

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Fenland District Council freezes its portion of the council tax

Fenland residents will not face an increase in their council tax contribution to Fenland District Council after the authority froze its share of the bill for the sixth time in ten years.

Councillors have voted in favour of keeping its council tax portion the same for 2020/21, as the Council continues to meet its ambitious savings target.

It is thought that Fenland will be among only 3% of local authorities across the country not to propose a tax hike for the coming year.

However, households will still see a rise in their overall council tax bills due to precept increases from Cambridgeshire County Council (3.59% rise), Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner (4.49% rise), Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority (1.91% rise) and local town and parish councils (average 4.42% rise). Fenland District Council collects all elements of the council tax, as the collecting authority for the area.

The government has allowed local authorities to raise their council tax by up to 2% in 2020/21 (plus an additional 2% for councils providing adult social care). If Fenland District Council was to implement a 2% rise, it would cost taxpayers £156,000 overall.

But thanks to prudent financial management, achieved savings and ambitious plans for the future, the Council has agreed a 0% rise to help reduce the burden on Fenland's taxpayers.

It means the Council's portion of a Band D council tax will remain at £260.46 per dwelling, or £173.64 for a Band A (84% of Fenland's properties are in Bands A-C).

The overall Band D council tax, including all precepts, will be £1,924.38 per dwelling, up from £1,865.97 in 2019/20.

However, the average total council tax per dwelling in Fenland in 2019/20, taking into account all precepts, all Bands A-H properties and exemptions such as Single Person Discount and Council Tax Support, was £1,262.74 – the lowest in the whole of Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of Fenland District Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, said: "Local authorities are under financial pressure, with significantly less money coming from central government. But since austerity measures hit in 2010 we have reduced our budget by 33% and made savings of almost £10million, whilst protecting and enhancing frontline services.

"Given the scale of challenges and uncertainties faced by the Council, the financial forecasts represent a significant achievement. It means we are a good position for what lies ahead and can balance our books without increasing the tax burden on our hardworking residents."

The savings have been achieved in a number of ways, including management and service reviews, shared services, procurement and income generation. Proposals implemented have included the relocation of the Council's March and Wisbech One Stop Shops, a shared CCTV service with Peterborough City Council, and the leisure centre management contract with Freedom Leisure.

There are also a number of other opportunities for the Council to accomplish further savings and generate additional income. They include the development of its Commercial and Investment Strategy, looking at investing in property and developing Council-owned land, and its 'Council For The Future' (CFF) transformation plans. These include the 'My Fenland' project to modernise customer service arrangements, with plans to utilise technology and launch a new website to enable residents to access services 24/7.

ENDS

For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226