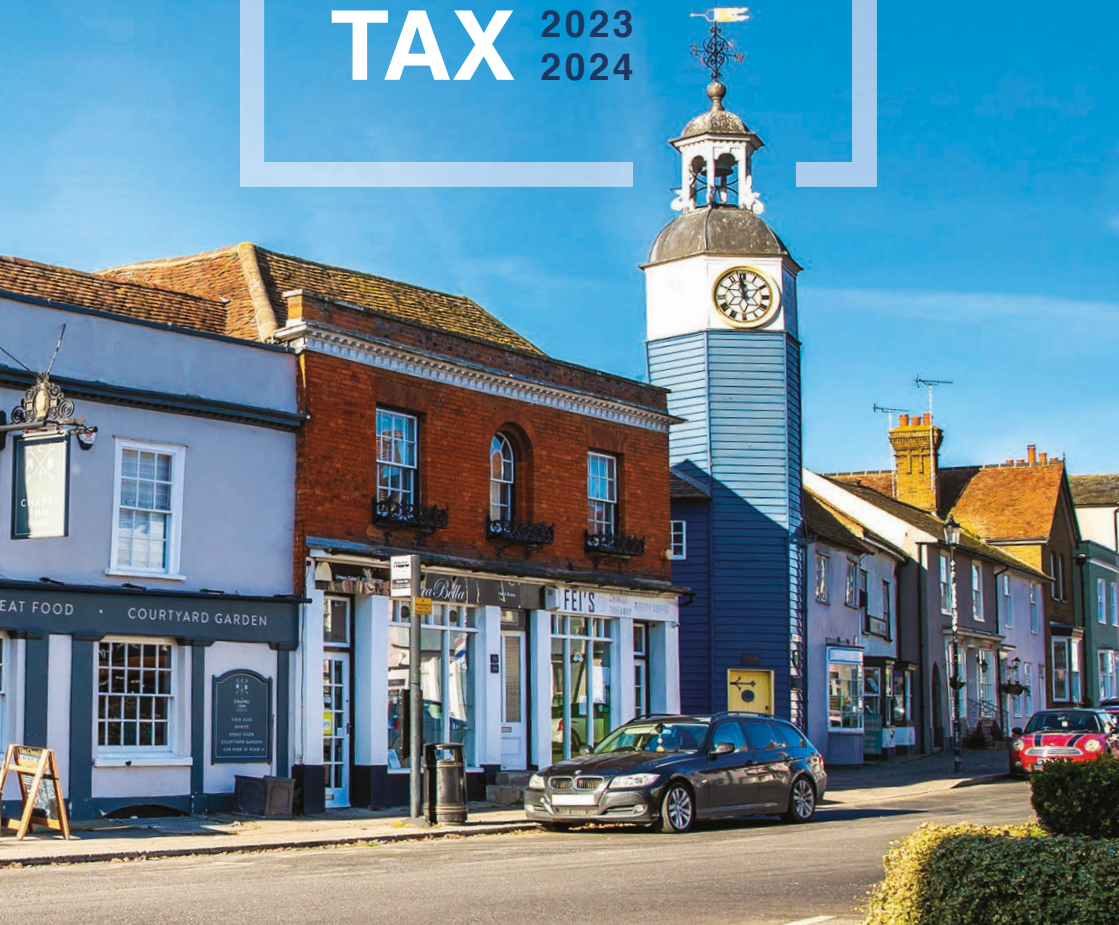


YOUR GUIDE TO COUNCIL TAX

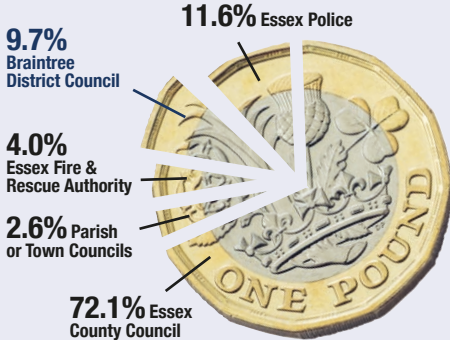
2023
2024



How your Council Tax is shared

Braintree District Council collects the Council Tax on behalf of the District Council, Essex County Council, Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (responsible for Policing and Community Safety and Essex Fire & Rescue Authority) and the Parish and Town Councils in the district.

Here's how your Council Tax is allocated:



Who pays Council Tax?

At least one person in each household is responsible for paying Council Tax, whether they own the home or rent it.

In most cases the person (or people) aged 18 or over who will be responsible for paying Council Tax are:

- owner-occupiers
- leaseholders
- people who pay rent
- people who have a licence to occupy, such as people who live in tied cottages (housing relating to their work)
- people such as squatters, who live in the property but have no legal interest in it (that is, they don't own or rent it)
- people who own the property but don't live in it.

People living together such as tenants, married people or civil partners can be jointly or separately responsible for the whole Council Tax for their property.

What is Council Tax?

Council Tax is a tax on homes collected by your local council to pay for local services.

Valuation band	Value of property on 1 April 1991 tax rate	Braintree District	Essex County tax rate *	Essex Police tax rate	Essex Fire & Rescue tax rate
A	Up to £40,000	£129.54	£966.78	£155.64	£53.52
B	£40,001 to £52,000	£151.13	£1,127.91	£181.58	£62.44
C	£52,001 to £68,000	£172.72	£1,289.04	£207.52	£71.36
D	£68,001 to £88,000	£194.31	£1,450.17	£233.46	£80.28
E	£88,001 to £120,000	£237.49	£1,772.43	£285.34	£98.12
F	£120,001 to £160,000	£280.67	£2,094.69	£337.22	£115.96
G	£160,001 to £320,000	£323.85	£2,416.95	£389.10	£133.80
H	Over £320,000	£388.62	£2,900.34	£466.92	£160.56

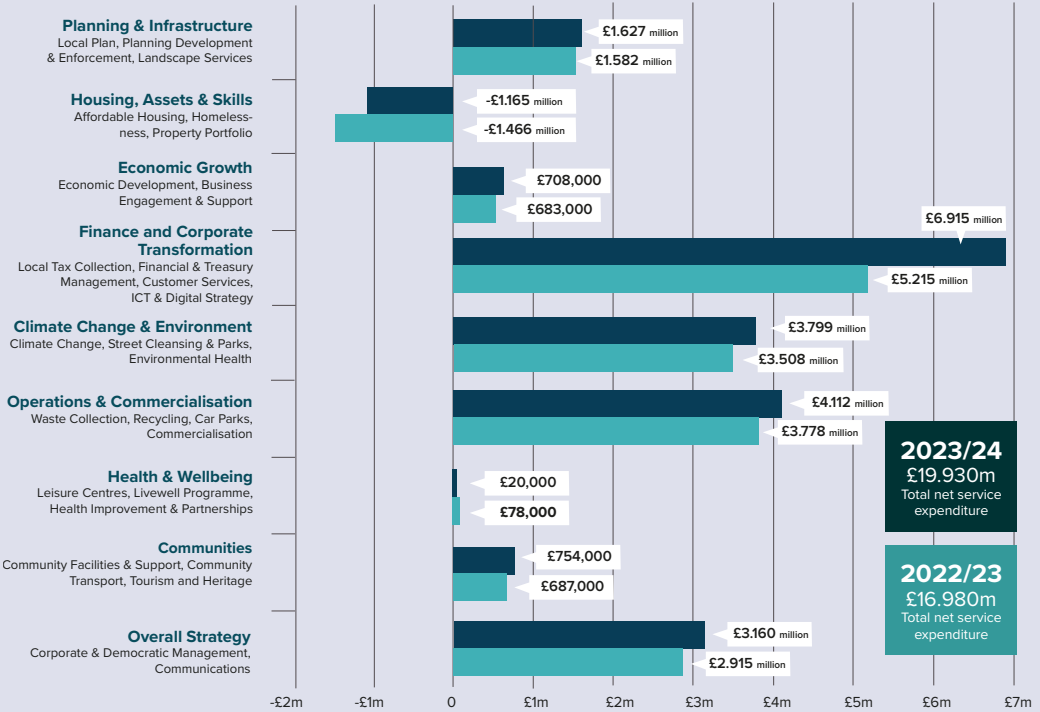
* Includes an amount for Adult Social Care. Find out more at www.essex.gov.uk

If you think your home should be in a different valuation band, please contact the Valuation Office Agency at www.gov.uk/council-tax-bands or call 03000 501501.

If you challenge your band, you must continue to pay council tax at your current band until your appeal is decided.

Braintree District Council spending plan

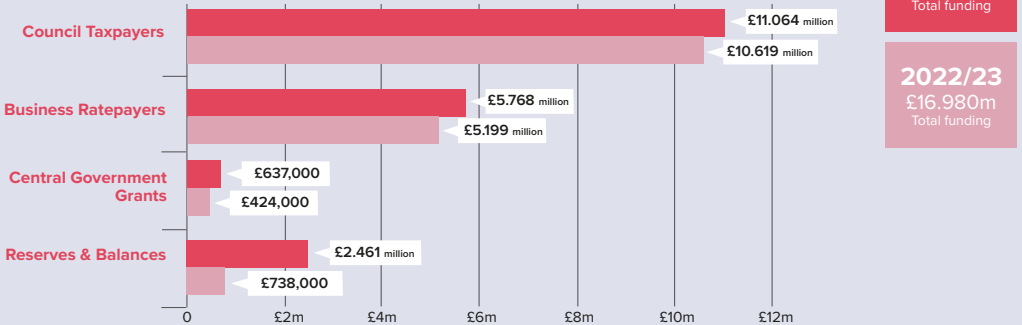
Comparison of figures for 2023/24 with 2022/23



Braintree District Council income

Comparison of figures for 2023/24 with 2022/23

How the net service expenditure is funded



The spending plan above includes £1.6m for a New Homes & Growth Dividend, and £0.5m for Cost of Living support (£1m to be spent over two years). Figures are net of income from fees & charges (£7.1m), rents (£3.7m) and treasury investments (£1.3m)

What is Local Council Tax Support?

If you are struggling to pay your Council Tax bill due to a low income, you may be entitled to help through the Local Council Tax Support.

Contact our Benefits team on **01376 557852** or visit www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax for more details.

Appealing Decisions

If you have applied for Local Council Tax Support and you disagree with the decision, write to us stating the grounds on which you are aggrieved. If we cannot resolve your grievance within 2 months, you may appeal to the Valuation Office Tribunal.

If you think your Council Tax bill is incorrect and you think you should pay less or none at all, write to us stating your appeal.

You cannot withhold payment of your Council Tax while the matter is investigated/under appeal.

I am having difficulty paying, what can I do?

We are here to help you.

Contact us as soon as possible on **01376 557722** or email payadvice@braintree.gov.uk

We only send two reminders in the year. Following that, should the bill remain unpaid, a summons and possibly a liability order will be issued which will incur additional costs being added to your account.

Discount and exemption changes

You must tell us within 21 days about anything that could affect an exemption or discount you receive. If you fail to tell us in this timescale you may be subject to a £70 penalty.

Exempt properties

Some properties are exempt from Council Tax. The exemption depends on the property class and can be for occupied and unoccupied properties. We have full guidance on the different property classes that may be exempt on our website www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax or you can contact our Revenues team.

If you apply for a Council Tax exemption you must continue to pay your Council Tax bill while you are waiting for our decision. If you fail to pay existing instalments we will take recovery action.

What is empty homes premium?

The Government is keen to ensure that dwellings do not remain unoccupied or unused for extensive periods. Unfortunately, it remains the case that nationally, a distressing number of dwellings are being left empty at a time when there is an overall housing shortage. There are currently 219 properties across our district which have been unoccupied for more than 2 years.

Therefore to encourage home owners to bring these properties back into use, a Council Tax premium will be charged on empty homes after a period of 2 years.

A premium of 100% will be applied in addition to the full (100%) charge after the first 2 years a property has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished.

Once the property has been empty for more than 5 years but less than 10 years, the premium will be 200% in addition to the full (100%) charge.

After 10 years, the premium will be 300% in addition to the full (100%) charge.

These premiums are incurred from the date the property became unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and relate to the property not the ownership of that property.

For full details of Braintree Council's empty homes policy please visit www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax

I live on my own, am I entitled to a discount?

Your Council Tax bill assumes two adults are living in your household.

If you are the only adult living there (as your main home) we will reduce your bill by 25%.

When we look at the number of adults living in a property, we need to know about:

- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth trainees
- people who live in hospital
- people who are being looked after in care homes

- people who are severely mentally disabled
- people staying in some hostels or night shelters
- 18 and 19-year-olds who are at or have just left school
- care workers working for low pay (usually for a charity)
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not their partner, or their child (a child is someone under 18).

Please visit our website for the full list of discounts available

www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax

People with disabilities

You may be entitled to pay less Council Tax if you or someone who lives with you has a room or extra space, or an extra bathroom or kitchen, or uses a wheelchair in your property, to meet special needs relating to a disability.

This means that if you have a disability you might not have to pay more Council Tax for the extra space you need.

We have an annexe, do we get a discount?

A Council Tax discount of 50% is available for property annexes.

It applies for people living in annexes providing they are related to the person liable to pay the Council Tax of the main dwelling.

www.braintree.gov.uk/annexediscount

What your Parish or Town Council receives

The table below shows each Parish Council's Council Tax requirement (how much they need), based on a Band D Charge. Parish and Town Councils need extra money to pay for things like community centres, footpaths and extra street lighting. If the Parish or Town Council raises more than £140,000 from its local taxpayers, it must publish information about its spending plans. The spending plans for Coggeshall Parish, Halstead and Witham Town Councils can be found on our website www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax

Town Or Parish	Band D
Alphamstone	23.00
Ashen	40.24
Belchamp Otten	16.85
Belchamp St Paul	22.73
Belchamp Walter	55.75
Birdbrook	85.42
Black Notley	49.20
Borley Parish meeting	22.64
Bradwell	52.62
Braintree	0.00
Bulmer	40.08
Bures Hamlet	96.60
Castle Hedingham	68.09
Coggeshall	105.54
Colne Engaine	61.79
Cressing	53.01
Earls Colne	91.38
Fairstead	73.34
Faulkbourne	69.27
Feering	81.43
Finchingfield	89.54
Foxearth	61.81

Town Or Parish	Band D
Gestingthorpe	58.64
Gosfield	67.12
Great Bardfield	79.42
Great Henny	45.18
Great Maplestead	61.39
Great Notley	42.57
Great Yeldham	80.97
Greenstead Green	46.33
Halstead	49.86
Hatfield Peverel	59.27
Helions Bumpstead	67.80
Kelvedon	101.51
Lamarsh	23.00
Liston	61.81
Little Henny	45.18
Little Maplestead	66.55
Little Yeldham	32.75
Middleton	45.18
Ovington	32.75
Panfield	69.08
Pebmarsh	60.29
Pentlow	65.93

Town Or Parish	Band D
Rayne	61.73
Ridgewell	91.38
Rivenhall	47.39
Shalford	61.88
Sible Hedingham	65.29
Silver End	66.67
Stambourne	52.66
Steeple Bumpstead	68.12
Stisted	60.25
Sturmer	64.62
Terling	73.34
The Salings	71.70
Tilbury Juxta Clare	32.75
Toppesfield	80.58
Twinstead	45.18
Wethersfield	82.93
White Colne	56.71
White Notley	69.27
Wickham St Paul	101.67
Witham	89.64

If you require this leaflet in an alternative format,
please call **01376 557755**

Sign up to Open Portal

You can use Open Portal secure service to view your Council Tax bill online rather than us posting them to you.

As well as paying your bill, you can:

- View your bill
- Request a copy bill
- Check your balance
- See all payments made
- Check your next payment due

Register for Open Portal

You need to register to use Open Portal. To register you will need your;

- name and contact details
 - Council Tax account number
 - email address
- www.braintree.gov.uk/opregister**

Once you have registered for Open Portal you will receive an email within a few days confirming your registration. The email will contain your username and memorable information. For added security we will post your password to your home address within seven days of registering.

When your account is set up, you will need to download Adobe Acrobat on your device unless you're viewing your account on a smartphone.

If you have any queries please contact Revenues

on **01376 552525** or email

counciltax@braintree.gov.uk



Council Tax Support Fund

This is additional financial help for Local Council Tax Support claimants. A discount of up to £25 will be deducted from your 2023/24 Council Tax bill

Additional funding will be available to those facing financial hardship. For further details please contact us on **01376 55772** or email **payadvice@braintree.gov.uk**

**REPORT
FRAUD
NOW**

08000 740405
fraud@braintree.gov.uk

Data Protection Statement:

The Council may share information internally and with other agencies to carry out its statutory functions efficiently.

Braintree District Council has a duty to protect the public funds it administers, so we may use information you provide for the prevention and detection of fraud.

Information may also be shared with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

More information can be found on www.braintree.gov.uk/privacy

Paying your Council Tax

The easiest way to pay is online.
Visit www.braintree.gov.uk/counciltax



Direct Debit

Over 45,000 Council Tax payers in the Braintree District use Direct Debit to pay their bill each month. It is so easy to arrange, simply call **01376 557755** and provide your bank account number, sort code and Council Tax reference number which you will find on your latest bill, and we will do the rest.



Debit/Credit Card payments

You can use the Council's website to make a payment with your debit/credit card. Alternatively, you can also call our automated card line on **01376 557894** which is available 24 hours a day.

Online banking

If you are making a payment using your bank's website, please ensure you quote our bank details: Sort Code **30-00-02**, Bank Account Number **00825110**. You will also need to quote your Council Tax reference number which you will find on your latest bill, in the reference box.

Payment at Post Offices or PayPoint outlets

If you are unable to pay your Council Tax bill by any of the other options, and you have a barcode displayed on your bill, you may make payments at any Post Office or Paypoint outlet.



Payment by Standing Order/Bank Transfer

Please ensure you quote our bank details: Sort Code **30-00-02**, Bank Account Number **00825110**. You will also need to quote your Council Tax reference number which you will find on your latest bill, in the reference box. Due date remains the first of each month.

Paying by instalments?

By default, Council Tax is payable in ten monthly instalments starting on 1st April and ending on 1st January.

However, did you know that you can request to spread your payments over twelve monthly instalments? These would be 1st April to 1st March. Just remember that you would lose the instalment free period during February and March if you choose the twelve monthly option. If you would like to take up this option please call **01376 557755**.

IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTIES PAYING

If you do not make payments by the due dates, we will issue a reminder notice.

The maximum number of reminders you may receive in any financial year is two. If the second reminder remains unpaid, a summons will be issued and cost incurred.

Please contact us if you cannot pay your Council Tax. Do not wait until you are in debt as this makes it more difficult to sort the problem out. Contact us on 01376 557755.

Please recycle this when you have finished with it.