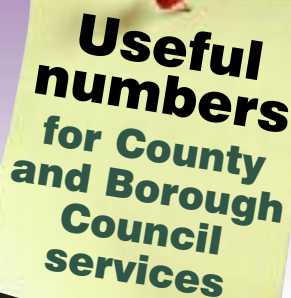


# Your services

**Redditch**  
in Worcestershire

2011 - 12

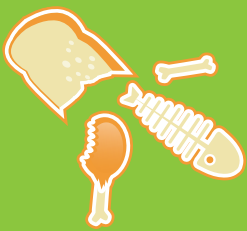
**Find out**  
what your Council  
Tax pays for



**Useful  
numbers  
for County  
and Borough  
Council  
services**



**HOW TO PAY • HELP & ADVICE • BENEFITS INFO • GET IN TOUCH**  
and much more from your County Council, Borough Council  
and the Fire and Rescue Authority



# Let's waste less in Herefordshire & Worcestershire

The possibilities are endless



This fantastic website is packed full of useful information about preventing waste, from how to save money by reducing food waste to just what to do with your old sofa.

To find out more visit [www.letswasteless.com](http://www.letswasteless.com)  
or call 01905 766883

## welcome

Most of the money for providing services to you comes from central Government and other grants, but in Redditch just over £41 million is collected through Council Tax.

Redditch Borough Council collects the Council Tax on behalf of all of the authorities shown below. The total amount is then split to provide the services that are part of your everyday life.

This year a Band D household in Redditch will pay £1,500.60 - this is the **same** as last year.

Worcestershire  
County Council  
**69.3%**

Redditch  
Borough Council  
**13.9%**

Hereford &  
Worcester  
Fire and Rescue  
Authority  
**4.9%**

West Mercia  
Police Authority  
**11.9%**



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- 4** Message from Redditch Borough Council's Chief Executive
- 5** The sharing of services. Key achievements during 2010.
- 11** How Worcestershire County Council spends its share of your money
- 16** Your County Council budget details
- 21** Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority budget and information
- 25** Budget figures and the important 'small print' from Redditch Borough Council
- 32** Get in touch: Contact us online, on the phone, or face-to-face



# Message from the Chief Executive

Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council

“ This joint Council Tax leaflet, which we produce with our partners, is in its seventh year - and I think it is even more relevant this year. In the current financial climate, which is affecting the whole country in some way or another, I am delighted to be sharing with you how we are striving to balance our books, while providing quality and efficient services to you all.

Furthermore, our new Customer Experience Strategy will put you at the forefront of everything we do and ensure we provide the services you most need.

Financially, the next few years will be a challenge. The announcement of the Local Government Grant Settlement that this Council is set to face a cut in grant funding of £1.3 million over two years (2011-2013) is not easy to deal with. It is a reduction of 25.3 per cent.

Many local authorities are looking to their partners and neighbouring councils to share the costs of running

services. Sharing services and working together to save money is something this Council, and Bromsgrove District Council, embarked on several years ago. You can find out more about this on the next page along with our key achievements from 2010. Page 6, meanwhile, identifies priorities for the year ahead.

Also in this leaflet we have the opportunity to remind residents of the many services we provide for Redditch, in an easy to follow A-Z, and how to contact us.

Finally, on page 20 we provide information about the elections and referendum which are taking place on Thursday 5th May. It is important you use your vote.

Happy reading! ”

**You can follow us on [twitter](#) and [facebook](#). Click on our website for more details**

The borough council collects Council Tax for our partners – but keeps just **14%** of the bill.

# The sharing of services

We are nearly four years into our Shared Services Project with Bromsgrove District Council, which is not about a political merger, but making sure that services provided are high quality, cost effective and responsive to customer needs. Last April our single management team was appointed. Services already shared between both councils include:

- Payroll
- Procurement
- Community Safety
- Electoral Services

- CCTV Services
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

But it is more than this. We are also looking at business transformation which will see us asking why we do things the way we do.

A programme of remaining teams to go through Shared Services and Business Transformation has now been launched.

**For updates on Shared Services follow Kevin Dicks' blog at [www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)**

# Key achievements during 2010

## Community Safety

- No Barriers award scheme introduced to recognise individuals, businesses and organisations that help disabled people

## Environment

- Council consulted on Redditch expansion to produce its Preferred Draft Core Strategy

## Housing

- Church Hill development - part of which will include new social housing - gets the go ahead

## Leisure

- Work on the new Abbey Stadium, including a swimming pool, begins after planning permission granted
- £320,000 BMX track opened at Arrow Valley Country Park





## HIJK

Health Liaison  
Health & Safety  
Heating (Council homes)  
Heming Road workshops  
**517165**

Highways (Borough  
Council-owned)  
Homelessness enquiries  
House numbering

Housing:  
Equipment and  
Adaptations  
Capital  
Former Tenant Arrears  
**530420**

Rents  
Repairs  
Tenancy  
Tenant Participation  
Housing Grants  
Insurance claims

## L

Land and property gazetteer  
Land charges and searches  
Landscape capital project  
Land Drainage  
Land sales  
Landscape Maintenance  
Learn Direct  
**68583**

Leaseholders  
Local land charges  
Licensing  
(entertainment, street closure)  
Lifeline  
**597402**  
Litter enquiries

## M

Markets  
Mayor's office  
Members' (Councillor)  
services  
MOT testing  
Morton Stanley Park  
Museum - Forge Mill Needle  
Museum  
**62509**

## N

Neighbourhood Groups  
Neighbour mediation  
Noise complaints

## O

Older people/  
community services  
One Stop Shops

## PQ

Palace Theatre  
**61544**  
Parking (outside homes)  
Parks  
Pest control  
Planning:

applications/enforcement/policy  
Play area management  
Plymouth Road Memorial  
Gardens  
Police checks  
Postal voting  
Property Services  
Property Management

## R

Recruitment of staff  
Recycling centres  
Recycling - kerbside  
Redditch Partnership  
Reddicard  
Rents  
**534193**  
Right To Buy

## S

Searches (land)  
Sheltered housing  
Shopmobility  
Shredder Man service  
**0845 6021939**  
Sports and Leisure Facilities  
- Abbey Stadium **60206**  
- Arrow Vale Sports Centre  
**500010**

- Arrow Valley  
Countryside Centre  
**464000**

- Hewell Road  
Swimming Pool **64189**  
- Kingsley Sports Centre  
**529724**

Skateparks  
Pitcheroak Golf Course  
**541054**

Sports Development **64676**  
Sports Pitches **52972**  
Street collections/lotteries  
St David's House  
(home for the elderly)  
**584769**

Street nameplates  
Student Council  
Sundry Invoices  
**534020**  
SureStart  
**534150**

## T

Taxi licensing  
Tenant participation  
Theatre/Box Office  
**61544**  
**65203**  
Tourist Information Centre  
**60806**

Trade waste (new collections)  
Trade waste enquiries  
Transport Department  
Travellers (enquiries)  
Tree enquiries  
Twin town enquiries

## UVWXYZ

Voting  
Waste collection  
Website for the Council  
Work experience  
opportunities  
Workshop lettings  
**517165**

Below are contact numbers for some of Worcestershire County Council's main services. Why not keep them somewhere handy? If the service you need is not listed, you can get advice or make a general enquiry by getting in touch with the Worcestershire Hub using the following contact details:

- **01905 765765** (Monday - Friday 8am - 8pm and Saturday 9am - 5pm)
- [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)
- [www.whub.org.uk](http://www.whub.org.uk)

An increasing range of County Council services are available anytime by going online - go to [www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk) to give it a try.

### Adoption & Fostering - Freephone 0800 028 2158

We find homes for vulnerable children. If you think you can help, please get in touch for more information.

### Bus Timetables 01905 765765

Up-to-date details of bus times and routes.

### Concessionary Travel Scheme 01905 822766

Advice and information about the National concessionary travel scheme, including applications and entitlement.

### Carers Unit - Freephone 0800 389 2896

Support and advice for anyone who looks after someone else's needs.

### Consumer Relations 01905 766368

Responsible for managing all types of representations (comments, compliments and complaints) about County Council services.

### Countryside Service 01905 766493

Information about our sites, guided tours, walks, activities and events.

### County Museum 01299 250416

Find out what's on at the museum, based in the historic Hartlebury Castle, near Kidderminster.

### Family Information Service 01905 790560

Free and impartial information and advice for families with children aged 0 to 19 years.

### Highways & Transport 0845 607 2005

For enquiries about highways management and maintenance, including road works, potholes, dropped kerbs, yellow lines, abandoned vehicles, grass cutting and fly tipping.

### Libraries & Learning 01905 822722

Discover where your local library is, events and activities taking place, and adult learning classes.

# Useful County Council Contact Numbers

## Public Rights of Way 01905 768214

For enquiries about public rights of way, including footpaths, bridleways and byways.

## Record Office 01905 766351

For everything you could want to know about Worcestershire's history, contact the Record Office.

## Registration Service 0845 603 2859

Make enquiries about civil weddings, births, deaths, baby naming and renewal of vows ceremonies.

## School Admissions 01905 822700

Find out about allocation of school places at first, primary, middle and high schools in the county.

## School Transport 01905 765765

Get details about transport to and from schools across Worcestershire.

## Student Finance Direct 0845 607 7577

Support and advice on financial matters for higher education students.

## Social Care 0845 607 2000

For social care enquiries, including support at home, residential care and home adaptations.

## Street Lighting 'Lights Out Line' - Freephone 0800 137 352

Report faults and problems with street lighting in your local area.

## Trading Standards: Consumer Direct 0845 404 0506

Specialist advice on all kinds of consumer issues - from buying cars to faulty household appliances.

## Trading Standards: Business Advice 0845 330 3313

Business guidance on Trading Standards legislation - from keeping animals to labelling of foods and selling fireworks.

## Waste Management 0845 607 2007

For information about household recycling centres, reducing, re-using and recycling your waste and home composting.

## Youth Support 01905 765463

Free advice, information and support for young people aged 11-20 years, including youth centres, youth activities and our Worcestershire Youth Cabinet.



## Your County Councillors

Log on to [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/postcodesearch](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/postcodesearch) to find out who your County Councillor is and how to contact them to discuss your local concerns and issues.



# Your County Council



**worcestershire**  
county council



## Quality and value for **everyone**

**Worcestershire County Council remains committed to delivering services of real value to taxpayers, despite the financial challenges we face.**

**Read on for more information about the work your County Council has done in the last year and how we worked towards achieving our priorities.**

The recent financial settlement received from the Government means the authority has to make savings of £60-70 million over the next four years.

**See page 18 for more information on how we are responding to this challenge.**

Council Tax collected in Worcestershire makes up 66.7 per cent of our budget, excluding funding for schools.

The rest of our budget is funded by central Government, including the money we receive to fund schools.

**Our share of the Council Tax bill will not increase for 2011-12.**



## Priorities for 2010-2011

Given the unprecedented change in the global economy we are currently revisiting our vision and values with three themes; Open for Business, Children and Families, and Environment.

**Here are just some of the achievements from last year:**

### Value for money and low Council Tax

- We have one of the lowest Council Taxes compared to other county councils without responsibility for the fire service.

### The local economy

- We made the local economy a high priority during 2010 by working with partners to support businesses
- Among many other initiatives, we invested in a £1 million loan fund for local companies, held a series of events to help people start their own business and developed the Find It In Worcestershire business portal
- We also worked with partners to successfully agree the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, which will help the county's private sector industries
- Our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants scheme awarded nearly £300,000 to VCS groups during 2010, which provide excellent value for

money and services that respond to community needs.

### Keeping people safe

- We worked closely with others to keep children and young people safe. There were 3,140 referrals and 2,898 initial assessments to children's social care service in 2009-10.
- The improvements we have made to arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults have been



Work continued through 2010-11 on The Hive, which is due to open in 2012 and is set to be Europe's first joint public and academic library, creating jobs for local people.



recognised with a rating of 'performing well' by the Care Quality Commission. We are handling just under 100 new adult protection referrals a month

- Our road safety education programme in primary schools has delivered cycling training to 2,812 children and pedestrian training to 7,164 children (April 10 to Jan 11)
- The number of people killed or seriously injured on Worcestershire's roads fell by 19.4 per cent last year and the number of children killed or seriously injured fell by 16.7 per cent.

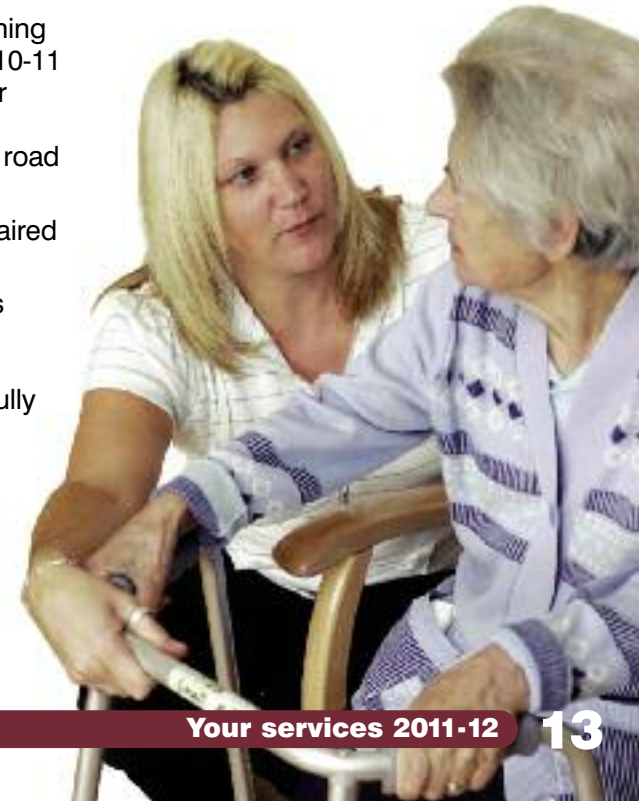
### Roads, travel and transport

- We spent £16 million on maintaining Worcestershire's highways in 2010-11 and during the winter season our gritting teams went out 32 times covering around 26,000 miles of road
- During 2010-11 around 35,000 potholes were identified and repaired
- A major £15 million programme has just started to improve roads in rural areas of the county. A similar scheme for urban unclassified roads was successfully completed during 2010
- A £3 million capital project to improve footways around Worcestershire was recently completed and, following the success of that scheme,

another similar one is set to start in 2011-12. Flood alleviation and drainage improvement work has also taken place across the county.

### Independent healthy living

- Our Choice and Control programme allows individuals to choose the type of social care they prefer. Around 2,000 people have chosen to receive a direct payment and make their own care arrangements.



## Educational achievement and skills

- Worcestershire has just under 74,000 children being educated in 243 schools, which are supported by over 14,000 teaching specialists and support staff. The total budget for schools is £306 million
- There are currently 34 designated Children's Centres in Worcestershire providing services to families with children under five-years-old
- The council supports 305 private or voluntary early years settings, 541 childminders, one nursery school and 53 nursery units.

## A green future

- Our work to improve the county's sustainability has resulted in us being short-listed for the best 'Low Council Carbon', due to be decided later this year

- We are piloting 'eco-communities', and we have supported the national 10:10 campaign to reduce carbon emissions
- The County Council manages 19 countryside sites across Worcestershire, which include three that achieved the prestigious Green Flag status in 2010. In addition to this the countryside team looks after more than 16,000 rights of way, totalling around 3,000 miles, along with 140 miles of waymarked trails and circular walks
- The EnviroSort recycling facility, which officially opened in March 2010, has helped divert 54,000 tonnes of Worcestershire household waste from landfill sites.



## How the money is spent

### Summary of gross expenditure, income and staffing

The planned costs of services are shown below:

2010-11	Services	2011-12			Council Tax for a Band D property £	Staffing numbers
		Gross Exp £m	Income £m	Net Exp £m		
0.0	Schools budget	369.0	369.0	0.0	0.0	8,479
84.9	Children's Services, excluding schools	104.9	28.9	76.0	240.57	1,431
157.2	Adult and Community Services, including libraries	195.0	37.6	157.4	498.43	1,792
34.5	Highways and public transport	39.2	2.2	37.0	117.07	444
24.1	Waste disposal	39.1	14.6	24.5	77.40	15
3.0	Planning and economic development	3.7	0.4	3.3	10.60	63
30.7	Net cost of council borrowing	29.7	0.1	29.6	93.89	-
-28.4	Other services	24.3	14.9	9.4	29.53	801
0.0	Council Tax Freeze Grant	0.0	5.5	-5.5	-17.30	-
<b>306.0</b>	<b>Total cost of services</b>	<b>804.9</b>	<b>473.2</b>	<b>331.7</b>	<b>1,050.19</b>	<b>13,025</b>
3.1	Addition to or use of general reserves	0.0	3.5	-3.5	-11.13	-
<b>309.1</b>	<b>Net budget requirement</b>	<b>804.9</b>	<b>476.7</b>	<b>328.2</b>	<b>1,039.06</b>	<b>13,025</b>

### Where the money comes from to pay for the 2011-12 budget

The Government calculates our general grant according to relative circumstances and ability to raise money from Council Tax. Worcestershire's general grant is £109.163 million or £195 per person, compared to the shire county average of £211 per person for comparable county councils without responsibility for the fire service.

We also receive other grants from the Government for specific purposes. The most significant is the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that provides the funding for schools and can only be used for this purpose. For 2011-12 the Government has made changes to the grant arrangements by discontinuing some specific grants, removing ring-fencing and transferring some grants into our general grant.



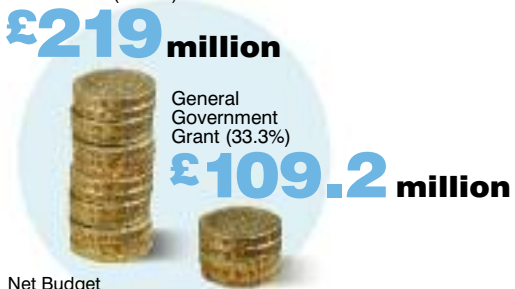
# Your County Council's Budget

Overall, however, the level of grant support has been reduced.

In addition the Government has made available a Council Tax Freeze Grant to councils limiting their Council Tax to the level set for 2010-11. This is a new grant equal to an increase in Council Tax of 2.5 per cent and represents a benefit of £5.5 million to the County Council.

The cost of providing our services in 2011-12, net of specific grants, is £331.7 million which, after transferring £3.5 million from general reserves, leaves £328.2 million to be funded from general Government grant and local taxation, as follows:

Council Tax (66.7%)



Net Budget

**£328.2 million**

Council Tax (66.7%)



£/person

Total £/person

**£586**

## Why spending has changed from 2010-11

	£m
<b>Net budget requirement 2010-11</b>	<b>309.1</b>
Less transfer to general reserves in 2010-11	-3.1
Personal Care at Home legislation not continued	-1.5
Area Based Grant discontinuing	39.7
Specific Grants transferring to Formula Grant	2.9
<b>Revised starting position 2011-12</b>	<b>347.1</b>
Inflation	7.3
Adult Social Care service pressures	4.5
Concessionary fares function transferred from district councils	5.1
Looked after children service pressures	2.0
Children's early intervention activities	0.4
Strengthening economy	0.3
Community based transport	0.1
Better Outcomes, Lean Delivery programme - budget savings	-16.5
Grant funding and services discontinued due to grants ceasing	-11.8
Reduction in borrowing costs for capital expenditure	-1.1
Other	-0.2
Council Tax Freeze Grant	-5.5
Transfer from general reserves in 2011-12	-3.5
<b>Net budget requirement 2011-12</b>	<b>328.2</b>

The council faces additional cost pressures in respect of inflation and increases in the demand for services such as the extra numbers of people needing social care. Some inflationary costs experienced by local authorities

are significantly higher than the general rate of inflation. In addition the responsibility for concessionary fares transferred from the district councils to the County Council with effect from 1st April 2011. The overall effect of these cost pressures together with the reduction in grant funding has resulted in the need to identify significant reductions in the council's budget. The net budget requirement for 2011-12 has reduced by £18.9 million over last year, as shown in the table opposite.

In addition the DSG funding for schools will be £4,601 per pupil, giving no increase over the 2010-11 adjusted figure. The estimated total DSG for 2011-12 is £342 million.

## Council Tax

There will be no increase in the Council Tax contribution towards our 2011-12 budget and for a Band D property it remains at £1039.06. The illustration below shows how much you will pay for our services for each property band.

## Staffing

During 2011-12 we expect to employ the equivalent of 13,025

full-time staff. This includes an increase in school-based staff, the movement of staff between authorities following the establishment of shared services, and the planned reduction in staff numbers as part of the council's efficiency measures.

## Capital investment

We plan to invest £90.6 million during 2011-12 in capital projects such as building and refurbishing schools, improvements to roads, and information and communications technology.

## Borrowing

We borrow money to pay for some of our capital investment. The total borrowing at 31 March 2011 is estimated to be £240 million.

## General balances

We plan to keep a general reserve of around £14 million to pay for emergencies and other unforeseen expenditure.



# Being **BOLD**

Public sector organisations are facing unprecedented reductions in funding over the next four years. Worcestershire County Council is not immune from these challenges and is tasked with making savings of £60-70 million over this period.

In response the County Council launched its **BOLD** (Better Outcomes, Lean Delivery) programme back in 2009. Such early engagement with these challenges has meant that significant progress has already been made, with *savings proposals totalling some £45 million already identified* at the time of going to print. Savings have been identified in three ways; through efficiencies, in other

**£800,000**

has been taken out of senior management costs

words delivering the same level of service for less money, through reforming some services and as a last resort, through cuts.

We believe that by planning ahead, we can do more to protect core and valued services. Where changes or reductions in service are necessary, the **BOLD** programme has given us the time to involve staff, partners and customers in designing and managing those changes to minimise disruption and upset.

# Have your **say**

The **BOLD** programme is much more than just saving money, it is about delivering Better Outcomes for Worcestershire residents and ensuring that the money the council does have is spent delivering the services which really matter to people. This is why we have and will continue to ask you what you think.

Consultation began in earnest last year which ranked residents' priorities for services and was followed up by a further dialogue this year which went into more detail to inform the budget decisions. Methods included: questions in a residents' survey, a web-survey, face-to-face interviews and a simple survey in public buildings and local newspapers.

A number of **BOLD** "Have your Say" public road shows also took place across the county to ask communities what they thought about our plans which provided qualitative feedback to sit alongside the quantitative results.

We will be asking you for your views throughout this year, with more roadshows planned for the spring, look out for further details visit **www.worcestershire.gov.uk**

*We have had over 16,000 respondents to consultation since BOLD was launched - a big thank you to all who took part.*

“ the services important to me are...” ”





# Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Last year the County Council combined with the six district councils in Worcestershire, to create the first all encompassing Regulatory Service in the UK.

Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing functions all across the county have been combined into a single service:

### Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The innovative and ground-breaking move is part of a range of ideas for sharing services across councils, which use less resources and are also more effective.

All the local services that Worcestershire's local authorities used to deliver to residents remain in place, and are now run as a single shared service hosted by Bromsgrove District Council.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services is the first service of its kind in the country, and will be more efficient and effective while still addressing local needs.

So for all your Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing needs, call the Worcestershire Hub on:

**01905 822799** or e-mail

[worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)



 <p><b>COMING SOON TO YOUR COUNCIL</b> District Elections Parish Elections &amp; National Referendum</p> <p><b>WHEN?</b> Thursday 5 May</p>	<p><b>POLLING DAY - THURSDAY 5 MAY</b></p> <p>Going to be away? - Plan early. Don't Lose YOUR Vote!</p>
	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mon 2 April, all hours</p> <p>Close of Nominations to stand as a candidate</p>
	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thurs 14 April</p> <p>Deadline to register as an elector for these elections</p>
	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thurs 14 April, 5pm</p> <p>Deadline to apply for a postal vote or change an existing one</p>
	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Week of 18 April</p> <p>Issue of Postal packs. Are YOU to home to receive YOURS?</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thurs 21 April, 5pm</p> <p>Deadline to apply for a proxy vote or vote by ballot paper</p>	
<p><b>?</b></p> <p>Need more info? Contact YOUR Electoral Services Office, or For application forms and advice visit: <a href="http://www.elect.gov.uk">www.elect.gov.uk</a></p>	



# YOUR Fire & Rescue Authority

We have not increased our Council Tax charge this year so just **£73.64** from a Band D Council Tax will again go to fund the services provided by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). The FRA is made up of 25 Worcestershire County Councillors and Herefordshire Councillors who oversee our budget and give strategic direction to how we deliver our services to you.

**This contribution amounts to just 20p each day per Band D household.**

For this, you receive round the clock reassurance that in the event of an emergency, the Fire and Rescue Service will be on hand to help you. We also spend thousands of hours in your local communities, educating people about the risk of fires and other emergencies including road traffic collisions. We also work extensively with other local partners to protect the young and vulnerable including the fitting of free smoke alarms.

We provide our services from a total of 27 fire stations and a headquarters building. There are five Wholtime Stations; Hereford, Worcester, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch which are crewed 24 hours a day. We also operate stations in Malvern, Droitwich and Evesham, which are staffed during the day with crews on call from home at night.

There are a further 19 retained duty (on-call) stations that are crewed by firefighters who are on-call to provide 24 hour cover to their communities, often in addition to their regular employment and respond in a few minutes from their place of main employment or home.

Your contributions help fund a total of 328\* full-time operational staff, 369\* retained (on-call) firefighters, 25\* control room staff who take emergency calls and mobilise our crews, and over 100\* support staff who ensure our service runs effectively and efficiently.

*\*These statistics are the current budgeted staffing establishment figures*



This document can be made available in other languages and alternative formats (large print, audio tape, computer disc and Braille) on request from the Worcestershire Hub on telephone number 01905 765765 or by emailing [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)



As part of the nation's resilience against large scale incidents we also host specialist equipment including one of 20 national Urban Search and Rescue specialist units.

In 2010 we received 12,919 emergency calls and attended 8,751 incidents. Throughout the year, we rescued 17 people unharmed from fires, 49 people unharmed from road traffic collisions and rescued 212 unharmed people from other situations.

In our area in particular there are also calls for rope and water rescues and to assist when chemicals are spilled. We have highly trained specialist teams to deal with these specific types of emergencies.

In 2010 we completed 3,196 Home Fire Safety Checks and fitted 6,871 smoke alarms in areas where we have identified people who are at greater risk. We also carried out 473 education visits in local schools.

## How are we performing?

We are committed to delivering an excellent service and we will continue to strive to ensure that our communities are made safer from the dramatic and sometimes tragic consequences of fire and other hazards.

We are a consistently high-performing authority with a good record of improvement and financial prudence.

In 2011-12 the Fire and Rescue Authority will spend £31.2 million providing a comprehensive emergency service to the communities of Herefordshire & Worcestershire. £10.4 million will come from the government in the form of grants and the (£20.8 million) balance from council tax-payers.

	2010-11 £m	2011-12 £m
<b>Gross expenditure</b>		
Employees (including pension costs)	23.324	23.326
Running costs	6.950	7.105
Capital financing	2.205	2.400
Income	(0.170)	(0.169)
<b>Core budget</b>	<b>32.309</b>	<b>32.662</b>
Special Grant - Urban Search and Rescue	(0.868)	(0.868)
Special Grant - New Dimensions Training	(0.080)	(0.080)
Special Grant - Fire Control Project	(0.238)	0.000
Special Grant - Council Tax Freeze	0.000	(0.519)
<b>Gross expenditure</b>	<b>31.123</b>	<b>31.195</b>



## Performance & priorities

In a report published in December 2010, the Audit Commission confirmed that Hereford & Worcester FRA had:

- its best ever annual performance in terms of the lowest total number of incidents, in addition to delivering a number of five year performance records in key areas
  - a track record of performing within budget whilst achieving good service performance.
- We remain one of the highest performing Combined Authorities yet in 2010-11 received a lower government grant per head than any other Combined Authority in England.
- focused on achieving priorities through redirecting resources which had improved our front-line services whilst achieving efficiency savings

Budget requirement and Council Tax precept	2010-11 £m	2011-12 £m
Gross expenditure	31.123	31.195
Transfer to General Balances	0.271	0.000
<b>Net budget requirement</b>	<b>31.394</b>	<b>31.195</b>
Less: Business Rates	(9.315)	(7.950)
Less: Revenue Support Grant	(1.353)	(2.457)
Gross precept requirement	20.726	20.788
Less: Surpluses on Collection Funds	(0.083)	(0.031)
Net precept requirement	20.643	20.757
Tax-base	280,317	281,861
Band D equivalent	£73.64	£73.64

Why spending has changed	£m
<b>Net budget requirement 2010-11</b>	<b>31.394</b>
Less one-off Strengthening of Balances 2010-11	(0.271)
Deletion of Assistant Chief Fire Officer post	(0.140)
Savings from 2010-11 Pay Freeze	(0.150)
Non-Pay Inflation	0.328
Impact of Asset Management Plan and Vehicle Strategy	0.201
Additional on-call Firefighter Training & Property Maintenance Costs	0.150
Council Tax Freeze Grant	(0.519)
Net other changes	0.202
<b>Net budget requirement 2011-12</b>	<b>31.195</b>

## What will your **money** go **towards** this year?

This year, your money will help us to procure and replace the necessary equipment and vehicles to ensure the safety of our communities and our firefighters.

We will continue to deliver safety advice, particularly to vulnerable people within our communities. We will continue to work with other emergency services, agencies and schools to make our communities safer and help improve community well-being.

The development of our environmental strategy will help us to reduce our impact on the environment, improve sustainability and focus on carbon reduction.

Ultimately, your Council Tax will go towards ensuring our firefighting and rescue response to emergency calls remains effective, and that we continue to perform well.



## How we'll spend Redditch's Council Tax in 2011-12

We have agreed a net expenditure for 2011-12 of £10.491 million, including net changes to services totalling £1,278,000. After taking the use of our reserves, balances and central Government support into account, **there is no tax increase this year.**

### How our budget compares to last year

	£'000
Budget requirement 2010-11	12,222.8
Changes in services	-1,260.0
Change in use of balances	-471.5
Budget requirement 2011-12	10,491.3

The Council Tax for 2011-12 is £209.18 for a Band D property. In addition, Feckenham will pay a Parish Levy which is £21.24 for a Band D property. It covers the expenses of the Parish Council.

The table below shows how we spent the money last year and how we'll spend it in 2011-12.

2010-11 Net Expenditure £'000	Service	2011-12		
		Net Expenditure £'000	Other Income £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000
9,794.8	Culture, Environment and Planning	9,071.5	-4,819.9	13,891.4
507.6	Housing	663.1	-23,660.7	24,323.8
1,394.0	Roads and Transport (including Concessionary Fares)	493.2	-310.0	803.2
1,240.0	Central Services to the Public	1,229.3	-7,540.1	8,769.4
264.4	Other Services	-458.8	-1,819.5	1,360.7
8.3	Parish Precept	7.8	-	7.8
13,209.1	<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>11,006.1</b>	<b>-38,150.2</b>	<b>49,156.3</b>
- 986.3	Contribution from balances	-514.8	-514.8	-
12,222.8	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>10,491.3</b>	<b>38,665.0</b>	<b>49,156.3</b>

## Redditch Borough Council's spending plan

	Total expenditure £ million	Per head of population £
Budget 2010-11	12.223	153.97
Changes in services	-1.278	-16.11
Change in use of balances	-0.454	-5.71
<b>Budget 2011-12</b>	<b>10.491</b>	<b>132.15</b>

## Redditch Borough Council's spending is funded as follows

	2010-11 £ million	2011-12 £ million	Per head of population £
Council Tax payers	5.765	5.795	73.00
Business Rates	5.639	3.587	45.18
Government grants	0.819	1.109	13.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.223</b>	<b>10.491</b>	<b>132.15</b>

Redditch needs to raise £10.491 million to provide services in 2011-12, a decrease of £1,732,000 compared to 2010-11. There are savings this year due to changes in service delivery including the introduction of shared services. In 2011-12 the council will use £515,000 from its reserves.

Some council spending is met from grants and redistributed Business Rates from the Government. The income from these sources decreased by £1,762,000 compared to last year.

The total amount required from Council Tax payers is £5.795 million.

No increase on the 2011-12 Redditch Council Tax is needed to fund this.

An estimated £1,200,000 will be held in general fund balances as at 31st March 2012 to meet any unexpected future expenditure.

The council intends to invest £14.275 million in capital projects during 2011-12 using money from the sale of assets and prudent borrowing.

## Introducing a North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration Team

From June there will be a joint Economic and Regeneration Team for North Worcestershire, hosted by Wyre Forest District Council. It will include Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils.

Economic Regeneration is a priority for each, so the move to a shared service means the authorities can bring together their teams to form a more effective service.

Work covered includes supporting businesses, delivering strategies for the development of areas, and working to promote and enhance town centres and attract tourists.

The joined up approach will mean we can direct resources to key activities and reduce duplication. It will also give the team a more powerful collective

voice in promoting opportunities for new investments into the area. The team will also maintain a focus on those matters that are important to each of the areas.



NEW College's Redditch campus

## Environment Agency Midlands Region

The Environment Agency, as a levying body for its Flood Defence functions, provides the following information:

### Severn Trent Regional Flood Defence Committee

	2010-11	2011-12
Gross expenditure	£63,822,000	£51,066,000
Levies raised	£3,000,000	£3,000,000
<b>Total Council Tax base</b>	<b>2,908,000</b>	<b>2,926,000</b>

Flood defence money is spent on flood defence schemes, maintenance of the river system and a flood warning system.

Changes in the gross budgeted expenditure between the years reflects the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of capital projects.

The local flood defence levy included in the County Council's budget for 2011-12 is £0.2 million (2010-11 £0.2 million).

## Council Tax valuation

Most owned or rented dwellings are subject to Council Tax. How much you pay depends on the value of your property. The Inland Revenue has placed each dwelling in one of the eight valuation bands shown in the table below. These are based on the price a property would have fetched if it had been sold on 1 April 1991. Any increase or fall in a dwelling's value since then will not affect your Council Tax band.

Please note that the Inland Revenue has assessed the value of properties, not the Borough Council.

Your Council Tax bill tells you which band your dwelling is in. You can appeal against your valuation if:

- There is a material increase or reduction in the value of the dwelling

- You start or stop using part of the dwelling for business
- You have just moved, but you must appeal within six months of your move
- The Listing Officer alters the band.

If you think your band is wrong contact the Listing Officer at Government Buildings, Whittington Road, Worcester WR5 2LB or ring 01905 687600. You can inspect the Valuation List at the same address or at a Redditch Borough Council Customer Service Centre.

## Discounts

The full Council Tax bill assumes that two adults live in a dwelling. If you are the only adult living in a property your Council Tax bill will be reduced by 25 per cent. You may also be eligible for a discount if you or someone who lives with you is:

- A full time student, student nurse, apprentice, Youth Training trainee or a non-British spouse/dependant of a student
- Permanently resident in hospital or a care home
- Severely mentally impaired
- Staying in certain hostels or night shelters
- 18 or 19 years old and is at, or has just left, school
- A charity careworker on low pay
- Caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18
- A member of visiting overseas forces, certain international institutions or certain religious communities
- In prison (except those in prison for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine)
- A diplomat or member of an international organisation with UK headquarters.

Where a dwelling is no-one's main home, the bill will be reduced by 50 per cent. This can apply to unoccupied furnished dwellings and second homes.

If you think you're entitled to a discount that is not shown on your bill please contact us. If your bill shows that an exemption or discount has been applied and your circumstances have changed please let us know straight away. If you don't, you may have to pay a penalty of £70. If you continue to fail to provide the correct information you may have to pay a further penalty of £280.

*Note: Where a person is liable to pay Council Tax, the council sending the bill may reduce the amount payable to such an extent as it sees fit. The Council Tax can be reduced by any amount and the power can be exercised on a case by case basis or by determining a class of case where a discount may apply. The use of this power is the exception rather than the rule.*

## Exempt dwellings

The list below is a summary of properties that are exempt from Council Tax. These include properties that are:

- Empty and unfurnished, including new dwellings - exempt for a period of up

to six months, a 100 per cent charge applies after six months

- Uninhabitable, empty and in need of, or undergoing, structural alteration or repairs - exempt for up to one year then 100 per cent charge applies
- Empty and owned by a charity - exempt for up to six months then 100 per cent charge applies
- Left empty by students or school leavers
- Left empty by someone who has gone into prison, or moved into hospital, a residential care home or elsewhere to receive care
- Left empty by someone who has moved elsewhere in order to provide care for someone
- Empty and waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted - exempt for up to six months after the grant is made then 100 per cent charge applies
- Left empty by someone who is bankrupt or properties repossessed by a mortgage lender

- Occupied only by people under 18 or by people who are severely mentally impaired
- Student halls of residence or where all the residents are students

- An unused caravan pitch or boat mooring
- Not allowed to be occupied by law
- Waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion
- Part of a dwelling, such as an annex or granny flat, which is empty and may not be let separately
- Occupied by members of visiting forces, certain international organisations, a foreign diplomat or member of an international organisation with UK headquarters
- Owned by the Ministry of Defence and held available for occupation by serving personnel
- Any part of a property, such as an annex occupied by a dependant relative of the family in the other part. The relative must be over 65, severely mentally impaired or substantially and permanently disabled.

Contact us if you think your property may qualify for an exemption.

## People with disabilities

If you or someone who lives with you needs extra space in your property because of a disability, such as an extra bathroom or kitchen, you may be entitled to a reduced Council Tax bill.

## Council Tax charges - what you pay (non parish area)

Property Value	Up to £40,000	£40,001-£52,000	£52,001-£68,000	£68,001-£88,000	£88,001-£120,000	£120,001-£160,000	£160,001-£320,000	£320,001 +
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Redditch Borough Council	139.46	162.70	185.94	209.18	255.67	302.15	348.64	418.37
Worcestershire County Council	692.71	808.16	923.61	1,039.06	1,269.97	1,500.87	1,731.77	2,078.13
West Mercia Police Authority	119.15	139.00	158.86	178.72	218.44	258.15	297.87	357.44
H & W Fire and Rescue Authority	49.10	57.28	65.46	73.64	90.01	106.38	122.74	147.28
<b>Total Tax</b>	<b>1,000.42</b>	<b>1,167.14</b>	<b>1,333.87</b>	<b>1,500.60</b>	<b>1,834.09</b>	<b>2,167.55</b>	<b>2,501.02</b>	<b>3,001.22</b>

Valuations based on houses prices from 1 April 1991.

Contact us for more information. If your home has any special fixtures which have been added for a disabled resident that reduce the home's value and you do not think they have been taken into account in the valuation, you should contact the Listing Officer (see page 28).

### Council Tax Benefit

Council Tax Benefit ensures that most householders on a low income or state benefit pay little or no Council Tax.

The amount of benefit received depends on your Council Tax band, the level of your income, the size of your family, any savings/investments you have, and if there are any non-dependants (people

aged 18 or over) living in your property. Outgoings such as mortgage payments are not taken into account, but child minding charges could be disregarded.

You may get Second Adult Rebate if you pay Council Tax and share your home with one adult or more. The person sharing your home cannot be your partner. To qualify, the second adult must be on a low income, must not be paying you rent or paying Council Tax themselves.

### Housing Benefit

If you are on a low income and/or receive a state benefit, you may get help to pay your rent. This includes council and private tenants. A home visiting service is available for people who can't attend Council offices due to illness or disability. Ring the Redditch Borough Council Benefit Office on 01527 534050.

### Enquiries about your bill

If you have any questions about your Council Tax or non-domestic rates bill:

Write to: Revenue Services, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch B98 8AH

Call: 01527 534040 during office hours

Email: [revenues@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@redditchbc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

### Appeals

Your bill will tell you which band your property is in. You may be able to appeal if you feel it is wrong. You can appeal if you have moved into the property in the last six months or if there has been a change in the building or the physical state of the local area.

### Advice about Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit

Contact the Benefits section at Redditch Borough Council on 01527 534050.

OR visit a Customer Service Centre.

OR visit our web calculator: [www.redditchbc.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/benefits)

OR visit the Department for Work and Pensions website: [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

### Help and Advice with Rent and Welfare

The Council's Rent and Welfare team helps Council tenants who are having problems with paying their rent. Please call us on 01527 534193 - we can help.

# Struggling to make 'ends meet'?

Help is at hand with Redditch Borough Council's free Financial First Aid Pack.

You can find information and advice on:

- **Benefits**
- **Housing Options**
- **Rent and Welfare**
- **Children's Centres**
- **Job Centre Plus**
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**
- **Black Pear Credit Union**
- **Act on Energy and energy efficiency**



Download the pack from [www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk) (see Features) or contact the Council for specific advice

# Every **customer** every **time**

We are committed to putting the customer at the heart of everything that we do. In April we are launching a new plan which will improve the service that our customers receive from us.

Our vision is simple. We will:

- **Make it easy** to access services, joining up with other organisations where possible
- Provide a **high quality customer experience** for all customers who make contact with us, regardless of when or how they make contact
- Ensure customers **get the information and advice they need** every time in a way that suits their needs and is easy to understand.

See **Redditch Matters** or the local press for more details.



# Need more information about your Council Tax?

## The Hub'll help

For information or advice about your Council Tax, or any other council service, contact the Worcestershire Hub



[www.whub.org.uk](http://www.whub.org.uk)



**01527 534123**



Redditch Customer Service Centre  
Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square,  
Redditch B98 8AH

