

Your services

– Your Council Tax 2009/10



Your Council Tax 2009/10

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Wodville Halls
Gravesend London shows at local prices

Download your new 2009 programme

www.gravesham.gov.uk Box office 01474 33 77 74

Gravesham Borough Council provides many local services but not all. Others come from Kent County Council, the Kent Police Authority and Kent Fire and Rescue Service. If you live in an area with a parish council, it too provides some local services. The council tax you pay is collected by Gravesham Borough Council on behalf of all the authorities shown below. The total amount is then divided between these authorities.



Kent & Medway
Fire & Rescue Authority



Find out more at: www.gravesham.gov.uk

Or call the customer contact centre on **01474 33 70 00**

Alternatively, you can write to:

Gravesham Borough Council, Revenues and Benefits, Windmill Street,
Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1AU

Email: council.tax@gravesham.gov.uk

Or visit the Civic Centre between 9am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.



Foreword from the Leader, Gravesham Borough Council

This leaflet outlines some of the services provided by the public authorities, and how we intend to pay for these services. We have also outlined the priorities which this authority is working on. You can find out more in our Corporate Plan which was revised in 2008.

It all adds up to a vision for Gravesham as a place where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life – making it a great place to bring up a family, a place of opportunity, a place open for business and a place of choice.



Councillor Mike Snelling
Leader, Gravesham Borough Council

Has our spending changed since 2008/09?

Yes. Our budget for 2008/09 was £13.654m, compared to £14.164 in 2009/10. The reasons for the increase are shown below.

	£m
2008/09 Net budget	13.654
Deduct: Increased income	-1,417
Add: Reduction in use of net balances and reserves	-0.122
Add: Increased costs	2.049
2009/10 Net budget	14.164

Better services

Here are some of the services Gravesham Borough Council provides.
Note: council homes are not funded by council tax.

- Waste collection and recycling facilities.
- Street cleaning.
- Parks, play areas and skate parks.
- Leisure centres and sports development.
- Environmental crime enforcement – litter, fly tipping, dog fouling, smoke free legislation.
- Food, health and safety inspections.
- Animal welfare – lost and abandoned dogs.
- Events – Big Day Out, St George’s Day Parade, fireworks display, Festival of Light.
- Concessionary fares.
- Support for community groups.
- Car park facilities and parking enforcement.
- Public toilets.
- Running elections.
- Dealing with planning applications.
- Housing and homelessness advice.
- Council tax and housing benefits administration.
- Community safety wardens.
- Approximately 6,000 council homes, including sheltered housing facilities.
- Woodville Halls theatre venue, 810 seated capacity.





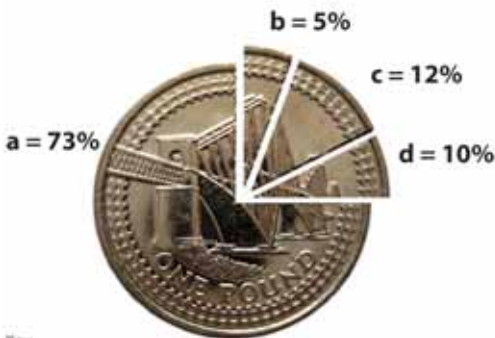
Among our achievements this year

- The Cobham Ashenbank Management Scheme, incorporating renovation of Cobham Park and the Darnley Mausoleum is completed and awaiting transfer to the National Trust.
- The planning and enhancement elements of the A2 widening were completed.
- Phase I of the regeneration of the Canal Basin was completed.
- The planning application for £150 million investment in the Heritage Quarter of the town centre was submitted.
- Funding agreements were signed in respect of the Transport Quarter (around Gravesend Railway Station) and funding was made available for the environmental elements of the new A2 activity park and GBC's own 'Parklands' project at the Riverside Leisure Area / Thames & Medway Canal.
- In 2007/08 the borough had the largest fall in crime in the South East. The Home Office awarded the "Safer Socialising award" to the G-Safe scheme operating in the town centre in 2008.
- We won a prestigious Green Apple Environment Award, and also won national recognition at the 2008 Loo of the Year awards for our public conveniences at Parrock Street car park.
- We had a new St. George's Day event in April and a Festival of Light in September. For the second year running the Big Day Out Festival attracted around 20,000 people. The annual fireworks display at the riverside attracted around 10,000 people.
- Woodville Halls had new seats and carpet fitted. Regular cinema nights and SNAP (under 16s) discos launched.
- The first phase of the regeneration of the Christian Fields estate has been completed.
- Our tourism office, Towncentric, was awarded 'Enjoy England Official Partner' status.

Where your money goes

The council tax goes towards paying for services provided by the county council, the borough council, the police and fire services, and parish councils where applicable. Most of the rest of the funding comes from central government in the form of Revenue Support Grant or from business rates (also referred to as national non-domestic rate or NNDR). The Revenue Support Grant comes from general taxation. The business rate, although collected by Gravesham Borough Council, is paid to the government which then repays a proportion of it back to local councils.

In 2009/10 (ignoring parishes which are explained separately in this leaflet) the council tax share for each Band D is shown below.



Key:
a = Kent County Council, b = Kent Fire and Rescue,
c = Gravesham Borough Council, d = Kent Police Authority

a - Kent County Council	£1026.27
b - Kent Fire and Rescue Service	£66.06
c - Gravesham Borough Council	£161.63
d - Kent Police Authority	£134.65
Total	£1,388.61

Each authority sets its own council tax charge. Gravesham Borough Council collects its share of the council tax as well as for the three other public authorities on their behalf.

How Gravesham Borough Council spends its money

The table below shows how much we plan to spend on each of the main services.

	2008/09			2009/10		
	Expenditure	Income	Net costs	Expenditure	Income	Net costs
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Corporate and Democratic core	2,327	-151	2,176	2,252	-198	2,054
Central Services	3,324	-2,087	1,237	2,033	-719	1,314
Cultural, Environmental and Planning Services	12,461	-4,276	8,185	12,223	-3,695	8,528
Highways, Roads and Transportation Services	2,348	-1,985	363	2,335	-1,877	458
Housing Services	31,854	-30,264	1,590	35,246	-33,694	1,552
Other Services	452	-565	-113	726	-562	164
Total council services	52,766	-39,328	13,438	54,815	-40,745	14,070
Contributions to/from reserves			216			94
Total council budget required			13,654			14,164
Other principal precepting authorities						
Kent County Council			35,020			36,421
Kent Police Authority			4,484			4,779
Kent Fire and Rescue Authority			2,231			2,344
Net total			55,389			57,708
Less: Revenue Support Grant			-1,005			-1,563
Less: NNDR Contribution			-7,219			-6,770
Total requirements before adjustments and parish precepts			47,165			49,375
Adjustments to council tax for estimated collection fund (surplus/deficit)			160			116
Parish precepts			-204			-211
Total requirements – council tax			47,121			49,280
			£			£
Council Tax for Band D dwelling			1,347.93			1,388.61
Council's budget requirement per head of population			140.93			145.88

Budget and council tax 2009-10

Last year in KCC's three-year financial plan we prepared for a much tougher financial climate, although the speed and likely severity of the economic slowdown is far harsher than we and others anticipated.

We recognise that, this year, Kent businesses, charitable and voluntary organisations, public sector partners, residents and tax payers are under much more financial strain. In December 2008, we launched 'Backing Kent Business'; a ten-point plan to support Kent business, as far as possible, through this recession. In setting our council tax level for 2009-10, we believe we are balancing the often competing needs of the people of Kent.

The growth in demand for KCC services will continue as personal finances come under strain. The cost of services is under pressure; our income is under pressure; and our ability to finance our capital programme is affected because assets that we planned to sell are now worth much less, or are not realisable in the short term.

Despite these significant difficulties it is vitally important that KCC provides the quality services people need. It is also important to continue to spend our resources locally; commissioning services and creating jobs widely but wisely in Kent, to keep our economy working and to prepare for better times.

We are continuing to modernise and improve public access to our services. We are also investing in information technology to further reduce costs.



It is also essential that we keep council tax levels as low as possible to offer some financial relief to hard pressed taxpayers and residents.

KCC will do this, in part, by making savings and raising additional income totalling £39.3 million across the council's services.

For more information about KCC's financial publications visit:
www.kent.gov.uk/financialpublications

If you are on a low income with less than £16,000 in savings (this limit does not apply if you receive Pension Guarantee Credit) you may be able to get some help with your Council Tax. To find out whether you would qualify contact the Kent Benefits Partnership on 0845 345 0310 or your district council.

If you are a small business with premises with a rateable value of less than £15,000, you may be entitled to some relief from your business rates. Contact your district council for details.

Our performance

KCC currently holds four stars, the highest possible rating under the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment of councils, as well as the highest level (four) for the organisation's 'Use of Resources' and delivery of value-for-money services.

For more information on performance visit:
www.kent.gov.uk/cpa email: performance@kent.gov.uk
write to Kent County Council, Room 1.63 Sessions House,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.



Where your money goes

The council tax you pay to KCC partly funds quality services that make a positive difference to people’s lives, for example.

- 570 schools and services for children and families described as ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in 2008.
- 101 libraries lent 6,588,813 books last year, while more than 5,000 people improved their numeracy and literacy with Skills Plus, and our apprenticeship and vocational training schemes helped young people find rewarding work.
- 10,000 young people now travel by bus with The Kent Freedom Pass, while helping to reduce traffic and pollution.
- 30,000 people are able to live in their own homes with the personalised care we provide. We support 6,500 people in permanent residential care.
- We maintain 20 country parks and picnic sites, 5,000 miles of roads and 4,200 of paths and public rights of way. We promote road safety and health and our 101 community wardens are working with our partners to keep Kent safe.

KCC Services 2009-10	Total spending £m	Net spending * £m	Net spending per day £'000
Children, Families and Education	1,430.6	284.2	778
Adult Social Services	474.1	350.5	960
Environment, Highways and Waste	199.2	185.3	508
Regeneration	11.3	8.5	23
Communities	118.2	67.4	185
Corporate activities	64.2	-9.5	-26
Area-based grant	n/a	- 64.7	- 177
Budget 2009-10	2,297.6	821.7	2,251

* Net spending is funded from business rates/general government grant and council tax

Our goals

KCC's long-term plan (Vision for Kent) and four-year plan (Towards 2010) set out how we will achieve the following:

- Increased prosperity for Kent through business growth and job creation;
- Transformation in education;
- Reduced congestion;
- Improved health and quality of life;
- Quality homes in a well-managed environment;
- A safer Kent;
- Continued improvements in services while keeping council tax down.

Pressures on service budgets in 2009-10

- Children's Services - there will be demographic, legislative and inflationary pressures on Early Years, Social Services, implementing Care Matters, fostering and adoption services, totalling £6.9m. The increase in early education entitlement to 15 hours a week from September 2009 adds a further £2.1m;
- Providing more low-cost public transport for 11-16 year olds by extending the piloted Freedom Pass scheme will cost £3.8m;
- Social Care - coping with increasing numbers of the very elderly and people with a disability, while maintaining the existing assessment criteria and providing preventative support to more people, will add £7.5m and inflation a further £7m;
- Waste disposal - the increasing costs of disposal plus landfill tax amounts to £4.7m;
- Highways - £3.7m will help maintain and improve the condition of Kent's roads and pavements;
- Finance - funding our capital programme will cost an additional £7.7m including further highway maintenance.

Kent County Council

The council tax you pay for KCC services has increased by 2.44% - or an extra 47p a week for a Band D household.

Please note: your total bill will be more than the figure shown in the chart below, as it also includes council tax charged by other authorities.

Kent County Council council tax charge		
Tax Band	2008-09 £	2009-10 £
A	667.86	684.18
B	779.17	798.21
C	890.48	912.24
D	1,001.79	1,026.27
E	1,224.41	1,254.33
F	1,447.03	1,482.39
G	1,669.65	1,710.45
H	2,003.58	2,052.54

The average property in Kent is in Band C

You might like to know that:

- **£xx million** owed to us by the Government for supporting children of asylum seekers is expected to be reimbursed. It is not included in council tax this year;
- in the past, the interest on cash deposited in low-risk bank accounts contributed significantly towards the cost of services. Low interest rates and our decision only to deposit money in the Government's secure Debt Management Office means that we must make savings of **£7 million** to ensure there is no impact on council tax;
- it is too early to know if there will be any loss arising from depositing some of our cash funds in Icelandic banks. No cost is included in this year's council tax, in line with Government advice.

Our spending and funding

	2008-09 Budget £m	2009-10 Budget £m
Budget 2008-09	795.9	795.9
Changes in service responsibilities and specific grant funding		5.5
Revised budget		801.4
Pay award and price inflation		22.1
Government/legislation pressures		10.4
Demand-led pressures and delivering <i>Towards 2010</i> targets		17.6
Schools budget increase		2.3
Service strategies and improvements		21.7
Dedicated schools grant increase		-7.7
Sub-total of pressures		66.4
Savings		-38.2
Income generation		-4.2
Increase in the area-based grant		-3.7
Budget total	795.9	821.7
Business rates/general grant	-259.3	-267.2
Collection fund surplus(-) / deficit	0.2	-0.2
Council tax	536.8	554.3
Tax base (Band D equivalent properties)	535,858	540,115
KCC Band D council tax charge	£1,001.79	£1,026.27 + 2.44%



Total expenditure

Budget	2008-09 £m	2009-10 £m
Total expenditure *	2,232.7	2,297.6
Grants for specific services and other income	-1,436.8	-1,475.9
Budget	795.9	821.7

* Includes estimated levies from Environment Agency for flood defence (£359,000) and from joint sea fisheries (£264,000).

If you have a question about paying your council tax bill or claiming council tax benefit, please contact your local council using the details in their part of this leaflet.

Questions about KCC's budget:

phone: 08458 247 247 (24 hours a day, seven days a week);
 email: council.tax@kent.gov.uk; or
 write to: Kent County Council, Room 3.08 Sessions House,
 Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Information about KCC's council tax is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages. Please call the KCC contact centre on 08458 247 247.



Helping keep Kent

Round the clock, 365 days a year, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority helps protect 1.6 million residents in 700,000 homes across the county.

Last year we:

- Dealt with over 37,000 emergency 999 calls – answering over 99% of them within 20 seconds
- Responded to nearly 20,000 fires and other incidents
- Reached over 90% of fires in less than ten minutes
- Dealt with around 1,200 road traffic collisions
- Carried out 12,000 free home safety visits, fitting over 16,000 smoke alarms
- Educated over 96,000 children and young people on fire and road safety

All those services will be provided to you this year for under £1.27 a week (band D property).

Value for money

We work hard to deliver our services in the most efficient way possible. Kent and Medway is one of only three Fire and Rescue Authorities classed as Excellent by the Audit Commission. The Commission has also for the second year running rated the Authority as *Improving Strongly*, and it gave us the top rating for our use of resources including value for money.

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority is the only fire and rescue authority in the country to have received top marks in all three assessments.



Your Council Tax 2009/10



and Medway safe

Planning for the future

We have been very successful in reducing the number of fires in homes and businesses. But to keep you safe, we must plan for the future demands of our changing community.

The number of older people in the county is set to increase, an extra 65,000 homes are planned by 2016, and more storms and flooding are forecast.

This is why we are investing in staff training and new equipment.

Compressed air foam will put out fires quicker and reduce the amount of water used. High volume pumps and search and rescue equipment help us deal with major emergencies, and save lives. New water safety equipment and

training is also being introduced to deal with floods and other water rescues.

For more information look at our Service Performance Plan or our Medium Term Financial Plan for 2009/12, available on our website www.kent.fire-uk.org or write to us at the address below.

If you have any comments or questions about the information provided by Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority please write to:

Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
Headquarters, Straw Mill Hill, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6XB



Where your money goes

2008/09 £'000	Revenue budget	2009/10 £'000
56,289	Employees	58,344
1,473	Firefighters' pensions	1,339
4,038	Premises	4,137
3,135	Vehicles and travel	3,244
4,882	Equipment and supplies	5,104
1,591	Fees and services	2,119
823	Other costs	829
2,400	Contributions to capital	2,048
1,105	Debt financing costs	1,194
75,736	Gross revenue expenditure	78,358
-5,460	Service Income	-5,386
-2,041	Transfers to/from reserves	-2,557
68,235	Net budget requirement	70,415
	Financed by:	
28,608	Gov. grant/business rates	29,033
-16	Collection fund surplus (deficit)	15
39,643	Council tax	41,367
68,235		70,415

Why spending has changed

	£'000
Revenue budget 2008/09	68,235
Pay, prices and commitments	2,072
Service developments & pressures	1,733
Savings	-2,069
Movements in grant and reserve funded expenditure	444
Revenue budget 2009/10	70,415



Your Council Tax 2009/10

Our budget for 2009/10

Each year, additional funding is required in the Authority's budget to meet the cost of inflation increases and the cost of nationally set pay awards. In overall terms, the net budget for 2009/10 is just over 3% more than in 2008/09.

The Authority needs to invest in service improvements. To do this without making significant increases to Council Tax, the Authority must identify efficiencies and other savings that can be made without increasing the risk to public safety.

The Authority plans to make savings of £2m in 2009/10 (equivalent to 3% of the budget for the previous year) and plans to use over £1.7m

of this to invest in improved staff training, new operational equipment and improvements to premises.

The Authority also has a capital budget for investment in projects with long term benefits.

Capital budget		2009/10
		£'000
Premises projects		1,708
Investment in IS/IT		448
Vehicles & equipment		2,598
Regional control centre project		187
Community safety schemes		642
Total capital expenditure		5,583
Funded by:		
Borrowing		1,750
Revenue contributions		2,048
Capital grants		1,684
Capital receipts		101
Total capital funding		5,583

Our share of your Council Tax

Your Council Tax bill is made up of charges from Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority as well as other local authorities in your area. These are the amounts that relate to the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority for 2009/10.

Our share of the Council Tax for a band D property is £66.06, which is just 3.5% more than the equivalent charge of £63.81 for 2008/09.

Band	Council Tax
A	£44.04
B	£51.38
C	£58.72
D	£66.06
E	£80.74
F	£95.42
G	£110.10
H	£132.12

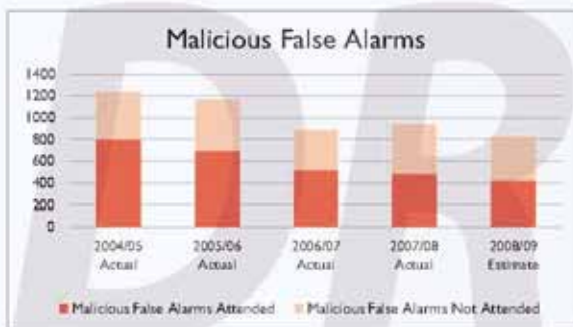


What is improving

We work with partners like the police to achieve targets such as reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and reducing CO₂ emissions.

Achievements have included:

- **Deliberate fires down** by over 47% over the last five years
- **Reducing false alarms** - malicious false alarms down by over 33% over the last five years, helping improve our response to real incidents
- **Reducing road accidents** - the number of accidents we attend has gone down by nearly 7% over the last five years



Key Indicators	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Estimate
Total fires (per 10,000 people)	53.7	45.5	38.2
Accidental fires in the home (per 10,000 people)	11.1	12.1	10.8
Deliberate fires (per 10,000 people)	34.3	28.1	21.9
Road accidents attended (per 10,000 people)	7.9	7.5	7.4

* Based on data at December 2008



Kent Police Authority is an independent body that oversees your policing. We have set the policing budget for 2009/10 at £277million. This means for the typical Band D household your police council tax will increase by £6.40 a year (4.99%).

“Last year the Authority invested in neighbourhood task teams to further reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

We have listened to the Chief Constable as to the resources he needs to keep Kent and Medway an even safer place to live and work. Our recent consultation has shown that you would like more task teams and anti-social behaviour remains a top priority.

The only way we can afford to increase the number of task teams from one per policing area to one per district is to make a small rise to the police council tax. This was not an easy decision for the Authority. We are aware of how bleak the economic outlook is and Police Authority members have considered a number of options.



By increasing the council tax by 12p per week for a typical Band D household we can create even safer neighbourhoods and improve the quality of life for all of us. Even with this increase, the Force will have to make £1.5m of savings each year. It's always incredibly hard making the decision to increase taxes but we have consulted widely and we all feel that a small rise is justifiable. Task teams: they're what we want, we know they work and now we will have an extra 48 officers making a difference to our neighbourhoods.”

Ann Barnes, Chair of the Kent Police Authority



What your money will buy

Eight new task teams will be introduced later on in the year – more than doubling the number already in place. The teams, made up of one sergeant and five police constables, will be placed in hotspot areas to tackle ongoing quality of life crimes.



The decision to invest in more neighbourhood task teams follows research that showed existing task teams had reduced vehicle crime, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.

Local people can also have their say as to where they think the task teams should be placed by going along to a Partners and Community Together (PACT) meeting.

You set the priorities, we take the action

Is there a problem where you live? Nuisance vehicles, graffiti, litter? Then tell the police and other agencies about it at a Partners and Community Together meeting and make sure action is taken against your priorities. Your neighbourhood officers will be available to provide information, give you support and listen to your views.

Find out where your local PACT meeting is or who your neighbourhood officer is by visiting the Kent Police website www.kent.police.uk - either enter your postcode on the search facility or follow the links on the maps.





Police Finances

How we are funded	£'000	£/resident
Budget requirement funded by:		
Government police grant	112,780	69.00
Government revenue support grant	14,882	9.10
Business rates grant surplus	64,479	39.45
08/09 council tax collection surplus	30	0.02
Balance to be met by council taxpayers	84,319	51.58
Total	276,490	169.15

Why spending has changed	£'000
Revenue budget for 2008/09	266,900
Pay and price changes	9,661
Service developments and unavoidable cost increases	9,000
Savings	-9,071
Total budget requirement for 2009/10	276,490

Budget breakdown	2009/10 £'000	2008/09 £'000
Police pay	163,309	160,582
Police pensions	33,859	32,682
Support staff	86,045	83,123
Other expenditure	50,832	48,346
Gross revenue budget	334,045	324,733
Income from other sources	-57,555	-57,833
Total	276,490	266,900



**How much will I
have to pay?**

Band A	£89.77
Band B	£104.73
Band C	£119.69
Band D	£134.65
Band E	£164.57
Band F	£194.49
Band G	£224.42
Band H	£269.30

The Police Authority pages in this booklet are available in other formats and a range of languages.

You can contact Kent Police Authority by emailing:

[**kpaenquiries@kent.pnn.police.uk**](mailto:kpaenquiries@kent.pnn.police.uk)

Telephone: **01622 677055**

Alternatively write to:

Kent Police Authority

Gail House

Lower Stone Street

Maidstone

Kent ME15 6NB

[**www.kentpa.kent.police.uk**](http://www.kentpa.kent.police.uk)

Useful  numbers

In an emergency dial: **999**

For all non-emergencies: **01622 690690**

Kent Crimestoppers: **0800 555 111**

National domestic violence: **0808 2000 247**

Kent Homophobic incident reporting line: **0800 328 9162**

Kent Racial incident reporting line: **0800 138 1624**

Report a non-urgent crime online:

[**https://reportacrime.kent.police.uk/**](https://reportacrime.kent.police.uk/)

Deaf and speech impaired: report a crime by texting police to **60066**

Future plans

In 2008, Gravesham revised its Corporate Plan. Our Corporate Plan sets out our vision for the borough, our values, priorities, and a series of goals set to ensure we meet these aims. The council's priorities are as follows:



Environment

To achieve a safe, clean and green Place of Choice.



Communities

To foster vibrant and cohesive communities.



Housing

To seek to provide and work with others to ensure quality and affordable housing.



Business

To secure a sustainable and buoyant economy.



Regeneration

To maximise regeneration opportunities for the benefit of existing and new communities.



Transformation

To transform the council into a more economically sound organisation.

See www.gravesham.gov.uk/corporateplan for more information about our Corporate Plan.



Becoming more efficient

Local authorities face a challenge in the next few years – to cut costs, whilst improving services offered to residents. The current economic climate will place additional pressures on existing services and decrease our income.

Historically our costs have been in line with other authorities: in 2007/08, Gravesham’s share of the council tax for a Band D property was £146.88, which compares favourably with the average for all district authorities in Kent which was £159.88.

In November 2008, the Government announced a 1.3% increase in Gravesham Borough Council’s grant settlement for 2009-10, which is a below inflation settlement. The shortfall is expected to be met by efficiency savings, achieved by “transforming” its services.

All councils are required to measure and report the value of efficiency savings they have achieved since April 2008. An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity falls, but its effectiveness is not reduced. The table below shows the value of “cashable” (real) efficiency savings forecast to be achieved by the end of March 2009.

Forecast cumulative efficiency savings (Submitted in October 2008)	By March 2009	As a % of 2007-08 baseline expenditure	Saving per Band D dwelling	National average for similar authorities
Authority	£	%	£	£
Kent County Council	30,732,000	4.0%	58	53
Gravesham Borough Council	484,000	1.8%	14	22
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	935,000	1.3%	2	2

The table details the impact of this efficiency saving for the average Band D dwelling and compares this with the average figure for similar authorities across England. The figures alone do not tell the whole story since priorities and previous efficiency savings are not included. Whilst our forecast in the table is shown as 1.8%, we are working to achieve a 3% efficiency saving which amounts to £791,670 and equates to a saving of £23 per Band D dwelling.

Gravesham Borough Council has worked with neighbouring councils and Kent County Council to deliver several important efficiency projects, which have enabled significant improvements in service delivery:

- **Asset management** we completed refurbishment of our Civic Centre, to offer improved facilities for visitors and enabled us to sell Cygnet House which had previously been occupied by ~100 of our staff.
- **The Public Safety Unit**, now housed at the Civic Centre, offers improved partnership working by allowing police and council officers to work closely together. In 2007/08 the borough had the largest fall in crime in the South East.
- **Procurement and IT** work is increasingly focused on helping us manage 'in house' savings and improve the way we work.

The focus on efficiency will be maintained in 2009/10, with ongoing reporting of efficiency savings in future council tax bills.



Gravesham's share of the council tax for a Band D property

Your council tax bill is made up of the money needed by all the local authorities divided by the 'tax base'. This is the number of properties registered for council tax as if everyone was in a Band D property. For 2009/10 this figure is 35,489.01.

If your home is in Band D, your council tax for this year will be £1,388.61 plus a contribution towards your parish council spend if applicable. This amount varies depending on their spending.

	£
The amount of money we need	399.09
Add: collection fund deficit	3.25
Less: town and parish councils' spending	-5.93
Less: Revenue Support Grant	-44.03
Less: NNDR Contribution	-190.75
The amount you pay for Gravesham services	161.63

The table below shows how much money each parish needs to raise and how much is added onto the Band D council tax 2009/10.

Parish	Precept 2008/09	Precept 2009/10	Tax Base	Addition for Band D Dwelling
	£	£		£
Cobham	14,000.00	12,000	684.13	17.54
Higham	27,110.00	29,280	1,624.06	18.03
Luddesdown	4,450.00	4,960	102.74	48.28
Meopham	62,800.00	65,900	3,053.49	21.58
Shorne	12,600.00	12,600	1,190.17	10.59
Vigo	83,610.00	85,830	736.50	116.54
	204,570	210,570		

Other properties apart from Band D

Your council tax is based on the value of your home and how many adults live there. Your home is in one of the eight valuation bands depending on its market value at 1 April 1991.

The banding can be affected by improvements made by a previous owner and when ownership changes, the band can be increased.

Valuation Band	Your Property's value at 1 April 1991
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	£320,001 or more

Council tax is always initially calculated for a Band D home. That figure is then used to work out the level of tax for the other bands. Every other band is a proportion of the Band D amount, as shown below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
D x 6/9	D x 7/9	D x 8/9	D x 1	D x 11/9	D x 13/9	D x 15/9	D x 18/9
925.74	1,080.03	1,234.32	1,388.61	1,697.19	2,005.77	2,314.35	2,777.22

e.g. Band D in Gravesend = £1,388.61
 Band C in Gravesend = Band D x 8/9 = £1,234.32
 Band H in Gravesend = Band D x 18/9 = £2,777.22



How to Pay

Please refer to your council tax bill for methods of payment. Or pay online at www.gravesham.gov.uk/payonline

Am I paying the right amount?

Appeals. These can be made regarding your valuation band, or your individual responsibility to pay council tax.

Council tax benefits. Those on low income can apply for this help.

Disabled relief. You may be eligible for this if your home is specifically adapted for someone severely and permanently disabled living there.

Discounts. The full council tax bill presumes two or more people live in your home. If this is not the case, you may be entitled to a discount.

Disregarded adults. Some people, such as school leavers under 20, prisoners and those living in care homes are not included in the council tax calculation.

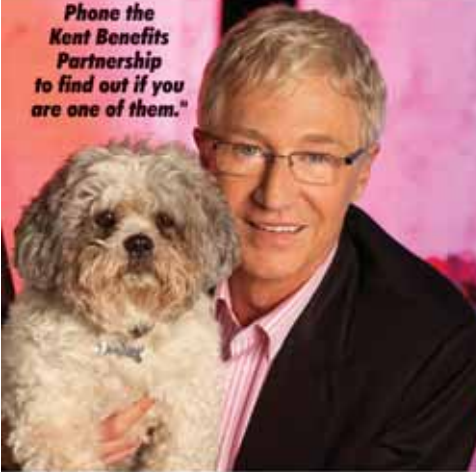
Exempt properties. Student dwellings and some empty properties are exempt from council tax charges.

Second homes. If you own a property which is not your main home, you may be eligible for a 10 per cent discount on the tax.

Information about Gravesham Borough Council's council tax is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages. Please contact Gravesham Borough Council on **01474 33 70 00**.

"Thousands of people are missing out on the money they are entitled to."

Phone the Kent Benefits Partnership to find out if you are one of them."



You may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit. It's only the cost of a phone call to find out.

0845 345 0310

KBP
KENT BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP
Working for you and your community

Get involved

We ask residents and local groups to help shape the council tax, and to help shape priorities, as laid out in our Corporate Plan. Would you like to join our Residents Panel or get involved with one of our neighbourhood forums to help shape those priorities in the future?

Then write to:

Gravesham Borough Council, Community Engagement, Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1AU

Email: jackie.denton@gravesham.gov.uk

Or call Jackie Denton on 01474 33 77 25 for an informal chat.

Your Council Tax 2009/10

Which authority provides local services?

The table below highlights the key services provided by authorities.

				Town or parish council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Families, including Education • Adult Social Services • Highways and Public Transport • Libraries • Youth Services • Waste Disposal • Trading Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and housing • Refuse collection and recycling • Environmental services and licensing • Council Tax collection & Housing Benefits • Leisure services • Street cleaning and parking • Planning services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding Kent Police to account • Setting the budget for Kent Police, including council tax • Setting Kent Police challenging targets to drive performance higher • Appoint the Chief Constable • Consult with local people to find out what they want from policing • Continuously monitoring force performance against targets • Oversees police complaints and discipline procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to fires and other emergencies • Rescuing people from road traffic collisions • Promoting road safety • Educating people about fire safety • Completing free home safety visits • Ensuring businesses are protected from fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining local assets including allotments, common lands, burial grounds, play areas, tennis courts, litter bins, seats and ponds. • Town and parish councils are consulted on all planning applications affecting their areas.



For the latest local news, to pay your council tax,
or to book seats at the Woodville Halls and find out about local events
plus much more, visit

www.gravesham.gov.uk

