

Council Tax 2023/24



*Two new libraries – part of our
investment in local communities*

www.bexley.gov.uk



The best way to report, apply, and pay for services is on our website.

Search our website for all our services including Housing, Waste Services, School Admissions and Blue badges.

To make an appointment, please visit the service page on the website.

Council Tax or Housing Benefit

Call **0345 302 2317**

Cost of living help and advice

www.bexley.gov.uk/cost-of-living

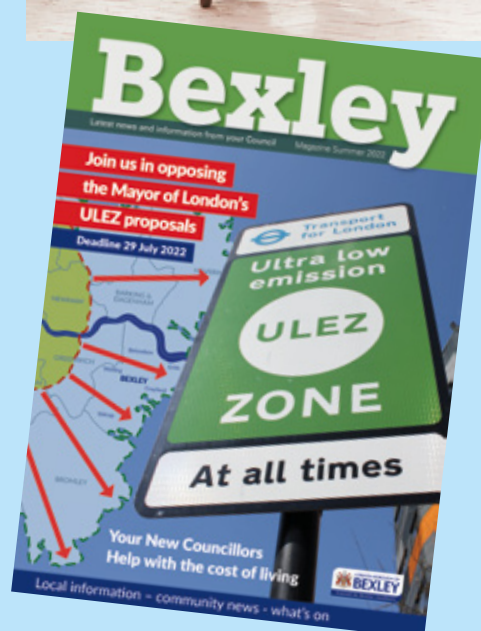
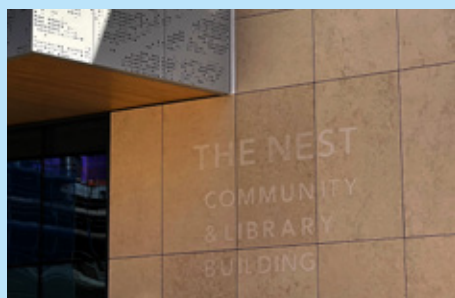
Safeguarding

If you have concerns about the safety of a child call **020 3045 5440**

If you have concerns about the safety of an adult call **020 3045 5159**

Out of Hours

If you need urgent assistance and your emergency cannot wait until normal office hours call **020 8303 7171**. Please note this number is for emergencies only.



Message from the Leader of the Council

This year's budget is the first shaped by our new corporate strategy, 'Making Bexley Even Better: Our Bexley Plan 2022/26'.

The budget and our Medium Term Financial Strategy set out how we will use the resources available to us to make Bexley even better by 2026, by supporting residents to live the best lives possible and to reach their potential.



We will be investing in services that all residents use, such as our parks, open spaces, highways, libraries and bin collections, and supporting our most vulnerable residents, including people with disabilities, children in care and adults needing social care assistance.

We will be making around £30m extra of capital investment, on top of £162m already planned over the next four years, including -

- £15.5 million on road and footpath resurfacing across the borough
- £2 million on digital projects to support service transformation
- £500,000 on improvements to the Homeleigh hostel

We understand that many residents are under pressure due to the cost of living and, as always, we will continue to work hard to ensure that we spend your money sensibly.

The opening of two new libraries – in Sidcup and Thamesmead – shows our commitment to building strong communities.

Our decision to oppose the Mayor of London's plan to expand his Ultra Low Emission Zone to outer London shows our determination to stand up for local people and businesses. We believe it is not the best way to reduce air pollution and that the harm it would cause far outweighs the possible benefits.

The Council is not the only organisation providing public services in the borough that are partly funded from your Council Tax. This booklet sets out where the money to pay for Council and other local services comes from and how it is spent.

We will continue to work to provide the best possible value for your money on the services you value while also supporting those who need it most.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Teresa O'Neill'.

Councillor Baroness O'Neill of Bexley OBE
Leader of the Council

Council Tax for 2023/24

Bexley's Council Tax requirement will result in a Council Tax for band D property with two residents of £2,037.76 in 2023/24.

A comparison of Bexley's and the Greater London Authority's Council Tax for 2023/24 with last year is shown in the table below.

Taxing Authority	2022/23	2023/24	Change
London Borough of Bexley	£1,527.40	£1,603.62	4.99%
Greater London Authority	£395.59	£434.14	9.74%
Total Tax at Band D	£1,922.99	£2,037.76	5.97%

Valuation Band	Range of Values	2022/23	2023/24
A	Up to and including £40,000	£1,282.00	£1,358.51
B	£40,001 - £52,000	£1,495.66	£1,584.92
C	£52,001 - £68,000	£1,709.33	£1,811.34
D	£68,001 - £88,000	£1,922.99	£2,037.76
E	£88,001 - £120,000	£2,350.32	£2,490.60
F	£120,001 - £160,000	£2,777.66	£2,943.43
G	£160,001 - £320,000	£3,204.99	£3,396.27
H	More than £320,000	£3,845.99	£4,075.52

Bexley's Budget and Council Tax Requirement

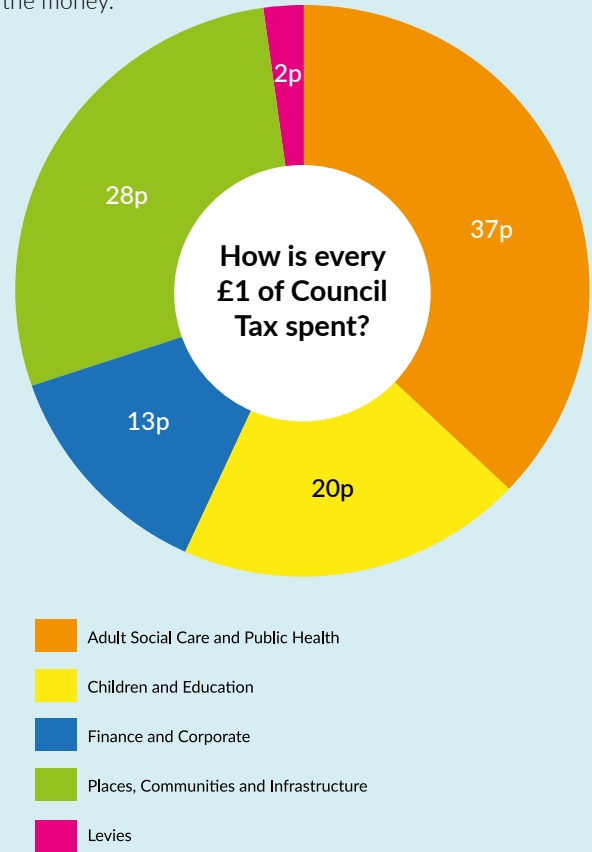
	2022/23			2023/24		
	Spending £m	Income £m	Net Spending £m	Spending £m	Income £m	Net Spending £m
Children and Education	91.344	(37.197)	54.147	104.962	(41.966)	62.996
Adult Social Care and Public Health	52.060	(16.017)	36.043	56.437	(13.444)	42.993
Place	102.674	(76.150)	26.524	103.362	(77.040)	26.322
Finance and Corporate	79.398	(42.749)	36.649	80.193	(36.777)	43.416
Schools DSG	78.282	(78.282)	0.000	88.158	(88.158)	0.000
Spending on Services	403.758	(250.395)	153.363	433.112	(257.385)	175.727
London-wide payments and levies			5.156			6.174
Net Financing Costs			10.091			9.712
Contingency Provision			2.700			3.700
Centrally Held for Directorate Pressures			19.359			13.394
Net Spending to be Financed			190.669			208.707
Income from Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant			(43.825)			(48.536)
Other Core Grants			(22.177)			(28.057)
Use of Reserves, Balances and Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit			0.679			1.185
Amount to be met from the Council Tax			125.346			133.299
Taxbase			82,065			83,123.6
Bexley Council Tax			1,527.40			1,603.62



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 12 years we have saved £143m.

In 2023/24, the Council is expecting to raise £133m from Council Tax income and here is how we expect to spend the money.



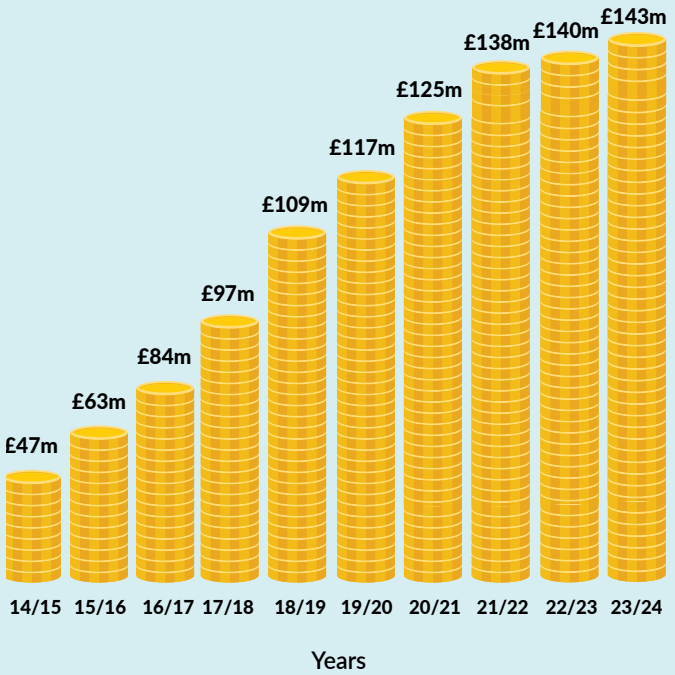
Changes since last year

	£m
Net increase in Spending on Services	22.364
Demographic increases and Inflation	(5.965)
Decrease in Net Financing Costs	(0.379)
Increase in Contingency	1.000
Income from Business Rates Multiplier Cap Grant	(4.711)
Increase in Other Core Grants	(5.880)
Increase in London-wide payments and levies	1.018
Increase in Use of Reserves, Balances and Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	0.506
Increase in Council Tax Revenue	7.953



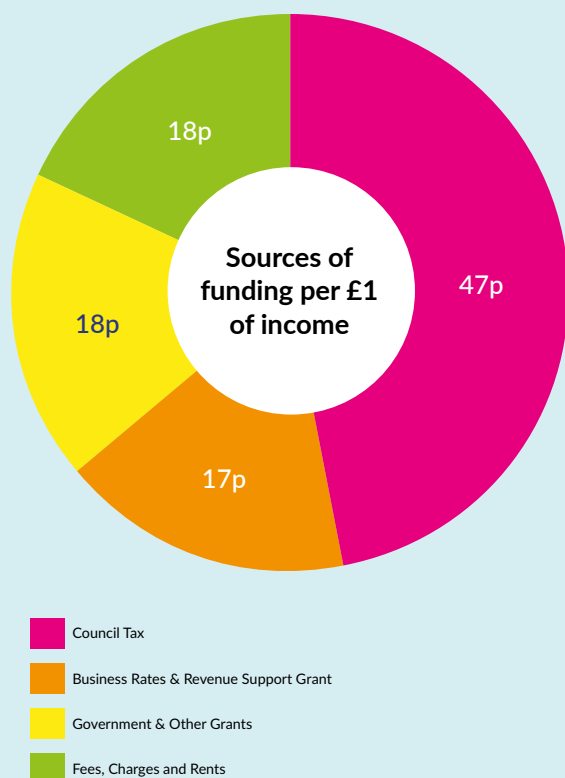
What we have saved

The Council has a good track record for financial management.



How is it paid for?

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



Adult Social Care

Adult social care is one of the main services provided by the Council. Councils nationwide are facing substantial cost pressures in providing adult social care services. This is due to:

- increasing numbers of people requiring care
- the rising cost of providing care
- Government funding for councils remaining constrained



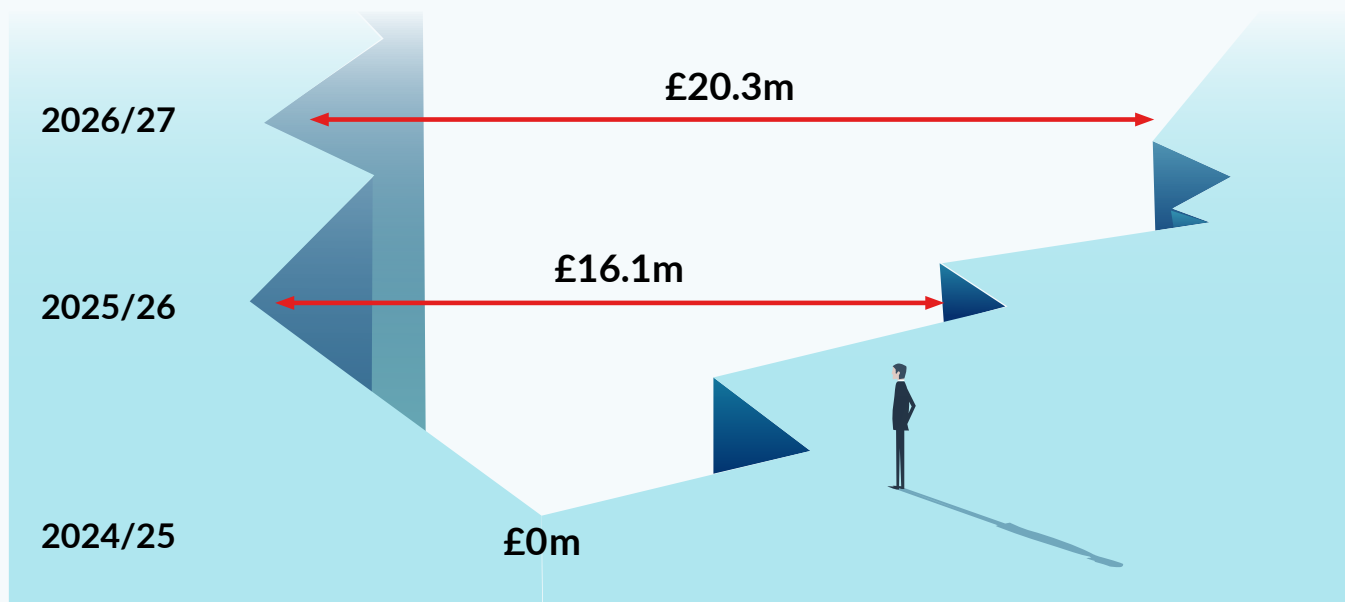
To help fund these pressures, the Government expects councils responsible for providing adult social care services to have an adult social care precept. The introduction of an adult social care precept was originally announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2015 and has continued each subsequent year. The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 allows local authorities with adult social care responsibilities to raise Council Tax above the referendum limit via an increase in the adult social care precept of 2%.

It should be noted that the precept just funds some of the pressures in adult social care. A large amount of all the council tax the Council receives is also used to fund adult social care. Further sources of funding which are used to help provide adult social care include business rates and Government grants.

The future budget gap

The Council has set a balanced budget for the 2023/24 financial year, however there are many challenges ahead. The forecasted budget gap is set to reach £20.3m by 2026/27 due to rising costs, pressures and demands on services and ongoing economic uncertainty. There continues to be increasing spending pressures in a number of key services, including both Children and Adult Social Care, Special Education Needs Transport, Homelessness and Parking Services.

The uncertainty around the state of the economy over the next few years will also have an impact. The impact of inflation and interest rates has a direct impact on the Council, the amount we pay for services and the income we are able to collect. Our challenge is to continue to provide good quality and affordable public services, while balancing our income and spending levels in the current challenging circumstances.



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.

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		
	2022/2023 '000s	2023/2024 '000s
Gross Expenditure	£70,919	£129,642
Levies Raised	£1,548	£1,594
Total Council Tax Base	1,891	1,914

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 3.00%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £1,547,824 in 2022/2023 to £1,594,259 for 2023/2024.

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 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		
	2022/2023 '000s	2023/2024 '000s
Gross Expenditure	£109,376	£139,806
Levies Raised	£12,282	£12,526
Total Council Tax Base	5,214	5,297

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 £12,281,930 in 2022/2023 to £12,526,341 for 2023/2024.

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

Recognising the impact of rising bills, the government has provided a Council Tax Support fund in 2023-24 for local authorities to reduce the Council Tax bills of residents who receive an award under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The government has stated that the maximum Council Tax Support fund award which can be applied to a residents bill is £25. Where a resident receives assistance via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and their outstanding bill after that award is less than £25, the Council Tax Support fund award will reduce accordingly e.g. bill outstanding after main Council Tax Reduction Scheme award is £10, Council Tax Support fund award is £10.

You do not have to apply for or contact the Council about this new assistance, it will be applied automatically to your Council Tax bill if you are eligible.



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

Introduction

The Mayor of London's budget for the 2023-24 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 – inequalities which have become even more apparent as a result of the current cost of living crisis. 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, funding to maintain the capital's transport services 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 services for children and young people and make London a fairer and cleaner place for everyone to live. Moreover, it prioritises resources for the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade to keep Londoners safe, including violence reduction initiatives, support for victims of crime, recruitment drives for additional frontline officers and projects to divert vulnerable young people away from the criminal justice system. The Mayor is also responding to the cost of living crisis by providing £130 million of new funding to ensure all primary school pupils can receive free school meals in the 2023-24 school year.

In light of the significant reductions in fares revenue since the pandemic, it has been necessary to provide additional resources through local taxation income to maintain London's transport system including investing in preserving the bus network. However, this budget remains focused on delivering a swift and sustainable economic recovery across the capital 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 £38.55 (or 74p per week) to £434.14. The additional income raised will fund the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade and will also go towards ensuring existing public transport services in London can be maintained, meeting requirements set by the government in funding arrangements. Council taxpayers in the City of London, which has its own police force, will pay £142.01

Council Tax (£)	2022/23	Change	2023/24
MOPAC (Metropolitan Police)	277.13	15.00	292.13
LFC (London Fire Brigade)	58.80	3.68	62.48
GLA	22.57	-0.13	22.44
Transport Services	37.09	20.00	57.09
Total	395.59	38.55	434.14



Investing in frontline services

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

- Ensuring the Metropolitan Police has the resources it needs to tackle violent crime – since 2019 the Mayor has funded 1,300 additional police officer posts from locally raised council tax and business rates revenues – while seeking to increase trust and confidence amongst Londoners in the police service. His precept increase for 2023-24 will also be used to fund the recruitment of an additional 500 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).
- Tackling the underlying causes of crime through the rollout of funding to support disadvantaged young Londoners to 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. The London Fire Commissioner, with the full support of the Mayor, is also committed to implementing the deep-rooted reform needed to the culture and systems within the LFB.
- 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 older Londoners, 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.
- Completing the final stages to deliver the full operation of and timetable for the Elizabeth line by no later than May 2023. The line has increased central London's rail capacity by ten per cent and saw over 100 million passenger journeys during its first eight months. This follows on from the opening of Northern line extension to Nine Elms and Battersea Power Station in September 2021.
- Continuing to tackle London's housing crisis, by investing £6.9 billion to allow 116,000 affordable home starts within London by the end of 2023 year and an additional 165,000 affordable homes starts by 2026, as well as allocating resources to tackle homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.
- Tackling the climate emergency including creating a new £134 million Environmental Improvement fund to help deliver the Mayor's target for London to be carbon net zero by 2030. The Mayor is also expanding the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) London-wide to tackle air pollution, supported by a £110 million vehicle scrappage scheme for small businesses and Londoners in receipt of low income and disability benefits to help them switch to cleaner vehicles or retrofit their existing ones.
- Investing in projects to enable more walking and cycling across London.
- Funding projects to bring Londoners together, promote arts, sports and culture, help tackle inequality and improve the environment.

Summary of GLA budget

The GLA's planned gross expenditure is higher this year. This reflects the additional resources the Mayor is investing in policing, the fire brigade and transport services. Overall the council tax requirement has increased because of the extra resources for the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade and to secure funding to maintain existing transport services including buses and the tube network. There has been a 1.6 per cent increase 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)	2023/24
Gross expenditure	16,232.6
Government grants and retained business rates	(7,001.9)
Fares, charges and other income	(7,527.2)
Change in reserves	(350.4)
Amount met by council taxpayers (£m)	1,353.1

Changes in spending (£ million)	2023/24
2022-23 council tax requirement	1,213.6
Net change in service expenditure and income	(108.4)
Change in use of reserves	(278.3)
Government grants and retained business rates	942.8
Other changes	(416.6)
Amount met by council taxpayers (£m)	1,353.1

What is the Elizabeth Line (formerly Crossrail) and how will it benefit your business?

The Elizabeth Line is London's newest railway. It connects the outer suburbs and Heathrow airport to the West End, the City and Canary Wharf. As such, it is vital to the future of London's economy. The increased earnings it will bring – from new jobs and quicker journeys – will benefit businesses across London. It was named the Elizabeth line in honour of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

The Elizabeth line has been the single largest investment in London's infrastructure for decades. It employed up to 14,000 people at the peak of construction. The central section opened in May 2022 and in November 2022, direct Elizabeth line services into central London from Reading, Heathrow, Shenfield and Abbey Wood began. The final timetable across the entire railway is expected to be in place by no later than May 2023.

To find out more, visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/elizabeth-line>, call the helpline on 0343 222 1234 or go to <https://tfl.gov.uk/help-and-contact>

Developments in the funding of Crossrail

The previous Mayor of London agreed a funding settlement with the government in 2010 for the Crossrail scheme. The Mayor and the Secretary of State for Transport agreed revised funding packages for Crossrail in December 2018 and November 2020.

How will London's businesses help fund Crossrail?

In April 2012, the previous Mayor introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy (MCIL) on new developments in London to finance Crossrail. The charging schedule changed in April 2019. The developer pays this levy.

Business ratepayers of larger properties have contributed through a special Crossrail Business Rate Supplement (BRS) since April 2010.

Under the current funding package, the GLA is expected to contribute a total of around £7 billion towards Crossrail. This is financed through the MCIL and the BRS. The BRS will need to be levied until the GLA's Crossrail related borrowing is repaid. This should be no later than March 2041, in line with the published Crossrail BRS prospectus.

Does my business have to pay the Crossrail BRS?

Your rates bill makes clear if you are liable to pay the BRS. It applies only to assessments (for example business and other non-domestic premises) with a rateable value above £75,000. This year the threshold has been increased from £70,000 to £75,000 reflecting the impact of the 2023 business rates revaluation. This higher threshold means that at least 86 per cent of the capital's non-domestic properties will be exempt from paying the BRS in 2023-24.

How much do I pay if my property's rateable value is above £75,000?

The Crossrail BRS multiplier for 2023-24 remains at 2p per pound of rateable value. Reliefs for the Crossrail BRS will apply on the same basis and at the same percentage rate as for your national non-domestic rates (NNDR) bill. However, there is no transitional relief scheme for the BRS.

Keeping you up to date

We will give ratepayers an annual update over the lifetime of the BRS. Contact for more information

020 7983 4100;

crossrail-brs@london.gov.uk;

www.london.gov.uk/crossrail-brs

Finance, GLA, City Hall, London E16 1ZE



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