

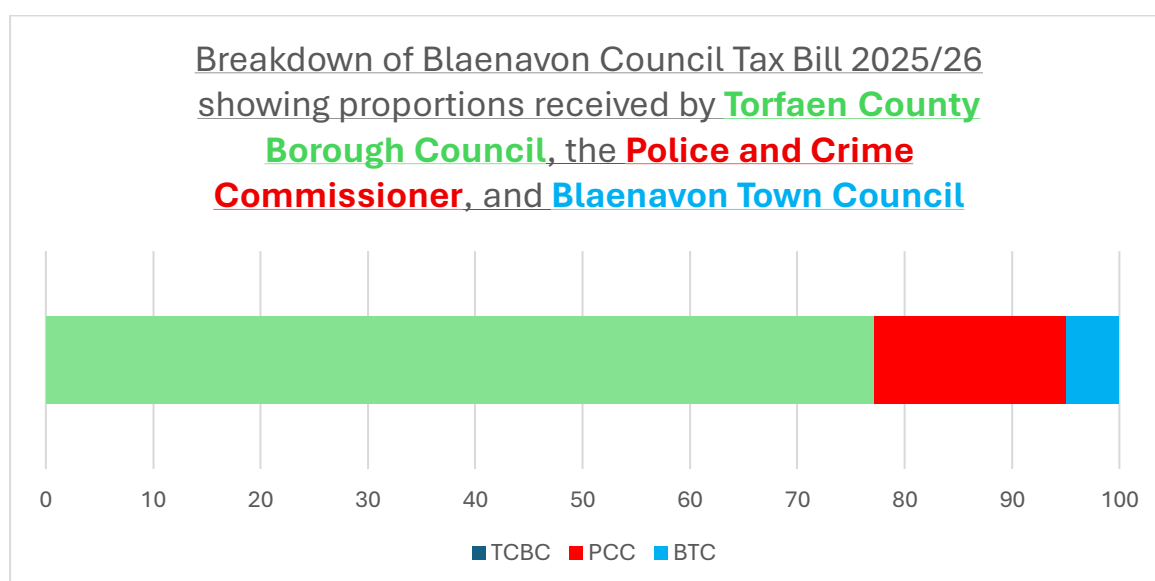


The Precept Explained

The **precept** is the amount of money that a town or community council requires residents to contribute through their council tax. It is how town and community councils in Wales raise much of the income they need to carry out their work.

The precept is added to council tax bills and collected by the unitary authorities (for example Torfaen County Borough Council), which then passes the relevant share to each town or community council in their area.

The community council precept is the smallest part of the overall council tax bill. In Blaenavon, the proportion paid to the Town Council for 2025 to 2026 is shown in blue on the chart below.



Approximately 5% of your council tax bill goes to Blaenavon Town Council. Most council tax goes towards Torfaen County Borough Council, with a further precept levied by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent.

How the Precept Is set

Each community council has a **legal duty under Section 50 of the Local Government Act 1992 to set a budget** for the year ahead. Councillors agree this budget with advice from the council's Responsible Financial Officer.

Spending must be lawful, achievable, and supported by the precept, reserves, or other income such as grant funding. **Councils cannot plan to spend money they do not have.**

Budgets must first cover core duties and obligations, staffing, contractual commitments, and audit requirements. They also include the activities the council plans to deliver during the year.

In Blaenavon this usually includes community events, cost of living initiatives, play schemes, Christmas lighting, local projects, and grants to community groups. The budget must also account for added pressures such as inflation, National Insurance changes and nationally agreed local government pay scales.

Reserves can support the budget although they must be used with care. Reserves are funds held to provide financial stability or to meet future costs. General reserves should remain at a sensible level. Earmarked reserves must be used only for their intended purpose.

Once the council has agreed its programme of work, it checks whether its income will cover the associated costs. **The precept is then set at the level needed to deliver the agreed activities.**

In 2025/26, the following precepts were set by the six town and community councils in Torfaen:

Community Council	Precept 2025/26
Blaenavon Town Council	£205,710
Pontypool Community Council	£774,942
Cwmbran Community Council	£692,866
Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon Community Council	£156,921
Henllys Community Council	£38,788
Ponthir Community Council	£28,284

How is Council Tax Calculated?

The amount of council tax a household pays is based on property bands from **Band A to Band I**. These bands reflect the **assessed market value of a property at a fixed valuation date**, rather than the size of the household or the income of the people living there. Because property values vary between areas, **similar houses can fall into different bands depending on their location.**

This means a house that is in **Band A or Band B in Blaenavon** could reasonably fall into a **higher band in another community** where property values are higher. The building itself may be similar, but its market value is not.

Band D is used as the standard reference figure by unitary authorities, the Police and Crime Commissioners, and community councils when setting and publishing their charges. Other bands pay a set proportion of the **Band D** amount. Although the **Band D** figure often appears in leaflets and reports, it is only a reference point.

In practice, **most households in Blaenavon do not pay the Band D amount**, because the town has a very high proportion of homes in the lower bands. Around **90 percent of**

properties fall below Band D, and homes in these lower bands pay a reduced amount compared with **Band D**. The table below illustrates this distribution.

Council	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Band I
Blaenavon	1421	965	231	150	98	28	5	2	0

Many households (**around 43%**) also receive a discount such as the 25 percent single person discount. This means most households in Blaenavon pay less than the figure shown for **Band D**.

By contrast, as an example, Cwmbran has a different housing profile. Less than one in ten homes there is in **Band A**, and more than half are in **Band C** or higher. The below table depicts the housing band profile for the other community councils within Torfaen as of December 2025.

Council	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Band I
Cwmbran	1801	6140	4958	1565	2022	726	216	23	4
Pontypool	2787	5280	4092	2061	1389	864	137	10	4
Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon	69	355	2206	401	431	315	125	17	2
Henllys	17	94	242	148	245	271	60	7	1
Ponthir	0	30	29	123	125	152	129	16	3

Homes in higher bands pay more. Due to house valuations, the typical household in Cwmbran – and indeed all other communities within Torfaen - therefore pays more council tax than the typical household in Blaenavon. This is inclusive of the TCBC, Police and Crime Commissioner and Community Council contributions.

The below table demonstrates this using a ‘median’ average calculation.

Council	Total properties Bands A-I	Median bill (£)	Median band	Mode bill (£)	Mode band
Blaenavon	2,905	1,640.40	B	1,406.07	A
Cwmbran	17,455	1,825.78	C	1,597.54	B
Pontypool	16,624	1,843.03	C	1,604.77	B
Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon	3,921	1,822.05	C	1,822.05	C
Henllys	1,085	2,491.26	E	2,944.20	F
Ponthir	607	2,497.14	E	2,951.15	F

The **median council tax bill** is a useful measure for explaining what residents actually pay because it shows the bill paid by the household in the middle once all households are ordered from the lowest to highest band.

This reflects the real housing mix in a community rather than simply presenting the standard **Band D** figure. The **mode** shows the most common council tax band and is helpful for understanding the dominant type of housing in an area.

Why is Blaenavon's Community Council Precept Higher?

Although the median council tax bill for Blaenavon households is the lowest in Torfaen, the proportion paid towards the community council precept is higher. This is primarily due to the size of the community's **tax base**.

The tax base is not the total number of properties. It is the number of **chargeable dwellings expressed as an equivalent Band D figure**, after accounting for banding, discounts and exemptions. Because Blaenavon has a high proportion of **Band A and Band B properties**, together with a relatively large number of discounts and exemptions, its tax base is smaller than its property count.

The below table highlights the tax base calculations for each community Council across Torfaen covering last year's figures 2025/26 and this year's figures for 2026/27:

Community Council	Tax Base at 'Average Band D'	
	2025/26	2026/27
Blaenavon	1,969	1,958
Cwmbran	14,037	14,136
Pontypool	13,213	13,190
Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon	3,474	3,482
Henllys	1,152	1,149
Ponthir	735	733

For 2026/27, Blaenavon has **2,994 properties**, of which **89 are exempt**, leaving **2,905 chargeable dwellings**. When band weighting and discounts are applied, this produces a tax base of **1,958**, which is significantly lower than larger communities such as Cwmbran or Pontypool. As a result, the cost of running the town council must be shared across **fewer chargeable households**, increasing the precept per household even where overall spending is modest.

Blaenavon is smaller and more geographically remote than larger towns, but residents expect a similar level of local services, including events, youth provision, community initiatives, Christmas lighting. and support for local groups. These services require organisation, delivery and statutory compliance.

To do this work, the council employs **2.4 full-time equivalent staff** who manage projects, organise activities and fulfil legal duties. The role the officers play goes beyond administration, with their work having a direct benefit to the community. Staffing is therefore a core service cost rather than just an administrative overhead.

In larger towns, staffing and service costs can be spread across many thousands of **Band D** equivalent properties, which keeps individual precepts lower even if the staffing headcount is higher. In Blaenavon, however, the cost of staffing is shared across a much smaller tax base than in Pontypool or Cwmbran, which inevitably pushes the precept per household up.

The tax base changes each year and has recently reduced slightly. This means that even if the council's overall budget remains unchanged, the amount paid by each household can still rise. A smaller tax base will always result in higher individual contributions.

Blaenavon faces this pressure each year because of its housing profile rather than because the council is acting unusually or spending extravagantly.

What Residents Actually Pay Towards Blaenavon Town Council

For 2026 to 2027, Blaenavon Town Council will receive £235,000 through the precept.

Whilst a **Band D** home will pay £120.81 of its annual council tax to the Town Council in 2026/27, over 90% of households pay less. For example:

Banding	Cost Per Year	Cost Per Week
A	£80.01	£1.54
B	£93.34	£1.79
C	£106.68	£2.05

Some households pay even less as around **43 percent of households in Blaenavon receive a council tax discount**. A single person in a **Band A** home, for example pays £60.01 a year, the equivalent of about £1.15 a week.

Why the Precept is Important

The precept enables Blaenavon Town Council to deliver events and services throughout the year. The town's smaller tax base means the cost of providing these services is shared among fewer households, which is a key reason the figure differs from that of larger communities.

The funding residents contribute towards the town supports events, youth activities, community groups, local projects, and the council's statutory responsibilities.

Every household's contribution helps sustain these services and ensures Blaenavon continues to receive the standard of provision that residents expect.