



# Media Release

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## **COUNCIL TAX RISE TO BE KEPT TO MINIMUM**

**ALTHOUGH**, the government has given Harrogate Borough Council the lowest grant rise in the country for next year, council chiefs have vowed to keep the average weekly rise in council tax to under 20p per week.

Expressing concern that, for the fourth year running, Harrogate has received the equal lowest grant revenue in the country, at 2.5% compared to a national average of 5.6%, Councillor Alan Skidmore, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said: "This is once again disappointing news for us, especially as it seems some of the funding is a one-year cash injection only. The only good news is that the government has for the first time taken account of the district's increasing population. This should improve things in future years.

"For now though, we will have the very difficult task of finding ways of maintaining our services and at the same time funding a raft of government imposed spending initiatives such as on recycling, on delivering electronic services and taking on responsibility for alcohol licensing. They have given us a very limited extra sum for emergency planning."

He also highlighted the success of the council in increasing efficiency with associated cash savings, which will be used to maintain or enhance front line services such as kerbside recycling collections.

Finance officers will be working on the government's final figures but it is expected that the rise in council tax next year could be less than 20p per week for a Band D property. This does not, of course, include any rise which will be set by North Yorkshire County Council or the Police and Fire Services.

Harrogate Borough Council will set its budget and council tax in March next year.

ENDS

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Councillor Alan Skidmore is available for comment on 01765 658785. Further technical information is available from Mr John Sowden, Director of Finance on 01423 556121.