



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'Society' Series

COVID-19 Sector Updates: Local Government with Martin Esom, Chief Executive, London Borough of Waltham Forest

Expert Insight

We were joined by Martin Esom, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Waltham Forest to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on local government. He touched upon points including:

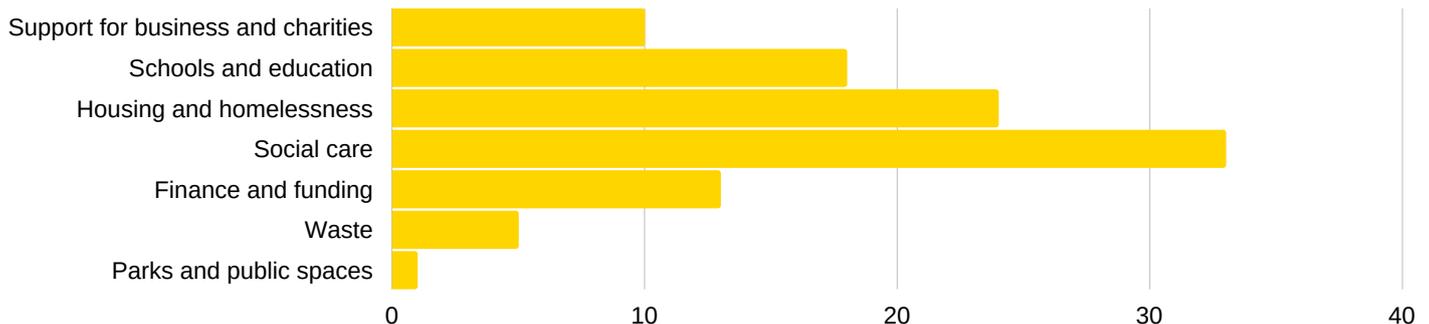


- Local authorities have had to transform how they are run through changes in the process of governance, new communication structures, remote working and reallocation of roles across all levels. In London, a strategic coordination group has been set up to oversee coordination of all 32 boroughs.
- Local government has experienced a major hit to their income. For Waltham Forest, the main losses have been through parking, highways, leisure, and business rates.
- The most important priority for local government is to keep critical services such as adult social care, protection of vulnerable children, refuse collection, and the planning system running.
- Other services have had to be either altered or stopped, and new services have been introduced, including PPE distribution, delivering business grants, and a shielding and food distribution service.
- The next big challenge for local government will be to move out of lockdown by opening up services again, and the enforcement measures that will need to be taken.

Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

Apart from public health, what should the main priorities for local government be in their response to COVID-19?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Prioritisation in divesting less important services in the context of already tight local council budgets
- Restoring public confidence to use public places
- Plans for managing a potential second wave
- Benefits and challenges of national and local government working on similar offerings
- Opportunities for local government operations moving forward

WIG members can listen to Martin's presentation [here](#)
To see our full programme of webinars, visit www.wig.co.uk