

FOI number: **HBC\_FOI\_20190186**  
Date FOI Received: **05/03/2019**  
Department: **Council Tax**  
Title: **Council tax comparison**  
Description: **Comparison between council tax for 2018/19 in the London Borough of Brent and Hertsmere Borough Council.**

**Request:** *(As Redacted sent by requestor)*

Dear Hertsmere Borough Council,

Please can you let me know what makes Hertsmere council tax higher than the London Borough of Brent?

If no analysis for the differential has been carried out, can you explain why?

In 2018/19 Band D in Brent was £1,496.54, the equivalent in Elstree & Borehamwood was £1694.41. A difference of £198. Average household income for Elstree & Borehamwood is lower than the average for Brent.

Is this due to staff being paid more, or getting poorer value from contractors, or for other reasons?

Yours faithfully,

**Response:** *(Response as Redacted sent by service)*

All local authorities are required by law to set a balanced budget each year whereby the Council's net expenditure on the services it provides is fully funded. This funding comes from central government grant and local taxation. After allowing for Central Government Grants and retained Business Rates any remaining funding shortfall represents the Local Authority's Council Tax Requirement i.e. the amount to be raised locally from Council Tax.

Hertsmere Borough Council are a billing authority and therefore collects Council Tax on behalf of all precepting authorities namely: Hertsmere Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire and the Parish Councils. The element of Council Tax retained by Hertsmere is only around 10% of the total Council Tax bill, with 77% going to the County Council, 11% to the Police and 2% to the Parish Councils.

Whilst Hertsmere does benchmark itself against other similar local authorities it would not necessarily compare itself against a London Borough such as Brent as there is a vast difference in the services provided by each authority. Hertsmere is part of a two tier structure made up of itself and the County Council with other precepting bodies including the Police and Parish Councils as mentioned already. Brent however is a London Borough or Unitary Authority (single tier), whose Council Tax includes the GLA precept. Hertsmere do not therefore hold any analysis on the differential between itself and Brent.

It is difficult to directly compare one Council against another as there are many differences between authorities such as population size and density, urban and rural landscape, levels of deprivation etc.

These factors are among many that are used by Central Government in determining each Local Authorities needs based Grant allocations. Also the services provided can and do vary between different Local Authorities as apart from the Statutory Services that Councils must all provide, other discretionary services will depend on the decisions of a particular Council.

If you have any queries about the processing of your request then please do not hesitate to contact me. Further information explaining the Council's process for responding to information requests together with a complaints/appeals procedure is available in our reception or via our website at: <https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Your-Council/Official-Publications--Guides--Policies/Access-to-Information.aspx>

The Information Commissioner oversees the application of the Freedom of Information Act. You may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioners Office  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 01625 545700  
Website: [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Please include the above reference number on all correspondence related to this request.

Thank you for your request.

Kind regards,

Information Services