

# **Wiltshire Council agrees 2026/27 budget - committing to provide vital services despite financial challenges**

**Wiltshire Council has approved its budget for 2026/27 at Full Council, confirming how it will invest £567m in vital services that support residents, communities and businesses across the county.**

Published 26 February 2026

Wiltshire Council has approved its budget for 2026/27 at Full Council, confirming how it will invest £567m in vital services that support residents, communities and businesses across the county.

The budget included amendments, introduced following public feedback and detailed scrutiny.

The first amendment will ensure that Purton and Lower Compton household recycling centres (HRCs) will remain open for now, as the council's contractor, Hills Waste Solutions, has provided revised costs enabling a contract extension. This ensures continuity of service for residents while work continues to progress the planned new recycling facility in the north of the county.

The other approved amendment will ensure that grants are maintained for community transport. Following concerns raised by residents, councillors and community partners, funding has now been reallocated to allow these grants to continue, protecting vital services that support vulnerable residents and strengthen community resilience.

Other amendments agreed include introducing a lane rental scheme which will allow the council to charge utilities companies for working on some main roads. It was also agreed to pause the capital scheme for the proposed Melksham Bypass and use that money to part-fund the council's highways investment. The council has also agreed to delay the proposed changes to the Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS), which provides flooding resilience equipment such as gel sacks and tabards. It was also agreed to remove a saving because there was no clear way to deliver it (the Empty Homes Council Tax Premium saving).

Full Council approved a 2.99% general Council Tax increase, plus a 2% Adult Social Care levy. Together these changes will raise £20.5m to support essential services. The Band D rate for 2026/27 will be £1,981.15, an increase of £1.81 per week.

Despite the challenging financial context, the approved budget includes a net £40m increase in spending on council services compared with 2025/26. The largest areas of council spend in 2026/27 will be adult services: £224m; families and children: £79m; waste services and environment: £62m; highways and transport: £44m; and education and skills: £41m.

Cllr Ian Thorn, Leader of Wiltshire Council, said: We're delighted that this budget has been approved by Full Council and I'd like to thank officers, staff and members across all parties for their hard work in helping to develop it.

It is an ambitious, sustainable budget that helps to safeguard vital services despite the financial challenges we face. It reflects our commitment to the principles at the heart of Our Wiltshire Plan and ensures we remain focused on the long-term wellbeing of our residents and communities.

This budget balances the need to support those who rely on us most with the need to invest in the future of Wiltshire. It enables us to continue delivering on our priority areas: supporting people to live fulfilling lives; protecting and strengthening our communities; improving opportunities for children and young people; enhancing our environment; promoting healthier lives; and helping the economy work for everyone.

When we published our draft proposals, we did so welcoming ongoing dialogue, and that's why we have amended the budget to reflect this feedback. As any Cabinet should, we have listened carefully to the public, councillors, community groups and organisations - and this engagement has been invaluable. It is central to our commitment to work in partnership with empowered communities rather than adopting on a traditional top-down approach. This budget ensures we remain transparent, financially responsible and focused on measurable outcomes for the people of Wiltshire.

National funding continues to fall short - particularly for rural counties like ours - but now that this budget has been agreed, we are determined to continue the hard work of delivering strong services, protecting vulnerable residents, and investing in the priorities our communities care about.

To balance the budget without using reserves, the council has identified £27.6m in new savings alongside £5.3m agreed previously. These include:

- Service redesign and efficiency improvements
- Increased use of automation and AI where appropriate
- Reviewing staff vacancies
- Better use of council buildings and assets
- Increasing fees and charges in line with inflation at a minimum
- Investing in local children's homes to reduce reliance on external placements
- Strengthening procurement and contractual value.

The approved £260m capital programme for 2026/27 includes:

- £15m for road resurfacing and pothole management
- £3.3m for Warm Homes: Local Grant Scheme
- £1m for leisure centre fitness equipment
- £10.8m for the A350 Chippenham bypass
- £16.1m for structures and bridges
- £27m for new council house building
- £13m for the new Trowbridge leisure centre
- £12.1m for school maintenance and modernisation.

To read the budget papers and watch a replay of the meeting, which took place on 24 February, people should go to: [Agenda - Democratic Services - Wiltshire Council](#)(opens new window).

Explore the topic

**Topics:**

- [Business and economy news](#)
- [Council and democracy news](#)