

# Council Tax Further Information

These notes form part of your Demand Notice. If you have any questions about these notes, please refer to the contact details on the front of your bill.

## Council Tax Valuation Bands

Most dwellings are subject to Council Tax. There is one bill per dwelling, and every property has been allocated to one of eight bands by the Valuation Office Agency according to its open market capital value as at 1st April 1991. The bands and their values are as follows:

Valuation Band	Range of Values
A	Up to £40,000
B	£40,001 to £52,000
C	£52,001 to £68,000
D	£68,001 to £88,000
E	£88,001 to £120,000
F	£120,001 to £160,000
G	£160,001 to £320,000
H	More than £320,000

Your Council Tax bill shows which band your home is in.

If you have a query about your Council Tax banding you should contact the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) at St Mark's House, St Mark's Court, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6QS. Telephone: 01642 416700.

The VOA website address is [www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk)

## Appeals

You can appeal to the Council if you think you are not liable to pay Council Tax. This could be because you consider:

- You are not the correct person to be charged; or
- The property should be exempt; or
- We have made a mistake working out your bill.

If you want to appeal for one of these

reasons you must write and tell us so that we can have a look again at your case. Our address appears on the front of this leaflet.

## Making an appeal does not mean you can stop paying your Council Tax.

(If you would like to comment on our standards and performance please contact us at the address shown on the front of this leaflet).

## Non-Payment of Council Tax

To avoid receiving a reminder notice for late payment, your Council Tax instalments must be paid on the due dates shown on your bill. If your account is not brought up to date after a reminder notice, a summons will be issued for the remaining balance of the full year's charge, and costs will be added. Only 2 reminder notices will be issued against an account in any financial year - after this, any further late payment will result in the withdrawal of instalments and issue of a final notice for the remaining balance of the full year's charge.

If you receive a summons, the Council will apply to the Magistrates' Court for a liability order. This could result in deductions from your earnings, Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance, bankruptcy proceedings, or a visit from a Bailiff to remove goods you own. If you have a problem making payment it is important that you contact us at the address shown on the front of this leaflet straight away.

### DATA PROTECTION - Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

Information you have provided may be used to prevent and detect fraud, and, where the law permits, may be disclosed to external organisations. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. If you have any queries or concerns relating to the information held about you, contact Mike Wray on 01642 526343.



Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Your Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rates explained 2010 - 2011

Your Council Tax helps provide hundreds of local services for the Borough and its residents. This leaflet explains:

- The Council's spending plans
- How you could cut your Council Tax bill
- About your Council Tax

If you would like this leaflet in any other language or format, for example large print or audio, please contact us at:

Taxation Division, PO Box 410, Kingsway House,  
West Precinct, Billingham TS23 2YD

Telephone: **01642 397108**

E-mail: [council.tax@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:council.tax@stockton.gov.uk)

or [business.rates@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:business.rates@stockton.gov.uk)

# Cut Your Council Tax Bill

## Discounts

The full Council Tax bill assumes that two adults live in the property. If only one adult lives there (as their main home), the Council Tax bill will be reduced by a quarter (25%). If the property is no-one's home, the bill will be reduced by a half (50%). This can apply to empty properties. For second homes the bill will be reduced by 10%.

The following people do not count when we look at the number of adults who live in a property:

- Full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees
- Patients living in hospital or nursing homes
- People who are being looked after permanently in care homes
- People who are severely mentally impaired
- People staying in certain hostels or night shelters
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at, or have just left school
- Careworkers working for low pay, usually for charities
- People caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner, or child under 18
- Members of visiting forces and certain international institutions
- Members of religious communities (monks and nuns)
- People in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine)

## Exempt Properties

Council Tax is not charged on some properties (known as exempt properties). Listed below are the properties which are exempt:

Exemption code	Description
A	Empty property that needs or is undergoing structural alteration or major repair (exempt for the first 6 months of a possible 12 months)
AA	Empty property that needs or is undergoing structural alteration or major repair (exempt up to 12 months)
B	Empty property owned by a

C	Charity (exempt for up to 6 months)
D	Empty and unfurnished property (exempt for up to 6 months)
E	Property left empty by someone who is in detention
F	Property left empty by someone who has moved to receive personal care in a hospital or home
FF	Empty property waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted
FF	Empty property where probate has been granted (exempt for up to 6 months afterwards)
G	Empty because the law says the property cannot be lived in
H	Property waiting to be lived in by a Minister of Religion
I	Property left empty by someone who has moved to receive care elsewhere
J	Property left empty by someone who has moved to provide care for another person
K	Property left empty by a student(s)
L	A repossessed property
M	Halls of Residence for Students
N	Property only occupied by a student(s)
O	Armed Forces accommodation
P	Visiting Forces accommodation
Q	Property left empty by a person who has become bankrupt
R	Empty caravan pitch or boat mooring
S	Property only lived in by a person(s) under 18
T	An unoccupied dwelling which is attached to another property, which may not be let separately
U	Property only lived in by a person(s) who is severely mentally impaired
V	Property occupied by a diplomat
W	A Granny flat

**Discounts and exemptions can be awarded with effect from the date these circumstances apply. If you think you may be entitled to a discount or an exemption and one is not shown on your bill, please contact us at the address shown on the front of this leaflet.**

If your bill shows that we have given you a reduction, you must tell us about any change of circumstances that may affect your entitlement straight away. If you don't, you may have to pay a fine.

## People with Disabilities

Your bill may be reduced if a permanently disabled person (whether an adult or child) lives in the property. Your property must have certain features which are essential or of major importance to the well-being of the disabled person. These features are:

- A room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) which is used mainly by the disabled person; or
- A second bathroom or kitchen for the disabled person to use; or
- Extra space inside your home for the use of a wheelchair.

Where the qualifying conditions are met, the bill may be reduced to that of a property that is one band lower in the Valuation List. A reduction is also available for Band A properties.

**For further information about reductions for people with disabilities, please contact us at the address shown on the front of this leaflet.**

## Council Tax Benefit

You may qualify for help with your Council Tax whether you are working or not, or if you are self-employed. The amount of help you will get will depend on the people who live with you, your income, savings and the amount of Council Tax you pay. There are two types of benefit that you can claim:

- **Main Council Tax Benefit** – This is available for people who are on a low income. You can claim this benefit to cover up to the whole amount of your bill.
- **Second Adult Rebate** – This is for people who are single householders but have another adult or adults living in their home who are on a low income, either in or out of work. You can claim this benefit to cover up to 25% of your bill.

You can only qualify for one type of rebate at a time, but if you apply for Main Council Tax Benefit, we will work out if you are entitled to Second Adult Rebate and award whichever is the higher. Benefit can usually be paid only from the week following the date that you apply, so if you think you may qualify, claim straight away.

**For more information, contact Stockton Benefits Service on 01642 393829 or at 16 Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TX**

## Choose Direct Debit - The Easy Way to Pay!

Why not pay your Council Tax or Business Rates by Direct Debit?

- Direct debit cuts out unnecessary payment journeys saving you time, money, cheques and stamps
- You can pick a payment date to suit your budget
- Direct debit is convenient for you and good for the environment.



It's so simple you don't even have to fill in a form. Just telephone us on 01642 397108 from the

comfort of your own home. Tell us your Council Tax or Business Rates account number, have your bank details ready and we will do everything else - it's that easy!



## Improving Customer Service

The Council uses a computer system to help us to improve our communications and deal more effectively with your queries and requests for service. Regardless of when, where or how you make contact, our staff are able to see what stage your request for service is at, report on its progress or answer your queries about many Council services.

The names from our Council Tax records form part of this system. We have produced a "fair processing" leaflet, giving more details about our new system, the range of data to be held, how it will be accessed and shared and the security measures that protect it. If you would like a copy of the leaflet, please call (01642) 527313, write to Customer First, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton, TS18 1LD or e-mail customerfirst@stockton.gov.uk

## Value for money and efficiencies keep budget on course

Despite the effects of the 'credit crunch' and rising pressures on services, Stockton Borough Council has limited this year's Council Tax rise to 2 per cent – half of what the Council originally planned in last year's budget.

Thanks to putting in place long term financial planning more than a decade ago, the Council has been able to weather the recent downturn and has continued to provide efficient services and value for money for residents.

For Band A Council Tax payers – almost half the Borough's total – this means an extra 31 pence a week.

The Council began an Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Programme last year, is reviewing travel allowances for Council staff and looking at ways of extending partnering with others – such as the groundbreaking public sector partnership with Darlington Borough Council. We are also making our procurement process more effective.

Together, we intend these will save a further £12m by 2013, whilst protecting front line services and jobs despite reductions in both Government funding and income – and whilst demands on services such as benefits, safeguarding vulnerable people and personal care for an aging population are increasing.

The Audit Commission has recognised the way we use our resources by awarding the Council a top 'excellent' rating – Stockton is one of just three English unitary or county councils to achieve this.

Looking ahead, developments totalling hundreds of millions of pounds will help transform schools, housing, health, transport and other services in the coming years, with the £15 million refurbishment of Billingham Forum to be completed in 2011.

The Council is supporting apprentices training in a range of services and has signed up to the national 10:10 campaign to cut its carbon emissions by 10 per cent during 2010.

Together, these will help make the Borough a better place in which to live.

Stockton Borough Council also collects Council Tax on behalf of Cleveland Police (2.94% increase), Cleveland Fire Authority (3.90% increase) and Parish Councils in the Borough. These are also included in your Council Tax bill, leading to a combined increase for all authorities of 2.20%.

2009/10			2010/11			
Gross Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000		Gross Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
261,364	180,850	80,514	Children Education & Social Care	267,146	185,445	81,701
130,013	86,895	43,118	Development & Neighbourhood Services	147,887	106,402	41,485
<u>23,943</u>	<u>5,453</u>	<u>18,490</u>	Resources	<u>25,235</u>	<u>4,157</u>	<u>21,078</u>
415,320	273,198	142,122		440,268	296,004	144,264
62		62	Port Health Levy	64		64
99		99	Environment Agency Levy	116		116
<u>7,723</u>		<u>7,723</u>	Capital Financing Charges	<u>8,431</u>		<u>8,431</u>
<u>423,204</u>		<u>150,006</u>		<u>448,879</u>		<u>152,875</u>
		<u>-3,251</u>	Contributions to/from (-) Reserves			<u>-1,879</u>
		<u>146,755</u>	<b>Net Expenditure/ Budget Requirement</b>			<u>150,996</u>

Average Band A Council Tax compared with last year.			
	2009/10	2010/11	Increase
Police	£121.65	£125.23	2.94%
Fire	£41.05	£42.65	3.90%
Council	£798.39	£814.35	2.00%
Parishes	£6.48	£6.64	2.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£967.57</b>	<b>£988.87</b>	<b>2.20%</b>

The chart (above) compares an average 'Band A' Council Tax bill for 2010/11 against the equivalent for 2009/10.

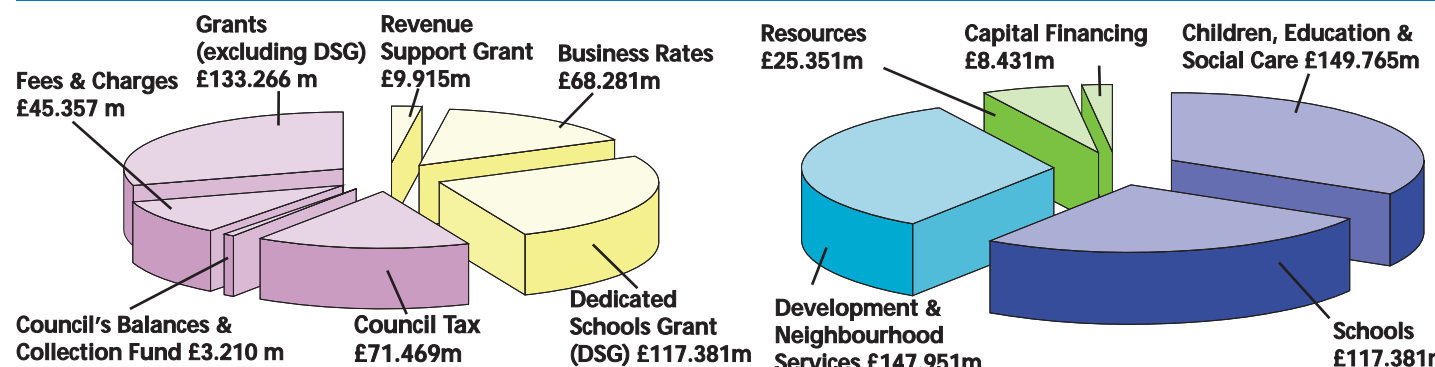
Your bill includes amounts required by the Council, the Police, the Fire Authority and Parish Council for your area.

The actual amount of your bill depends on the requirements of these authorities, your particular Parish area and the banding (Bands A - H) of your property.

The percentage increase in bills is the same for all property bands.

The Police and Fire Authority both request amounts to support their spending plans for the year, which the Council collects and pays over to them. You should refer to their Tax Leaflets (enclosed) for details.

### Funds used in providing services (£m)



The Government provides funds through redistributed Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant which, along with Council Taxes and Council balances, are used to fund general services. The Government also provides Dedicated Schools Grant which must also be used to fund schools.

**Services Provided (£m)**  
(the pie chart above identifies how your funds are used for services. Dedicated Schools Grant is used to fund schools).

The Council's funds are spent on providing services for residents and visitors to Stockton in accordance with the Council Plan (available on the Council website – www.stockton.gov.uk). An analysis of the cost of services provided is shown above.

### These are services provided by Stockton Borough Council

**Development & Neighbourhood Services**  
This group provides services within the community concentrating on Development & Regeneration, Environmental Services, Housing & Community Safety. It continues to regenerate the Borough and its economy by developing communities, the workforce and business opportunities; making the most of our environment; developing better, safer transport. It secures a safe and attractive environment for current and future generations by protecting the environment, promoting energy efficiency, developing care for your area initiatives, refuse collection, waste disposal and recycling initiatives in addition to providing countryside activities. It promotes the safety and well-being of the community by reducing fear of crime, reducing drug taking and burglary, extension of CCTV and warden schemes, meeting housing needs for vulnerable people, reducing homelessness and reducing traffic accidents.  
**Contact Telephone Number:** 01642 527260  
**Email:** DANS@stockton.gov.uk

**Children Education & Social Care**  
This group of services caters for Adults and Children. It improves educational opportunities and achievement, through nursery, primary and secondary education, adult learning and youth services; libraries and museums and sports development. It continues to improve the health of the community by working with partners to offer better access to health services; promoting healthy living; protecting children, families and elderly, infirm and mentally ill people.  
**Contact Telephone Number:** 01642 527764  
**Email:** firstcontact@stockton.gov.uk

**Resources**  
Provides ICT, Finance, Human Resources, Administrative Support, Front-line Customer Services and collects Council Taxes and Business Rates and also provides Treasury Management and Insurance and Risk Management functions.  
**Contact Telephone Number:** 01642 526343  
**Email:** resources@stockton.gov.uk

### Cleveland Police spending plans compared to last year

	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	Changes in Expenditure Between Years £'000
Revenue Budget	128,790	132,172	3,382
Precept	10,581	10,990	409

(See Police Authority Council Tax Leaflet enclosed for details.)

### Efficiency Savings Cleveland Police Authority

Cumulative efficiency savings for 2008-09	£7,678,000
Estimated cumulative efficiency savings 2009-10	£10,846,000
Estimated cumulative efficiency savings per Band D Dwelling	£64
Relevant Benchmark for the Authority	£54

### Cleveland Fire Authority spending plans compared to last year

	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	Changes in Expenditure Between Years £'000
Revenue Budget	33,228	33,436	208
Precept	3,570	3,743	173

(See Fire Authority Council Tax Leaflet enclosed for details.)

### Efficiency Savings Cleveland Fire Authority

Cumulative efficiency savings for 2008-09	£1,045,000
Estimated cumulative efficiency savings 2009-10	£1,870,000
Estimated cumulative efficiency savings per Band D Dwelling	£11
Relevant Benchmark for the Authority	£4

### Stockton Borough Council Efficiency Improvements

Stockton Borough Council has always striven to provide value for money in services provided for its residents. All Councils were required to measure and report savings following the Gershon Report in 2004, and must now show the following information here:

### Efficiency Savings Stockton BC

Cumulative efficiency savings for 2008-09	£10,822,000
Estimated cumulative efficiency savings 2009-10	£16,331,000
Estimated cumulative efficiency savings per Band D Dwelling	£282
Relevant Benchmark for the Authority	£169

### Parish Council Precepts

2009/10		Parish	2010/11	
Precept £	Band A £		Precept £	Band A £
0	0	Aislaby & Newsham	0	0
103,874	6.79	Billingham	112,793	7.36
4,350	10.05	Carlton	4,350	9.87
15,000	20.25	Castleavington/Kirklevington	10,900	14.57
73,135	16.15	Egglescliffe & Eaglescliffe	74,260	16.19
0	0	Elton	0	0
7,250	3.85	Grindon	6,000	3.17
1,500	4.66	Hilton	1,810	5.61
107,615	10.91	Ingleby Barwick	107,615	10.69
6,000	12.16	Long Newton	6,500	13.15
2,000	8.87	Maltby	2,000	8.89
5,500	6.08	Preston	5,500	6.13
2,500	11.19	Redmarshall	1,500	6.73
6,750	13.13	Stillington & Whitton	7,500	13.99
0	0	Stockton	0	0
139,700	14.35	Thornaby	139,700	14.07
10,274	17.57	Wolviston	10,582	18.14
78,000	15.86	Yarm	91,550	18.57
<b>563,448</b>		<b>Totals</b>	<b>582,560</b>	