

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Cabinet approves budget designed to deliver improvements in challenging times

Bexley's Council Tax is set to increase by 3.99% from April. This includes a 2% precept that will be earmarked to help with the increasing cost of adult social care.

"Our focus is on living within our means and making sure we use the money taxpayers have given us to deliver the maximum benefit for the borough and our residents," said Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE, Leader of the Council. "People know that the economy is going through a challenging period, but we will continue to show that we can do a lot of good with the money we have. We are also continuing to plan carefully for the future and put money aside to ensure we can cope with the unexpected."

The budget and Council Tax were agreed by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting last night (26 February) and are subject to formal approval by the full Council meeting on 7 March.

The Mayor of London will be increasing his share of the Council Tax by 5.82%, which means that Bexley residents in a typical Band D property will see their Council Tax Bill increase by £49.64 a year.

Bexley is set to spend more than £466 million on local services next year. This will include £108 million on long-term investment, particularly health and social infrastructure, and housing.

Residents' Council Tax now contributes 41p of every £1 the Council spends.

The continuing withdrawal of government grant means that Bexley must be financially self-sufficient from 2020/21. As a result, the Council is working hard to generate income through commercial activities, improve the way services are commissioned, intervene early to prevent care needs escalating, promote economic growth and work strategically with a growing range of public and private partners.

The Council has saved £109 million since 2010, in part by finding new and better ways to deliver services, including –

- A new model of care for people with learning disabilities, that is focused on independence rather than dependence, and will improve their quality of life.
- Closer partnership to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and to help keep families together.
- The creation of Belvedere Beach with external funding.
- The success of the borough's new community libraries.
- Continuing savings as a result of the Council's moves to new offices, which are now shared with the NHS Bexley Clinical Commissioning Group.

Like many other councils, Bexley faces significant spending pressures, including the cost of increasing homelessness, plus growing demand for adults' and children's services. Rising inflation is

also pushing up costs.

A recording of the Cabinet's discussion – together with the papers considered at the meeting – is available online at <https://bexley.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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