



UNITED KINGDOM – February 2024

Contents

UK GENERAL 1

 THE TORIES STARVED COUNCILS, THINKING NO ONE CARED. NOW THEY’RE BUST – AND WE CARE VERY MUCH 1

 COUNCIL TAX BOMBHELL WILL SEE HOUSEHOLDS HIT BY £523 EXTRA ON THEIR BILLS 2

ENGLAND 2

 ENGLISH COUNCILS NEED £4BN TO PREVENT WIDESPREAD BANKRUPTCY, MPs SAY 2

 MINISTERS WILL NOT REFORM COUNCIL TAX AS IT WILL BE EXPENSIVE FOR PENSIONERS, OFFICIALS REVEAL 2

 FOUR REFORMS TO STOP ENGLISH COUNCILS FROM GOING BANKRUPT 3

 BIRMINGHAM GIVEN GO-AHEAD TO RAISE COUNCIL TAX BY UP TO 10% 3

 RISHI SUNAK CRITICISES LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR REQUESTING STEEP COUNCIL TAX RISES 3

 NORTHERN HOUSEHOLDS OVERPAYING £250 A YEAR DUE TO OUTDATED COUNCIL TAX SYSTEM 3

 PROBE INTO CLAIM PRESTON’S OLD BHS BRANCH HAS BEEN ‘TURNED INTO A SNAIL FARM’ 4

 THE AUTHORITIES PLANNING TO FREEZE COUNCIL TAX 4

 THE UK SEASIDE TOWN SO CHEAP HOMES SELL FOR £5K BUT LOCALS PAY MORE TAX THAN MILLIONAIRES 4

NORTHERN IRELAND 5

 MOST VALUABLE NI HOMES FACE A HUGE BILL IF THE DOMESTIC RATES CAP ABOLISHED 5

 SHOCK AS NI COUNCIL HIKES RATES BY ALMOST 10% 5

 DEADLINE OVER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN OVER DEBT ‘NOT ACCEPTABLE’: FINANCE MINISTER 5

 MULTI-MILLION POUND RATES WRITE OFF IS UNFAIR ON ‘LAW-ABIDING PEOPLE’ SAYS DUP’S FORSYTHE 5

 DUP’S GREGORY CAMPBELL ADVOCATES FOR RATE PAYMENT FLEXIBILITY TO AID SMALL BUSINESSES AMID ECONOMIC STRAIN 6

 EXECUTIVE RISKS FRESH STAND-OFF WITH UK GOVERNMENT AFTER MAKING DECISION ON REGIONAL RATE RISE 6

SCOTLAND 6

 URGENT CALLS FOR COUNCIL TAX REVALUATION 6

 GORDON BROWN’S THINK TANK CALLS FOR SCOTLAND TO SCRAP COUNCIL TAX 7

UK GENERAL

The Tories starved councils, thinking no one cared. Now they’re bust – and we care very much

This article reports on the perilous condition of local authority finances and voices the opinion that this is due to the amount they have received having been cut by 30% in real

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.

terms since the Tory government has been in power. The article gives the history of the cuts in local service provision that have ensued and suggests reforms that the government might start with.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[The Tories starved councils, thinking no one cared. Now they're bust – and we care very much | Will Hutton | The Guardian](#)

Council tax bombshell will see households hit by £523 extra on their bills

This article unearths documents from the Office of Budget Responsibility that show that the amount raised from council tax will reach £57.4 billion. This is double the amount it was under the Labour Government. The article looks at the effect it will have on council taxpayers and hears from the Labour Deputy Leader who criticises the economic mismanagement of the Tories.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Council tax bombshell will see households hit by £523 extra on their bills - Mirror Online](#)

ENGLAND

English councils need £4bn to prevent widespread bankruptcy, MPs say

This article reports on the levelling up, housing and communities committee who have advised the government to act to help councils in financial crisis with an extra £4bn and carry out an urgent review of the “outdated and regressive” council tax and of business rates as part of a full review of council funding.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[English councils need £4bn to prevent widespread bankruptcy, MPs say | England | The Guardian](#)

Ministers will not reform council tax as it will be expensive for pensioners, officials reveal

The government has announced that there will not be a revaluation for council tax, nor will the system be reviewed even though it is out of date and regressive. This article gives the government’s reasons for not addressing the problem despite the calls for reform.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Ministers will not reform council tax as it will be expensive for pensioners, officials reveal \(msn.com\)](#)

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.

Four reforms to stop English councils from going bankrupt

This article provides opinion on the crisis facing local government funding, indicating that six councils have announced their bankruptcy since 2020 and others may be following unless a £4 bn gap in funding is met. The article goes on to suggest four reforms that could be made by the government to address the problem. These are: the council's require financial needs assessment, as in other European countries, and a fair funding review; there should be equitable funding to and also between councils; a standing committee should be formed to handle financial enquiries for councils and also raising issues; and a percentage of national taxes should be assigned to councils.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[EXPERT COMMENT: Four reforms to stop English councils from going bankrupt | Northumbria University, Newcastle](#)

Birmingham given go-ahead to raise council tax by up to 10%

This article reports that the levelling up secretary has announced that he will not oppose Birmingham City Council's proposal to increase council tax by up to 10% without the need for a local referendum, after they served a Section 114 notice. The article looks at the demands on the council's budget, other measures they may take to increase the revenue available and similar problems for other English councils.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Birmingham given go-ahead to raise council tax by up to 10% | Local government | The Guardian](#)

Rishi Sunak criticises local authorities for requesting steep council tax rises

This article looks at the funding crisis in English council's and the Prime Minister's recent comments criticising those that are looking to increase council tax by a figure greater than the 5% cap. Eight English councils have so far issued S. 114 notices, effectively declaring themselves bankrupt, and the article looks at the ways the councils can increase council tax above the cap to close the funding deficits.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Rishi Sunak criticises local authorities for requesting steep council tax rises | Council tax | The Guardian](#)

Northern Households Overpaying £250 a Year Due to Outdated Council Tax System

The Northern Powerhouse Partnership (NPP) is calling for a revaluation of properties and new super bands for more expensive properties, to address the higher council tax bills in the

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.

North compared to the South. This article looks at the cause of the discrepancy which is a result of the rise in house prices in the South and the fall in areas of the North since the introduction of council tax in 1991.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Northern Households Overpaying £250 a Year Due to Outdated Council... \(bnnbreaking.com\)](#)

Probe into claim Preston's old BHS branch has been 'turned into a snail farm'

This article considers the use of Preston's former BHS store that has been empty since 2016. The article confirms that the property has benefitted from two periods of EPR during this time and speculates that this has been achieved by claims that the store has been used as a "farm" for edible snails.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Probe into claim Preston's old BHS branch has been 'turned into a snail farm' \(lep.co.uk\)](#)

The authorities planning to freeze council tax

This article identifies three English councils which will freeze council tax this year. The article looks at the way in which the councils will try to balance their budgets without reverting to increases for taxpayers.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[The authorities planning to freeze council tax | Local Government Chronicle \(LGC\) \(lgcplus.com\)](#)

The UK seaside town so cheap homes sell for £5k but locals pay more tax than millionaires

This article looks at the small north-eastern town of Easington which went into decline when the colliery closed. The article reports that properties can be bought for as little as £5,000, but with CT payments of around a third of the capital value. The fairness of this is questioned in comparison with \$20 million properties in Westminster and Belgravia who pay significantly less and the article reports on a local MP who is calling for reform to provide an equitable system.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[The UK seaside town so cheap homes sell for £5k but locals pay more tax than millionaires - kamumedy](#)

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Most valuable NI homes face a huge bill if the domestic rates cap abolished

A consultation paper from the Department of Finance will close shortly. This article looks at the questions put out for consultation on revenue-raising measures ranging from getting rid of industrial de-rating, abolishing a discount for the early payment of rates and ending the cap on house valuations. The article looks at the current cap of £400,000 for domestic properties, and what a removal of this cap would mean for amount of tax that occupiers of houses worth over £400,000 would pay.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Most valuable NI homes face a huge bill if the domestic rates cap abolished | BelfastTelegraph.co.uk](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/most-valuable-ni-homes-face-a-huge-bill-if-the-domestic-rates-cap-abolished-1.6444444)

Shock as NI council hikes rates by almost 10%

The Mid and East Antrim Council has agreed a 9.78% increase in the domestic district rate for 2024/25 and an 11.86% increase for the non-domestic rate. This article hears comments from the council on why such a hike is necessary and looks at Belfast and Mid Antrim where increases of 5.44% and 5.9% have been seen. The regional rate is still to be set by Stormont.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Shock as NI council hikes rates by almost 10% | BelfastTelegraph.co.uk](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/shock-as-ni-council-hikes-rates-by-almost-10-1.6444444)

Deadline over sustainability plan over debt 'not acceptable': Finance Minister

This article looks at the proposal by the Treasury to make the writing-off £559m in Executive debt dependent upon Stormont publishing a financial sustainability plan by May. The article examines the views of the new NI Finance Minister in response.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Deadline over sustainability plan over debt 'not acceptable': Finance Minister | BelfastTelegraph.co.uk](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/deadline-over-sustainability-plan-over-debt-not-acceptable-finance-minister-1.6444444)

Multi-million pound rates write off is unfair on 'law-abiding people' says DUP's Forsythe

A total of £27 million in unpaid rates has been written off in the last two years in Northern Ireland. This article looks at the recent increases in district rates from councils and the regional rates increases expected from Stormont, and hears from the South Down DUP MLA that this is unfair to ratepayers who pay their taxes on time and the money foregone could be put to good use.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.

[Multi-million pound rates write off is unfair on 'law-abiding people' says DUP's Forsythe \(newsletter.co.uk\)](#)

DUP's Gregory Campbell Advocates for Rate Payment Flexibility to Aid Small Businesses Amid Economic Strain

This article reports on matters raised by a DUP MP concerning the inflexibility that non-domestic ratepayers are given – they do not receive a discount for prompt payment and receive high charges for payment using a credit card. The MP outlines proposals to help small businesses.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[DUP's Gregory Campbell Advocates for Rate Payment Flexibility to A... \(bnnbreaking.com\)](#)

Executive risks fresh stand-off with UK Government after making decision on regional rate rise

The UK government has demanded that the NI Executive must raise £113m in revenue in the next 12 months as a pre-condition for a £3.3bn package to support the restored devolved government. This article looks at the Executive's decision to increase the regional element of rates bills by only 4%, in line with inflation, despite this increase only raising £30m out of the extra £113m in extra revenue required. The increase must be approved by the Assembly, and the remainder of the article looks at the views of ministers and economists and ratepayer representatives.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Regional rate: Executive agrees 4% rise, risking fresh stand-off with Government over revenue-raising | BelfastTelegraph.co.uk](#)

SCOTLAND

Urgent calls for council tax revaluation

This article looks at a call from charities, academics and campaign organisations, who have united and are led by the Scottish TUC, for Scotland's political leaders to revalue property for Council Tax as a step towards reforming Scotland's broken system of local property taxation. The article goes on to look at how far out of date the current valuations are and how this is affecting both councils and taxpayers.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Urgent calls for council tax revaluation - TFN](#)

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.

Gordon Brown's think tank calls for Scotland to scrap council tax

This article looks at a report by Our Scottish Future which is urging Scotland's political parties to scrap council tax and implement a new system of local taxation after the 2026 Holyrood elections. The article looks at the think tank's reasoning.

The article can be accessed via the following link:

[Gordon Brown's think tank calls for Scotland to scrap council tax | The Herald \(heraldscotland.com\)](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/2025/03/20/gordon-brown-think-tank-calls-scotland-scrap-council-tax/)

International Property Tax Institute

IPTI Xtracts- The items included in IPTI Xtracts have been extracted from published information. IPTI accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or any opinions expressed in the articles.