



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# How we manage Your Council:

Explaining how your council tax is used



# Introduction from Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council



Dear Resident,

Welcome to this year's council tax booklet. In this leaflet, you can read all about how the council tax you pay has been used to benefit West Oxfordshire over the past year, and learn more about our clear, proactive plan – developed with you, our residents – to help grow and improve the district in the years ahead.

As we move into 2026, we are entering an important period for local government, with preparations for Local Government Reorganisation underway and work progressing on our new Local Plan. These changes bring both challenges and opportunities, and the decisions we take now must ensure that West Oxfordshire continues to receive high-quality services and good value for money.

As discussions on Local Government Reorganisation continue, we will continue to champion West Oxfordshire's interests. Our priority is clear: any future arrangements must strengthen, not weaken, local services and ensure residents continue to see their council tax used effectively for local benefit.

Managing our finances carefully is central to everything we do. At a time of ongoing financial pressure across local government, we remain focused on delivering the services that matter most to residents while making the best possible use of our limited resources. This includes investing in leisure services, supporting community and climate projects, delivering truly affordable homes, revitalising our town centres and much more.

By managing our budget sensibly, working efficiently, and focusing on what matters most, we will continue to protect essential services, invest where it makes a difference, and ensure West Oxfordshire remains a great place to live, work, and visit.

Councillor Andy Graham - Leader of  
West Oxfordshire District Council



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DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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 West Oxfordshire District Council

[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

# Local Government Reorganisation

The biggest change to your councils in 50 years

Local government in Oxfordshire is set to change. The Government have announced plans to simplify how councils operate. The current county and district council system will be replaced by 'unitary' councils that deliver all service under one roof.

The Government asked councils to submit proposals for how this could work in Oxfordshire. Three options have been put forward.

West Oxfordshire District Council supports the proposal for two unitary councils along with Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire councils.

We believe two unitary councils strike the right balance – large enough to deliver efficient, high-quality services, but local enough to reflect community needs and protect local representation. It is backed by independent financial modelling, showing it offers a great opportunity for long-term savings and more resilient finances.

We believe it is the only option that would protect services West Oxfordshire residents value but also improve those that need to change like highways maintenance, adult social care and SEND. We believe it is the only viable proposal that will deliver positive change.

The government is currently consulting on the proposals until 26 March and we would encourage you to have your say on this very important decision for West Oxfordshire.

To find out more, learn about the three options for Oxfordshire, and complete the consultation, visit: [www.twocouncils.org](http://www.twocouncils.org)



Two new councils. One better future.

# Our plan for West Oxfordshire

West Oxfordshire District Council is **your** local council, and we've developed an ambitious plan for the district based on what you told us matters most.



We are committed to tackling the issues that are important to our residents, local businesses, and the organisations that help make West Oxfordshire a great place to live.

Our five priorities, of equal importance, will guide the work we do:

1. Putting Residents First
2. Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All
3. Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife
4. Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency
5. Working Together for West Oxfordshire



Find out more by visiting our website: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/councilplan](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/councilplan)

## Help if you're struggling to pay your Council Tax

We understand that paying Council Tax can be difficult for some people, and support is available for those who need it. If you are on a low income or receive benefits, you may be eligible for help through our Council Tax Support Scheme. Find out more at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport)



# Our finances explained - where your council tax goes

Over the past decade, we have experienced a large drop in the funding we receive. With the cost of delivering services also rising, we need to manage our finances very carefully to continue to provide the services you rely on, and also make improvements to the district.

As your district council, we only receive 10p in every £1 of the council tax you pay, with the rest going to the county council, fire service, police and parish councils. You can see the split in your council tax bill.

With the money we receive, we deliver over 50 different services including bin collections, parking, planning and homelessness support, among many others. We do not deliver other council services such as road maintenance, public health, adult social care or education, which are done by the county council.

In our 2026/27 budget, we are prioritising supporting the local economy, enhancing natural habitats, preventing homelessness and tackling violence against women and girls. We're also freezing our garden waste service charges, keeping West Oxfordshire the lowest charging council in the county for this service.

To balance our budget, which is required by law, we will be raising our element of the council tax by £5 for a band D household, equivalent to around 10p per week. Our total budget for 2026/27 is £18.4m.

## Where the Council's money comes from



## Where the Council's money will be spent in 2026/27



## Services that bring in money



"You can find out more about the council's budget by visiting our website."  
Cllr Alaric Smith,  
Executive Member for Finance

# What we delivered for West Oxfordshire last year

Over the past year we have made great progress to deliver for residents in West Oxfordshire and improve our district. Some of our achievements made on your behalf include:



FarmAbility

## Investing in local communities

Through our community crowdfunding platform Westhive, we have supported 28 local projects, helping them raise over £900,000 for communities across West Oxfordshire. This year, the Council pledged more than £124,000 to support projects that improve community spaces and support wellbeing, creativity and young carers.

## Supporting local businesses

We continue to support local businesses and town centres through grants, training and business advice. This support has helped businesses grow and adapt, with town centres enjoying a successful Christmas period in 2025, including at Marriotts Walk.

## Helping residents claim financial support

We introduced the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to help identify residents missing out on financial support. By writing to over 200 pensioners who were eligible for Pension Credit, we helped 68 residents successfully claim support, unlocking £250,000 in additional income, including backdated payments and winter fuel support.

### **Improving leisure centres**

By continuing our contract with GLL, we are able to provide the best value and protect the future of our leisure centres. A £3.5 million, five-year investment plan is now underway, with improvements already delivered at Windrush Leisure Centre.

### **Delivering affordable homes**

In 2025, we delivered 321 social rented homes across West Oxfordshire. This includes 12 new social rented homes at Magpie Court in Chipping Norton and 105 social rented homes at Milestone Road in Carterton, helping local families access genuinely affordable housing with lower energy bills.

### **Taking action on climate change**

We are reducing emissions and supporting climate action by expanding our electric vehicle fleet, installing more EV charging points, decarbonising our own buildings, supporting a business carbon reduction grant, and creating the district's first biodiversity land bank to support nature recovery.

### **Making growth work for residents**

The new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will ensure new development helps fund local roads, schools, green spaces and community facilities, with funding shared directly with town and parish councils.



# Delivering local services for West Oxfordshire

We deliver more than 50 services across West Oxfordshire, and the figures below highlight the hard work of our teams in keeping our communities running. In 2025, we delivered:



Over **655** reported fly tips cleared



Over **556** reported abandoned vehicles investigated



Over **119,347** interactions with our customer services team



Over **1,227** new benefits and financial support claims processed for people in need of support



Over **8,727,000** waste collections with over **22,974** tonnes recycled



**321** affordable homes delivered



Over **3,136** planning applications received



**16** free car parks maintained



Over **251** people supported to avoid them becoming homeless



3 leisure centres with **977,271** visits and a wide range of health and wellbeing support for communities



Over **3,988** bulky waste collection bookings

