



SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

YOUR COUNCIL TAX EXPLAINED 2025/26

Leader's message

Over the past year, we have faced significant financial pressures due to past property investments, high interest rates, inadequate central government funding, and reduced reserves following the catch-up of four years' worth of inherited unaudited annual accounts.

At the same time and following statements made in the House of Commons, the Surrey County Council elections originally scheduled for 1 May 2025 have been postponed until 2026 to accelerate the local government reorganisation process and support devolution. The reorganisation is moving quickly, with an interim plan due to be submitted to government by 21 March 2025 for feedback, followed by the final proposal on 9 May 2025.

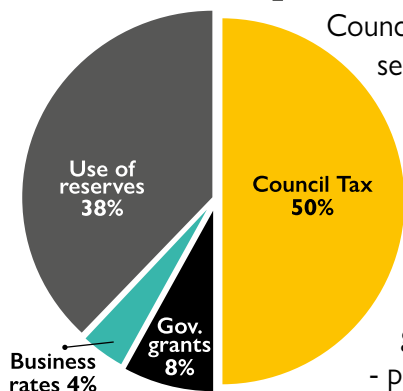
Despite these challenges, we remain focused on delivering value-for-money services and are committed to working collaboratively with our partners, neighbouring authorities, and residents.

Our commitment to "Delivering for You and a Fairer Society" drives everything we do. We prioritise supporting those in greatest need, building strong partnerships, promoting sustainable growth, and ensuring well managed development to benefit everyone in our borough. Additionally, we are dedicated to preserving our green spaces, maintaining clean and safe streets, and enhancing the quality of life across the borough.

Finally, as Council Tax can seem complicated, our 2025/26 leaflet explains how your contributions are used so please read on to learn how we're making Surrey Heath an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

Cllr Shaun Macdonald
Leader, Surrey Heath Borough Council

How is your council funded?



Council Tax plays a crucial role, funding the majority of services we provide to residents, alongside central government grants and retention of £0.9 million of the £36.3 million in business rates collected. Like many councils, Surrey Heath is facing significant financial pressures and is projected to deplete its specific earmarked usable reserves within the next two years, putting it at risk of asking for government assistance due to effective bankruptcy - primarily due to historic property investments.

We recognise the challenges residents continue to face from high interest rates and cost of living increases. Demand remains high for essential services like homelessness and vulnerable people support. Delivery of the local plan to control building development is also an expensive project to complete in 2025/26.

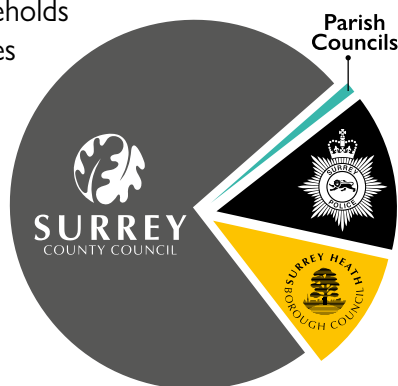
Despite these challenges, we remain committed to delivering high-quality frontline services while prioritising community needs and trying to mitigate the financial pressures ahead. Thank you for your continued support through your Council Tax contributions.

How Council Tax is shared out

We collect Council Tax from over 38,000 households within Surrey Heath on behalf of local authorities and the police in our area. Only 11% of your Council Tax stays with us, helping to fund a wide range of services to support our local communities.

We are doing all we can to reduce our costs by being more efficient in the way we work and making savings on our budget.

In 2025/26, the council will launch a major transformation programme to better align core income and expenditure, addressing the current £3 million gap. Additionally, this is separate from the property-related debt interest shortfall of £5 million.



How much is it increasing by?

Surrey Heath has increased its share of Council Tax by 2.99% in 2025/26 which works out to just £7.43 a year, or 14p a week, for an average Band D property.

Paying your Council Tax

The easiest way to pay your Council Tax is by Direct Debit. Payments are made monthly and you can choose to pay 10 or 12 instalments.

Set your payment up securely online at surreyheath.gov.uk/council-tax

Help for households struggling with Council Tax

If you're struggling to pay your Council Tax, please contact Surrey Heath Borough Council to explore the support available.

You can also visit surreyheath.gov.uk/EHF for details on our Council Tax Support scheme and the Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF). The EHF is designed to help cover the gap between Council Tax liability and Council Tax Support payments. If you receive Council Tax Support and still have a shortfall, you are eligible to apply for additional assistance through the fund.

Some of the services we provide

Surrey Heath Borough Council provides a broad range of vital services to our residents and local communities. Here are some examples of the services that your Council Tax helps to fund:



Waste and Recycling



Planning and Licensing



Housing



Sport and Leisure



Resident Support



Business Support

For more information on the services that we provide visit:

surreyheath.gov.uk/services



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Our vision for Surrey Heath

Delivering for You and a Fairer Society

Our vision is to secure improvements in the quality of life and opportunities for all of our residents and businesses, whilst ensuring sustainable council finances to deliver core services effectively. We believe our residents and businesses deserve nothing less.

Having listened to our residents, we will achieve our vision through the delivery of the following five priorities:



Protect Our Environment

We recognise that urgent action is needed to protect and sustain what we have for both current and future generations.



Deliver Effective Services with Sustainable Finances

We know that the delivery of easy to access, effective and responsive public services are what our residents expect and deserve, so we will accelerate our improvements.



Promote Healthier & More Inclusive Communities

We believe in a community where everyone can be themselves, and be valued for who they are, with the opportunity to build a good life and achieve their full potential.



Campaign for Residents

We will give residents a greater voice in shaping the council's activities and decision making. We will stand up for what is most important for local residents.



Support a Strong Economy and Create More Homes

We recognise the essential role of local business in driving our economy and creating jobs. We want to be seen as a great place to live, build, invest and grow a business.

Contact us



For further details about the information in this leaflet scan this QR code or contact us directly.



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