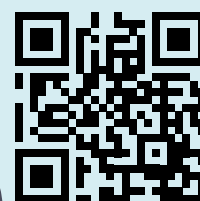




Council Tax

2024/25

www.bexley.gov.uk



The best way to report, apply, and pay for services is on our website.

Search our website for all our services including Housing, Waste Services, School Admissions and Blue badges.

To make an appointment, please visit the service page on the website.

Council Tax or Housing Benefit

Call **0345 302 2317**

Cost of living help and advice

www.bexley.gov.uk/cost-of-living

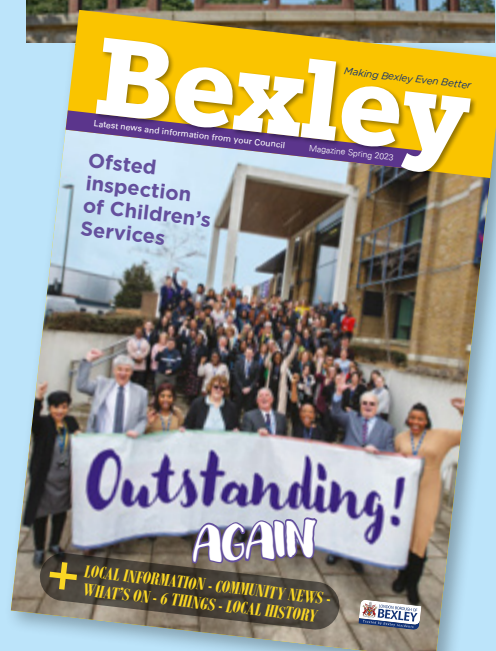
Safeguarding

If you have concerns about the safety of a child call **020 3045 5440**

If you have concerns about the safety of an adult call **020 3045 5159**

Out of Hours

If you need urgent assistance and your emergency cannot wait until normal office hours call **020 8303 7171**. Please note this number is for emergencies only.



Message from the Leader of the Council

The tough financial challenges currently affecting councils right across the country have been widely reported. But here in Bexley we remain fully committed to supporting the aspirations of our residents, through our agreed strategy, 'Making Bexley Even Better: Our Bexley Plan 2022/26'.

Every day, Council staff deliver vital services to more than 250,000 people who live in the Borough. These include the social care services that account for the majority of our spending.

Our investment has brought many projects to fruition over the past year, including the new Nest library in Thamesmead, Lime Grove School in Erith and the new Crayford Material Recovery Facility, which has created local jobs and helps to reduce the Borough's carbon footprint.

In the year ahead we will continue to invest in our future infrastructure, while putting more money into frontline services, ensuring support is in place for the most vulnerable in society and maintaining our universal services.

We understand that many residents are under pressure due to the cost of living and as always, we will continue to work hard to ensure that we spend your money sensibly.

Our budget for the year ahead is balanced. We will be investing more than:

- ▶ **£373m** in day-to-day services in 2024/25, including:
 - **£55 million** to provide social care for around 5,500 children and young people, and education provision (excluding schools)
 - **£79 million** to support around 7,300 adults through social care

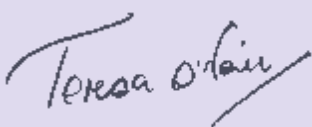
- ▶ **£266m (£95m in 2024/25)** over four years through the capital programme – including additional capital investment of:
 - **£62 million** of funding provided to BexleyCo for housing development
 - **£4 million** on roads (including more than 2,500 pot holes) and parks and open spaces
 - **£3 million** for equipment for vulnerable older people and people with disabilities

In total, the Council will be spending in revenue and capital an average of about £1m per day.

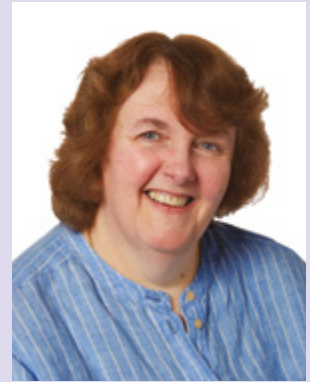
The Council is not the only organisation providing public services in the Borough that are partly funded from your Council Tax. This booklet sets out where the money to pay for Council and other local services comes from and how it is spent.

I hope you agree that Bexley continues to be a green and pleasant place to live. A place where we can be happy to call home, to bring up children and to stay as we grow old.

Whatever challenges we face, we will always aim to do the best for our Borough and the people who live here. We will continue to work hard to provide the best possible value for your money on the services you value, while also supporting those who need it most.



Councillor Baroness O'Neill of Bexley OBE
Leader of the Council



Council Tax for 2024/25

Bexley's Council Tax requirement will result in a Council Tax for band D property with two residents of £2,155.04 in 2024/25

A comparison of Bexley's and the Greater London Authority's Council Tax for 2024/25 with last year is shown in the table below

Taxing Authority	2023/24	2024/25	Change
London Borough of Bexley	£1,603.62	£1,683.64	4.99%
Greater London Authority	£434.14	£471.40	8.58%
Total Tax at Band D	£2,037.76	£2,155.04	5.76%

Valuation Band	Range of Values	2023/24	2024/25
A	Up to and including £40,000	£1,358.51	£1,436.69
B	£40,001 - £52,000	£1,584.92	£1,676.14
C	£52,001 - £68,000	£1,811.34	£1,915.59
D	£68,001 - £88,000	£2,037.76	£2,155.04
E	£88,001 - £120,000	£2,490.60	£2,633.94
F	£120,001 - £160,000	£2,943.43	£3,112.84
G	£160,001 - £320,000	£3,396.27	£3,591.73
H	More than £320,000	£4,075.52	£4,310.08

Bexley's Budget and Council Tax Requirement

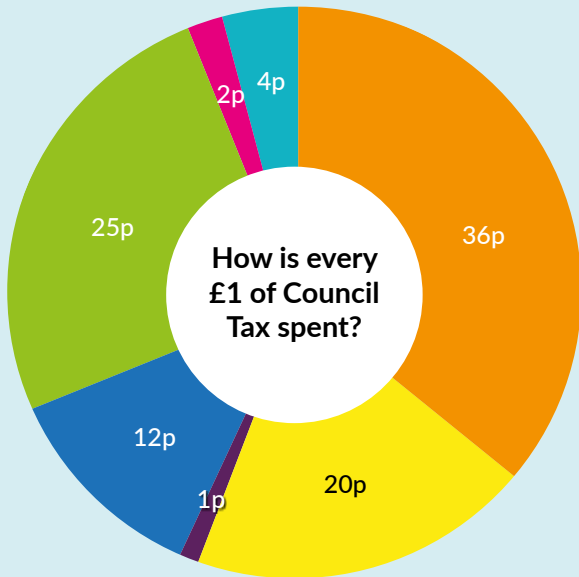
	2023/24			2024/25		
	Spending £m	Income £m	Net Spending £m	Spending £m	Income £m	Net Spending £m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	104.962	(41.966)	62.996	109.049	(38.164)	70.885
Chief Executive's Office	-	-	-	4.850	(0.113)	4.737
Children and Education	56.437	(13.444)	42.993	62.631	(13.822)	48.809
Finance and Corporate	103.362	(77.040)	26.322	95.030	(67.590)	27.440
Place	80.193	(36.777)	43.416	80.207	(38.201)	42.006
Schools DSG	88.158	(88.158)	-	105.717	(105.717)	-
Spending on Services	433.112	(257.385)	175.727	457.484	(263.607)	193.877
London-wide payments and levies			6.174			7.254
Net Financing Costs			9.712			12.462
Contingency Provision			3.700			2.700
Centrally Held			13.394			21.151
Net Spending to be Financed			208.707			237.444
Income from Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant			(48.536)			(53.152)
Other Core Grants			(28.057)			(34.511)
Use of Reserves, Balances and Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit			1.185			0.100
Contribution from Voluntary Minimum Revenue Provision			-			(8.469)
Amount to be met from the Council Tax			133.299			141.412
Taxbase			83,123.6			83,991.9
Bexley Council Tax			1,603.62			1,683.64



What we spend

The Council has a good track record for financial management and efficiency, making year-on-year savings to keep costs down and improve services.

Over the last 14 years we have saved £144m. In 2024/25, the Council is expecting to raise £141m from Council Tax income and here is how we expect to spend the money.



- Adult Social Care and Public Health
- Children and Education
- Chief Executive's Office
- Finance and Corporate
- Places, Communities and Infrastructure
- Levies
- Financing Costs and Contingency

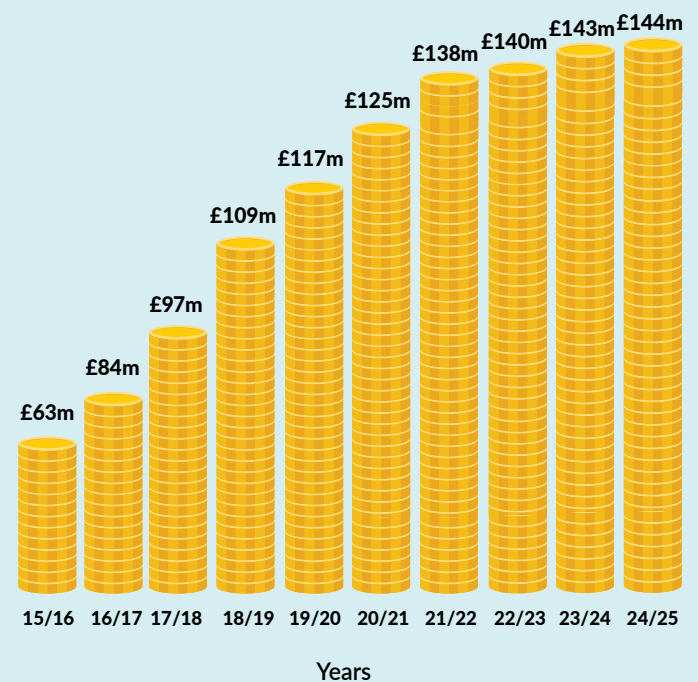


Changes since last year

	£m (rounded)
Net increase in Spending on Services	17.065
Demographic increases and Inflation	7.757
Increase in Net Financing Costs	2.750
Increase in contribution from voluntary Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	(8.469)
Decrease in Contingency	(1.000)
Income from Business Rates	(4.616)
Increase in Other Core Grants	(6.454)
Increase in London-wide payments and levies	1.080
Increase in Council Tax Revenue	8.113

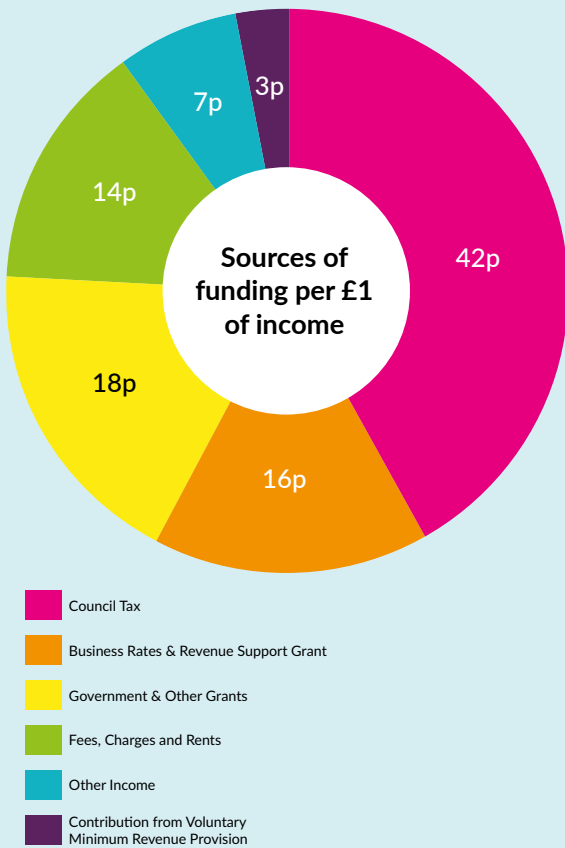
What we have saved

The Council has a good track record for financial management.



How is it paid for?

Council Tax is just one of the Council's sources of income.



Adult Social Care

Adult social care is one of the main services provided by the Council. Councils nationwide are facing substantial cost pressures in providing adult social care services. This is due to:

- increasing numbers of people requiring care
- the rising cost of providing care
- Government funding for councils remaining constrained



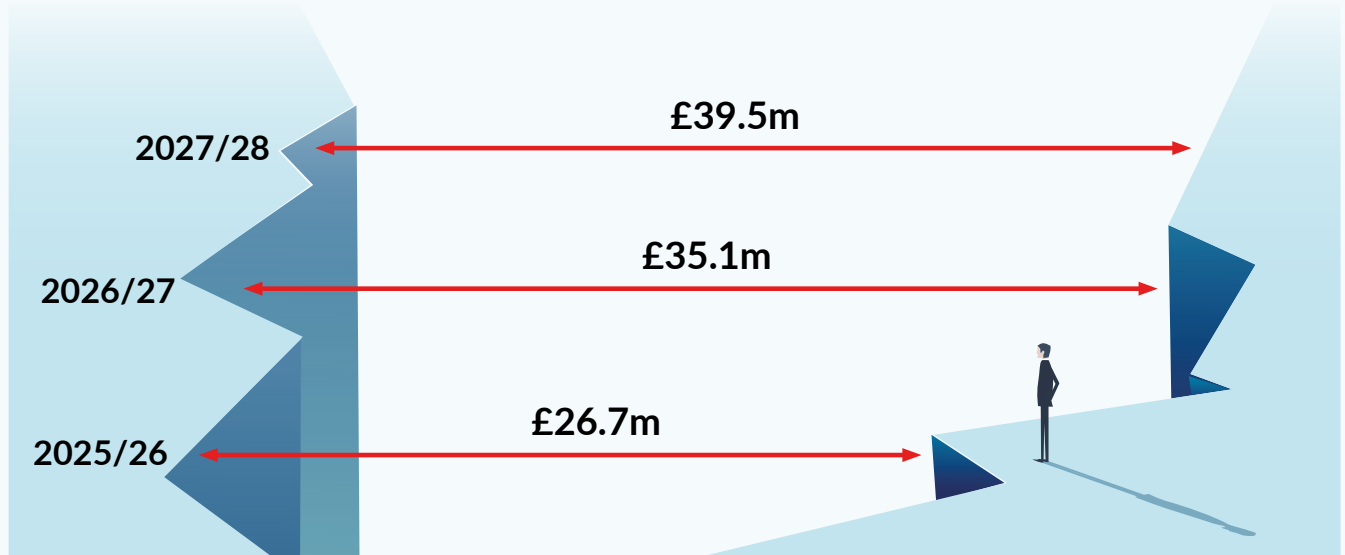
To help fund these pressures, the Government expects councils responsible for providing adult social care services to have an adult social care precept. The introduction of an adult social care precept was originally announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2015 and has continued each subsequent year. The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 allows local authorities with adult social care responsibilities to raise Council Tax above the referendum limit via an increase in the adult social care precept of 2%.

It should be noted that the precept just funds some of the pressures in adult social care. A large amount of all the council tax the Council receives is also used to fund adult social care. Further sources of funding which are used to help provide adult social care include business rates and Government grants.

The future budget gap

The Council has set a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year, however there are many challenges ahead. The forecasted budget gap is set to reach £39.498m by 2027/28 due to rising costs, pressures and demands on services and ongoing economic uncertainty. There continues to be increasing spending pressures in a number of key services, including both Children and Adult Social Care, Special Education Needs Transport, Emergency Accommodation and other demand led services such as Parking and Waste Services.

The uncertainty around the state of the economy over the next few years will also have an impact. The impact of energy prices, inflation and interest rates has a direct impact on the Council, the amount we pay for services and the income we are able to collect. Our challenge is to continue to provide good quality and affordable public services, while balancing our income and spending levels in the current challenging circumstances.



Environment Agency

The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

Environment Agency Southern Region

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 3540 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee		
	2023/2024 '000s	2024/2025 '000s
Gross Expenditure	£100,727	£106,443
Levies Raised	£1,594	£1,642
Total Council Tax Base	1,914	1,935

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 3.0%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £1,594,259 in 2023/2024 to £1,642,087 for 2024/2025.

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

Environment Agency Thames Region

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 5200 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee		
	2023/2024 '000s	2024/2025 '000s
Gross Expenditure	£140,213	£157,319
Levies Raised	£12,526	£12,776
Total Council Tax Base	5,297	5,365

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 1.99%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £12,526,341 in 2023/2024 to £12,775,615 for 2024/2025.

Help with your finances, bills and Council Tax

We know these are challenging and difficult times for many families and households and some face uncertainty and hardship. Help and advice is available and if you are experiencing difficulties or worried about your finances there are ways that the Council and organisations we work with can help.

If you are on a low income and having problems paying your Council Tax, you can apply for the Council Tax reduction scheme.

Anyone of working age is required to pay a minimum of the first 20% of their Council Tax bill, although pensioners will still be able to receive maximum support.

If you think you may qualify for help with paying your Council Tax then you can claim online at www.bexley.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

If you wish to spread your payments over 12 instalments instead of 10 please contact us as soon as you receive the new Council Tax bill.

If you wish to seek financial advice from an independent body there are a number of organisations who can provide advice such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Christians Against Poverty, New Community Debt Advice Service, Step Change Debt Charity and Shelter. Further details are available on the Council's website www.bexley.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-help



The credit union is a not for profit financial co-operative that is open to residents and fully supported by the Council. Members can make regular savings and take out small loans.

More information can be found at: www.gbcreditunion.com or by ringing 020 8855 4344

Introduction

The Mayor of London's budget for the 2024/25 financial year sets out his priorities, including supporting Londoners through the current cost-of-living crisis. The budget also supports job creation and London's business community, our city's future growth and economic success and the Mayor's work to continue building a safer, fairer and greener London for everyone.

This year's budget will provide resources to improve the key public services Londoners need and help address the cost-of-living crisis. This includes extending the Mayor's universal free school meals programme for all state primary school children for a further academic year until at least July 2025, freezing TfL pay as you go and other non-government regulated fares for the next twelve months and delivering more genuinely affordable homes. The budget also provides resources to support jobs and growth, fund skills and retraining programmes, help rough sleepers off the streets, invest in services for children and young people and make London a fairer and greener place to live. Moreover, it prioritises resources for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and London Fire Brigade (LFB) to keep Londoners safe, including violence reduction initiatives, support for victims of crime, funding to maintain frontline officer numbers, continued reform of the MPS and the delivery of projects to divert vulnerable young people away from gangs and violence.

In light of the conditions imposed as a result of government funding deals, it has been necessary to provide additional resources through local taxation income, including council tax, to maintain London's transport system and preserve and expand the bus network.

Council tax for GLA services

The GLA's share of the council tax for a typical Band D property has been increased by £37.26 (or 72p per week) to £471.40. The additional income from this increase in council tax will fund the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade, and will also go towards ensuring existing public transport services in London can be maintained, meeting requirements set by the government in funding agreements. Council taxpayers in the City of London, which has its own police force, will pay £166.27.

Band D Council Tax (£)	2023/24	Change	2024/25
MOPAC (Metropolitan Police)	292.13	13.00	305.13
LFC (London Fire Brigade)	62.48	4.26	66.74
GLA	22.44	0.00	22.44
Transport for London	57.09	20.00	77.09
Total	434.14	37.26	471.40



Investing in frontline services

This budget will enable the Mayor to fulfil his key priorities for London. These include:

- Freezing TfL fares (excluding central government regulated fares such as travelcards) in 2024 with off-peak fares being introduced on Fridays all day for an initial three month trial period between March and May 2024
- Working with London boroughs to maintain existing concessionary travel and assisted door to door transport schemes. This includes, for example, maintaining free bus and tram travel for under 18s as well as free off-peak travel across the network for older Londoners (supplemented by free travel before 9am on Fridays for those aged 60+ for an initial three month trial period from March to May 2024), the disabled, armed forces personnel in uniform and eligible armed services veterans and protecting the Taxicard and Dial-a-Ride schemes.
- Providing £140 million to continue to fund universal free school meals for London's estimated 287,000 state primary school children for a second academic year until at least July 2025. This will save families up to £1,000 over two years per child as the cost-of-living crisis continues to hit
- Ensuring the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has the resources it needs to tackle violent crime by investing an additional £151 million in 2024/25 in policing and crime prevention. This includes investing an extra £6.5 million in London's Violence Reduction Unit to divert young people away from gangs and crime. More generally an additional £189 million is being invested to deliver reform of the MPS, including through the New Met for London programme to increase trust and confidence amongst Londoners in their police service
- Funding 1,300 additional police officer posts and 500 extra Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) from locally raised council tax and business rates revenues. This budget will see MPS receiving a record £1.143 billion in funding from the GLA
- Tackling the underlying causes of crime through the rollout of funding to support disadvantaged young Londoners to access positive opportunities and constructive activities that allow them to make the most of their potential, as well as resources for new violence reduction initiatives
- Protecting vulnerable children and women at risk of abuse and domestic violence
- Providing resources to rollout a transformation programme so that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) can implement the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and other key improvements. The London Fire Commissioner, with the full support of the Mayor, is also committed to continuing to implement the deep-rooted reform needed to the culture and systems within the LFB
- Continuing the Hopper bus fare, which makes transport more affordable for millions of Londoners
- Delivering the Elizabeth line on its full timetable and route. The Elizabeth line has increased central London's rail capacity by ten per cent and is forecast to see upwards of 200 million passenger journeys per annum making it the busiest rail line in the UK. This follows on from the opening of Northern line extension to Nine Elms and Battersea Power Station in September 2021
- Continuing to tackle London's housing crisis, by investing £6.4 billion over the next five years to increase the number of Londoners who have a safe, decent and affordable home as well as allocating resources to tackle homelessness and reduce rough sleeping

- Tackling the climate emergency following the expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) London-wide to tackle air pollution, which has been supported by a £210 million vehicle scrappage scheme for small businesses and Londoners to help them switch to cleaner vehicles or retrofit their existing ones
- Investing in projects to enable more walking and cycling across London and
- Funding projects to bring Londoners together, promote arts, sports and culture, help tackle inequality and improve the environment.

Summary of the GLA Group budget

The following tables compare the GLA Group's planned spending for 2024/25 with last year and sets out why it has changed.

The GLA's planned gross expenditure is higher this year. This reflects the additional resources the Mayor is investing in policing, the fire brigade and transport services. Overall, the council tax requirement has increased because of the extra resources for the MPS and the LFB and to secure funding to maintain existing transport services including buses and the tube network. There has been a 1.4 per cent increase in London's residential property taxbase. Find out more about our budget at: www.london.gov.uk/budget.

How the GLA's budget is funded (£ million)	2024/25
Gross expenditure	17,480.4
Government grants and retained business rates	(7,433.2)
Fares, charges and other income	(8,130.3)
Change in reserves	(426.6)
Amount met by council taxpayers (£m)	1,490.3

Changes in spending (£ million)	2024/25
2023/24 council tax requirement	1,353.1
Net change in service expenditure and income	485.3
Change in use of reserves	43.7
Government grants and retained business rates	(272.3)
Other changes	(119.5)
Amount met by council taxpayers (£m)	1,490.3



If you would like the information in this document in a different format, please call 020 8303 7777 and ask for Communications/Graphics. The reference to quote is: 600615/4.24