

Winchester City Council Report - March 2026

Winchester City Council approves balanced budget for 2026/27

Winchester City Council has approved a balanced budget for the upcoming year. At a meeting of the full council the district council element of the Council tax bill was set at an average increase of 2.99% (which relates to an increase of between £4.50 - £4.83 per year for an average band D property).

It also allows for an increase in the pressures from rises in utility costs, and lays out plans for investments which will make it easier and faster for residents to contact the council by improving digital and online services, freeing up traditional contact for those who need it.

A total of £1.7m has also been set aside for essential structural repairs to the listed civic Guildhall building (an additional £3.3 million is allocated from the separate capital investment strategy), and £15,000 has been set aside to explore speed indicators in the town area.

Recognising the ongoing impact of the cost of living, the city council has also extended the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund into 2026/7. Additionally In light of the increase to universal credit, it was agreed that income bands for applying council tax reduction are revised so the majority of working age applicants continue to receive a similar level of support through 2026/27. While the scheme aims to protect vulnerable households and limit reductions in entitlement, additional safeguards remain in place for those experiencing exceptional hardship.

This budget also includes provision for preparing the council for the implementation of the Government's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) plans which is expected to have a significant impact on council resources, so that usual services are not affected.

Central Winchester Regeneration – new information released

Central Winchester Regeneration's Development Partner, Jigsaw by Partnerships and Places held drop-in public information events at the end of February to share the latest evolution of the plans. These provided residents and stakeholders opportunities to contribute their views and ideas ahead of a planning application later this year.

Central Winchester Regeneration is set to unlock a new wave of potential for the city, creating a sustainable pedestrian-led quarter that reflects Winchester's distinctive character and heritage. The new creative quarter will offer flexible work and creative spaces, food and drink options, and plenty of public spaces. To support this emerging business community, the vision includes a wide variety of tenure-diverse homes suitable for people at all stages of life.

According to council leader, Martin Tod, "(the council is) are aiming to sign off this summer, allowing Jigsaw to make a planning application by the end of the year."

The information shared via the event display boards is still available to view
at www.winchesterregeneration.co.uk/

Still time to share your views on future recycling – deadline 8th March

Winchester City Council is preparing for future changes in recycling and has released a survey asking for residents' views. The short survey will help the council understand residents' current knowledge about recycling and how much more they're likely to recycle in the future, when more options are available. At present, Winchester City Council is limited in what it can collect for recycling, due to the limited facilities that Hampshire County Council has to process materials. However, Hampshire County Council is building a new Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) that will allow the city council to be able to collect a wider range of materials for recycling – such as plastic tubs, pots and trays. It is expected that this will be up and running in 2028. Winchester City Council would like to introduce this broader range of recycling options as soon as the facility is available in Hampshire.

WCC is keen to hear from people living in all types of accommodation, including flats and shared housing, as well as from residents of all ages over 18. This feedback will help better understand both the opportunities and challenges of expanding recycling services.

Residents can complete the survey at www.winchester.gov.uk/recycling-future to provide their feedback on recycling across the Winchester district. The survey is available until midnight on Sunday 8 March.

A further conviction – against another Poles Lane fly-tipper!

Winchester City Council has achieved another successful fly-tipping conviction. Samuel James Rickard, aged 51 years-old and a resident of Elder Close, Badger Farm, Winchester, was seen by a passing motorist dumping green waste and hedge cuttings from his gardening business onto private land in Port Lane, Hursley in December 2024. The council's team investigated and prosecuted the case. Mr Rickard was sentenced to a fine of £677, and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £271, prosecution costs of £1,523 and clear-up costs of £180, making a total to pay of £2,651.

Reports of fly-tipping can be made [via the council's website](#), via the Your Winchester app or by calling 0300 300 0013.

2026 District Small Grants application window

The present round of applications to the District Small Grants scheme closed on 31 January. For any applications made by this deadline, monies are to be spent/allocated by end of March 2026.

To learn more and discover when future grants become available* visit the WCC Grants webpage:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/grants-for-not-for-profit-organisations>

(*NB – the previous application window started in May 2025.)