

Your guide to council tax 2010/11



Working together



South Bucks
District Council



South Bucks District Council

Phone lines are open 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Wednesday and 9am to 5pm Thursday and Friday. If the service you want to contact isn't listed, please visit us online at www.southbucks.gov.uk or phone our switchboard on **01895 837 200**.

Anti-social behaviour	01895 837 253	communitysafety@southbucks.gov.uk
Benefits	01895 837 515	benefits@southbucks.gov.uk
Building control	01895 837 212	buildingcontrol@southbucks.gov.uk
Business rates (NNDR)	0845 300 5014	businessrates@southbucks.gov.uk
Community safety	01895 837 220 / 837 234	communitysafety@southbucks.gov.uk
Council tax	01895 837 500	ctax@southbucks.gov.uk
Cultural and Youth Services	01895 837 255	culturalandyouth@southbucks.gov.uk
Electoral services	01895 837 205	elections@southbucks.gov.uk
Environmental health	01895 837 264	envhealth@southbucks.gov.uk
Housing – Paradigm Housing	01494 830 991	Paradigmhousing@southbucks.gov.uk
Licensing	01895 837 222	licensing@southbucks.gov.uk
Parking	01895 837 359	
-Parking ticket automated payment line	0845 452 4747	
Planning	01895 837 210 / 837 342	planning@southbucks.gov.uk
Refuse and recycling collections	01895 837 362	refuseandrecycling@southbucks.gov.uk

Buckinghamshire County Council

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm.

If the service you want to contact isn't listed, please phone our switchboard on **0845 370 8090** (Typetalk facility available on request) or email customerservices@bucksc.gov.uk.

Adult learning	0845 045 4040	studentenquiries@bucksc.gov.uk
Customer services	0845 370 8090	customerservices@bucksc.gov.uk
Education/schools	0845 370 8090	customerservices@bucksc.gov.uk
Fly-tipping	0845 330 1856	illegaldumpingcosts@bucksc.gov.uk
Libraries	0845 230 3232	library@bucksc.gov.uk
Public transport (Transport for Buckinghamshire)	0845 230 2882	passtrans@bucksc.gov.uk
Roads and highways (Transport for Buckinghamshire)	0845 230 2882	TFB@bucksc.gov.uk
Household waste recycling centres	0845 370 8090	waste_strategy@bucksc.gov.uk
Social services	0845 370 8090	customerservices@bucksc.gov.uk
Trading standards	0845 370 8090	tsd@bucksc.gov.uk

Out of hours emergency numbers

Roads and highways (Transport for Buckinghamshire)	01296 486 630
Social services	01494 675 802

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service In an emergency dial 999

General enquiries	01296 744 400	enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk
Fire safety in the home	01296 744 477	cs@bucksfire.gov.uk
Fire safety in the workplace	01628 470 640	marlowfiresafety@bucksfire.gov.uk
Fire safety training	01296 744 411	ictu@bucksfire.gov.uk
Recruitment	01296 744 670	recruitment@bucksfire.gov.uk

Police

In an emergency dial 999

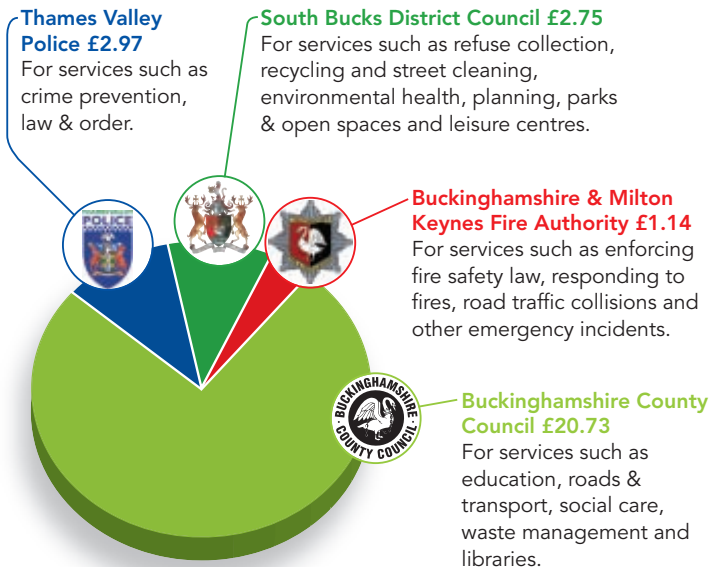
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Thames Valley Police (non emergency)	0845 8 505 505

We all use local public services. Some services are funded by government grants, while others are paid for by collecting council tax. This leaflet contains information from three of the authorities which provide local public services and are funded by your council tax – South Bucks District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority. We hope that this combined leaflet will give you a clearer idea of how your council tax is spent.

How much do I pay?

This is how much council tax you pay each week for local services in your area. We hope that you will agree that it represents good value for money.

You pay your council tax to South Bucks District Council and this money is then shared with other local service providers.



*Based on an average band D property

In addition to the authorities above, some of your council tax is shared with your local parish or town council to pay for the services that they provide.

Budget details for the parish and town councils that are planning to spend more than £140,000 this year are shown on page 8.

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2009/10 Net (£000s)	South Bucks District Council	2010/11 Gross expenditure (£000s)	2010/11 Gross income (£000s)	2010/11 Net (£000s)
1,616	Community	2,067	569	1,498
1,717	Health & housing	2,041	391	1,650
2,742	Environment	4,277	1,562	2,715
710	Resources	1,112	389	723
2,281	Sustainable development	3,134	952	2,182
452	Cost of collecting council tax	641	165	476
488	Housing & council tax benefits	14,312	13,837	475
1,079	Democratic representation & management	913		913
(3,548)	Capital financing & other	56	3,031	(2,975)
<u>7,537</u>		<u>28,553</u>	<u>20,896</u>	<u>7,657</u>
	Funded by			
4,537	Council tax			4,643
2,437	Business rates			2,632
563	Government grant			382
<u>7,537</u>				<u>7,657</u>
(£000s)	Capital spending			(£000s)
334	Major capital schemes			57
496	Grants			447
240	ICT			185
155	Buildings & grounds works			85
300	Other capital schemes			149
<u>1,525</u>				<u>923</u>

Net cost per week of some key services

Refuse collection	54p
Planning	87p
Community safety	16p
Environmental health	21p
Recycling	44p

Our element of the council tax is £143 for a band D property, an increase of 2 per cent on last year.

Our financial overview



South Bucks
District Council

The amount we are raising from council tax for our services in 2010/11 is only 2 per cent more than last year. Overall the South Bucks District Council element of the council tax is increasing by only 5 pence per week. This level of increase is after absorbing the effect of continuing falls in our income, due to the recession and interest rates remaining at historically low levels. The effect of these factors has cost us around £300,000 in reduced income in the last year.

We have minimised the increase in the cost to the council tax payer by making savings and efficiencies of over £700,000 and by using around £1million of our reserves. Our financial position has not been helped by our grant from the Government for 2010/11 only increasing by 0.5 per cent.

We believe that our element of the council tax strikes a balance between the need to maintain funding of key services such as waste collection and litter collection or the planning and building control services and continuing our policy of keeping our element of the council tax as low as possible.

One of the impacts of the reduced funding available to us has been the need to reduce our capital programme. The programme will however continue to make over £360,000 available for housing and disabled improvements grants.

Details of the help available if you are having difficulties in paying your council tax and/or rent are shown on the back page of this leaflet. In difficult financial times we would encourage you to contact us, or other advice agencies, as early as possible if you feel that you may have difficulties with paying your rent or council tax. If you would like to pay your council tax by direct debit please contact the council tax team who will assist you in setting up the arrangement.

Further information about our finances, council tax and benefit matters can be found on our website, www.southbucks.gov.uk, where you can also register to gain online access to information about your council tax account.

Valuation band

Parish/town council	Band A (£)	Band B (£)	Band C (£)	Band D (£)	Band E (£)	Band F (£)	Band G (£)	Band H (£)
Beaconsfield	984.07	1,148.10	1,312.11	1,476.12	1,804.14	2,132.17	2,460.19	2,952.24
Burnham	1,017.12	1,186.66	1,356.18	1,525.70	1,864.74	2,203.78	2,542.82	3,051.40
Denham	974.74	1,137.21	1,299.66	1,462.12	1,787.03	2,111.94	2,436.86	2,924.24
Dorney	981.54	1,145.14	1,308.73	1,472.32	1,799.50	2,126.68	2,453.86	2,944.64
Farnham Royal	981.18	1,144.73	1,308.26	1,471.79	1,798.85	2,125.91	2,452.97	2,943.58
Fulmer	991.51	1,156.78	1,322.03	1,487.28	1,817.78	2,148.29	2,478.79	2,974.56
Gerrards Cross	984.44	1,148.53	1,312.61	1,476.68	1,804.83	2,132.98	2,461.12	2,953.36
Hedgerley	987.03	1,151.55	1,316.05	1,480.56	1,809.57	2,138.58	2,467.59	2,961.12
Iver	1,006.45	1,174.21	1,341.95	1,509.69	1,845.17	2,180.66	2,516.14	3,019.38
Stoke Poges	982.09	1,145.79	1,309.47	1,473.15	1,800.51	2,127.88	2,455.24	2,946.30
Taplow	968.66	1,130.11	1,291.56	1,453.00	1,775.89	2,098.77	2,421.66	2,906.00
Wexham	977.41	1,140.33	1,303.23	1,466.13	1,791.93	2,117.74	2,443.54	2,932.26

Beaconsfield Town Council

2009/10		2010/11
£445,010	Gross expenditure	£387,485
(£31,295)	Transfer from reserves	(£16,286)
£413,715	Net expenditure	£371,199
(£156,308)	Income	(£112,244)
£257,407	Precept	£258,955

Gross expenditure is estimated to reduce by £57,525. The main reasons for this reduced expenditure are no further resurfacing of tennis courts saving £12,000, and a project included in last year's budget costing £30,000 that did not take place and is not envisaged will take place in the coming year.

Income is estimated to decrease by £44,064 because the Town Hall rents and recovered charges may decrease by £11,000 and interest may reduce by £3,000.

The precept for 2010/11 represents an increase of 0.60% over that for the previous year.

Beaconsfield Town Council Phone on 01494 675 173

Burnham Parish Council

2009/10		2010/11
£2,811,000	Gross spending	£1,536,000
£766,000	Net expenditure (prior to the use of reserves)	£414,000
£472,000	Precept	£472,000

The Parish Council has not increased the precept this year and held the rate for a fourth year. Funds are being accrued to assist with rebuilding the new community premises at Burnham Park which started during the last financial year. Expenditure in 2009/10 was not as high as anticipated due to the delay in the commencement of the building works. However there was also a large drop in interest rates on the Council's investments.

The precept allows for the rental of alternative accommodation and the servicing of the loan from the Public Works Loans Board. Funds have been allocated this year to cover the cost of the large number of street light repairs necessary around the parish.

The Parish Council continues to provide and maintain the closed churchyard, five play areas, 350 street lights and five bus shelters. The upkeep of the Jennery Lane toilets, the football pitches, Burnham Park and the Cherry Orchard Nature Reserve are ongoing commitments

Phone Burnham Parish Council on 01628 661 381 or visit www.burnhamparish.gov.uk

Gerrards Cross Parish Council

2009/10		2010/11
£221,154	Gross spending	£221,154
£188,216	Net expenditure for all classes of services	£188,216
£188,216	Precept	£188,216

The Parish Council has resolved that there will be no increase in the parish precept for the forthcoming year. The Council is well aware that in light of the continuing difficult economic environment many residents are concerned about their finances. This decision is for one year only and will not affect our provision of essential services such as street lighting, maintenance of footpaths, the Camp and the Commons and many others.

Within the limitations imposed by this cap on the precept, the Parish Council still plans to undertake new initiatives that will benefit the residents of the village. This includes the establishment of a youth committee with the aim of working closely with a number of interested parties in order to enhance the provision of youth services and a forestry project. Nonetheless, some additional new projects may have to be deferred for one year.

Overall the Parish Council feels that this is a prudent decision in the current economic climate.

Phone Gerrards Cross Parish Council
on 01753 888 018
or email clerk@gerrardscross.gov.uk

Iver Parish Council

2009/10		2010/11
£400,364	Gross spending	£908,743
£358,859	Net expenditure	£416,378
£352,000	Precept	£364,000

The Parish Council intends to build a new sports pavilion at Iver Recreation Ground (approximate build cost £453,000) in this financial year. The majority of the increase in spending relates to the new pavilion. The Parish Council will put £52,000 of its reserves into this project and has also committed to borrow up to £250,000 in order to complete the project. A grant is being applied for from the Football Foundation for approximately half of the build cost.

The Parish Council has also taken over management of a piece of land in Swan Road (on a lease from the district council). There are some repairs required to the boundary walls and fences which will account for approximately £20,000 of the increase in spending.

Phone Iver Parish Council on 01753 655 331 or email clerk@iverparishcouncil.gov.uk

Your choices in an emergency

At some point, you will need to get help because of an accident or a medical emergency. This is more likely if you have children or elderly relatives living with you. Planning ahead and understanding what your options are in an emergency will help you get the best care as quickly as possible.

In Buckinghamshire the NHS provides more than just A&E services for urgent medical care. This means that if you need urgent medical treatment, you might not need to travel to Stoke Mandeville Hospital to get it. Likewise if you live near the borders of Buckinghamshire, the nearest place to go in an emergency might be in Slough, Milton Keynes or Oxford. Here's an introduction to your emergency choices:

Minor Injuries Unit (MIU)

In Buckinghamshire we have two Minor Injuries Units which can help adults or children with minor injuries, for example suspected fractures, scalds or minor burns. Waiting times at a MIU are often shorter than at A&E, where you may have to wait a long time with the same symptoms while other

more critical patients are treated first. At Milton Keynes Hospital a similar service is offered called an Urgent Care Centre.

Emergency Medical Centre

Wycombe Hospital's Emergency Medical Centre can treat a wide range of adult medical problems, including chest pain, breathing difficulties and overdoses. This means you might not need to go to Stoke Mandeville if you are taken seriously ill and if Wycombe is closer to your home

Accident & Emergency

Accident and Emergency departments should only be used in limb or life-threatening situations. A&E departments provide immediate emergency care for people who show the symptoms of serious illness or are badly injured.

For more information about the NHS in Buckinghamshire request a Choose Well leaflet and pocket card from our Patient Experience Team on **0800 328 5640** or visit www.buckinghamshire.nhs.uk/choosewell

Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road,
Aylesbury, HP21 8AL
Phone **01296 315 664**

Wycombe Hospital
Queen Alexandra Road,
High Wycombe, HP11 2TT
Phone **01494 425 438**

ONLY ONE OF THESE PEOPLE NEEDS A&E.

For less severe symptoms
Know your choices

Choose well.



For more information visit:

www.buckinghamshire.nhs.uk



Our income and spending

Our main aims are to provide efficient and effective services and keep council tax levels down by driving out waste and inefficiency.



In finding around £20 million of efficiency savings through improving the way we deliver services, we have been able to keep our council tax increase to 2 per cent. The need for efficiencies is vital in balancing our books, as we only receive a government grant increase of 1.5 per cent.

The Audit Commission states that "The Council manages its finances well to deliver value for money" and as a result it can provide a range of high quality services to Buckinghamshire residents.



This year the average band D household will pay £1077.74 a year, an increase of only 21 pence per week.



We provide a range of services for both you and your community including:

- Schools and education
- Social care
- Highways
- Public transport
- Youth services
- Libraries and museums
- Recycling
- Trading standards
- Country parks
- Archaeology

A breakdown of our spending can be viewed on the opposite page.

Recommended revenue budgets 2010/11

2009/10 adjusted* Net (£000s)	Portfolio	2010/11 Net (£000s)	Cost of services per £100 of council tax
112,158	Adults and families	115,613	36.86
55,117	Children and young people	54,656	17.43
8,864	Deputy leader	8,171	2.61
3,251	Leader	3,218	1.03
19,869	Planning and environment	21,248	6.78
24,966	Resources	26,820	8.55
47,640	Transportation	47,670	15.20
30,998	Capital financing and other below the line	36,225	11.55
302,863	Total net operating budget	313,621	100
-1,805	Use of reserves	-1,270	
-18,651	Area based grant (ABG)	-24,029	
282,407	Net budget requirement	288,322	
	Financed by:		
-58,732	Formula grant (RSG & NNDR)	-59,552	
-847	Net surplus on council tax collection	-41	
-222,828	Council tax	-228,729	
-282,407	Total financing	-288,322	

*Budgets and financing adjusted to enable like for like comparison

2009/10 Gross (£000s)	Capital spending	2010/11 Gross (£000s)
726	Adults and families	430
11,283	Children and young people	29,645
1,630	Planning and environment	739
8,856	Resources	10,629
14,042	Transportation	9,547
-	Additional pump priming budget	300
36,537	Total gross capital programme	51,290

Safety tip

Remember to turn off and unplug hair-straighteners and irons after use and to keep them out of reach of children.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority comprises 14 councillors from Buckinghamshire and seven from Milton Keynes. It serves a population of around 730,000.

You can count on us to respond to your 999 call for help in an emergency – and we are working harder than ever to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place.

Our vision is to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes safer by working with the other emergency services and national and local government partners to reduce death, injury and damage to property, the environment and our heritage from fire and other emergencies.

This year we will continue to focus on five key community safety objectives and on improving the performance of our emergency response. The objectives are to make you safer:

- In your home
- At work and in public places
- On the roads
- In your community
- In an emergency

Where the money comes from

This year we will spend £28,835,152 (£39.88 per head of population) on providing services to you. Government grant accounts for £2.01 per head of population, business rates £13.83 and council tax £24.04.

	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
Government grant	2,136,807	1,452,021
Business rates	9,257,746	9,999,505
Council tax	16,825,230	17,383,626
Total	28,219,783	28,835,152

Safety tip

Keep internal doors shut - if you have a fire, this will slow down the rate at which it spreads through your home.

Our budget for this year is 2.18 per cent higher than last year's. This allows for committed expenditure such as the costs of specialist equipment and contracts for utilities such as electricity and gas, and the decline in interest received.

To fund essential improvements and priorities, and to compensate for an increase in government funding of 0.5 per cent – £56,973 – we have had to increase the rate at which our share of your council tax is charged by 2.5 per cent. This amounts to an additional £1.44 a year to a band D council tax payer, making a total of £59.13 for the year for a band D property.

Where the money goes

	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
Employees	23,860,517	24,209,263
Premises	1,256,514	1,312,529
Transport	1,890,392	1,539,059
Supplies and services	2,742,097	3,266,940
Agency payments	61,080	224,774
Capital charges	773,983	929,514
Income	-2,364,800	-2,646,927
Total	28,219,783	28,835,152

We currently employ a total of 733 staff, comprising 361 wholetime firefighters, 211 retained firefighters, 24 control room staff and 118 people who work in a variety of support services including community safety, fire safety, workshops, finance, human resources, planning, information technology and procurement, and 19 staff based at fire stations such as cooks, cleaners and administrative support.

We repaid a loan of £335,000 in 2009/10, reducing our total borrowing to £6,117,000 at 31 March 2010.

The employee costs take account of a reduced establishment in our wholetime firefighters. This is part of our plan to continue to have a more efficient workforce with no reduction in our response capability.

Safety tip

Make an escape plan - talk to your family now about how you would all get out of your home if there was a fire.



Safety tip

More than half of all house fires start in the kitchen. Take extra care when cooking and never use the cooker or oven if you have been drinking.

Safety tip

Smoke alarms save lives - but only if they work. Test your smoke alarms once a week. Push the button, not your luck.



Safety tip

If in doubt, get out, stay out and call us out by ringing 999. Things and buildings can be replaced - people can't.

The costs also take account of the phased enhancement of the numbers of retained firefighters and community safety staff. Included within employee costs are the National Insurance contributions required by employers, and the pension contributions set nationally for firefighters and locally for non-firefighting staff.

A significant proportion of our employee costs is used for training our staff to ensure that they are well prepared for any event that they may be required to attend, and are skilled to the appropriate level to help you at a variety of different types of incident.

We have reviewed our capital programme and will fund the essential repairs and maintenance of our fire stations and maintain the replacement programme for some fire appliances and associated specialist equipment. We will also continue our programme to install smoke alarms in the homes of the most vulnerable people within our community. In addition, we are investing in environmental measures to help reduce our carbon footprint.

Making you safer

- Are you aged 65 or over?
- Do you live on your own?
- Are you sharing with non-family members?
- Do you receive a benefit?

If you have answered "yes" to one or more of these four questions, we can help make you safer. Let us carry out a **free** home safety check to help you minimise the risk of a fire. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the size of your home. We will need you to be present to answer a few questions for us. We will fit free 10-year smoke alarms where necessary.

To book one, phone us on 01296 744 477 or email us at cs@bucksfire.gov.uk

Fire safety leaflets in other languages

Fire safety leaflets in English and 30 other languages are available to download from our website at www.bucksfire.gov.uk/bucksfire/languages

These notes form part of your council tax bill

Council tax and housing benefit

These notes form part of your council tax bill

If you and your partner are unemployed or on a low income, you may be able to get help to pay your council tax bill and/or housing rent.

Any entitlement to benefit will normally start on the Monday following the date you first contact the council. So don't delay, it could cost you money.

The actual amount of benefit you receive will depend on your financial situation and the housing benefit may not meet all of the rent due on the property. The Rent Service - part of the Valuation Office Agency - decides how much rent your home is worth. The amount of housing benefit will be linked to the number of rooms you and your family need.

Under no circumstances should you take on a tenancy in the hope that housing benefit will take care of the rent. We recommend that you contact the council before you commit yourself to a tenancy agreement.

Second adult rebate

This type of rebate is for council tax payers only and is a different way of getting help to pay your council tax. People who are solely liable to pay council tax, who share their home on a non-commercial basis with one or more adults on a low income may claim it, for example if you have adult children or elderly relatives. Please note that this does not include your spouse or partner.

- Even if your income and/or savings are too high to qualify for council tax benefit, you may still be entitled to some help, as benefit is based on the other adult's income, not your own.
- You cannot get both council tax benefit and second adult rebate, but we will work out which one you will be better off receiving.
- The amount of second adult rebate may be 25 per cent, 15 per cent or 7.5 per cent, depending on the second adult's income.

Discounts and exemptions

If you are already receiving a discount or your property is exempt from council tax payments, this will be shown on your bill. If you are not entitled to the discount you must notify the council within 21 days of any change. Failure to do so may lead to penalties being imposed.

Are you entitled to a discount?

The full council tax bill assumes there are at least two adults living in a property. If there is only one adult living there and it is not a second home (rented or owned), you should be receiving a 25 per cent discount. When counting the number of adults (people aged 18 and over) in your home, you can exclude:

- 18- and 19-year-olds who are still at school or have recently left school
- full-time students and student nurses, foreign language assistants
- long-term residential patients in a hospital or care home
- people under the age of 25 receiving approved training that is funded by the Learning Skills Council
- residents of some night hostels or shelters
- apprentices earning less than £195 a week before deductions and working over 35 hours

- people who provide full-time care for a disabled relative who is not a child aged under 18 or their husband, wife or partner
- resident care workers earning less than £44 a week
- people with severe mental-health problems
- people in prison or detained by a court order
- members of religious communities with no income
- diplomats and visiting forces staff

If a property is unfurnished and isn't used at all throughout the year, then council tax is payable. If the property is your second, furnished home or holiday home, then there is a discount of 10 per cent, unless it is a condition of your employment that you live and pay council tax in a specific property.

Disabled band reduction scheme

If someone in your home is disabled and either uses a wheelchair indoors or has the total or main use of a room because of this disability, you may be entitled to a reduction in your bill. This does not apply if the room is your only kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

Should you be paying council tax at all?

We will not charge council tax for an empty home if:

- it is unfurnished apart from fixtures (up to six months) after which council tax is payable
- it cannot be lived in or is undergoing major structural work (up to 12 months) after which council tax is payable
- it is owned by a charity and was last used for charitable purposes (up to six months) after which council tax is payable
- you are in prison, or detained by a court order
- you are a long-term residential patient of a hospital or care home
- the person living there before has died and the will has not yet been settled or was settled less than six months ago
- planning restrictions do not allow anyone to live there
- it is waiting to be lived in by a serving cleric
- you are living elsewhere to receive or provide care
- it is an unused caravan pitch or boat mooring

- you are bankrupt or the property has been repossessed
- it is an annexe (or granny flat) which cannot be let separately

We will also not charge council tax if the property is only lived in by:

- full-time students
- people under 18 years old
- dependent relatives who are either disabled or aged 65 years or over, and the home is annexed to the main property (a granny flat)
- people with severe mental-health problems
- visiting forces staff and their dependants
- armed forces staff and their dependants and the home is owned by the Ministry of Defence
- diplomats and their dependants

If we have not given you a discount and think you should get one, please contact us with the details, or visit our website for an application form. Our contact details are on the back page of this leaflet and on the front of your bill.

Valuation bands and appeals

There is one council tax bill for every property, whether it be a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat. Each property is in one of eight valuation bands and your council tax bill shows which band your home is in. The value of your home on 1 April 1991 is used to work this out.

Appealing against your valuation band

You can appeal against the valuation band your property is in if one of the following applies:

- Your home has reduced in value because of demolition or adaptation work or because of a change in the area, such as a new major road next to your home.
- The property has been re-valued because of past building (or other) work. The person appealing would normally be the new owner or occupier.
- You have to pay council tax for the property for the first time, in which case you must appeal within six months of first becoming liable.
- You start using part of your home for business, or the balance between domestic and business use changes.

You cannot appeal directly to the council about your council tax band. You must appeal to the listing officer, who is a government official, at:

Property band	Property value on 1 April 1991	Fraction band-D charge
A	Up to £40,000	6/9
B	£40,001 to £52,000	7/9
C	£52,001 to £68,000	8/9
D	£68,001 to £88,000	9/9
E	£88,001 to £120,000	11/9
F	£120,001 to £160,000	13/9
G	£160,001 to £320,000	15/9
H	More than £320,000	18/9

The Valuation Office Agency,
Heron House,
49 Buckingham Street,
Aylesbury,
HP20 2NQ
Phone 01296 550 300

If you want information about valuation bands for similar properties, you can visit The Valuation Office Agency website at www.voa.gov.uk.

Please note that this is a free service and there is no need, unless you want to, to employ a company to appeal. If you have access to the internet then please take some time to research the matter.

Appealing against paying council tax

You can appeal if you think that you are not the person who should be paying council tax. In this case, you should appeal directly to your district council. Our contact details are on the back page of this leaflet and on the front of your bill.

Have your circumstances changed?

If you are receiving help with your rent or your council tax through the benefits system, it is very important that you tell us about any changes in your circumstances. If you do not tell us about these changes, you could lose out on benefit that you should be getting, or you could be receiving more benefit than you are entitled to, resulting in us sending you a bill later on to recover the overpaid amount.

The types of change you must tell us about are:

- changes in your income or your partner's income, capital or savings including any new benefit you get
- changes in any tax credits you receive
- changes to the income of any adults living with you
- if you stop receiving Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance
- a change of job or changes to your working hours
- changes in the number of people in your household
- if any of your children leave school or college
- changes to your tenancy or rent
- if you move to different accommodation
- if you are likely to be away from your home for 13 weeks or more

The information you provide us with must be accurate and we may ask for documentary evidence before we make any change to your entitlement. If you need any advice or are unsure of the effect of any change, please contact our benefits team - their contact details are listed on page two of this leaflet.



Please note that the council has a duty to protect the public funds we manage. The council tax information you provide us with could be used for the prevention and detection of fraud. We may also share this information with other organisations responsible for auditing or administering public funds, so that checks can be made.

Thames region



The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood defence for 5,200 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences, in the area of the Thames Valley Flood Defence Committee. Flood defence money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences, together with the operation of a flood warning system.

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, where there are schemes which do not attract funding, the Environment Agency may seek funding from county and metropolitan councils, unitary authorities and London boroughs in the form of a local levy. The local levy is shared on the basis of band D equivalents between all contributing bodies within the committee area.

The levy is being kept at the same level as balances are being used to fund the increased expenditure on flood defence projects.

2009/10 (000s)	Thames Regional Flood Defence Committee	2010/11 (000s)
£96,798	Gross expenditure	£113,089
£10,000	Levies raised	£10,000
4,988	Total council tax base	5,027

To report an incident such as pollution, phone the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. For further information about flood warnings in a particular area, phone 0845 988 1188 or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Have your say

This is the second year we've worked together to produce our council tax information leaflet in this format, part funded by local advertising to reduce costs, and we hope that you find it a more interesting read.

Most of the pages have information that we must provide, but we'd like to hear your views on the content and style of the leaflet, the number and format of the advertisements and if there is anything else you would like us to consider including in next year's leaflet.

If so, please email haveyoursay@southbucks.gov.uk or write to Communications, South Bucks District Council, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham, UB9 4LH.

Becoming more efficient

During 2010/11, South Bucks District Council will continue to work with other local authorities, including Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority and Thames Valley Police, to achieve important efficiency savings, which we hope will also result in significant improvements in service delivery.

All councils now measure and report the value of efficiency savings they have achieved since April 2008. An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity falls, but its effectiveness is not reduced. The table below shows the cumulative value of efficiency savings achieved by the end of March 2009 and forecast to be achieved by the end of March 2010:

	By March 2009 (£)	By March 2010 (£)
South Bucks District Council	364,000	664,000
Buckinghamshire County Council	9,792,000	20,101,000
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	717,000	1,404,000
Thames Valley Police Authority	12,088,000	28,043,000

The table below shows the average savings we expect to have achieved by March 2010 for the average band D household and compares that with the average figure for similar authorities across England:

	Saving per band D household (£)	National average for similar authorities (£)
South Bucks District Council	21	41
Buckinghamshire County Council	95	98
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	5	4
Thames Valley Police Authority	33	54

Chiltern and South Bucks Welfare Partnership Bee Benefit Wise



You don't have to be unemployed to claim help with rent and council tax.

Is the credit crunch affecting you?

- reduced hours?
- loss of partner's income?
- Having problems paying rent or council tax?

Phone us to find out if you may be entitled to help:

01895 837 515

or email
benefits@southbucks.gov.uk



South Bucks District Council

South Bucks District Council

Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham
Bucks, UB9 4LH

Phone 01895 837 500

Email ctax@southbucks.gov.uk

www.southbucks.gov.uk



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1BD

Phone 01296 744 400

In an emergency dial 999

Email enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk

www.bucksfire.gov.uk



Buckinghamshire County Council

County Hall, Walton Street

Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UA

Phone 0845 370 8090

Email customerservices@buckscc.gov.uk

www.buckscc.gov.uk

Sign it and forget it with direct debit

There are no cheques to write or paperwork and postage each month as payments are taken directly from your bank account. You also have a choice of payment dates. To find out more and to set up a direct debit phone us on 01895 837 500

Pay by phone

Our 24 hour automated payment line makes it easier to pay your council tax by debit card. The service is available on 01895 837 525. Please have your card and council tax account number to hand.

View your council tax account on line

Our self service pages allow you to view your council tax details online. To use this service you will require a Personal Identification Number (PIN). To apply please email ctax@southbucks.gov.uk

You can get this leaflet in large print by phoning us on 01895 837 500