

# YOUR GUIDE TO COUNCIL TAX

2024  
2025



# 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.

This year for an average band D property your council tax will be **£2,109.51** and it's divided up like this:



# 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	£133.38	£1,015.02	£164.28	£55.08
B	£40,001 to £52,000	£155.61	£1,184.19	£191.66	£64.26
C	£52,001 to £68,000	£177.84	£1,353.36	£219.04	£73.44
D	£68,001 to £88,000	£200.07	£1,522.53	£246.42	£82.62
E	£88,001 to £120,000	£244.53	£1,860.87	£301.18	£100.98
F	£120,001 to £160,000	£288.99	£2,199.21	£355.94	£119.34
G	£160,001 to £320,000	£333.45	£2,537.55	£410.70	£137.70
H	Over £320,000	£400.14	£3,045.06	£492.84	£165.24

\* Includes an amount for Adult Social Care. Find out more at [www.essex.gov.uk](http://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](http://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.

# 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:

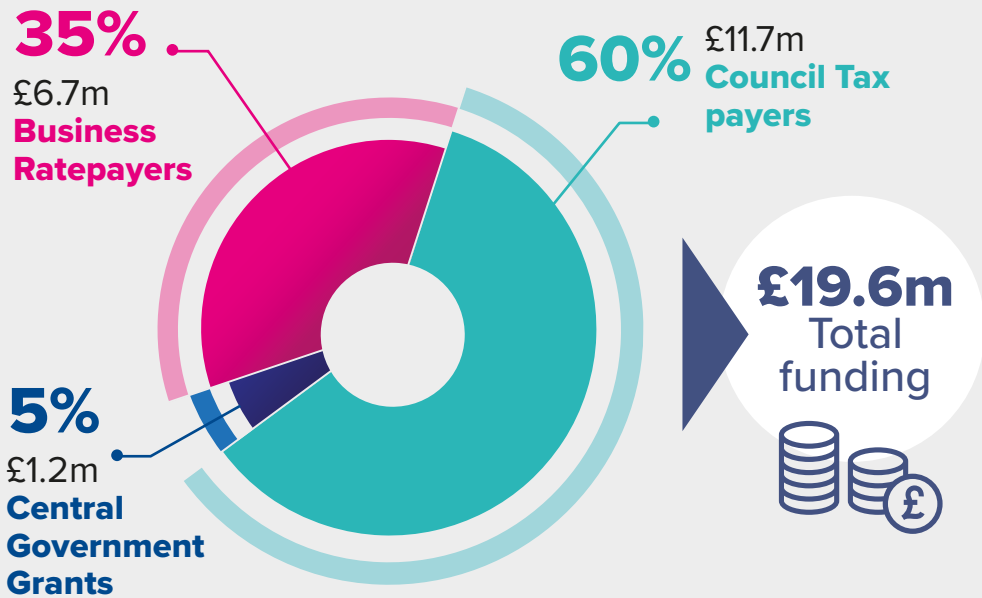
- owner-occupiers
- leaseholders
- people who pay rent

- 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.

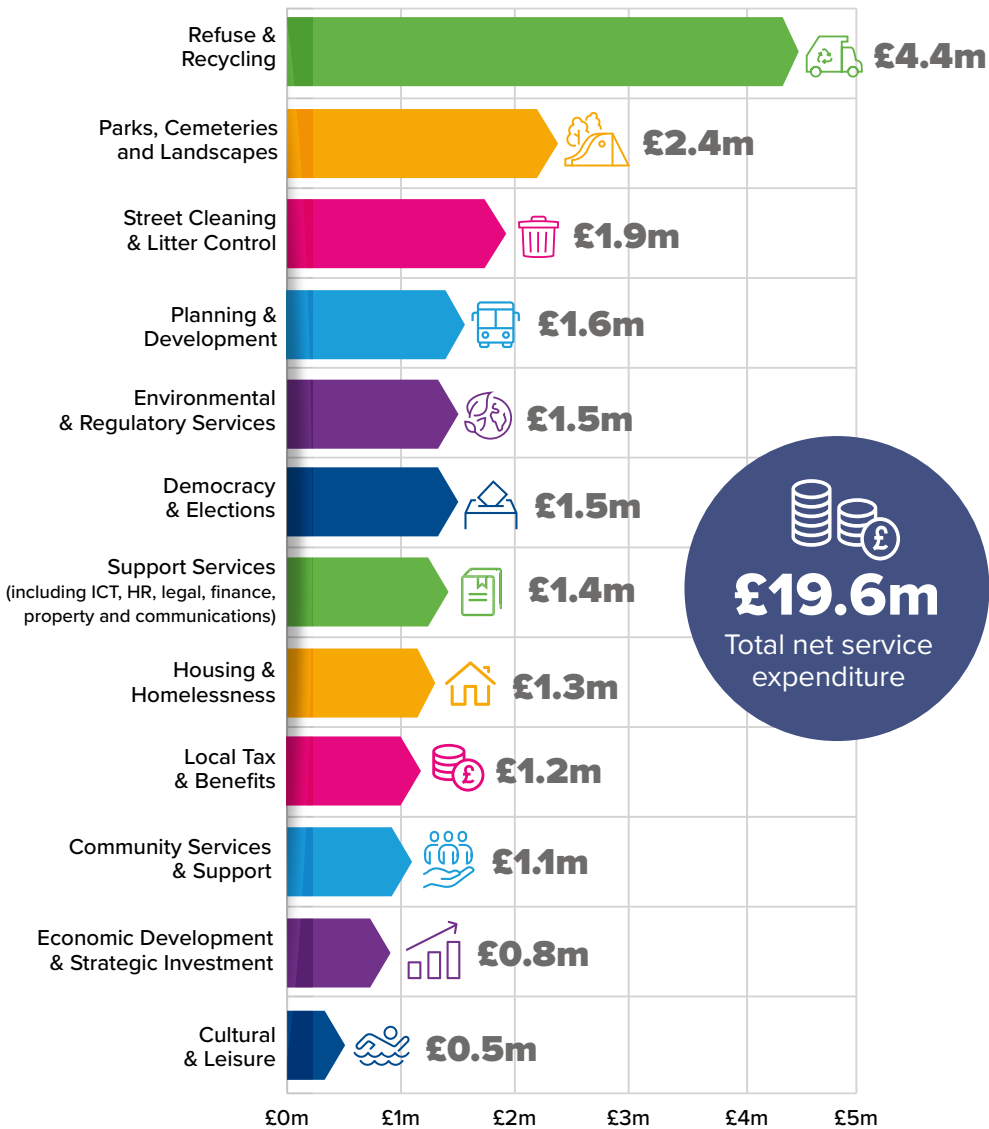
People living together such as tenants, married people or civil partners can be jointly or separately responsible for the whole Council Tax for their property.

# Braintree District Council income

Figures for 2024/25



# Braintree District Council spending plan 2024/25



Figures are net of income from fees & charges (£7.3m), rents (£4.4m), treasury investments (£2.1m) and the use of Council reserves (£2.2m)

# 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 the Parishes of Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon as well as Halstead and Witham Town Councils can be found on our website [www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax)

Town Or Parish	Band D	Town Or Parish	Band D	Town Or Parish	Band D
Alphamstone	25.23	Gestingthorpe	62.02	Rayne	67.06
Ashen	42.09	Gosfield	69.78	Ridgewell	94.42
Belchamp Otten	16.52	Great Bardfield	84.41	Rivenhall	48.23
Belchamp St Paul	22.73	Great Henny	48.25	Shalford	73.91
Belchamp Walter	55.75	Great Maplestead	70.58	Sible Hedingham	65.26
Birdbrook	89.64	Great Notley	44.70	Silver End	65.70
Black Notley	51.23	Great Yeldham	88.91	Stambourne	53.16
Borley Parish meeting	25.70	Greenstead Green	48.57	Steeple Bumpstead	76.54
Bradwell	52.61	Halstead	51.70	Stisted	66.66
Braintree	0.00	Hatfield Peverel	77.44	Sturmer	68.46
Bulmer	41.08	Helions Bumpstead	67.97	Terling	81.04
Bures Hamlet	98.21	Kelvedon	103.12	The Salings	82.65
Castle Hedingham	71.49	Lamarsh	25.23	Tilbury Juxta Clare	36.58
Coggeshall	111.63	Liston	71.89	Toppesfield	80.63
Colne Engaine	60.46	Little Henny	48.25	Twinstead	48.25
Cressing	52.65	Little Maplestead	72.22	Wethersfield	85.42
Earls Colne	106.02	Little Yeldham	36.58	White Colne	57.03
Fairstead	81.04	Middleton	48.25	White Notley	73.53
Faulkbourne	73.53	Ovington	36.58	Wickham St Paul	118.02
Feering	121.88	Panfield	88.78	Witham	103.24
Finchingfield	94.13	Pebmarsh	67.53		
Foxearth	71.89	Pentlow	64.19		



# Empty Homes

## 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 764 properties across our district which have been unoccupied for more than 1 year.

Therefore, to encourage home owners to bring properties back into use, a Council Tax premium will be charged on empty homes after a period of 1 year. Certain exemptions will apply and full details of these will be published on the Council's website.

A premium of 100% will be applied in addition to the full (100%) charge after the first year 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](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax)

## Empty Properties Can:

- Attract crime, arson and vandalism
- Cause damage to neighbouring properties
- Encourage pest and vermin infestations
- Devalue neighbouring properties by around 20%
- Be a wasted resource (particularly when considering rising homelessness)
- Make communities seem untidy and uncared for
- Be a source of worry and hassle for owners and neighbours

## Cost to Owners:

- Expensive repair and maintenance bills
- Council Tax charges – 200% to 400% when empty for 1 to 5+ years
- Higher risk of break-in/damages
- Loss of potential rental income
- Utility standing charges
- Higher insurance
- Possible enforcement action by the local authority

## Advantages of bringing an empty property back into use:

- ✓ Can provide a rental income (on average £12k per year)
- ✓ Reduce the risk of vandalism or damage
- ✓ Increase the value of the property
- ✓ Provide more housing to help meet the housing needs
- ✓ Make the property more appealing to buyers
- ✓ Reduce the risk of squatters
- ✓ Save money (fewer repairs, no utility costs and Council Tax liability if property is rented out)
- ✓ Has a positive impact on the local environment and community

## Why work with Braintree District Council to bring your empty home back into use?

We are committed to working with owners to help bring empty properties back into use.

## We have a dedicated Empty Homes Officer

They can offer free advice and information in order to support you in bringing your empty property back into use.

## If you would like free information on bringing an empty home back into use contact:

☎ 01376 552525 Ext 2152

✉ [emptyhomes@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@braintree.gov.uk)

🌐 [www.braintree.gov.uk/emptyhomes](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/emptyhomes)

  
There are over  
**1000**  
empty homes  
in the Braintree District



# 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.

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

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

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

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](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax)

## 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](http://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.

## 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](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/annexediscount)

## 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](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/council-tax) for further information on our NEW scheme for 2024/2025.

## 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.



# Paying your Council Tax

The easiest way to pay is online.  
Visit [www.braintree.gov.uk/counciltax](http://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.



## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

Do not wait until you are in debt as this makes it more difficult to sort the problem out.

### We are here to help you.

Contact us as soon as possible on **01376 557722** or email [payadvice@braintree.gov.uk](mailto: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.

**REPORT FRAUD NOW**  
**08000 740405** [fraud@braintree.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/privacy)

**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](http://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](mailto:counciltax@braintree.gov.uk)**

