

Rates update



District rates increase below the average rate of inflation over the council term

We've increased the district rate by 1.98 per cent for the coming year. This applies to 44 per cent of the Belfast business and domestic rates bill – the element we're responsible for setting. Stormont departments set the remaining portion.

In real terms, the increase means domestic ratepayers will pay an average 62 pence extra per month. Offices and retail will pay an average of £12.09 extra per month – around £145.09 per year.

We're committed to keeping the costs of rates as low as possible for our residents and business community which is why we've kept the district rate below the average rate of inflation throughout the council term, providing real savings for rate payers.

Reducing costs while providing high quality services and facilities is important to us. We've achieved £3 million in efficiency savings over the last year and our total savings over the last 10 years has been more than £30 million. We've also earmarked a further £3.3 million for this year.

This rates pull-out explains where we get our money from and how we use it to make Belfast a great place to live, work, visit and invest in.

Your rates bill

Your rates bill is made up of two parts - the district and regional rate. The annual rates bill you receive is the combined cost.

Central government sets the **regional rate**. It accounts for around 56 per cent of the bill and it goes towards:

- education,
- emergency services,
- hospitals,
- law and order,
- roads,
- social services, and
- community development.

Your local council sets the **district rate**. It accounts for around 44 per cent of the bill and funds services like:

- the arts,
- events and recreation,
- building control,
- leisure and community centres,
- environmental health,
- tourism, and
- waste management.

What does the district rate increase mean in monetary terms for householders and businesses?

Property type	Annual increase	Monthly increase
Terraced house	£5.58	£0.47
3 bed semi-detached	£8.54	£0.71
4 bed detached	£18.98	£1.58
Apartment	£5.39	£0.45
Average office	£146.87	£12.24
Average retail	£143.31	£11.94

How your rate bill is calculated

Domestic rates are calculated as follows:

$$\text{* Rateable capital value of your property} \times (\text{regional rate} + \text{district rate}) = \text{rates payable}$$

*The rateable capital value is based on the assessment of your property's value on the open market on 1 January 2005.

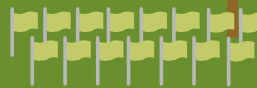
What do my rates pay for?

Continuing to promote Belfast as a tourist destination (in 2017, tourism generated £328m into the economy on 1.5m overnight visitor trips, supporting 18,600 jobs)

Last year your rates helped us to meet and exceed many of our targets and improve our services. Here are some examples.



We won 19 Green Flag Awards for our parks and open spaces



We attracted:

200,000 visitors to the Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall



Over 1m visitors to St George's Market and over 1m visitors to the Christmas Market and other markets

200,000 visitors to Belfast Castle and Malone House



608,000 visitors to 25 community centres

We entertained:

Over 300,000 people

at our large scale events, adding £12m to the local economy

Over 134,000 people through our parks and events programmes

1,500 children at 32 inclusive summer schemes



Over 220,000 visitors to Belfast Zoo

Delivering community safety services such as on-street alcohol enforcement and policing and Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) projects

Attracting over 224,800 visitors to our website every month



Dealing with fuel poverty via schemes like Be Warm which sold £111,415 in oil stamps



Delivering 1,304 free home safety checks



Dealing with 133 dangerous buildings and improving the look of over 13 dilapidated buildings



Supporting over 33,0000 people to promote good relations



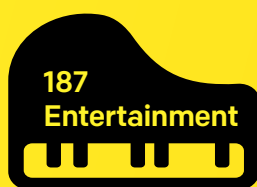
Responding to 4,740 night time noise services requests



Carrying out inspections for health and safety, housing, food safety and entertainment



3,811 Housing



187 Entertainment



583 Health and safety

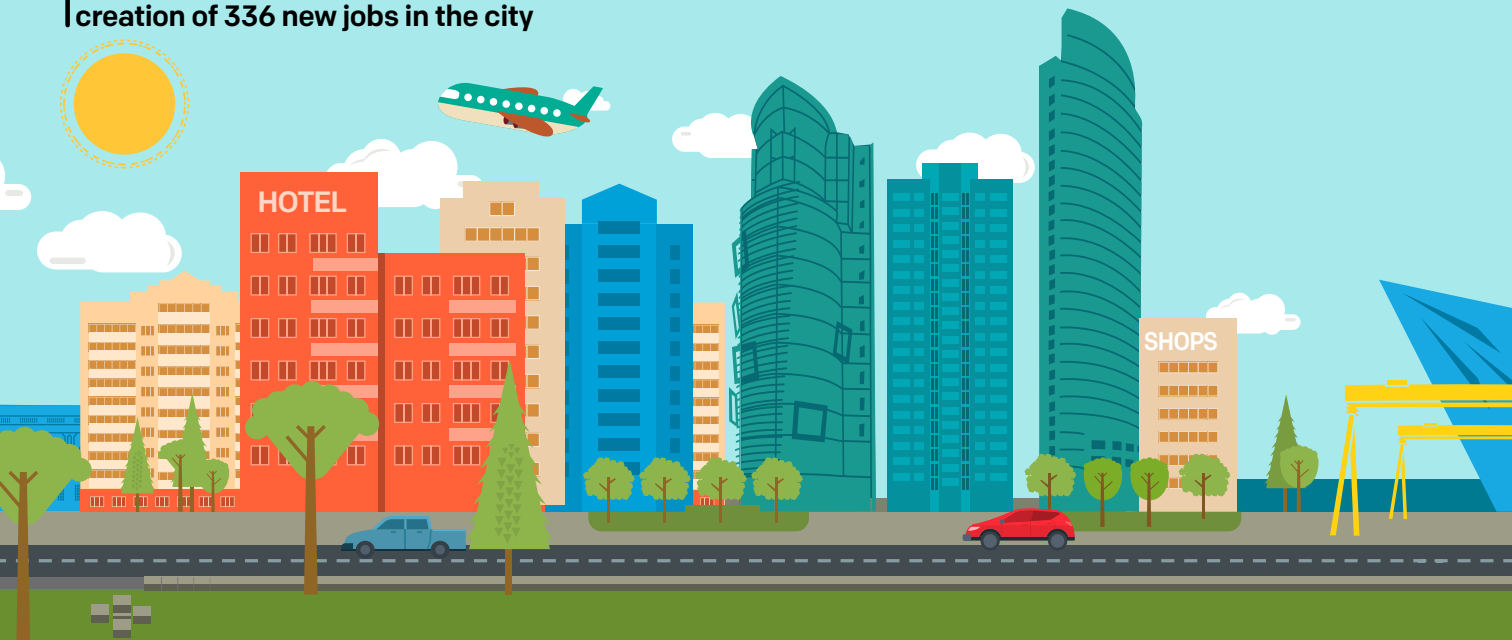


2,580 Food safety

1,590 individuals have engaged in our enterprise initiatives and we've helped 547 new businesses or social enterprises to start, which has supported the creation of 336 new jobs in the city

Giving advice to over 1,200 consumers, resulting in over £190,000 going back into the consumer pocket

Issuing 380 entertainment licences



Over the past year we've

Organised
152
community
clean-ups

Recycled over
65,000
tonnes
of waste



Issued nearly **2,500**
Fixed Penalty Notices
for littering and
dog offences




Recycled
nearly
44 per cent
of our household
waste



Had nearly
842,800
people visit our
recycling centres

Emptied almost **9m** wheelie bins
and carried out nearly **38,500** bulky
waste collections



 Cleaned over **4,787** streets per week
(445,000km per year)

Supporting **2,750**
through employability
initiatives with **800+**
expected to move into
employment

We've provided financial
assistance of:



Over £3m
in 273 community grants

We've delivered a physical investment
programme including:

A total investment of £66.4m

Supporting
3,500
young people
through youth
initiatives relating to
employability and skills



£367,000
for sports clubs,
coaches, talented
individuals and sports events



30
major
projects
completed

Work started on another
16 major projects
worth **£80 million**
(see page 14)

Engaging with
7,500
participants
through career
events and jobs fairs



Just over £1.5m
to culture and arts
organisations

£465,000
to support good relations

Key projects completed include
Olympia Leisure Centre,
the Tropical Ravine
refurbishment and the new
City Hall visitor exhibition



Where we get our money from

We get our money from four key areas:



District rate £157.80m

From households and businesses.



Fees and charges £21.11m

This is money we receive for services like waste disposal and building control.



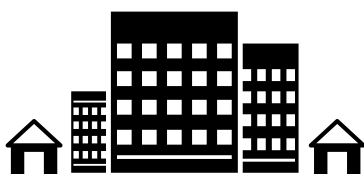
Grants £11.29m

For example, from Europe and central government.




Other £12.66m

For example, rents and licences.



Total planned income for 2019-20
£202.85m



 For further information on how we spend the district rate, go to www.belfastcity.gov.uk/HowWeUseYourRates



Help with your rates

Land & Property Services (LPS) has a number of responsibilities when it comes to rates.

These include:

- valuing your property;
- issuing your rate bill;
- collecting your payment;
- providing help with paying your bill; and
- pursuing court action for unpaid rates.

It manages several schemes for domestic ratepayers including:

- Lone Pensioner Allowance;
- Disabled Person's Allowance;
- Rate Relief;
- Housing Benefit; and
- Rate Rebate.

If you wish to apply for Rate Rebate you must apply for and be awarded Universal Credit first and then apply for Rate Rebate.

You must pay your rate bill or LPS will take legal action against you. If you're finding it difficult to pay your rates, contact LPS immediately on 0300 200 7801. They will review your circumstances and may be able to discuss alternative payment arrangements with you. In 2018-2019, over 15,000 Belfast ratepayers set up a payment arrangement with LPS to help manage their debt and avoid further legal action.

Payment options

Set up a direct debit – it's safe, secure and the easy way to pay! Over 65,000 ratepayers in Belfast are paying this way. Go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates and click on 'Set up a Direct Debit online'

Pay rates online – Domestic ratepayers can go online and pay rates directly to LPS. Go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates and click on 'Pay your rates online'

Domestic ratepayers can pay by direct debit or online in one full lump sum (and qualify for discount) or you can spread the cost of your rate bill over monthly instalments.

LPS also offer other methods to pay – go online to find out more at www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates

Have you moved or changed address?

Let LPS know as quickly as possible if you have moved house or changed your address, or have a second property that you have not received a bill for, to avoid receiving a backdated bill. Go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates and click on 'Property and housing online services' to create or update your rate account.

If there have been physical alterations to the property which will require a revaluation, you should submit a valuation application form as soon as the change has begun. Go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates and click on 'Valuation of domestic properties for rates'.

Contact LPS

For more information about this article or for queries about your rate bill go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates or call LPS on 0300 200 7801 (calls charged at local rate). Text Relay: 18001 0300 200 7801

Or contact LPS in person or in writing at:

Land & Property Services,
Lanyon Plaza, 7 Lanyon
Place, Town Parks, BT1 3LP