Strategy was published in 2008, with £235m investment into play.
- Our parks and playgrounds are well loved and heavily used by children and families across the borough. They form a critical part of our social and community infrastructure.

This Council welcomes:

- The capital programme that has utilised the proceeds of development, investing in inclusive play facilities for children across the borough including £200,000 for Lloyd Park and £250,000 in Drapers Field and new playgrounds in Wingfield Park and Priory Court.
- The £8.4 million Government funded and pioneering 'Child-friendly Chingford' programme bringing a range of projects co-created with local children and young people to town centres and parks in the north of the borough, including £3.3m in Chase Lane, Memorial Park and Rolls Park.
- The strong emphasis on play throughout our Early Years provision, which has contributed to the borough's excellent Early Years results – making us one of the top boroughs in the country.
- The significant number of school streets installed to prioritise and provide a safe space for children to be with their friends on the way to and from school and our long-standing commitment to encouraging and supporting play streets.
- Productive partnerships with anchor institutions such as Soho Theatre Walthamstow to deliver high-quality creative and play opportunities including the Primary Playwrights scheme.
- Collaboration with voluntary and community sector partners as well as local schools, and other specialist providers to deliver the Space4All programme for young people from 5 to 16.
- The installation of three play-based fountains in the borough in the last five years.

This Council resolves to:

- Support the national campaign on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to protect and prioritise play space for children and young people, as launched by Play England.
- Continue to utilise the proceeds of housing growth to invest and improve the play offer of our playgrounds and parks.
- Establish a “Together We Play” fund of £50,000, enabling residents and community stakeholders to access funding to deliver play-based activities in their local communities across the borough.
- Support the campaign to scrap ‘No Ball Games’ signs on Council estates across the borough.
- Create a new online family-friendly play directory.

Councillors Emma Best and Catherine Saumarez then moved to amend the motion to add the words underlined:

Councillor Saumarez formally seconded and reserved her right to speak.

This Council notes:

- That play and creativity are an integral part of childhood and fundamental to the way all children learn, develop, and grow.
- That play stimulates cognitive development, supports language acquisition, enhances problem-solving skills, and encourages creativity.
- That the last National Play Strategy was published in 2008, with £235m investment into play.
- Our parks and playgrounds are well loved and heavily used by children and families across the borough. They form a critical part of our social and community infrastructure.
- The Holiday Activities and Food programme, rolled out in 2021 by the Department for Education, (worth over £1million in 24/25) which gives children the opportunity to get involved in a wide range of activities and enjoy a daily meal during their summer holidays and reached almost 2000 Waltham Forest children in summer 2024.

This Council welcomes:

- The capital programme that has utilised the proceeds of development, investing in inclusive play facilities for children across the borough including £200,000 for Lloyd Park and £250,000 in Drapers Field and new playgrounds in Wingfield Park and Priory Court.
- The £8.4 million Government funded and pioneering ‘Child-friendly Chingford’ programme bringing a range of projects co-created with local children and young people to town centres and parks in the north of the borough, including £3.3m in Chase Lane, Memorial Park and Rolls Park.
- The strong emphasis on play throughout our Early Years provision, which has contributed to the borough’s excellent Early Years results – making us one of the top boroughs in the country.
- The significant number of school streets installed to prioritise and provide a safe space for children to be with their friends on the way to and from school and our long-standing commitment to encouraging and supporting play streets.

- Productive partnerships with anchor institutions such as Soho Theatre Walthamstow to deliver high-quality creative and play opportunities including the Primary Playwrights scheme.
- Collaboration with voluntary and community sector partners as well as local schools, and other specialist providers to deliver the Space4All programme for young people from 5 to 16.
- The installation of three play-based fountains in the borough in the last five years.

This Council resolves to:

- Support the national campaign on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to protect and prioritise play space for children and young people, as launched by Play England.
- Continue to utilise the proceeds of housing growth to invest and improve the play offer of our playgrounds and parks.
- Oppose any loss of or building on our publicly accessible verdant green parks and spaces.
- Establish a “Together We Play” fund of £50,000, enabling residents and community stakeholders to access funding to deliver play-based activities in their local communities across the borough.
- Support the campaign to scrap ‘No Ball Games’ signs on Council estates across the borough.
- Create a new online family-friendly play directory.
- Introduce a School Streets Programme that includes areas without CPZs, much like has been successfully rolled out in boroughs like Brent.
- Ensure that there is no loss of vital Family Hub and youth activities in South Chingford due to the sale of the Paradox Centre and engage with both Peabody and the new owners for these activities to continue at the Centre.

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- There was debate in which Councillors Shumon Ali-Rahan, Kischa Green, Justin Halabi, John Moss, Jenny Gray, Afzal Akram and Catherine Saumarez spoke. Councillor Kizzy Gardiner exercised her right of reply.

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 18.4, a recorded vote was requested by the Conservative group on the amendment in the names of Councillors Emma Best and Catherine Saumarez.

When put to the vote, the amendment in the names of Councillors Emma Best and Catherine Saumarez **FELL**.

For the amendment: Councillors Afzal Akram, Emma Best, Marion Fitzgerald, Jemma Hemsted, Kay Isa, Tim James, John Moss, Sam O’Connell and Catherine Saumarez.

Against the amendment: Councillors Shumon Ali-Rahman, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Vicky Ashworth, Karen Bellamy, Kastriot Berberi, Marsela Berberi, Shabana Dhedhi, Andrew Dixon, Rosalind Doré, Paul Douglas, Kizzy Gardiner, Jenny Gray, Kischa Green, Crystal Ihenachor, Whitney Ihenachor, Johar Khan, Kira Lewis,

Khevyn Limbajee, Gerry Lyons, Zafran Malik, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, Yusef Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Uzma Rasool, Keith Rayner, Sebastian Salek, Richard Sweden, Steve Terry, Katy Thompson, Sharon Waldron, Terry Wheeler, Jennifer Whilby and Grace Williams.

Abstentions: None.

The motion in the names of Councillors Kizzy Gardiner and Rosalind Doré was put to the vote by show of hands and was **CARRIED**.

Council **AGREED**:

This Council notes:

- That play and creativity are an integral part of childhood and fundamental to the way all children learn, develop, and grow.
- That play stimulates cognitive development, supports language acquisition, enhances problem-solving skills, and encourages creativity.
- That the last National Play Strategy was published in 2008, with £235m investment into play.
- Our parks and playgrounds are well loved and heavily used by children and families across the borough. They form a critical part of our social and community infrastructure.

This Council welcomes:

- The capital programme that has utilised the proceeds of development, investing in inclusive play facilities for children across the borough including £200,000 for Lloyd Park and £250,000 in Drapers Field and new playgrounds in Wingfield Park and Priory Court.
- The £8.4 million Government funded and pioneering 'Child-friendly Chingford' programme bringing a range of projects co-created with local children and young people to town centres and parks in the north of the borough, including £3.3m in Chase Lane, Memorial Park and Rolls Park.
- The strong emphasis on play throughout our Early Years provision, which has contributed to the borough's excellent Early Years results – making us one of the top boroughs in the country.
- The significant number of school streets installed to prioritise and provide a safe space for children to be with their friends on the way to and from school and our long-standing commitment to encouraging and supporting play streets.
- Productive partnerships with anchor institutions such as Soho Theatre Walthamstow to deliver high-quality creative and play opportunities including the Primary Playwrights scheme.
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- Establish a “Together We Play” fund of £50,000, enabling residents and community stakeholders to access funding to deliver play-based activities in their local communities across the borough.
- Support the campaign to scrap ‘No Ball Games’ signs on Council estates across the borough.
- Create a new online family-friendly play directory.

18. 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 and Clyde Loakes, Councillor Grace Williams responded to the relevant questions.

Question 1**Councillor Emma Best to Councillor Clyde Loakes**

Will the Leader meet with ward councillors to speak with businesses on Station Road to talk about the changes to parking session fees?

Councillor Williams responded that there had been engagement at every level and that she continues to engage with businesses often.

Question 2**Councillor Justin Halabi to Councillor Khevyn Limbajee**

Can we have figures on the types of infractions that constitute the 2500 fines issued since the PSPO was brought in?

Councillor Limbajee agreed to provide the information in writing and provide a member’s briefing on the PSPO consultation.

Question 3**Councillor Afzal Akram to Councillor Clyde Loakes**

Can the size of the signage on Cherrydown Avenue be increased due to the high numbers of PCNs and that any money from the fines were ringfenced for roads and pavements in the area?

Councillor Williams said that the request had been reviewed and she would provide a full written response.

Question 4

Councillor Jemma Hemsted to Councillor Clyde Loakes

What is being done to stop businesses shutting down in Cherrydown Avenue?

Councillor Williams said that officers had been engaging with businesses about signage and loading provisions.

Question 5

Councillor John Moss to Councillor Ahsan Khan

Can we have more detail on the completion dates of pipeline developments?

Councillor Williams agreed to provide this in a written response.

Question 6

Councillor Kay Isa to Councillor Clyde Loakes

How many tickets had been issued compared to the previous year?

Councillor Williams said that she would check and provide a written response.

The following oral questions were asked.

Councillor Emma Best to Councillor Grace Williams

Can you rule out any building on any parks in Waltham Forest?

Councillor Williams said that any developments were required to following national planning law and could provide a written response on the technical answer about development on any verdant green spaces.

Councillor Jemma Hemsted to Councillor Grace Williams

Can you tell us why residents in Valley ward, experiencing closure of businesses in Cherrydown Avenue should feel grateful for the new Marks and Spencers in Leytonstone?

Councillor Williams said that all councillors are required to represent the borough as a whole and decisions are made for the best interests of town centres across the borough.

19. Appointments

The following appointments were **AGREED** by Council:

Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

Councillor Richard Sweden to replace Councillor Keith Rayner

Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Caramel Quin to be taken off

**Licensing 2003 Act Committee, Licensing General Committee and
Gambling 2005 Act Committee**

Councillor Raja Anwar to be added to the membership

Pension Fund Committee

Councillor Keith Rayner to replace Councillor Jenny Gray as the Vice-Chair

Pension Board

Jane Morris to replace Natasha Brown as an employer representative.

Outside Bodies: Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Councillor Terry Wheeler to replace Councillor Rosalind Doré as representative.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chair's Signature _____

Date _____