



# Media Release

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pr1127.Why pay more council tax.doc

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## **COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT**

**OVER** £21m is paid each year by Harrogate Borough Council in council tax and housing benefit but council chiefs are concerned that this isn't enough and that potential claimants are being missed. A new easy to understand benefit 'ready reckoner' is set to make things clearer. Copies are being delivered to every household with the council tax bill in the hope it will encourage those who may be eligible to put in a claim.

The 'ready reckoner' will show - by council tax band - the highest weekly income a resident can have and still be entitled to council tax benefit. They may also be entitled to housing benefit if they pay rent for their home.

Councillor Alan Skidmore, Cabinet Member for Resources, said: "Although this council's average increase in council tax this year amounts to just 16p per week the combined rise, including the county council, police and fire authorities, amounts to about £1 a week. That is quite an increase for someone on a low income.

"Whilst we do everything we can to make sure that we reach those who are entitled to receive benefit, we are conscious that there could be potential claimants in the district who may be missing out. That is why we are targeting every household with this benefit eligibility 'ready reckoner'. We hope that it will make it easier for people to work out whether they may be entitled to make a claim."

People who are likely to qualify include:

- those who are not working and receive other benefit income,
- retired people who only have the state pension or a small second pension and receive pension credit, and
- those who are working but who are on a low wage.

Anyone with savings of more than £16,000 will not qualify unless they are receiving pension guarantee credit.

ENDS

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Councillor Alan Skidmore, Cabinet Member for Resources, is available for comment on 01765 658785. Further technical

**information is available from Mr Keith Simpson, Deputy Director of Finance on  
01423 556414.**