



Council Tax 2021/22



Thank you

Despite the extraordinary challenges of the past year, managing the Council's finances has continued to be one of our top priorities. The reason is simple: our budget is the tool we use to make a positive difference to the lives of our residents.

The past year has made clearer than ever that our number one responsibility is to support local people and keep them safe.

I am so proud of the way people have responded to everything we have faced. Thank you for your help and understanding – and for paying your Council Tax when I know some of you have faced your own financial challenges.



I have been pleased that we have been able to play such a big part in supporting our community through the pandemic. It has been good to see our staff and the Civic Offices play a key role in the distribution of food and personal protective equipment, as well as rapid testing.

We have all had to deal with challenge and uncertainty on a scale we could never have imagined. Although we all hope that the end is in sight, that uncertainty is still an issue for us, because of our responsibility to the quarter of a million residents who rely on us for local services.

To continue to invest in the local services that our residents rely upon and meet growing demands, we are increasing Council Tax and making use of the Adult Social Care Precept. This means we can continue to support and protect our most vulnerable residents. And to make sure we can put as much taxpayers' money into frontline services as possible, we are improving efficiency, transforming our services to adapt to new circumstances and making savings in the Council's administration.

With our plans, we are making targeted investments that will improve people's lives. This includes new schools for pupils with SEN, additional help for victims of domestic abuse, more money for adult social care services and new libraries in Sidcup and Thamesmead.

We will continue to lobby for a fairer share of the money the government allocates to local councils. We receive much less than some of our neighbours, but face many of the same pressures. We will make our case robustly when the government launches its promised review of council funding because we believe our residents deserve a better deal.

I know this year has been difficult for everyone, so thank you again for the way you have responded.

We will continue to do all we can to help.

Stay safe.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Teresa O'Neill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE
Leader of the Council

Council Tax for 2021/22

Bexley's Council Tax requirement will result in a Council Tax for band D property with two residents of £1,846.72 in 2021/22.

A comparison of Bexley's and the Greater London Authority's Council Tax for 2021/22 with last year is shown in the table below.

Taxing Authority	2020/21	2021/22	Change
London Borough of Bexley	£1,412.57	£1,483.06	4.99%
Greater London Authority	£332.07	£363.66	9.51%
Total Tax at Band D	£1,744.64	£1,846.72	5.85%

Valuation Band	Range of Values	2020/21	2021/22
A	Up to and including £40,000	£1,163.10	£1,231.15
B	£40,001 - £52,000	£1,356.94	£1,436.34
C	£52,001 - £68,000	£1,550.79	£1,641.53
D	£68,001 - £88,000	£1,744.64	£1,846.72
E	£88,001 - £120,000	£2,132.34	£2,257.10
F	£120,001 - £160,000	£2,520.04	£2,667.48
G	£160,001 - £320,000	£2,907.74	£3,077.87
H	More than £320,000	£3,489.28	£3,693.44

Bexley's Budget and Council Tax Requirement 2021/22

	2020/21			2021/22		
	Spending £m	Income £m	Net Spending £m	Spending £m	Income £m	Net Spending £m
Children and Education	47.231	(12.032)	35.198	53.128	(16.825)	36.303
Adult Social Care and Public Health	83.878	(37.089)	46.789	85.717	(37.603)	48.114
Place	77.664	(34.260)	43.404	74.020	(38.576)	35.444
Finance and Corporate	134.542	(113.736)	20.807	135.796	(112.041)	23.755
Dedicated Schools Grant	72.600	(72.600)	0.000	72.843	(72.843)	0.000
Spending on Services	415.915	(269.718)	146.197	421.504	(277.888)	143.616
London-wide payments and levies			8.226			7.469
Net Financing Costs			10.600			13.106
Contingency Provision			2.884			5.177
Centrally Held			5.845			7.896
Net Spending to be Financed			173.752			177.264
Income from Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant			(45.177)			(41.874)
Other Core Grants			(11.902)			(14.846)
Use of Reserves, Balances and Collection Fund Surplus			(0.533)			0.684
Amount to be met from the Council Tax			116.140			121.228

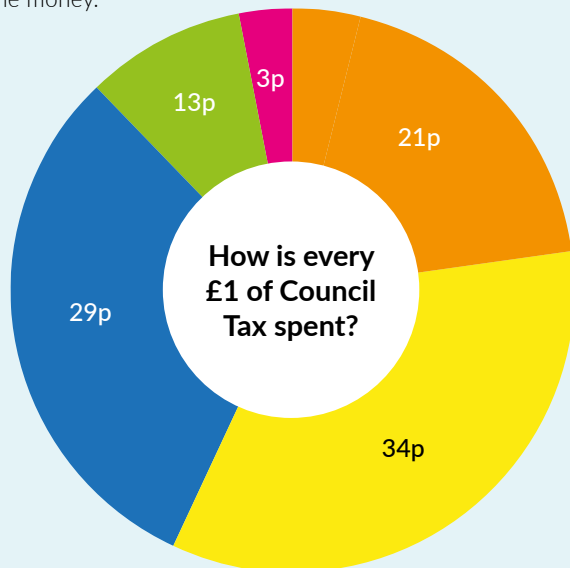


The new Cleeve Meadow School

What we spend

The Council has a good track record for financial management and efficiency, making year-on-year savings to keep costs down and improve services. Over the last decade we have saved £138m.

In 2020/21, the Council is expecting to raise £121m from Council Tax income and here is how we expect to spend the money.



- Children and Education
- Adult Social Care and Public Health
- Places, Communities and Infrastructure
- Finance and Corporate
- London-wide payments and levies

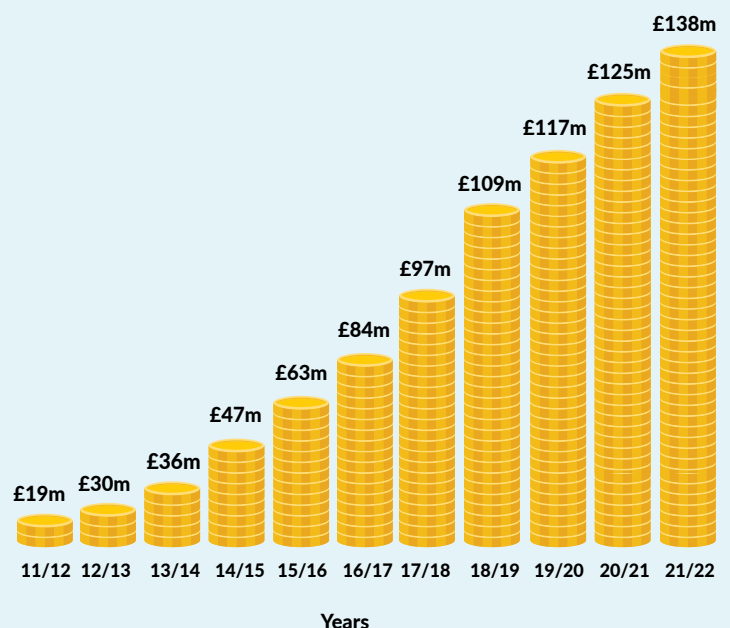


Changes since last year

	£m
Net reduction in Spending on Services	(2.581)
Demographic increases and Inflation	2.051
Increase in Net Financing Costs	2.506
Increase in Contingency	2.293
Reduction in Income from Business Rates Retention	3.303
Increase in Other Core Grants	(2.944)
Decrease in London-wide payments and levies	(0.757)
Reduction in Use of Reserves, Balances and Collection Fund Surplus	1.217
Increase in Council Tax Revenue	5.088

What we have saved

The Council has a good track record for financial management.



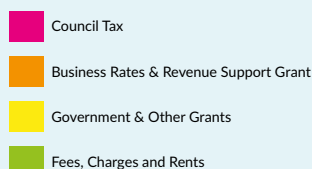
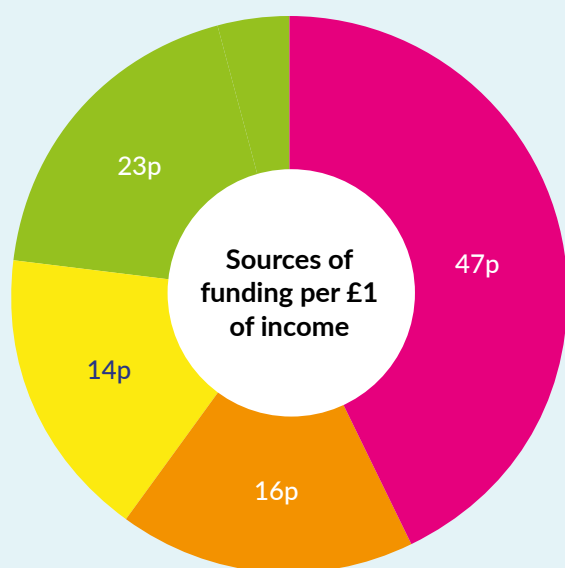
Artist's impression of new Thamesmead Library



Artist's impression of new Sidcup Library and Cinema

How is it paid for?

Council Tax is just one of the Council's sources of income.



Adult Social Care Precept

The Secretary of State made an offer to adult social care authorities. ("Adult social care authorities" are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.)

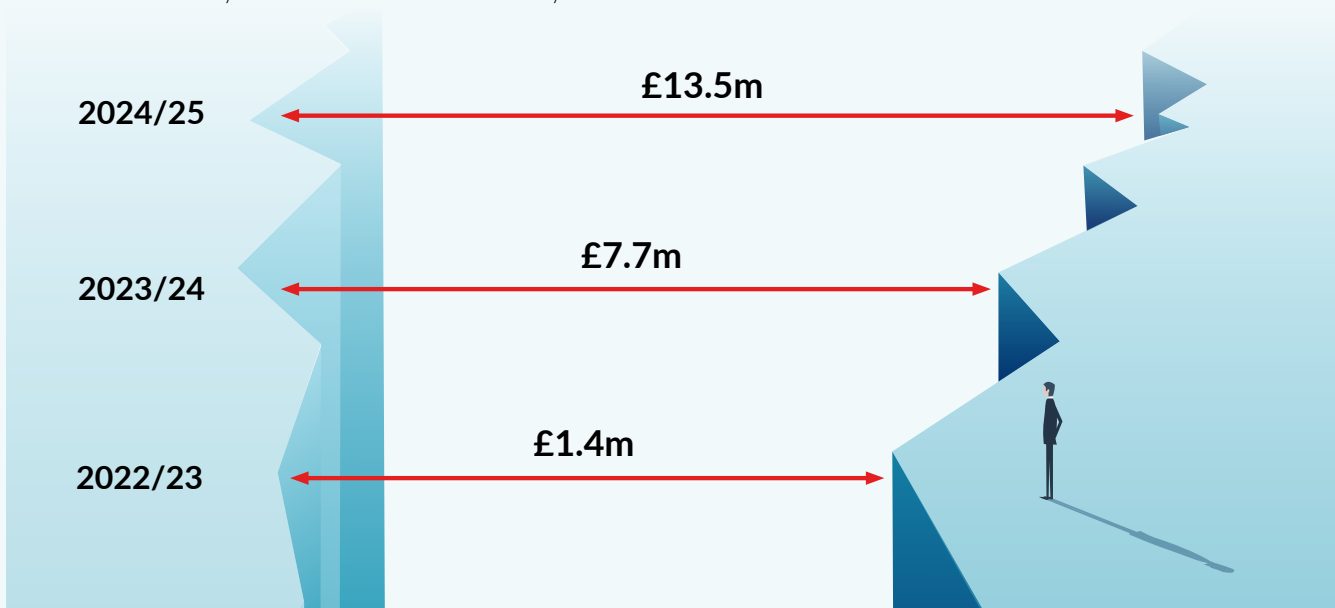
Since 2016/17 adult social care authorities have had the option to charge an additional "precept" on its Council Tax without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting its expenditure on adult social care. The Secretary of State, subject to approval from Parliament has been deciding annually if a further precept can be made.

For 2021/22 the increase in Council Tax for Bexley includes an additional 3.00% for the Adult Social Care Precept.

The future budget gap

The Council has set a balanced budget for the 2021/22 financial year, however there are many challenges ahead. The forecasted budget gap is set to reach £13.5m by 2024/25 due to forecasted reductions in Government funding and increased spending pressures. There continues to be increasing spending pressures in a number of key services, including Children's Social Care, Homelessness, Adult Social Care and families approaching the Council for support who have no access to the wider benefit system – known as No Recourse To Public Funds. The uncertainty around the state of the economy over

the next few years will also have an impact. With prospects of increasing inflation, the amount we pay for services is expected to increase and the current low interest rates means that the income we receive from our investing money continues to be lower than anticipated. Our challenge is to continue to provide good quality and affordable public services, while balancing our income and spending. By projecting future gaps and planning for the medium-term, we are able to take action to set balanced budgets, keep our costs down and invest in services.



Environment Agency

The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

Environment Agency Southern Region

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 3540 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee		
	2020/2021 '000s	2021/2022 '000s
Gross Expenditure	£80,063	£99,343
Levies Raised	£1,488	£1,517
Total Council Tax Base	1,867	1,859

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 2.0%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £1,487,720 in 2020/2021 to £1,517,475 for 2021/2022.

Environment Agency Thames Region

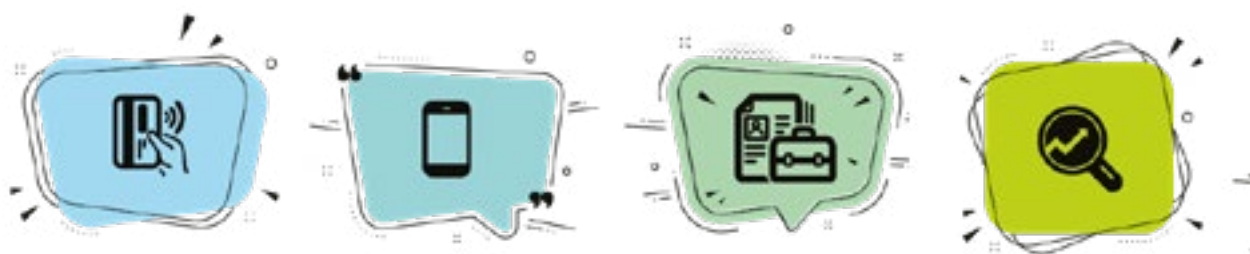
The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 5200 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee		
	2020/2021 '000s	2021/2022 '000s
Gross Expenditure	£132,291	£133,962
Levies Raised	£11,807	£12,042
Total Council Tax Base	5,163	5,127

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 1.99%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £11,807,323 in 2020/2021 to £12,042,289 for 2021/2022.

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www.bexley.gov.uk

Introduction

The Mayor of London's budget for the 2021/22 financial year sets out his priorities to support London's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to tackle the huge social, health and economic inequalities which it has exposed and exacerbated. It supports job creation and London's business community, our city's future growth and economic success and the Mayor's vision to rebuild London as a greener, cleaner and safer city with stronger and more cohesive communities.

This year's budget will provide resources to improve the key public services Londoners need. This includes delivering more genuinely affordable homes, securing funding to maintain and expand the capital's transport infrastructure and tackling toxic air pollution and the climate emergency. The budget also provides resources to support jobs and growth, fund skills and retraining programmes, help rough sleepers, invest in youth services and make London a fairer and cleaner place to live.

The budget prioritises resources for the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade to keep Londoners safe, including violence reduction initiatives and initiatives to improve opportunities for young Londoners. In light of the significant reductions in fare revenues and property tax income due to the pandemic some difficult decisions have been unavoidable. However, this budget remains focused on delivering a swift and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, as well as building the better, brighter, fairer future all Londoners want and deserve.

Council tax for GLA services

The GLA's share of the council tax for a typical Band D property has been increased by £31.59 (or 61p per week) to £363.66. The additional income raised will fund the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade and will also go towards maintaining existing travel concessions for the under 18s and Londoners aged 60 and over. Council taxpayers in the City of London, which has its own police force, will pay £96.53.

Council Tax (£)	2020/21	Change	2021/22
MOPAC (Metropolitan Police)	252.13	15.00	267.13
LFC (London Fire Brigade)	55.28	1.59	56.87
GLA	22.69	-0.12	22.57
TfL (Transport)	1.97	15.12	17.09
Total	332.07	31.59	363.66

Investing in frontline services

This budget will enable the Mayor to fulfil his key priorities for London. These include:

- ensuring the Metropolitan Police have the resources they need to tackle violent crime – the Mayor has funded 1,300 additional police officer posts from locally raised council tax and business rates revenues;
- tackling the underlying causes of crime through the rollout of funding to support disadvantaged young Londoners access positive opportunities and constructive activities that allow them to make the most of their potential, as well as resources for new violence reduction initiatives;
- protecting vulnerable children and women at risk of abuse and domestic violence;
- providing enough resources to the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to ensure that first and second fire engines arrive at emergency incidents within 10 minutes on at least 90 per cent of occasions and 12 minutes on at least 95 per cent of occasions respectively, after being dispatched. The Mayor is also providing resources to rollout a transformation

programme so that the LFB can implement the recommendations of the Grenfell fire inquiry. This includes investing in the new vehicles and equipment required;

- working with London boroughs to maintain existing concessionary travel and assisted door to door transport schemes. This includes for example, maintaining free bus and tram travel for under 18s as well as free off-peak travel across the network for Londoners aged 60+, the disabled, armed forces personnel in uniform and eligible armed services veterans and protecting the Taxicard and Dial a Ride schemes;
- continuing the Hopper bus fare, which makes transport more affordable for millions of Londoners;
- opening the central London section of the Elizabeth line (the operational name for Crossrail) in the first half of 2022, followed by the full line opening with through services as soon as possible to increase central London's rail capacity by ten per cent. TfL will also open the Northern line extension to Nine Elms and Battersea Power station in 2021;
- continuing to tackle London's housing crisis, by investing £4.4 billion to continue delivering 116,000 affordable home starts within London by 2023 and an additional 35,000 by 2026, as well as allocating resources to tackle homelessness and reduce rough sleeping;
- tackling the climate emergency through continued roll out of a £50 million Green New Deal for London fund;
- investing in Healthy Streets to fund projects to enable more walking and cycling across London. The Mayor will also expand the Ultra Low Emission Zone to the North and South Circular roads in Autumn 2021 to tackle air pollution; and
- funding projects to bring Londoners together, promote arts, sports and culture, help tackle inequality and improve the environment.

Summary of GLA budget

The following tables compare the GLA group's planned spending for 2021-22 with last year and set out why it has changed. The GLA's gross expenditure is higher this year. This is mainly due to the impact of extra investment planned by the Mayor in transport and policing. Overall the council tax requirement has increased because of the extra funding for the Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade and maintaining existing concessionary free travel for under 18s and Londoners aged 60 and over. There has also been a 1.0 per cent decrease in London's residential property taxbase. Find out more about our budget at: www.london.gov.uk/budget.

How the GLA's budget is funded (£ million)	2021/22
Gross expenditure	13,804.4
Government grants and retained business rates	-8,453.9
Fares, charges and other income	-5,136.9
Change in reserves	883.0
Amount met by council taxpayers (£m)	1,096.6
Changes in spending (£ million)	2021/22
2020-21 council tax requirement	1,010.9
Inflation	176.7
Efficiencies and other savings	-196.3
New initiatives	383.3
Other changes (for example fares revenue and government grants)	-278.0
Amount met by council taxpayers (£m)	1,096.6

Help with your finances, bills and Council Tax:

We know these are challenging and difficult times for many families and households and some face uncertainty and hardship. Help and advice is available and if you are experiencing difficulties or worried about your finances there are ways that the Council and organisations we work with can help.

If you are on a low income and having problems paying your Council Tax, you can apply for the Council Tax reduction scheme.

Anyone of working age is required to pay a minimum of the first 20% of their Council Tax bill, although pensioners will still be able to receive maximum support.

If you think you may qualify for help with paying your Council Tax then you can claim online at www.bexley.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

If you wish to spread your payments over 12 instalments instead of 10 please contact us as soon as you receive the new Council Tax bill.

If you wish to seek financial advice from an independent body there are a number of organisations who can provide advice such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Christians Against Poverty, New Community Debt Advice Service, Step Change Debt Charity and Shelter. Further details are available on the Council's website

www.bexley.gov.uk/counciltax

or

www.bexley.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-help



The credit union is a not for profit financial co-operative that is open to residents and fully supported by the Council. Members can make regular savings and take out small loans.

More information can be found at:

www.gbcreditunion.com or by ringing 020 8855 4344

Just DD do it

Using Direct Debit makes sure your Council Tax is always paid on time.

You can spread the cost over the whole year, and you can choose to pay on the 1st, 15th or 25th day of the month – whichever works best for you.

You can set up a direct debit at www.bexley.gov.uk/council-tax



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