

Councillor Update

*From your
Unitary Councillors
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Somerset
Council

GOVERNMENT GRANTS SOMERSET COUNCIL EXCEPTIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT



We have some significant news to share regarding our local council's finances and what it means for all of us.

In response to mounting financial challenges, the Government has granted Somerset Council permission to raise Council Tax by up to 7.5% for the upcoming fiscal year. This increase exceeds the national cap of 5%, reflecting the council's pressing need to address a substantial budget shortfall.

Why the Increase?

Since its formation in April 2023, Somerset Council has been diligently working to reduce costs, implementing measures such as staff reductions to save £47 million by April 2025. Despite these efforts, escalating expenses in Children's and Adult's & Social Care have led to a projected budget gap of approximately £66 million for the 2025/26 fiscal year. To put it

in context with a Band D property charge of £1,728, £1,140 of that is spent on Children's and Adult's & Social Care leaving only £588 left for all other services. The council sought Exceptional Financial Support from the Government, resulting in the approved Council Tax increase.

What Does This Mean for You?

If the council decides to implement the full 7.5% increase, residents in a Band D property could see their annual Council Tax bill rise by about £100. While no one welcomes higher taxes, this measure aims to ensure the continuation of essential services that many in our community rely on.

Supporting Our Most Vulnerable

Recognizing the impact of this increase, especially on low-income households, the council plans to bolster its exceptional hardship fund. This fund is designed to provide support for residents on the lowest incomes, ensuring that those most in need receive assistance during these challenging times.

A Call for Urgent Reform

Council Leader Bill Revans has emphasized the need for immediate financial help, stating, "We have been saying for some time that the funding model for Local Government is broken. The new Government has acknowledged this and promised reform and additional funds in key areas like social care by 2028. But 2028 is too late. We need urgent financial help now."

SOMERSET RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO RECYCLE THEIR METAL PACKAGING



We have some exciting news to share that not only benefits our beautiful county but also contributes to a greener planet. Somerset Council, in partnership with SUEZ recycling and recovery UK, has launched a new campaign to encourage all of us to recycle our metal packaging.

What's the Buzz About?

The 'MetalMatters' campaign, spearheaded by the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation (Alupro), aims to boost kerbside recycling rates across Somerset. Over the next six weeks, you'll notice messages on social media, digital platforms, radio, and even buses, all highlighting the importance of recycling metal household packaging.

What Can We Recycle?

Here's a quick list of metal items you can toss into your recycling bin:

Food and drink cans: Aluminium foil and foil trays: Empty aerosols: Metal screw tops and jar lids

Why Should We Care?

Recycling metal has some fantastic benefits:

Energy Savings: Recycling just one aluminium can save enough energy to run a TV for three hours!

Environmental Impact: Metal is infinitely recyclable, meaning it can be reused over and over without losing quality. By recycling, we reduce the need for raw materials and decrease our carbon footprint.

A Word from Our Council

Cllr Richard Wilkins, Somerset Council's Executive Member for Transport and Waste Services, shared, "We know that people here in Somerset are great at recycling, but together we can all make the effort to do more." He encourages everyone to think about their recycling habits and understand how to correctly recycle various metal items.

Let's Make a Difference Together!

By making a conscious effort to recycle our metal packaging, we can collectively make a significant impact. It's a simple yet effective way to contribute to our community and the environment.

So, next time you're about to toss that empty can or used foil, remember to recycle it. Every little bit helps in making Somerset a greener place for all.

*Best wishes to you all,
Andy and Mike*

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