

Dear Lewisham resident,



Each year, I write to update you on Lewisham Council's budget, how we are delivering services and what we can look forward to for the coming year.

Like many councils across the country, we are facing significant financial challenges.

The cost of delivering essential services is rising, while demand continues to grow. At the same time our budget feels the impact of 14 years of underfunding.

### Council tax and our budget

To protect essential services, Lewisham Council will be increasing council tax by 4.99% this year. This difficult decision ensures we can continue providing services we all rely on, such as libraries, parks, youth services, community safety, bin collections, street cleaning, and vital support for our most vulnerable residents.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is also increasing its share of council tax. For a Band D property, this means an increase of approximately £1.87 per week. With the GLA increase, it's just over £8 extra a month.

We are doing everything possible to manage our finances responsibly, making efficiencies, finding smarter ways to deliver services, and working with the new Government to secure a fairer deal for Lewisham. However, without raising council tax, we simply could not continue delivering the services our community depends on.

You may have heard that a growing number of councils have effectively gone bankrupt, while others are introducing much higher tax increases of up to 10%. With public resources stretched, it is more important than ever that we set a sustainable and responsible budget. You can read more at [lewisham.gov.uk/budget25](https://lewisham.gov.uk/budget25).

### Investing in essential services

Social care and housing remain our biggest costs now accounting for 71% of our budget. The housing crisis has led to over 3,000 households approaching the Council for support, as private rents have become unaffordable. Our temporary accommodation

costs have risen by £12m. Meanwhile, demand for children's and adult social care continues to grow.

Despite these challenges, we are committed to supporting residents by providing financial advice and practical support through our local partners, ensuring no child goes hungry with free school meals during the holidays, funding 45 Warm Welcomes across the borough, expanding our jobs and skills services, including a new Youth Employment Hub, and rolling out Family Hubs to make it easier for families to access support in one place locally.

### Looking to the future

While we face financial challenges, we remain ambitious for Lewisham. We are investing in projects that will make a real difference, including:

- Families First for Children – a pioneering programme supporting children to stay with their families
- Bringing youth services back into the Council, as well as refurbishing Riverside Youth Centre, and creating a state-of-the-art 3G football pitch, games area, gym, and indoor sports space
- Building on success – improving our 'GOOD' Ofsted-rated Children's Services and Adult Learning, and our 'GOOD' Youth Justice Services
- Revitalising Lewisham Town Centre – including a refurbished library, updated high street, and improved market space
- Campaigning for the Bakerloo Line extension – to create jobs, unlock new homes, and improve transport links.

Lewisham has a strong track record of responsible financial management. We remain committed to improving and modernising our services, ensuring they deliver value for money while continuing to support those who need them most.

If you need financial support or advice, including information on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, you can find out more over the page or visit [lewisham.gov.uk/support](https://lewisham.gov.uk/support).

Thank you for your continued support.

**Brenda Dacres, Mayor of Lewisham**

## What does your Council tax help fund?



**1,200km**  
of roads and  
pavements  
maintained



**17**  
**million**  
bins  
collected



**5,000**  
adults supported  
through  
Adult Social Care



Maintenance  
of our  
**47**  
parks and  
green spaces



11 libraries with books,  
employment support,  
and digital access,  
visited nearly  
**1 million**  
times in the year



Supporting  
**1,200**  
local residents  
into good jobs



Supporting  
**438**  
children in care  
and care leavers  
as they transition  
to adulthood



**Nine**  
Family Hubs that  
provide support  
to hundreds  
of families

## Help is available

If you are worried about being able to pay your council tax, please get in touch about the support you might be able to claim – [lewisham.gov.uk/support](https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/support)

We have a Council Tax Reduction Scheme in place to support low earners with a discount on their council tax of up to 75%.

## Could you be better off?

BetterOff is an online tool for people who live in Lewisham. BetterOff will show you the benefits you are entitled to and will help you to apply for them online. It also provides information on how to find and apply for jobs.

1,200 local people have used the BetterOff Lewisham tool to access on average, over £7,200 each. Since we launched it in April last year, nearly £9m in benefits have been distributed to eligible people.

Go to [lewisham.betteroff.org.uk](https://www.lewisham.betteroff.org.uk) to see if you are eligible.



We regularly share updates about support in our weekly newsletter, you can sign up by scanning the QR code, or visit [lewisham.gov.uk/signup](https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/signup). It only takes a minute, and you will be kept up to date with news and events from the Council.