



About your Council Tax

Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent Police Authority and Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority together deliver most of the local services in your area. If you live in an area with a parish council, it too provides some local services. This leaflet provides information from each of these authorities.



The Council Tax you pay is collected by Swale Borough Council on behalf of all the above authorities. The total amount is then divided between these authorities (see table on page 5).

We have set our 2011/12 budgets in the most difficult circumstances that we have faced for a very long time. Following the General Election in May 2010, the Coalition Government pledged to remove the £149 billion national deficit over the next four years and it was inevitable that local government would have a significant part to play.

Despite these difficult circumstances, and in light of the continuing economic uncertainty facing many households, all of the four authorities have agreed that Council Tax should be frozen at the same level as 2010/11 for the forthcoming year.



Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent and Medway Fire & Rescue Authority and Kent Police Authority have worked together



to produce this leaflet. This leaflet outlines some of the services provided by these public authorities, and how we intend to pay for them, as we seek to transform the economic, social and

environmental prospects of Swale, making it one of the best places in Britain to live, learn, work and invest.

Swale Borough Council's pages within this booklet are available on the council's website www.swale.gov.uk. If you would like further information, more copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request. Please contact Customer Services on 01795 417850 or email csc@swale.gov.uk.

The Council Tax, which is primarily a property based tax, was introduced in April 1993. For the financial year 2011/12, the basic Council Tax for the average Band D property is calculated as follows:

	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Swale Borough Council Net Expenditure (Budget requirement)	19,767,060	17,388,970
Less: National Non-Domestic Rate Pool	(10,595,611)	(7,355,122)
Revenue Support Grant	(1,538,581)	(2,273,489)
Contributions to Collection Fund	(71,970)	(88,260)
Amount to be met by the Council Tax for Swale	7,560,898	7,672,099
This amount is then divided by the Tax Base* for Swale which is	47,276.32	47,971.52
Giving a Swale Council Tax for a Band D property of	159.93	159.93
To which is added		
Kent County Council Tax of	1,047.78	1,047.78
Kent Police Authority Tax of	138.68	138.68
Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority Tax of	67.95	67.95
Giving a total Council Tax for a Band D property of	1,414.34	1,414.34

*The Tax Base is the equivalent number of Band D properties in the area after allowing for the relative proportions payable by all other bands and the fact that some of those properties may pay a reduced amount because of discounts.



Swale Borough Council's Expenditure 2011/12

	Gross Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net Expenditure £000
Corporate & Democratic Services	3,251	(209)	3,042
Local tax collection, Elections, Land Charges etc.	11,940	(10,631)	1,309
Cultural, Environmental & Planning Services	15,820	(3,200)	12,620
Highways, Roads & Transportation Services	1,270	(1,990)	(720)
Housing Services	41,070	(39,813)	1,257
Other Services	1,581	(1,501)	80
	74,932	(57,344)	17,588
Contributions to/(from) Funds			(199)
			17,389

NB: Brackets () around figures denote income

1. The addition of Parish Precepts to Swale Borough Council's own expenditure gives the Budget Requirement for Swale as follows:

	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Swale B. C.	19,767,060	17,388,970
Parish Precepts	767,327	772,447
	20,534,387	18,161,417

2. The main changes in expenditure on services are as follows:

	£000
Expenditure on services 2010/11	19,949
Committed price increases	732
Loss of income	509
New grants	(491)
Loss of specific grant	337
Savings	(2,627)
Concessionary fares move to KCC	(780)
Other	(41)
Expenditure on services 2011/12	17,588



Previous year's expenditure 2010/11

	Gross Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net Expenditure £000
Corporate & Democratic Services	3,703	(249)	3,454
Local tax collection, Elections, Land Charges etc.	11,993	(10,592)	1,401
Cultural, Environmental & Planning Services	17,320	(4,926)	12,394
Highways, Roads & Transportation Services	2,229	(2,172)	57
Housing Services	41,133	(39,770)	1,363
Other Services	3,448	(2,168)	1,280
	79,826	(59,877)	19,949
Contributions to/(from) General Fund			(182)
			19,767

NB: Brackets () around figures denote income

Swale Borough Council value for money

£4 million
of expenditure reductions and increased income have been achieved for 2011/12



£1,500,000	Expenditure Reductions to match reduced specific grant
£1,270,000	Financial savings
£760,000	Management efficiencies
£230,000	Increased income
£140,000	Partnership working
£140,000	Improved procurement

Efforts are being made to release further efficiencies e.g. through working arrangements with other authorities



Joint Council Tax breakdown

House Band	Kent County Council £	Swale Borough Council £	Kent Police Authority £	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority £	Total Council Tax (excluding parish precepts) £
A	698.52	106.62	92.45	45.30	942.89
B	814.94	124.39	107.86	52.85	1100.04
C	931.36	142.16	123.27	60.40	1257.19
D	1,047.78	159.93	138.68	67.95	1414.34
E	1,280.62	195.47	169.50	83.05	1728.64
F	1,513.46	231.01	200.32	98.15	2042.94
G	1,746.30	266.55	231.13	113.25	2357.23
H	2,095.56	319.86	277.36	135.90	2828.68



Have you heard about the Gateway?...

It's an exciting new Sheerness High Street development, where you can access support, advice and a wide range of public and voluntary services under one roof.

Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council and a range of partners are working together to deliver this project in Summer 2011.

For more information and regular updates visit:

www.swale.gov.uk/sheerness-gateway/



Council Tax Bill Explanatory Notes

1. The Council Tax helps to pay for the spending of the Local Authorities in your area. The rest of their spending is provided by:

- Government Grants;
- National Non-Domestic Rates Pool;
- Fees, charges and other income.

All of the authorities shown on your bill provide services in your area and their spending plans are detailed within this booklet. Swale Borough Council collects the Council Tax for all these authorities and is the authority to which you make your payment. Swale Borough Council's address is shown on the bill.

2. Budget requirement

Generally this is the amount for Swale Borough Council's area which has to be found from:

- its share of Council Tax charges;
- its share of Non-Domestic Rates;
- Revenue Support Grant.

3. Banding

The amount payable in relation to a particular property depends upon the band allocated by the Listing Officer of the Valuation Office Agency, who is an official of the Inland Revenue and is not employed by the Council. Details of the bandings, together with the proportion of the tax payable for each

band, are shown on the reverse of your Council Tax bill.

The basis of the valuation of each property is the capital value which is an estimate of the amount for which each dwelling would have been sold on the open market at 1 April 1991. The dwelling is then placed in the appropriate band. Any general rise or fall in house prices since that date will not, in itself, be a reason to change your banding.

4. Liability

The bill you have received has been addressed to the liable person, who will be whoever comes first of:

- the owner occupier;
- the tenant;
- any other resident;
- the owner.

If there is more than one liable person in the property, we will have addressed the bill to one of those persons and listed elsewhere the others equally liable. It is the responsibility of the persons to whom the bill is addressed to pay the Council Tax. However, should he/she/they fail to do so, then we may summons any or all of the other liable persons as jointly liable for the tax. Appropriate costs will be added should a summons be heard where any amount payable remains unpaid on the court hearing date, with a reduced amount payable even if the account is paid before the hearing.



5. Status discounts

The full tax payable may be reduced in certain circumstances through the granting of Status Discounts. These will be given automatically on the basis of current information. However, if you feel you are entitled to a status discount and have not been given one on your bill, then please contact us immediately. If your circumstances change during the year, you must also let us know immediately.

- A discount of 25% is allowed if the property is occupied by only ONE person.
- The Local Government Act 2003 gave powers to Local Authorities to reduce the Council Tax discount for second homes and holiday chalets, from 50% to a minimum 10%. Similarly, the regulations also gave powers to Local Authorities to reduce the Council Tax discount for long-term empty properties from 50% to zero.

Swale Council Members resolved in 2006/07 to alter the percentage discount from 50% to 10%.

6. Completion notices

Dwellings that are newly built, and existing dwellings that have undergone major structural alteration or repair, are exempt from Council Tax for up to six months after the completion of the work, provided they remain unoccupied and unfurnished.

In order to facilitate the operation of the exempt period, the council will

serve a completion notice on the owner of the dwelling in order to identify the day from which a new building becomes a dwelling, or on which a conversion or alteration is completed. If you are sent a completion notice and do not agree with the date specified, you may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal within 28 days. However, in the first instance, you are invited to contact the Council to agree an alternative date if possible.

7. Emergency banding

In the case of new dwellings, the Valuation Office Agency may not have issued the Council with a banding. However, Council Tax may be payable from a date some time before the banding is known. The Council will inform you of the date from which the Council Tax becomes payable. It is suggested that, in order to avoid a late bill with fewer instalments and larger payments, you make payments related to an agreed band. It is advisable to contact the Council if you feel you are liable for the Council Tax and have not received an account.

8. People with disabilities

In certain circumstances disabled persons may have their banding reduced. If adaptations have been made to a dwelling to cater for the disability of a resident, who need not be the liable person, then please contact the Council for further information. This now includes properties in Band A.



Why spending has changed

	£'m
Budget Requirement 2010/11	943.3
Changes in responsibilities from Central Government	5.4
Unavoidable pressures to cover inflation, demand/demographic changes and externally imposed factors	28.4
Revenue investments to support local policy priorities	16.6
Removal of one-off issues from 2010/11	-1.3
Additional income	-6.0
Savings	-88.8
Loss of other Central Government Grants	11.5
Budget requirement 2011/12	909.1

How the budget requirement is funded

Budget requirement	2010/11 £'m	2011/12 £'m
Government Grants	372.4	333.4
Council Tax	570.9	575.7
	943.3	909.1

The increase in council tax is due to more households, not an increase in the amount each household pays.



Where your money goes

The council tax you pay to KCC contributes towards paying for services that make a positive difference to the lives of all Kent residents. For example, it helps pay for:

- the maintenance of over 5,000 miles of roads in Kent, and 4,200 miles of paths and public rights of way
- the processing and disposal of 760,000 tonnes of waste every year. There are 18 KCC recycling centres in Kent providing recycling facilities for 4 million visitors per year
- 101 permanent libraries and 11 mobile libraries, issuing approximately 6.3million books and supporting 7million visits
- 28,520 clients who receive support to live independently in their homes, with the personalised care we provide
- 73,500 weeks of permanent nursing care for approximately 1,400 clients provided through the independent sector
- 562 schools and other services which support children and young people and their families
- transport to and from school for over 19,000 eligible children
- over 25,000 Freedom Passes for young people aged 11 to 16
- the support of approximately 1,200 looked after children including 46,000 weeks of care through registered foster carers and 3,600 weeks with independent foster carers
- 61 salting runs, salting approximately 2,485 miles of highway per run
- 101 Community Wardens.





Where your money goes

KCC Services 2011/12	Total Spending £'m	Net Spending £'m	Net Spending per day £'000
Adults and Older People	486.5	345.4	946
Community and Regulatory Services	72.8	39.5	108
Highway Services	50.5	41.9	115
Schools Budgets	999.1	0.0	-
Services for Schools	63.7	11.7	32
Support for Individual Children	234.1	119.2	327
Transport Services	74.4	68.6	188
Waste Management	69.9	67.9	186
Financing Items*	129.1	112.9	309
Management, Support Services and Corporate Overheads	150.8	89.1	244
Other	20.1	12.9	35
Total	2,351.0	909.1	2,490

* Includes estimated levies from the Environment Agency for flood defence (£344,000) and Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (£386,400)

How your services are funded

Budget	2010/11 £'m	2011/12 £'m
Total expenditure	2,413.2	2,351.0
Funded By:		
Service Income	323.9	430.9
Government Grants which must be spent on specific things	1,146.1	925.9
General Government Grants	372.3	418.5
Collection Fund Surplus	1.5	2.0
Council Tax	569.4	573.7



Overseeing your policing

Kent Police Authority is an independent body made up of 17 members – a mix of local people and councillors who hold Kent Police to account. We set the police council tax, appoint the Chief Constable, monitor police performance, and set policing targets for the Force.

“ This budget setting round is different from any other since Police Authorities were established in 1995. This year has been the most difficult and challenging for a generation as we begin to feel the pain of public sector cuts.

‘Police Authority members have agreed to freeze this year’s Police Council Tax as part of a Government deal. We have to reduce our police budget by 20 per cent over the next four years following the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, and have set a medium term financial plan that will enable us to find that money.

‘Our budget has been set at £288million and we will focus on protecting the frontline, as well as restructuring the Force and changes to how the county is policed. We still pride ourselves on being one of the lowest precept Police Authorities in England and Wales.

‘Authority members have also set stretching targets for the Force to meet. We have been working very closely with the Chief Constable during trying times. The Authority is confident that we can reduce the budget, and at the same time make sure taxpayers of Kent and Medway get the best possible policing.”

Ann Barnes, Chair of Kent Police Authority



Working smarter in tough times

Kent Police Authority has agreed in principle a new policing model for the county. The restructure will involve reducing the current six policing areas to just three, East Kent, West Kent, and North Kent and Medway.

The move follows a rethink in light of the comprehensive spending review resulting in a 20 per cent cut to the police budget over the next four years, the equivalent of £53million, as well as a drive to improve police performance. This means we will have to lose around 500 officers and 1,000 support staff over the next four years. However, this will take us back to the levels of officers we had back in 2000.

The public should not receive reduced services as a result of the new policing model. In fact the Authority is confident they will improve, as Kent Police adopts a new approach to responding to calls. A new borderless response will allow the nearest response officer to attend an emergency call, even if that call comes under a different policing area. It will also potentially allow for more resources to be moved into neighbourhood policing.

The Chief Constable has already successfully restructured the policing model in Norfolk using a similar approach, saving money and improving performance.

Our collaboration work with Essex Police continues to go from strength to strength. Kent and Essex Police Authorities and Forces have been at the forefront of collaborative working since 2007. Together they have had a number of joint working initiatives including setting up one of the largest Specialist Crime Directorates outside of the Metropolitan Police, one of the first joint IT departments and a joint procurement service. So far £11million has been identified as recurring annual savings.

Find out more about Kent Police Authority

You can contact us on twitter, or sign up to our Facebook group. Alternatively check out our videos on YouTube. We welcome your feedback so get in touch. Either write in to Kent Police Authority, First Floor, Gail House, Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6NB or visit our website to have your say at www.kentpoliceauthority.gov.uk





How Kent Police are funded	£'000's	£/resident
Central Government grants	199,505	119.76
Extra council tax collected in 2010/11 compared with original estimate	263	0.16
Balance to be met by council taxpayers in 2011/12	88,032	52.84
Total	287,800	

Budget breakdown – what we are spending money on	2011/12 £'000's	2010/11 £'000's
Police Pay	161,166	162,462
Police Pensions	34,151	33,881
Support Staff Pay	88,491	88,914
Other expenditure e.g. premises, computers, transport	48,923	57,281
Gross revenue budget (total of above)	332,731	342,538
Income generated by external parties outside of Kent Police	-44,931	-44,438
Total	287,800	298,100

Useful numbers

In an emergency dial **999** if there is a threat to life or public safety, or a crime is in progress.

Call our single non-emergency number **01622 690690** for enquiries, non-urgent crime reporting and anti-social behaviour.



Budget breakdown – cost of service	2011/12 £'000's	2010/11 £'000's
Local Policing	153,259	158,744
Assisting and responding to the public	20,271	20,997
Criminal Justice Arrangements	22,653	23,464
Roads Policing	10,146	10,509
Specialist Operations	22,983	23,805
Intelligence	7,585	7,856
Specialist Investigations	27,426	28,407
Investigative Support	11,750	12,171
National Policing	7,232	7,491
Funds to run Kent Police Authority	1,200	1,243
Police pensions, cost of ill health and early retirements	2,547	2,638
Capital Financing	748	775
Total	287,800	298,100

Why spending has changed	£m
Revised 2010/11 to reflect changes to Grant payments	298.1
Pay and price changes (inflation)	4.2
Council Tax Freeze Grant	-2.2
Spend to Save – Force Development Unit	0.6
Commitments – Regional Intelligence Unit	0.2
Commitments – Police National Database	0.2
Savings	-13.3
Total Budget Requirement for 2011/12	287.8



There when you need us – Kent Fire and Rescue Service

For just over £1.30 a week (for a Band D property) – the price of a Sunday paper – Kent Fire and Rescue Service provides you and your family with a round-the-clock, 365 days a year service. We are there when you need us, not only fighting fires, but dealing with a huge range of other emergencies from road traffic collisions, floods and explosions to chemical accidents.

Last year we:

- Dealt with 32,000 emergency 999 calls – answering 97% of them within 20 seconds
- Responded to nearly 19,000 incidents including fires
- Reached 90% of fires in less than ten minutes
- Dealt with around 1,000 road traffic collisions
- Carried out 14,000 free home safety visits, fitting around 22,000 smoke alarms
- Educated over 75,000 children and young people on fire and road safety

The cost for our services is the same as last year. Our governing body, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, works hard to ensure services are delivered to local people in the most efficient way possible. That is why they have consistently received top ratings from the Audit Commission for service delivery, overall performance, management and value for money.

The number of incidents we attend has dropped dramatically over recent years thanks to our hard work in promoting safety in homes and businesses:

Key indicator	2008/09 actual	2009/10 actual	2010/11* estimate	% change between 2009/10 and 2010/11
Total fires (per 10,000 people)	38.3	38.7	33.7	-12.9%
Accidental fires in the home (per 10,000 homes)	11.0	10.8	9.8	-9.3%
Deliberate fires (per 10,000 people)	21.9	18.3	15.1	-17.5%
Road accidents attended (per 10,000 people)	7.7	6.8	6.0	-11.8%

* Based on data collected at the end of January 2011



Plans for the future

A county-wide review is underway to provide better emergency cover and to ensure that fire stations and equipment are in the best locations to meet the needs of the county.

Over a quarter of all Kent Fire and Rescue Service calls are to automatic fire alarms – most false alarms. This takes firefighters away from genuine emergencies and is a waste of your money. We are encouraging alarm owners to manage their equipment more effectively. From April 2012 we will not go out to these alarms – except to high risk premises or people – unless we get a 999 call about an actual fire.

We want to focus more on making sure the most vulnerable people (such as older people and those with disabilities) are safe from fire in their homes.

How can you help?

Keep yourself and your family safe by checking our website at www.kent.fire-uk.org and following the safety advice.

Volunteer to help spread the word about safety in your local community. Details are on our website, or get more information by emailing volunteering@kent.fire-uk.org

If you know someone who may be vulnerable, our specialist team can help – contact them via email at vulnerable.people@kent.fire-uk.org



Posed by model

Keeping vulnerable people safe

Recently our specialist team visited a man in his 80s who was suffering hearing loss.

They fitted a special flashing smoke alarm and a device to automatically turn off his cooker as he was becoming forgetful.

They also gave him vital safety advice to keep him safe and help him escape if a fire breaks out.



Where your money goes

Revenue budget	2010/11 £ 000	2011/12 £ 000
Employees	58,341	56,930
Firefighters' pensions	1,385	1,544
Premises	4,438	4,043
Vehicles and travel	3,219	3,151
Equipment and supplies	5,605	7,124
Fees, services and other costs	2,389	2,006
Contributions to capital	858	813
Debt financing costs	1,263	1,306
Gross revenue expenditure	77,498	76,917
Service income	-5,004	-4,783
Council tax freeze grant	0	-1,080
Transfers to reserves	110	679
Net budget requirement	72,604	71,733
Financed by:		
Formula grant	29,596	28,417
Collection fund surplus	154	129
Council tax	42,854	43,187
	72,604	71,733



Why spending has changed

Revenue budget	£ 000
Revenue budget 2010/11	72,604
Pay, prices and commitments	1,201
Service developments and pressures	3,151
Savings	-4,004
Reduction in transfer to general reserve	-139
New council tax freeze grant	-1,080
Revenue budget 2011/12	71,733



