

## East Renfrewshire Council Budget 2021/2022

Posted by RM64 - 27 Feb 2021 09:20

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News

People

### East Renfrewshire freezes Council Tax for 2021/22

East Renfrewshire Council has set an outline budget for 2021/22 which freezes Council Tax for residents, despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the additional financial pressures this has brought.

By Dawn Renton

Thursday, 25th February 2021, 1:15 pm

This has been achieved as a result of a 0.45% increase in the like for like grant settlement and additional funding for a council tax freeze from the Scottish Government, as well as the use £3m of reserves.

A budget shortfall still remains of £3.5m, with savings options being prepared for the next meeting of the Full Council if required.

Detailed service spending plans will be confirmed next month following the Scottish Government setting its final budget on March 9, as it is hoped that this could reduce the shortfall further still.

Council Leader, Councillor Tony Buchanan, said: "The impact of Covid-19 has been felt by all of us and my thoughts are with those families who have lost loved ones through this dreadful virus.

Throughout the last year, I have also been immensely proud to be Leader of East Renfrewshire Council as I saw the resolve of Council staff to continue going the extra mile to deliver for our residents.

From the staff involved in introducing new services at very short notice, such as the humanitarian food hub and processing new business grants, to our colleagues who continued to work right on the frontline – the efforts have been incredible.

“As well as the terrible human costs of this virus, there has, of course, been considerable financial cost – not only to councils but to the wider economy.

“The additional Covid-related costs incurred by East Renfrewshire Council since last March are estimated to be around £9m.

Despite these challenges, I am delighted that we are able to bring forward a budget with a much smaller shortfall than had been originally predicted in October 2020.

Freezing Council Tax will also help to reduce household bills at a time when people are struggling from the financial consequences of Covid-19.”

As well as confirming spending on key services and savings at the additional Full Council meeting on March 15, details of the ambitious capital plans for major projects which will transform the lives of East Renfrewshire residents in the next few years will also be set out.

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## Re: East Renfrewshire Council Budget 2021/2022

Posted by RM64 - 02 Mar 2021 23:37

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02/03/2021

Published Barrhead News on line -

News

5 hrs ago

## Cuts loom despite council tax freeze in East Renfrewshire

By Drew Sandelands Local Democracy Reporter

A COUNCIL tax freeze for East Renfrewshire residents has been agreed but a possible £3.5million of savings could still be needed to plug a budget gap.

Councillors welcomed extra cash from the Scottish Government for local authorities which agreed not to raise the tax.

They are expecting to get an additional £1.8m – equivalent to a 3% increase.

But the settlement from Holyrood – currently £196m – came under fire from opposition members, with claims it shows “utter contempt” for local government.

The council agreed to take £3m from reserves to cut the budget shortfall to £5.5m.

With the area’s culture and leisure trust and health and social care partnership set to identify their own savings, the council needs to find £3.5m of cuts.

However, that figure could reduce once the Scottish and UK governments finalise their budgets this month.

Councillors will meet again on March 15 to agree savings and spending plans for 2021/22.

Directors have outlined savings options totalling £9.4m.

The council tax bill for Band D households will be £1,290.

Council leader Tony Buchanan said the £196m settlement was a 0.45% like-for-like increase on last year, whereas forecasts had been based on a 1% cut.

“We have been able to reduce some of the more challenging savings the council was facing,” he added.

Taking £3m from reserves makes the council’s “safety net now much smaller,” he said.

“It may not be possible to use such high levels of reserves in the future,” added Councillor Buchanan.

“But, given the particular financial challenges facing the council and so many East Renfrewshire residents this year, we felt it important to make this substantial commitment, which will help us avoid more extensive reductions to vital services.”

He admitted £3.5m of savings would be “painful” but “won’t be to the same degree as just a few months ago.”

“The hope is negotiations on the Scottish budget will deliver extra funding which may allow us to reduce our £3.5m budget shortfall even further,” he added.

However, Councillor Gordon Wallace, of the Conservatives, said: “All we see is utter contempt from the Scottish Government, who seem to not recognise they depend so heavily on what we do locally.”

He added that the council’s key services had been “absolutely crucial” over the past year, showing “the importance of local decision-making.”

“Every year, we are seeing our grant cut, cut, cut,” added Councillor Wallace.

“We’re not allowed to call them cuts are we? We’re supposed to be calling them savings but, in reality, they are cuts.”

Councillor Stewart Miller said he felt sorry for SNP members who had to put a “positive spin” on the 0.45% increase.

“With an inflation rate of 2%, we’ve actually got a 1.5% cut in real terms,” he added.

However, SNP councillor Caroline Bamforth said it was “laughable” to blame the Scottish Government “given what you see happening down south.”

Another SNP councillor, Colm Merrick, said the council would need to wait for Chancellor Rishi Sunak’s UK budget “to see how much money he will give back to Scotland from what he took.”

And Labour’s Paul O’Kane, deputy council leader, added: “Regardless of our political affiliation, we all have a duty to argue for better settlements for local government and longer settlements to aid long-term financial planning.”

An estimated £9m of Covid-19 costs are set to be met through government funding and financial flexibilities.

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## Re: East Renfrewshire Council Budget 2021/2022

Posted by RM64 - 16 Mar 2021 09:14

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Detailed 2021/22 budget set for East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire Council has finalised its budget for the year ahead and outlined major capital projects which will be progressed.

By Dawn Renton

Tuesday, 16th March 2021, 7:02 am

At a previous meeting, it was agreed Council Tax would be frozen for 2021/22.

Detailed spending plans and a range of capital projects were confirmed.

The council faced a remaining budget gap of £3.5m and details of how these savings will be met were also confirmed.

Four new nurseries have already opened as part of the council's plans to almost double the amount of free early learning and childcare provision to 1140 hours.

Future capital projects include development of a new leisure centre for Eastwood, which includes three new pools, space for other sports, new theatre, library and gym.

Other projects being progressed are replacements for Neilston Primary, St Thomas's Primary and Madras Family Centre, Crookfur Primary extension, new all-weather pitch and athletics track at Mearns Castle High School, and building 310 council houses in the next four years.

Further details on the council's website.

[eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3552/Det...or-East-Renfrewshire](http://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3552/Det...or-East-Renfrewshire)

For more information about the council's budget, go to the detailed revenue estimates paper.

[eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4760/Counc...m=637510756152430000](http://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/4760/Counc...m=637510756152430000)

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## Re: East Renfrewshire Council Budget 2021/2022

Posted by RM64 - 17 Mar 2021 18:01

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17/3/2021

Published Barrhead News On Line -

News

5 hrs ago

Jobs at risk as East Renfrewshire Council chiefs try to plug budget black hole

By Drew Sandelands Local Democracy Reporter

New charges for garden waste collection and the council's reserves will help plug a £3.5m budget black hole – but 50 jobs could be at risk.

East Renfrewshire's spending and saving plans for the coming year were agreed by councillors on Monday.

Around 50 council posts are under threat due to cuts, but there will be no compulsory redundancies, council leader Tony Buchanan said.

Money will be spent on a new Eastwood Leisure Centre, primary schools and an all-weather pitch and athletics track at Mearns Castle High.

A council tax freeze – with the Scottish Government providing the cash equivalent of a 3% rise – and taking £3m from reserves had already been agreed at a meeting last month.

An extra £465,000 will now be used from the reserves, after an underspend was identified.

The area's culture and leisure trust and health and social care partnership will identify their own savings, totalling around £2m.

It had been hoped the £3.5m shortfall would be reduced once the Scottish and UK Government budgets were finalised.

Mr Buchanan said: "The council still has to make £3.5m worth of savings and every year it becomes more difficult to find such savings because of years of reduced funding.

"As a result, around 50 council posts may be affected by this year's savings proposals but in most cases this process will be managed by not filling vacancies.

"I am able to reaffirm our longstanding commitments that there will be no compulsory redundancies at East Renfrewshire Council in the coming years."

He added there would be an overall staff increase of 265 as new roles are being created, including in nurseries under an early years expansion.

Introducing charges for brown bin (garden waste) collection is expected to raise £800,000 while fees for pre-application planning advice will bring in £40,000.

A saving of £881,000 is planned by reducing the devolved school budgets held by headteachers.

Just over £100,000 will be saved through a review of the council's community safety unit's capacity and £87,000 from an ICT restructure.

Budget papers show £77,000 will be found from a review of accountancy vacancies and temporary staff cover.



The council is planning to save £340,000 through efficiencies, including reviewing non-staff budgets in corporate and community services and the environment department.

Mr Buchanan said savings would be “painful” but added: “I can absolutely assure residents and staff that we have done all that we can to protect our vital frontline services.”

One major project being progressed by the council is the development of the new leisure centre, with swimming pools, gym, library and theatre, for Eastwood.

Money will also be used on replacements for Neilston Primary, St Thomas’ Primary and Madras Family Centre.

There is £2.2m for a further extension to Crookfur Primary and £1.7m for the pitch and track at Mearns Castle High School.

More than 300 new council houses are set to be built over the next four years.

There were no amendments to the plans submitted by opposition councillors.

Tory councillor Gordon Wallace said an amendment would be “not so much rearranging the remnants of a fleshless carcass, as giving out a message that this is how it has to be”.

“It is not how it has to be,” he added. “I can only hope the political landscape, this time next year, will be one that values local accountability and rejects this continued centralisation agenda of the Holyrood incumbency.”

Labour councillor Paul O’Kane, the council’s deputy leader, said: “It is clearly time to reset the relationship between local government and Scottish Government and indeed that is what I will argue for.”

Councillor Stewart Miller added: “I’m really disappointed the nationalist government in Holyrood and their Green sidekicks, who appear to be more yellow than green, have given us a pretty poor budget settlement.

“It’s our local residents who will have to take the brunt of lack of Holyrood government investment.”

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