

Overview of Council Funding Cuddington Annual Village Meeting



Buckinghamshire Council

Each year the Council must prepare a budget and as part of the process we are asking residents and businesses to tell us their priority areas for the year ahead.

The last couple of years have been exceptional. The direct impacts of the pandemic, and the economic trauma it has caused, has led to significant additional costs and seen large reductions in income across a range of areas - such as parking revenue, planning applications, council tax and business rates, and rental from property we own.

At the same time we are taking on additional costs in providing new and further support to our most vulnerable children and adults and to help the recovery of the local economy and jobs.

Last year we had some support from government to help address these issues. However, we are still having to deal with many of these budget issues as we move through the pandemic and the economy slowly recovers.

In considering recovery from the pandemic, we will look to focus on the priority areas outlined in our Corporate Plan:

- Strengthening our communities
- Improving our environment
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Increasing prosperity

In preparing the budget, we also need to be aware of our statutory responsibilities: the services that we must continue to fund, such as Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care. We also need to consider those more limited areas of discretionary spend that improve the quality of life for all Buckinghamshire residents.

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We are committed to making substantial savings and efficiencies next year and beyond, and prioritising those which do not reduce the levels of support and service we are able to offer. We will also continue to press government for fairer funding for the Council and the ability for us to more freely use some specific grants.

But there are many uncertainties. What will the 'new normal' look like for residents and businesses? How will the government fund local councils? Will there continue to be a lower income from services such as parking and property rental? What will happen if providers of essential services, such as care homes fail? Will we continue to see sharply increased demand for mental health services? Will we see inflation as the cost of goods, services and energy increase? All these factors make preparing the budget for 2022/23 extremely challenging.

Making these decisions allows the Council both to balance the books (a legal requirement) and still continue many key projects such as:

- fighting Climate Change by planting more than half a million new trees in Bucks, one for every resident.
- again next year, cleaning out every one of the 85,000 gullies in the county
- spending more than £100 million on our roads and pavement improvement programme
- enhanced street cleaning in local communities – part of our 'Big Bucks Tidy Up' programme

Our capital budget spans the next four years and proposes spend in the following key areas:

- £37.9m to support Economic Growth & Regeneration
- £136.4m on schools, and school improvement projects
- £117.9m on overall transport and Strategic Highways maintenance including:
 - i) £61.6m on major highway resurfacing schemes
 - ii) £17.7m on smaller planned surface repairs (known as 'Plane and Patch' repairs)
 - iii) £8.5m on pavement repairs
 - iv) £8.4m on Street Lighting repairs, replacement and maintenance
 - v) £8m on drainage works to reduce flooding on our roads
- £120.5m on Strategic Infrastructure
- £24m investment in Waste, primarily on vehicle replacement and a household recycling centre in Buckingham
- £21.7m to support Housing and Homelessness including affordable housing action plans and disabled facilities grants

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Where does council funding come from?

Council Tax
78%
Business rates
12%
New Homes Bonus
2%
Other grants
8%

Our prudent financial management through these challenging times means Buckinghamshire is in a positive position of being able to bring forward plans to balance the books while still delivering the service improvements in areas our residents have asked us to prioritise, such as committing over £100 million to roads and pavement improvements and our plans to open a new Household Recycling Centre in the north of the county.

As with all local authorities, the biggest budget pressures come from those services we are legally required to provide, particularly social care for both Adults and Children. Overall, 57% of our net budget is spent on these services. In total we budget to spend approximately £295 million on social care services in 2022/23. Protecting the vulnerable and helping those that need the Council's services the most is arguably the most important work we do. We need to balance this alongside spending on the biggest priorities for our residents, like roads and pavements maintenance and improvements, tackling climate change and supporting our residents and businesses to build back from the pandemic.

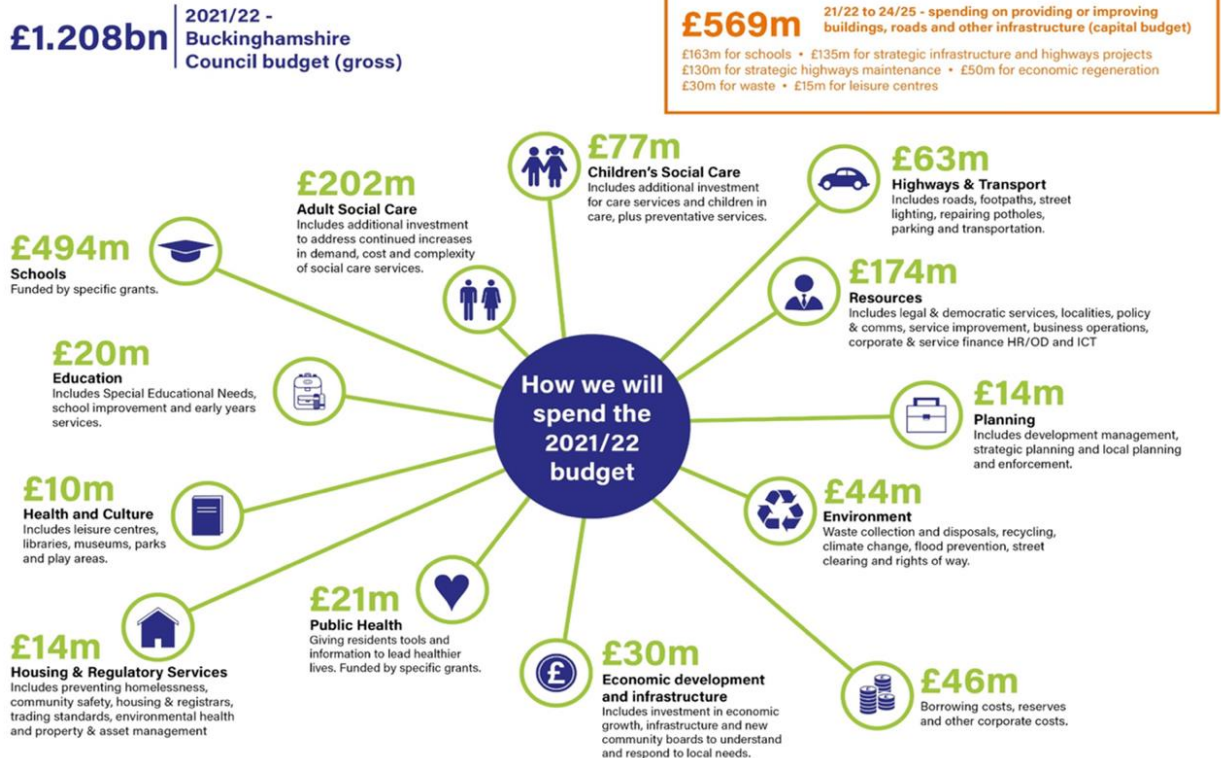
It means difficult choices are being made and the budget proposals include the following ways of raising the necessary revenue for 2022/23:

- increasing Council Tax in Buckinghamshire by 3.99% (a rise of £1.23 per week for the average Band D property)- this includes a 2% precept to help pay for Adult Social Care
- reducing some of the funding for our sixteen Community Boards
- continuing the significant savings being made as a result of becoming a single unitary council
- using a one-off sum of £1.36 million from the General Fund to balance the budget and mitigate risk in 2023/24

To understand where your taxes go it is good to look back at last year's budget, the graphic below shows how the 21/22 Budget was distributed:

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Our Spending



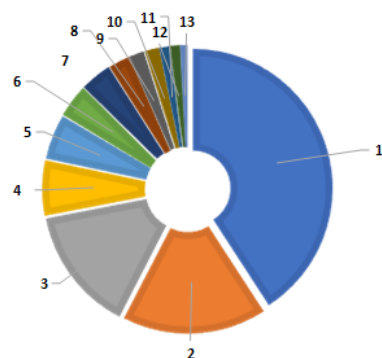
Points to note

Budget allocation

All councils have a legal duty to limit their spending to the income they receive each year. So, our budget must balance. The vast majority of our budget each year needs to be spent on the services we are required by law to provide, such as social care for adults and children.

For every £100 we spend, this is how it is divided between the various services we provide:

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Number	Service	Amount
1	Schools	£41
2	Adult Social Care	£17
3	Resources	£14
4	Children's Social Care	£6
5	Highways & Transport	£5
6	Borrowing costs, reserves	£4
7	Environment	£4
8	Economic development and infrastructure	£2
9	Public Health	£2
10	Education	£2
11	Planning	£1
12	Housing Regulatory Services	£1
13	Health & Culture	£1

If you have any questions please feel free to ask your Councillors.

Cllr Paul Erwin
Cllr Ashely Waite
Cllr Mick Caffrey