

Councillor Liz Green
Leader of Kingston Council



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Dear resident,

We are proud of Kingston and ambitious about the future, even though limited finances mean we can no longer do everything in the same ways that we have in the past.

We are determined to invest and committed to improve the borough for everyone through initiatives such as improving air quality, creating a new vision for our town centre, upgrading our parks and green spaces and revamping our libraries.

£6.6 million of this year's budget will be put into key services for residents. £3.8 million will go towards meeting increasing demand for children's services and adult social care, helping our most vulnerable residents to reach their full potential. The remainder will go into delivering our priorities, including action on the climate emergency, and continuing to provide the essential frontline services that residents expect.

Nevertheless, these are stark financial times for Kingston and prolonged central Government underfunding and cuts have had an impact on our plans, meaning we are more reliant on business rates and council tax as we look to balance the books.

Raising council tax is not an easy decision, but due to our funding being cut from £66 million in 2010 to zero, we must still make some very tough decisions in order to secure the financial future of our borough.

Sadly this means we don't have any choice but to ask residents to pay a little more money for the services we deliver. Council tax will increase by 1.99% this year, with an additional

2% to fund adult social care services. This works out at about £1.19 extra per week on average.

I know many residents will share our frustrations that to provide the services needed, we have had to increase council tax again this year. I have said before that we are a community in Kingston and the council tax and business rates you pay go directly to help those that most need our help. This includes children in need of care or with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), all who have mental or physical health problems, learning disabilities or housing needs, the elderly who need assistance and anyone suffering domestic violence or a multitude of other concerns.

I'd like to thank you for helping ensure Kingston remains a great place to live, work, study and do business. In return we promise to use your money wisely.

For more information on this year's budget and council tax please visit www.kingston.gov.uk/RBKBudget2021

We have a plan for Kingston and we want the best for our borough and all our residents. We will continue to work with our communities to give everyone in our wonderful borough the fairest possible deal.

Working with residents and businesses to find solutions to our biggest issues, such as climate change and demographic pressures on adult and children's social care, is extremely important to us. To stay up to date, have your say and get involved in what we are doing, please sign up to our Let's Talk community engagement portal. kingstonletstalk.co.uk/get-involved

Thank you



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P.S. Sign up for e-billing next year to help the environment and save money
www.kingston.gov.uk/viewyourbillonline