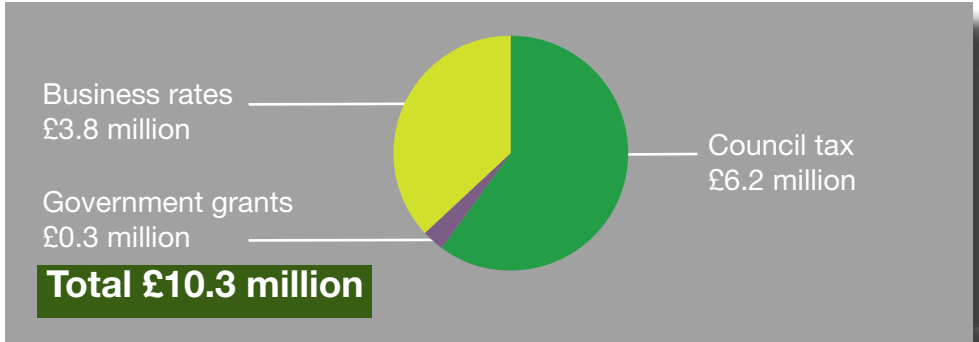


Where the money comes from



Council tax

For every £1 in council tax you pay we receive **12p**, Hertfordshire County Council receives **77p**, and the Police and Crime Commissioner receives **11p**.

Business rates

We also get a share of the money we collect from business rates.



Where the money goes

100%
Band D
£1,904.20



As part of the budget process this year we had to identify £1.594 million in savings for 2021/22 due to government grant reductions and the ongoing financial impact of COVID.



£1.7m

Community services



£5.4m

Cultural and leisure services



£1.3m

Housing (excluding Housing Revenue Account)



£3.1m

Planning and regeneration



£2.1m

Refuse and recycling



-£0.6m

Transport and parking



£0.8m

Housing Benefits



-£4.9m

Commercial properties and garages



£3m

Environmental services



-£1.3m

Other

Budget requirements **£10.6m**

How our budget has changed from last year

Our (net) budget for 2021/2022 is £10,635,570.

	£	£
Budget 2020/21		10,220,060
Inflation	408,270	
Changes in spending		
Growth in services	166,970	
Service pressures	656,540	
Other changes	777,610	
Increased income generation	-202,700	
Financial Security Savings	-1,391,180	
Net Increase		415,510
Net budget requirement 2021/22		10,635,570

What is council tax?

There are more than 87,000 people living in Stevenage and we also provide services for people who work in and visit the town.

The council tax paid to **Stevenage Borough Council** helps to pay for **refuse collections, recycling, street cleaning, leisure centres, parks and playgrounds, Stevenage Museum** and many other services provided by Stevenage Borough Council.

The council tax paid to Hertfordshire County Council helps to pay for road maintenance, street lighting, education, social services and libraries that are provided by Hertfordshire County Council.

The council tax paid to Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire helps pay for the policing service in Hertfordshire.

There is one bill for every home, whether it's a house, bungalow, flat or mobile home - owned or rented.

Council tax 2021/2022

The amount per head is calculated using information supplied by the Government's Office for National Statistics.

Details of the make-up of your council tax	2020/2021		2021/2022	
	Total amount £	Total per head £	Total amount £	Total per head £
Stevenage Borough Council's budget requirements	9,871,030	99.33	10,309,503	117.42
Paid for by:				
Government Grants (COVID)	0	0	258,902	2.95
Non- Domestic Rates including section 31 grant	3,815,544	30.36	3,159,008	35.98
Collection fund adjustments	66,885	0.76	774,439	8.82
Stevenage Borough Council council tax requirement	5,988,601	68.21	6,117,154	69.67

This table shows what is included in the council tax for a band D property.

Details of the make-up of your council tax	2020/2021		2021/2022	
	Total amount £	Band D council tax £	Total amount £	Band D council tax £
Stevenage Borough Council's net requirement	5,988,601	215.57	6,117,154	220.57
Hertfordshire County Council's net requirement	35,870,718	1,291.21	36,590,866	1,319.36
Hertfordshire County Council's Social Care Precept	3,416,748	122.99	4,195,292	151.27
Hertfordshire County Council's Total	39,287,466	1,414.20	40,786,158	1,470.63
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner net requirement	5,500,579	198.00	5,907,299	213.00
Total	50,776,645	1,827.77	52,810,612	1,904.20

How much do you have to pay?

The amount you pay depends on the valuation band your home is in. The Valuation office Agency, part of HM Revenues and Customs, carries out all valuations. Your council tax bill states what band you are in.

Valuation Band	Valuation Band £	Stevenage Borough Council £	Herts County Council £	Herts CC Social Care £	Herts CC total £	Herts Police & Crime Commissioner £	Total £
Band A	Up to and including 40,000	147.05	879.57	100.85	980.42	142.00	1,269.47
Band B	40,001 to 52,000	171.55	1,026.17	117.65	1,143.82	165.67	1,481.04
Band C	52,001 to 68,000	196.06	1,172.76	134.46	1,307.22	189.33	1,692.61
Band D	68,001 to 88,000	220.57	1,319.36	151.27	1,470.63	213.00	1,904.20
Band E	88,001 to 120,000	269.59	1,612.55	184.89	1,797.44	260.33	2,327.36
Band F	120,001 to 160,000	318.60	1,905.74	218.50	2,124.24	307.67	2,750.51
Band G	160,001 to 320,000	367.62	2,198.93	252.12	2,451.05	355.00	3,173.67
Band H	More than 320,000	441.14	2,638.72	302.54	2,941.26	426.00	3,808.40
% increase since last year		2.32%	2.18%	22.99%	3.99%	7.57%	

The average Stevenage home (Band C) will pay £196.06 for 120 Stevenage Borough Council services. That includes:



£54.52 for weekly refuse and recycling collections,



£25.60 for children's services,
£14.85 for supporting local groups and communities,



and £20.77 for housing and homelessness support (in addition to our house building and tenancy services).

Valuations

Check your band is correct

The Valuation Office Agency sets the band for your property. This is based on property values on 1 April 1991 (if built after this, it would be valued as if it had been built then and not what a property is worth today). We charge you council tax based on their assessment.

Many residents do not know that they can challenge a council tax band by:

- making a formal challenge to the Valuation Office Agency or
- simply asking the Valuation Office Agency to check it (the right to ask the Valuation Office Agency to check their band is not limited by time).

You can contact the Valuation Office Agency, where you can compare your band with any other property at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency or telephone **03000 501501**.

Appealing against the band you are in

Stevenage Borough Council has no influence on the band. You should contact the Valuation Office Agency directly.

You can appeal against the band your home is in if you have just moved in. You must appeal within six months of moving in.

You can appeal if you think there has been a material change (reduction) in the value of the property – at any time.

If you want more details about the bands, or details of how to appeal against the band for your home, please contact the Valuation Office Agency by telephone 03000 501501 or write to: **Council Tax East, Valuation Office Agency, Ground Floor, Ferrers House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, Notts, NG2 1AB** or email cteast@voa.gsi.gov.uk

You must continue to pay your council tax while you make your appeal. If the appeal is successful you will be refunded any overpayment.

Paying Your Council Tax

Sign-up now for a Council Tax and Benefits account **www.stevenage.gov.uk/your-accounts**. You can switch to e-billing to reduce the number of letters you get in the post, view your payments, outstanding balance and correspondence online without the need to call the council.

Ways to pay

You can pay your council tax:

- in one payment for the whole year (in April)
- by 10 monthly instalments (April to January)
- over 12 months – please contact us to arrange.

How to pay your council tax

The council's web address is **www.stevenage.gov.uk/pay**

All you need is your account reference number to check your balance and make a payment using our online service. We accept all major debit and credit cards except American Express or Diners Club.

Direct debit. You can now arrange to do this online at **www.stevenage.gov.uk/council-tax** and click on setup a Direct Debit.

Online Banking. Payments can be made by your online banking facility. The Council's bank account is **11549200** and the sort code is **40-43-36**. The bank name is **HSBC** and the payee name is **Stevenage Borough Council**. Please quote your surname and council tax reference number to ensure your payment is allocated to your account.

Telephone payments. All you need is your account reference number to check your balance and make a payment. You can pay by debit or credit card by calling **01438 242345** at any time to pay via the automated payments.

Post Office. You can pay by debit card, cheque or cash at any post office using your plastic payment card. If you do not have a plastic payment card, please contact us and we will arrange for one to be issued to you.

What happens if you don't pay?

We will send you a reminder notice if you miss a payment or your payment is late.

You will lose the right to pay by monthly instalments if you do not pay after we have sent you a reminder or if we have to send you more than two reminders in any financial year.

We have the right to collect unpaid Council Tax through the magistrates' court. You will have to pay additional costs if we have to do this.

If you have difficulty paying please contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss your situation.

Council tax discounts

The full council tax assumes that there are two qualifying adults, over 18 living in a dwelling (as their main home). If one adult lives in a dwelling, a 25% discount will apply.

Second home

If you have a second home which is substantially furnished, but is not your main home, you are required to pay the full charge.

Discounts for unoccupied properties

From 1st April 2017 there is no discount for:-

- Empty and Unfurnished properties, or for Empty (and unfurnished) properties undergoing major repairs or structural work. So you pay the full charge.
- For Empty and Unfurnished properties which are empty for 2 years and over these will pay 150% of the Council Tax.

If your property is exempt from council tax

You may be exempt from council tax on certain occupied and unoccupied properties.

This includes properties only occupied by:

- people under the age of 18
- students
- UK armed forces accommodation
- diplomats – people who have diplomatic immunity

- people who are severely mentally impaired, including those with Alzheimer's
- annexes where a dependent person – who is 65 or over or is severely mentally impaired or substantially and permanently disabled – lives next door to relatives in an annexe.

It also includes unoccupied properties that may qualify if they are:

- owned by a charity
- where the council tax payer is deceased and probate application has been made but has yet to be granted.
- where occupation is prohibited by law
- held for a minister of religion
- where a mortgagee is in possession
- left unoccupied due to bankruptcy
- where the person is detained elsewhere
- where the person is living in a care home or hospital
- where the person is away providing or receiving care elsewhere
- an annexe which forms part of a single property but cannot be let separately from that of the other dwelling
- property left empty by a student (who owns the property).

Discounts (disregards)

Certain people can be 'disregarded' for council tax purposes subject to meeting an entitlement criteria. This means that we do not count them when we are looking at how many adults live in the property. People who are disregarded include:

- people who are severely mentally impaired, included those with Alzheimer's
- people who normally live in the property but are currently in prison
- people in respect of whom child benefit is payable
- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainee
- hospital patients where it is their sole or main residence (not returning home)
- patients in care homes where it is their sole main residence
- people caring for someone who is not a spouse, partner or child under the age of 18
- people staying in hostels or night shelters with no fixed abode
- school leavers under the age of 20
- members of visiting forces
- spouses of foreign students
- members of religious communities.

If you are entitled to a discount, the amount will appear on your bill. Your discount may be affected if your circumstances, or the circumstances of any member of your household, change or if anyone joins or leaves your household. You must tell the Revenues division of any changes

in your circumstances. If you fail to do so, you may incur a £70 fine.

If you think you might be entitled to an exemption or discount please visit www.stevenage.gov.uk and under Council Tax select discounts or exemptions or email us at revenues@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk

People with disabilities

Your council tax may be reduced if you or someone who lives with you has a disability. This could be an adult or a child.

We may be able to reduce your council tax bill where it is essential for the person with the disability to have:

- an additional room to meet the needs of the disabled person (but not a kitchen or bathroom)
- a second bathroom or kitchen
- sufficient spaces for use of a wheelchair indoors which must be used indoors.

If agreed the council tax reduction would be to the band immediately below your existing band.

For more information please visit www.stevenage.gov.uk/council-tax select reductions for people with disabilities or email us at revenues@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk

Council Tax Support scheme

As a result of the 2013 Council Tax Support Scheme, all working-age customers entitled to Council Tax Support must now pay the first 8.5% of their council tax bill.

Council Tax Support and Benefits

Many people in Stevenage aren't applying for the support they may be entitled to.

To get a quick estimate of how much you're entitled to and start your claim visit **www.stevenage.gov.uk/benefits** and follow the link to make a new claim.

If you or someone on your behalf can't claim online please telephone **01438 242875**.

Let us know if your circumstances change

If you are getting a discount or exemption and your circumstances change, for example if your partner is now living with you, you must let us know.

Please contact us within 21 days at our website at **www.stevenage.gov.uk/council-tax** or email **revenues@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk**

Alternatively write to us within 21 days at:

**Revenues Service
Wallfields Pegs Lane
Hertford SG13 8EQ**

If you or someone on your behalf can't use the above methods please telephone **01438 242875** between 9am and 5pm.

If you fail to tell us, you may incur a £70 fine.

Help with your finances

Credit Union

Stevenage Credit Union is a local community organisation offering a safe way to save money or get low interest loans. For further information or to join, contact the Credit Union at:

Telephone: **01438 740844**

Email:

mail@stevenagecreditunion.com

**11 The Hyde
Hydean Way
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG2 9SD**

It's open Monday and Wednesday from 9am to 12pm.

Citizens Advice

If you have debts or are concerned about changes to benefit entitlements, speak to one of the Citizens Advice's trained advisors for free, confidential and impartial advice on these and many other issues.

Get information on their 24-hour advice line telephone:

0800 144 8848

Or visit:

<https://stevenagecab.org.uk>

Appeals

You can appeal if you think any of the information on your council tax bill is incorrect.

Write to:

Revenues Service

Wallfields

Pegs Lane

Hertford

SG13 8EQ

If you or someone on your behalf can't write to us, please email **revenues@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk** or telephone **01438 242875** between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. For Council Tax Support Appeals please email **revenues@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk** or call **01438 242440** and we will help. You must still pay your council tax in the meantime.

This leaflet gives you information about council tax. We can make it available in different languages, Braille and large print upon request. We also have access to interpreting services for people who do not speak English. Telephone **01438 242242**.

Stevenage Borough Council administers the collection of council tax in partnership with East Hertfordshire District Council. By sharing this service, the cost of collecting council tax is kept down, the service becomes more resilient and good performance can be maintained.

For council tax support enquiries please call **01438 242440** between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.