

How your Council Tax is spent

Hartlepool Borough Council Budgets	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
SERVICES								
Adult Social Services <small>Note 1</small>	388.09	452.77	517.45	582.13	711.49	840.85	970.22	1,164.26
Children's Services <small>Note 2</small>	242.09	282.43	322.78	363.13	443.83	524.52	605.22	726.26
Highways & Transport	73.91	86.23	98.55	110.87	135.51	160.15	184.78	221.74
Refuse Collection & Disposal	63.81	74.44	85.08	95.71	116.98	138.25	159.52	191.42
Other	54.96	64.13	73.27	82.44	100.75	119.10	137.40	164.88
Environmental Services	40.83	47.63	54.44	61.24	74.85	88.46	102.07	122.48
Loan Repayments	36.33	42.39	48.44	54.50	66.61	78.72	90.83	109.00
Recreation & Tourism	34.58	40.34	46.11	51.87	63.40	74.92	86.45	103.74
Libraries	15.13	17.65	20.17	22.69	27.73	32.77	37.82	45.38
Community Safety & Youth Justice	13.89	16.21	18.52	20.84	25.47	30.10	34.73	41.68
Planning & Development	12.81	14.95	17.08	19.22	23.49	27.76	32.03	38.44
Consumer Services	6.02	7.02	8.03	9.03	11.04	13.04	15.05	18.06
Hartlepool Borough Council Precept	982.45	1,146.19	1,309.92	1,473.67	1,801.15	2,128.64	2,456.12	2,947.34
Adult Social Care Precept <small>Note 3</small>	48.39	56.46	64.53	72.59	88.72	104.85	120.98	145.18
Council Tax For Hartlepool Borough Council Services	1,030.84	1,202.65	1,374.45	1,546.26	1,889.87	2,233.49	2,577.10	3,092.52
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	143.03	166.86	190.70	214.54	262.22	309.89	357.57	429.08
Cleveland Fire Authority	48.71	56.82	64.94	73.06	89.30	105.53	121.77	146.12
Council Tax For Hartlepool Borough Council Area	1,222.58	1,426.33	1,630.09	1,833.86	2,241.39	2,648.91	3,056.44	3,667.72

Adult Social Services Note 1

Key services include - community based services, residential care for older people, support for adults with learning and / or physical disabilities and the provision of mental health care services in conjunction with the NHS.

Children's Services Note 2

Key services include – child protection, fostering, looking after children in care, support for families, Children's Centres, youth support services and home to school transport.

Adult Social Care Precept Note 3

The Government introduced a 2% Adult Social Care precept in April 2016 to help pay for the increasing costs of these services. From April 2017 Authorities can implement a 3% Adult Social Care precept. The Council determined to implement these precepts and this line shows the cumulative Adult Social Care precept charge. In line with Government regulations the Council will only use these resources to fund Adult Social Care services and further information is provided overleaf.

Council Tax and Business Rates Information Leaflet



2017/2018

MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER AKERS-BELCHER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Government has confirmed that funding cuts will continue for three more years. By 2019/20 this means councils will have faced nine successive years of Government grant cuts. In 2019/20 the amount of Government grant paid to the Council will be approximately half the amount received in 2015/16 – a reduction of nearly £10 million. To put this into context Council Tax would need to increase by 30% to replace the Government grant cut just to stand still financially. Clearly, such an increase would not be appropriate.

In addition to managing the continuing cuts in Government funding, the Council also has to manage the impact of increasing inflation, including the National Living Wage introduced by the Government without additional funding. As a result, the Council faces a budget shortfall over the next three years of nearly £21 million. To manage this shortfall the Council has identified a range of savings and additional income, including:

- Savings in information technology costs, insurance costs and interest costs;
- Increased Council Tax income from new housing developments;
- Anticipated additional funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20 from the Government's new Better Care Fund; and
- Increases in the level of Council Tax.

These proposals reduce the impact on services the Council provides, but do not address the full budget shortfall. Therefore, the Council still needs to make budget reductions of nearly £9 million over the next three years. This is a further budget cut of 10%. Plans to achieve nearly three quarters of these savings have been approved. The remaining savings will be addressed during 2017 to ensure they are implemented over the next three years.

In view of the significant reduction in Government grant funding and the shift in the Government's Council Tax policy we have considered the level of Council Tax carefully and decided to implement an increase of 4.9%. This increase will raise approximately **£1.7 million** (including £1.0 million from the 3% Adult Social Care Precept). We are committed to supporting the Frail, Elderly and Vulnerable through the Social Care precept.

For the majority of households (i.e. the 72% living in properties in Council Tax Bands A and B) the weekly increase is between 93p and £1.08p. A detailed explanation of the Council Tax increase is provided overleaf.

Despite the financial challenges facing the Council over the next three years we need to remain ambitious for the town. I believe that the budget we have set is prudent and enables us to protect frontline services. The Council will continue to work with its key partner organisations to attract additional funding to improve Hartlepool as a place to live, work, study and visit.

Why is Council Tax increasing?

Over the five years 2011/12 to 2015/16 the Government encouraged councils to freeze Council Tax and Hartlepool Council was the only council in the Tees Valley to do so.

In 2016/17, the Government introduced the Adult Social Care precept – a specific amount of your Council Tax bill to help pay for Adult Social Care services - and set this at 2%, indicating this would continue to apply for a further three years. The Adult Social Care precept is in addition to the basic Council Tax referendum limit of 2% (the maximum increase before a public vote is required) and therefore set a referendum limit of 4%.

In December 2016 the Government announced changes to the Adult Social Care precept arrangements to help councils cope with the spiralling costs of Adult Social Care. Under the revised arrangements councils can either achieve a 6% Adult Social Care precept over two or three financial years. However, by 2019/20 both options provide the same Council Tax income.

This change in Government policy shifts the cost of paying for Adult Social Care services from national taxation to Council Tax. The Government's funding for councils anticipates a Council Tax increase for 2017/18 at the referendum limit (5%).

The Council has decided to implement the 3% Adult Social Care precept for 2017/18 to maximise funding available to support Adult Social Care services. This therefore means there will be an overall increase for the Council's services of 4.9% in April.

How will the Council use the 3% Adult Social Care Precept?

The Council can only spend this money on Adult Social Care and each council's Chief Financial Officer is required to submit a declaration to the Government confirming this is the case. The Council has submitted this declaration, which confirms that this funding will partly fund financial pressures in Adult Social Care, including annual increases in the National Living Wage. The balance of the Social Care financial pressures have been addressed as part of the overall budget strategy.

What are Adult Social Care Services?

Adult Social Care services often work in partnership with services provided by the NHS and help people with non medical support. These services support older people (aged 65 years and over), adults with learning and/or physical disabilities, adults with mental health or substance misuse issues and carers. Services include supporting people to access residential care, domiciliary care that supports people in their own homes and telecare support to help people remain independent. Each year the Council provides support to over 5,900 adults, including:

- 950 older people supported in their own homes
- 690 older people supported in residential care;

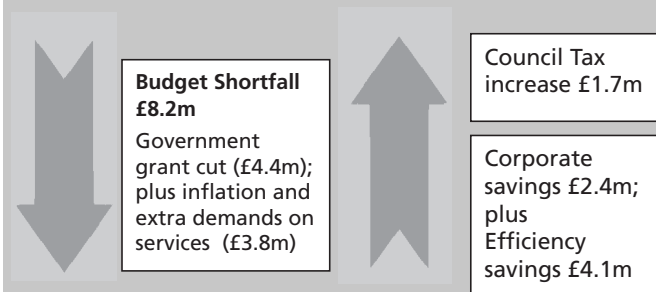
- Telecare support provided to over 2,300 people to promote independence
- 350 adults with learning disabilities supported to live in the community
- Over 1,000 carers provided with information, advice and support

In line with national trends, the population in Hartlepool is ageing which creates additional demands on services. People with learning and physical disabilities are also living longer. These trends are to be celebrated but do increase the costs of providing adult services.

How has the Council managed the 2017/18 Government grant cut and inflation?

Over the next three years Government grant will be cut by nearly £10 million. Approximately 44% of this cut is being made in 2017/18. The Council also faces inflation and demand pressures, which mean there is a budget shortfall of nearly £8.2m next year. The Council Tax increase of 4.9% (including the 3% Adult Social Care precept) only covers approximately a fifth of this shortfall. The remaining shortfall has been funded from a combination of corporate budget savings (saving in information technology costs, insurance costs and interest costs) and efficiency savings, as summarised below:

Summary of 2017/18 budget shortfall and measures to address it.



How is the Council planning to use reserves?

As part of the approach to managing continuing Government grant cuts the Council has adopted a long-term strategy to manage its resources, including monies held in reserves. This strategy recognises that reserves can only be spent once.

The Council has earmarked £17 million to support the budget over the four years up to 2019/20 to help manage the budget cuts which will be required over this period. This strategy also ensures there is no ongoing dependency on the use of reserves after 2019/20.

COUNCIL TAX VALUATION BANDS

The amount of council tax you pay depends on which band your property is in. Your property has been placed into one of 8 valuation bands by the Valuation Office Agency, based on its value as at 1st April 1991.

Your property's council tax band is shown on your bill. If you think your property has been placed in the wrong council tax band please contact the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) by telephoning 03000 501 501 or visiting the website at www.voa.gov.uk

You also have the right to appeal against your council tax bill if you think that:

- the Council has made a mistake when working out your bill; or
- you should not pay council tax; or
- your property should be exempt or free from council tax.

Write to us at the address shown at the end of this leaflet, telling us why you are appealing against your council tax bill.

BAND RANGE OF VALUE

- A Up to £40,000
- B £40,001 to £52,000
- C £52,001 to £68,000
- D £68,001 to £88,000
- E £88,001 to £120,000
- F £120,001 to £160,000
- G £160,001 to £320,000
- H Over £320,000

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

Information about what you are paying to support your local fire and rescue service for 2017/18 can be found online at:

www.clevelandfire.gov.uk.

Are You Paying too much Council Tax?

Please take time to read the following information carefully. It tells you about the help you may be able to claim if you, or another adult in your home, is on a low income, either in or out of work. There are also council tax reductions available for special circumstances; for example if a member of your family is disabled, or severely mentally impaired, or your partner now lives permanently in a nursing home.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme (previously Council Tax Benefit)

If you are on a low income either working, unemployed or retired, you may get help paying your council tax bill by applying for help under the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The amount of help you receive will depend on your income.

Good news for Pensioners

If you are over 60 years old you can have savings of up to £10,000 without it affecting your benefit. You may even get some help paying your bill if you have savings of up to £16,000. However, if you are entitled to Guarantee Pension Credit you may have savings of more than £16,000 and still qualify for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support.

Please bear in mind that benefit will normally only be awarded from the Monday following the date you make your claim.

Reductions for Carers

Your council tax bill may be reduced if you care for another member of your household for more than 35 hours each week. The person you care for must be in receipt of (or entitled to) certain state benefits such as the higher rate Attendance Allowance or the highest rate of the care component of a Disability Living Allowance. (Under the current rules, you will not receive a reduction if you are a Carer for your partner or any of your children under the age of 18).

You may also receive a reduction if you work for a Council or a Charity as a Residential Careworker. You must work for at least 24 hours each week and earn no more than £44 per week. A house left empty by somebody providing care to someone elsewhere is free from council tax, as is a house left empty by someone who is receiving care permanently in a Nursing Home or Hospital.

Reductions for People with Disabilities

Your council tax bill may also be reduced if you, or someone who lives with you is permanently disabled and, because of their disability, needs one of the following:

- A room which is not a kitchen, bathroom or toilet and is used mainly by the disabled person. You may need an extra room for therapy/treatment e.g. a room used mainly for therapy for an autistic child.
- A second bathroom or a kitchen for the disabled person to use.
- Extra space inside the home for a wheelchair - the wheelchair must be used indoors.

Reductions for People with Severe Mental Impairments

Your council tax bill may be reduced if you or someone you live with has a severe mental impairment such as Alzheimers or any form of dementia, including those associated with a Stroke. If the person with the severe mental impairment lives alone then their property will be exempt or free from council tax. If the person with the severe mental impairment lives in a property with other adults, the bill may be reduced because that person will not be counted for council tax purposes.

Council Tax Discounts

The full council tax bill is worked out based on 2 or more adults living in a property. If only 1 adult lives in a property the bill will be reduced by 25%.

Due to special circumstances some adults will also not be counted when we work out how much council tax you have to pay. These are:

- People receiving care in nursing homes, care homes, hospitals and hostels.
- People who are severely mentally impaired (includes those suffering from Alzheimers, Strokes and other forms of dementia).
- School leavers or people aged 18 for whom you receive child benefit.
- People aged 18 or 19 still in full-time education (other than those in Higher Education).
- Full-time students & student nurses.
- Youth trainees & apprentices.
- Members of visiting overseas forces.
- Members of certain religious communities.
- People in prison (except for those in prison for non-payment of council tax or a fine).

Occupied Properties Free from Council Tax:

The following types of occupied property may be free from Council Tax:

- Properties lived in only by people who are severely mentally impaired (includes those suffering from Alzheimers, Strokes and other forms of dementia).
- Self-contained properties like 'Granny Flats' which are occupied by a dependant relative.
- Halls of Residence or properties lived in only by students or by people under 18 years old.
- Properties lived in by foreign diplomats or visiting armed forces
- Properties owned by the Secretary of State and occupied by army personnel.

ANNEXES

If you live in an annexe and you are related to the person liable to pay the council tax of the main dwelling you may be entitled to a 50% discount in the amount of council tax that is due to be paid.

EMPTY PROPERTIES

Properties left empty and free from Council Tax for a set period:

- Unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties – free for 1 month.
- Properties left empty after someone dies - free up to the date probate is granted, and then for a further 6 months (if ownership is not transferred).
- Properties owned by charities and was last occupied in furtherance of the objects of the charity - free for 6 months.

Properties left empty and are exempt or free from Council Tax

In most cases the following properties are free from council tax:

- properties left empty by people living permanently in hospital or homes; or by people receiving care elsewhere; or by people who are caring for someone else.
- properties left empty because of a repossession.
- properties left empty by students - provided it was their only or main home and is owned or rented by them.
- properties left empty and awaiting occupation by a Minister of Religion.
- properties left empty by prisoners - except for people who are in prison for not paying their council tax or a fine.
- empty properties that are self-contained and cannot be let separately because they are attached to another property.

Properties left empty and council tax has to be paid:

A dwelling which is vacant - unoccupied and substantially unfurnished - and which has been empty for longer than one month will not receive any council tax discount.

Properties which are unoccupied but furnished will not receive any council tax discount. However, if you have to have a 2nd home because of your job you may still be entitled to a 50% discount.

Properties that need or are undergoing major repair work or structural alterations can receive a 50% discount for up to 12 months.

Properties left empty for 2 years or more:

If you own a property that has been empty and unfurnished for a period of 2 years or more you will be charged an empty homes premium. This premium has been set at 50% and means that you will be required to pay 150% of the council tax that has been set for the band which your property falls into.

For more information about council tax reductions please go to the Councils website: www.hartlepool.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NORTH EAST REGION

The Environment Agency, together with partner organisations, maintains over 27,000 miles of flood defences, including structures, seawalls and flood banks, and many other assets such as pumping stations, locks and sluices. Flood defence money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences, together with the operation of a flood warning system.

The majority of the funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

However, where there are schemes which do not attract central funding these are financed by County and Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities and London Boroughs through Local Levies. The Local Levy is shared on the basis of Band D equivalent properties, between all contributing bodies within the Committee Area. The local levy for 2017/18 is £2.259 million (2016/17 £2.215 million). Hartlepool's share of the 2017/18 levy is £75,200 (2016/17 £73,994).

If you have any questions please contact customer services on 03708 506 506.

To report an incident telephone 0800 80 70 60 or a flood 0345 988 1188.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T PAY YOUR COUNCIL TAX BILL

If you don't pay your council tax instalment when it's due we will send you a Reminder Notice. If your account is not brought up to date, we will send you a Summons, which adds costs on to your account.

Once a Summons has been issued, we will apply to the Magistrates' Court for a Liability Order. The Order gives the Council the authority to recover the council tax you owe by taking money out of your wages or benefits, or by sending a Bailiff to your home to remove your goods.

If this action fails, as a last resort, we will apply to the Courts to have you made Bankrupt or we will ask the Magistrates to send you to prison.

Don't let this happen - contact the Revenues Section on 01429 284166 as soon as you have problems paying your council tax bill.

BENEFIT FRAUD IS BENEFIT THEFT

Everyone who commits benefit fraud is a benefit thief! Many people assume that benefit theft applies only to those who are working for 'cash in hand' whilst claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. This is not the case. All benefit theft is crime.

Benefit theft includes:

- not telling us that you are now living with a partner.
- not telling us that you are receiving other benefits.
- not telling us about any savings or not telling us the right amount.
- Claiming for children who have left home.
- not telling us that you have started work, or about any earnings.
- not telling us that you have inherited money.
- not telling us that you are going abroad, living abroad, or have changed address.

There are no exceptions. People who knowingly withhold information or deliberately fail to report a change in their circumstances are benefit thieves. It is not 'playing the game' – it is breaking the law!

DO YOU KNOW A BENEFIT CHEAT? REPORT IT NOW!

Telephone our 24 hour hotline in confidence – 01429 523157

If you have any questions about your council tax bill or the information contained in this leaflet, please contact us at:
Revenues & Benefits Section, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY
Tel: **01429 284277 (Revenues)** or **01429 284188 (Benefits)**
Email: revenues@hartlepool.gov.uk or benefits@hartlepool.gov.uk
www.hartlepool.gov.uk

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request.

Bengali

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে এবং অডিও ট্রেপ আকারেও অনুক্রমে পাওয়া যায়।

Cantonese

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Kurdish

ئەم بەلگەییە ھەرۆھە بە زمانەکانی کە، بە چاپی درشت و بە شریتی تەسجیل دەس دەکەوێت

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔