

Draft Budget Consultation 2026/27

**HAVE YOUR SAY AT:
[HTTPS://RBWMTOGETHER.RBWM.GOV.UK](https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk)**



This consultation on our draft budget proposals runs from
**Wednesday 17 December 2025
to Sunday 1 February 2026.**

WE WANT YOUR VIEWS ON THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS

Introduction

Every year the council must, by law, set a balanced budget. This budget sets out how the council plans to pay for and deliver services in the year ahead.

Plans for the 2026/27 budget are being developed at a time when councils across the country are facing serious financial pressures. These include high inflation, higher interest rates and growing demand for services such as social care and housing.

The Royal Borough is also likely to be particularly affected by changes to how government funding is shared between councils, following the Fair Funding Review. These changes will reduce the amount of funding the council receives.

Alongside this, the Royal Borough has a low level of council tax compared with other areas and high levels of historic debt. This means the council has less financial flexibility to deal with rising costs and demand, even after taking significant action to improve its finances since 2023.

The council is on track to achieve £6m of savings in 2025/26 by changing how services are delivered, increasing income and strengthening financial management. This has included difficult decisions and an 8.99% increase in council tax this year. Even with this increase, council tax in the Royal Borough remains among the lowest in the country, with a Band D charge almost £500 a year less than the national average.

Despite these steps, the council still faces an annual £51m gap between the money it has and the cost of providing services for 2026/27. This highlights the difficult choices ahead, and why we want your feedback on our budget proposals for the coming year.



Why we want your views

We are taking the necessary steps to stabilise the council's finances, but it is vital to receive your feedback so we can continue to protect the services you use, invest in the areas that matter most to you, and help shape the choices ahead for the Royal Borough. The feedback we receive through the consultation will be reviewed and carefully considered as part of the council's budget-setting process and will form part of the final budget report that will be published in February. The final budget will be voted on by all councillors at Full Council on Tuesday 3 March.

How to have your say

The consultation is open from Wednesday 17 December 2025 until 23.59 Sunday 1 February 2026 for residents and businesses in the borough, as well as people who study or work here, and also community and interest groups.



You can give your feedback by completing the online survey at: rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/2026-27-draft-budget-consultation



If you don't have online access, there are public-access computers available at all local libraries and colleagues there will also be able to help you get online. Paper copies of the consultation documents can be printed at borough libraries, upon request.

If you have any questions, please contact budgetconsultation@rbwmgov.uk.



Our proposed budget for 2025/26

The budget is designed to ensure that we continue to be able to deliver local services to residents and we propose to spend £155.4m delivering these essential services in the new financial year.

This is an increase on the current year's budget and includes savings of £6m from transforming council services while allowing us to put money back into the services which matter most to residents.

The draft budget includes proposed increased spending of around £14m to meet rising demand for services and putting money back into certain areas of the budget. This includes an extra £3.35m within Adult Social Care to help people remain safe and independent in their own homes for longer; £5.65m investment around children's care placements; an increase of £1.88m on temporary accommodation and housing; a total of £1.17m aimed at improving borough parks, carparks, council owned buildings and other areas in need of repair.



Delivering the services residents need

Our funding mainly comes from council tax, business rates, government grants, and fees and charges.

We use this money to deliver services that support our residents and communities including caring for vulnerable adults, helping children and young people get the best start in life, supporting people live well and stay healthy, collecting rubbish and recycling, looking after our countryside, and fixing and maintaining roads and street lighting.

For every £100 we use to fund services, we will spend:



Caring for adults who need our help and support



Helping children and young people get the best start in life they can



Support services, including HR, IT, corporate projects



Housing and public protection



Corporate costs, including servicing debt, pension deficit and environmental levy



Place-based services, including leisure, libraries, parking and planning



Revenues and benefits



On legal and democratic services, including running elections



How will we spend that money?

Our budget is divided across our four main council directorates that deliver a range of services. Our 2026/27 budget proposals set out the proposed funding for each of our directorates, with examples of the services this money supports.



The budget would also seek to build in funding to provide support for the borough's most vulnerable residents, to protect them from any additional council tax increase. This builds on support already offered by the council to help residents with their council tax bills – including council tax support, discretionary reduction, exemptions, and discounts alongside the ability to spread the cost over 12 months.

You can view the full range of our proposals as part of the [Draft Budget 2026/27 agenda papers for Cabinet meeting](#) on 16 December 2025.

Adult Social Care & Health - £64.4m (35%)

This includes caring for adults who need our help and support, helping people keep well and stay healthy, and includes additional funding of £3.35m to support people to remain in their own homes and live a safe and independent life for as long as possible.

Children's Services & Education - £44.1m (24%)

This includes helping children and young people get the best start in life they can and to live in safety, supporting children and families who are experiencing challenges, and caring for children who are unable to live with their families. This amount includes additional funding of £5.65m to meet rising demand and costs of children's services.

Schools receive a ring-fenced budget (the Dedicated Schools Grant) to provide the universal services for all 5-16 year olds that is not included in this figure.

Place - £26.2m (14%)

These services include maintaining our roads, helping people avoid homelessness, keeping our communities safe, collecting rubbish and recycling, and looking after our environment. We manage our town centres and play a lead role in the council's efforts to tackle climate change and its effects. An additional £1.88m is being allocated to meet the rising demand and costs of temporary accommodation, and to transform housing services.

In addition, the council delivers a number of capital projects, including work on road infrastructure, flood alleviation, grants for home adaptations and equipment, active travel schemes and looking after the buildings and land we own. This includes a boost to the maintenance budget, which means there is a total of £1.17m aimed at improving borough parks, carparks, council owned buildings and other areas in need of repair.

Resources - £14.7m (8%)

This includes a mixture of resident-facing services such as libraries and registrars, and 'back office' services including finance, human resources, IT and legal services to support the council to function. We are also responsible for arranging elections, administration of council tax and business rates and ensuring the benefits and other grant money is given to those who are eligible.

In addition, £34.2m (19%) is allocated to spend on corporate costs, including servicing debt, pension deficit and environmental levy.

We are seeking your views on:

- the council services and facilities that you use most
- how satisfied you are with your local area
- which council services are most important to you
- the different approaches available to the council to close the budget gap.

**WE WANT YOUR VIEWS ON OUR
DRAFT BUDGET**

