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**£5.41 council tax rise is agreed to protect vital services in Chichester District**

Chichester District councillors have agreed to increase the average council tax bill by £5.41 a year for a Band D property in order to protect vital services across the district.

The decision was made at Chichester District Council’s Full Council meeting on 27 February 2024, where the 2.99% rise was agreed for 2024 to 2025. This means that the average Band D council taxpayer will pay £186.48 a year for the council’s 80 plus services. This amounts to around 51 pence a day.

Councillor Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council, says: “We always aim to keep council tax as low as we can, and people may not be aware, but we are still one of the lowest charging authorities in the country. While we collect all the council tax, we only keep around an 8% share of this, with the rest going to the police, parish councils and West Sussex County Council. We want to ensure that vital services are protected and that we are continuing to provide support to those people in our communities who need it the most.

“Unfortunately pressures from inflation, the cost-of-living crisis, and other world events are continuing to have a significant impact on some council services. As a council, our residents should be reassured that we are extremely proactive in reviewing our finances, and budgets across the council are regularly monitored in partnership with our teams. This means we will be able to ensure the council’s financial stability as much as possible over the medium term.

“It’s important to understand that as a council we have a legal duty to deliver a balanced budget, which we have achieved again this year, and again, without the need for using any reserves. This is a very positive result considering the current pressures. As a result of the proactive measures that we’ve taken, we’ve achieved a budget that is as robust as it can be in the current circumstances. It also ensures that our financial resources match our council’s priorities.

“As people know, there are strong pressures on local government, and we’ll still face challenges over the next couple of years which we will be regularly monitoring. But, we are a council that doesn’t have any debt and I would like to stress that we are in a good position to be able to invest in and deliver a range of additional services.

“One of the issues that we are most concerned about is helping those residents who are most in need in our district, and so we are continuing to invest in our fantastic Supporting You Team, which focuses on helping residents with any cost of living-related issues. We are also continuing to invest in our Social Prescribing service, which helps people with non-medical issues that are significantly affecting their health, and connects people with other council services and organisations in the district.

“In terms of financial support, we are putting in another £100,000 over the next year for discretionary housing payments which can provide assistance to low-income households who are struggling to meet their housing costs. This funding will allow us to help more households avoid arrears or homelessness. As in previous years, we’re also still providing a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to eligible residents, which can award up to 100% reduction in their bill.

“In addition, we’ll also be looking at how to increase the amount of temporary accommodation in the district in both the short and medium term, in order to support those who have become homeless.

“We are also putting in £1.7 million for disabled facilities grants. These are issued to those residents who need adaptations so that they can keep as much independence as possible and carry on living in their own homes after leaving hospital, which is vital.

“We’ll also be allocating £100,000 to help support businesses in the district to become more sustainable and we’re also continuing to invest in events across the district to help boost the local economy. In addition, we’ll be spending money on refurbishing our public toilets because we know how important these are to our residents and visitors.”

Chichester District Council collects all the council tax, but only keeps around an 8% share of this. The other 92% is then distributed to West Sussex County Council (77%); The Police and Crime Commissioner (11%); and, parish councils (4%). Each of these public service providers make decisions about its council tax increases independently.

For more information, and to read a copy of this year’s budget, go to: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/budgetsspendingandperformance**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/budgetsspendingandperformance)

Cllr Moss adds: “I would urge anyone in the district who is struggling to contact us — our Supporting You Team is here to assist those who are finding times tough at the moment. The team can help people access a wide range of assistance including financial help to pay bills, help with housing, and health and wellbeing support. In addition, the team can also help signpost people to our other partner organisations when they feel this is appropriate, such as Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice, Arun and Chichester Food Partnership and the Community Hub. The team can be contacted by emailing **supportingyou@chichester.gov.uk** or calling **01243 534860**. Information is also available online at: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyoucampaign**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyoucampaign)”

Every day, Chichester District Council provides more than 80 different services. These range from emptying bins, checking food hygiene standards, cleaning the streets, looking after the coastline, caring for parks and open spaces and providing support and reassurance to the vulnerable — to name just a few services.

**Ends**

**For further information, please contact Clare Hawkin, Senior Communications Officer on 01243 534537 or by emailing** **chawkin@chichester.gov.uk**