

**2025-26**

# Your council tax

## and how to contact us



# Let's give recycling some thought!

## ✓ Yes, please!



Food and  
drink cans



Glass bottles  
and jars



Plastic bottles, pots,  
tubs and trays



Cardboard



Paper



Cartons

## ✗ No, thanks!



Nappies



Clothes and textiles



Food



Plastic film



Pizza or  
takeaway boxes



Plastic bags



# Foreword

I am proud to present our groundbreaking Budget, which invests more than any other local authority to support our residents with the cost of living, amounting to an unprecedented total investment of £184m from 2022-2028.

We've made history as the first council in the country to introduce universal free school meals, restore the Education Maintenance Allowance, and replace the winter fuel allowance for pensioners who had this lifeline cut by central government.

We are now the first council to offer universal school uniform grants for families earning up to £50,350, benefiting 21,000 pupils. I remember what it meant to my family to receive support with my uniform and I'm determined to ensure every child has the best chance to thrive in education.

We are now the second council in the country to offer free homecare, addressing the social care crisis and ensuring residents get the support they need at home.

This is a fully costed and financially sustainable budget, which retains £471m in our total reserves by the end of 2027/2028. We are leading the way in showing how councils can fill the void created by national cuts and invest in communities, while ensuring balanced books and fiscal responsibility.

Our council tax rate remains the sixth lowest in London. Council tax is frozen for households earning less than £50,350 and those on the lowest incomes pay no council tax at all. If this might apply to you please find more information on page 4.

Our trailblazing initiatives to directly relieve cost of living pressures on residents, along with unprecedented levels of investment in housing, sports, leisure, community safety, education, youth and care services are improving peoples' lives and making Tower Hamlets an even greater place to live.

**Lutfur Rahman**

Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets

# Council tax for 2025-26

The council is increasing its portion of council tax this year by 2.99%. This represents a £36.00 increase in Band D Council Tax and generates £6.7m to support running the Council's services.

There will be an adult social care precept of 2%. This precept represents a £24.08 increase in Band D Council Tax and generates £3.3m towards funding adult social care costs.

The budget prioritises tackling ongoing the cost-of-living crisis, protection for vulnerable children and adults, as well as investment in education, community safety, waste services, housing, leisure and public health. We expect that Tower Hamlets will continue to have the sixth lowest council tax rates in London.

The Mayor of London has increased the Greater London Authority (GLA) element of Council Tax by 4%, a Band D increase of

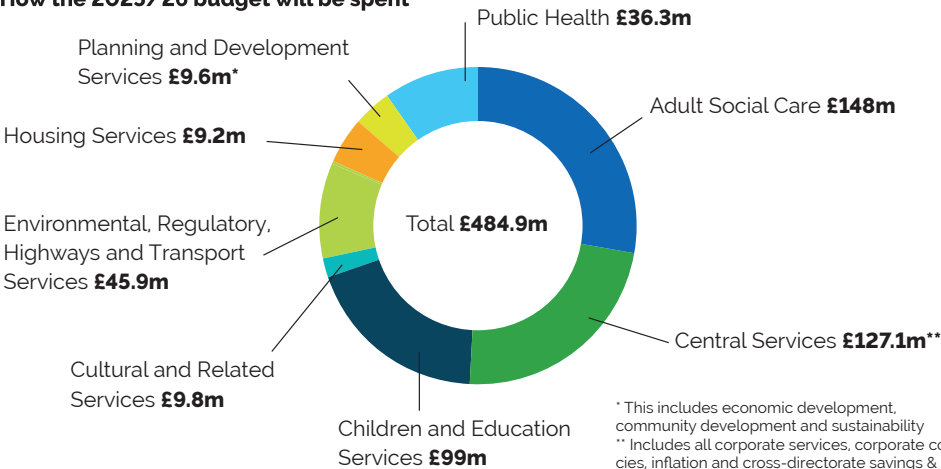
£18.98. The overall increase to Council Tax bills for a Band D property will be £79.06.

Our established council tax reduction scheme will continue. The 2.99% rise in the council's element of council tax will be offset for many households by a Council Tax Cost of Living Relief Fund so those with household incomes of less than £50,350 will not need to pay the increase. Details on how to apply for the new fund can be found on the Council's website: Details on the new fund including the application process once it is set up will be added to the Council's website [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/counciltax) alongside other information related to council tax and potential additional support and reductions.

আপনি এই পৃষ্ঠার বাংলা অনুবাদ পেতে চাইলে ইমেল করুন: [communications@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:communications@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Hadaad Rabto aad hesho safxadan (page kan) oo af Somaliya fadlan lasoo Xidhiidh: [communications@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:communications@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## How the 2025/26 budget will be spent



# Plans for the future

## – our new budget includes

**£1m** school uniform grants for **7,000** starters per year



**£3m** for a new Meals on Wheels service



**£4.9m** a year for a new free homecare service



A new **£551k** Tackling Drugs Taskforce



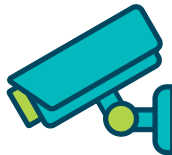
**£1m** to help young people with SEND move to adulthood



**£15m** of additional investment into the waste service



An extra **£810k** to expand and improve CCTV services



Balanced budget with General Fund reserve increased to **£25m**



**£1.8m** for the new **£175** local pensioner winter fuel payment scheme



**£162k** for extra befriending and short breaks for children with disabilities and their families



# Addressing your **priorities**

## Tackling the cost of living crisis

The council continues to support struggling households as the cost of basic items like food, fuel and clothing continues to rise.

We introduced the Tower Hamlets Winter Fuel Payment to provide financial support to those who no longer receive the government's Winter Fuel Payment.

The scheme provides a one-off payment of **£175** to those eligible, as part of a **£1m** package of support, which includes funds from the government's Household Support Fund (HSF).

The new budget also includes **£3.1m** for new energy fund for low-income households.

We are introducing a **£2m** Community Resilience Support Fund package which will include free school uniform grants in addition to ongoing funding for universal free school meals in primary and secondary schools.

Many people are still missing out on vital support such as Universal Credit, Pension Credit, and Disability Premium. **£17m** worth of Pension Credit alone is going unclaimed in Tower Hamlets. Residents can use our online benefits calculator to check they are receiving all the support they are entitled to. Visit our Cost of Living webpage [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/costofliving) to find out more.



## Providing homes for the future

The council and partners are committed to delivering **4,000** homes by 2026.

We have just given the green light to build **210** affordable homes - including family-sized homes in Bow as part of the Bow Common Gas Works development.

The regeneration of Harriott, Apsley & Pattison House in Stepney is also underway which will deliver **407** new homes alongside a new community centre and mosque.

In our drive to improve housing standards across the borough, the council became the first local authority in the country to bring legal action against a freeholder of a private building to remove dangerous ACM cladding from a high-rise building in Stepney.

We will continue to secure more Remediation Orders against freeholders of other high-rise buildings where progress has stalled.

## Accelerate education

Ofsted has recently rated our Children's Services as 'Outstanding' - the highest rating attainable.

Pupils achieved great success in their GCSEs and A Levels last summer.

**83 per cent** of GCSE students achieved grades 9-4 (equivalent to the old A\* to C grades). In Maths, **75 per cent** of students achieved grades 9-4.

Almost three-quarters (**69.1 per cent**) of students achieved an A\* to C grade in their A Levels. Almost one-fifth (**16.1 per cent**) achieved an A\* or A grade.

We are investing in the future of our young people by continuing to fund universal free school meals for all primary and secondary pupils up to the age of 16.

Nearly half of children in Tower Hamlets live below the poverty line - the highest rate in the UK.



We support young people to achieve their full potential by extended funding for our Education Maintenance Allowance and University Bursary schemes.

Since launching in 2022, the council has funded **2,350** grants totalling **£1.82m**. This year's grants will benefit up to **2,050** students.

**£1m** a year will fund a new school uniform grants for families with household incomes of up to **£50,350**. For a child starting primary or secondary school, the scheme is expected to support **7,000** children each year.

All youth centres across the borough are being refurbished thanks to **£13.7m** investment.

## Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure

**£1.5m** of additional funding is to be invested in leisure facilities, as part of the council's commitment to support healthier communities.

This funding adds to previous investments of over **£4.8m** to upgrade the spa at York Hall, Mile End Park Leisure Centre football pitches, and essential systems across all six operating centres, including boilers, pool pump systems, heating and ventilation.

The new upgrades will include a women's only gym at Poplar Baths and York Hall.



There will be pop up crèche facilities at Poplar Baths, Mile End Park and Tiller Leisure Centres. Since leisure service came in-house, Be Well has welcomed **17,000** new members.

Entrepreneurs and small independent businesses will benefit from a **£700,000** investment into programmes to help them achieve their business aspirations.

The investment is set to empower **250** individuals to become qualified entrepreneurs, establish **150** businesses, create **50** social enterprises, and support **50** women-led or owned businesses.

Tower Hamlets has many diverse parks, gardens and open spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. The borough holds a record number of awards for its parks including **14** Green Flag Awards. Victoria Park holds the People's Choice recognition in the Green Flag Top **10** parks in the country.



Our markets continue to attract praise with Whitechapel Market and Columbia Road Flower Market winning national awards this year.

### Investing in public services

The budget will see **£4.9m** a year for a new free homecare service, which will provide important support for our older and vulnerable residents. **£3m** is also being provided to establish a new Meals on Wheels service.

**£1m** a year will help young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) receive extra support to move successfully into adulthood.

Among a number of new local services, this year a new women's centre – the Naari Centre, will open in Whitechapel to provide health, education and employment advice.

The council has five Residents' Hubs where residents can pop in to get face to face advice and support on a range of issues. Residents are benefiting from having the choice to access services, how they want – digitally, in person or over the phone.

Find out more about the opening hours and range of support at the hubs on the council website: [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/residentshub](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/residentshub)



## Empower communities and fight crime

We have recently marked the 15 years of the pioneering work of our THEOs (Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers), and the crucial work that they do across the borough and often supporting the police in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

The council is investing a record **£8m** in community safety, which includes ongoing council funding for **64** THEOs and **26** police officers.

Building effective partnerships is key to tackling crime. More than **1,200** knives were recently taken off the streets thanks to **six** knife amnesty bins across the borough, installed by the charity Word 4 Weapons and paid for by the council and a local church.

We are investing **£1.5m** for a Drug Misuse Treatment Centre. Our new budget includes **£270,000** to expand and improve CCTV services, and a new **£551,000** Tackling Drugs Taskforce.



The council values the vital role that more than 1,300 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups play across Tower Hamlets and we work alongside them to improve the lives of our residents.

We are pleased to provide financial support to our VCS including through our **£3.5m** a year community grants scheme, and **£800,000** for our small grants scheme.

## A cleaner and greener future

The council continues to invest in our waste and recycling service to keep our streets clean, with an additional **£15m** being invested into the service over the next three years. This will see more staff; improved equipment and extra collections to provide cleaner local streets and estates.

There will be extra funding including **£2.1m** for flats food waste services and **£1.3m** for waste vehicle replacement. This is in addition to the **£5m** invested last year to upgrade our fleet and make improvements to our collection routes.

We are committed to making our council a green and environmentally sustainable local authority. Several funding commitments have been included to make the borough cleaner and greener, with **£3.3m** of new capital investment going towards energy efficiency, renewable energy and food waste treatment.

**Tower Hamlets Council is required by law to collect money for other organisations through the council tax. We cannot influence how much they charge. More details on who is charging you and what services they provide is included below.**

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## Introduction

The Mayor of London's budget for 2025-26 sets out how he will fund his plans to continue building a fairer, safer, and greener London for everyone and provides resources to improve key public services in the capital. The budget ensures investment to tackle crime, build more affordable homes, reduce street homelessness, improve our transport network, and ensure London remains a world-leader in tackling air pollution and the climate crisis. The budget prioritises resources for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and London Fire Brigade.

(LFB) to keep Londoners safe. This includes resources for violence reduction initiatives, support for victims of crime, additional funding for frontline police

officers, continued reform of the MPS and the delivery of projects to divert vulnerable young people away from gangs and violence. It also confirms funding to continue Universal Free School Meals in London's state primary schools for a further academic year until July 2026.

## Council tax for GLA services

The GLA's share of the council tax for a typical Band D property has been increased by £18.98 (or 37p per week) to £490.38. The additional income from this increase in council tax will fund the MPS and the LFB. Council taxpayers in the City of London, which has its own police force, will pay £171.25.

Band D Council Tax	2024-25 £	Change £	2025-26 £
MOPAC (Metropolitan Police)	305.13	14.00	319.13
LFC (London Fire Brigade)	66.74	4.98	71.72
GLA	22.44	0.00	22.44
Transport Services	77.09	0.00	77.09
Total	471.40	18.98	490.38

## Investing in frontline services

This budget will enable the Mayor to continue fulfilling his key priorities for London. This includes:

- > 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, the disabled, armed forces personnel in uniform and eligible armed services veterans and protecting the Taxi card and Dial-a-Ride schemes.
- > Providing £147.5 million to continue to fund universal free school meals for London's estimated 287,000 state primary school children for a third academic year. By July 2026 it is estimated that this programme will have saved London families up to £1,500 per child since its introduction in September 2023.
- > Ensuring the MPS has the resources it needs to tackle violent crime by investing additional resources in front line policing and crime prevention. The Mayor has doubled investment in policing to help tackle crime, including recurring funding for 1,300 additional police officers funded from council tax and business rates income. While the Mayor provides MOPAC and the MPS with as much funding as possible, the impact of significant real-terms national government cuts over the last 14 years has left the MPS in a difficult financial position.
- > 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. The Mayor has funded more than 500,000 positive opportunities to help divert vulnerable young Londoners away from crime – including through London's Violence Reduction Unit.
- > Providing resources to roll out a transformation programme to support the LFB in implementing the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and other key improvements. The LFB now responds to emergencies faster and is rated as outstanding in how it responds to major and multiagency incidents.
- > Freezing bus and tram fares in 2025 and retaining the one-hour Hopper fare thus making transport more affordable for millions of Londoners. The Superloop network will also be expanded.
- > Building on the success of 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 saw over 500,000

passenger journeys between its opening date in 2022 and early 2025. This has made it the busiest rail line in the UK. This follows on from the opening of the Northern line extension to Nine Elms and Battersea Power Station in September 2021.

- > Rolling out new trains on the Piccadilly line, with the first new trains serving customers from 2025 and upgrading the signalling on the District and Metropolitan lines.
- > Continuing to improve accessibility across TfL's network, increasing the availability of step-free access and toilets. In 2025-26, TfL will increase investment in step-free schemes to make progress towards its goal of halving step-free journey times across the network, as well as its target of making 50 per cent of London Underground stations fully accessible. All 41 Elizabeth line stations are now step-free.
- > Continuing to tackle London's housing crisis, by investing £1.5 billion in 2025-26 to increase the number of Londoners who have a safe, decent and affordable home. The Mayor will also allocate resources to tackle homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.
- > Investing in schemes designed to make walking, cycling and public transport safer, cleaner and more appealing in partnership with London boroughs.

### 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](http://www.london.gov.uk/budget)

How the GLA budget is funded (£m)	2025-26
Gross expenditure	17,961.6
Government grants and retained business rates	-7,676.0
Fares, charges and other income	-8,312.4
Change in reserves	-391.3
<b>Amount met by council taxpayers</b>	<b>1,581.9</b>

Changes in spending (£m)	2025-26
2024-25 council tax requirement	1,490.3
Net change in service expenditure and income	348.8
Change in use of reserves	53.4
Government grants and retained business rates	-327.2
Other changes	-16.6
<b>Amount met by council taxpayers</b>	<b>1,581.9</b>

# The Environment Agency

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 5,200 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	2024-25 000s	2025-26 000s
Gross expenditure	£154,702	£126,785
Levies raised	£12,776	£13,030
Total Council Tax Base	5,365	5,453

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.

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 £12,775,615 in 2024-25 to £13,029,850 for 2025-26.

# London Pension 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 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 2025-26, 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.

From 2022 onwards, a portion of the amount previously raised as levies is being paid into the LPFA Pension Fund to address a funding deficit in respect of former GLC, ILEA, and LRB employees.

Inner London	£7,000,000
Greater London	£1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8,000,000</b>

# Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

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 formerly derelict land, is partly funded by a levy on the council tax. This year there has been a 2.7% increase in this levy. Find out more about hundreds of great days out, world class sports venues and award winning parklands at [www.visitleevalley.org.uk](http://www.visitleevalley.org.uk)

Budget/Levy 2025-2026	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m
Authority Operating Expenditure	15.3	15.6
Authority Operating Income	(7.8)	(8.0)
<b>Net Service Operating Costs</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>7.6</b>
Financing Costs - Debt servicing/repayments	2.2	2.1
Financing Costs – Capital investment	1.3	1.6
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>11.3</b>
Net Use of Reserves	(0.0)	(0.0)
<b>Total Levy</b>	<b>(11.0)</b>	<b>(11.3)</b>

Further details on how this budget is spent and the amount each council contributes can be found at [www.leevalleypark.org.uk](http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk)



# How to contact us

We want you to be able to access services quickly and easily online, whilst on the go or in the comfort of your home.

The easiest way to access council services is to go online. This includes parking, council tax, housing applications, housing benefits and more. Visit

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/contactus)

## You can also

– Call **020 7364 5000**

– Download the **Find it, Fix it app** via App Store or Google Play

## Find out more

Suscribe to our e-newsletter

– [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/signup](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/signup)

## Follow us on social media

 @towerhamletsnow  towerhamletscouncil

 @towerhamletsnow  towerhamletscouncil

If you do not have the facilities to go online from home or you would like support, please visit one of our Idea Stores. Staff are on hand to help you with using our online services.

Residents who cannot access services online or need additional help with complex issues can make an appointment to visit the Residents' Hub based at the new Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BJ or call **020 7364 5055**. Further details on each of the five hubs in the borough at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/residentshub](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/residentshub)

If you require the information in this booklet in an alternative format or language or for help or advice on claiming council tax support call **020 7364 5000**.

**Tower Hamlets town hall is now located at:  
160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ**

