

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

4 January 2024

Council proposes no council tax increase, as draft Budget and Business Plan is published

A year after cutting its portion of the council tax by two per cent, Fenland District Council is now proposing to freeze its element of the council tax over the next 12 months, to further support its residents.

If its draft Budget for 2024/25 is approved next month, it will be the sixth consecutive year of no rises in Fenland's share of the council tax.

Cllr Chris Boden, Leader of Fenland District Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, said: "Almost every other principal council has raised its council tax over the past six years, and of the few which haven't raised their council tax, none can match Fenland's two per cent reduction in that period. Councillors believe that the burden of providing cost-efficient services should fall on the Council itself, a long way before it falls on our residents."

Have your say

Residents, businesses and organisations are now being encouraged to have their say on the draft Budget, and the authority's draft Business Plan for 2024/25, which set out its priorities and ambitions for the year ahead, and how it will pay for them.

A consultation runs until 4 February. To read the draft Business Plan and Budget, and share your views, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/yourviews2024

The Council is seeking views on five priorities identified in its Business Plan – Communities, Environment, Economy, Quality Organisation and Transformation Agenda.

Developed to meet the needs of local communities, the priorities include delivering a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service, which empties over three million bins a year, recycles over 9,000 tonnes of waste and cleans 210 square miles of town centres and open spaces.

It also includes investment in much-loved community events; supporting vulnerable members of the community; preventing and tackling homelessness; helping people to live in good quality, safe housing; working with police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; encouraging residents to live healthier, more active lifestyles; lobbying for infrastructure improvements, improving air quality and much more.

The Transformation Agenda work – phase one of which is already on track to save over £1million a year – is also continuing to further improve service efficiencies and customer experience, and ensure the Council is fit for the future.

The draft Budget proposes no increase in the amount of council tax raised by Fenland District Council. Fenland's portion of the council tax represents around 13 per cent of the total council tax bill, so it keeps around 13p in every £1 to pay for its services.

The remaining money goes to Cambridgeshire County Council (around 71 per cent), parish/town councils, Cambridgeshire police and fire authorities, and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Cllr Boden added: "As always, our priorities focus on putting the people of Fenland at the heart of everything we do. Despite facing the same increased financial difficulties that everyone is experiencing, we believe we can reduce the burden on residents by not increasing our portion of the council tax, on the back of a two per cent reduction last year.

"Of course, we do need to be cautious, but thanks to very good financial management, we're finding that we don't need to drastically cut services or take additional money from taxpayers when we don't have to.

"We would urge people to read through our draft Budget and Business Plan to help us shape the next 12 months and ensure we have got it right. Please use the consultation as an opportunity to have your say."

Take part in the consultation at: www.fenland.gov.uk/yourviews2024

Paper copies of the documents and consultation will also be available to view, without an appointment, at the Council's Customer Services Centres at:

- South Fens Business Centre, Fenton Way, Chatteris, PE16 6TT
- Fenland Hall, County Road, March, PE15 8NQ
- The Boathouse Business Centre, Harbour Square, Nene Parade, Wisbech, PE13 3BH

Paper copies are also available on request by phoning the Council's Contact Centre on 01354 654321.

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Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk