

Your guide to council tax 2010/11



Working together



Wycombe District Council

Our main office is open from 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and until 4.45pm on Friday. If the service you want to contact isn't listed, please visit us online at www.wycombe.gov.uk or phone our switchboard on **01494 461 000**.

Anti-social behaviour	01494 421 404	asb@wycombe.gov.uk
Benefits - council tax and housing	01494 421 325	benefits@wycombe.gov.uk
Building control	01494 421 403	building_control@wycombe.gov.uk
Business rates (NNDR)	01494 421 060	localtax@wycombe.gov.uk
Community safety	01494 421 404	communitysafety@wycombe.gov.uk
Council tax	01494 421 324	localtax@wycombe.gov.uk
Electoral services	01494 421 223	elections@wycombe.gov.uk
Green spaces	01494 421 821	groundsmaintenance@wycombe.gov.uk
Housing - applications	01494 421 609	housingneeds@wycombe.gov.uk
Housing - repairs	01494 463 690	repairs@wycombe.gov.uk
Housing - sheltered and supported	01494 421 674	housing_support@wycombe.gov.uk
Housing - tenancies and rents	01494 421 201	tenanciesandrents@wycombe.gov.uk
Parking	01494 421 417	parking@wycombe.gov.uk
Planning applications and appeals	01494 421 539	planning@wycombe.gov.uk
Recycling and rubbish collections	01494 421 415	wastecleansing@wycombe.gov.uk
Wycombe Museum	01494 421 895	museum@wycombe.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@buckscc.gov.uk.

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

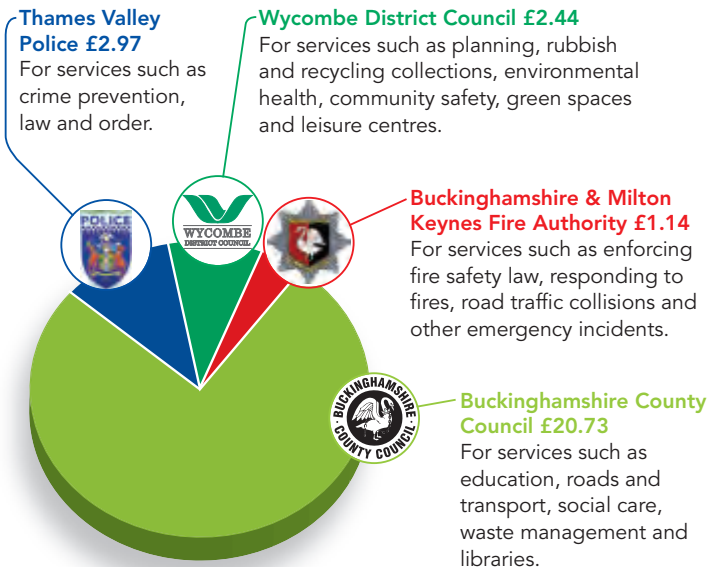
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Thames Valley Police (non emergency)	0845 8 505 505

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 – Wycombe 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 Wycombe 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. These charges vary according to local needs and are listed on page eight.

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

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Our income and spending

For 2010/11 the increase to our share of the council tax is 1.75 per cent - our lowest percentage increase in over five years.

This year, an average band-D household will pay Wycombe District Council £126.99. This is equivalent to £2.44 a week for our wide range of services – some of which are listed below - and is an increase on last year's bill of 4 pence per week.

We faced some difficult decisions in setting our budget this year, due to rising costs and a decrease in our income. This year, the challenges will be greater as a result of the economic downturn. In spite of these challenges, we have kept the increase to our share of the council tax below the current rate of inflation.



We provide many local services, including:

- Rubbish and recycling collections
- Street cleaning
- Community safety
- Local planning and building control
- Leisure, sports and arts services
- Play areas and green spaces
- Licensing
- Housing advice and homelessness
- Air quality and noise pollution control
- Electoral registration and running elections
- Collecting council tax and business rates
- Administering benefits

Income and spending	2009/10 (£000s)	2010/11 (£000s)
Gross expenditure	79,367	91,290
Income	- 60,054	-72,675
Net cost before use of reserves	19,313	18,615
Use of reserves	- 620	282
Wycombe District Council's net expenditure	18,693	18,897
Parish precepts/special expenses	2,624	2,666
Budget requirement	21,317	21,563
Central government formula grant	- 10,095	-10,145
Collection fund surplus	- 95	-49
Council tax payers	11,127	11,369

Where the money comes from and goes to

This year, we will be spending £91.3 million on providing a wide range of services for you. This money comes from a variety of sources including government grants, fees and charges, property rental, council tax and our reserves.

Where the money comes from	(£millions)
Government contribution to benefit costs	51.5
Council tax	8.8
Business rates	8.9
Rent from factories, shops and offices	4.3
Car parks	4.0
Planning and land charges	2.0
Government grant	1.3
Other fees and charges	10.8
Reserves	-0.3
	91.3

Where the money goes to	(£millions)
Housing benefit and council tax benefit	52.1
Rubbish and recycling collections, street cleaning	6.4
Leisure	6.6
Transport and concessionary fares	5.5
Planning	4.7
Social housing and homelessness	2.2
Environmental health	1.7
All other services	12.1
	91.3

Our budget changes

Our planned spending for 2009/10, after taking into account our income, was £18.693million; for 2010/11 it is £18.897million.

In this year's spending plan, we have made the following allowances:

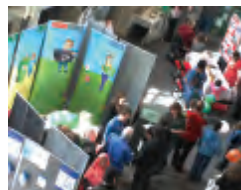
- £256,000 for reduced income from fees and charges¹
- £1.05million for additional cost pressures²
- £400,000 contribution to working balances³
- £616,000 for our transformation project⁴

There has been a reduction in our service costs, due to savings on contract tenders, of £1.229million.

To keep our share of the council tax below inflation, we will be making savings, including efficiency savings, of £889,000. In addition, there has been an increase in general government support from grant and business rates of £50,000 (0.5%).

Notes

1. Includes reductions to estates, recycling and market income.
2. Various budget changes for expected cost pressures including the civil enforcement area, renovation grant funding and loss of housing benefit administration grant.
3. A contribution is to be made to our working balance to restore the overall fund back above the minimum level.
4. Invest to save fund. Investments in projects will either generate future income streams, or will enable services to be provided at a lower cost.



Budget requirements of parish and councils spending over £140,000

2009/10			Parish/town council (or equivalent)	2010/11		
Gross cost (£)	Gross income (£)	Net cost (£)		Gross cost (£)	Gross income (£)	Net cost (£)
378,457	48,299	330,158	Chepping Wycombe	372,472	34,060	338,412
676,402	443,252	233,150	Hazlemere	279,752	39,802	239,950
567,800	146,100	421,700	High Wycombe special expenses	571,800	144,800	427,000
178,875	23,875	155,000	Hughenden	180,695	23,695	157,000
349,000	56,000	293,000	Marlow	337,625	44,625	293,000
384,906	39,906	345,000	Princes Risborough	386,373	37,923	348,450
300,590	38,090	262,500	Wooburn and Bourne End	306,865	49,193	257,672

Parish/town council	Spending 2009/10 (£)	Spending 2010/11 (£)	Band D tax (£)
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	17,000	17,000	14.47
Bradenham	5,000	5,000	21.47
Chepping Wycombe	330,158	338,412	51.83
Downley	68,000	70,450	35.37
Ellesborough	16,000	22,000	49.95
Fawley (Parish Meeting)	-	-	-
Great & Little Hampden	1,400	1,400	8.94
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	17,000	21,000	45.24
Great Marlow	9,270	9,500	13.06
Hambleden	27,000	28,000	33.78
Hazlemere	233,150	239,950	58.92
Hedsor (Parish Meeting)	-	-	-
High Wycombe Town:			
-special expenses	421,700	427,000	18.78
-Charter Trustees	46,000	46,000	2.02
Hughenden	155,000	157,000	39.41
Ibstone	6,500	6,500	45.73
Lacey Green	27,000	25,000	20.15
Lane End	105,000	107,500	74.83
Little Marlow	39,794	39,794	50.27
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	16,500	16,500	24.07
Marlow Bottom	28,750	28,750	18.78
Marlow Town	293,000	293,000	43.05
Medmenham	16,283	16,283	31.73
Piddington & Wheeler End	15,000	18,500	70.64
Princes Risborough	345,000	348,450	97.35
Radnage	24,000	22,000	57.86
Stokenchurch	61,000	65,000	32.95
Turville	4,000	5,000	22.86
West Wycombe:			
- Parish Council	30,000	30,000	55.05
- special expenses	3,200	3,200	5.87
Wooburn & Bourne End	262,500	257,672	52.78

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.



NHS
Buckinghamshire



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.



Safety tip

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



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

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 produced this single 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.

Please write to Communications, Freepost HY 120, Wycombe District Council, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BR.

Becoming more efficient

During 2010/11, Wycombe 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 (£)
Wycombe District Council	601,000	1,399,000
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 (£)
Wycombe District Council	21	41
Buckinghamshire County Council	95	98
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	5	4
Thames Valley Police Authority	33	54

Wycombe District Council

For council tax enquiries

Phone 01494 421 324

Email localtax@wycombe.gov.uk



WYCOMBE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

For council tax benefit and housing benefit enquiries

Phone 01494 421 325

Email benefits@wycombe.gov.uk

Contact details for some of our other services are listed on page 2.

Did you know that you can find out about council tax and benefits on our website?

Visit www.wycombe.gov.uk/counciltax or
www.wycombe.gov.uk/benefits

If you don't have access to the internet, you can visit us at our main office on Queen Victoria Road in High Wycombe, or at our information centres in Marlow and Princes Risborough.

Buckinghamshire County Council

County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UA

Phone 0845 370 8090

Email customerservices@buckscc.gov.uk

www.buckscc.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



This leaflet is available in different formats on request by phoning Wycombe District Council on 01494 421 324

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ہر جہاں کی خدمات چاہئیں تو ہر اے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔