

How is your money spent? Your council tax explained

2013 – 2014

**0% increase for
Hillingdon residents**

**5th
year
running**



HILLINGDON
LONDON

www.hillingdon.gov.uk



Introduction from the Leader of the Council

Dear resident,

We have committed to freezing council tax for the next two years, as part of our promise to put residents first. This will mean we will have frozen council tax for a total of six years for all our residents. For the over 65s, we will have frozen it for eight years.

Alongside this, thanks to our strong financial management and good planning, we have also been able to continue to freeze all fees and charges for our residents for a further year, including parking, library service charges, TeleCareLine, home care charges, early years centre nursery fees and fees and charges for using our leisure centres and arts venues.

We will also continue to invest in improvements across the borough, including an extra £2.5m for road and pavement maintenance. The funding to complete the library rebuild and refurbishment programme has also been set aside.

We will continue to support our older residents, with our free burglar alarm scheme, brown badge parking scheme, winter heater loans and free swimming. This year we will also introduce free pest control for the over 65s.

Hillingdon currently has the largest school building programme in London, and we will continue to improve and extend our schools to cope with the rising demand for places. Every child in Hillingdon will have a school place to go to, close to their home, across the whole borough. We are investing nearly £150m on our school building programme – the biggest investment in London.

Weekly waste and recycling collections will continue as we know this is important to you, and we will not move from our current one bag service to wheelie bins.

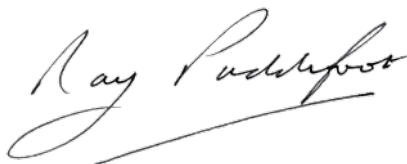
Last year we increased the amount we give to the voluntary sector to help communities, bucking the national trend of reducing funding to voluntary groups, and this year we will be giving more than £1.6m to these groups who support some of our most vulnerable residents.

The fight against the proposed high speed rail link through the borough continues, and we will work with our residents to oppose these plans. We are also ready to oppose any future plans for development at Heathrow Airport that would affect our residents and our environment.

Investing in our environment remains a priority, and our Chrysalis improvement programme will continue to give out grants to community projects that will enhance the area. Our work to improve the facilities at Ruislip Lido is also due to be completed this year, giving all residents access to a fantastic open space within the borough.

Extra spending is possible because we are running the council more efficiently, meaning you get better services and we can continue to invest despite government cuts in funding. We will continue to make efficiencies; we are always looking to run our services in the best, most cost-effective way. We have saved £17.7m over the last year, and are aiming to make £17.1m of savings in the coming year.

We will continue to focus on our key priorities – our people, our environment, our heritage and our finances, and we will work to ensure residents' wishes are at the centre of our plans for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ray Puddifoot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Cllr Ray Puddifoot
Leader of the Council

Your council tax

This booklet contains information about your council tax for the year beginning on 1 April 2013. It tells you how much you will pay, how the money will be used and how much goes to other organisations such as the Greater London Authority (GLA), which is headed by the Mayor of London.

Every house in the country receives a council tax bill. Whether you live in a house or a flat, own your own house or rent, everyone has to pay council tax which helps to pay for the nearly 800 services that Hillingdon Council delivers for local people – everything from schools, leisure centres, youth centres, children’s centres and libraries to our waste and recycling, parks, keeping you safe, services for the elderly and housing.

Once again, by putting our residents first we are working hard to keep your council tax as low as possible and for the fifth year running, we have once again frozen council tax in Hillingdon. This table shows the amount you will pay for Hillingdon Council’s services and how much you will pay to the GLA, which includes the police and fire service.

<i>Property band</i>	<i>£ Hillingdon</i>	<i>£ GLA</i>	<i>£ Total council tax payable</i>	<i>£ Range of values</i>
A	741.95	202.00	943.95	up to 40,000
B	865.61	235.67	1,101.28	40,000 to 52,000
C	989.27	269.33	1,258.60	52,000 to 68,000
D	1,112.93	303.00	1,415.93	68,000 to 88,000
E	1,360.25	370.33	1,730.58	88,000 to 120,000
F	1,607.57	437.67	2,045.24	120,000 to 160,000
G	1,854.88	505.00	2,359.88	160,000 to 320,000
H	2,225.86	606.00	2,831.86	more than 320,000


Valuation of properties and valuation banding appeals

All homes, including houses, flats, mobile homes and house boats must pay council tax. Every property is placed in a valuation band for England by the Listing Officer at the Valuation Office Agency (for HM Revenue and Customs).

Your council tax bill shows which band your property is in based on the expected sale price as at 1 April 1991. If you have a query about the banding of your property or wish to appeal against it, please contact:

 **The Listing Officer**
Council Tax South
Valuation Office Agency
Second Floor
1 Francis Grove
Wimbledon
London
SW19 4DT

 VOA Centralised Switchboard: 03000 501 501

 ctsouth@voa.gsi.gov.uk

Council tax appeals

You can appeal against your council tax if you think:

- you are not the resident or owner.
- your property is exempt.
- there has been a mistake in calculating your bill.

If you want to appeal, you must tell us in writing, giving the reasons why you are appealing.

You must continue to pay your council tax while your appeal is being dealt with. We will refund any money that you have overpaid if your appeal is successful.

Discounts for the over 65s

The London Borough of Hillingdon offers all of our residents over 65 years of age a council tax discount, if:

- you are living in a property in the London Borough of Hillingdon and responsible for paying the council tax.
- you do not receive a council tax reduction.

If you think you may be entitled to the over 65s discount and it is not already shown on your bill please contact us on 0300 123 1384.

Are you entitled to a reduction?

Discounts

In some cases, you may be entitled to a reduction. If you are the only adult living in a property, you may be entitled to a 25 per cent discount. We work out your council tax based on at least two adults living at the property. However, some people are not counted for council tax purposes, which may entitle you to a reduction even if you do not live alone. These are:

- full time students, student nurses, apprentices (earning less than £195 a week) and youth training trainees.
- 18 and 19 year olds who are in, or who have just left, a course of education for the period 1 May to 31 October.
- patients in hospital and people looked after in a care home.
- people who are severely mentally impaired.
- those staying in certain hostels or night shelters.
- care workers on low pay working for charities.
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18 years of age.
- members of visiting armed forces and certain international institutions.
- members of religious communities (monks and nuns).
- people in prison (unless sentenced for non-payment of council tax or a fine).

Discounts for empty homes

From 1 April 2013 the government has abolished exemptions for empty and substantially unfurnished properties (previously Class C exemption) and also the Class A exemption for buildings that were empty undergoing major repair work or being structurally altered.

From 1 April 2013 the council has replaced the exemptions with discounts. Prescribed Class C discount at the rate of 100 per cent will be applied to property that is empty and substantially unfurnished, including newly built property for up to six months. The discount is reduced to 0 per cent after six months. Thereafter the full council tax will be payable on the property.

Prescribed Class D discount at the rate of 100 per cent will be applied to property that is undergoing major repair work or is being structurally altered for up to a maximum of 12 months. Thereafter the full council tax will be payable on such property.

Second homes and furnished properties which are not used as your sole or main residence will attract a 25 per cent discount.

The council will only award such reductions for empty properties after the position has been verified by an inspection and such discounts will not be granted retrospectively. It is important therefore to advise the council as soon as your property has become empty.

Exemptions

The following properties are exempt from council tax:

- previously occupied and owned by a charity (exempt for up to six months).
- was last occupied by someone who has gone into prison (unless sentenced for non-payment of council tax or a fine).
- was last occupied by someone who has gone into hospital or a nursing home to receive personal care.
- where probate or letters of administration are awaited (exempt for up to six months after either have been granted).
- where occupation is prohibited by law.
- is waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion.
- where the previous occupier has moved elsewhere (other than hospital or care home) to receive or provide personal care through old age, disability, illness or mental disorder past or present, or through alcohol or drug dependence.

- is owned by a full time student and was their last sole or main residence.
- has been repossessed.
- where the liable person is acting as a trustee in bankruptcy.

Exemptions also apply to:

- student halls of residence, forces' barracks and married quarters, a caravan pitch or mooring not in use and an unoccupied annexe which is part of a single dwelling.
- property where the liable person is a member of (or has a relevant association with) visiting armed forces, or is a visiting non-UK citizen entitled to diplomatic privileges or immunities.
- property where all residents are full time students or is occupied by person(s) under 18, or those severely mentally impaired.
- an annexe of an occupied dwelling which is occupied by a dependent relative.

Certain conditions may apply to discounts or exemptions. Please contact the council tax office for further details.

If your council tax bill shows a discount, the council has made the assumption that you are entitled to the discount for the period covered by the bill. If this assumption is no longer correct as your circumstances have changed, or you know that they will change during the period covered by your bill, please let us know. You are required to let the council know in writing within 21 days of realising that you are no longer entitled to a discount. A failure to do this without a reasonable excuse could lead to a £70 penalty.

If you are unsure whether your change of circumstances will affect any entitlement to discount, please contact us for advice.

People on a low income

The way the council provides council tax support for people on low income is changing from 1 April 2013. Full details of the new council tax reduction scheme and the main changes can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

If you are on a low income you can apply for council tax reduction for a discount on the amount you have to pay. If you qualify for reduction it is your right to receive it. The level of reduction will depend on the size of your family, your savings, your income and the amount of council tax.

The maximum that you can receive is 80 per cent of your council tax. If you are receiving Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, or Employment Support allowance you will have to pay 20 per cent of the council tax due. This could be more if you have non-dependant adults living with you. More details of the council's local council tax reduction scheme can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

Couples

If you are married or living with someone as husband, wife or same sex partner you will normally be jointly responsible for the council tax bill. Only make one claim for council tax reduction, which will be assessed on your joint income.

Capital limit

If you or your partner has savings of more than £16,000 you will not be entitled to council tax reduction. For couples the £16,000 applies for each claim not for each person. However, if you are receiving the guarantee part of the pension credit there is no savings limit.

Non-dependents deduction

Your council tax support will be reduced if you have someone other than your partner or dependent children living in your household. The amount will depend on the person's gross weekly income. You can find out how much council tax reduction you may be entitled to by using the council tax reduction calculator at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

People with disabilities

You may be entitled to a reduction in your council tax bill if your home has certain features which are essential (or of major importance) to the wellbeing of a disabled person who lives there. These are:

- a room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) used mainly by a disabled person (for example for storing dialysis equipment or a ground floor bedroom in a property with two or more floors).
- an additional kitchen or a bathroom (with bath and/or shower, not just a toilet and wash basin) for use by the disabled person.
- extra space inside the property to allow for the use of a wheelchair.

If you are eligible, your bill will be reduced to that of a property in the valuation band immediately below the actual band of your property.

How to pay

Council tax is usually paid in 10 instalments from April to January however under new rules you can apply to pay in 12 instalments. If you wish to do so for 2013-14 your request must be received in writing by 1 April 2013. Where requests are received after 1 April 2013, council tax will be payable in the number of months remaining up to and including March 2014. Details of the different payment methods and contact information are at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

What do I get for my money?

The council delivers nearly 800 different services which directly benefit local residents and the borough of Hillingdon. These services are funded through a combination of grants from central government, a share of local business rates and your council tax. The amount to be raised from council tax is known as the council tax requirement.

This year's council tax

For the fifth successive year (the seventh for those over aged 65) Hillingdon's element of council tax will not increase and the Greater London Authority's element of council tax will decrease by 1 per cent.

Impact of localising support for council tax

From 1 April 2013 council tax benefit will be replaced by a local council tax reduction scheme, due to differences in accounting for the two schemes changes have been made reducing the council tax requirement. This is presentational and has no impact on the charge payable by residents.

Amount to be raised by council tax	2012/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000
Gross expenditure on services	697,320*	675,777
Gross income (business rates, central government funding)	-586,586*	-579,298
London-wide charges and other levies	822*	842
Hillingdon's council tax requirement	111,556	97,321
Greater London Authority	30,744	26,496
Total council tax requirement	142,300	123,817
Band D equivalent properties	100,236	87,446
Charge for Band D properties	1,419.65	1,415.93

(*2012/13 figures have been restated to enable direct comparison with 2013/14 figures)

Change in the cost of services for the year

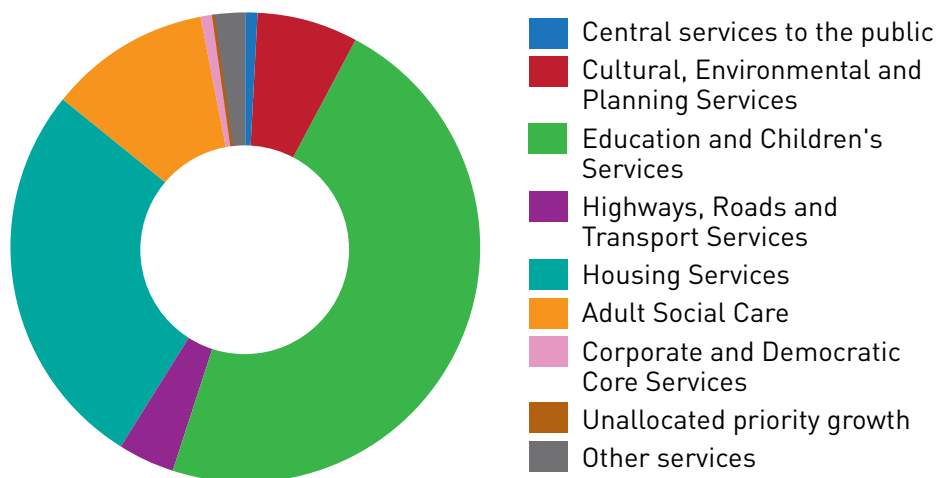
Hillingdon's budget for 2013/14 includes £17.1m savings and efficiencies, which allows council tax to be held at 2009/10 levels (2007/08 for those over 65) despite significant reductions in central government funding over the same period. The development of the 2013/14 budget from the 2012/13 budget is detailed in the table below:

Development of 2013/14 budget from the 2012/13 budget

Council tax requirement 2012/13	111,556
Decrease in central government funding	10,111
Transfer of funding for council tax support	-15,605
Inflationary cost increases	2,926
Increase in contingency	6,657
Savings and efficiencies	-17,111
Increase in priority growth	930
Changes in contributions from balances and corporate adjustments	-2,143
Council tax requirement 2013/14	97,321

	2012/13*	2013/14	
Hillingdon's gross expenditure	£'000	£'000	%
Central services to the public	30,712	8,452	1%
Cultural, Environmental and Planning Services	49,256	48,539	7%
Education and Children's Services	313,415	314,326	47%
Highways, Roads and Transport Services	26,721	27,451	4%
Housing Services	172,912	180,094	27%
Adult Social Care	80,799	76,600	11%
Corporate and Democratic Core Services	6,374	6,364	1%
Unallocated priority growth	2,504	1,800	0%
Other services	12,501	12,151	2%
Contribution to balances	2,126	0	0%
Total gross expenditure on services	697,320	675,777	100%

(*2012/13 figures have been restated to enable direct comparison with 2013/14 figures)



Further information about the council's budget and services can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk.

Introduction

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, is committed to leading a transparent administration. This guide explains how your council tax pays for GLA services. His fifth budget continues to deliver on his promise to reduce council tax and invest in London's infrastructure. For the second year running the Mayor is cutting his part of the council tax. This means it has fallen 20 per cent in real terms since 2008.

In the current economic climate the public sector must do more with less. This year's budget requires some tough but necessary choices, including proposals to rationalise the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade estates. The proposals for the police will result in equivalent or better public access. Those for the Fire Brigade will actually increase the number of boroughs that will fall within its target for response times - these are already amongst the best in the UK.

Council tax and budget information

The GLA group's share of the council tax for a typical band D property has been reduced to £303.00. Residents of the City of London - which has its own police force - will pay £86.08. The table below shows how the council tax (at band D) is allocated.

<i>Council Tax (£)</i>	<i>2012-13</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>2013-14</i>
MOPAC (Met Police)	228.10	-11.18	216.92
LFEPa (Fire Brigade)	39.54	10.33	49.87
GLA and Olympics	37.11	-3.23	33.88
TfL (Transport)	1.97	0.36	2.33
Total (£)	306.72	-3.72	303.00

Investing in frontline services

The Mayor has put value for money at the very heart of his administration and has controlled costs tightly as well as ruthlessly cutting out waste. His budget will protect vital front line services by:

- investing in frontline policing by maintaining officer numbers at or around 32,000;
- maintaining existing targets for how quickly fire engines attend incidents;
- investing £22 billion to upgrade the Tube and deliver Crossrail, improving cycling safety, upgrading London's road network and delivering up to 600 New Buses for London;
- maintaining existing concessionary travel schemes in full, including free 24 hour travel for the over 60s, the disabled and eligible war veterans;
- investing £231million to support London's local places and promote economic growth;
- ensuring a long term legacy from the 2012 Olympics and transforming the Olympic Park; and
- delivering 55,000 affordable homes and creating 200,000 jobs over the course of his Mayoral term.

Summary of GLA budget

The following tables compare the GLA group's spending for 2013-14 with last year and the reasons for the changes. The change in gross expenditure reflects the impact of the phasing of transport investment and savings within the GLA group. Overall the council tax requirement has fallen by £156 million. This is due to the impact of council tax benefit changes and the effect of the band D precept reduction of £3.72. Find out more about the budget on our website: www.london.gov.uk (tel: 020 7983 4000).

<i>How the GLA budget is funded (£m)</i>	<i>2012-13</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>2013-14</i>
Gross expenditure	11,039	204	11,243
Government grants and business rates	-5,039	-69	-5,108
Fares, charges and other income	-4,931	-362	-5,293
Use of reserves	-124	71	-53
Surplus in council tax collection funds	-10	0	-10
Amount met by council taxpayers	935	-156	779

<i>Changes in Spending (£m)</i>	<i>2013-14</i>
2012-13 council tax requirement	935
Inflation	81
Efficiencies and other savings	-421
New investment to improve services	377
Other changes (including income growth)	-193
2013-14 council tax requirement	779

Environment Agency South East Region

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.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 5,200kms 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 the management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

	2012/13 £m	2013/2014 £m
Gross expenditure	84,682	74,688
Levies raised	10,000	10,500
Total council tax base	5,127	4,472

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 'matching' funding the Agency may seek funding from County and Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities and London Boroughs in the form of a Local Levy. The Local Levy is shared on the basis of Band D equivalents between all contributing bodies within the Committee Area.

Changes in the Gross Budgeted expenditure between the years reflects the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of capital projects. The total Local Levy raised has increased by 5 per cent.

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £10,000,000 in 2012/13 to £10,500,000 for 2013/14.

Lee Valley Regional Park is a unique leisure, sports and environmental destination for all residents of London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The 26 mile long, 10,000 acre park, much of it is formerly derelict land, is partly funded by a levy on the council tax. This year there has been no increase in this levy. Find out more about hundreds of great days out, world class sports venues and award winning parklands at: www.leevalleypark.org.uk

<i>Budget/Levy Changes - 2012/2013 to 2013/14 (£'000)</i>	<i>2012/13 £m</i>	<i>2013/14 £m</i>
Gross operating expenditure	19.5	20.6
Gross operating income	(10.0)	(11.5)
Net service operating costs	9.5	9.1
Financing cost		
– debt servicing/repayments	0.6	0.6
– new capital investment	1.6	1.8
Total net expenditure	11.7	11.5

Further details on how this budget is spent and the amount each council contributes can be found at www.leevalleypark.org.uk

London Pensions Fund Authority

The London Pensions Fund Authority (LPFA) raises a levy each year to meet expenditure on premature retirement compensation and outstanding personnel matters for which LPFA is now responsible and cannot charge to the pension fund. These payments relate to former employees of the Greater London Council (GLC), the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and the London Residuary Body (LRB).

For 2013-14, the income to be raised by levies is set out below. The Greater London levy is payable in all boroughs, the Inner London levy only in Inner London Boroughs (including the City of London). The figures show the total to be raised and, in brackets, the percentage change on the previous year.

	<i>£m</i>	<i>Change</i>
Inner London	13.065	(0%)
Greater London	10.318	(0%)
Total	23.383	(0%)

Putting our residents first – 24 hours a day

As part of our commitment to improve services to our residents, the council is continuing to add new services online.


You can already renew library books, report potholes, manage your *HillingdonFirst* card and ask for more recycling bags online, and more services are being added all the time.


Registering for these services is simple. Visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk, click the 'do it online' tab at the top of the page and follow the instructions. Once you have registered, you will be able to log-in 24-hours a day.

By reporting it online you will also be able to track the progress of your request.

You can now access many council services online 24 hours a day. However, if you need to speak to someone, below is a list of council services


Useful numbers


 London Borough of Hillingdon
Council Tax
PO Box 1091
Nelson
BB9 4EU


 0300 123 1384

 counciltax@hillingdon.gov.uk


Council Tax Reduction enquiries

 0300 123 1384


 The Benefit Office
PO Box 458
Uxbridge
UB8 1BR

 01895 556666


Housing Services – including
benefits and needs

 01895 556666


Environment and anti-social
behaviour

 01895 556000


Anti-social behaviour

 0800 694 0240


Hillingdon Social Care Direct

 01895 556633


Racial Harassment

 0800 694 0240 or
01895 556000


School Admissions

 01895 556644


Planning

 01895 250230


Registrars and Electoral Services

 01895 558250


Hillingdon *First* Card

 01895 558250


Fraud hotline

 0800 389 8313 (24 hours)

Council main switchboard

 01895 250111

Out of hours service

 01895 250111

Tackling fraud

Hillingdon Council is committed to tackling council tax fraud and will investigate all cases. Every time someone commits fraud, it adds to the costs that we all have to pay. You can help us to detect fraud by telling us if you suspect someone is committing fraud.

If you have information about possible council tax fraud, please contact the council's Fraud Hotline 0800 389 8313.

Putting our residents first



Our people

We will continue to support our residents in all that we do, helping you reach your full potential and recognising those who make outstanding achievements.

Our built environment

We are continuing to invest in new libraries and schools, and wherever possible we are incorporating affordable homes for local first-time buyers into these projects.



Our natural environment

Our parks and green spaces are among the best in London, and we will continue to invest in these, with work to improve Ruislip Lido due to be finished this summer.

Our financial management

Through strong financial management we are able to maintain our front line services, and invest in the areas you tell us need work, including road maintenance.

