

Public budget consultation for 2024/25

Budget 2024 to 2025

Current spend and funding

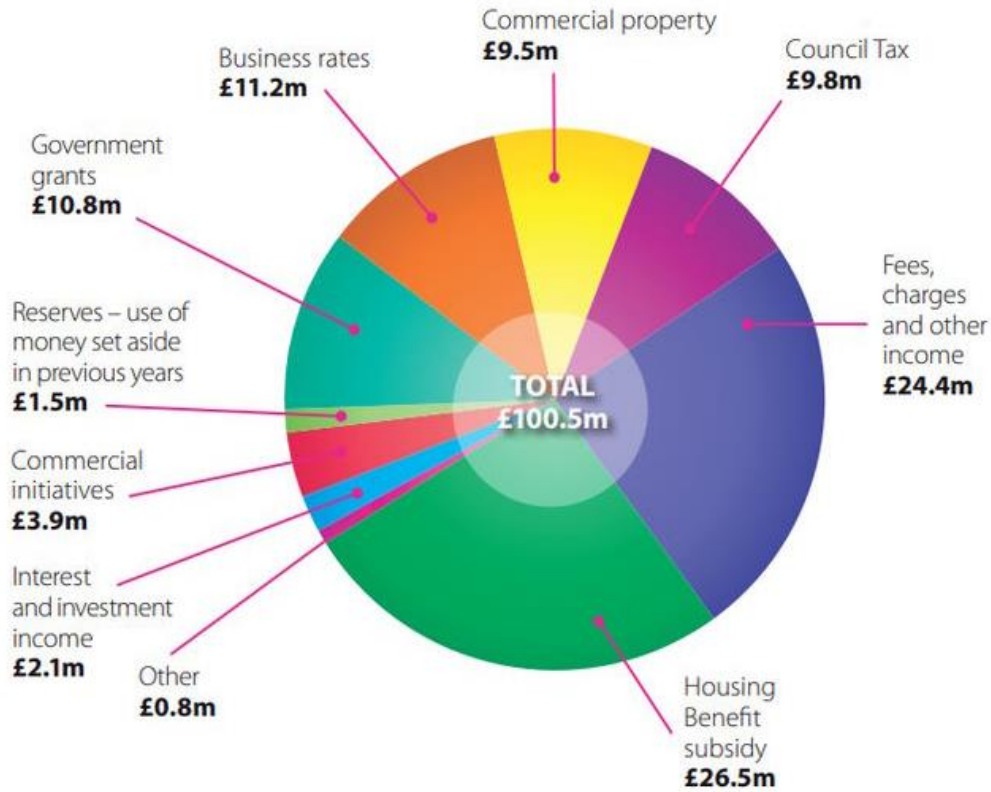
We are keen to understand residents' and businesses' views on the services we provide and on proposals we have identified that could be used to balance our budget for the next financial year (2024/25). The areas covered by council are shown here: [Ward map - Cambridge City Council](#)

Cambridge City Council provides a wide range of services and has set out its priorities in our Corporate Plan. Some services in the city of Cambridge are provided by Cambridgeshire County Council (for instance maintenance of the highways, social care for children and adults) or the health service (including GPs and dentists) or other bodies. This consultation is not about those services.

At present the council spends about £100 million a year to deliver services in Cambridge, excluding the provision of council homes, which are budgeted and reported separately. This is paid for mainly from the income we generate from fees and charges for services, commercial property rents and government grants.

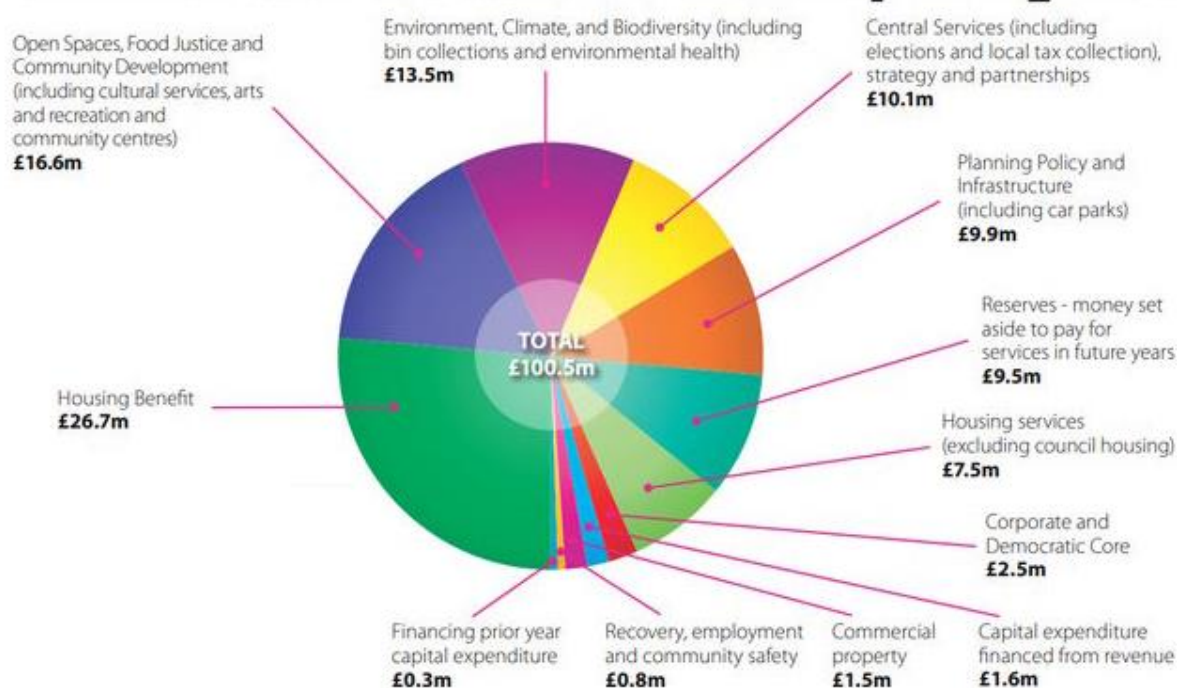
Our net spend is that part of our total spend that is not covered by the income we generate. It is about £20m per year and is funded by a share of business rates and Council Tax.

Where the council's money comes from



Income	
Service	Income
Housing Benefit subsidy	£26.5m
Fees, charges and other income	£24.4m
Business rates	£11.2m
Government grants	£10.8m
Council Tax	£9.8m
Commercial property	£9.5m
Commercial initiatives	£3.9m
Interest and investment income	£2.1m
Reserves – use of money set aside in previous years	£1.5m
Other	£0.8m
Total income	£100.5m

Where the council's money is spent



Expenditure	
Service	Expenditure
Housing Benefit	£26.7m
Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development (including cultural services, arts and recreation and community centres)	£16.6m
Environment, Climate, and Biodiversity (including bin collections and environmental health)	£13.5m
Central Services (including elections and local tax collection), strategy and partnerships	£10.1m
Planning Policy and Infrastructure (including car parks)	£9.9m
Reserves - money set aside to pay for services in future years	£9.5m
Housing services (excluding council housing)	£7.5m
Corporate and Democratic Core	£2.5m
Capital expenditure financed from revenue	£1.6m
Commercial property	£1.5m
Recovery, employment and community safety	£0.8m
Financing prior year capital expenditure	£0.3m
Total expenditure	£100.5m

Need to reduce our net spend

We need to **reduce our net spending by around £6 million** in the next three financial years. This is due to the increasing demand for our services as a result of the cost of living crisis and the growth of the city, which are not matched by increases in our funding from government. Proposals identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) [\[link\]](#) could contribute to that.

We expect that our annual net spending will need to be around £11.1 million less in 2029 than it is now for the council to be financially sustainable.

This reduction in net spend in the coming years is in addition to the £13 million that the City Council has already saved over the past five years.

Balancing our budget?

The council is delivering a transformation programme called “Our Cambridge” [‘Our Cambridge’ transformation programme - Cambridge City Council](#) .Through this programme we are building on new ways of working and good relationships we have made with other

local organisations, so that we can deliver a better future for our communities and local businesses.

We are also looking at changing how we do things within the council, so that we can maximise the value of everything we do and achieve operational efficiencies, improvements, savings and generate additional income.

Have your say

We are keen to hear your views on our five-year financial plans (the MTFS) and the potential savings and additional expenditure included within it [\[link\]](#)

Please submit your views by completing our survey.

What happens next?

- Draft budget proposals will be discussed at our Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 January 2024. [Agenda for Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 15th January, 2024, 5.30 pm - Cambridge Council](#)
- Your responses to our survey will be summarised and reported to councillors after that meeting. Your responses will then inform our thinking on budget choices and service priorities as we finalise our budget for 2024/25.
- The Budget will be discussed at a meeting of The Executive on 5 February 2024 and a decision will be made at the Council meeting on 15 February 2024.
- We will communicate what has been decided after that meeting via our website.

Questionnaire

We are keen to hear your views on the services we provide and on proposals to help set our budget for the next financial year (2024 to 2025).

The survey will take approximately **nine minutes** to complete

PRIORITISATION OF COUNCIL SERVICES

1. What do you think are the three most important priorities for Cambridge?

The following statements or phrases describe some of the things that may need to be done in Cambridge by either the council, its partners or other agencies in the year(s) ahead.

In some cases, the council has a limited direct impact but seeks to work with partners to address those.

Please select three options.

- a) Affordable housing
- b) Climate change and biodiversity
- c) Congestion, greener transport and active travel
- d) Essential public services (for example, collecting household waste, street cleaning and planning applications)
- e) Homelessness
- f) Local economy sustainable growth
- g) Local skills
- h) Addressing poverty and inequality
- i) Ensuring people are safe and have equal access to opportunities and resources
- j) Something else? Please specify.

2. Select three of our top services that you value most.

Please select three options.

- Benefits (including Housing Benefit and Council Tax reductions)
- Car parks
- Central market
- Community centres and community development

- Council houses and sheltered housing
- Community safety (including preventing anti-social behaviour)
- Crematorium and bereavement services
- Cultural services, including the Corn Exchange and outdoor events such as the Folk Festival and Fireworks Night
- Elections
- Environmental health services (including licensing, air pollution, food safety standards in restaurants and standards in private rented housing)
- Housing advice and temporary accommodation for people at risk of homelessness
- Leisure services, including swimming pools
- Parks, open spaces, trees and nature reserves
- Planning services (including planning applications, enforcement and local plan making)
- Street cleaning services
- Waste services (including recycling and green waste)

BALANCING THE 2024 TO 2025 BUDGET

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identifies strategic savings and additional spending that could be considered for inclusion in our budget for the year ahead. These potential changes are likely to have the most impact on public services and on our budget.

6. Which of the potential budget proposals do you support? [tick boxes to indicate support]

- a) Improve the environmental performance of our buildings
- b) Where possible, charge commercially for the provision of advice
- c) Review and merge services to improve efficiency
- d) Rent out unused office space
- e) Modernise and streamline operational services
- f) Support households in need impacted by the cost of living crisis
- g) In collaboration with partners, reduce emissions from our buildings and the wider city to reduce the city's carbon footprint
- h) None of the above

Please explain briefly why you support these proposals.

7. Are there any potential budget proposals that you oppose? [tick boxes to indicate opposition]

8. Improve the environmental performance of our buildings
9. Where possible, charge commercially for the provision of advice

10. Review and merge services to improve efficiency
11. Rent out unused office space
12. Modernise and streamline operational services
13. Support households in need impacted by the cost of living crisis
14. In collaboration with partners, reduce emissions from our buildings and the wider city to reduce the city's carbon footprint
15. None of the above

Please explain briefly why you oppose these proposals.

OPTIONS TO BALANCE THE BUDGET OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

16. To what extent do you agree that we should focus on:

- a. Using digital technology and providing more services online, whilst maintaining face-to-face support only where it is needed
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- b. Increasing co-operation and co-delivery of services by working with local communities and voluntary sector organisations to design and deliver services:
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- c. Working collaboratively with local partner organisations, including businesses, universities and statutory partners such as Cambridgeshire County Council, NHS, police and other public bodies
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- d. Working with neighbouring councils to deliver additional shared services to help save money and become more efficient
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree

- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

17. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the approaches Cambridge City Council could take to balance its budget:

- e. Stop delivering services that have a less direct impact on residents' quality of life
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- f. Continue delivering existing services, but do some things to a reduced specification or frequency (for example grass cutting, street cleansing)
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- g. Reduce capital spending on physical assets and 'street scene' projects in the city (for example, park, playgrounds and street furniture)
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- h. Increase fees and charges for some services (the council currently charges for parking, planning applications, inspections, hire of buildings and open spaces etc. and may consider introducing charges for some additional services)
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- i. Seek to increase income from the commercial properties through redevelopment and refurbishment
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- j. Sell underused buildings and assets or let them out to generate additional income
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither Agree nor Disagree

- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

COUNCIL TAX

In Cambridge, increasing Council Tax by 1% raises an extra £98,000 for the city council (89% of the Council Tax that we collect goes to Cambridgeshire County Council, police and fire services).

An increase of 2.99% would add about £6.54 per year to the bill for a Band D property (an average house). This would generate around £293,000 for the city council. It is the most we are allowed by the Government to raise Council Tax in one year without holding a referendum.

18. Bearing in mind the need to find £2.3m to balance next year's budget, which of the following options do you support?

- a) Reduce Council Tax
- b) Keep Council Tax the same
- c) Increase Council Tax by less than 2.99%
- d) Increase Council Tax by 2.99%
- e) Increase by more than 2.99%

Please explain why you chose this option.

END