

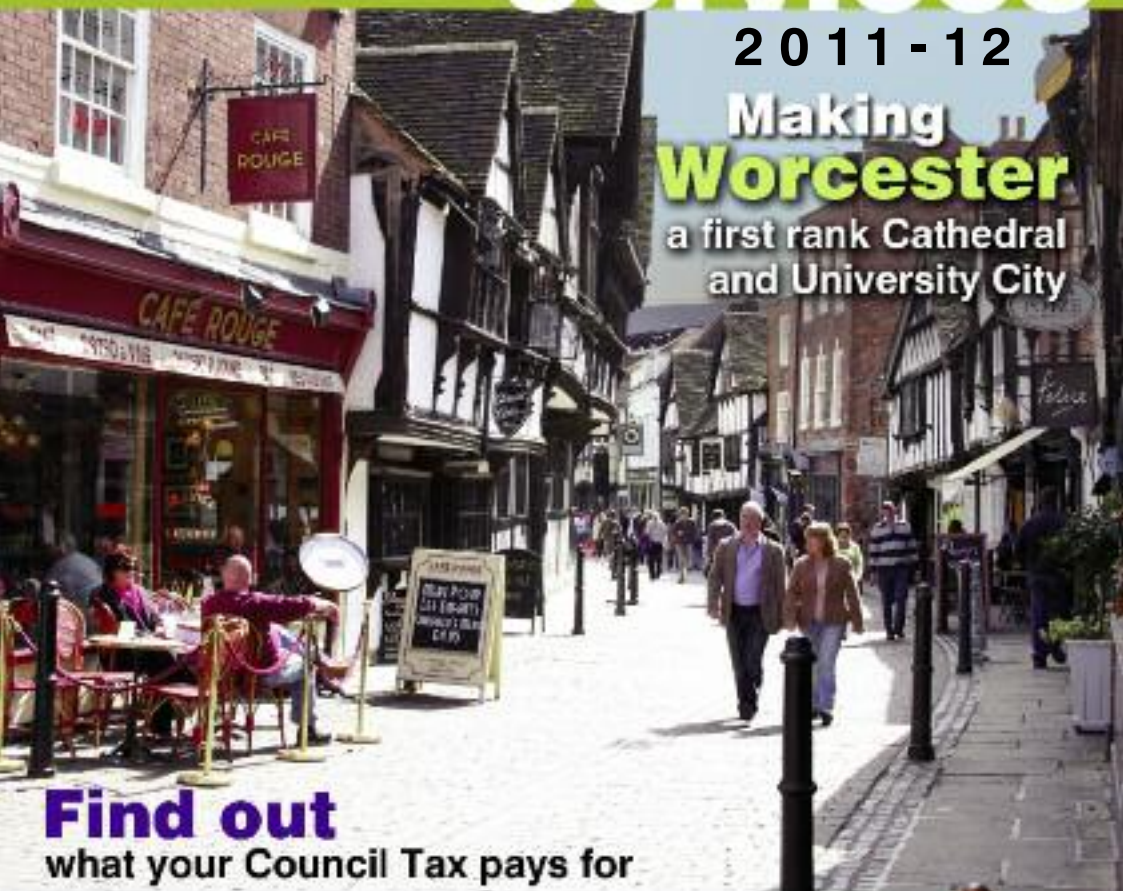
Your services

Worcester
in Worcestershire

2011-12

Making
Worcester

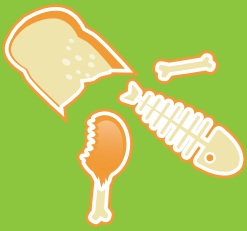
a first rank Cathedral
and University City



Find out
what your Council Tax pays for



HOW TO PAY • HELP & ADVICE • BENEFITS INFO • GET IN TOUCH
and much more from your County Council, City 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.

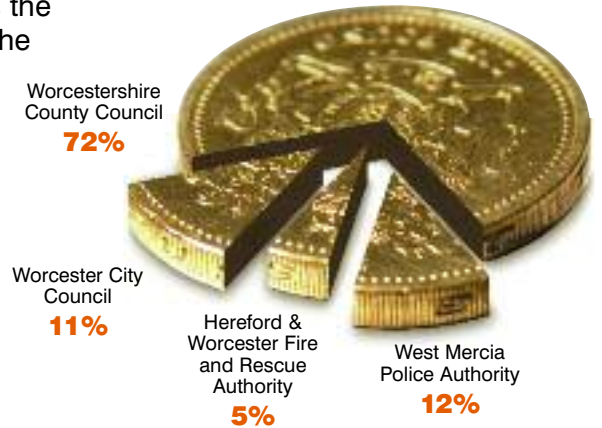
To find out more visit www.letswasteless.com
or call 01905 766883

welcome

Most of the money for providing services to you comes from central Government and other grants. In Worcester, just under £47.9 million is collected through Council Tax.

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

This year, a Band D household in Worcester will pay £1,453.52 on average to their local authorities - that's just £27.95 a week.



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Dear Citizen

As Leader of the Council it is my responsibility to ensure we deliver quality services, which meet the needs of the communities we serve, at the lowest possible cost to you. The Council also has a key role in shaping Worcester's future. Councillors and staff are striving to do this against a tough financial climate with major reductions in Government grant as a result of the Coalition Government's need to tackle Britain's unsustainable budget deficit.

I appreciate that many residents will be feeling under pressure this year with finances squeezed and uncertainty over the future. That's why we have frozen Council Tax and, for the second year running, frozen car parking charges. Our budget seeks to bridge the financial gap by making further efficiencies in order to minimise the need to make reductions in public services. We already have an excellent track record with millions saved

over the last few years with minimal impact on front line services.

I am pleased to be able to report further progress in our five key priorities.

Cleaner and Greener: Our aim to be one of the cleanest cities in the country is being realised with new neighbourhood working bringing teams together to tackle problems and better equipment purchased to do the job properly. The 'Take Pride' campaign run with the Worcester News encouraged everyone to get involved in creating a better environment and changing behaviour. Our recycling rates show what can be achieved.

Safer and Stronger Communities: Working together we have ensured CCTV will continue to be monitored. A Community Trust has been established to run community centres and a new integrated youth and community centre is under construction. Major improvements have

been completed in Cripplegate and Gheluvelt parks, both achieving national Green Flag status, supported by the efforts of voluntary 'Friends' groups.

Urban Renaissance: Major regeneration is taking shape across the city including the iconic Library & History Centre, Lowesmoor development and the new waterfront communities in Diglis. The new Diglis footbridge and riverside improvements are creating sustainable travel opportunities as well as great riverside walks. The scheme won the national Sustainable Infrastructure of the Year award. Worcester Bosch's expansion, with a potential 1900 new jobs, is now a step closer with planning consent granted.

Customer Care and Citizen Engagement: The Worcestershire Hub provides a single point of contact for enquiries and an ever-increasing range of services online. The Hub resolves 95.8 per cent of enquiries at the first point of contact with 91 per cent satisfied. Our Worcestershire Viewpoint surveys and

community forum inform decision making and our quarterly magazine CityLife aims to keep you updated. We're on Twitter and Facebook too and welcome feedback and suggestions.

Performance, Innovation and Efficiency: The Council has pursued an ambitious programme of collaborative working with other councils and now delivers many services through Shared Services. This has helped reduce costs and saved front line services from unnecessary cuts. We now have a much leaner management team saving £1.7 million over the next five years. In future we will be commissioning services to ensure we deliver them even more efficiently.

I hope this demonstrates that the Council really is delivering value for your money.

Simon Geraghty
Leader of Worcester City Council.

How to pay your Council Tax

Preferred methods of payment



Direct debit
The simplest and most convenient way to pay is by monthly direct debit on your choice of four payment dates. Please complete the form inserted in this leaflet.



Online
By visiting our pay online facility at www.worcester.gov.uk



Over the phone
By calling 0845 602 3408, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (line is closed 5.15pm - 5.30pm each day)

Alternative methods



By post
To: Worcester City Council
PO Box 31, Pershore WR10 9DD



In person by cash, debit or credit card
At the: Customer Service Centre
Orchard House, Farrier Street,
Worcester WR1 3BB

Difficulty in paying?
Please contact us as soon as possible. We can then work out a payment plan that suits us both.

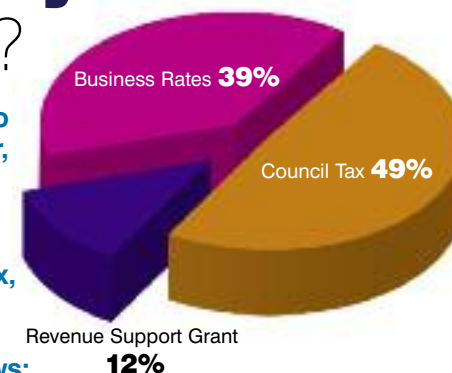
Our **budget** - where the money will be spent

Your Council Tax helps to pay for the services you receive.
The following table outlines how the money is split between them.

2010-11 Net Cost £'000	Services	2011-12		
		Total Spending £'000	Total Income £'000	Net Cost £'000
Central Services to the public				
1,306	Local Tax Collection	7,800	-6,681	1,119
246	Elections	260	-7	253
53	Emergency Planning	55		55
0	Local Land Charges	136	-141	-5
116	Property	551	-447	104
Cultural, Environmental, & Planning				
4,053	Cultural & Related Services	8,922	-4,918	4,004
3,610	Environmental Services	7,403	-3,818	3,585
759	Planning & Development Services	2,147	-1,414	733
Highways, Road & Transport				
7	Parking, Transport & Policy Strategy	2,024	-3,670	-1,646
Housing				
2,578	General Fund Housing (Inc. Homelessness)	24,312	-22,414	1,898
2,731	Corporate and Democratic Core	4,176	-1,414	2,762
15,459	Net Cost of Services	57,786	-44,924	12,862
-1,859	Capital Charges and Interest			-1,819
0	Use of Balances			-141
13,600	Budget Requirement			10,902
-1,039	Revenue Support Grant			-1,316
-7,154	Distribution from non-domestic rate pool			-4,260
5,407	AMOUNT TO BE MET BY LOCAL TAXPAYER			5,326

Where does the **City Council's** money come from?

It costs the City Council £57.786 million to deliver its function and services. However, after taking into accounts service income and grants, the budget requirement/net cost of these services is only £10.902 million. The net sum is met by Council Tax, the Revenue Support Grant paid to the council by Government and the council's share of national Business Rates, as follows:



Parish council

People living in the parishes of Warndon and St. Peter will pay an extra charge for their parish councils. The local precept issued are:

	2010-11 £	2011-12 £	Band D Amount
Parish of St. Peter	33,302	32,633	14.57
Parish of Warndon	67,800	69,834	17.29

	£	£/head
Council Tax	5,347,841	56.59
Deficit on Collection Fund	-22,055	-0.23
From Central Government		
Revenue Support Grant	1,316,670	13.93
Non-Domestic Rates	4,259,651	45.08
Total (including £102,467 for Parish Council)	10,902,107	115.37

How much Council Tax do you pay? (excludes any discounts, benefits or relief)

Valuation bands	Value of property £	City area	Parish of Warndon	Parish of St. Peter
A	Up to 40,000	969.03	980.55	978.73
B	41,000 to 52,000	1,130.52	1,143.97	1,141.84
C	52,000 to 68,000	1,292.02	1,307.39	1,304.96
D	68,000 to 88,000	1,453.52	1,470.81	1,468.08
E	88,000 to 120,000	1,776.54	1,797.67	1,794.34
F	120,000 to 160,000	2,099.54	2,124.52	2,120.58
G	160,000 to 320,000	2,422.55	2,451.36	2,446.81
H	Over 320,000	2,907.05	2,941.63	2,936.17

The City Councils share of the total Band D Council Tax is £162.10 this is not an increase over the Council Tax for 2010-11

How we kept your Council Tax at the **same level**

The main changes in the City Council's budget

Type of Expenditure and Income	Change in Expenditure and Income £'000	£/head	Band D Council Tax
2011-12 Changes in Inflation and Income	661	7.05	20.04
Efficiency Changes	-1,583	-16.89	-47.98
Contingent provisions including transfer Concessionary travel	-1,695	-18.09	-51.38
Reduction in Government formula grant	2,617	27.93	79.32
Total	0	0.00	0.00

How many staff do we employ?

To provide its services, the City Council has budgeted for full time permanent posts as follows. The reduction in FTE from 2010-11 is a result of senior management restructure as part of budget reductions:

2010-11

394 full time (or equivalent) posts

2011-12

364 full time (or equivalent) posts

Capital projects

In addition to revenue expenditure, the City Council proposes to spend approximately £6.851 million over the next five years on capital projects (i.e. spending on assets that have a lasting value such as land, buildings and vehicles). Projects include investment in environmental schemes, improvements to riverside, information technology and provision of grants to privately owned houses.

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
- www.whub.org.uk

An increasing range of County Council services are available anytime by going online - go to 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 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.

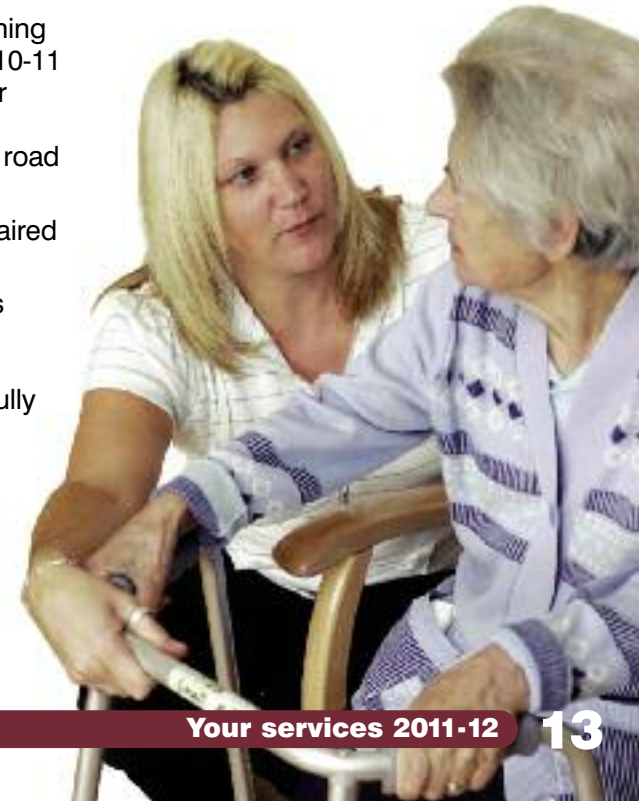
Roads, travel and transport

- 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 Net Exp £m	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	-
306.0	Total cost of services	804.9	473.2	331.7	1,050.19	13,025
3.1	Addition to or use of general reserves	0.0	3.5	-3.5	-11.13	-
309.1	Net budget requirement	804.9	476.7	328.2	1,039.06	13,025

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
Net budget requirement 2010-11	309.1
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
Revised starting position 2011-12	347.1
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
Net budget requirement 2011-12	328.2

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



 <p>COMING SOON TO YOUR COUNCIL District Elections Parish Elections & National Referendum</p> <p>WHEN? Thursday 5 May</p>	<p>POLLING DAY - THURSDAY 5 MAY</p> <p>Going to be away? - Plan early. Don't Lose YOUR Vote!</p>
	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mon 3 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 electronic means</p>	
<p>?</p> <p>Need more info? Contact YOUR Electoral Services Office, or For application forms and advice visit: www.elect.gov.uk</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



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
Gross expenditure		
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)
Core budget	32.309	32.662
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)
Gross expenditure	31.123	31.195



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.
- focused on achieving priorities through redirecting resources which had improved our front-line services whilst achieving efficiency savings

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.

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
Net budget requirement	31.394	31.195
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
Net budget requirement 2010-11	31.394
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
Net budget requirement 2011-12	31.195

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.



Your **Council Tax bill** explained

A Who is liable to pay Council Tax?

B Do I qualify for a reduction in my Council Tax? See pages 26 and 27 for discounts, and page 28 for disability reductions.

C Where is my account number /payment reference?

D Council Tax bandings explained. See page 7.

E How is the money split? See page 3.

F How do I make a payment?

The amount you have to pay and the payment dates are detailed on the foot of your bill. Details of how to make payment are detailed on the reverse of your bill.

Worcester City Council
 Revenue & Benefits
 PO Box 31
 Pershore
 WY4 3SD
 Tel: 01905 822125
 Fax: 01905 845883
 email: h.w@worcester.gov.uk

Worcester
 CITY COUNCIL

Account number: 10000000000000000000

Account name: 10000000000000000000

Account address: 10000000000000000000

Annual Direct Debit Council Tax Bill 2010/2011

Charge made by:	Rate	Amount
Worcestershire County Council	100%	£100.00
West Midlands Police Authority	100%	£100.00
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	100%	£100.00
Worcester City Council	100%	£100.00
Full year charge for a property in Band E		£400.00
Council Tax for the period 01 Apr 2010 to 31 Mar 2011		
01.04.2010 to 31.03.2011		£400.00
25% Discount as only one occupant is resident		£100.00
Total Charge:		£300.00
Total Amount Due		
£300.00		

This bill is payable by Direct Debit that is as follows:

Date Due	Amount Due	Date Due	Amount Due
01 Apr 2010	£100.00	01 Jul 2010	£100.00
01 May 2010	£100.00	01 Oct 2010	£100.00
01 Jun 2010	£100.00	01 Nov 2010	£100.00
01 Aug 2010	£100.00	01 Dec 2010	£100.00

*As a condition of any bill or demand notice, you must pay the amount due to the authority within the period specified in the bill or demand notice.

Your **questions** answered

How your Council Tax is worked out

Council Tax has to be paid on most owned or rented dwellings.

How much you pay depends on the value of your property. There are eight valuation bands and each dwelling is placed in one of them by the Inland Revenue Listing Officer, based on its open market value at 1 April 1991. A full list of bands and the Council Tax for each can be found on page 7 of this booklet.

Who has to pay?

You have to pay Council Tax if you own and live in a property or you are a tenant. If no-one is living in a dwelling or it is not the main home of the people living there, then the owner has to pay. There are some occupied dwellings where the owner, not the occupier, has to pay. These are:

- residential care homes, nursing homes and some hostels
- dwellings of religious communities
- houses in multiple occupation
- dwellings sometimes occupied by an employer whose staff live there
- some residences of ministers of religion
- certain dwellings provided for asylum seekers.

Discounts on Council Tax

The full Council Tax bill assumes there are two or more adults living in a dwelling. If there is only one adult using it as their main home, the bill will be reduced by a quarter - 25 per cent. Some adults are not counted for Council Tax. These are:

- full time students, student nurses, apprentices and Youth Training trainees
- hospital patients who will not be returning to their home
- people being looked after in care homes
- people who are severely mentally impaired

- people living in certain hostels or night shelters
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at school or have just left
- charity careworkers on low pay
- those caring for a disabled person who is not a spouse, partner or child
- diplomats, members of visiting forces and certain international institutions
- monks and nuns
- people in prison - except those in prison for not paying their Council Tax or other fine.

If a dwelling has been empty for more than six months or is used as a second home then the bill will be reduced by a quarter.

If there is a discount on your bill and you are not entitled to it, or if your circumstances change you must tell us within 21 days. If you don't, you may have to pay a penalty of £70.

Exempt dwellings

Council Tax does not have to be paid if a dwelling is not occupied and is:

- not furnished, including new dwellings - for up to six months since last occupied
- not furnished and needs, or is having, major structural alteration or repair - up to a maximum of twelve months since last occupied.

If you want to apply for one of the exemptions opposite, we will need to visit your property while it is unoccupied and under repair if appropriate, so you will need to tell us as soon as it becomes unoccupied.

Further exempt dwellings include those that are:

- owned by a charity - for up to six months
- left empty by students or school leavers
- left empty by someone who has moved into a hospital, care home or other place for personal care or someone who has moved to care for another person
- waiting for the official execution of a will or letters of administration to be given - and for up to six months after repossessed by a mortgage lender
- the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee
- empty because occupation is prohibited by law

- waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion
- a caravan pitch or a boat mooring not in use
- part of another dwelling - such as a granny flat
- left empty by someone who has gone to prison.

Council Tax does not have to be paid on occupied dwellings whose residents are:

- all full time students
- all under 18
- all severely mentally impaired (but only when the severely mentally impaired residents are liable)
- foreign diplomat(s)
- elderly or disabled relatives occupying a self contained part of the resident's house.

Please remember: you must tell us if you are no longer entitled to an exemption.





Reductions for people with disabilities

If a person in your house needs extra rooms or facilities to cater for their disability, then you may be able to get your Council Tax bill reduced. This makes sure that people do not end up paying more tax on the extra space they need.

If you think you may be entitled to a discount, exemption or disability reduction, please call the number on your bill or call in at the council's Customer Service Centre, Orchard House, Farrier Street, Worcester.

Appealing against your Council Tax

You can appeal against the band that your house has been put into after:

- demolition
- conversions of houses into flats
- physical changes in the locality that affect the value

or, within six months of:

- the Listing Officer changing the band of your property
- a band change made to a similar property by a valuation tribunal or the High Court
- becoming the tax payer for the property.

**For details contact:
The Listing Officer,
Block A Government Buildings,
Whittington Road, Worcester WR5 2LB
Telephone: 01905 687600**

You can also appeal if you think you are not liable to pay Council Tax; for example, if you are not the resident or owner, or the property is exempt, or if you think we have made a mistake calculating your bill. Write to us so we can reconsider your case.

If you make an appeal you must carry on paying until the appeal is settled.

If your appeal is successful you will get a refund of any overpaid tax.

Information sharing

Information held on the Council Tax records may be matched against data held by other local authorities and any other benefits and grants awarded.

Council Tax Benefit

If you qualify for Council Tax Benefit it means you will get money off your bill. To qualify, you must be living in the property and be responsible for paying the Council Tax. You can get help with your bill through one of the two Council Tax Benefit schemes:

SCHEME ONE The Main Benefit Scheme

Who should claim?

- People on low income
- People on state benefit.

Who can get this benefit?

If you are liable to pay Council Tax you can apply for benefit. The amount of benefit you receive will be based on:

- your capital, including savings (if you and/or your partner have over £16,000 you will not qualify unless you receive pension credit guarantee)

- your income, including tax credits, earnings & any other state benefits
- The amount of Council Tax you pay
- your family circumstances, e.g. the age of you and/or partner, the number of dependant children, whether anyone is disabled.

SCHEME TWO Second Adult Rebate Scheme

Who should claim?

- People who have 'other adult(s)' sharing their home who are on a low income
- Couples can claim if one of them is not counted in the Council Tax calculation.

Who can get this rebate?

Benefit will depend on the personal circumstances and income of the 'other adult(s)'. Please note: your own personal circumstances, income and capital will not be taken into account.

(Continued on page 30)



Council Tax **Benefit** (Continued)

Housing Benefit

If you pay rent you may also be entitled to Housing Benefit (see contact details on the back page for more information).

When should I claim?

You should start claiming as soon as possible, if you delay you may lose benefit. You can apply even if you do not have all the supporting information, this can be sent to us later. Benefit cannot normally be backdated so do not delay. Get in touch and complete an application form now.

How do I claim?

Application forms are available from the Benefits Office or Customer Service Centre.

The form should be completed and returned as soon as possible as benefit

is normally only payable from the Monday after the form is requested.

Benefit fraud

It is estimated that social security benefit fraudsters cost the country £1.5 billion per year. If you think that someone is committing benefit fraud, you can report it by telephoning us on our confidential Benefit Fraud Hotline: 01386 565280.

Alternatively, you can contact the Department for Work and Pensions Shared Fraud Hotline between 8.30am and 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, on 0800 854 440 or by post to: NBFH, PO Box 647, Preston PR1 1WA.

If you have a speech or hearing difficulty and use a text phone, dial 0800 328 6341.

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
Total Council Tax base	2,908,000	2,926,000

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 are mainly due to an enhanced capital programme based on national prioritisation.

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



No more waiting for your bill to arrive in the mail - now you can see it online and if you're one of the first to sign up you could be our lucky winner!

Council Tax payers can:

- view your account details including payments made and amounts due
- set up a Direct Debit
- make a payment
- report a change of address
- apply for discounts and exemptions.

Benefit claimants can:

- make a new claim for Council Tax or Housing Benefit
- notify us of a change in your circumstances
- view notifications and details of how your benefit has been calculated.

Just a click away!

To find out more
visit www.worcester.gov.uk

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



Council Tax 01905 822733

Benefits 01905 822744

Business Rates 01905 822755



Worcester Customer Service Centre,
Orchard House, Farrier Street, Worcester WR1 3BB

**To find out more about how the Hub can
help you, call 01905 722233**

