



2009 | 2010

# Council Tax information



*'leading for tomorrow'*

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## Our share of the Council Tax 2009/10

	Frimley & Camberley *see note below	Bisley Parish	Chobham Parish	West End Parish	Windlesham Parish
Band	£	£	£	£	£
A	125.69	146.56	143.57	146.91	142.87
B	146.63	170.99	167.49	171.40	166.69
C	167.58	195.41	191.42	195.88	190.50
D	188.53	219.84	215.35	220.37	214.31
E	230.43	268.69	263.21	269.34	261.93
F	272.32	317.55	311.06	318.31	309.56
G	314.22	366.40	358.92	367.28	357.18
H	377.06	439.68	430.70	440.74	428.62

\* includes Frimley Green, Deepcut and Mytchett

This table only shows the Council Tax we charge and, where relevant, the Parish Councils of Bisley, Chobham, West End and Windlesham. The figures for Frimley and Camberley include special expenses for this area. This is explained on our website. Page 15 shows the total Council Tax including amounts charged by Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority across the borough.



## Statement by Moira Gibson Leader of Surrey Heath Borough Council

This has been a turbulent year for the world economy and we have not been immune from its effects here at Surrey Heath. Early in the year our planning and land search fee income fell as the construction industry and housing market faltered. Later, our rental income declined as retailers experienced problems and recently the number of Benefit Claimants and Homelessness enquiries has increased as the recession deepens.

To cope with this the Government has increased our grant by only 0.5% (£24,000) which does not reflect the considerably higher inflation rate. Increasingly, south east councils cannot maintain their current service levels due to low funding compared to other parts of the country. In addition, the Government requires us to take on new statutory services, often without adequate funding, which then falls on Council Tax payers. Whilst we support the benefit it brings to our older residents, the National Concessionary Bus Pass Scheme has left the Council £160,000 out of pocket. This is equivalent to 3% of your Council Tax. We have always maintained that this is a national scheme and should be fully funded centrally and not fall on Council tax payers.

We have reduced our costs during the year and expect to make £328,000 of efficiency savings. We will be examining all our services during 2009/10 to find more cost efficient ways of providing them to ensure that Council finances remain sustainable. This will inevitably result in hard decisions and changes in the way services are delivered.

There have also been some notable achievements during the year. The £1.3m refurbishment of the Arena Leisure Centre and the opening of The Atrium in November have been real factors in drawing people into Camberley. Our new refuse collection service, which we will roll out later this year, will not only make it easier for residents to recycle but will also benefit the environment through reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.

Low Government funding combined with the economic situation has meant that we have had to increase the Council tax this year, although we have kept it as low as we can. However, for approximately 50p a week Surrey Heath provides a wide range of services from refuse collection to leisure centres and is also increasing help to those adversely affected by the credit crunch.

As I said at the beginning, Surrey Heath is not immune to the world economic situation but both members and staff are committed to supporting and helping our residents and businesses through these difficult times.

# Introduction

This leaflet gives residents and business customers general information about Council Tax. It explains how we are funded and how we spend the money we receive.

The information in this leaflet should answer most of your questions, but if you have any questions about our spending please telephone **Financial Services on 01276 707260** or e-mail us at: [financial.services@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:financial.services@surreyheath.gov.uk).

If you have any questions about your **Council Tax account**, please call **01276 707176** or e-mail us at: [revenues@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@surreyheath.gov.uk).

If you have any questions about the spending plans of Surrey County Council or Surrey Police, please contact them direct. Their phone numbers are shown on the back of this leaflet. There are details about our policies and performance in our Corporate Plan. You can also find details of our budget and an explanation of the terms we have used in this leaflet on our website [www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk).

## What is Council Tax?

Council Tax helps pay for local services. We can charge Council Tax on homes and the amount you have to pay depends on the valuation of your property. We collect Council Tax to pay for our own services and, where relevant, those provided by parish councils. **We also collect tax for Surrey County Council and Surrey Police.** The amounts we collect for other organisations are known as 'precepts'. Around 73% of the money we collect is for the County Council.

There are more details of the services we provide on page 12 of this leaflet. Surrey County Council and Surrey Police produce their own leaflets which are included with your Council Tax bill.

The Environment Agency's flood defence work is funded by a levy on local councils. Further details can be found on our website.

This leaflet is designed to give information and advice on Council Tax. It is not meant to be a complete guide to the relevant legislation.

For more information, please contact Council Tax Enquiries, or see our website.

## Paying by direct debit

The easiest way to pay your Council Tax is by direct debit. Paying by direct debit takes away the hassle of remembering to write and send in cheques, renew standing orders or queue at a bank.

Once you have set up the direct debit, it will continue each year and you are protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

If you pay by direct debit, this is also much cheaper for us as it saves a lot of administrative time and expense processing cash and cheques. These savings free more of our funds to provide vital local public services.

Over 22,000 households already pay by direct debit. To join them simply fill in the form enclosed with your bill and return it to us or visit our website to download a form.

## Moving home

If you move home, we need to know the address of the property you are leaving, your new address, the date of the move and whether all the members of your household are moving. It will also help if you can tell us if anyone is moving into your old address. Please write your Council Tax account number on all letters you send us.

## Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit are available if you pay rent, Council Tax, or both, and you have a low income and less than £16,000 in savings and investments. If you get Income Support, Pension Credit, or Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit could pay up to 100% of your rent and Council Tax. Even if you are working full-time and receiving a tax credit, you could still be entitled to some help.

If you have already applied for benefit to another agency such as the Jobcentre or the Pension Service, we can get information about your claim from them. You will not have to give this information again.

If you want to fill in an application form or would like to ask us to work out whether you may be entitled to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit (this is known as a 'trial calculation'), please

contact us at the address or phone number shown on the back of this booklet. If you need help filling in the form and you cannot get in to see us, please phone us as we may be able to send an officer out to visit you.

Our website at [www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk) contains detailed information about benefits (*look under 'Council' and then 'Benefits'*).

## Benefit Fraud

We are committed to stopping benefit fraud. We employ a team of officers whose job is to track down people who claim Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit illegally.

If you claim benefit you are not entitled to we can set a variety of tough penalties. These include the following:

- We or the police can give a formal caution. This is the same as a legal warning.
- An administration penalty. This is a fine which you must pay as well as the original amount of benefit you fraudulently claimed.
- Prosecution. We will prosecute you if it is in the public interest. If you are found guilty, you could be sent to prison.

If you know someone who is claiming benefit they are not entitled to call **Benefit Fraud Hotline on 01276 707372**. You do not have to give your name.

## Discounts and exemptions

If you are currently receiving a discount, or your property is exempt from Council Tax (see page 8), this will be shown on your bill. You must tell us within 21 days of any change in your circumstances which might affect your entitlement. If you don't do this, you may have to pay a penalty of £70. Please give your Council Tax account number whenever you contact us.

### Discounts

Council Tax bills generally assume that there are two or more adults living in a property. However, the following discounts are available.

- **Single Person Discount (25%):** If only one adult lives in a property or if any other people are not counted for Council Tax purposes (see below).
- **Long-Term Empty Discount (50%):** Properties which nobody is living in and which are mainly unfurnished.
- **Prescribed Class A Discount (10%):** Properties that are furnished, no-one's sole or main home, and which people are not allowed to live in for at least 28 days in a row each year.
- **Prescribed Class B Discount (10%):** Properties that are furnished, no-one's sole or main home, and which people are allowed to live in for at least 28 days in a row each year. These include second homes and furnished properties which are available to let.

When we are working out how many people live in a property, we do not count the following groups of people:

- Full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees.
- Patients living in hospital.
- People who are being looked after in care homes.
- People who are severely mentally impaired.
- People staying in certain hostels and night shelters.
- 18-19 year olds who are at, or have just left, school.
- Care workers working for low pay, usually for charities.
- People caring for someone with a disability who is not a married partner, or a child under 18.
- Members of visiting forces and certain international institutions.
- Members of religious communities (monks and nuns).
- People in prison (unless they are in prison for not paying their Council Tax or a fine).
- Non-British married partners of students.
- People with diplomatic immunity.

For more information or to apply for a discount or exemption, please contact Council Tax Account Enquiries on the number shown on the back page.

# Exempt properties

## Exemptions for properties that people are living in

If a property is 'exempt' from Council Tax, this means we don't charge Council Tax on it.

We do not charge Council Tax on the following properties.

**Class M:** Students' halls of residence.

**Class N:** Properties that are lived in only by students.

**Class O:** Armed forces' accommodation.

**Class P:** Visiting forces' accommodation.

**Class S:** Properties lived in only by people under age 18.

**Class U:** Properties where all the people living there are severely mentally impaired.

**Class V:** Properties that visiting diplomats are staying in.

**Class W:** Granny annexes where the person living there is aged over 65 or disabled.

## Exemptions for empty properties

We do not charge Council Tax on the following properties as long as nobody is living in them.

**Class A:** Properties that need or are having major repair work to make them fit for people to live in, or are having structural alterations. (These are exempt for up to one year after becoming empty.)

**Class B:** Properties owned by a charity as long as the property was used for the purposes of the charity right up to the date it became empty. (These are exempt for up to six months if they are still empty.)

**Class C:** Properties that are new or become empty. (These are exempt for up to six months if they are empty and unfurnished.) When the six-month exemption ends we can only give another six-month exemption after the property has been lived in for more than six weeks.

**Class D:** Properties left empty by someone who has been sent to prison or taken into hospital.

**Class E:** Properties left empty by someone who has gone to receive personal care in a home or hospital.

**Class F:** Properties left empty by someone who has died. (These are exempt for up to six months after probate is granted.)

**Class G:** Properties left empty because nobody is allowed to live there by law.

**Class H:** Empty properties that a Minister of Religion is waiting to move into.

**Class I:** Properties left empty by someone who has gone to receive personal care.

**Class J:** Properties left empty by someone who has gone to provide personal care.

**Class K:** Empty properties which were last used and owned by a student.

**Class L:** Empty properties which have been passed back to the mortgage lender.

**Class Q:** Properties left empty because the owner has been made bankrupt.

**Class R:** Unused domestic caravan pitches.

**Class T:** Empty annexes where the main property is lived in, for example, granny annexes.

## People with disabilities

If you, or someone who lives with you, needs a room, an extra bathroom or kitchen, or extra space because you have special needs or a disability, you may be entitled to a reduced Council Tax bill. We may reduce your bill by putting your home in the Council Tax band immediately below your current one. For Band A properties, we may reduce your bill by a fixed proportion of the Band D charge.

These reductions mean that people with disabilities do not pay more tax because of the extra space they may need.

## Appeals

If you think your home has been put in the **wrong valuation band**, you can appeal against it. To appeal, you should write to the Valuation Office which is responsible for putting all properties in one of eight Council Tax bands. The address is shown at the back of this leaflet. Please do not write to us as we cannot consider this type of appeal.

You can also appeal if you think you are **not liable for paying** the Council Tax, perhaps because you do not own or live in the property or your property is exempt, or you think we have made a mistake working out your bill. In these cases, you should write to us and we will reconsider your case. If you are not satisfied with our response, you can appeal to a Valuation Tribunal.

In both types of appeal, you must continue to pay all of your Council Tax while your case is being reconsidered. If your appeal is successful, we will refund any overpaid Council Tax.

# If you do not pay your Council Tax

## Reminders, final notices and summonses

The methods we use to collect Council Tax are controlled by legislation and council policy.

In some cases we have to send reminders, final notices and sometimes a summons (an order to appear before a judge or magistrate) to people who do not pay all of their instalments, or do not pay by the due date. Everyone, including people who pay on time, must cover the costs of sending reminders and final notices.

It is important that we collect the Council Tax quickly to reduce our administrative costs and help keep Council Tax as low as possible. Instalments are due on the 2nd of each month, so you should pay them on or before that date. If you miss this date, we will send you a reminder, a final notice or a summons, depending on how many times you have been late paying.

**Under the laws which control Council Tax, we do not have to send more than two reminders in any year before moving onto a final notice or a summons. This is an important point and one worth noting.**

If you do not pay your instalments on time, we will eventually send you a final notice (telling you you have lost the right to pay by instalments) or a court summons. If you receive a court summons you will have to pay extra costs (these are £63 at the moment). If you do not make the full payment before the hearing date, we will apply for a liability order. If we are granted this, it will give us the power to claim back the amount you owe us using various methods such as bailiffs, asking your employer to take payments from your earnings or taking it from your benefit.

We know there are circumstances where, because of genuine financial difficulties, people are unable to make their payments. If this is the case, please contact us immediately so we can work something out.

Direct debit is an easy way to avoid forgetting to pay and receiving a reminder. Why not take the hassle out of Council Tax payments by signing up to the direct debit scheme? There is a form enclosed with your bill or you can download one from our website.

## Surrey County Council, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Surrey Heath Borough Council - Becoming more efficient

In 2008-09, Surrey County Council planned efficiencies totalling £24.5m, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service £1.2m and Surrey Heath Borough Council £328,000 – 4.4%, 2.7% and 1.8% of 2007-08 total baseline expenditure. This equates to an efficiency saving of £50.43, £2.47 and £8.82 for each Band D household respectively, which compares with national figures of £53, £2 and £22.

The Surrey Heath Borough Council efficiencies are principally made up from:

- Absorbing the costs of inflation without reducing the level of service
- Reducing costs through better procurement of services and supplies
- Achieving the same level of service for less money and;
- Increasing staff efficiency through greater productivity.

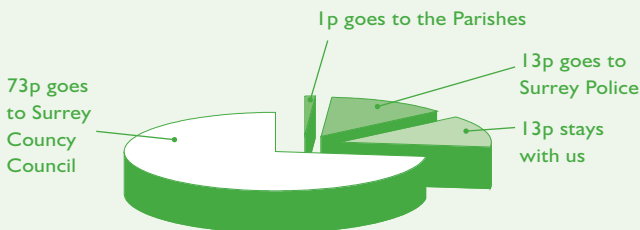
## Financial information

### What does the Council Tax pay for?

For every pound of Council Tax we collect, 73p will go to Surrey County Council to pay for services such as social services, schools and libraries, and 13p will go to the Surrey Police Authority.

We will keep around 13p to pay for services we provide locally such as collecting rubbish and sweeping the streets, services for the elderly, caring for the environment, health and safety, planning, parks, open spaces and leisure centres. 1p will go to parish councils.

For every £1 collected ...



## Cost of our services

GROSS EXPENDITURE	2008/09 Total Spending £ thousands	2009/10 Total Spending £ thousands
Environmental Health	2,353	2,458
Housing	1,433	1,640
Planning & Economic Development	2,922	3,079
Recreation	3,290	3,535
Refuse Collection	2,333	3,489
Community Services	2,222	2,437
Housing Benefit	14,302	14,584
Parking Services	1,542	1,612
Corporate Services	3,302	2,854
Cost of Collecting Revenue	953	944
Other	595	-650
Parish Precepts	456	474
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>35,703</b>	<b>36,456</b>
Less grants and other income	-23,594	-23,373
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>12,109</b>	<b>13,083</b>
Use of General Fund	-363	-908
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>11,746</b>	<b>12,175</b>
Revenue Support Grant	-585	-903
Re-distributed NNDR	-4,205	-3,911
Collection Fund deficit	104	0
<b>Demand on Collection Fund</b>	<b>7,060</b>	<b>7,361</b>
<b>SHBC basic band 'D' Equivalent</b>	<b>189.47</b>	<b>198.53</b>

## Changes in our spending

Our total spending is **£753,000** more than last year. The reasons for the increase are set out below.

	£ thousands
Full year effect of Approved Changes	464
Less funding from Reserves	-368
Other Budget Adjustments	-861
Effect of Inflation	317
Change in Quantity of Services - Increased Spending	1,618
Change in Quantity of Services - Savings	-434
Increase in Parish Precepts	17
<b>Increased Spending</b>	<b>753</b>

## Changes in our income

Our total income is **£324,000** more than last year. The reasons for the increase are set out below.

	£ thousands
Decrease in Investment Income	-510
Increases in Fees and Charges	287
Increased funding from Reserves	545
Changes in the Quantity of Services	766
Other Budget Adjustments	-764
<b>Increased Income</b>	<b>324</b>

## Special Expenses and Parish Precepts

	Special Expenses or Precept	Band D Equivalent
	£	£
Frimley and Camberley (*see below)	179,000	7.60
Bisley	58,268	38.91
Chobham	68,000	34.42
West End	79,600	39.44
Windlesham	267,780	33.38

\* includes Frimley Green, Deepcut and Mytchett

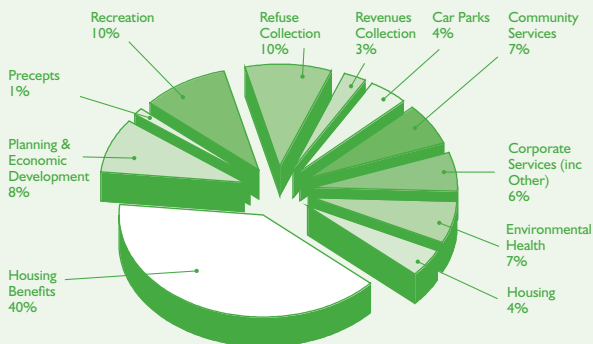
## Parish Precepts over £100,000

The following information relates to Windlesham Parish Council which in 2009/10 will be asking us to collect precepts of **£267,780**.

	2008/09 Total Spending £	2009/10 Total Spending £
<b>Services</b>		
Recreation	65,250	55,980
Environmental Health	71,980	90,040
Other Services	146,810	156,320
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>284,040</b>	<b>302,340</b>
Income	28,990	34,560
<b>Spending (less income)</b>	<b>255,050</b>	<b>267,780</b>

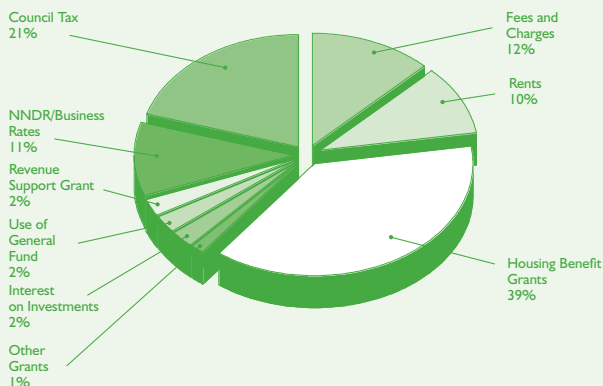
An increase of £18,300 in total spending, less an increase in income of £5,570, increases the budget requirement and precept by £12,730.

# What Surrey Heath Spends



WHAT WE SPEND	£000's	WHAT WE SPEND	£000's
Car Parks	1,612	Precepts	474
Community Services	2,437	Recreation	3,535
Corporate Services (inc Other)	2,204	Refuse Collection	3,489
Environmental Health	2,458	Revenues Collection	944
Housing	1,640		
Housing Benefits	14,584		36,456
Planning & Economic Development	3,079		

# Where does the money come from



INCOME	£000's	INCOME	£000's
Fees and Charges	4,515	Revenue Support Grant	903
Rents	3,661	NNDR / Business Rates	3,911
Housing Benefit Grants	13,765	Council Tax	7,361
Other Grants	532		
Interest on Investments	900		
Use of General Fund	908		36,456

# Valuation

HM Revenue and Customs Valuation Office has placed each home in the borough into one of eight bands according to its open market value on 1 April 1991. Your Council Tax bill will show which band your home is in. The valuation bands are as follows:

A	Up to and including £40,000	E	£88,001 to £120,000
B	£40,001 to £52,000	F	£120,001 to £160,000
C	£52,001 to £68,000	G	£160,001 to £320,000
D	£68,001 to £88,000	H	More than £320,000

If you disagree with the band your home is in, you can appeal against it.

There is more information about this, and other types of appeals, on page 9.

## Total Council Tax for each part of the Borough

	Frimley and Camberley (*see below)	Bisley Parish	Chobham Parish	West End Parish	Windlesham Parish
Band	£	£	£	£	£
A	983.21	1,004.08	1,001.09	1,004.43	1,000.39
B	1,147.07	1,171.43	1,167.93	1,171.84	1,167.13
C	1,310.94	1,338.77	1,334.78	1,339.24	1,333.86
D	1,474.81	1,506.12	1,501.63	1,506.65	1,500.59
E	1,802.55	1,840.81	1,835.33	1,841.46	1,834.05
F	2,130.28	2,175.51	2,169.02	2,176.27	2,167.52
G	2,458.02	2,510.20	2,502.72	2,511.08	2,500.98
H	2,949.62	3,012.24	3,003.26	3,013.30	3,001.18

\*includes Frimley Green, Deepcut and Mytchett

# Useful Contacts

Surrey Heath Borough Council  
Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road,  
Camberley, Surrey GU15 3HD

Website: [www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk)  
(look under 'Council' then 'Council Tax')  
E-mail: [revenues@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@surreyheath.gov.uk)

Contact Centre:	01276 707100
Council Tax account enquiries:	01276 707176
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit:	01276 707121
Business Rates:	01276 707136
Other finance enquiries:	01276 707260
Benefit fraud hotline:	01276 707372
Payment Line:	01276 707680
Surrey County Council:	08456 009009
Surrey Police Authority:	01483 630200
Bisley Parish Council:	01483 480172
Chobham Parish Council:	01276 856633
West End Parish Council:	01276 855361
Windlesham Parish Council:	01276 471675

The Valuation Office, West Block, Westbrook Mills,  
Borough Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2SG

Phone: 01483 702900

Website: [www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk)

**If you would like this leaflet in large print,  
please phone 01276 707176.**

**Council opening hours:**

**Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.30pm**

**Friday: 8.30am to 5pm**