



SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

YOUR COUNCIL TAX EXPLAINED 2026/27

Leader's message

As we move into 2026/27, the council continues to deliver essential services and facility improvements for Surrey Heath residents as cost efficiently as possible. We are also preparing for change following the Government's decision to create West Surrey Council, replacing the current two-tier local government system.

While this council supported a different structure which we felt better reflected our local identity, we are positively engaging throughout the transition to ensure the new arrangements best support local decision-making, protect community interests, and maintain the high-quality services our residents expect and deserve.

With elections taking place in May 2026, West Surrey Council will start assuming its full powers and responsibilities in April 2027. Throughout this transition period, our priority remains ensuring stability, continuity, and clear communication with our communities.

Residents should continue to seek support when needed from ourselves and Surrey County Council in the usual way throughout the year ahead. We are here for you.

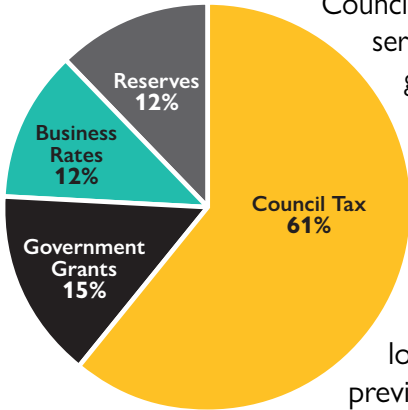
We also have important improvement projects to complete this year including multiple playground refurbishments, exciting new leisure facilities, and key infrastructure upgrades in Camberley town centre, Lightwater Country Park and Frimley Lodge Park.

We will continue to work closely with partners in our community to help make Surrey Heath a safe, welcoming, green and fair place for all to live, work, play and learn.

Cllr Shaun Macdonald
Leader, Surrey Heath Borough Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Shaun Macdonald'.

How is your council funded?



Council Tax plays a vital role in funding most of the services we provide for residents, alongside central government grants and our retained share of locally collected business rates. In 2026/27, Surrey Heath will retain £1.5 million, equivalent to just 2.8% of business rates collected locally.

Like many councils across the country, Surrey Heath faces ongoing financial pressures. The council's current financial position reflects long-term debt and associated interest from previous asset transactions.

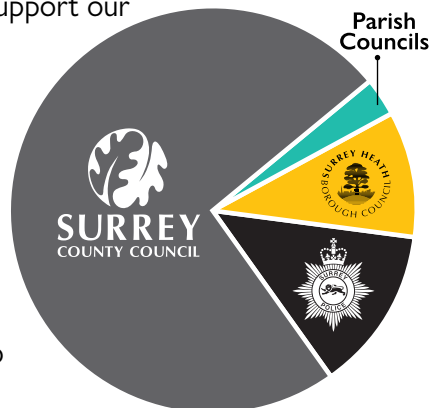
In response, we have taken decisive action to strengthen our finances and protect essential services. Our transformation programme has identified nearly £3 million in savings, which represents 19% of the direct cost of our services.

These savings have been achieved through improved efficiency, tighter financial controls, and maximising income from core services and assets. These actions delayed the need for additional government support, particularly following funding formula changes that consider deprivation and affluence. The council is still projected to face an annual deficit of around £8 million.

How Council Tax is shared out

We collect Council Tax from more than 38,000 households in Surrey Heath on behalf of local authorities and the police. Only 10% of the Council Tax you pay stays with us to help fund local services which support our communities.

We continue to do all we can to reduce costs and work more efficiently. In 2026/27, we are also preparing for Local Government Reorganisation, which will see Surrey Heath merge into the new West Surrey Council. While this aims to deliver long-term efficiencies, the transition creates additional short-term costs and complexity, adding further pressure to an already challenging financial position.



How much is it increasing by?

Surrey Heath has increased its share of Council Tax by 2.99% in 2026/27 which works out to just £7.65 a year, or 15p 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



Sport and Leisure



Planning and Licensing



Resident Support



Housing



Business Support

For more information on the services that we provide visit:

surreyheath.gov.uk/services



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New West Surrey Council

From April 2027, the current county council and 11 district and borough councils will be replaced by two new unitary councils, **East Surrey** and **West Surrey**, delivering all local government services. These will include roads, waste collection, planning, libraries, schools, parks and playgrounds, as well as vital frontline services such as adult social care and children's social care, including safeguarding, support for vulnerable adults and children, SEND services, fostering and adoption, and care for older people and adults with disabilities.

What this means for Surrey Heath

Surrey Heath will be part of the new West Surrey Council, replacing the current geographic areas of Surrey Heath, Guildford, Waverley, Runnymede, Spelthorne and Woking councils.

The change aims to simplify local government, reduce duplication and lead to more joined up services.

Existing councils will continue to provide these services during a transition period, with shadow arrangements beginning in 2026.

What happens next?

Work is underway to prepare for this transition, and make sure that there is no interruption in the services you receive during this process.

Elections for the new unitary councils are due to take place in May 2026, with the new councils officially taking over on 1 April 2027.

Find out more about the elections at surreyheath.gov.uk/voting

To stay informed about the changes to local councils, visit the **Surrey LGR Info Hub** website at surreylgrhub.gov.uk

Contact us

For further details about the information in this leaflet contact us at:

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