



# South Ayrshire Council Budget Guide 2025-26



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# Introduction

In this guide you will find key information on the budget decisions that have been made by South Ayrshire Council for the years 2025/26 and beyond.

## Our Council

Our Council is currently led by Chief Executive Mike Newall, who is supported by the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Education, Lyndsay McRoberts; Director of Housing, Operations and Development, Kevin Braidwood; the Director of Communities & Transformation, Jane Bradley; and the Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership, Tim Eltringham.

There are 28 Councillors who have been elected by the people of South Ayrshire, and you can contact any of your local Councillors at any time if you need information, advice or assistance.

There are eight Council wards, each served by either three or four Councillors, depending on the population size.

## Contact us

If you need to contact South Ayrshire Council, you can:

- Visit [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Email us at [customerservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Call us on 0300 123 0900

The South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership is responsible for the planning, funding and delivery of a range of community health services, social work and social care services for older people, adults, children and families. If you need to contact the Partnership, you can:

- Email [sahscp@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:sahscp@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)
- Call 01292 612419

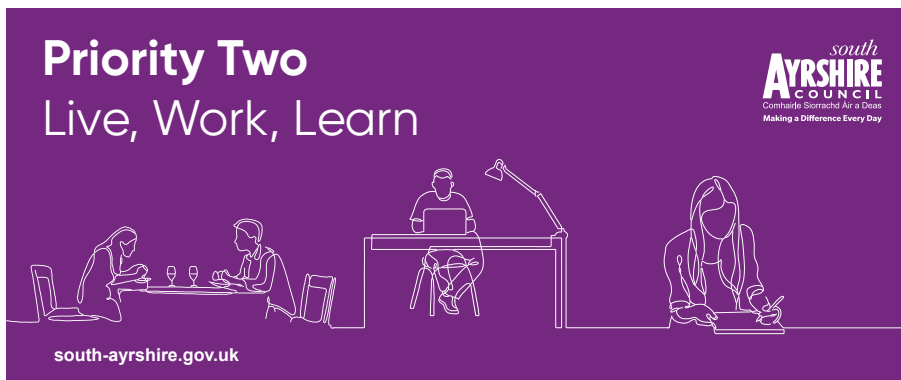
Our roads and transportation service is provided by the Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA), which is a shared service with East Ayrshire Council. You can contact ARA about roads, lighting or bridges by:

- Visiting [www.ayrshireroadsalliance.org](http://www.ayrshireroadsalliance.org)
- Calling 01563 503164



# Our Council Plan

Our Council Plan 2023-28 is focused around three key priorities which ensure we can continue to make a difference every day and deliver for the people of South Ayrshire.



These priorities include a focus on quality education and lifelong learning; supporting local businesses; ensuring everyone has opportunities to take part in play, sport and recreation; and encouraging tourism and increased visitor numbers.

You can find out more about our Council Plan by visiting our website:  
[www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-plans](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-plans)

Decisions for the 2025/26 budget have been made in line with the aims and priorities of the plan.



# Our Budget for 2025/26

The amount of money, or the 'budget' that we have to spend in the next financial year comes from two main sources. These are:

- A grant of £302.4m from the Scottish Government, including non-domestic rates income. This makes up 80% of our overall budget;
- £73.5m from Council Tax, which amounts to 20% of our total funds.

We have significant spending commitments for the services that we provide on a day-to-day basis, such as bin collections, home care and customer services.

Once we receive our allocation of funds from the Scottish Government, the total budget is split and allocated between all Council services. The Council agrees the amount each service will receive through the annual budget setting process in February.

You can find more information and full details of the 2025/26 budget in our budget book: [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/37904/Council-Budget](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/article/37904/Council-Budget)

## Council Tax

For 2025/26, the council tax charge has increased by 8% from 2024/25 levels in order to preserve local services in the face of increasing financial pressures.

You can find details of the costs for each band opposite:

Band	2025/26
A	£1046.27
B	£1220.65
C	£1395.03
D	£1569.41
E	£2062.03
F	£2550.29
G	£3073.43
H	£3845.05

Scottish Water may increase water and sewerage charges – these are not controlled by the Council.



# Message from the Leader of South Ayrshire Council - Martin Dowey



Every year we are faced with the challenge of balancing our budget, and this year in particular, we are facing significant financial pressure. However, I'm pleased that we have agreed a budget that focuses on the protection of frontline services, income generation and investment in key areas, such as education, and health and social care.

In recent years, like all local authorities, we have had to make millions of pounds worth of savings, which involves making difficult choices. This is in the face of a range of demographic pressures, increased service demands and recent high levels of inflation.

While we have prioritised protecting our vital services, we do need to focus on generating more income. This aligns with the feedback from our budget consultation, where most respondents told us that they would prefer to see an increase in charges rather than a decrease in services provided, and we have taken this into account.

It's been challenging, but we are confident that the steps we have taken will protect jobs, essential services and improve the local area for residents and visitors.

We are making positive investments across the area, including a capital investment programme of £344.5 million invested in our towns and villages over the next 12 years. This highlights our commitment to making sure South Ayrshire is an attractive destination to live, work and visit, and includes £16 million for Ayr Town Centre to improve Burns Statue Square, £1.5 million for Girvan Regeneration works, and £2.5 million as match funding for the Dunure Heritage project.

We're continuing to make improvements in all eight wards in South Ayrshire through our Ward Capital Projects programme, with a range of works already complete and new projects set to begin in 2025/26. This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to enhancing our spaces and places and promoting civic and community pride in the area. We're also allocating £26.1 million over the next 12 years to improve the road network across South Ayrshire.

Our young people are our future, and we're investing £2.6 million in education to help raise attainment and continue to make sure our children and young people have the best possible start in life. Plans for the new Girvan Primary School are well underway, and we're making improvements to the exterior of Troon Primary School, demonstrating our commitment to modernising our schools and education facilities. We're also expanding our free school meals provision.

We want to make sure local people can be fit and active, and we're continuing with investment in a range of our leisure facilities. This includes ongoing works at the Citadel Leisure Centre and Prestwick swimming pool, a planned extension for Troon swimming pool, plus improvements to the all-weather pitch in Girvan.



The health and wellbeing of our residents is a priority, and Councillors agreed to invest £107.1 million in our Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) - an increase of almost 6% on previous years. This will ensure the vital services they provide can continue, and people can access the care they need. Plans are also ongoing to repurpose the former Hourstons building into a mixed use 'care village' development, following significant investment last year.

As I mentioned above, one of our key focuses this year is generating more income for the Council, and to do this, we are increasing fees for some council services, including sport and leisure, golf, allotments, and commercial waste collections.

We have also had to take the difficult, but essential decision to increase Council Tax by 8% in 2025/26.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff for their continuous hard work. Without their dedication, we couldn't make a difference to our residents on a daily basis.

The people of South Ayrshire have been at the forefront of our minds as we made our decisions, and I'm confident that we've been able to deliver for them.



# How We're Making a Difference



**£107.2 million**  
for the South Ayrshire Health  
and Social Care Partnership,  
an increase of almost 6%

**£26.1  
million**

over the  
next 12 years  
to improve  
the road  
network  
across South  
Ayrshire



**£344.5 million**  
for Capital Investment  
projects that will benefit  
our communities over  
the next 12 years

Improving attainment  
in our schools with

**£2.6  
million  
for  
education**



**£16 million**  
for Ayr Town Centre  
to improve Burns  
Statue Square

**£2.5 million**  
as match funding for the  
Dunure Heritage  
project





Directorate		2025/26 Total Net Expenditure
		£m
Chief Executive's Office		18.043
Education		156.037
Housing, Operations & Development		43.627
Communities & Transformation		22.437
Social Care (funding delegated to South Ayrshire Integrated Joint Board)		107.165
Transport Subsidies and Concessionary Fares		2.140
Miscellaneous Services:	Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board	0.937
	Other Services	7.282
	Capital Charges	18.203
		<b>375.871</b>

**Financed by:**

Government Grants	252.552
Non-Domestic Rates	49.811
Total Government support	302.363
Use of Surplus/Funds	-
	302.363
<b>Funding required from Council Tax</b>	<b>73.508</b>

Comparison with Government Provision for Current Expenditure			
	£ per dwelling	Calculation of Net Expenditure	£m
Expenditure figure used by Government in Aggregate External Finance (Government support) calculation	6,317	Gross Expenditure	478.777
		LESS: Fees, charges and other income	102.906
Proposed spending by Council on comparable basis	6,647	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>375.871</b>

2024/25 (RESTATED) Total Net Expenditure	Change from 2024/25		Band D Council Tax Equivalent
£m	£m	%	£
16.833	1.210	7.19	385
145.089	10.948	7.55	3,331
42.626	1.001	2.35	931
20.052	2.385	11.89	479
100.449	6.716	6.69	2,288
2.099	0.041	1.95	46
0.859	0.078	9.08	20
9.734	(2.452)	(25.19)	155
15.480	2.723	17.59	389
<b>353.221</b>	<b>22.650</b>	<b>6.41</b>	<b>8,025</b>

235.767	5,392
46.075	1,063
281.842	6,456
4.000	0
285.842	6,456
<b>67.379</b>	<b>1,569.41</b>

	South Ayrshire Council	Scottish Average Band D
Band D Council Tax 2024/25	£1,453.16	£1,418.00
Council Employees (Full-Time Equivalent)		
At 31st December 2024		4,924
At 31st December 2023		4,901

# Your Council Tax

## How and when do I pay?

Direct debit is the easiest way to pay, and is quick and easy to set up. You can do this online at [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax), or over the phone by calling 0300 123 0900

Full details on all payment options can be found on the back of your Council Tax notice.

## Who has to pay Council Tax?

Council Tax is normally paid by the resident owner or tenant of the property.

Husbands and wives, couples and joint owners/tenants have joint liability for Council Tax, and we can choose to collect the full amount from anyone who is legally responsible for it.

## Exemptions, discounts & variations

Some properties may be exempt from Council Tax – for example, if they are unoccupied and unfurnished, or if they are occupied solely by students.

You may be entitled to a 25% discount if you are the sole adult aged 18 or over in your home. If there is more than one adult resident, they may be disregarded due to personal circumstances, such as being a full time student.

A Disabled Person's Reduction may be available if there are special features or facilities in the property to meet the disabled person's needs.

Long term Empty and Second Homes Properties may be subject to a variation in the level of Council Tax due, of up to 200% of the charge.

Full details of all exemptions, discounts and charges for empty properties and second homes can be found at [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax) or by calling 0300 123 0900.

## Change of circumstances

You must let us know if there is a change to your household circumstances that could affect your Council Tax. For example, if you receive a discount or exemption such as the Single Occupier's Discount, and the conditions no longer apply.

## Contact us online

You can contact us online to tell us about a change of address, set up a Direct Debit, apply for Single Occupier Discount or request a copy of your bill. Please visit [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax)



## What if I can't afford to pay?

You can apply to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which was created to help people on benefits or on a low income. The basic amount of reduction depends on your (and your partner's) income, capital, personal circumstances and the amount of Council Tax payable.

Regardless of your own circumstances, a second adult rebate may be claimed based on the income and circumstances of one or more adults who live with you but who are not your partner or a boarder/lodger.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme does not apply to water and sewerage charges, however, households entitled to Council Tax Reduction may also be entitled to a reduction in their Water and Sewerage charges of up to 35% - no application is needed as this is awarded automatically.

The Scottish Welfare Fund also provides assistance to people who are on a low income and are experiencing exceptional pressures, or are in a crisis situation.

To see what help is available, please visit [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund)  
You can claim Council Tax Reduction and find out more about benefits at [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing-benefit](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing-benefit)

## What happens if I don't pay?

If any instalment is not paid by the due date, you will be given notice requiring you to pay within seven days. If you subsequently default on a monthly payment, a further reminder will be issued. If you default on three instalments, you will not receive a reminder, and the full year's balance will become due immediately.

If you do not pay the outstanding instalment(s) quoted in any reminder, you will immediately become liable to pay the arrears and the amount due for the remainder of the year.

The Council can take legal proceedings for recovery of the total amount due after serving a notice requiring payment of that balance within 14 days.

If legal proceedings are taken, the Sheriff will grant what is known as a Summary Warrant against you. This will result in the addition of a 10% surcharge to the Council Tax outstanding and allows the Council to employ a Sheriff Officer to recover the arrears by carrying out an attachment and arrestment of wages, bank accounts, etc.

Any expenses incurred by the Sheriff Officer are also payable by you in addition to the 10% surcharge.

# Money Advice

A free, confidential, information and advice service is available to assist with welfare rights and issues related to money and debt advice. Further information can be found at [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/information-and-advice-hub/](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/information-and-advice-hub/) or phone 0300 123 0900.

Worrying about Money? Financial advice and support is available if you're struggling to make ends meet. To see what local support is available, please visit [www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/south-ayrshire](http://www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/south-ayrshire)



## Further Information

Further information on the following can be found on our website:

**Council Tax:** [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council-tax)

**Non Domestic rates:** [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/business-rates/](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/business-rates/)

**Benefit Services:** [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing-benefit](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing-benefit)

Enquiries about the valuation band (domestic properties) or rateable value (non-domestic properties) including any appeals should be directed to Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board, 9 Wellington Square, Ayr KA7 1HL on 01292 612221 or [assessor@ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:assessor@ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk)

### Appeals

Appeals on the grounds that you have been improperly charged should be made in writing to the address shown below within 28 days of receiving your bill.

If you have a comment about any aspect of our service, or a suggestion about how we can improve our service, please let us know by writing to:

**Service Lead Revenues and Benefits,  
South Ayrshire Council,  
PO Box 31,  
Ayr  
KA7 2PL**