

How is your money spent? Your council tax explained

2012 – 2013

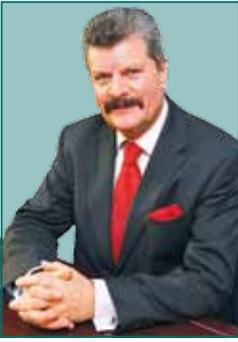
**0% increase for
Hillingdon residents**

**4th
year
running**



HILLINGDON
LONDON

www.hillingdon.gov.uk



Introduction from the Leader of the Council

Dear resident,

As part of our commitment to putting our residents first, you will see that for the fourth year in a row, we have frozen council tax for all our residents. For those of you who are over 65, this is the sixth year we have done this.

In Hillingdon, through continued strong financial management and good planning, we have also been able to freeze many service fees and charges for our residents, including parking charges. By operating the council on a more efficient basis we are also able to continue to invest in better service provision and facilities. We will be continuing our popular weekly waste collection service and we will not move from the current mixed bag service to using wheelie bins or fortnightly collections which most residents tell us they do not want.

Unlike many councils we are not only keeping all of our libraries open but this year will see the completion of our rebuild and refurbishment programme for every one of our libraries which has received national praise and proved popular with our residents of all ages. We will be refurbishing Highgrove swimming pool and enhancing the facilities at Ruislip Lido. There will also be additional investment in road and pavement repairs.

We are continuing to fund initiatives to support the borough's older residents, including our free burglar alarm scheme, which helps older residents feel safe in their home and which sees around 1,000 older people a year benefit from having this added security. The winter heater loan scheme, the brown parking badge scheme and free swimming for the over 65s will all continue.

So we can continue to help young people in the borough get a foot on the property ladder, we have once again invested money in our innovative First Time Buyers' Scheme, which will help the next generation of residents to live in the borough.

As a result of the national increase in birth rate, we are investing more than £120 million to ensure that all children in Hillingdon have a local school place. We have continued to invest in children's centres and youth facilities and we are seeing more and more families make use of these facilities which are highly regarded by our residents.

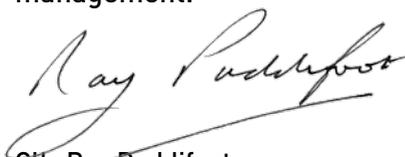
At a time when councils across the country are reducing financial support for the voluntary sector in Hillingdon we are increasing our commitment to those local charities and voluntary groups that our residents value with an additional £400,000.

We are continuing to invest in the environment through our Chrysalis environmental projects initiative and our popular ward budget scheme gives residents the opportunity to suggest ideas for local improvements.

Working closely with our residents, and as we did with the Third Runway proposal, we have continued to oppose plans for a high speed rail link through our borough and we have set aside funding to continue to oppose the current plans.

Like most councils, we have a programme of efficiencies but unlike others, we are not simply cutting services and jobs. We have taken a planned approach by reviewing all of our services to see if we can deliver them differently, more efficiently and for less. Throughout this process, our overriding principle has been that at the same time, we should aim to improve services for our residents. Some of the changes we have already made include joining services together so residents only have to come to us once and making improvements to the way you can access on-line services – allowing you to do business with the council at a time that is convenient for you. We are reviewing all of the contracts that we have in place to ensure we are getting the best value from them for our residents. By looking at the way we do things and by making efficiencies, we saved more than £26 million in the last year and we will deliver savings of £17.7 million in the coming year. At the same time, so that we remain well prepared for what may face us in the next few years, we have also managed to increase our balances and reserves to over £20 million. This gives us a strong financial base going forward.

The national economic climate continues to be difficult but in Hillingdon we are more than weathering the storm and will as always continue to put residents first. Our key priorities will remain the same – our people, our natural and built environment, our heritage and sound financial management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Ray Puddifoot'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the text.

Cllr Ray Puddifoot
Leader of the Council

Your council tax

This booklet contains information about your council tax for the year beginning on 1 April 2012. It tells you how much you will pay, how the money will be used and how much goes to other organisations such as the Greater London Authority (GLA), which is headed by the Mayor of London.

Every house in the country receives a council tax bill. Whether you live in a house or a flat, own your own house or rent, everyone has to pay council tax which helps to pay for the nearly 800 services that Hillingdon Council delivers for local people – everything from schools, leisure centres, youth centres, children’s centres and libraries to our waste and recycling, parks, keeping you safe, services for the elderly and housing.

Once again, by putting our residents first we are working hard to keep your council tax as low as possible and for the fourth year running, we have once again frozen council tax in Hillingdon. This table shows the amount you will pay for Hillingdon Council’s services and how much you will pay to the GLA, which includes the police and fire service.

<i>Property band</i>	<i>£ Hillingdon</i>	<i>£ GLA</i>	<i>£ Total council tax payable</i>	<i>£ Range of values</i>
A	741.95	204.48	946.43	up to 40,000
B	865.61	238.56	1,104.17	40,000 to 52,000
C	989.27	272.64	1,261.91	52,000 to 68,000
D	1,112.93	306.72	1,419.65	68,000 to 88,000
E	1,360.25	374.88	1,735.13	88,000 to 120,000
F	1,607.57	443.04	2,050.61	120,000 to 160,000
G	1,854.88	511.20	2,366.08	160,000 to 320,000
H	2,225.86	613.44	2,839.30	more than 320,000

Valuation of properties and valuation banding appeals

All homes, including houses, flats, mobile homes and house boats must pay council tax. Every property is placed in a valuation band for England by the Listing Officer at the Valuation Office Agency (for HM Revenue and Customs).

Your council tax bill shows which band your property is in based on the expected sale price as at 1 April 1991. If you have a query about the banding of your property or wish to appeal against it, please contact:

 **The Listing Officer**
Council Tax South
Valuation Office Agency
Second Floor
1 Francis Grove
Wimbledon
London
SW19 4DT

 VOA Centralised Switchboard: 03000 501 501

 ctsouth@voa.gsi.gov.uk

Council tax appeals

You can appeal against your council tax if you think:

- you are not the resident or owner.
- your property is exempt.
- there has been a mistake in calculating your bill.

If you want to appeal, you must tell us in writing, giving the reasons why you are appealing.

You must continue to pay your council tax while your appeal is being dealt with. We will refund any money that you have overpaid if your appeal is successful.

Discounts for the over 65s

The London Borough of Hillingdon offers all of our residents over 65 years of age a council tax discount, if:

- you are living in a property in the London Borough of Hillingdon and responsible for paying the council tax.
- you do not receive council tax benefit.

If you think you may be entitled to the over 65s discount and it is not already shown on your bill please contact us on 0300 123 1384.

Are you entitled to a reduction?

Discounts

In some cases, you may be entitled to a reduction. If you are the only adult living in a property, you may be entitled to a 25% discount. We work out your council tax based on at least two adults living at the property. However, some people are not counted for council tax purposes, which may entitle you to a reduction even if you do not live alone. These are:

- full time students, student nurses, apprentices (earning less than £195 a week) and youth training trainees.
- 18 and 19 year olds who are in, or who have just left, a course of education for the period 1 May to 31 October.
- patients in hospital and people looked after in a care home.
- people who are severely mentally impaired.
- those staying in certain hostels or night shelters.
- care workers on low pay working for charities.
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18 years of age.
- members of visiting armed forces and certain international institutions.
- members of religious communities (monks and nuns).
- people in prison (unless sentenced for non-payment of council tax, community charge or a fine).

Unoccupied properties and second homes

A property that is not your sole or main home and is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished is liable for the full council tax, after an initial exemption for six months. In Hillingdon the council tax bill for a furnished property that is not used as your sole or main home is usually reduced by 25 percent.

Exemptions

The following properties are exempt from council tax:

- owned by a charity (exempt for up to six months).
- substantially unfurnished, including newly built property (exempt for up to six months) or is undergoing major repair work or being structurally altered. There is a maximum twelve month limit for this exemption regardless of whether work has been completed. Please note that we will only grant this exemption following verification by our inspectors, therefore the exemption will not be granted retrospectively.
- was last occupied by someone who has gone into prison (unless sentenced for non-payment of council tax, community charge or a fine).
- was last occupied by someone who has gone into hospital or a nursing home to receive personal care.
- where probate or letters of administration are awaited (exempt for up to six months after either have been granted).
- where occupation is prohibited by law.
- is waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion.
- where the previous occupier has moved elsewhere (other than hospital or care home) to receive or provide personal care through old age, disability, illness or mental disorder past or present, or through alcohol or drug dependence.
- is owned by a full time student and was their last sole or main residence.
- has been repossessed.
- where the liable person is acting as a trustee in bankruptcy.

Exemptions also apply to:

- student halls of residence, forces' barracks and married quarters, a caravan pitch or mooring not in use and an unoccupied annexe which is part of a single dwelling.

- property where the liable person is a member of (or has a relevant association with) visiting armed forces, or is a visiting non-UK citizen entitled to diplomatic privileges or immunities.
- property where all residents are full time students or is occupied by person(s) under 18, or those severely mentally impaired.
- an annexe of an occupied dwelling which is occupied by a dependent relative.

Certain conditions may apply to discounts or exemptions. Please contact the council tax office for further details.

If your council tax bill shows a discount, the council has made the assumption that you are entitled to the discount for the period covered by the bill. If this assumption is no longer correct as your circumstances have changed, or you know that they will change during the period covered by your bill, please let us know. You are required to let the council know in writing within 21 days of realising that you are no longer entitled to a discount. A failure to do this without a reasonable excuse could lead to a £70.00 penalty.

If you are unsure whether your change of circumstances will affect any entitlement to discount, please contact us for advice.

People on a low income

If you are on a low income you can apply for council tax benefit for a reduction in the amount you have to pay. If you qualify for benefit it is your right to receive it. The level of benefit will depend on the size of your family, your savings, your income and the amount of council tax. The maximum amount that you can receive is 100% of your council tax. If you receive income support you will have nothing to pay, as long as you have no one else living with you other than your partner and/or any dependent children.

Couples

If you are married or living with someone as husband, wife or same sex partner you will normally be jointly responsible for the council tax bill. Only make one claim for council tax benefit, which will be assessed on your joint income.

Capital limit

If you or your partner has savings of more than £16,000 you will not be entitled to council tax benefit. For couples the £16,000 applies for each claim not for each person. However, if you are receiving the guarantee part of the pension credit there is no savings limit.

Non-dependents deduction

Your council tax benefit will be reduced if you have someone other than your partner or dependent children living in your household. The amount will depend on the person's gross weekly income. Further information and examples are available on the council's website www.hillingdon.gov.uk/advice and benefits.

Second adult rebate

If you're single and someone over 18 shares your home who does not pay rent, you may be entitled to claim a rebate if the person's income is less than £235 a week. If more than one person lives with you, their combined weekly income must not exceed £234.99 for you to be eligible to claim.

People with disabilities

You may be entitled to a reduction in your council tax bill if your home has certain features which are essential (or of major importance) to the wellbeing of a disabled person who lives there. These are:

- a room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) used mainly by a disabled person (for example for storing dialysis equipment or a ground floor bedroom in a property with two or more floors).
- an additional kitchen or a bathroom (with bath and/or shower, not just a toilet and wash basin) for use by the disabled person.
- extra space inside the property to allow for the use of a wheelchair.

If you are eligible, your bill will be reduced to that of a property in the valuation band immediately below the actual band of your property.

Tackling fraud

Hillingdon Council is committed to tackling council tax fraud and will investigate all cases. Every time someone commits fraud, it adds to the costs that we all have to pay. You can help us to detect fraud by telling us if you suspect someone is committing fraud.

If you have information about possible council tax fraud, please contact the council's Fraud Hotline 0800 3898313.

What do I get for my money?

The council delivers nearly 800 different services which directly benefit local residents and the borough of Hillingdon. Along with grants from central government, business rates and a dedicated schools grant, your council tax helps to pay for these services. The amount to be raised from council tax is known as the council tax requirement.

This year's council tax

For the fourth successive year Hillingdon's element of council tax will not increase and the Greater London Authority's element of council tax will decrease one percent.

<i>Amount to be raised by council tax</i>	<i>2011/12 £'000</i>	<i>2012/13 £'000</i>
Gross expenditure on services	716,587	702,883
Income and Capital Charges	-623,206	-608,764
London wide charges and other levies	16,927	17,437
Hillingdon's Council Tax requirement	110,308	111,556
Greater London Authority	30,709	30,744
Total Council Tax requirement	141,017	142,300
Band D equivalent properties	99,118	100,236
Charge for band D properties	1,422.75	1,419.65

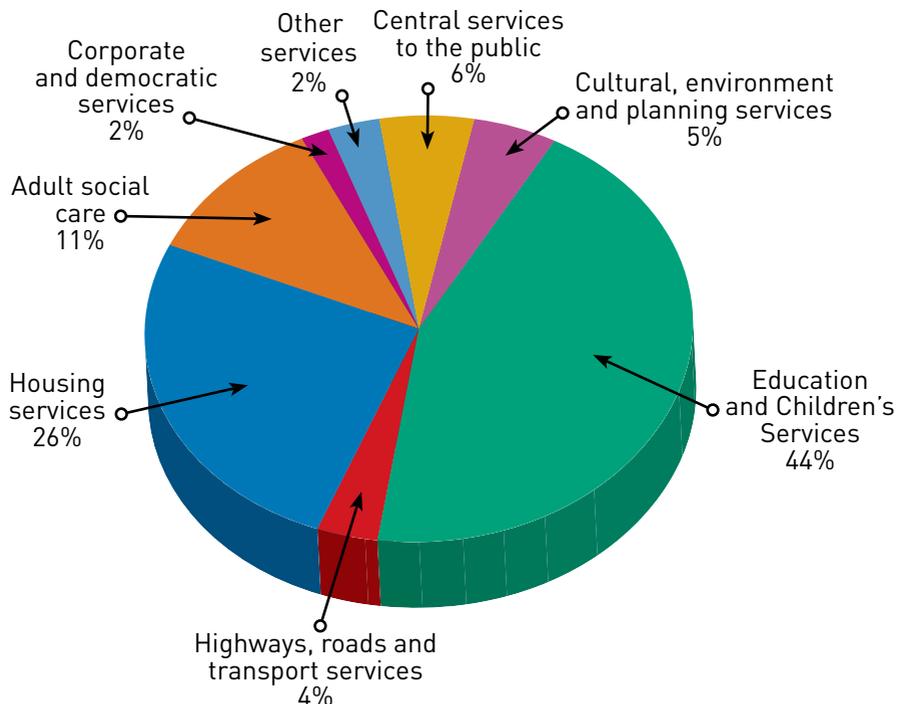
Change in the cost of services for the year

Whilst Hillingdon's budget for 2012/13 contains savings of £17.7 million, this does not fully cover the impact of the significant cuts in funding from Central Government, and as a result the council tax requirement for 2012/13 has increased by £1.25 million. However, as the number of taxpayers in the borough has also increased, the amount payable by each taxpayer has remained unchanged. The development of the 2012/13 budget from the 2011/12 budget is detailed in the table below.

Development of 2012/13 budget from the 2011/12 budget

Council Tax requirement 2011/12	110,308
Decrease in government grants, Business Rates etc	5,326
Inflation	3,070
Increase in contingency	5,755
Savings and efficiencies	-17,696
New service developments	2,250
Non formula grant adjustments	-3,676
Corporate adjustments	6,219
Net Council Tax requirement 2012/13	111,556

Summary of Hillingdon's budget



<i>Hillingdon's gross expenditure</i>	<i>2011/12 £'000</i>	<i>2012/13 £'000</i>
Central services to the public	37,966	39,712
Cultural, environment and planning services	42,834	37,182
Education and children's services	316,078	311,784
Highways, roads and transport services	24,814	25,505
Housing services	182,534	182,408
Adults social care	86,177	79,732
Corporate and democratic services	10,526	10,372
Other services	15,659	16,188
Total gross expenditure on services	716,587	702,883

Further information about the council's budget and services can be found on the council's website: www.hillingdon.gov.uk

Introduction

Boris Johnson's fourth budget continues to deliver on his priority to keep the cost of living down and protect front line services. For the first time in the history of the GLA, this year the Mayor is cutting his element of the Council Tax by one percent. This means that since the beginning of the current Mayoral term his precept has fallen by 16 percent in real terms.

In the current economic climate the public sector must do more with less, delivering improved public services for no extra cost. The Mayor will continue to invest in his priorities by increasing police numbers to 1,000 more than he inherited in 2008, improving public transport, protecting the 24 hour Freedom Pass, investing in delivering more homes for London families, working to increase young people's opportunities and ensuring the 2012 Games leave a lasting legacy.

Council Tax and budget information

The GLA Group's share of the Council Tax for a typical Band D property has been reduced to £306.72. Residents of the City of London – which has its own police force – will pay £78.62. The table below shows how the Council Tax (at Band D) is allocated.

Council Tax (£)	2011-12	Change	2012-13
MOPC (Met Police)	227.95	+0.15	228.10
LFEPA (London Fire Brigade)	52.20	-12.66	39.54
Core GLA (City Hall) and Olympics	27.68	+9.43	37.11
TfL (Transport)	1.99	-0.02	1.97
Total Band D (£)	309.82	-3.10	306.72

Investing in front line services

The Mayor has put value for money at the very heart of his administration and has controlled costs tightly as well as ruthlessly cutting out waste. His budget will protect vital front line services by:

- investing in front line policing – ensuring that there will be 1,000 more warranted police officers at the end of his current Mayoral

term than at the beginning. The Metropolitan Police will continue to drive down crime – which has fallen by more than 10 percent since 2008.

- investing £22 billion to upgrade the Tube and deliver Crossrail, which will increase London’s rail capacity by 10 percent and maintaining London’s bus network and existing concessionary travel schemes in full, including the 24 hour Freedom Pass for older and disabled Londoners.
- co-ordinating £221m of investment to support London’s high streets and those areas hardest hit by the August 2011 disturbances, so communities emerge from the economic downturn stronger.
- delivering 50,000 more affordable homes and 100,000 apprenticeships for young people by the end of 2012 as well as providing secure ongoing funding for the four rape crisis centres located across London.

2012 Olympics and Paralympics

The GLA will seek to ensure the benefits of the Games are seen London wide in order to deliver a lasting legacy.

Summary of GLA budget

The following tables compare the GLA group’s spending for 2012-13 with last year and the reasons for the changes. The change in gross expenditure reflects the impact of the phasing of transport investment and savings within the GLA Group. Overall the council requirement is broadly unchanged – although the Band D precept has been cut by £3.10. More information on the budget is available on the GLA website at www.london.gov.uk. (tel: 020 7983 4000).

<i>How the GLA budget is funded (£m)</i>	2011-12	Change	2012-13
Gross expenditure (net of intra group spend)	13,801	-146	13,655
Fares, charges and other income	-6,151	-452	-6,603
Specific and general government grants	-6,413	113	-6,300
Use of reserves	-294	487	193
Surplus in Council Tax collection funds	-8	-2	-10
Amount met by council tax payers (£m)	935	0	935

<i>Changes in spending</i>	2012-13
2011-12 Council Tax requirement	935
Inflation	92
Efficiencies and other savings	-272
Growth for existing services and new initiatives	157
Other changes (including income growth)	23
2012-13 Council Tax requirement	935

Environment Agency South East Region

The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 5200 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. 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 and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

<i>Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee</i>	<i>2011/2012 '000s</i>	<i>2012/2013 '000s</i>
Gross expenditure	£86,484	£86,484
Levies raised	£10,000	£10,000
Total Council Tax base	5,082	5,081

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide 'matching' funding the Agency may seek funding from County and Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities and London Boroughs in the form of a Local Levy. The Local Levy is shared on the basis of Band D Equivalents between all contributing bodies within the Committee Area.

Changes in the Gross Budgeted expenditure between the years reflects the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of capital projects.

The total Local Levy raised has remained the same in 2012/2013 as 2011/2012 at £10,000,000.

Lee Valley Regional Park is a unique leisure, sports and environmental destination for all residents of London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The 26 mile long, 10,000 acre park, much of it formerly derelict land, is partly funded by a levy on the council tax. For the second year running there has been a two percent decrease in this levy. Find out more about hundreds of great days out, world class sports venues and award winning parklands at www.leevalleypark.org.uk

<i>Budget/levy changes – 2011/2012 to 2012/13 (£'000)</i>	<i>2011/12 £m</i>	<i>2012/13 £m</i>
Gross operating expenditure	16.8	18.3
Gross operating income	(7.5)	(8.8)
Net service operating costs	9.3	9.5
Financing cost		
– debt servicing/repayments	0.7	0.7
– new capital investment	2.0	1.5
Total net expenditure	12.0	11.7

Further details on how this budget is spent and the amount each council contributes can be found at www.leevalleypark.org.uk

London Pensions Fund Authority

The London Pensions Fund Authority (LPFA) raises a levy each year to meet expenditure on premature retirement compensation and outstanding personnel matters for which LPFA is now responsible and cannot charge to the pension fund. These payments relate to former employees of the Greater London Council (GLC), the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and the London Residuary Body (LRB).

For 2012-13, the income to be raised by levies is set out below. The Greater London levy is payable in all boroughs, the Inner London levy only in Inner London Boroughs (including the City of London). The figures show the total to be raised and, in brackets, the percentage change on the previous year.

	£m	Change
Inner London	13.065	(0%)
Greater London	10.318	(0%)
Total	23.383	(0%)

Putting our residents first – 24 hours a day

As part of our commitment to improve services to our residents, the council is continuing to add new services online.

You can already renew library books, report potholes, manage your *HillingdonFirst* card and ask for more recycling bags online, and more services are being added all the time.

Registering for these services is simple. Visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk, click the 'do it online' tab at the top of the page and follow the instructions. Once you have registered, you will be able to log-in 24-hours a day.

By reporting it online you will also be able to track the progress of your request.

You can now access many council services on-line 24-hours a day. However, if you need to speak to someone, below is a list of council services

Useful numbers

 London Borough of Hillingdon
Council Tax
PO Box 1091
Nelson
BB9 4EU

 0300 123 1384

 counciltax@hillingdon.gov.uk

 The Benefit Office
PO Box 458
Uxbridge
UB8 1HN

 01895 556666

Housing Services – including
benefits and needs

 01895 556666

Environment and anti-social
behaviour

 01895 556000

Anti-social behaviour

 0800 694 0240

Hillingdon Social Care Direct

 01895 556633

Racial Harassment

 0800 694 0240 or
01895 556000

School Admissions

 01895 556644

Planning

 01895 250230

Registrars and Electoral Services

 01895 558250

Hillingdon*First* Card

 01895 558250

Fraud hotline

 0800 389 8313 (24 hours)

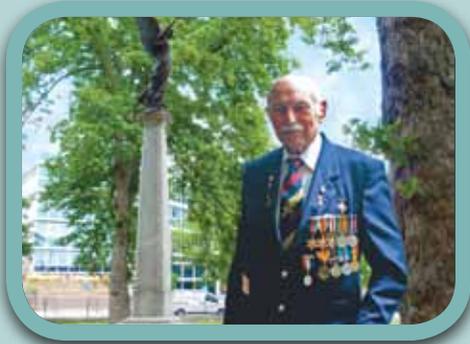
Council main switchboard

 01895 250111

Out of hours service

 01895 250111

Putting our residents first



Our people

We will continue to support our residents through our Feel Proud initiative, encouraging communities to get involved.

Our built environment

Our multi-million pound library programme is due to be completed this year.



Our natural environment

We will continue to invest in environmental projects to improve our borough.

Our financial management

Through strong financial management we will be able to maintain front line services that our residents value, including weekly rubbish collections.

