

Your services

Bromsgrove
in Worcestershire

2011 - 12

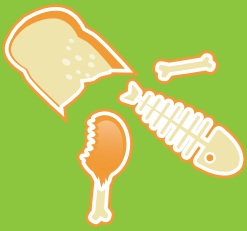


Find out

what your
Council Tax
pays for



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

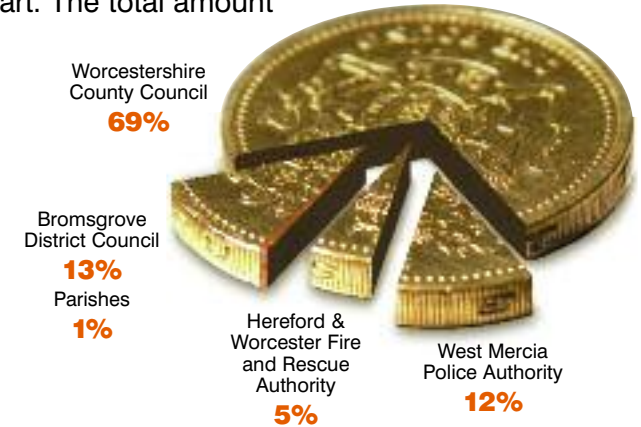
To find out more visit www.letswasteless.com
or call 01905 766883

welcome

Most of the money for providing services to you comes from central Government and other grants, but in Bromsgrove around £7 million is collected through Council Tax.

Bromsgrove District 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 Bromsgrove will pay £1,502.44 on average to their local authorities - that's just £28.89 a week.



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Sharing **more** spending **less**

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

“ *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, our customer.*

It's not going to be easy. Following the announcement of the Local Government Grant Settlement, the council is set to face a cut to grant funding by £1.3 million over two years. This is a

The District Council collects Council Tax from partners - but keeps just **13%** of the bill.

reduction of 27.7 per cent and is the highest in Worcestershire on a settlement which is already the lowest in the county.

Many local authorities nationally are looking to their partners and neighbouring councils to share the costs of running services. Sharing services and looking for creative and innovative ways of working together to save money is something this Council, and Redditch Borough Council embarked on nearly four years ago.

You can find out more about this initiative and other wider partnerships we are pursuing on the opposite page and on page 20. Indeed this leaflet is an example of this sharing - by joining forces with the District Councils in Worcestershire, the County Council and Fire Service we make savings and you don't get individual leaflets through your door.

This leaflet is the only publication which we send directly to all of our residents.

Happy reading. ”

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



Sharing **Services**

Not about political merger but making sure that services provided are high quality, cost effective and responsive to customer needs

We are nearly four years into our Shared Services Project with Redditch Borough Council.

Last April our single management team was appointed and services already shared between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils include:

- Payroll
- Procurement
- Community Safety
- Electoral Services
- CCTV Services
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

We have come a long way and this approach is being adopted by other councils across the country as more budget pressures are put on the public sector.

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

“No change is not an option”

The programme of remaining teams to go through the processes was launched in September but following the recent local grant settlement announcements, we may need to bring some of the changes forward.

For updates on the Shared Services follow Chief Executive Kevin Dicks' blog on our website.

And there's more...

From June, Bromsgrove District Council will join Redditch Borough and Wyre Forest District Councils to form a joint Economic and Regeneration Team for North Worcestershire.

A move to a shared service, hosted by Wyre Forest, means the authorities can bring together their teams to form a much more effective service including supporting businesses and work to enhance town centres and attract tourists.

It will also give the team a more powerful collective voice in promoting opportunities for new investments in the area - while still focussing on local needs.

Council Tax frozen for District Council services





Delivering **services** to you

OUR VISION

“ Working together to build a District where people are proud to live and work through community leadership and excellent services. ”

Under this vision are our four objectives which are based on the areas you told us are important to you. They help us to make sure we target the Council Tax in the right areas.

Regeneration

Achievements

Last year we:

- Helped work to start on the multi-million pound health centre in the town
- With the County Council, completed work to develop the bus station, including new electronic display boards, and a revamp of the surrounding area
- Secured £2 million partnership funding for the Town Centre Regeneration Project.



Next year

We will:

- Begin work on improving the High Street
- Start work with the Local Enterprise Partnerships which will help support economic development in the town and across the county
- Consider residents' comments on the strategic plans for the Town Centre Regeneration Project which are out to public consultation.

Improvement

Achievements

Last year we:

- As part of the Shared Services Project, we have saved £500,000 in the first year
- Launched Worcestershire Regulatory Services which brings together Trading Standards, Licensing and Environmental Services - thought to be the first of its kind in the country
- Delivered excellent customer service through the Customer Service Centre.

Next year

We will:

- Launch our Customer Experience Strategy so customers receive excellent service every time
- Continue to use good financial practices like shared services,

procurement and transformation to balance our books

- Deliver £50,000 of savings through good collaborative procurement practice.

One community

Achievements

Last year we:

- Published our first 'Together Bromsgrove Plus' - a magazine specifically for our older residents
- Invested over £100,000 in Sidemoor and Alvechurch Recreation Grounds including replacing toddler facilities
- Held a U-Decide Event with the County Council when young people decided how to spend £50,000.

Next year

We will:

- Build on our Democracy Year 2011 events and organise more community clean-ups and visits to schools to get you involved
- Continue to support the Community-based Youth Enterprise in Alvechurch
- Continue our events including Street Theatre, Multi-skills, Diwali and support for Black History Month.

Environment

Achievements

Last year we:

- Retained 17,000 residents who signed up to our garden

waste collection service

- Helped residents to recycle more than one million tonnes of materials
- Extended our waste and recycling collection to 2,000 extra homes.

Next year

We will:

- Retain our customer base for the garden waste service
- Ensure the Core Strategy balances the need for housing and economic growth with the green agenda
- Invest in technology, including solar panels, to make buildings more energy efficient.



For more details on our services visit www.bromsgrove.gov.uk
You can follow us at Redditch and Bromsgrove Big Local app,
Facebook or Twitter. See the back page for more contact details.



More than **emptying** your bin

13 per cent of your Council Tax pays for Bromsgrove District Council services. So, what do you get for your money - here are some of the services we provide:-

- We clean the streets, clear up litter and wipe graffiti from the walls
- We make sure our parks are blooming - and a wonderful place for you to relax
- We help keep you safe with our CCTV and Lifeline services - not to mention our Neighbourhood wardens
- We can advise if you are planning an extension, housing development - or want to chop down a tree
- We provide safe, illuminated and well-patrolled environments to park your car - and at competitive prices
- We administer housing and council tax benefits on behalf of the Government
- While we send out the Council Tax Bill and collect the cash - just 13 per cent stays with us!

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 Together Bromsgrove or watch the local press for more details.

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.

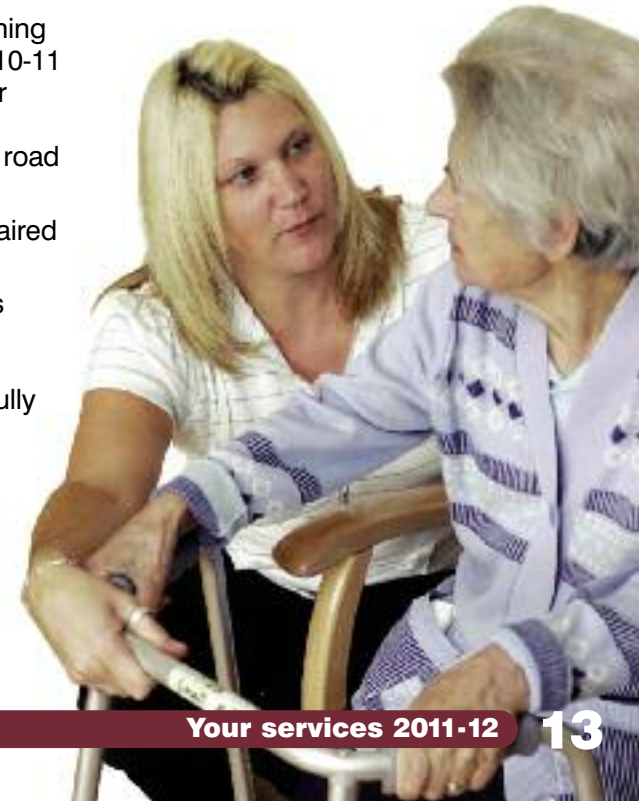
Roads, travel and transport

- 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.

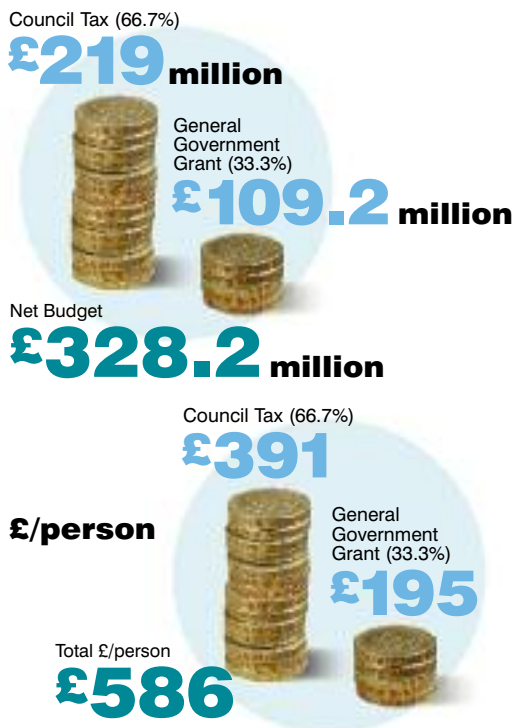


Your County Council's Budget

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:



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.

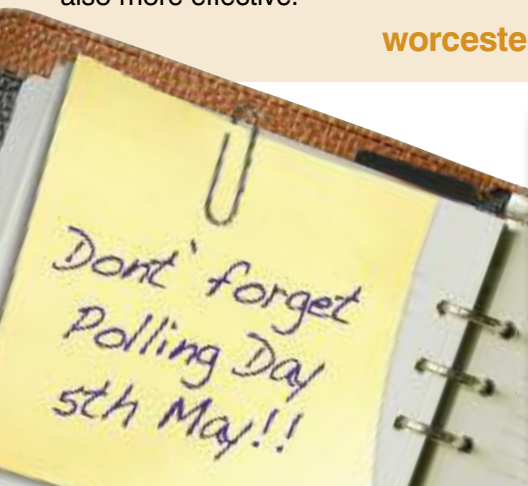
All the local services that Worcestershire's local authorities used to deliver to residents remain in place, and are now run as a single shared service hosted by Bromsgrove District Council.

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



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



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.



How we'll spend **Bromsgrove's** cash in 2011-12

Services	2010-11	2011-12		
	Net expenditure £000's	Net expenditure £000's	Other income £000's	Gross expenditure £000's
Performance, Policy & Projects	562	602	-63	665
Corporate Resources	250	188	-144	332
Customer Services	474	497	-175	672
Community Services	1,850	1,508	-187	1,695
Business Transformation	1,319	1,272	-629	1,901
Finance & Resources	2,209	2,091	-928	3,019
Legal & Democratic Services	1,024	1,107	-173	1,280
Planning & Regeneration Services	546	542	-960	1,501
Regulatory Services - Client	616	439	-433	872
Leisure & Cultural Services	1,192	1,236	-231	1,466
Environmental Services	2,197	2,385	-2,900	5,284
Total service Net expenditure	12,239	11,866	-6,821	18,687
Investment income	-87	-68	-68	0
Specific grants	-29	-436	-436	0
Sums to(+)/from(-) General Fund working balances	135	-323	-323	0
Contributions to(+)/from(-) specific reserves	0	-15	-15	0
Net expenditure Bromsgrove District Council	12,258	11,024	-7,663	18,687
Parish councils precepts	647	664	0	664
Recharge from Capital Programme	-136	-100	-100	0
Total budget requirement	12,769	11,588	-7,763	19,351
Less Revenue Support Grant	-640	-904	-904	0
Less non domestic rates	-4,407	-2,926	-2,926	0
Less sums from the Collection Fund	-52	-46	-46	0
Total Council Tax requirement	7,670	7,712	-11,639	19,351

Why has our spending changed?

Our budget requirement for 2011-12 of £11.59 million is a decrease of £1.18 million from 2010-11. The main reasons for this increase are shown in the following table:

	£'000
Provision for inflation	172
Net service improvements/savings	-560
Decrease in service expenditure	-388
Reduction in investment income	19
Change in use of balances	-457
Change in use of specific grants/reserves	-407
Change in recharge to capital projects	36
Increase in parish precepts	17
Decrease in budget requirement	-1,180
Decrease in Government funding*	1,217
Change in Collection Fund surplus	5
Change in amount to be met by Council Tax	42

* includes adjustment for transfer of concessionary fares.

Outstanding borrowing

We have been debt free since March 2000 and do not intend to enter into any borrowing agreements during 2011-12.

	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Bromsgrove District Council	128.57	149.99	171.42	192.85	235.71	278.56	321.42	385.70
Worcestershire County Council	692.71	808.16	923.61	1,039.06	1,269.97	1,500.87	1,731.77	2,078.12
West Mercia Police Authority	119.15	139.00	158.86	178.72	218.44	258.15	297.87	357.44
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority	49.10	57.28	65.46	73.64	90.01	106.38	122.74	147.28
*Average Parish Council	12.11	14.13	16.15	18.17	22.20	26.24	30.28	36.34
Total Council Tax bill (av)	1,001.64	1,168.56	1,335.50	1,502.44	1,836.33	2,170.20	2,504.08	3,004.88

* The figure for parish councils is an average. What you pay depends on your own parish council's precept.

Capital projects

In addition to revenue expenditure, we will be investing £2.15 million on capital schemes throughout the district. This expenditure will be funded from grants, contributions and the council's own capital receipts. Capital receipts are the proceeds of sale of our fixed assets. The table below shows the area in which we will be investing:

Capital Programme	£'000
Environmental Services	905
Leisure & Cultural Services	112
Community Services	795
Business Transformation	100
Other Departments	238
Total expenditure	2,150

How is the Council Tax bill calculated?

The amount of Council Tax payable is dependent upon the valuation band to which your property has been allocated. There are eight valuation bands - A to H. The valuation band for your property is shown on your Council Tax bill.

Budget Jury

Every year we recruit a group of residents from across the district to have their say on the council's spending through our Budget Jury. In a series of four sessions running from June to October last year the group heard from Senior Managers about how the council's finances are run and the services we deliver.

Armed with this knowledge they are tasked with drawing up a list of priorities where they believe the 13 per cent of the Council Tax bill which the district council keeps, should be invested. With a limited pot of cash they jurors are given an insight into the tough spending decisions that

members and officers face each year. The jurors also consider the actual bids and savings proposed by each department, just as members do.

The jurors priorities were considered by Executive Cabinet and Senior Management Team during the summer and the opinions of the jurors in relation to the bids and savings will inform the budget setting round. The jurors will be invited back to the council meeting next year where the budget will be set.

For more details contact Rebecca Dunne on 01527 881616 or r.dunne@bromsgrove.gov.uk

As seen on TV



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).

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 placed each dwelling in one of the eight valuation bands shown 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 assessed the value of properties, **not** the district 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 (in this case, you must appeal within six months of your move)
- The Listing Officer alters the band.

If you think your band is too high contact the Listing Officer at The Valuation Office

Agency, Crown House, Bull Ring, Kidderminster DY10 2AA or ring 03000 507450 or email westmidlandsgroup.vo@voa.gsi.gov.uk. You can inspect the Valuation List at the Customer Services Centre, School Drive, Bromsgrove or access it at the Valuation website.

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:

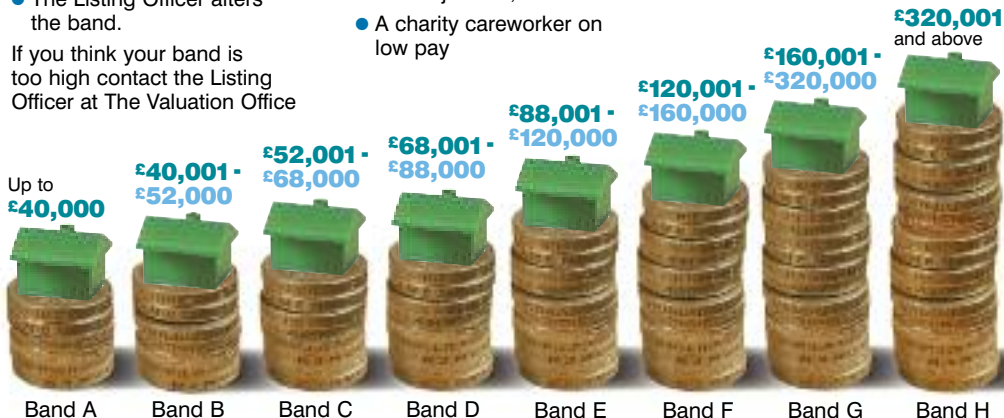
- A full time student, student nurse, apprentice, Youth Training trainee or a non-British spouse/dependant of a student
- Permanently resident in hospital or a care home
- Severely mentally impaired
- Staying in certain hostels or night shelters
- 18 or 19 years old and is at, or has just left, school
- 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 (unless they are in prison for not paying Council Tax or a related fine)
- A diplomat or member of an international organisation with UK headquarters.

Please note

Properties which are empty and unfurnished for more than six months will be liable for full Council Tax. Properties classed as second homes which are unoccupied and furnished are eligible for a 10 per cent reduction in the Council Tax payable.

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.



Valuations based on houses prices from 1 April 1991.

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.

Exempt dwellings

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

- Unoccupied and unfurnished, including new dwellings - these are exempt for a period of up to six months, after which a 100 per cent charge applies
- Uninhabitable, unoccupied, unfurnished and in need of, or undergoing, structural alteration or repairs - these are exempt for up to one year, then a 100 per cent charge applies
- Empty and owned by a charity - these are 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 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 full time 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
- A self-contained part of a property, which is the sole or main residence of a dependant relative of a person who lives 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, need 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. Contact us for more information.

If your home has any special features which have been added for a disabled resident and which increase its value, these features should be ignored when your property is valued for Council Tax purposes. If you think your property has been valued incorrectly you should contact the Valuation Office.

Information you have provided may be used for the prevention and detection of fraud. The information may be shared with other bodies or organisations such as Government departments, if the law allows.

What happens if I don't pay my Council Tax

Your Council Tax is payable on or before the dates shown on your annual bill. If a payment is missed, the council will issue a reminder notice. You have seven days to bring your account up to date.

If you bring your account up to date, no further action will be taken. If you don't pay, your right to pay by instalments will be withdrawn and the full balance will become due within a further seven days. No further reminder will be issued.

If your account then remains unpaid, the council will request that the Magistrates issue a court summons, costing £62.00. This is a request for you to appear at a court and answer to the complaint that you have not paid your Council Tax. The Magistrates will then issue a liability order. This gives the council the right to take further action to collect any money outstanding.



Appeals

You can appeal if you consider that you are not liable to pay Council Tax - for example, because you are not the resident or owner, or because your property is exempt, or we've made a mistake calculating your bill. If you wish to appeal on these grounds you must notify us in writing, and we will review the situation. Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of tax owing in the meantime. If your appeal is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid tax. If you make an appeal and you are still not satisfied, you can then appeal to a Valuation Tribunal. Details are available on request from us or the Listing Officer (valuation appeals only), or The Tribunal Office, Hepworth House, Unit 2 Trafford Court, Doncaster, DN1 1PN, 01302 342324.

Council Tax and Housing Benefits

Council Tax Benefit is available to help people on low incomes pay their Council Tax. There is also a scheme called Second Adult Rebate. If you are not entitled to Council Tax Benefit in your own right because of your income, but there is another adult in your house (not your partner) and they are on a low income, we may be able to work out your benefit using their gross income. If you do get benefit, you must tell us about any changes in your circumstances straight away. If you do not, you may lose benefit. Failure to tell us promptly of changes may be an offence.

Please note that you may also get help with your rent known as Housing Benefit.

If you would like to claim Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Second Adult Rebate please contact Customer Services on 01527 881630.

Please note, Council Tax Benefit may also be referred to as Council Tax Rebate in some publications.

Fraud

The Corporate Anti-Fraud Team is charged with detecting, deterring and preventing all types of fraud against the council, including benefit fraud. In order to achieve this, the council is taking action against all fraudsters by prosecuting, levying penalties and issuing cautions, as well as pursuing recovery of monies overpaid.

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to tackling all fraud against the council and the message is clear:

- If you are defrauding, you are going to be caught and may be prosecuted
- If you know someone who is fraudulently claiming benefits, and/or Single Person Discount on their Council Tax, please tell us using one of the following methods:

Telephone 01527 881221
 Email fraud@bromsgrove.gov.uk
 Write to: Corporate Anti-Fraud Team, Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 1AA
 Or check out our web-pages at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/business/fraud

Business Rates

From April 2011 the rateable value threshold for empty property relief will be 2600. The threshold was temporarily increased from 1st April 2009 (from 2200 to 18000). The April 2011 threshold reflects the movement in property values as at the April 2010 revaluation.

For further information about Business Rates (Non Domestic Rates) is shown on a separate explanatory leaflet enclosed with the Business Rates bill. If you have not received this leaflet it can be downloaded from our website or if you would like a copy, please contact us.

This leaflet forms part of the Council Tax demand notice and national non-domestic rate bill for 2011-12.

Self Service

Self Service is now available for you to view your Council Tax account on line. You can register for the e-citizenservice at <https://selfserve.bromsgrove.gov.uk> and request a PIN to access your account.


How to pay your Council Tax


You can pay your Council Tax On-line, by Telephone, Post, In Person or at your local Payzone store or Post Office.

See the reverse of you Council Tax bill for more information.

Get **in touch!**

Click on www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Or find us on 

or follow us on 

Email

worcestershirehub@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Call us

01527 881288

Out of hours emergency

01527 871565



Visit us

Customer Service Centre,
 School Road, Bromsgrove,
 Monday - Wednesday
 & Fri 9am - 5pm
 Thursday 10am - 5pm
 Saturday 9am to noon

Write to us

The Council House, Burcot
 Lane, Bromsgrove B60 1AA

Council Tax Bill

Paying it is as easy as

1. Pick up a pen
2. Fill in a form
3. Return and relax



Paying by



adds up!

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



01527 881288



Bromsgrove Customer Service Centre
Dolphin Centre, School Drive,
Bromsgrove B60 1AY

