

Council Tax 2025/26

What your Council Tax funds

Your council tax bill is made up of four elements. Your council tax, which is collected by North Herts Council, pays for the services you receive from:

- North Herts Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Parish, Community or Town Council (where relevant)

North Herts Council (also referred to as North Hertfordshire District Council)

The funding for North Herts Council makes up about 11.6% of your Council Tax bill. This element of your total Council Tax has gone up by 2.99% compared with 2024/25 (£7.77 for a Band D property).

The increase for the Hertfordshire County Council element is 4.99% (£84.12 for a Band D) and 5.58% (£14.00 for a Band D) for the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The North Herts Council element of the Council Tax bill provides funding towards a range of services, including:

- Improving our environment and combating climate change
- Collecting refuse and recycling from all households in the District.
- Providing information and advice about housing to everyone, including people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Providing three key leisure facilities, North Hertfordshire Leisure Centre, Hitchin Swim Centre and Royston Leisure Centre. In addition, we run the Letchworth outdoor pool and manage the sports hall at Fearnhill School, Letchworth.
- Providing parks and open spaces for all to enjoy.
- Managing elections not only for the District and County Council but also for the Police and Crime Commissioner and General Elections.
- Supporting voluntary groups through providing grant funding to organisations such as Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire.
- Dealing with Planning Applications.
- Ensuring public health is maintained by carrying out food safety inspections and investigating noise nuisance complaints.

The budgeted spend for 2025/26 is shown below, alongside a comparison with 2024/25:

	2025/26 £m	2024/25 £m	% Change
Gross Service Expenditure	65.3	61.8	5.7%
<u>Less</u> Service Income	(16.8)	(14.9)	
<u>Less</u> Housing Benefit Subsidy	(23.3)	(24.0)	
<u>Less</u> income from commercial rents	(1.7)	(1.8)	
<u>Less</u> investment interest income	(0.8)	(1.2)	
Net Expenditure	22.7	19.9	14.1%
Retained Business Rates	3.5	3.4	
New Homes Bonus	0.2	0.3	
Council Tax	13.6	13.1	
Other general funding	2.7	1.4	
Contribution from / (to) Reserves	2.7	1.7	
Total Funding	22.7	19.9	14.1%

North Herts Council's budgeted net expenditure is £2.8m higher than 2024/25. This includes:

- Net inflationary pressures of £0.8m,
- the expected delivery of new savings, additional income and cost reductions of -£1.6m
- budget pressures and investments of £3.9m, and
- Other budget changes of -£0.3m

North Herts Council's vision is **“working with you for a fairer, greener North Herts”**.

This includes the following detailed priorities:

- Thriving Communities
- Accessible Services
- Responsible Growth
- Sustainability

More detail can be found at <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/council-plan>

Councillors have also agreed a Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next five years. The strategy identified that the Council's reserves would be used to avoid having to make drastic service changes in response to previous real terms reductions in our overall funding. We welcome that we will receive more certainty from Government over our funding for the period 2026-2029.

We are clear that we will need to reduce how much we spend or generate more income to balance our budget. Whilst we will look deliver services at lower cost by using technology, we will need to also reduce the levels of service that we provide and generate more income from our fees and charges. We will consult with you in advance of any decisions on such changes.

In setting the Council's budget in February 2025, Councillors felt that, taking into account our current budget shortfall and future funding uncertainty, it made it necessary to increase Council Tax by 2.99% (£7.77 per year on a band D property).

North Herts Council will also use capital funds to provide investment in the District. For 2025/26 onwards this includes the delivery of the following:

- A gym extension at Royston Leisure Centre – we will also continue to investigate the feasibility of building a learner pool at Royston
- The decarbonisation of our leisure centres, partly funded by a grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
- New museum storage to better preserve our heritage.
- New waste collection and street cleansing vehicles.
- Continued investment in our play areas and green space.

North Herts Council also pays a special levy to the Bedfordshire and River Ivel Drainage Board. In 2025/26 this will be £10k (£9k in 2024/25).

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

The funding for HCC makes up just under 77% of your Council Tax bill. This share of your Council Tax has gone up by 4.99% compared with 2024/25. The HCC charge also includes a levy for the Environment Agency Thames and Anglian Central Regions and a levy for the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

The HCC element of the Council Tax bill provides funding towards a range of services, including:

- Caring and supporting children, young people and families
- Caring for the elderly, and people with disabilities and mental health issues
- Public Health and supporting people with drug or alcohol problems
- Fire and rescue services
- Road maintenance and safety
- Co-ordinating bus services and providing home to school transport for children
- Recycling and waste disposal
- Responding to major planning applications – for example, housing and mineral extraction
- Economic development
- Providing libraries, archives and local studies materials
- Protecting consumers against poor quality goods and services and upholding fair trading laws
- Community safety (crime / reducing anti-social behaviour) and emergency planning

The budgeted spend for 2025/26 is shown below, alongside a comparison with 2024/25:

	2025/26 £m	2024/25 £m	% Change
Gross Service Expenditure	2,950.4	2,687.5	10%
<u>Less</u> Ring-fenced grants	(1,574.3)	(1,407.3)	
<u>Less</u> Sales, fees and charges	(156.3)	(141.3)	
<u>Less</u> Partner contributions	(36.0)	(30.8)	
Net Expenditure	1,183.7	1,108.0	7%
Business Rate Retention	167.6	167.2	
Ring-fenced funding	55.7	53.7	
Non ring-fenced grants	128.2	99.3	
Collection Fund	1.7	0.4	
Council Tax	830.5	787.4	
Total Funding	1,183.7	1,108.0	7%

HCC's budgeted net expenditure has increased by £76m. The main reasons for this increase are additional service demand, exceptional inflationary pressures and new investment opportunities.

Further information on the HCC element can be found here:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/whatwedo

The HCC element of the Council Tax also provides funding for the levies in relation to the Environment Agency and the Lee Valley Regional Park.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions. The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide 'matching' funding the Agency may seek funding from County Councils in the form of a local

levy. The local levy is shared on the basis of Band D equivalents between all contributing bodies within the area.

Lee Valley Regional Park is a unique leisure, sports and environmental destination for all residents of London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The 26 mile long, 10,000-acre park, much of it former derelict land, is partly funded by a levy on the council tax.

	2025/26 £m	2024/25 £m	% Change
Environment Agency Thames			
Gross Expenditure	126.8	154.7	-18%
Less: Other Funding	(121.3)	(149.3)	
Council Tax Levy	5.5	5.4	+1.6%
Environment Agency Anglian Central			
Gross Expenditure	29.6	18.9	+57%
Less: Other Funding	(28.2)	(17.6)	
Council Tax Levy	1.4	1.3	+1.8%
Lee Valley Regional Park			
Gross Expenditure	19.1	18.8	
Less: Income	7.8	(7.8)	
Contribution to / (from) reserves	(0.0)	(0.0)	
Council Tax Levy	11.3	11.0	+2.7%

Further information on the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority element can be found here: www.leevalleypark.org.uk

Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

The funding for the PCC makes up around 11.5% of your Council Tax bill. This share of your Council Tax has gone up by 5.6% compared with 2024/25.

The budgeted spend for 2025/26 is shown below, alongside a comparison with 2024/25:

	2025/26 £m	2024/25 £m	% Change
Net Expenditure	279.9	267.0	+4.8%
Central Government Funding	155.2	150.0	
Collection Fund	0.3	(0.2)	
Council Tax	124.4	117.2	
Total Funding	279.9	267.0	+4.8%

The PCC's budgeted net expenditure has increased by £12.9m. The main reasons for this increase are cost pressures of £18.0m and investments of £1.8m. This has been partly offset by savings of £7.3m.

Further information on this element can be found here: <https://www.hertscommissioner.org/transparency/finances-and-reserves/>

Parish, Community and Town Councils

Across the District there are 36 parish areas. Not all of these have a local Council and therefore do not have a precept (do not make a charge for Council Tax). If you live in an area with a Parish, Town or Community Council, the following amounts will be added to your Council Tax bill for an equivalent Band D property:

Area	Band D Precept (£)	Area	Band D Precept (£)
Ashwell	124.89	Knebworth	95.29
Baldock	n/a	Langley	0
Barkway	98.28	Letchworth	n/a
Barley	99.24	Lilley	108.97
Bygrave	71.95	Nuthampstead	0
Caldecote & Newnham	42.08	Offley	66.09
Clothall	21.59	Pirton	95.61
Codicote	64.80	Preston	68.10
Graveley	57.94	Radwell	26.42
Great Ashby	24.00	Reed	51.54
Hexton	0	Royston	59.22
Hinxworth	68.75	Rushden & Wallington	20.92
Hitchin	n/a	St. Ippolyts	41.98
Holwell	92.50	St. Pauls Walden	86.79
Ickleford	67.23	Sandon	34.34
Kelshall	35.61	Therfield	37.38
Kimpton	84.71	Weston	51.52
Kings Walden	90.75	Wymondley	100.53

Royston Town Council and Knebworth Parish Council raise more than £140,000 from Council Tax and as a result there is a requirement to disclose further information about their budget. This is shown below:

	2025/26 £000	2024/25 £000	% Change
Royston Town Council			
Gross Expenditure	574	570	0.7%
<u>Less</u> Income	(177)	(154)	
<u>Less</u> Other Funding	(12)	(12)	
Council Tax Levy	385	404	(4.7%)
Knebworth Parish Council			
Gross Expenditure	343	319	7.5%
<u>Less</u> Income	(148)	(124)	
<u>Less</u> Other Funding	(3)	(3)	
Council Tax Levy	192	192	0%

Council Tax by band

Your council tax band is based on how much your property was worth when council tax was introduced. Your council tax band is shown on your bill. Your council tax band is decided by the Valuation Office Agency <https://www.gov.uk/topic/local-government/council-tax>

Your Council Tax for 2025/26 (excluding any Parish, Community or Town Council element) will be as follows:

	North Herts Council	HCC	PCC	Total
Band A	178.52	1,179.91	176.67	1,535.10
Band B	208.27	1,376.57	206.11	1,790.95
Band C	238.03	1,573.22	235.56	2,046.81
Band D	267.78	1,769.87	265.00	2,302.65
Band E	327.29	2,163.17	323.89	2,814.35
Band F	386.79	2,556.48	382.78	3,326.05
Band G	446.30	2,949.78	441.67	3,837.75
Band H	535.56	3,539.74	530.00	4,605.30

The overall increase (excluding any Parish, Community or Town council element) compared with 2024/25 is 4.82%.