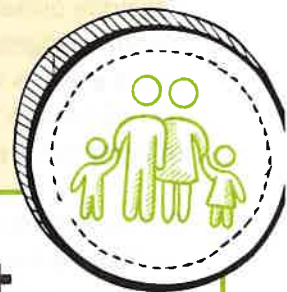


have
your
say...

Central
Bedfordshire



Budget 2023



Have your say on our budget

Every winter, Central Bedfordshire Council sets its budget for the year ahead.

Our budget proposals for next year include:

- Plans to spend around £475 million on services
- Plans to spend £253 million on new facilities like schools, leisure centres and care homes
- Plans to increase efficiency, reducing costs by £9.5 million
- No increases to our share of Council Tax

More detail and the full budget plans are available on our website:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/budget

It's quite a long and complicated, so here are the summarised headlines, with a focus on the plans for 2023/24.



Stay in touch with all the latest Budget news

 www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/budget

 www.facebook.com/letstalkcentral

 @letstalkcentral #YourMoneyCounts

Overview

Every winter the Council plans its budget for the year ahead. This year we face a challenging financial climate caused by rising inflation and increasing demand for services.

Inflation has added an extra £16.6 million to the cost of running the Council over the next year, while demand for our adult social care and children's services increases. We're not alone in this – all other local authorities are grappling with the same challenges. Many councils are concerned as they face huge funding gaps and tough decisions to reduce discretionary services.

We pride ourselves on good financial management and planning which has left us in a sound position. We had already budgeted for some increase in inflation, and we are improving our efficiency to reduce our running costs which gives us some ability to offset the pressures. We are also using some of our reserves (savings) so that we do not need to raise our share of Council Tax next year. Given the pressures on households with the rising cost of living this is particularly important.

Our budget means we can continue to provide the vital services you expect from us through these financially challenging times. We are working hard to support residents with the cost of living through a range of schemes and to look after our most vulnerable children and adults.

We also continue to invest in new facilities such as new care homes, schools, roads and leisure centres that means our residents want to live here and businesses want to invest.

Our spending plans

In the next financial year (from April 2023 until March 2024), the Council expects to be spending around **£475 million** on its services and operations across Central Bedfordshire. This is known as the revenue budget and is mainly funded through Council Tax and business rates.

The largest proportion of the funding is spent on care services for those who are frail, disabled or vulnerable and need protection. This includes services for children and young people as well as older people and other vulnerable adults.

This budget also funds our core services, and we'll continue to spend this money delivering core services that everyone has access to, such as refuse and recycling, roads, leisure, libraries, parks and countryside services.

Next year we propose to increase the funding to meet pressures in some key areas, such as providing more complex care for older people and adults with disabilities, providing more support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and children who need our protection.

The cost of running Council services has increased £16.6 million due to inflation. We had already budgeted to allow for some increase in inflation, so we are able to absorb some of this. Our continued focus on being more efficient also means we can offset these pressures.

Reducing our costs

At the same time as spending on services we are also continually looking at how we can work smarter, be more efficient and reduce our costs. Since we came into existence in 2009, we've delivered £185 million of efficiencies. This has not been through cuts to services but through working differently and prudent financial management.

The budget plans for 2023/24 include proposals to reduce our costs by a further **£9.5 million**.

Most of these efficiencies relate to changing care packages for older people, people with a learning and physical disability to be more proportionate to their needs. Right-sizing care packages can reduce costs but also improves outcomes for people because it encourages independence and reduces reliance on social care services.

We're modernising our approach to day care, investing in extra care accommodation, and using assistive technology more.

We also expect to start getting income from the new Integrated Health and Care Hub we have built in Dunstable.

We are also continuing to review how we work to reduce costs.

Any of the proposals which could result in significant changes affecting residents or staff will be subject to public consultations before a final decision is taken. At this stage we are seeking your feedback on our overall approach.

Council Tax

Given the pressures on households this winter with the rising cost of living, we have proposed a budget that doesn't include raising our share of Council Tax*.

Through good financial management and planning we are able to absorb the financial pressures by anticipating some of them, being as efficient as possible and using some of our reserves to meet the funding gap.

**Note: Your Council Tax bill includes Council Tax that pays for Police, Fire and your Town or Parish Council, these organisations set their own increases and if they raise their share of Council Tax your bill will increase.*

Investing in facilities

Unlike many other councils across the country, we've not only maintained our frontline services like libraries, leisure centres and roads, we've also been investing in many of them too. Next year, we plan to spend a further **£253 million** on roads, care homes, schools (including £13.8 million on specialist school places for SEND), leisure provision and other infrastructure projects. These infrastructure projects are funded from our capital budget. This is not funded through Council Tax, it is funded through loans or selling land or buildings the Council owns and reinvesting this money.

Have your say

Before your elected councillors make any decisions on the budget, we want to give them your views on the proposals. Please help us by completing and returning the attached form and submitting your answers to just a few simple questions.



Please return your completed questionnaire by 24 January 2023 to:

FREEPOST RSJS GBBZ SRZT, Budget 2023, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ.

This is a freepost address, so you do not need a stamp. Further paper copies can be requested by calling 0300 300 8301.

Alternatively, you can complete the questions online at

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/budget

Elected councillors will consider your feedback before setting a final budget in February 2023.

In March, each household will receive an information leaflet which will explain the detail of what has been agreed and its implications for our service users and council taxpayers.



Central Bedfordshire Council

Budget 2023



Please answer the following questions relating to the budget consultation. If you would like more information on the plans and draft proposals, these can be found on our website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/budget

Please submit your response by Tuesday 24 January 2023.

Q1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the plans to increase spending to meet pressures in some key areas, such as providing more complex care for older people and adults with disabilities, providing more support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and children who need our protection? (please select one)

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Q2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans to invest in new facilities and infrastructure projects like roads, care homes, schools, leisure provision and other infrastructure projects? (please select one)

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to reducing our costs by £9.5million next year? (please select one)

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Q4 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal for Central Bedfordshire Council to not increase Council Tax for 2023/24? (please select one)

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Q5. Please use this space to give us any other thoughts, suggestions or feedback you have on the budget proposals.

About You

This section is about you. The following information will help us when considering your opinions and to make sure that we're getting views of a cross-section of the community. The answers will not be used to identify any individual. You can read more about why we ask these questions on our website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations.

All of these questions are optional, and you can give as much or as little information as you wish.

Q6. Are you responding as: (please select one)

☐

Resident

☐

Local Business

☐

Other

☐

Town or Parish Council

☐

Voluntary or community organisation

If Town or Parish Council, please specify:

If voluntary or community organisation, please specify:

If other, please specify:

Q7. How did you hear about the consultation?

☐

Central Bedfordshire Council website

☐

Poster

☐

E-mail from Central Bedfordshire Council

☐

Radio

☐

Local councillor surgery

☐

Social media from Central Bedfordshire Council

☐

Local MP surgery

☐

Word of mouth

☐

Newspaper

☐

Other

If other, please specify:

Q8. If social media, please tell us which one(s)

☐

Facebook

☐

Twitter

☐

Instagram

☐

Youtube

☐

LinkedIn

☐

Other social media

If other social media, please specify:

Q9. Are you: (please select one)

☐ Male

☐ Other

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

Q10. What is your age? (please select one)

☐ Under 16 yrs

☐ 30-44 yrs

☐ 65-74 yrs

☐ 16-19 yrs

☐ 45-59 yrs

☐ 75+ yrs

☐ 20-29 yrs

☐ 60- 64 yrs

☐ Prefer not to say

Q11. Do you consider yourself disabled? (please select one)

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q12. To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (please select one)

☐ White British

☐ Asian or Asian British

☐ Other ethnic group

☐ Black or Black British

☐ Mixed ethnicity

☐ Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

Q13. What is your religion or belief? (please select one)

☐ Buddhist

☐ Jewish

☐ No religion

☐ Christian

☐ Muslim

☐ Other

☐ Hindu

☐ Sikh

☐ Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

Q14. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth? (please select one)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q15. How would you define your sexual orientation? (please select one)

☐ Gay

☐ Bisexual

☐ Other

☐ Lesbian

☐ Heterosexual

☐ Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

Q16. What is your home or organisation's postcode?

This will only be used for analysis purposes and will not be used to identify you in any way.

Q17. If you would like to receive alerts for any new consultations, please provide your email address below to be added to our database, this will not be used or shared for any other reason:

Thank you.

Please return your response by 24 January 2023
Freepost RSJS GBBZ SRZT (you do not need a stamp)
Budget 2023
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
SG17 5TQ

Data Protection Act 2018

Please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by Central Bedfordshire Council for the purpose of this survey. The information collected may be disclosed to officers and elected members of the Council and its' partners involved in this survey. Summarised information from the forms may be published, but no individual details will be disclosed under these circumstances.

Your personal details will be safeguarded and will not be divulged to any other individuals or organisations for any other purposes unless we need to do so in order to meet our legal duties obligations. If you do not wish to have your personal details retained for the purposes given, please contact consultations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk who will arrange for their removal and deletion.

We will only be able to locate your data for removal if you have provided us with a personal identifier, such as your email address.

For more information about how Central Bedfordshire Council handles your data, please visit <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/terms>