



38%

Your

council tax

explained

County council services and
how your money is spent

2025/26



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**



Councillor Liz Leffman
Leader,
Oxfordshire County Council

Dear resident,

Local government has faced a prolonged period of widescale financial challenges as a result of reductions in grant funding since 2010. Meanwhile, the demand on services, and the cost and resource challenges to provide them, have increased – especially in children’s and adults’ social care.

When we set our budget for 2024/25, we laid out broad plans for 2025/26. We knew that extra money would be needed for this growing service demand alongside an increase in waste tonnage, anticipated population growth and housing changes, and inflationary pressures.

In the autumn, new pressures, including an increase in the national

living wage and employers’ national insurance, added to our existing plans and meant we were facing a **£25 million** funding shortfall for 2025/26. This was before taking account of government grant funding and council tax increases pledged by the chancellor at the end of October.

The impact of new money allocated to local government, confirmed in late December, meant we were able to finalise and agree proposals to deal with this shortfall and set a balanced budget. To do this, as the majority of our overall funding comes from council tax, we are raising it by **4.99 per cent**, **two per cent** of which must be spent on adult social care.

To set our budget, we listened to what matters to you. This was through our residents’ survey, our budget simulator exercise and engagement events, and our budget consultation. So in 2025/26, we have increased funding for the repair and maintenance of highways and bridges (by **£54.8m**), for children’s services (**£17.8m**) and for measures to improve the council’s responsiveness to flooding (by **£3.6m**, including highway drainage).

While there remains huge uncertainty about the future impact of funding reform on our services, we will continue to work hard, in partnership, in the best interests of all our residents.

About the council

Oxfordshire County Council provides 85 per cent of local government services by expenditure, including adult and children’s social care, some education services, public health, fire and rescue, libraries and museums, roads and transport, trading standards, waste disposal and recycling.

Our vision

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

To achieve our vision, we will:

- Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
- Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Support carers and the social care system.
- Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
- Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
- Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
- Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

Working for you

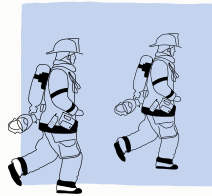
Our services

We are proud to provide and support a huge range of services that enhance and improve the lives of people across our communities.

Here are just a few of the services we provided last year (figures from January - December 2024):



Registered **7,434** births.

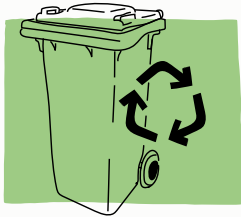


Attended **6,449** fire and rescue service call outs.



Cared for **816** children.

(April 23 to March 24)



Managed **295,738** tonnes of household waste, of which **57.7 per cent** was recycled, reused or composted.



Repaired around **41,000** potholes.



Loaned over **3,610,157** items and resources to our library customers.



Supported on average **6,600** people daily with ongoing adult social care.

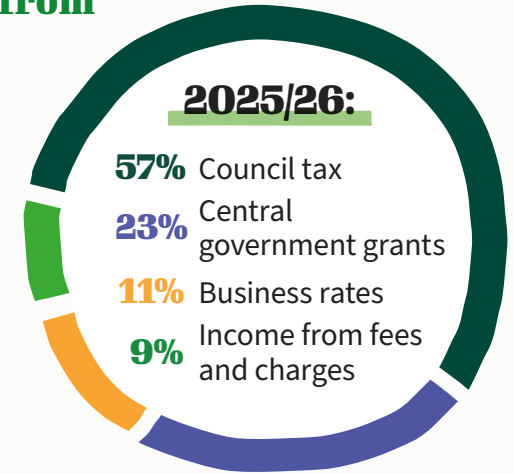
Managing our budget

Where the money comes from

For 2025/26, **57 per cent** of the county council's funding for services will come directly from council tax, with the rest coming from charging for services, business rates and government grants.

This has increased since 2010 as central government has cut grants to local government.

In 2010/11, **28 per cent** came from council tax.

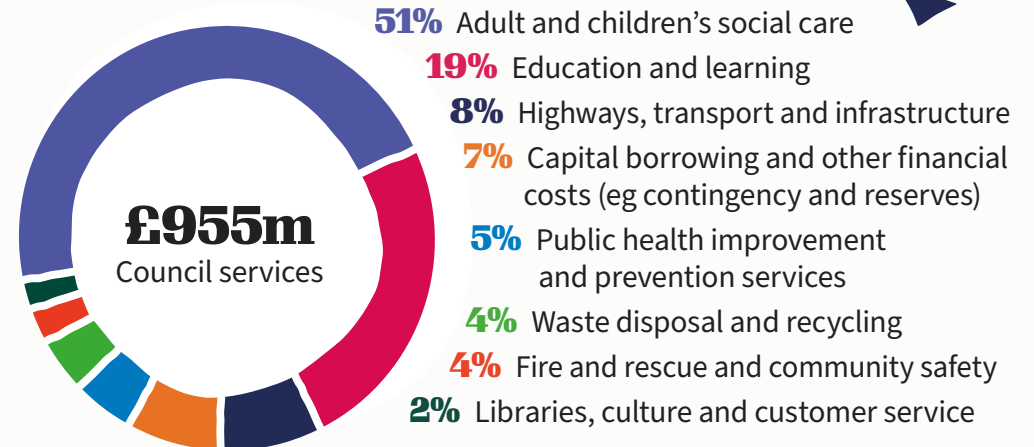


What we spend on council services

In 2025/26, the council plans to spend **£955m** on services – our gross expenditure budget. In addition to the education funding shown below, we will also spend **£267m** on maintained schools and early years providers, which covers

teachers, other staff and running costs, and comes directly from the government.

The figures below show broadly how we will spend our budget on services in 2025/26.



Our budget decisions

Where we will invest

Our budget invests in the things you think we should focus on to deliver our nine strategic priorities. We listened carefully to what matters most to you and your communities through our residents' survey, engagement events and our budget consultation.

Examples include:

£54.8m

to improve highways, cycle paths, pavements, and to repair and maintain bridges.



£17.8m

in children's services, including enhancing support for under fives and those with special educational needs and disabilities.



£3.6m

for flooding measures, including community work and highway drainage.



£1m

to leverage investment in rail.

£0.4m

to hold the price of a park and ride joint ticket (parking and bus).



CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Four per cent of your council tax is used to support the cost of borrowing towards our **£1.5 billion** capital programme, which includes investing in highway improvements (**£308m**) and major infrastructure (**£697m**), new school buildings and pupil places (**£235m**) and other service needs reflecting the council's priorities.

Most of the funding comes from government grants and can only be used for capital schemes – it can't be used for day to day council spending.

Additional costs and savings

All local authorities are continuing to face significant demand-led and inflationary pressures. These new pressures, including an increase in the national living wage and employers' national insurance, amount to approximately £18 million in 2025/26.

In the autumn, we were facing a £25 million funding shortfall in 2025/26 before taking account of any new funding. While government grants and other

funding have increased, and we have been able to make one off investments of just over £5 million, we have still had to find £18 million of new savings to set a balanced budget. These include making the council leaner, operating from fewer buildings and reducing the council's spend on contracts.

Our 2025/26 budget can be viewed at oxfordshire.gov.uk/councilspending

Council tax

For 2025/26, Oxfordshire County Council is increasing council tax by 4.99 per cent. This is made up of a 2.99 per cent increase to your 'core' council tax and an additional two per cent increase to help pay for adult social care (known as a precept), which the government expects local authorities to use to meet social care responsibilities.

The county council's share of council tax for a Band D property (the average council tax band) in 2024/25 was £1,820.56 (£35.01 per week).

For 2025/26, this will increase to £1,911.40 (£36.76 per week), which

is equal to an additional **£90.84 per year or £1.75 per week in council tax on a Band D property.** If you are experiencing a financial crisis and struggling to afford household essentials, you can apply to our Residents Support Scheme for assistance.

To access the scheme please visit: oxfordshire.gov.uk/living

The overall council tax bill for your property also includes separate payments to your city or district council, the police and crime commissioner for Thames Valley and possibly a parish or town council.

Waste and recycling

Household waste recycling centres
[oxfordshire.gov.uk/
waste-and-recycling](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling)

Bin collections

- [westoxon.gov.uk/bins](https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/bins)
- [cherwell.gov.uk/bins](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/bins)
- [southoxon.gov.uk/bins](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/bins)
- [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/bins](https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/bins)
- [oxford.gov.uk/recycling](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/recycling)

Recycling advice

- [oxfordshirerecycles.org.uk](https://www.oxfordshirerecycles.org.uk)
- [oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastewizard](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wastewizard)

Report

Potholes, faulty street or traffic lights
[fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Libraries

[oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries)

Schools

Admissions and term dates
[oxfordshire.gov.uk/schools](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schools)

Support services

Live Well Oxfordshire
[oxfordshire.gov.uk/livewell](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/livewell)

Better climate choices

[climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk](https://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk)



Flooding
toolkit



Community
safety



Consultations
and citizens'
assembly

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION

Oxfordshire County Council has 63 county councillors who you vote for every four years. The next county council election will be on **1 May 2025**, when the number of councillors will increase from 63 to 69. Make sure you register to vote by Friday 11 April:
[gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

You can apply, book, find, report and pay for a range of services on the county council website:
[oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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