# Kensington and Chelsea consider cutting Notting Hill Carnival amenities amid financial crisis



Kensington and Chelsea Council is teetering on the brink of financial collapse, facing an staggering £82 million budget shortfall driven largely by the government's ongoing funding cuts. This crisis is forcing the council to consider radical reductions to essential services, including crucial provisions like the public toilets at the Notting Hill Carnival—an event that draws millions and demands proper facilities. Councillor Cem Kemahli warned that "mature discussions" are underway to find savings, signaling a possible withdrawal of the council's £1 million investment in carnival amenities. While Kemahli insists the council can navigate this financial storm, the reality is that this 'unprecedented crisis' has left them with barely any room to manoeuvre. Labour councillor Claire Simmons’s fervent opposition to cutting these facilities highlights the pressing need for support that the government has consistently failed to provide—yet, instead of addressing this crisis head-on, they continue to starve local councils of vital resources.

The dire straits faced by Kensington and Chelsea are part of a broader pattern across London, emblematic of a systemic failure by central government to fund local authorities properly. London Councils, representing the city’s authorities, issued a stark warning following the recent Spring Statement: underfunding is choking local services and undermining economic confidence. Chair Cllr Claire Holland called for an urgent review of government support to prevent boroughs from spiraling into financial ruin—an outcome that will see essential services, from social care to infrastructure, sacrificed just to keep the lights on. Instead of meaningful reforms, what we’re seeing is a Westminster-driven austerity that leaves our communities vulnerable and local governance on the edge of collapse.

The crisis is not confined to London alone. Councils across the UK are struggling under the weight of decades of austerity and inadequate funding. Haringey Council, for example, describes its situation as a "funding emergency," fighting to meet growing demand with resources stretched to breaking point. Leadership here points out how outer London receives far less in funding compared to inner-city areas, leaving councils to juggle escalating costs—especially in adult social care and temporary accommodation—without sufficient government backing. Meanwhile, other areas like Powys County Council are battling budget overruns due to climate change-induced disasters such as flooding, demanding further taxpayer support. On a more positive note, Wokingham Borough Council boasts a healthier financial outlook, thanks to assets and profitable housing ventures, exposing the chaos elsewhere as purely down to mismanagement and neglect at the national level.

These patchy responses reveal a disturbingly consistent pattern: councils are being forced into a corner by relentless underfunding, rising costs, and mounting public expectations. The financial strain in Kensington and Chelsea, risking reductions in vital community services like carnival amenities, exemplifies how cuts threaten to erode community life itself. With the government seemingly more interested in maintaining its ideological austerity than supporting local communities, councils are left to face impossible choices—such as whether to close local facilities or drown in debt. As London Councils and local leaders desperately await meaningful intervention, the message is clear: the ongoing financial crisis is a symptom of government neglect that threatens the very fabric of local democracy and community cohesion across the country.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-toilets-councillors-b1249106.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/notting-hill-carnival-toilets-councillors-b1249106.html> - Kensington and Chelsea Council is considering cutting funding for toilets at the Notting Hill Carnival due to an £82 million budget shortfall caused by changes in government financing. The council is reviewing all non-statutory services to address the deficit. Councillor Cem Kemahli acknowledged the need for 'mature discussions' on potential savings, including the council's £1 million stake in the carnival. He emphasised the importance of budgeting for such events and suggested that the council may not be able to contribute as much or provide as many toilets as residents might expect. Labour councillor Claire Simmons argued that toilets are essential and should not be considered for cuts. The council is exploring various options to manage the financial crisis, including reducing council tax relief for vulnerable residents and reviewing community hubs.
3. <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/news-and-press-releases/2025/london-councils-response-spring-statement> - London Councils, a cross-party group representing the capital's local authorities, responded to the government's Spring Statement, highlighting the financial challenges faced by boroughs. Cllr Claire Holland, Chair of London Councils, emphasised the critical role councils play in boosting economic growth but noted that the crisis in town hall finances is hindering progress. She called for the upcoming Spending Review and planned reform of council funding to deliver the investment and financial sustainability needed to drive growth in London and across the country. Without adequate funding, boroughs risk entering effective bankruptcy, undermining economic confidence and holding back growth. London Councils is urging the government to use the Spending Review to invest in local services after more than a decade of structural underfunding and instability. ([londoncouncils.gov.uk](https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/news-and-press-releases/2025/london-councils-response-spring-statement?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://herald.wales/mid-wales/powys/powys-councillor-questions-future-budget-needs-for-flooding-and-storms/> - In Powys County Council, a senior councillor questioned the future budget requirements for flooding and storm responses. During a council meeting, it was noted that the council's response to Storm Bert in November and Storm Darragh in December cost £345,000, with recovery work estimated at £1.1 million. Cabinet assistant for climate emergency, Cllr Jeremy Brignell-Thorp, inquired about the council's approach to predicting future storm costs and whether the £1.5 million set aside annually for such events was sufficient. Cabinet member for a greener Powys, Cllr Jackie Charlton, acknowledged the risk budget set aside for flooding and other challenges on an annual basis is around £450,000 to £600,000, and anything above that would be clawed back from the Welsh Government. She expressed concern that the costs associated with storms are not going away and may worsen, affecting various sectors including highways, farming, schools, and social care. ([herald.wales](https://herald.wales/mid-wales/powys/powys-councillor-questions-future-budget-needs-for-flooding-and-storms/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://wokingham.today/we-are-not-a-council-about-to-go-broke-we-can-weather-the-storm/> - Wokingham Borough Council's executive member for finance, Cllr John Kaiser, addressed concerns about the council's debt and financial stability. He clarified that the council's debt amounts to approximately £7.60 per resident, not £10,000 per household as suggested by opposition members. Cllr Kaiser stated that the council is not at risk of going broke and has the capacity to weather the storm. He highlighted the council's £1 billion in assets and £264 million in external borrowings, asserting that the council could pay off its debt if desired. He also mentioned that the council's three housing companies are making a profit this year, contributing to the council's financial health. Despite challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, Cllr Kaiser expressed confidence in the council's ability to manage its finances prudently and continue delivering services to residents. ([wokingham.today](https://wokingham.today/we-are-not-a-council-about-to-go-broke-we-can-weather-the-storm/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://haringey.gov.uk/news/20250127/leaders-statement-budget-report> - Haringey Council Leader, Cllr Peray Ahmet, issued a statement addressing the council's budget report, highlighting the financial pressures faced by the borough. She noted that ever-growing demands, increased population, rising costs, and over a decade of government austerity have placed significant pressure on councils, including Haringey. The borough receives outer London levels of funding but faces inner London levels of need, resulting in less money to serve more people who require more expensive services. Cllr Ahmet described the situation as a funding emergency and emphasised the council's commitment to delivering a balanced budget for 2025/26 while protecting and delivering services that matter most to residents. ([haringey.gov.uk](https://haringey.gov.uk/news/20250127/leaders-statement-budget-report?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://haringeycommunitypress.co.uk/2025/02/13/council-caught-unaware-by-financial-turmoil-claim-lib-dems/> - In Haringey, Liberal Democrat group leader Luke Cawley-Harrison criticised the council's leadership for being caught unaware by the financial turmoil. He questioned why emergency financial recovery groups were not formed earlier, given the council's access to regular budget monitoring. Cllr Dana Carlin, the cabinet member for finance, responded that the council had allocated additional funds to adult social care but was not expecting the level of need and increased numbers and complexity of need. She acknowledged that temporary accommodation costs were also not predicted and that all local authorities were facing similar challenges. The council is forecasting £30.9 million of financial pressure due to adult social care costs for 2025/26 and £12 million for temporary accommodation. ([haringeycommunitypress.co.uk](https://haringeycommunitypress.co.uk/2025/02/13/council-caught-unaware-by-financial-turmoil-claim-lib-dems/?utm_source=openai))