



COUNCIL LEADER INTRODUCTION

Many councils – including ours – will face difficult budget decisions this year. In fact, setting our council budget for 2024/25 has been more challenging than any year in recent memory.

We're in a perfect storm due to long-term effects of the COVID pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, high inflation rates and increased demand for our services. But, given our ongoing strong financial management, we're in a position to be able to set a balanced budget again.

Since 2010, we've seen 60p in every £1 of funding cut by government. This means that collecting Council Tax is more important than ever, as it makes up the biggest source of funding for our budget.

Despite our decision to increase Council Tax again this year – which the vast majority of councils have had to do – it is worth remembering that Warrington has lower Council Tax rates than many other places nationally and in the North West, meaning you are likely to pay less Council Tax in Warrington than elsewhere.

Part of this year's Council Tax increase is specifically for supporting older people or adults who need additional support. This additional element is what is known as an adult social care precept. This is a really important part of your Council Tax, because as our population in Warrington grows older, more people are likely to depend on social care to help them to live fulfilling and independent lives.

We don't make decisions to increase Council Tax lightly, but the reality is we have no alternative if we are to keep providing the services people want and need.

Despite the ongoing pressures that we face, Warrington is already a place to be proud of, and together we can make it even better.

Councillor Hans Mundry

Leader of Warrington Borough Council

Councillor Denis Matthews

Cabinet member for corporate finance