



Council Tax Information 2010/11



If you need to contact Revenues and Benefits

www.harrogate.gov.uk/revenuesandbenefits

By email: ben_rev@harrogate.gov.uk

Telephone:
Council Tax Enquiries
01423 556677

Housing and Council Tax Benefit:
01423 556455

Opening hours for telephone enquiries:

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.00pm

Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Visit us at:

**Scottsdale House, Springfield Avenue,
Harrogate HG1 2HR**

Opening hours for visits

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Write to us at:

**Revenues and Benefits Division,
PO Box 13, Scottsdale House,
Springfield Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2SD**

How can you help us?

Tell us if you move home or if there is any change in your circumstances that will affect the amount shown on your demand notice.

Council Tax and What it Pays For

Harrogate Borough Council collects Council Tax on all domestic properties to help pay for the cost of local services. In the coming year Harrogate Borough Council will keep just 14% of your Council Tax to help provide the full range of its own services. The rest is paid over to the North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police Authority, North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority and various Parish Councils. Each authority sets its own tax level and the Borough Council collects the total due for all the authorities.

The changes in the overall tax bill for 2010/11 for a Band D property are:

	Band D Tax	Increase	%
North Yorkshire County	£1,057.48	£30.18	2.9
North Yorkshire Fire	£62.10	£1.21	2.0
North Yorkshire Police	£204.55	£5.38	2.7
Harrogate Borough	£219.56	£0.00	0.0
TOTAL	£1,543.69	£36.77	2.4

Harrogate Borough Council's Spending Plans

Harrogate Borough Council's spending this year has risen by 1.2% to cover the cost of inflation, rising costs and a variety of government and local initiatives (e.g. Concessionary Travel and Recycling). The increase in its grant from central Government to meet these costs was 2%, however the grant per head still remains well below the average for a District Council. In order to achieve a Council Tax freeze the Council has increased its charges for services but also reviewed all its services to find ways of making savings through improving efficiency.

Parishes over £140,000:

Harrogate has no parishes with precepts over £140,000 in 2010/11.

Exempt Dwellings

Some properties may be exempt from Council Tax if they are unoccupied. Some occupied properties can also be exempt.

People with Disabilities

You may be entitled to a reduction if you, or someone who lives in your property, have a disability and your property has certain additional or adapted facilities to meet the needs of the disabled person, more details are available from our website.

Your responsibilities

If you receive a discount/exemption you must advise us if for any reason, you think you no longer qualify for the discount or should be entitled to a lower amount. You must notify us within 21 days of any change to your circumstances and if you fail to do so you can be liable to a penalty of £50

Appeals against banding

If you think the valuation of your property is wrong you can appeal, please contact the District Valuer, 2nd Floor, 2 Victoria Avenue, Harrogate HG1 1TN. Tel: 01423 830800 or visit the VOA website at www.voa.gov.uk for further details.

Council Tax Appeals

You may appeal against various Council Tax matters e.g. because:

- You are not the resident or owner
- You think your property should be exempt
- You think you should get a discount you have not been allowed

If you wish to appeal you must notify us in writing. You must not withhold payment of Council Tax but if your appeal is successful you will receive a refund.

If you are not satisfied with the Council's decision you may then appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. For more information visit the following website: www.valuation-tribunals.gov.uk

Further information

More details about Benefits, Discounts, Exemptions and Reductions can be obtained by contacting us or from our website at: www.harrogate.gov.uk/revenuesandbenefits

What Do These Services Include?

Cultural and Related Services (£46 per head)

- Parks and Gardens, Swimming Pools, Sports and Leisure Centres, Museums and Galleries and the net surplus on Conferences and Exhibitions.

Environmental Services (£48 per head)

- Refuse Collection, Recycling, Public Toilets, Licensing, Food Safety, Street Cleansing, Control of Dogs, Pests and Noise, Cemeteries and Crematorium, CCTV and Community Safety.

Planning and Development Services (£20 per head)

- Forward Planning, Development Control, Building Control, Economic Development, and Regeneration Schemes.

Housing Services (£11 per head)

- Homelessness, Housing Advice, Housing Benefits and Housing Improvement Grants. Council Housing is in a separate account.

Highways, Roads and Transport (£5 per head)

- Concessionary Travel, surplus on Car Parking, Street Furniture and Parish Lighting.

Central Services (£28 per head)

- Council Tax Collection, Payment of Benefits, Land Charges, Electoral Registration, Elections, and Grants to Voluntary Organisations. Also included are capital financing charges and balance transfers.

Overall, the Council plans to spend £158 per resident on its services in 2010/11. Of this, £9 comes from Government Grant, £61 from redistributed business rates and **£88 from Council Tax, about £1.69 per week per resident.**

BUDGET 2010/11

2009/10		2010/11		
Gross Cost £'000	Net Cost £'000	Gross Cost £'000	Net Cost £'000	
1,923	1,153	Council Tax Collection	1,952	1,146
11,538	1,107	Other Central Services to the Public	12,446	1,176
20,569	6,788	Cultural & Related Services	20,814	7,446
6,740	4,602	Refuse Collection	6,804	4,532
5,846	3,008	Other Environmental & Regulatory Services	5,992	3,147
6,965	3,305	Planning & Development	6,675	3,193
40,008	1,171	Housing Services	45,035	1,716
6,401	1,482	Highways, Roads & Transport	5,165	878
3,444	3,228	Corporate Costs & Overheads	3,340	3,187
103,434	25,844	COST OF SERVICES	108,223	26,421
169	CR 1,255	Financing costs and Balance transfers	CR 908	CR 1,549
103,603	24,589	BOROUGH COUNCIL SPENDING	107,315	24,872
545	545	PARISH PRECEPTS	552	552
104,148	25,134	BOROUGH AND PARISH SPENDING	107,867	25,424
2,073	8,979	<i>Funded By:</i> Government Grant	1,429	9,839
DR 53		Redistributed Business Rates		0
	545	Collection Fund Deficit		552
		Council Taxpayers (Parish Element)		
		Council Taxpayers (Harrogate Borough Element)		13,604
	25,134			25,424

How Your Council Tax Bill is Calculated

Your bill shows separately the amounts due for North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police Authority, and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority, which are explained in their separate leaflets.

The Harrogate Borough Council element of the Council Tax is calculated by dividing the total needed from local taxpayers (£13,604,000) by the equivalent number of Band D dwellings (61,962), to give a tax of £219.56 per Band D dwelling.

The amounts due from dwellings in each Band are statutory ratios of this Band D Tax (see below).

The additional amounts needed from Band D dwellings to reflect any Parish spending plans (£552,000) are shown in the separate table.

Non-Domestic Rates

Although Harrogate Borough Council collects the non-domestic rates, the rate in the pound is set by Central Government. This is 41.4p for 2010/11 (40.7p for small businesses). The Council expects to collect about £54.1m from ratepayers in 2010/11.

The sums are paid into a national pool. The proceeds are redistributed as part of the grant from central Government. There is no relationship between the amount of rates collected in the Harrogate area and the amount redistributed to this area, which in 2010/11 will be:

North Yorkshire County Council	£24.4m
North Yorkshire Police Authority	£6.0m
North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority	£2.4m
Harrogate Borough Council	£9.8m

Council Tax Valuation Bands

Your property is placed in one of eight valuation bands to enable the Council to calculate your Council Tax

Band	Value of Property at 1 April 1991	Proportion of Band D	Borough Council Tax
A	Not more than £40,000	6/9	£146.37
B	£40,001 to £52,000	7/9	£170.77
C	£52,001 to £68,000	8/9	£195.16
D	£68,001 to £88,000	9/9	£219.56
E	£88,001 to £120,000	11/9	£268.35
F	£120,001 to £160,000	13/9	£317.14
G	£160,001 to £320,000	15/9	£365.93
H	Over £320,000	18/9	£439.12

Becoming More Efficient

All Councils are required to 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 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 £'000	By March 2010 £'000
North Yorkshire County	12,187	21,403
North Yorkshire Police	13,492	16,496
North Yorkshire Fire	298	614
Harrogate Borough	1,018	1,985

The table below shows the value of gains forecast to be achieved by March 2010 for the average Band D dwelling compared with the average figure for similar authorities across England:

	Saving per Band D dwelling £	National Average for similar authority £
North Yorkshire County	92.75	98.35
North Yorkshire Police	55.64	53.79
North Yorkshire Fire	2.07	4.49
Harrogate Borough	32.07	41.00

Each year, councils are assessed by the Audit Commission on their use of resources and given a score out of 4 (4 being "performing strongly" and 1 being "inadequate performance"). In January 2009, Harrogate Borough Council scored 3 recognising that the Council is performing well on making efficiency savings. Please see our website www.harrogate.gov.uk/efficiency for more details.

Data Protection

Your personal information may be shared with other sections in the Council to help improve our service to you. We comply with the Data Protection Act so if you do not wish this to happen, please contact us.

Use of Information

For collecting Council Tax, your name and address may be passed onto the District Valuer to help with the valuation of properties or with appeals against banding. We may also share this information within the Council or with other organisations for the purposes of preventing or detecting fraud.

When to Pay Your Council Tax

Council Tax is payable by a maximum of ten monthly instalments due on or before the 1st of each month as shown on your demand notice. Amounts owing from previous years are not included in the instalment plan and must be paid immediately unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed.

Payment Difficulties

Should you have any difficulties regarding payment of your Council Tax, talk to us early. Contact the Revenues and Benefits Division as quickly as possible, who may be able to help you.

How to Pay Your Council Tax

Direct Debit

Telephone us on 01423 556677 with your bank details or complete the instruction on the front of your demand notice, you can also download a direct debit instruction from our website.

Telephone

Debit and credit card payments can be made for Council Tax and other Council services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by telephoning our payment line on 0845 129 55 99.

Internet

Payments can be made by debit or credit card 24 hours per day, 7 days a week via the Council's website www.harrogate.gov.uk/easypay

BACS

Send payments to: Harrogate Council Collection Account, sort code 62-31-10, bank account number 00000000. Quote your 11 digit account reference number with all payments.

Post

To Revenues and Benefits Division, PO Box 13, Scottsdale House, Springfield Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2SD. Make cheques payable to Harrogate Borough Council with your 11 digit account reference number written on the back of your cheque.

Cash Office

Pay at any of the Council's cash collection offices, details can be found on our website www.harrogate.gov.uk/counciltax or contact us for details of dates and opening hours.

Are you paying too much Council Tax?

Council Tax Benefit/Second Adult Rebate

This can help towards the cost of your Council Tax. You may be entitled if you are on a low income - wages, benefits or pensions - and have savings/investments of less than £16,000. If your income is not low but you share your home with another adult who is on a low income, you may be able to claim benefit based on their income instead.

Discounts

A Council Tax demand notice is based on two adults aged 18 or over living in a property. If only one adult lives in a property the Council Tax bill will be reduced by 25%. To minimise its costs and reduce unnecessary contacts, the council will cease its practice of separately writing to taxpayers to confirm their status and will use other means to corroborate its records. Taxpayers are reminded, however, that they should still report a change when they are no longer the sole adult in a property. Some people are not counted when looking at the number of residents and this can result in a discount of 25% The Council can in exceptional circumstances allow a further discount.

Unoccupied Properties

Properties which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished will pay the full Council Tax, once they have been empty for 6 months.

Second Homes and Holiday Homes

If no-one lives in a property and it remains furnished the Council Tax will be reduced by 10%. This will apply to most second homes and holiday homes, and can in some circumstances be reduced by 50%.