

YOUR COUNCIL TAX EXPLAINED

2024/25

For more information and ways to
pay, visit sutton.gov.uk/counciltax



A message from the Leader



Dear resident,

I have been the Leader of the London Borough of Sutton for nearly 12 years and there has not been a time when the financial crisis faced by the Council was as great as the one we see now.

Across the UK all councils are having to deal with the consequences of years of government underfunding, increased demands for our services and rising costs.

Here in Sutton, the amount the Council receives in funding from central government has been slashed and yet the number of adults and children requiring our care has risen hugely while the costs of providing this care has reached record levels. Along with the increase in the number of people who are finding themselves homeless, our budget is being stretched to its limit.

Most of our funding comes from our council tax and in order to continue to provide vital services, the government has assumed councils will pay for our increased costs by taxing our residents. So we have been left with no choice but to take the difficult decision to increase council tax.

This means the average Sutton household living in a Band D property will pay an extra £1.55 per week in council tax as well as an extra £0.72 per week for the Greater London Authority (Mayor of London) charge. This is a total increase of £2.27 per week.

I know that this council tax increase comes at a particularly hard time for many people and in this booklet you can find services that can help.

As we take the decision to increase council tax, I can promise that we will continue to be a council that uses your money wisely and well. Since 2011 the Council's rigorous savings programme has seen us save over £118 million and most recently the Council has implemented programmes that will reduce the size of the Council's workforce, while still continuing to provide those 800 services that we depend on.

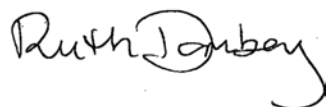
Over the next year, with demands on our services showing no sign of reducing and with a further £10.6 million in savings we need to find, our budget remains under pressure.

In response to this, the Council is changing the way we do things. As part of our change programme, the Council will be seeking your views on the services we can afford to provide and I really encourage you to get involved.

Alongside this programme of change, we will also continue to manage the careful investments we have made that will benefit everyone living and working in our borough. For example, the London Cancer Hub in Belmont will bring thousands of new jobs; our plans to regenerate the town centre will provide better work and leisure opportunities, protect our shops and create new jobs, and we will ensure that over 500 new affordable homes are built over the next five years to provide the housing that so many people desperately need.

Despite these challenging times ahead, I am confident that together we will build on the strength of our local communities and ensure that Sutton continues to be a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Dombey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D'.

Councillor Ruth Dombey
Leader of Sutton Council

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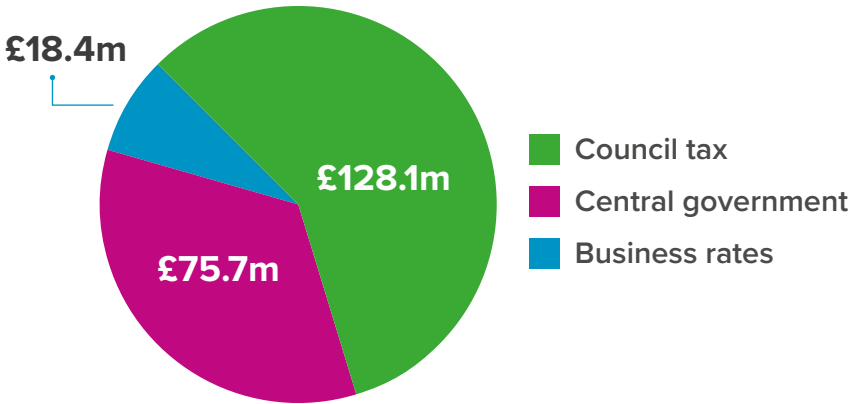
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Our 2024/25 budget

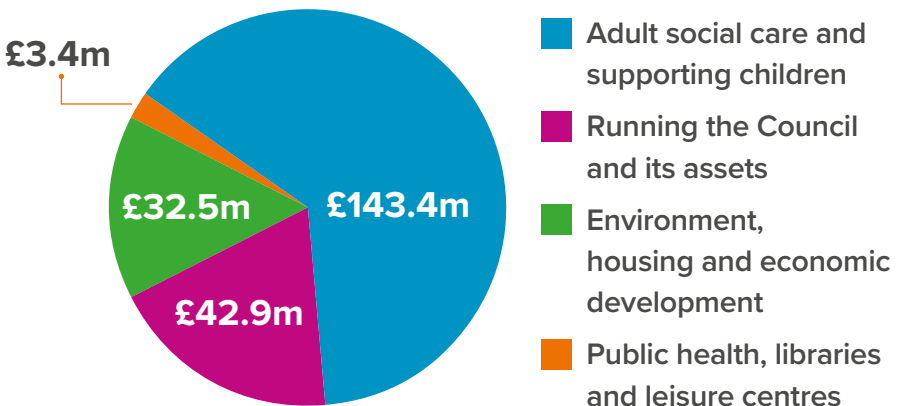
Where our funding comes from

Like all local authorities, Sutton Council gets its funding from a range of sources including council tax, business rates, government grants, as well as fees and charges.

How our budget is funded



How we will spend our 2024/25 budget



Rising demand for our services means that each week, we spend:



Over £1m
on adult social care



Average of £7,000
on a child in residential care



Average of £250,000
on home-to-school
transport for SEND pupils



Over £84,000
on emergency housing for
more than 400 households

Investing in what matters most



£4.3m
in roads, pavements
and street lighting



£6.8m
in maintaining and
expanding school places



£12.2m
in developing Sutton High
Street, the London Cancer Hub
and Belmont transport links



£37.4m
in new council homes
and housing regeneration

Weekly council tax breakdown for Band D

Sutton Council



£0.93
per week

Extra for
council tax

+



£0.62
per week

Extra for
adult
social care

+

Mayor of London (GLA)



£0.72
per week

Extra for
GLA

=



£2.27
per week
extra

What does each Council department do?

People's Services includes adult social care and supporting children.

Public Health and Wellbeing includes school nurses, libraries and museums, leisure centres, Sutton College, sexual health, substance support, transport for older people and Meals on Wheels.

Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods includes parks and open spaces, waste management, sustainability, roads, transport, housing regeneration, community safety, building planning and control, trading standards and emergency planning.

Development, Growth and Regeneration includes economic growth, Sutton Town Centre regeneration, creating The London Cancer Hub, employment and skills. This department has successfully brought millions of pounds of outside investment into the borough to deliver these projects.

Resources includes buildings, human resources, IT, finance, legal, elections, communications and policy.

How we calculate your council tax

As in all London boroughs, your total council tax is made up of two parts:

- An amount set by the Council based on how much money we need to deliver vital local services and meet our levying obligations (see below).
- An amount set separately by the Greater London Authority, called the GLA precept.

What are levies?

The Council Tax you pay includes amounts collected on behalf of other statutory bodies, known as levying bodies. These bodies pay for the net cost of their services by issuing a levy on each billing authority in their area, after deducting all other sources of income raised. The money due is included in your Council Tax bill, and is paid over to each body during the year.

Unlike the Greater London Authority (GLA) precept, levies have to be included as part of the council's own budget calculations and hence are included in the calculation of the Council's own band D tax. The amounts included are shown in the tables below:

	2023/24	2024/25
Environment Agency	£175,000	£178,000
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority	£188,000	£193,000
London Pensions Fund Authority	£247,000	£247,000
Total	£610,000	£618,000

What is the GLA precept?

The GLA precept is the part of your council tax that goes towards funding services provided by the Greater London Authority. These include London-wide transport, policing and fire services. The GLA precept is set each year by the Mayor of London, is collected by the Council and transferred to the Mayor. More information about the GLA precept is available at sutton.gov.uk/counciltax

We calculate the Sutton Council element of your council tax in two stages. First, we work out how much money the Council needs to deliver its services and meet its levying obligations (our gross expenditure). Then, we work out how much income we will generate and other funding we will receive (our gross income). Then, we work out the difference (our net expenditure) and what we need to raise in council tax. The next two tables show these calculations for 2024/25. Figures in brackets show income, savings or a surplus.

1. This table shows how much funding is needed to deliver council services, by department, and the ring-fenced central government grants we receive towards this. Ring-fenced grants are grants that must be spent on certain services and cannot be spent elsewhere.

	2023/24 Net expenditure	2024/25 Gross expenditure	2024/25 Gross Income	2024/25 Net expenditure
Directorates	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Health & Wellbeing	4,147	10,676	(7,270)	3,406
Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods	28,743	49,511	(17,731)	31,780
Development, Growth & Regeneration	1,011	721	0	721
Peoples	114,607	140,487	(12,723)	127,765
Ringfenced Better Care Funding Joint NHS/LA Grant	0	15,673	(15,673)	0
Ringfenced Public Health Funding Grant	0	10,818	(10,818)	0
Resources	23,734	103,728	(79,815)	23,913
Interest, levies, reserves and other centrally held budgets	16,634	22,325	(2,108)	20,217
Total	188,875	353,939	(146,137)	207,802
Non-ringfenced Core Grants	(27,645)			(33,554)
Net Budget Requirement	161,231			174,248

2. This table shows where the remaining funding needed to deliver Council services comes from, including how much council tax we need to raise after other sources of funding have been accounted for.

	2023/24 Net expenditure £'000	2024/25 Net expenditure £'000
Net Budget Requirement	161,231	174,248
Revenue Support Grant	(7,894)	(8,417)
Business Rates	(16,561)	(19,766)
Top up Grant	(18,130)	(19,289)
Collection Fund (surplus) / deficit - Council Tax	0	(1,612)
Collection Fund (surplus) / deficit - NNDR	743	1,348
Amount from Council Tax	119,389	126,512

How our budget has changed from last year

The table below shows how pressures like inflation and increased demand have affected our budget this year, and where we have saved money or received more income. These changes have led to an overall increase in the amount we need to raise through council tax.

Changes in the Council's expenditure	£m
Council tax requirement 2023/24	119,389
Inflation	7,212
Additional costs from continuing budget pressures and income shortfalls	21,674
Transfer to capital, provisions and reserves	1,014
Efficiencies, cost reduction measures and other savings	(10,603)
Collection Fund movement	(1,007)
Increase in Business Rates Income	(3,205)
Changes in grant income funding, Top up Grant and Revenue Support Grant	(7,962)
Council tax requirement 2024/25	126,512

How much council tax you will pay this year

How much council tax you pay depends on how much your home was worth in April 1991, when it was valued and put into one of eight bands by the Valuation Office Agency. Your council tax bill tells you which band your home is in. The table below shows how much council tax each band will pay in 2024/25.

Valuation band	Range of values	Sutton Council general	Sutton Council adult social care precept	Greater London Authority	Total council tax
A	Up to 40,000	£965.13	£164.72	£314.27	£1,444.12
B	40,001 - 52,000	£1,125.99	£192.17	£366.64	£1,684.80
C	52,001 - 68,000	£1,286.84	£219.63	£419.02	£1,925.49
D	68,001 - 88,000	£1,447.70	£247.08	£471.40	£2,166.18
E	88,001 - 120,000	£1,769.41	£301.99	£576.16	£2,647.56
F	120,001 - 160,000	£2,091.12	£356.89	£680.91	£3,128.92
G	160,001 - 320,000	£2,412.83	£411.80	£785.67	£3,610.30
H	More than £320,000	£2,895.40	£494.16	£942.80	£4,332.36

If you believe the banding of your property is incorrect, visit voa.gov.uk or call **0300 501 501**. If you make an appeal, you will still need to pay your council tax while it is considered.

Worried about the cost of living?

We are here to help you and those you care about with the rising cost of living.

Call **020 8770 5000**, visit sutton.gov.uk/support or visit your local library or the Civic Offices.

Discounts and reductions

Depending on your income and who is living in your home, you may be able to apply for a discount on your council tax bill.

Council tax discounts

You may be eligible for a discount if you live alone (excluding any children under 18) or if you or someone you live with:

- Has a disability and your home has been adapted to meet their needs.
- Is a full-time student, student nurse, apprentice or Youth Training trainee.
- Is severely mentally impaired.
- Is a person caring for someone who is not their spouse, partner or child under 18.

For further details on all discounts, including how to make an application, visit sutton.gov.uk/counciltax

Council Tax Reduction scheme

If you are on a low income or receive benefits, you may be eligible for a reduction on your council tax bill. Find out more at sutton.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction

Important information

Some discounts and exemptions are time-limited and will expire during the financial year. If your discount or exemption expires, we will send you a revised bill for the rest of the year. If your bill shows a discount or exemption that you are no longer entitled to, or your circumstances change so you are no longer entitled to a discount or exemption, you must tell us within 21 days. If you don't, you may have to pay a penalty.

Grounds for appeal against a decision regarding your council tax can be found on our website at sutton.gov.uk/counciltax

Empty properties and exemptions

Empty and unfurnished properties, including those needing or undergoing major repairs or structural alterations, are not exempt from council tax. This follows a change in the law on 1 April 2013.

Properties that are empty (vacant and substantially unfurnished) for one year or more are subject to a premium. From 1 April 2024, the following premiums apply:

- For properties that have been empty for one or more years, but less than five years, the premium is 100%. This means you will be asked to pay 200% of the full council tax bill. (Prior to 1 April 2024 the property could be empty for 2 years before the premium became payable).
- For properties that have been empty for five or more years, but less than 10 years, the premium is 200%. This means you will be asked to pay 300% of the full council tax bill.
- For properties that have been empty for 10 years or more, the premium is 300%. This means you will be asked to pay 400% of the full council tax bill.

If a premium becomes payable during the financial year, you will be sent a revised bill.

As this premium applies to the property, a change of ownership or tenancy will not affect the premium. If the property had already been empty or substantially unfurnished for one or more years when you bought or leased it, you will have to pay the extra council tax.

Some properties are still eligible for an exemption.

For more information or to make an online application visit **sutton.gov.uk/counciltax**

Help to pay and financial support

The cost of living crisis is affecting many people in Sutton. If you are worried about paying your council tax or other bills, help is available.

Hardship Fund and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

If you are entitled to a Council Tax Reduction, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and are struggling with council tax or rent, you can apply for a Hardship Fund payment for council tax or a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for rent.

These payments are designed for those who most need some extra help. Our budget is limited and we will prioritise helping to keep people in work and helping disabled and vulnerable people. We will also take levels of income and expenditure into account. Find out more at sutton.gov.uk/DHP

Together for Sutton


If you are feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to go for support, please contact Together for Sutton online at togetherforsutton.org.uk or by phone on **020 8254 2616** (Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm).

This is a free, impartial and confidential advice service which is run by local organisations and funded by Sutton Council.

Go to sutton.gov.uk/budget and click on “**Get the support you need**” for more information about the wide range of support available in Sutton.

How to pay

Direct Debit

-  You can help us save money, protect the environment and make your life easier by paying by Direct Debit and receiving your bill electronically. Set up your Direct Debit at sutton.gov.uk/directdebit

Win £100 cash

If you pay by Direct Debit, you'll also be in with a chance of winning our £100 prize draw every three months.

Other ways to pay



Go online: sutton.gov.uk/payforit



Call the 24 hour automated payment line: **020 8770 7887**



Pay with your Payzone card at Post Offices and newsagents that display the Payzone sign



Online banking, standing order, BACS and CHAPS Payments. Please make payments to:

Bank Sort Code: 30-80-12

Bank Account Number: 13740960



Want to pay your annual bill over 12 monthly instalments rather than 10? Email us at counciltax@sutton.gov.uk

Manage your council tax online with MyAccount

You can manage your council tax online using MyAccount, the Council's online portal for council tax, business rates and Housing Benefit. With MyAccount you can:



**Set up a
Direct Debit**



**Sign up
for e-billing**



**See past and
future payments**



**Claim discounts
and exemptions**



**Change your
name or address**



**Get a PDF version
of your bill**

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For more information
about council tax, visit
sutton.gov.uk/counciltax

