



Working together

Your guide to Council Tax spending in 2009-2010



South Bucks
District Council

South Bucks District Council

Telephone lines are open Monday - Wednesday from 09.00 to 17.30 and Thursday and Friday 09.00 to 17.00.
All dialling codes are 01895 unless otherwise stated:

If the service you are looking for isn't listed, please ring our switchboard on 01895 837200.

Anti Social Behaviour	837253	communitysafety@southbucks.gov.uk
Benefits	837515	benefits@southbucks.gov.uk
Building Control	837212	buildingcontrol@southbucks.gov.uk
Business Rates	0845 300 5014	businessrates@southbucks.gov.uk
Car Parking	837359	
Car Park Fines Automated Payment Line	0845 4524747	
Community Safety	837220 / 837234	communitysafety@southbucks.gov.uk
Council Tax	837500	ctax@southbucks.gov.uk
Electoral Services	837205	elections@southbucks.gov.uk
Environmental Health	837264	envhealth@southbucks.gov.uk
Housing – Paradigm Housing	01494 830991	Paradigmhousing@southbucks.gov.uk
Leisure	837255	leisure@southbucks.gov.uk
Licensing	837222	licensing@southbucks.gov.uk
Planning	837283 / 837284	planning@southbucks.gov.uk
Refuse and Recycling	837362	refuseandrecycling@southbucks.gov.uk

Buckinghamshire County Council

Lines open Monday to Friday 8am to 6:30pm. If the service you are looking for isn't listed, please ring our switchboard on 0845 370 8090. Typetalk facility available - please ask.

Adult Learning	0845 045 4040	studentenquiries@buckscc.gov.uk
Customer Services	0845 370 8090	customerservices@buckscc.gov.uk
Education / Schools	0845 370 8090	customerservices@buckscc.gov.uk or schoolsweb@buckscc.gov.uk
Fly Tipping	0845 330 1856	illegaldumpingcosts@buckscc.gov.uk
Libraries	0845 230 3232	library@buckscc.gov.uk
Public Transport	0845 230 2882	passtrans@buckscc.gov.uk
Road & Highways	0845 230 2882	hoc@buckscc.gov.uk
Rubbish – the tip	01296 382307	Waste_strategy@buckscc.gov.uk
Social Services	0845 370 8090	customerservices@buckscc.gov.uk
Trading Standards	01296 383212	tsd@buckscc.gov.uk

Out of hours emergency numbers

- Roads & Highways 01296 486630
- Social Services 01494 675802

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service In an emergency dial 999

All dialling codes are 01296 unless otherwise stated:

General enquiries	744400	enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk
Minicom	432333	Fax 744600.
Fire safety in the home	744477	cs@bucksfire.gov.uk
Fire safety in the workplace	01628 470640	marlowfiresafety@bucksfire.gov.uk
Fire safety training	717441	ictu@bucksfire.gov.uk
Recruitment	744670	recruitment@bucksfire.gov.uk

Police

In an emergency dial 999

Crime stoppers	0800 555 111
Thames Valley Police - non emergency	08458 505505

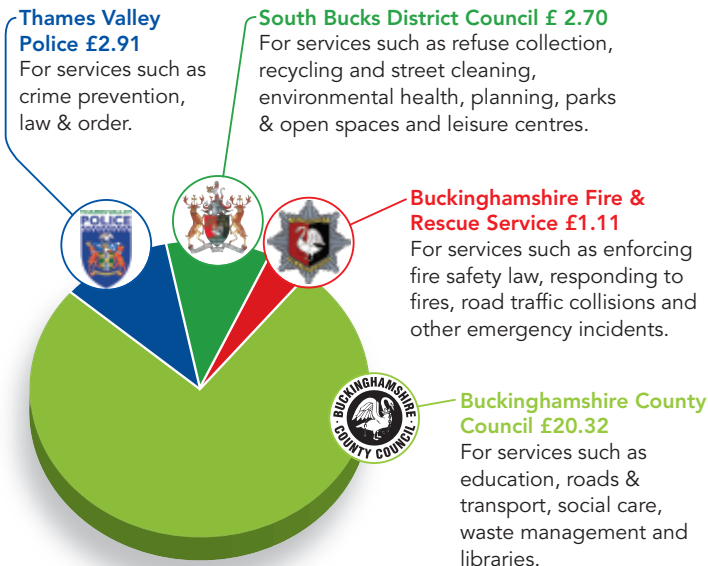
We all use local public services. Some are funded by government grant, which includes contributions from business rates - the rest is paid by collecting council tax.

For the first time the five councils in Buckinghamshire and Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service have worked together to produce council tax information into one leaflet. We hope it will make understanding your bill easier.

How much do I pay?

This is how much council tax you pay each week* for local services provided in your area. We hope you'll agree it represents good value for money.

You pay your council tax to SBDC, but not all the money goes to us.



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People may pay an additional sum to cover the services provided by their town or parish council. Budget details of the larger parishes and town councils that are planning to spend more than £140,000 are shown on page 6. *Average household (band-D property)

2008/09 Net £'000s	South Bucks District Council	2009/10 Gross Expenditure	2009/10 Gross Income	2009/10 Net £'000s
1,875	Community	2,986	1,150	1,836
2,027	Health & housing	2,130	412	1,718
2,458	Environment	4,405	1,662	2,743
656	Resources	1,097	390	707
2,191	Sustainable development	3,220	938	2,282
460	Cost of collecting council tax	616	164	452
447	Housing & council tax benefits	13,873	13,385	488
1,044	Democratic representation & management	1,079		1,079
(3,852)	Capital financing & other		3,768	(3,768)
<u>7,306</u>		<u>29,406</u>	<u>21,869</u>	<u>7,537</u>
	Funded by			
4,321	Council tax			4,537
2,620	Business rates			2,437
365	Government grant			563
<u>7,306</u>				<u>7,537</u>
£'000s	Capital spending			£'000s
724	Major capital schemes			334
	Farnham Park improvement schemes			1,015
507	Grants			496
200	ICT			240
497	Buildings & grounds works			155
377	Other capital schemes			330
<u>2,305</u>				<u>2,570</u>

Net cost per week of some key services

Refuse collection	55p
Planning	91p
Community safety	18p
Environmental health	22p
Recycling	44p

The District Council element of the council tax is £140.15 for a band D property, an increase of 3.8% on last year.

South Bucks DC financial overview

The amount the Council is raising from the council tax for its services in 2009/10 is less than 3% more than the previous year.

Overall the South Bucks DC element of the council tax is increasing by only 10p per week. This level of increase is after absorbing the effect of the substantial fall in the Council's income, due to the recession and falling interest rates, which has cost the Council around £600,000.

The Council has minimised the increase in the cost to the council tax payer by making savings and efficiencies of nearly £400,000, and by using over £1m of its reserves. The Council's financial position has not been helped by its grant from Central Government for 2009/10 only increasing by 0.5%.

The Council believes its element of the council tax strikes a balance between the need to maintain funding of key services such as waste collection or the Planning service, but also continuing the Council's policy of maintaining a low council tax.

One of the impacts of the reduced funding available to the Council has been the need to reduce the authority's capital programme. The programme will however continue to make over £600,000 available for housing improvements grants and local environmental improvement schemes.

Details of the help available if you are having difficulties paying your council tax and/or rent are shown on the back page of this leaflet. In these difficult financial times individuals are encouraged to contact the Council or other advice agencies, as early as possible if they feel they may have difficulties with paying their rent or council tax. Also if you would like to pay your council tax by direct debit please contact the council tax team who will assist you in setting up the arrangement.

Further information about the Council's finances, council tax, and benefit matters can be found on the Council's website, www.southbucks.gov.uk, where you can also register to gain online access to information about your council tax account.

TOWN/PARISH	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Beaconsfield	965.02	1,125.87	1,286.70	1,447.54	1,769.21	2,090.88	2,412.56	2,895.08
Burnham	998.30	1,164.69	1,331.08	1,497.46	1,830.23	2,162.99	2,495.76	2,994.92
Denham	954.71	1,113.84	1,272.96	1,432.08	1,750.32	2,068.55	2,386.79	2,864.16
Dorney	962.84	1,123.32	1,283.80	1,444.27	1,765.22	2,086.16	2,407.11	2,888.54
Farnham Royal	953.58	1,112.52	1,271.45	1,430.38	1,748.24	2,066.10	2,383.96	2,860.76
Fulmer	969.14	1,130.67	1,292.20	1,453.72	1,776.77	2,099.81	2,422.86	2,907.44
Gerrards Cross	965.77	1,126.75	1,287.71	1,448.67	1,770.59	2,092.52	2,414.44	2,897.34
Hedgerley	960.60	1,120.72	1,280.82	1,440.92	1,761.12	2,081.32	2,401.52	2,881.84
Iver	986.00	1,150.34	1,314.68	1,479.01	1,807.68	2,136.34	2,465.01	2,958.02
Stoke Poges	958.74	1,118.55	1,278.34	1,438.13	1,757.71	2,077.29	2,396.87	2,876.26
Taplow	950.85	1,109.34	1,267.81	1,426.29	1,743.24	2,060.19	2,377.14	2,852.58
Wexham	958.46	1,118.22	1,277.97	1,437.71	1,757.20	2,076.69	2,396.17	2,875.42

Budget details of the larger parishes and town councils that are planning to spend more than £140,000 are shown below:

Beaconsfield Town Council		
2008/9		2009/10
£540,960	Gross Expenditure	£445,010
(£ 15,000)	Transfer from Reserves	(£ 31,295)
£525,960	Net Expenditure	£413,715
(£128,975)	Income	(£156,308)
(£150,000)	Loan to refurbish Town Hall	-
£246,985	Precept	£257,407

Gross expenditure is estimated to reduce by £105,000. The main reason for this is that the programme of Town Hall dilapidations has been rescheduled and will be spread over current and future years and borne out of current income and not by borrowing £150,000. There is thus a saving of £29,300 per annum in servicing this loan over five years. New CCTV equipment in Holtspur will cost about £18,000 and digitising existing CCTV cameras will cost about £14,000.

Income is estimated to increase by over £27,000 because the Town Hall should be fully occupied from April onwards although we expect to receive less interest on our bank deposits due to the fall in rates. The precept for 2009/10 represents an increase of 4.22% over that for the previous year which was a 9.46% increase.

Beaconsfield Town Council contact 01494 675173

Iver Parish Council		
2008/9		2009/10
£378,357	Gross expenditure for all classes of services	£400,364
£339,660	Net Expenditure	£358,859
£336,000	Precept	£352,000

The increase in precept is due to the Parish Council being required by the police to quit the police station in order that they may improve resources for policing in Iver. There will be additional costs, which will not all be repeated year on year, in order to move the council offices into 63 Chequers Orchard SL0 9NJ.

Iver Parish Council Clerk
Mrs Glenda Collins 01753 655331
clerk@iverparishcouncil.gov.uk

Burnham Parish Council		
2008/9		2009/10
£2,435,000	Gross spending	£2,811,000
£1,867,000	Net expenditure	£ 766,000
	(prior to the use of reserves)	
£ 472,000	Precept	£ 472,000

The Parish Council has not increased the precept this year and held the rate for a third year. Funds are being accrued to assist with rebuilding Burnham Park Halls which will commence at the beginning of this financial year. This allows for the rental of alternative accommodation and the servicing of loans from the Public Works Loans Board. Funds have also been added to the budget to assist with six months running of CCTV cameras in the village. The Parish Council continues to provide and maintain the closed churchyard, 5 play areas, 340 street lights and 5 bus shelters. The upkeep of the Jennery Lane toilets, the football pitches Burnham Park and the Cherry Orchard Nature Reserve are ongoing.

Burnham Parish Council contact 01628 661381

Gerrards Cross Parish Council		
2008/9		2009/10
£214,173	Gross spending	£221,154
£182,275	Net expenditure for all classes of services	£188,216
£172,275	Precept	£188,216

The new precept for 2009/10 has been carefully considered with a view to continuing to improve Gerrards Cross. Beyond the day to day running of the village, the Parish Council has budgeted to aim to calm traffic, thereby improving the roads for pedestrians and cyclists as well as continuing to improve the common and local footpaths. Some of these improvements will be part funded by various grants thereby allowing our own funds to go significantly further.

Overall the precept is geared to offer value for money for our residents and will increase by around 9% which is less than last years increment. This we feel is a sensible reflection of the current economic climate.

Gerrards Cross Parish Council Clerk
Mrs D. C. Hepburn-Park 01753 888018
clerk@gerrardscross.gov.uk

Get the right treatment

Make sure you get the right help when you feel unwell



Common problems and advice: Pharmacist/NHS Direct



**Serious and chronic illness:
GP/Walk in Centre/Minor Injuries Unit**



**Emergency and life threatening Conditions:
A&E/999/Emergency Centre**



Coughs, colds and common problems?

Advice about medications? Treat the symptoms at home?

Pharmacists are qualified to give expert help and advise which over the counter medicines are best for your illness.

Call NHS Direct: 0845 4647 for 24 hour healthcare.

Serious and chronic illness?

Medical help needed within the next few hours? Problem got worse or changed? Contact your GP surgery and make an appointment. Explain your symptoms clearly. Outside normal business hours, call your GP surgery and follow the recorded instructions.

Life threatening emergency or critical condition?

Life threatening or critical condition, loss of consciousness, head injury, broken bones or deep wounds?

A&E/999 is for emergencies **ONLY!**

***Using the services properly will give you
the best treatment every time.***



BCC income and spending

Our main aims are to provide efficient and effective services, and keep Council Tax levels down by driving out waste and inefficiency.

In finding around £9m of efficiency savings through improving the way we deliver services, we have been able to keep our Council Tax increase to 3.7%. The need for efficiencies is vital in balancing our books, as we only receive a government grant increase of 1.75% (just £1.0m extra).

The Audit Commission state that "Value for money continues to improve. The Council delivers a range of high quality services, while maintaining below average council tax and net revenue expenditure."

This year an average Band D household will pay £1,056.61 a year, an increase of only 72 pence per week.

We provide a range of services for both you and your community including:

Schools	Libraries and Museums
Social Care	Recycling
Highways	Trading Standards
Public Transport	Country Parks
Youth Services	Archaeology

A breakdown of the County Council spend can be viewed on the opposite page.



Recommended revenue budgets 2009/10

2008/09 adjusted* Net £000's	Portfolio	2009/10 Net £000s	for every £100 of council tax etc
5,844	Strategic Direction & Leadership	5,884	1.94
102,968	Adult Social Care	102,542	33.86
20,049	Safer & Stronger Communities	20,335	6.71
53,165	Children's & Young People's Services	53,443	17.65
27,128	Resources	26,304	8.69
18,699	Strategic Planning & Waste	19,373	6.40
45,532	Transportation	46,230	15.26
21,393	Capital Financing & Other Below the Line	28,750	9.49
294,777	Total net operating budget	302,863	100.00
-4,439	Use of Reserves	-1,805	
-17,784	Area Based Grant (ABG)	-18,651	
272,555	Net budget requirement	282,407	
	Financed by:		
-57,722	Formula Grant (RSG & NNDR)	-58,732	
-1,239	Net Surplus on Council Tax Collection	-847	
-213,594	Council Tax	-222,828	
-272,555	Total Financing	-282,407	

*Budgets and financing adjusted to enable like for like comparison

2008/09 Gross £000	Capital spending	2009/10 Gross £000
197	Adult Social Care	-
936	Safer & Stronger Communities	726
17,539	Children's & Young People's Services	11,283
9,434	Resources	8,856
1,544	Strategic Planning & Waste	3,400
14,430	Transportation	12,272
44,080	Total gross capital programme	36,537





Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is run by Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, which comprises 14 councillors from Buckinghamshire and seven from Milton Keynes. It serves a population of around 720,000.

You can count on us to respond to your 999 call for help in an emergency - and we are working harder than ever to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place.



Our vision is to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes safer by working with the other emergency services and national and local government partners to reduce death, injury and damage to property, the environment and our heritage from fire and other emergencies.

This year we will continue to focus on four key community safety objectives and on improving the performance of our emergency response. The objectives are to make you safer:

- In your home
- At work and in public places
- On the roads
- In your community

Where the money comes from

This year we will spend £28,219,783 (£39.22 per head of population) on providing services to you. Government grant accounts for £2.97 per head of population, business rates £12.87 and council tax £23.38.

Safety tip:

Keep internal doors shut - if you have a fire, this will slow down the rate at which it spreads through your home.

	2008-2009	2009-2010
Government grant	£ 1,385,456	£ 2,136,807
Business rates	£ 9,952,408	£ 9,257,746
Council tax	£ 15,913,283	£ 16,825,230
Reserves	£ 202,000	£ 0
Total	£27,453,147	£28,219,783

Our budget is 2.79 per cent higher than last year's. To fund essential improvements and priorities, and to compensate for an increase in government funding of only 0.5 per cent - £56,689 - we have had to increase the rate at which our share of your council tax is charged by 4.99 per cent.

Our charge to a band D council tax payer is £57.69 for the year. This is an increase of £2.74 on last year, when your council tax contributed £15,913,283 to our budget of £27,453,147.

Where the money goes

	2008-2009	2009-2010
Employees	£ 23,839,410	£ 23,860,517
Premises	£ 1,118,965	£ 1,256,514
Transport	£ 1,915,288	£ 1,890,392
Supplies and services	£ 2,742,718	£ 2,742,097
Cross-border charges	£ 60,000	£ 61,080
Capital charges	£ 920,962	£ 773,983
Income	-£ 3,144,196	-£ 2,364,800
Total	£27,453,147	£28,219,783

Total borrowing figure for 2008/09: £6,452,000

This year's budget allows for committed expenditure including the nationally negotiated pay award, and inflation on contracts such as fuel costs.

We employ 743 people - 351 wholtime fire-fighters, 228 retained firefighters, 23 emergency control room staff, 122 people who work in a variety of support services including community safety, fire safety, workshops, finance, human resources, planning, information technology and procurement, and 19 people based at stations such as cooks, cleaners and administrative support staff.

Safety tip:

Make an escape plan - talk to your family NOW about how you would all get out of your home if there was a fire.



Safety tip:

Smoke alarms save lives - but only if they work. Test your smoke alarms once a week. Push the button, not your luck.

Employee costs take account of a planned reduction in the number of our wholetime firefighters and the phased enhancement of the number of retained firefighters. Included within employee costs are the National Insurance contributions required by employers and the pension contributions set nationally for firefighters and locally for non-firefighting staff. A significant proportion of our employee costs is used for training staff to ensure that they are well prepared for any event and are skilled to the appropriate level.

We have reviewed our capital programme and will fund the essential repairs and maintenance of our fire stations and maintain the replacement programme for fire appliances and equipment. We will manage the reduction in income as a result of other brigades buying fuel from other suppliers and the downturn in the economy leading to a reduction in training income from businesses.

Making you safer

- Are you aged 65 or over?
- Do you live on your own?
- Are you sharing with non-family members?
- Do you receive a benefit?

If you have answered "Yes" to one or more of these four questions, we can help make you safer. Let us carry out a FREE home safety check to help you minimise the risk of a fire.

It's a basic assessment of the fire risks in your home, carried out by our staff. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the size of your home. We will need you to be present to answer a few questions for us.

We will fit FREE 10-year smoke alarms where necessary. Smoke alarms give you a vital early warning in the event of a fire in your home.

Ring us on 01296 744477, email us at cs@bucksfire.gov.uk or fill in the online form at www.bucksfire.gov.uk

We will arrange a convenient time to come and see you to carry out the check. Please don't put this off - do something about it now!

**Safety tip:**

If in doubt, get out, stay out and call us out by ringing 999. Things and buildings can be replaced - people can't.

Fire safety leaflets in other languages

Buckinghamshire contains a diverse mix of communities, religions and cultures - and Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service acknowledges the importance of providing appropriate access to information and services for all its communities.

Fire safety leaflets in English and 30 other languages are available to download from our website at: www.bucksfire.gov.uk/bucksfire/languages

We will regularly update this part of our website to make more leaflets available.

The languages currently available are Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, English, Farsi, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Welsh.



Thames & Anglian regions

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood defences along 5,200 kilometres and 1,314 kilometres of main rivers in the areas of the Thames and Anglian Central Regional Flood Defence Committees respectively.

Flood defence money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the

river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system.

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, where there are schemes which do not attract central funding, the agency may seek funding from county and metropolitan councils, unitary authorities and London boroughs in the form of a local levy. This is shared on the basis of band D equivalents between all contributing bodies within the committee area.

2008/09 '000s	Thames Regional Flood Defence Committee	2009/10 '000s
£88,357	Gross expenditure	£96,798
£10,000	Levies raised	£10,000
4,952	Total council tax base	4,988

2008/09 '000s	Anglian Central Regional Flood Defence Committee	2009/10 '000s
£18,763	Gross expenditure	£21,518
£926	Levies raised	£972
641	Total council tax base	626

Changes in the gross budgeted expenditure between the years is due mainly to increased amounts of grant in aid, and changes in the national prioritisation of works in the Thames and Anglian Central regions respectively.

To report an incident, such as pollution contact us on the **incident hotline**, phone: 0800 807060 (Freephone, 24 hour service) For further information about **flood warnings** in a particular area, phone: 0845 988 1188 (24 hour service), or visit our website, www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Have your circumstances changed?



If you are receiving help with your rent or your council tax through the benefits system, it is very important that you tell us about any changes in your circumstances.

If you do not tell us about these changes, you could end up getting more benefit than you are entitled to, resulting in us sending you a bill later on to recover the overpaid amount - or, you could lose out on benefit that you should be getting.



The types of changes you must tell us about are:

- Changes in your income or your partner's income, capital or savings, including any new benefit you get
- Changes in any tax credits you receive
- Changes to the income of any adults living with you
- If you stop receiving Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance
- Changes in the number of people in your household
- If any of your children leave school or college
- Changes to your tenancy or rent
- If you move to different accommodation
- If you are likely to be away from your home for 13 weeks or more



The information you provide us must be accurate and we may ask for documentary evidence before we make any change to your entitlement. If you need any advice or are unsure of the effect of any change, please contact our benefits team, their phone number and email address are listed on page 2 of this leaflet.

Please note that the council has a duty to protect the public funds we manage. The council tax information you provide us with could be used for the prevention and detection of fraud. We may also share this information with other organisations responsible for auditing or administering public funds, so that checks can be made.

Housing and council tax benefit

These notes form part of your council tax bill.

If you and your partner are unemployed or on a low income, you may be able to get help to pay your council tax bill and or rent.

Any entitlement to benefit will normally start on the Monday following the date you first contact the Council. So don't delay, it could cost you money!

The actual amount of benefit will depend on your financial situation and the housing benefit may not meet all the rent due on the property. The Rent Service, an independent body, decide how much rent your home is worth. The amount of housing benefit will be linked to the number of rooms you and your family need.

Under no circumstances should you take on a tenancy in the hope that housing benefit will take care of the rent. It is recommended you contact the Council before you commit yourself to a tenancy agreement.

Second adult rebate

This type of rebate is for council tax payers only and is a different way of getting help to pay your council tax. People who are solely liable to pay council tax, who share their home on a non-commercial basis with one or more adults on a low income may claim it. Examples of these are grown up children or elderly relatives, but does not include your spouse or partner.

- Even if your income and or savings are too high to qualify for benefit, you may still be entitled to some help, as benefit is based on the other adult's income, not your own.
- You cannot get both council tax benefit and second adult rebate, but we will work out which one you will be better off receiving.
- The amount of second adult rebate may be 25%, 15% or 7.5%, depending on the income of the second adult.

Discounts and exemptions

If you are already receiving a discount or your property is exempt, this will be shown on your bill. If you are not entitled to the discount you must notify the council within 21 days of any change. Failure to do so may lead to penalties being imposed.

Are you entitled to a discount?

The full council tax bill assumes there are at least two adults living in a property. If there is only one adult living there and it is not a second home (rented or owned), you should be receiving a 25% discount.

When counting the number of adults (people aged 18 and over) in your home, you can ignore:

- 18-and 19-year-olds who are still at school or have recently left school;
- full-time students and student nurses, foreign language assistants;
- long-term residential patients in a hospital or care home;
- people under the age of 25 receiving approved training, funded by the Learning Skills Council;
- residents of some night hostels or shelters;

- apprentices earning less than £195 a week before deductions and working at least 35 hours;
- people who provide full-time care for a disabled relative who is not a child aged under 18, or their husband, wife or partner;
- resident care workers earning less than £44 a week;
- people with severe mental-health problems;
- people in prison or detained by a court order;
- members of religious communities with no income; and
- diplomats and visiting forces staff.

If a property is unfurnished and not used at all throughout the year, then council tax is payable. If the property is your second furnished home or holiday home, then there is a discount of 10%, unless it is a condition of your employment that you live and pay council tax in a specific property.

Disabled band reduction scheme

If someone in your home is disabled and either uses a wheelchair indoors or has the total or main use of a room because of this disability, you may be entitled

to a reduction in your bill. This does not apply if the room is your only kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

Should you be paying council tax at all?

We will not charge council tax for an empty home if:

- it is unfurnished apart from fixtures (up to six months), after which council tax is payable;
- it cannot be lived in or is undergoing major structural work (up to 12 months), after which council tax is payable;
- it is owned by a charity and was last used for charitable purposes (up to six months), after which council tax is payable;
- you are in prison, or detained by a court order;
- you are a long-term residential patient of a hospital or care home;
- the person living there before has died and the will has not yet been settled or was settled less than six months ago;
- planning restriction does not allow anyone to live there;
- it is waiting to be lived in by a serving cleric;
- you are living elsewhere to receive or provide care;

- it is an unused caravan pitch or boat mooring;
- you are bankrupt or the property has been repossessed; or
- it is an annexe (or granny flat) which cannot be let separately.

We will not charge council tax if the property is only lived in by:

- full-time students;
- people under 18 years old;
- dependent relatives who are either disabled or aged 65 years or over, and the home is annexed to the main property (a granny flat);
- people with severe mental-health problems;
- visiting forces staff and their dependants;
- armed forces staff and their dependants and the home is owned by the Ministry of Defence; or
- diplomats and their dependants.

If we have not given you a discount and you think that you should get one, please phone or email us with the details, or go to our website for an application form. Our contact details are on the back page of this leaflet and on the front of your bill.

Valuation bands and appeals

There is one council tax bill for every property, whether it is a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat.

Each property is in one of eight valuation bands and your council tax bill shows which band your home is in. The value of your home on 1 April 1991 is used to work this out.

Appealing against your valuation band

You can appeal against the valuation band your property is in if one of the following applies:

- Your home has reduced in value because of demolition or adaptation work or because of a change in the area, such as a new major road next to your home.
- The property has been revalued because of past building (or other) work. The person appealing would normally be the new owner or occupier.
- You have to pay council tax for the property for the first time, in which case you must appeal within six months of first becoming liable.
- You start using part of your home for business, or the balance between domestic and business use changes. You cannot appeal directly to the council about your council tax band.

Property band	Property value on 1 April 1991	Fraction band-D charge
A	Up to £40,000	6/9
B	£40,001 to £52,000	7/9
C	£52,001 to £68,000	8/9
D	£68,001 to £88,000	9/9
E	£88,001 to £120,000	11/9
F	£120,001 to £160,000	13/9
G	£160,001 to £320,000	15/9
H	More than £320,000	18/9

You must appeal to the listing officer, who is a government official, at:

The Valuation Office Agency
Heron House, 49 Buckingham Street
Aylesbury HP20 2NQ
Phone: 01296 550300

If you want information about valuation bands for similar properties, you can visit The Valuation Office Agency website at www.voa.gov.uk.

Please note that this is a free service and there is no need, unless you want to, to employ a company to appeal. If you have access to the internet then please take some time to research the matter.

Appealing against paying council tax

You can also appeal if you think that you are not the person who should be paying council tax. In this case you should appeal to your district council. Please see the contact details on the front of your bill.

Becoming more efficient

In 2008-09, South Bucks District Council has worked with neighbouring authorities and Buckinghamshire County Council to deliver several important efficiency projects, which have enabled significant improvements in service delivery.

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. To put these figures into perspective, the efficiency savings forecast to be achieved by March 2009 represent:

- 3% of South Bucks District Council's spending in 2007-08
- 3.6% of Buckinghamshire County Council's spending in 2007-08
- 2% of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority's spending in 2007-08

The table below shows the expected value of efficiency savings achieved and the value of gains forecast to be achieved by March 2009 for the average Band D dwelling and compares that with the average figure for similar authorities across England:

	Expected value of efficiency savings	Saving per Band D dwelling	National average for similar authorities
South Bucks District Council	£ 360,000	£12	£22
Buckinghamshire County Council	£8,540,000	£41	£53
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Authority	£ 568,000	£ 2	£ 2

Chiltern and South Bucks Welfare Partnership Bee Benefit Wise



You don't have to be unemployed to claim help with rent and council tax.

Is the credit crunch affecting you?

- reduced hours?
- loss of partner's income?
- Having problems paying rent or council tax?

Contact the following number to see if you may be entitled to help:

01895 837515

Email: benefits@southbucks.gov.uk



South Bucks District Council

South Bucks District Council

Capswood Oxford Road Denham
Bucks UB9 4LH

Tel: 01895 837500

Email: ctax@southbucks.gov.uk

www.southbucks.gov.uk



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Stocklake Aylesbury Bucks HP20 1BD

Tel: 01296 744400

In an emergency dial 999

Email: enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk

www.bucksfire.gov.uk



Buckinghamshire County Council

County Hall Walton Street

Aylesbury Bucks HP20 1UA

Tel: 0845 3708090

Email: customerservices@buckscc.gov.uk

www.buckscc.gov.uk

Sign it and forget it with Direct Debit

There are no cheques to write or paperwork and postage each month as payments are taken directly from your bank account. You also have a choice of payment dates. To find out more and to set up a Direct Debit phone us on 01895 837500

Pay by Phone

Our 24 hour automated payment line makes it easier to pay your Council Tax by debit card. The service is available on 01895 837525. Please have your card and Council Tax account number to hand.

View your Council Tax account on line

Our self service pages allow you to view your Council Tax details on line. To use this service you will require a Personal Identification Number (PIN). To apply please email: ctax@southbucks.gov.uk

You can get this leaflet in large print by calling us on 01895 837500