

County Council Report to Catsfield Parish Assembly 14 May 2026

Council Tax will rise by 4.99% plus an extra 2% which is the Adult Social Care precept. The County Council finances were examined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) and were found to be well managed. Nevertheless, the budget was £55m in deficit with no resources available to fill the hole without a rise in Council Tax of 19%. The Administration has been successful in getting Extra Financial Support from the government, £70m. This is a loan granted on a draw down basis with an annual repayment cost of £6.6m if the whole amount is used. It is not clear what are the plans for the extra £15m nor is it clear how it is planned to repay and service the loan. It is assumed that this will inevitably lead to more borrowing.

Adult Social Care has had a full inspection from CQC this year and was found to be good. I think that this is a testament to the staff and what they are able to achieve with ever diminishing funding from government. Adult Social Care and Health is pared to the bone and only delivering statutory services

Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit in July which looked at services for children in need of or subject to a protection plan. It was found that these children have access to services which make a positive difference in their lives. It was also found that the continuing investment and relentless focus on supporting social workers and staff was making a real difference.

The Children in Care Council won first place for their My Things Matter project in the campaign award category at the National Voice Awards 2025

As part of the Family First programme a Family First Consultation Advice Line was launched to help professionals provide early support to families.

6 of our residential homes for children were rated good by Ofsted and one is outstanding. One of our homes is a national resource.

Children's Services is largely demand led which leads to budgetary issues

Trading Standards made 130 interventions in the first 9 months of 2025/26 to protect vulnerable people who had been the target of rogue trading or financial abuse. Interventions included installing call blockers and CCTV.

The County Council has received £4.41m from the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund to support the rollout of on street electric vehicle charging points. A preferred supplier has been selected and the contract will be awarded soon.

Thirteen energy efficiency projects were completed on council buildings during the first 9 months of the year including insulation and solar energy schemes. Carbon emissions

for quarters 1 & 2 of 2025/26 saw a 23% reduction with the same period in 2024/25 and a 52% reduction compared with the same period in the baseline year of 2019/20

I have left potholes until last because we all see the situation daily. There is undoubtedly a lot of money spent on their repair, but we all see that the quality is often poor and does not last. Highways maintenance work is done by the council's contractor Balfour Beatty. The work it does and how it does it is specified in the contract which is due for renewal in 2030.

Cllr. Kathryn Field

April 2026