

East Renfrewshire Council Budget 2023/24



Supporting those most in need amidst financial challenges

Council Leader – Councillor Owen O'Donnell



New challenges for residents and council

- The Cost of Living Crisis has hit people hard and the Council responded by helping those most in need
- In October the Council announced it was facing a funding shortfall of more than £30m over the next three years
- This is because of rising energy costs, spiralling inflation and getting barely any extra cash on a like for like basis from the Scottish Government
- As a result we'll have to cut services and jobs and put up Council Tax



Our honest conversation with residents and staff

- We've been upfront with local people and our staff about the scale of the financial challenges facing the Council
- A major public engagement exercise was held in the Autumn and more than 1700 people shared their views with us
- That was the biggest response we've ever had in the Council's history
- We have listened carefully to what you said as we decide how best to tackle the financial challenges facing the Council



Our Scottish Government grant settlement

- Most of our funding for vital services comes from the Scottish Government
- Money raised from Council Tax accounts for just 18% of our funding
- Much of our government funding comes with strings attached - meaning less freedom for locally-elected politicians to decide where to focus spending
- Our 2023/24 grant settlement is £223.1m. After national policy commitments and increased rates, we have £800,000 extra, or 0.4%, more than last year
- With rising bills, this makes it difficult to provide vital services



Taking action to close our Budget gap

- Our Budget gap for 2023/24 is £18.1m. We can close this gap by increasing Council Tax and other charges, using reserves and cutting services
- Our reserves have been boosted by £14.8m as a result of changes in how we pay for major projects such as new schools and we will use that money over the next three years
- We have to spread the benefit in this way as current estimates show the Council will also face significant financial challenges in 2024/25 and 2025/26



What this means for Council Tax bills

- Making savings and using reserves is still not enough to close the Budget gap
- I am therefore recommending Council Tax goes up by 6% from April 1
- If we had to close the Budget gap using only Council Tax, we would have to increase Council Tax by more than 50% over the next three years
- A 6% rise means an annual increase of £80.11 for a Band D property - £1.54 a week. And 11%, or almost 4500 households, will continue to have a discount
- Our Council Tax is still expected to be around the Scottish average

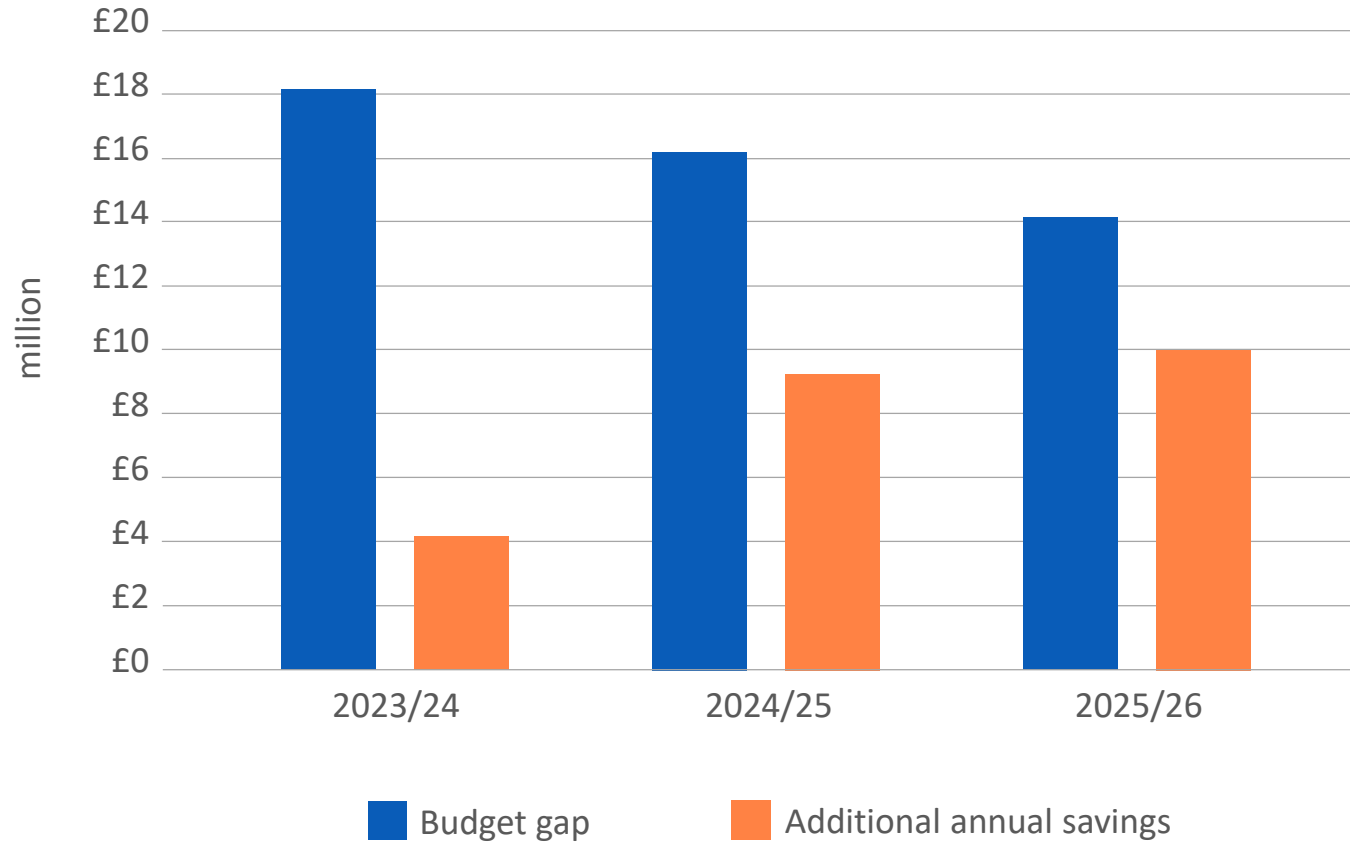


What savings the Council will have to make

- After increasing Council Tax and using reserves, we will still have to make £4.1m of savings in the year ahead
- We are publishing a detailed list of these so the public are fully aware
- We don't want to make these savings but we are required by law to balance our books
- We have withdrawn some of the savings options outlined in November
- Unless funding improves, further cuts will be needed in future years



Financial challenges over next 3 years



	£m		
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Budget gap	18.1	16.2	14.2
Savings	4.1	9.3	10

Early Years and Vulnerable Young People

Continued investment

- We continue to plan for a better future for all residents
- Our capital budget funds long-term projects
- Cross Arthurlie Nursery was officially opened in November, our sixth new nursery in recent years
- Isobel Mair pupils enjoyed the opening of their upgraded sports pitch
- We are also planning to spend more than £1m on expanding Isobel Mair School



Official opening of Cross Arthurlie Nursery.



Isobel Mair School's upgraded pitch.

Excellence in education

- Work has started on the new Neilston Learning Campus which will create two excellent new schools and a family centre
- Pupils celebrated another year of record-breaking exam results
- New pitch and running track at Mearns Castle will be finished soon
- New ASN unit at Carolside Primary



Artist's impression of new schools in Neilston.



Pupils celebrate record-breaking exam results.

Environment and Economy

Results from our investment

- Our biggest-ever council house development was completed in Barrhead
- The Greenlaw Works business centre opened, our most significant City Deal project so far
- We reclaimed our position as the best recycling area in Scotland
- 64 road resurfacing projects will be completed
- New investment to improve roads and pavements



New council houses at Balgraystone Road.



The Greenlaw Works official opening.

Environment and Economy – just some of the dozens of local roads resurfaced in the last year. A key priority for residents



BARRHEAD



BUSBY



CLARKSTON



EAGLESHAM



GIFFNOCK



NEILSTON



NEWTON MEARNES



THORNLIEBANK

Safe, Supported Communities

Supporting the most vulnerable

- Cost of Living package delivered to help our most vulnerable residents
- The Council distributed £100 gift cards to more than 4500 households
- Worked with voluntary sector to launch a network of Warm and Welcome Spaces
- There are now 38 Warm and Welcome Spaces across East Renfrewshire



One of our first Warm and Welcome Spaces.



Gift cards also boosted local businesses.

Older People and People with Long-Term Conditions

Caring on the frontline

- Our Care at Home team, nurses and GPs help deliver frontline health care
- Strong performance on delayed discharges, freeing up NHS beds and ensuring people can live at home
- More than £1m spent on new telecare system
- Installation of 1000 call blocker units has stopped one million nuisance and scam calls



Care at Home staff do vital work.



Blocking calls stops scams.



The important role of our staff

- Our staff are dedicated to improving the lives of people in East Renfrewshire
- They go above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis
- Despite reducing our Budget shortfall, we still have to make savings and that will impact staff
- Fewer than 50 posts may be affected in the year ahead
- No compulsory redundancies linked to this year's savings



Unprecedented financial challenges

- The Council is facing unprecedented financial challenges
- We have had to take very difficult decisions on savings and increasing Council Tax so we can balance the books as we are legally required to
- Councils must be better funded and I will continue to lobby for a better deal
- Our council is well-run, with some of the best services in the country
- We stepped up to the mark to help those hit by Cost of Living Crisis



Conclusion

- We have listened seriously to the concerns raised by residents during the budget engagement process
- This year we have saved our grass cutting service, our mixed tenure scheme and the Barrhead recycling centre will stay open
- We have protected teacher numbers, Pupil Support Assistants and the length of the school week and have added new investment to support ASN pupils
- We will continue to support the most vulnerable and build a better future

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