Why your council tax will be going up this year

23rd January 2018

The council tax in Gloucestershire is set to rise 2.49 per cent in 2018-19 with the average band D household paying an extra £52.95p per year.



But the county council says the increase is below Government guidelines - it includes £27.9 million for business support. The total council budget is now £412.9 million.

Over 1,700 comments were made by local people when the county council asked for feedback on next year's draft budget.

Seventy four per cent of people agreed with the overall draft budget. Eighty-nine per cent of people agreed that protecting the most vulnerable people in our county was important to them.

As a result, the council is now proposing an extra £5 million, bringing the total additional investment to £16.3 million to help the most vulnerable children and young people in the county, funding more social workers, as well as services like foster care and adoptions. £30m of capital funding is also included to pay for a new secondary school in Cheltenham.

The authority says councils continue to face pressure on social care with more and more people requiring support later in life. The government is allowing councils to increase the adults social care levy they collect to pay for things like social and residential care.

The council says it remains committed to £150 million investment in highways, and the budget also includes £2.74 million to support Highways England's safety improvements to the A417, plus continuing the Local Highways Scheme which will provide £10,000 for every county councillor to spend on improving highways in their area.

A new Growing Our Communities Fund will also offer £30,000 over three years for each county councillor, allowing more flexibility to spend money where it is needed.

Since the draft budget was published, the government has also allowed councils to increase council tax by up to 3 per cent without a referendum. However, mindful of the burden council tax can place on

Gloucestershire families, the council says it is only proposing a 2.49 per cent increase, in addition to the two per cent Adult Social Care Levy - 0.5 per cent more than the draft budget.

This means for an average band D household the proposed total increase would be £52.95 per year or £4.41 per month. Gloucestershire currently charges £46 per year less in council tax than the average county council, including the levy and £173 per year less in council tax than the highest charging council.

Cllr Ray Theodoulou, deputy leader and cabinet member for finance, said: "Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback. We have listened and made some difficult decisions.

"Government gave us the green light to increase general council tax by up to 3 per cent this year without a referendum. By staying well below that limit — 2.49 per cent — We have tried to find a balance that provides enough investment to protect our most vulnerable people, but also limits the financial impact on our hard working communities."

The updated budget proposals for 2018/19 are:

• Adult services - £133.172 million (incl. help for people with learning disabilities, older people, vulnerable adults)

• Children & Families - £102.924 million (incl. schools, children's services, prevention & wellbeing)

• Communities & Infrastructure - £79.896 million (incl. highways, libraries, trading standard, fire & rescue, waste)

• Public health - £24.271million (ring fenced grant)

The balance covers £27.917 million for business support and £44.720 million of technical and corporate (including cost of funding infrastructure investment) - a reduction of £12.867 million compared to 17/18 budget.

If approved at Wednesday's cabinet meeting, the budget is subject to a final decision at full council on 14th February.

Both meetings can be watched live at [www.gloucestershire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home](http://www.gloucestershire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)

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