# The NGDP at Waltham Forest



# **About Waltham Forest**

Waltham Forest is a London Borough in the North-East of the city, which is home to around 278,000 residents, making it the 17th largest borough in London. Its main population centres are Chingford in the north, Walthamstow in the centre, and Leyton and Leytonstone in the south.

Waltham Forest's identity is defined by its diversity. We are the 11<sup>th</sup> most diverse local authority in the UK, and the 9<sup>th</sup> in London. We are also home to the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Muslim population in the UK. The borough is also comprised of diverse geography, with the natural scenery of Epping Forest and the River Lea on our Northern and Western border, contrasted by more urban neighbours to our East and South.







As a local authority, Waltham Forest is one of the most ambitious in the country, leading the way on policies like 15-Minute Neighbourhoods, climate action and affordable housing. We have also made significant gains in tackling poverty within the borough, going from the 15th most deprived borough in the UK in 2010, to the 82nd in 2019.

As acknowledgment of our ambition as a local authority, Waltham Forest was awarded the MJ Council of the Year award in 2019.

The borough was also awarded London's first Borough of Culture award, highlighting our thriving arts scene, from the William Morris gallery, to our prosperous music scene, to our current renovation of Hoe Street's Soho Theatre.

# **Political Profile**

Waltham Forest council is comprised of 60 councillors and is currently a Labour

controlled authority, led by Councillor
Grace Williams. After the May 2022 local
elections there were 47 Labour councillors
and 13 Conservative councillors



# **Key Facts**



The population of Waltham Forest is 278,400 making it the 17th largest London Borough by population



Waltham Forest is
Ilth most diverse local
authority in the UK
with an estimated 53%
of residents being
born overseas



Waltham Forest has 4
Tube stations (and is only a 20-minute ride from central London),

10 railway stations, and around 401 bus stops



Waltham Forest became London's first Borough of Culture in 2019, and was also awarded MJ's Council of the Year 2019



Waltham Forest has more green space than any other north London borough, and is the 13th least densely populated borough in London



Waltham Forest is home to the longest running street market in Europe

# Mission Waltham Forest

Mission Waltham Forest sets out the Council's plan for more equal borough by 2030. It is our commitment to all our residents to tackle the fundamental challenges facing them and drive the change within the Council that is needed to achieve this.

# **Borough Missions**

To deliver on our vision for a fairer and more equal borough, by 2030 we will:



# Ensure every family and every child are given every opportunity

We will ensure every family and every child can access the services and support they need so all children can thrive.



# Build an economy that works for everyone

We will shape a more inclusive local economy that attracts businesses and talent while unlocking opportunities for residents.



# Make Waltham Forest a great place to live and age well

We will ensure all residents can make the most of their strengths and live healthier, longer, and more independent lives.



# Tackle the housing crisis head on

We will deliver a new generation of homes that are affordable to buy and affordable to live in.



# Lead the way for a net-zero borough

We will tackle the Climate Emergency head on, paving the way for net zero in Waltham Forget



# Safe, green neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive

We will ensure every resident feels safe in their homes and neighbourhoods and feels included and welcome.



# **Council Missions**

In order to transform the way that we work with residents and one another, and to deliver our vision of a changed borough, we as a Council will aim for:



# A focus on services designed around residents

We will constantly work to improve the design and quality of Council services and push ourselves to provide experiences and services residents deserve.



# A preventative approach for stronger communities

We will have a joined-up approach to prevention, offering support in the right place, at the right time, in the right ways.



# An inclusive workforce that reflects our community

We will build a culture of inclusion by closing pay gaps; our workforce will be as diverse as our community at every level.

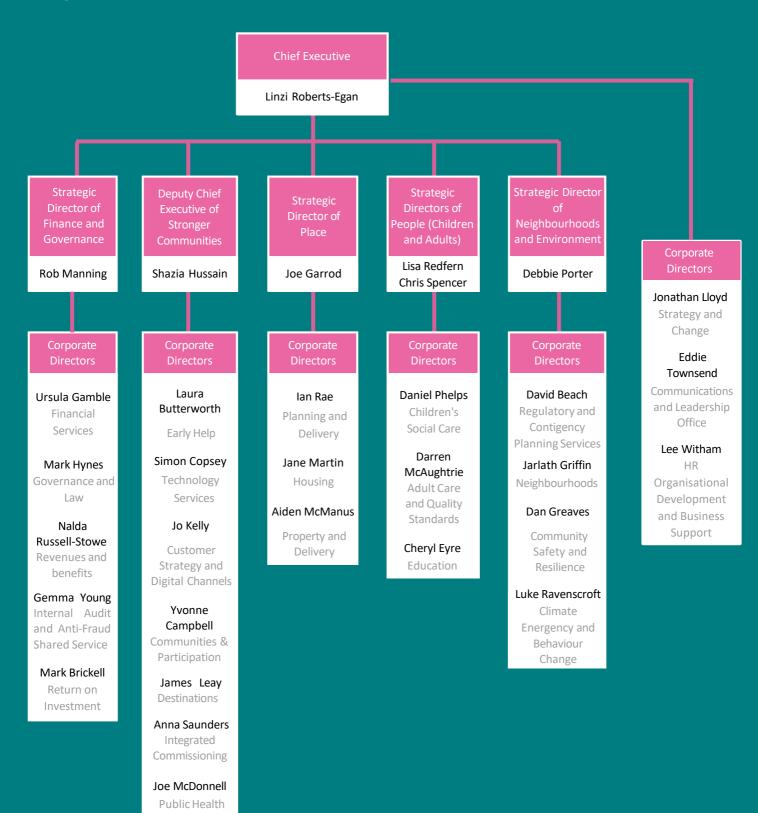


# A firm financial footing

We will achieve financial security by balancing the books and adopting a well-managed, sustainable approach to investment.

# Corporate Structure

Within Waltham Forest council, services are provided by six directorates. Each directorate is made up of a number of services which are managed by a Corporate Director.



# Our culture and values

# We want our culture and values to become fully shared and recognisable to everyone

At the beginning of 2021, services across the Council took part in the second part of our Big Conversation to help shape and develop our future People Strategy.

Directorates held sessions with their teams to discuss how we redefine our values and culture, focusing on what our values and culture mean to us and suggested practical ways as to how we can bring them to life and what barriers may stop us from achieving it.

In our teams we discussed the differences between the way we experience and understand Waltham Forest now, what our ideal looks like, and how we might get there. These conversations developed our values and culture which will ensure we thrive in the future.

These conversations have helped us redefine our values and culture to express what makes our Council unique and will enable us to work together towards our common vision:

# **Our Values**

Our values are at the heart of everything we do and will guide the way we work with each other, our partners, and our communities.



#### **Fellowship**

We will act with fellowship and care towards each other. We will be open and honest, learning from our mistakes as we continue to strive to deliver high quality services.



### **Opportunity**

We will create opportunities and look for ways to do things better as we encourage individual achievements



#### Respect

We value and respect each other. Respect is at the core of everything we do at the Council.



#### **Equality and Diversity**

We want our workforce at all levels to reflect our diverse borough whilst recognising the strength and value that comes from our differences to ensure everyone at Waltham Forest feels a sense of belonging



#### Service

We will deliver excellent service to our residents. We value the contribution of everyone working together to achieve shared success.



#### **Trust**

We trust our people to deliver and achieve the best outcomes for our residents whilst we support and equip them with the skills to do so, and will continue working in partnership to build trust together.

# **Our Culture**

Our vision is to create a culture where everyone is valued, respected, celebrated and can thrive in an environment they trust.

### We will... Communicate

- Drive conversations
- Engage with staff
- · Share information and knowledge

#### We will... Commit

- · Develop and improve staff through training
- · Celebrate our staff
- · Create a positive environment

## We will... Co-ordinate

- · Work towards shared goals
- · Make the most of teamwork skills
- · Make time to reflect

#### We have... Confidence

- · Empower people to make decisions
- Encourage creativity
- · Show respect by listening



# Whats happening at Waltham Forest





# **Affordable Housing**

By tackling the housing crisis head on, Waltham Forest Council have become national leaders in providing affordable housing within the borough.

Despite financial pressures, we have recently developed a new Housing Strategy based on recommendations by an independent Affordable Housing Commission, which we hope will present innovative ways to maximise the delivery of good quality, affordable homes for residents, to ensure people can reach their potential in our borough.

This is reinforced by our updated Local Plan, which aims to build 27,000 homes in the Borough over the next 15 years.

# Soho Theatre

Soho Theatre Walthamstow is the official title of the 970-seat venue on Hoe Street, previously the EMD and Granada cinemas. It is scheduled to reopen in 2025 after a £30m redevelopment.

Waltham Forest Council acquired the building in 2019 to ensure it remained an entertainment venue and cultural hub for the community, while bringing economic, social, and environmental benefits to Waltham Forest residents and local businesses.

The £30m investment into the venue's revival is part of the council's London Borough of Culture 2019 legacy commitment to place culture at the heart of its communities. The venue will help boost the local evening and night-time economy and support our existing businesses and residents.





# Citizens' Assembly 2024

In 2024, Waltham Forest became the first authority in the country to establish a Citizens' Assembly on the Future of Neighbourhood Policing, following the findings of the Casey Review.

The Assembly brought together 50 local residents to look at neighbourhood policing in the borough, hearing balanced evidence and experiences on the issues.

Their recommendations will shape how the local Police work in our neighbourhoods. The Council will also use the recommendations to improve our engagement with the Police so that we can better support residents.



# Levelling up funding

We recently received £31 million for projects in the borough from the government's Levelling Up fund.

Around £14 million of this funding is going to make long-awaited improvements to Leyton Station as part of our commitment to improve infrastructure in the borough. This will include a new entrance, ticket hall and facilities for step-free access will make a huge difference to local people. The remaining £14 million will go towards several projects in Walthamstow, including significant improvements across the High Street, Hoe Street and St James Street areas and the creation of new cultural hubs at Chestnuts House, Hatherley Mews and Vestry House.



# Town Hall Area Redevelopment

Construction is currently underway to transform our Town Hall Campus through the Fellowship Square programme, to create a new neighbourhood and cultural civic quarter within the heart of our borough.

Developments began in 2022 and will finish in 2026.



# Safe Streets Pilot

Within our work towards a 15-Minute Neighbourhood model, we have recently finished a six-month hyper-local Community Safety pilot called Safe Streets.

The idea was to improve our ways of working through highly responsive, co-located multidisciplinary teams, proactively locating and acting on resident priorities and fixing problems holistically. This participatory problem-solving approach will ensure that 'every contact counts', empowering staff beyond convention to tackle root causes as well as symptoms.

Following the Pilot's success, we have now begun the process of expanding it out throughout the whole borough.



# University of Portsmouth Campus

In 2024, students will begin studying at the new University of Portsmouth campus in Waltham Forest.

This will give fantastic learning opportunities for local residents, create jobs, and further highlight how the Borough is an amazing place to develop and thrive.





Abbey Marg

# How the scheme is run at Waltham Forest

At Waltham Forest, the NGDP is well established and highly regarded by the senior management of the Council. National Management Trainees at Waltham Forest have undertaken a range of exciting and challenging placements in which they've made a real difference to the Council.

Typically, graduates will do four placements over a two-year period with the council. They will also have access to wider support, such as:

**Mentoring:** All graduates join our mentoring programme, which includes training for both graduates and senior mentors to help get the best out of your mentoring relationship.

#### Additional training and qualification:

Graduates are provided with additional training – in previous years this has included project management courses and sessions with a qualified work coach. There are also frequent graduate development sessions with senior leaders from across the council, where graduates can learn a wide range of skills.

**Exposure to senior leaders:** Graduates will be given the opportunity to meet and speak with senior staff across the council including the Chief Executive and the Leader of the council.

A network and alumni: Waltham Forest have taken on graduates from the NGDP scheme for many years and this means graduates can expect to be supported by a large and growing network of people.

# **Recruitment Process**

# **Recruitment Process**

We will be recruiting 2 graduates in this cohort, who will join the existing 4 graduates that joined us in Cohort 25. Interviews are scheduled for **Tuesday 6 May 2024.** 

If attending in person you will:

- meet the NGDP sponsor Deputy Chief Executive Shazia Hussain
- have a tour of the town hall and local area
- meet with existing graduates for any informal questions

Online interviews will be offered on the same date

#### Support throughout the application process:

We will be hosting 2 drop-in sessions to meet the placement coordinator and the current NMTs in advance of your interviews

# Perks of the NGDP at Waltham Forest

Starting salary of £30,700

**Local Government Pension Scheme** 

**28 days annual leave plus public holidays** (with option to buy up to 5 days additional leave each year)

Family friendly policies including flexible working, maternity, paternity, and adoption leave, as well as time off for study leave, exams and public duty

On the job training – you'll complete a level 7 Institute of Leadership and Management qualification (the equivalent of a post graduate diploma)

**Hybrid working –** working remotely, including from home

**Flexi-time scheme** – working flexibly between 7am-7pm and the ability to take additional time off for hours accrued

Laptop

Mentoring and coaching schemes

Bike loans





# **Staff Networks**

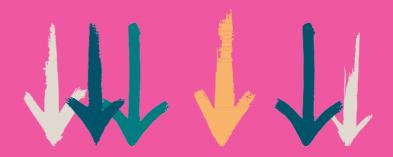
# Women's Network

The goal for the Women of the London
Borough of Waltham Forest council is to
engage all the members to achieve their full
potential and ambitions through the
network by learning from and cheerleading
each other. Enabling each member to
connect in a safe space and collaborate with
each other through shared learning, trusted
relationships and by having fun.

# **Race Equality Network**

The Race Equality Network aims and objectives are:

- To be an activist group promoting the rights and fair practice for non-white staff across all employment related matters
- To scrutinise the council's approach/ response to relevant matters and to challenge/act as a critical friend where appropriate
- To support non-white employees to successfully obtain senior positions within the council, new or via promotion
  - this may include positive action.
- To be a safe space for non-white employees to share experience and seek peer support.



# **LGBTQI+ Network**

Out in the Forest is the council's LGBTQI+ employee network.

They aspire to be a diverse group of colleagues who promote the interests of LGBTIQ+ colleagues (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, as well as any other sexualities and gender identities).

Their work mainly involves informal peer support, hosting awareness events and overarching scrutiny of council policy and practice. They

also arrange fun social events, including movie and coffee mornings for members to socialise and meet new colleagues who they might not otherwise meet.

# **Forest Wellbeing Network**

The Forest Wellbeing network supports staff with everything from mental and physical health to financial wellbeing, and offer frequent talks, book clubs, sessions and more to help staff maximise their own happiness.

# **Differently Abled Forum**

The differently abled forum objective is to work together to improve working life for people affected by disability at Waltham Forest.

# **Early Careers Group**

Waltham Forest Early Careers Group is a recently established peer support space open to all council employees in the early stages of a local government career. Our mission is to help colleagues new to local government to connect with, learn from, and support each other in their professional development. We champion co-production and are led by our members.

We will organise social events and career development opportunities for members, and advocate for their needs to senior staff. This is a very new group that was kickstarted by current NGDP graduates, and new graduates would be actively encouraged to join and help to steer the direction of travel within this space.

# Current National Management Trainees

# Niam Manansala

#### Cohort 25

I joined Waltham Forest's NGDP in October 2023, having graduated in Law in 2019. One reason for applying was because I view politics as a vehicle for positive change, and even when it goes awry, it is still very interesting! Another reason is that working for a council ties you closely to a local community which central government rarely does. Our projects tend to have direct consequences on the locality: things are delivered, and you can see the results, typically with positive outcomes for the people involved. Unsurprisingly, Waltham Forest stood out to me as an employment destination as I've lived here for almost my whole life and witnessed this borough undergo exceptional change. Simply put, I have a big stake in the borough and want to help manage this change equitably.

My first and current placement is in the Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate. One of the two projects I've been helping with is the Citizens' Assembly on the Future of Neighbourhood Policing. The Council has partnered with the Metropolitan Police to gather 50 residents who represent the borough's demographics. Our goal is to produce recommendations to improve neighbourhood policing and make residents feel safer. Finding expert speakers for the Assembly was a highlight; I worked with a colleague to create a longlist before pitching them to my team – and it was both surreal and rewarding to see a speaker I vouched for addressing the Assembly right before my eyes!

The other project I've been working on is the renewal of our property licensing scheme. In Waltham Forest, many landlords have to own a property license to be able to let, and this means the Council can ensure private-rented properties are well-managed and tenants fairly treated. I really enjoyed gathering case studies showing the Council using their powers to help residents, whether that was by taking control of a property mismanaged by its landlord, or by taking steps to treat poisonous damp and mould. When drafting the studies, I interviewed Enforcement Officers to better understand specific cases, and it was satisfying to see that most of my case studies appeared in the consultation pack we shared with the public. DLUHC has also taken a keen interest in our work.

The diversity of the Council is genuine – it really does feel like the environment I grew up in – and there is a real positive energy emanating from the Town Hall. Apply and see for yourself!

# Aisha Farah

#### Cohort 25

Hello, my name is Aisha Farah, I am a new NMT at the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Prior to this role, I studied History and Politics at University, following this I worked within Adult Social Care for a care agency commissioned by Haringey Council for 2 years.

I applied to work within local government not only due to my love for public service but also for the opportunity to deal with the more micro elements of policy. I appreciate how Waltham Forest prioritises community-led approaches and takes into consideration the valuable insight from residents' lived experience to better inform their policy! Something I am proud to be a part of.

I am currently in my first placement in the council, in Integrated Commissioning where I work on the council's Supported Programme and the new All-Age Autism Strategy. The former is an employment programme for young people with SEND that provides learners with employable skills and experience in order to prepare them for the world of work. Here I assist in the running of the programme, I work with our external stakeholders (the local college and MENCAP) as well as finding work placements for the learners. The second piece of work, the All-Age Autism strategy aims to make Waltham Forest an autism friendly borough. Here I focus on implementing one of the 10 priorities, building an inclusive community. I am currently creating a set of standards that is to be shared to local businesses to help them improve their spaces to make it more inclusive and neurodiverse friendly. Both areas of work are very exciting, new and fresh and are in line with 'Mission Waltham Forest'. It's great to be involved in an area that is seen as a priority, and because it is new it allows me to have some ownership and show off my skills!

# **Elinor Williams**

### Cohort 24

I have been on the Waltham Forest NGDP scheme in October 2022. I have a BA in Sociology and an MA in Teaching Studies and prior to applying for the NGDP, I was a primary school teacher for 4 years. After deciding that teaching was not for me, I was browsing for jobs on the Waltham Forest website and came across the scheme. I have lived in Waltham Forest all my life so was keen to find a role where I could work within and give back to my local community. I was also really drawn by the development opportunities and chance to gain professional qualifications. It is fair to say I have not looked back or regretted my career change.

So far on the scheme I have completed three 6-month placements. Firstly, I spent time in the leadership office supporting the Chief Executive and Leader of the council with their priority projects, gaining exposure to senior decision making in the engine room of the council. I then moved onto the Family Hubs project team, where I organised the Family Hubs launch event and coordinated the operational delivery of our 'best start in life' baby and toddler packs; a complementary gift to all new-born and two-year olds in the borough. I particularly enjoyed the frontline experience I got in this placement, interacting with families at the launch event.

My most recent placement has been within the housing transformation team. Housing is such a vast and interesting sector within a local authority, and I have really valued the time spent within the service. I have been working on the development and delivery of a pilot training programme for staff.

Waltham Forest Council is an exciting place to work, everyone I have met has been welcoming and there is a positive working culture. Flexible working is available and encouraged along with many accessible staff networks; for example, I have joined the women's network who put on regular events.

Wellbeing and work life balance were important to me when looking for a job and I have found them to be embedded in the Waltham Forest culture. There has been lots of support for us grads and no question I have had has ever felt too silly. I think now would be a great time to be a part of the scheme and hope you would consider coming to join us!

## **Max Carter**

#### Cohort 24

Hello everyone! My name is Max, and I am a NGDP graduate here at Waltham Forest Council. Prior to joining the scheme, I completed an MA in Geopolitics and worked as an emergency call handler. Whilst wondering what my future held, I stumbled across the NGDP whilst researching a wide variety of graduate positions. What struck me was the breadth and variety of positions that were available to work in within local government, alongside a strong focus on learning and developing you as a skilled operative within local government. This career development encourage me to apply, and after securing a place on the scheme, I moved to Waltham Forest to better understand the community I would be serving.

Now in my second year of the graduate scheme, I have completed three placements so far. I started my first placement within the Area Regeneration team, helping to support a project championing culture and creativity within the built environment, and exploring the idea of a 'cultural quarter' for local artists. This included extensive research, engaging with businesses, creating surveys, analysing data, and contributing to a high-level report. This enjoyment of engaging with business and residents led me into my second placement with the Employment, Business and Skills team. I worked on their 'Future Formed' programme, which aimed to get 16-30 year olds from minority backgrounds into creative careers. This was a fantastic experience, which included organising visits to creative venues across London, working with partners to facilitate training and work experience, and helping educate young people into understanding what creative careers are available to

My most recent placement has been within the Climate team. Climate change is one of the most existential threats to the modern world, and it has been thoroughly interesting to see how the team is combating it. I have been involved in applying for biodiversity grants, helping to organise retrofitting work in fuel poor homes and researching into effective waste and recycling strategies.

I also cannot speak highly enough of those running our graduate scheme alongside the staff I have interacted with so far on my placements. It really is a great work culture to be part of, with flexible working encouraged and development opportunities pushed to the forefront of our schedules. So, I absolutely encourage you to apply for Waltham Forest!

# Waltham Forest NMT Alumni

## Alisa Musanovic

# Cohort 24

I joined the Council a year ago now but it's gone by really quickly! I studied History BA and then completed a two-year interdisciplinary degree called Economy, State and Society. I ended up writing my dissertation about local experiences of culture across time, so knew I wanted to translate my interest in local communities to my career. After finding out about the NGDP through a chance google search, I applied having no idea how far I'd be able to make it through the application process. In the meantime, I worked for a think-tank, volunteered for a local charity, and then worked as a tour guide, which all proved valuable for my Waltham Forest interview.

Since being here, I've worked in a welcoming Strategy and Communities team who have really pushed me, trusting me with priority projects and supporting my development. I joined the team at an exciting time, just as it was shaping the Council's next Corporate Framework, which I helped to write. The Framework is based on a 15-minute neighbourhood approach that encourages local living and ensures essential services and experiences are within easy reach for all residents. I have also engaged with our local voluntary and community sector as part of our response to the Cost-of-Living crisis. In my second placement I joined a brand new Climate team which was a really different experience to my first placement.

Since the team was smaller and newer, I had a real opportunity to shape how the team worked and gained close exposure to senior leaders. While in my second placement, an exciting opportunity came up in my old team for a Policy Officer role which would help strengthen the skills that I'd started developing on the grad scheme – I went for it and am now in this role today. I have been lucky that I've been supported to continue with the learning and development side of the grad scheme, such as the ILM qualification, and still benefit

from the network of support that graduates get at Waltham Forest, such as the graduate network at the Council and our mentors. So, I'd really encourage you to join us, as the support that you get both on the scheme and beyond is amazing!

# **Simon Hooper**

# Cohort 23

Hi everyone! I joined the council as a graduate in 2021 after having completed an MSc in Environment, Development and Politics and a BA in Political Science. Over my time on the NGDP scheme at Waltham Forest, I worked on some really exciting placements and managed to meet some amazing people!

I started in the Climate Emergency team helping build the Climate Action Plan, then moved into the Elections team training staff and leading my own team on election night. I then worked in the Chief Executive Office, supporting on priority projects including getting beehives on the roof of the Town Hall! Finally, I moved into the Family Hubs programme, enhancing our existing offer to children and families in the borough and leading on developing our digital offer.

I really enjoyed life as a graduate at Waltham Forest, in particular my final placement in Family Hubs, and have recently left the scheme to take up a full-time role as Project Coordinator and Digital Lead for the Family Hubs project. This felt like the perfect next step, with a role that I enjoy and a team that I really get along with. I'm thrilled to be staying at Waltham Forest for another few years (at least!) and would really recommend the NGDP scheme here for anyone considering it!

# **Ellie Miller**

# Cohort 21

I joined the grad scheme at Waltham Forest in August 2019, starting in the Borough of Culture team halfway through our year as London's first Borough of Culture. This was a really exciting role to start with as it was very different from what I imagined council work to be like before joining and offered great variety in what I did. As I've grown up in the borough, it was great to transition from being at culture events as a resident, to delivering them and seeing all the work that goes into it.

My next few placements continued to surprise and excite me with the breadth of work and responsibility I was trusted with, from supporting the London-wide response to Covid as part of the Leadership Office, to developing an employment strategy for residents with learning disabilities, to helping shape the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programme.

Towards the end of my final placement in the Strategy and Communities Team, I was offered a role as the Chief Executive's Policy Support Officer, a new position within the Leadership Team. This role was a great opportunity to combine my experience from a placement in the Leadership Office with my placement in the Strategy team and I was able to lead on projects across both teams, such as developing a grant programme for community groups to hold events in Fellowship Square and supporting the development of the 15-minute neighbourhood's model.

After 6 months, I was looking for a new challenge and new experiences, so I moved into a role as the Autism Strategy and Employment Project Manager, giving me a chance to focus on strategic and delivery elements of a niche programme. This is the role I'm still in today, trying to make our borough more inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

# **Toby Stone**

# Cohort 20

I joined Waltham Forest in 2018, working on London's first borough of culture year. I worked on some really cool events in roles including project management, evaluation and legacy development.

I am now a Senior Policy Officer, having progressed through Project Coordinator and Policy Officer roles since leaving the grad scheme. I work primarily on developing improvements to the local area through a 15-minute neighbourhood model, and a new Community Safety Strategy. Other projects have included leading on the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme, a SEND Strategy, the Climate Emergency Commission and a host of smaller projects.

It was never my plan to stay at Waltham Forest for so long, but I have always had opportunities to develop here and try out lots of new and innovative projects. The Strategy and Change team I am in is always so welcoming and positive, we get on really well and that makes all the difference in enjoying work.

# Key links and documents

# Key Contacts

# **Council Website**

https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/

# The NGDP at Waltham Forest

https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/ jobs-and-training/find-jobs-and-otheropportunities/ngdp-waltham-forest

# **Latest Council News**

https://www.walthamforest.gov. uk/council-and-elections/about-us/ waltham-forest-news

# Mission Waltham Forest-Corporate Framework

https://www.walthamforest.gov. uk/stories/mission-walthamforest-resets-our-supportresidents **Daniel Wright-Mason** (Cohort 24)

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