

East Renfrewshire Council Budget 2024/25



Continuing to deliver despite funding challenges

Council Leader – Councillor Owen O'Donnell



Difficult decisions due to funding squeeze

- We had hoped a new partnership with the Scottish Government would be backed up by sufficient levels of funding
- Instead all councils are having to make cuts to vital services
- In East Renfrewshire, these cuts will harm services including our efforts to help residents still feeling the effects of the Cost of Living Crisis
- We'll focus on your priorities but will have to make difficult decisions about the levels of service we provide



Our Scottish Government grant settlement

- Most of our funding for vital services comes from the Scottish Government
- Our grant settlement for 2024/25 is £239.7m, a real-terms cut – on a like for like basis – to our biggest source of funding once inflation is taken into account
- We would have needed an extra £6.4m just to stand still and deliver the same level of services as we currently do
- Because our grant has been reduced in real terms we will have to make savings and this is difficult as we've made £48m of cuts since 2015/16



The size of our Budget shortfall

- Our budget gap for the year ahead is £12m
- This gap must be closed so we can balance the books as we are legally required to do
- There are only a limited number of ways councils can do this – by raising council tax, using any remaining financial reserves, or by making cuts
- The Scottish Government has announced a Council Tax freeze for 2024/25



The impact of the Council tax freeze

- Councils which agree to a Council Tax freeze will be compensated by the Scottish Government
- As things stand, we will receive the equivalent of a 4.66% rise in Council Tax
- Residents have previously told us they would be prepared to pay a little more in Council Tax to protect vital services
- A freeze ignores local democracy and does not help those most in need
- We will reluctantly freeze Council Tax for 2024/25



What savings the Council will have to make

- After using Council Tax compensation and reserves, we will still have to make £3.1m of difficult savings to close our Budget Gap
- Most of these were agreed in December and £900,000 of savings are proposed today
- Details of all these savings can be found in Annexe B of the Revenue Estimates Report
- We don't want to make these savings but we are required by law to balance our books



Impact on the vital work of the HSCP

- Ongoing financial challenges will impact the important work of the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- The council has had to give the HSCP an extra £6m in the current year to meet increased demands for its services
- People will see more changes to health and social care services and the HSCP will have to make further difficult decisions
- The cost of health and social care is a national issue and the council will continue to support the HSCP



Tougher challenges in future years

- The financial picture in future years remains extremely challenging
- Our Budget Gap for 2025/26 is £15.2m and further difficult decisions will be required to make up that shortfall
- To close that gap by Council Tax alone would require a 22% increase so we will have to use reserves and make further savings
- A short-term boost to reserves will be put in a new fund so councillors from all parties can work on plans to invest in future council projects

Early Years and Vulnerable Young People

Continued investment

- Despite the financial challenges, we continue to plan for a better future for all residents
- Our capital budget funds long-term projects and is separate from our revenue budget which is where savings have to come from
- Pre-school services continue to grow, with a new nursery class at St John's and a Family Centre at Calderwood Lodge and St Clare's joint campus
- Two new classrooms at Isobel Mair will open soon



New nursery class at St John's from August.



Extra space at Isobel Mair from next month.

Excellence in education

- New Neilston Learning Campus incorporating two schools and a family centre opens in a few weeks
- Another year of record-breaking exam results
- Almost 400 young people benefited from more than 50 vocational courses
- A record 98.5% of pupils went on to positive destinations after school
- Quality of schools reflected in inspection reports



New Neilston Learning Campus opens next month.



Mearns Castle pupils celebrate exam results.

Ambitious investment

- Our Get to Zero climate action plan has just been published
- Cowan Park's historic gate lodge has been transformed into a new social enterprise hub
- Work has started on City Deal project to create a new promenade alongside Balgray Reservoir
- And work on a brand new station at Balgray is due to start later this year



Cowan Park's gate lodge has been transformed.



Work underway on Balgray Reservoir promenade.

Environment and Economy

Ambitious investment

- More than 100 new council houses will be delivered in Maidenhill over the next two years
- Our Lavern Water project in Barrhead will help fish and wildlife thrive and prevent flooding
- Dozens of more local roads and pavements have been resurfaced as part of major investment
- This project has been extended and will see even more money committed in the years ahead



New council houses in Maidenhill will be delivered.



Area around the Lavern Water has been improved.

Environment and Economy – just some of dozens of local roads resurfaced last year. And more cash will be spent in future years



BARRHEAD



BUSBY



CLARKSTON



EAGLESHAM



GIFFNOCK



NEILSTON



NEWTON MEARNES



THORNLIEBANK

Safe, Supported Communities

Supporting the most vulnerable

- Spending on projects to help people hit by the Cost of Living Crisis passed the £7.5m mark
- Targeted support for low income families and those facing homelessness
- More money for the Citizens Advice Bureau and funding for the Dignity Food Network
- Extra funding for our HSCP to deliver health and social care across East Renfrewshire



Council leader and Citizens Advice staff.



HSCP's Care at Home service in action.

Older People and People with Long-Term Conditions

Caring on the frontline

- Inspectors praised the work of our adult support team who helped keep people at risk of harm safe
- HSCP's occupational therapists and physios received 3000 referrals and delivered rehab services and help with aids and home adaptations
- We strengthened connections with voluntary partners
- Our Talking Points service supported more than 1000 older people in the last year



HSCP staff who help on the frontline.

**Don't know who
to turn to?**
Turn to us

Talking
Points

Talking Points service gives advice and support.

our
values



Ambition



Kindness



Trust



The important role of our staff

- Thank you to our staff for the work they do in delivering vital services
- They go above and beyond and proudly demonstrate the council's values of Ambition, Kindness and Trust
- Despite reducing our Budget shortfall, savings will impact staff
- Fewer than 60 FTE posts may be affected in the year ahead and many of these posts are currently vacant
- No compulsory redundancies linked to this year's savings



Conclusion

- The council has once again had to take very difficult decisions so we can balance the books as we are legally required to do
- A real-terms funding cut and Council Tax freeze has hit our finances
- We continue to prioritise services which matter the most to our residents
- Improving the lives of all our residents is this administration's goal
- We are determined to steer a course to a better future for us all

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