

City news and information



Southend-on-Sea
City Council

What's inside?

- Financial support and advice for local people
- Could you foster in 2023?
- Changes to voting in person from May 2023
- Visit our parks, museums and galleries!



www.southend.gov.uk

Message from your City Council

This booklet aims to give residents a snapshot of just some of the services and work that your City Council is involved in, and support available to you.

From information on our budget challenge, through to a story encouraging you to visit our wonderful parks and museums, we hope you find this a useful source of information.

Most importantly, there is a large section designed to offer support and guidance to everyone who needs it right now. There is also more information on our website: www.southend.gov.uk/costofliving

Our website also has regular news updates and information on a range of services.

Sign-up for our e-newsletter



Want to be better informed about what's happening in your area? Sign up for weekly e-news from us, direct to your email inbox.

southend.gov.uk/enewsletter

Your local Councillors are here for you

Councillors are elected to represent their local community and local people and are a vital point of contact.

Visit www.southend.gov.uk/councillor to:

- find out who your local ward councillors are and how to contact them
- check what ward you live in

No access to the internet?

Please call 01702 215000 and our customer service team will help you find the correct details.

Go online anytime

Report a missed bin, potholes, abandoned vehicles, and much more...
my.southend.gov.uk

Main switchboard number: 01702 215000

For latest news, updates and information, visit www.southend.gov.uk

Our budget challenge

Our budget funds over 400 local services, from waste collection and street cleansing to libraries and museums. From fostering and children's services to adult social care for the vulnerable. Despite strong financial management, our budget for local services is under severe pressure and has been for over 10 years.

Why?

The central grant we receive from Government has reduced by over 90% in just over ten years and most of our funding for services now comes from local council tax, business rates and income from other fees and charges like car parking.

However, pressure and demand for services is rising higher than ever before, as is the cost of running our services.

Just like residents, the council is being impacted by inflation and rising fuel and energy prices. We're also seeing big increases in what providers charge to deliver services for us, most significantly the cost of placements to keep children safe and for local adult social care.

This increasing demand and cost of running council services is higher than the additional money we can raise through increases to council tax and other fees.

These factors create a large budget gap and is something all local councils

have been dealing with over many years. We must reduce our costs and increase income to balance the books.

Our budget challenge will also remain significant in the years ahead and further action will be needed in the longer-term.

For many years, we have been changing the way we deliver our services to balance our budget. The scale of the current challenge means that together we now face some very difficult choices.

We are experiencing significant increased demands and costs for services such as adults and children's social care. These are services that we must provide by law and we spend around two-thirds of our total budget on them.

Our careful financial management through years of austerity means we are in good place to deal with these challenges and our reserves position is strong, but we have tough decisions ahead.

Cost of living support and advice available for residents

This information is designed to provide practical support and advice to those who are facing tough financial times and choices.

Financial support

Southend-on-Sea City

Council website. Up-to-date information on financial support and advice is available at www.southend.gov.uk/costofliving

One Southend. This community-led website offers information and advice around some key cost of living topics and suggests services that are available locally. Visit: onesouthend.com/cost-of-living

Universal Credit. You may be able to get Universal Credit if you are on a low income or need help with your living costs. You could be:

- out of work
- working (including self-employed or part time)
- unable to work, for example because of a health condition

To claim you must:

- live in the UK
- be aged 18 or over (there are some exceptions if you're 16 to 17)
- be under State Pension age
- have £16,000 or less in money, savings and investments

You can use a benefits

calculator to check what benefits you could be entitled to:

www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators or Turn to Us:

benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

You can apply for Universal Credit online: www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk/start or by phoning

the Universal Credit helpline on **0800 328 5644**.

Council tax reduction (CTR). Council tax reduction is a means tested council tax discount. How much support you will receive will depend on your income and circumstances.

For more information and to make a claim visit

www.southend.gov.uk/help-paying or call **01702 215001**.

Council tax disregards. Some adults in your household could be disregarded (not counted) for council tax purposes. These could include students, carers or residents in a care home.

To apply for student reduction, please go to the Citizens Access Council Tax portal. For all other exemptions, go to my.southend.gov.uk to complete the Cancel a Discount/Exemption form or call **01702 215001**.

Cost of living payments in 2023

Millions of households will receive payments of up to £900 made in three lump sums in 2023. Eligible households will be on one of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Pension Credit. For each payment, exact payment start dates and eligibility criteria will be communicated by the Government before payments begin.

Essential Living Fund. The Essential Living Fund (ELF) is primarily intended to help vulnerable people live as independent a life as possible in the community. The fund is designed to:

- help people establish in the community following a stay in an institution, Care Home, Local Authority Care, hostel, prison or similar
- help people remain in the community rather than enter an institution or Care Home in which they will receive care ease exceptional pressures on people or their families
- help people with certain travel costs
- help people who are unable to meet their immediate short term needs either in an emergency in relation to some expenses or as a consequence of a disaster
- help children with school uniform costs

For advice and guidance please visit www.southend.gov.uk/extra-financial-help/essential-living-fund or call **0300 7900124**.

Pension Credit. If you are over the State Pension age and on a low income, this gives you extra support with your living and housing costs. If you receive Pension Credit you can also get other help, 'such as housing benefit, a council tax discount, help with heating costs and transport costs for hospital appointments

You can apply for Pension Credit up to four months before you reach the State Pension age.

If you have already applied for your state pension you can apply for Pension Credits by visiting apply-for-pension-credit.service.gov.uk/start or by calling **0800 99 1234**. Textphone: **0800 169 0133**. Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): **18001** then **0800 99 1234**.

WaterSure scheme. WaterSure scheme helps some people with their water bills. To apply for the scheme, you must be on benefits and need to use a lot of water either for medical reasons or because your household has a certain number of school-age children. You also need to be on a water meter or be waiting to have one installed.

You can apply for WaterSure by filling out a form from your water company. You will need to supply evidence that you qualify, such as a copy of your awards notice for a benefit.

Priority services registers. Vulnerable residents can sign up to this service with their energy company to ensure they get priority help and support if there is an issue with their supply.

You can apply to sign up to this register by contacting your supplier or network operator. Information is available in a range of formats including braille, large print or different languages and more information can be found on the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) website:

www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register

Benefits and support for those with children

- **15 hours free childcare for 2-year-old children**

Families who have 2-year-old children and are on certain benefits can get 15 hours of free childcare a week.

- **15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-old children**

All families with children aged 3 and 4 can get 15 hours of free childcare a week.

- **30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year-old children**

Eligible working families in England with 3 and 4-year-old children can receive 30 hours of free childcare a week.

- **Tax-free childcare for children aged 0–11 (0–16 if your child is disabled)**

You can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the cost of childcare.

- **Claim back childcare costs**

You may be able to claim back up to 85% of your childcare costs if you're eligible for Universal Credit, with up to £646 back each month for one child or £1,108 for 2 or more children.

Find out more about childcare cost: www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs

To find out more about help with the cost of childcare: Visit Childcare Choices for more information:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

email: earlyyears@southend.gov.uk or call **01702 215000**.

Free school meals. Children are entitled to receive free school meals if they or their parents or guardians receive certain benefits.

If you think you might be eligible for free school meals, submit a claim to your child's school.

www.southend.gov.uk/help-costs/free-school-meals-1

Holiday Activities and Food programme for school aged children aged 5–15.

For school aged children aged 5–15. You can get access to free activities and food for your children in the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays if they are eligible for free school meals.

To find out more, search for ‘HAF’ or Holiday Activity and Food Scheme on www.livewellsouthend.com
Email: HAF@southend.gov.uk or phone **01702 215000**.

Food vouchers. For school aged children aged 4–15. Schools issue food vouchers for use during school holidays to families with children eligible for free school meals.

For children attending a pre-school, nursery or childminder aged 2-4: your childcare setting will issue food vouchers for use during school holidays to families receiving certain benefits.

This scheme will run to at least March 2023.

Child Benefit. You can claim Child Benefit if you’re responsible for bringing up a child who is:

- under 16
- under 20 if they stay in approved education or training

Only one person can get Child Benefit for a child.

It’s paid every four weeks and there is no limit to how many children you can claim for.

You can claim Child benefit at www.gov.uk/child-benefit or call the Child Benefit helpline: **0300 200 3100**.

Claim Healthy Start vouchers. If you’re more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four, you may be able to get help to buy healthy food and milk.

Check if you’re eligible for Healthy Start vouchers: www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply or call **0300 330 7010**.

Get help with maternity costs. You could claim a one-off payment of £500 to help towards the costs of having a child.

Check if you’re eligible for the Sure Start Maternity Grant: www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant/eligibility or call **0800 169 0140**.

Bibs & Bobs Baby Bank. Open to all parents and carers with a 0-5 year old in their care. Help yourself to free children’s items and clothing.

Last Friday of each month, Summercourt Family Centre, Appointments available between 10am and 2pm. To book on email fcsessionbooking@southend.gov.uk

Family Centres. Open Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm. Supporting with issues such as emotional support, budgeting, parenting, domestic abuse, foodbank referrals and healthy start vitamins.

Call **01702 220810** for more information.

Food support

Help with food and groceries

Storehouse. Free food parcel, food support.

Referrals: no referral needed except for the Wednesday family session

Opening times:

- Monday 10:30am to 12pm and 1pm to 2pm. Open session
- Wednesday 9:30am to 11:30am. Family sessions by referral only. Access referrals from: social worker, health visitor, school, any other support service.
- Friday 10:30am to 12pm men only session and 1pm to 2pm. Open session.

Address: Storehouse Community Centre, Coleman Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 5AW.

Tel: **01702 612900** (Vineyard Centre) / **01702 617348** (Direct).

The One Love Project. Access to fresh food, cupboard fillers and clothing.

Referrals: No referral necessary

Opening times:

- Thursday 11:30 to 12:30: adults only
- Thursday 1pm to 2pm: families with children

Address: Hollybrook, Carnarvon Road (Behind Police Station), SS2 6LR

The Shoebury Ark. Free food parcels.

Referrals: No referrals needed but priority given to SS3 residents (proof of address will be requested on first visit).

Opening times: Tuesday 2pm to 4pm

Address: Friars Baptist Church, Eagle Way, Shoeburyness SS3 9RJ

Email: info@shoeburyark.org.uk

St Vincent's Centre Southend. Free food parcel.

Referrals: No referrals

Opening times: Monday to Friday 11am to 2:30pm



Free food parcel delivery for people that have mobility or medical exemptions, call: **01702 592980** (deliveries on Tuesday)

Address: Unit 9 Victoria Business Park, Short Street, Southend-on-Sea SS2 5BY

Vinnie's Pick 'n Mix. A low-cost food market, £1 annual membership, £4.50 for up to 15 items on the first occasion, £3.50 thereafter.

Referrals: No referrals

Opening times: Friday 10:30am to 1pm

Address: Unit 9, Victoria Business Park, Short St, Southend-on-Sea SS2 5BY.

Tel: **01702 592980**.

Southend Foodbank. Free, three-day food parcels.

Referral: Referral needed

Access referrals from: SAVS

01702 356000, Early Help

01702 215783, South Essex

Community Hub Tel: **01702 611199**

Email: info@sech-uk.com, Citizens

Advice Southend: **01702 456352** or

01702 456354, Welcome to the UK:

01702 808579.

Opening times:

- Monday 1pm to 3pm
Address: Ferndale Baptist Church, North Avenue, Southend, SS2 5HU
- Monday 5pm to 6:30pm
Address: Faith Hope and Charity Shop, 40 Hedingham Place, Rochford, SS4 1UP

- Tuesday 1pm to 3pm
Address: Belle Vue Baptist Church, Belle Vue Avenue, Southend, SS1 2QZ
- Wednesday 9:30am to 11am
Address: Eastwood Baptist Church, Rayleigh Road, Eastwood, SS9 5PY
- Wednesday 2pm to 4pm
Address: St Saviours Church, Kings Road, Westcliff, SS0 8LL
- Thursday 12.30pm to 2.30pm
Address: Shoeburyness and Thorpe Bay Baptist Church, 90 Thorpdene Gardens, Shoeburyness, SS3 9JD
- Friday 12:30pm to 2:30pm
Address: Earls Hall Baptist Church, 120 Hobleythick Lane, Westcliff-on-sea, SS0 0RJ
- Saturday 9:30am to 11am
Address: West Leigh Baptist Church, 1150 London Road, Leigh-on-sea, SS9 2AJ

Southend FOOD Clubs (Food On Our Doorstep). Provides good-quality food at a low cost, while also reducing food waste. It costs just £1 a year for a family to become a member. Members can then purchase a bag of tasty food items every week worth approx. £10–12 for just £3.50. To become a member you must live or work within 15 minutes of the club.

Referral: Please email

SouthendFoodClubs@family-action.org.uk or phone Karen on **07812 496015** / Natasha on **07971 951636** who will help you join as a member and book you a timed slot to attend a club.

Opening times:

- Monday: 9:30am to 11:20pm,
Address: Constable Way,
Shoeburyness, SS3 9X
- Friday 1:30pm to 3:20pm,
Address: Centre Place Family
Centre Prospect Close, SS1 2JD
- Saturday 10:30am to 12:20pm,
Address: Summercourt Family
Centre, Summercourt Road,
Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7AU

Help with toiletries

All Rise Collective (Toiletry Care bank). Free toiletry/essentials bag, period/baby bag,

Referrals: No referrals

- Opening times: Every other
Tuesday, 10.30am to 11.30am
Address: St Marks Centre, Princes
Street, Southend on Sea SS1 1QA
- Opening times: Every third Thursday
of the month 9am to 10.30am

Address: Westcliff Free Church, 635
London Rd, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 9PE

Visit: www.facebook.com/allrisecollective

Local charities

If you do not feel on top of your finances, you should seek advice. Details of some free organisations that can help are listed below

Citizens Advice Southend. They can help with debt advice, maximisation of income, help to claim Universal Credit.

Tel: **01702 456352** or **01702 969696.**

Drop in time: Monday to Friday 10am to 3pm, bring in any documents to support your inquiry

Address: Citizens Advice Southend, 1 Church Road, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 2AL.

King's Money Advice Centre (KMAC).

This a free, confidential, local, face-to-face debt advice service, authorized and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for debt advice and debt management. KMAC is affiliated to Community Money Advice who have been helping those in debt for 25 years.

Please phone and leave a message or email to arrange an appointment: **01702 522197.**

Email: kmacsouthend@btinternet.com or visit: kmacsouthend.wixsite.com/kmacsouthend

Christians Against Poverty (CAP).

Has been providing free regulated debt advice to anyone who has unmanageable debt for the last 25 years.

This CAP Debt Help Centre is run in partnership with various local churches in Southend-on-Sea and surrounding areas.

To arrange first appointment call (freephone) **0800 3280006.**

Are you

Voter Ready?

Register to vote

Make sure you are registered to vote for this year's local elections, which take place on Thursday 4th May 2023. The deadline to register is Monday 17th April 2023. Don't miss your chance to have your say.

Register online now: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Changes to voting in polling stations

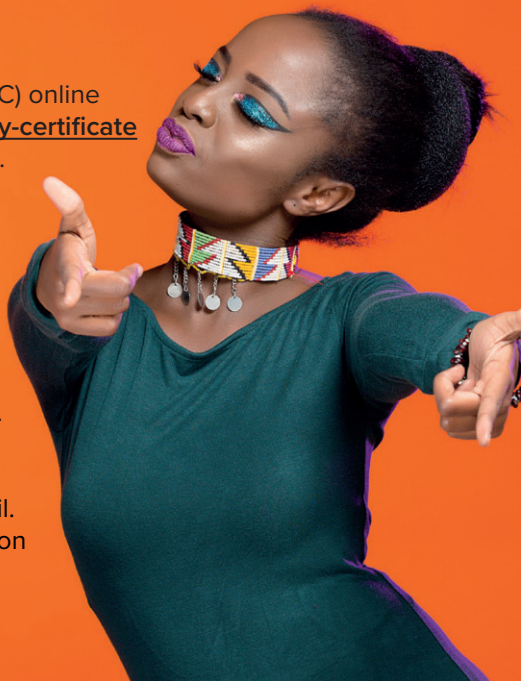
If you want to vote in a polling station in May, you'll need to show a form of photo ID to receive your ballot paper. For a full list of approved photo ID, please visit www.southend.gov.uk/VoterID

Don't have an approved form of photo ID?
Apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) online
www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate
or contact electoral services on **01702 215010**.

The deadline to apply for a VAC in time for the May elections is 25th April 2023. You do not need photo ID to vote by post.

Want to vote by post or proxy?

Visit www.southend.gov.uk/elections to apply.
The deadline for applying to vote by post or making changes to an existing postal or proxy vote for the May elections is Tuesday 18th April.
The deadline for applying for a proxy application is Tuesday 25th April.



Livewell Southend

Check out our health and wellbeing website:
www.livewellsouthend.com

SEND
Local Offer



Services for
adults



Services for
children and
families



Mid and South Essex
Integrated Care
System

Southend-on-Sea
City Council

Let us help you COMMIT TO QUIT

You are three times more likely to stop smoking with the right support and medication. A lone quitter with no support has about a 3% chance of success, so don't delay plan your quit today!

Stop Smoking Advisors are available at:

- Your local GP Surgery
- The Participating Pharmacy Scheme
- Commissioned vape shops

For more information on how to start your smokefree journey, call 01702 212000 or visit www.southend.gov.uk/stop-smoking



SOUTHEND
PASS

**Only £8.50
per month***

Pass includes 3 hours parking in each of the 4 parking zones every day!

Want to park for longer than 3 hours in a zone? Buy additional time on the app or at a machine.

*Proposed to rise to £10 per month from 1 April 2023



www.southend.gov.uk/southendpass

Need to contact us about your council tax reduction or housing benefit?

Do it online!

Visit www.southend.gov.uk/benefits to access our citizen access benefits portal where you can:

- make a claim
- view your claim and letters
- view your housing benefit entitlement
- view your council tax reduction entitlement
- tell us about any changes

Need to contact us about council tax?

Visit www.southend.gov.uk/council-tax/view-council-tax-account-online to access citizen access revenue portal where you can:

- view your up-to-date account information
- check your balance, payments and bills
- switch to paperless billing
- update your contact details
- tell us that you have moved
- apply for single occupancy and student discounts

It's more important than ever that you are paying the correct amount of council tax.

Unsure of what council tax discounts/exemptions are available?

Visit our website for full discount information: www.southend.gov.uk/reduce-council-tax-bill

Think you are entitled to a discount – but unsure if you are receiving it?

Review your annual demand – all discount/exemption information is listed on the bill together with the calculation of the reduction.

I have a discount/exemption on my demand, but I am no longer entitled?

It's your responsibility to ensure you're claiming the correct discounts/exemptions. Please visit www.southend.gov.uk/CTaxExemption and complete a 'cancel discount/exemption' form.

What happens if I don't make contact to update my account?

The Council regularly reviews all discounts claimed. If a discount is found to have been incorrectly claimed (or continued after a change of circumstances) you will be liable to pay a penalty charge and could face potential prosecution. The council tax charge will also be backdated.

Single person discount errors?

It is a common misconception that a single parent with adult children living with them can continue claiming a single person discount. This is not correct, as single person discount is only ever applicable if there is only one person over the age of 18 living in a property.

RECYCLING AND WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES

Your weekly checklist:

- ✓ Present by 7am on the day of your collection.
- ✓ Make sure it is put into the correct bins and bags.
- ✓ Place it on the edge of your land, in clear view and in an accessible location.
- ✓ Should there be no space on your land, present it against the wall of your property.

Run out of sacks or need a new bin?
Order more online on my.southend.gov.uk

Pink sacks
for dry mixed recycling

✓ Yes please



- ✓ Steel & aluminium: All drinks cans, food tins, empty aerosols, kitchen foil, foil trays
- ✓ Plastic: bottles, trays, pots, tubs and film
- ✓ All glass bottles and jars
- ✓ Cartons eg: Tetra Pak

✗ No thanks

- ✗ Polystyrene
- ✗ Pet food sachets
- ✗ Plate or Pyrex glass
- ✗ Mirrors, crockery or drinking glass
- ✗ Spectacles
- ✗ Wood
- ✗ Light bulbs

Blue box
for paper and card

✓ Yes please



- ✓ Cardboard
 - ✓ Shredded paper
 - ✓ Mixed paper or card
 - ✓ Newspaper
 - ✓ Magazines
- ⓘ Large cardboard should be flattened and left under/next to your box

✗ No thanks

- ✗ Food contaminated paper & card
- ✗ Greasy, waxed or shiny wrapping paper
- ✗ Carrier bags

Blue food waste bin
for cooked and uncooked food waste

✓ Yes please



- ✓ Bones
- ✓ Coffee grounds
- ✓ Cheese
- ✓ Meat
- ✓ Fruit/vegetable peelings
- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Egg shells
- ✓ Bread/pastries
- ✓ Plate scrapings

✗ No thanks

- ✗ Liquids
- ✗ Plastic bags
- ✗ All packaging

Black refuse sacks
for non-recyclable waste

✓ Yes please



- ✓ Anything that cannot be put in the blue paper and card box, blue food waste bin or pink sacks
- ⓘ Don't forget: if an item cannot be recycled consider if it could be composted, or re-used through the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRCs)

✗ No thanks

- ✗ Textiles: use clear textile sacks
- ✗ Small electricals (in carrier bag): leave by your recycling

For more information and advice regarding other recycling collection services please visit:

So much more beside the seaside, beside the sea

Seven of our parks have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag, including Shoebury Park and Southchurch Hall Gardens. As well as somewhere to have picnics and play on the swings, our parks host events like Park Runs through to the Leigh Folk Festival at Library Gardens, and free music at Priory Park bandstand. Chalkwell Park is home to Metal, and Prittlewell Priory, the 12th Century Cluniac Monastery is based at Priory Park.

Open spaces are plentiful too, with Two Tree Island and Belfairs nature reserves the perfect place to spot local wildlife.

Great outdoors not for you? Visit Central Museum, home to Southend Planetarium, artefacts from the

Prittlewell Prince who was buried here during Saxon times, and The London shipwreck which sank in the Thames Estuary in 1665. Our Letters Patent signed by Her Late Majesty confirming city status is also on show. Next door, the Beecroft Art Gallery has a permanent collection of over 2,000 historic and contemporary works.

Focal Point Gallery in the city centre is also home to exhibitions and somewhere to immerse yourself in the work of both local and national artists.

Exhibits change on a regular basis, so please check

www.southendmuseums.co.uk/beecroft and www.fpg.org.uk for more information.



Don't be fooled, we're not just for visitors.

Head to our website to find loads of great things to see and do on your doorstep. Well, not actually your *doorstep* but, you know, around the city.

**VISIT
SOUTHEND
.CO.UK**





Southend-on-Sea
City Council

COUNCIL TAX
EXEMPTION*

Thinking about Fostering?

Talk to us about our
increased fees and
allowances



Receive local training



Help local children



Get local support

☎ 01702 212938

✉ fostering@southend.gov.uk

🌐 www.southendfostering.co.uk

SAFE
& WELL

*Subject to eligibility