

Your council tax

2012-2013



Including Hampshire Police Authority policing budget and priorities

A message from Councillor David Pugh

Leader of the Isle of Wight Council

I am pleased to say the council's budget for 2012-2013 is a very different one to that of last year. Back then, needing to find £18 million savings without increasing council tax, difficult decisions were required.

Taking action when we did has significantly eased the budgetary pressures for this year. While we must continue to operate even more efficiently and focus resources on priority areas, we are now able to support a major investment programme this year.

Much of this is to stimulate and support the local economy. It includes £3 million investment in super-fast broadband, £1 million support for a new tidal energy research and development facility, £300,000 creating employment opportunities for young people, £250,000 for parish and town council schemes improving economic vitality and also a commitment to a new Cowes chain ferry. We are also continuing our support for the Highways PFI which from April 2013 will bring unprecedented government grant to modernise and maintain our roads network.

Our other priorities in 2012-2013 are raising educational standards, keeping children safe, supporting older and vulnerable residents, housing and the homeless, developing a new waste strategy and delivering budget savings through changing the way we work.

Once again the council tax and Hampshire Police Authority precept have been frozen. If there is any rise in your bill, it will reflect an increased levy by your town or parish council.

Finally, I would like to thank those individuals, organisations and companies who over the past year have taken on some services we have been unable to provide directly. It is this community spirit that helps make the Island such a great place.

Contacting the Isle of Wight Council

Website: www.iwight.com

It is possible to **find out about**, **pay for**, **report on**, **comment on** or **complain about** a service through the A to Z of services on our website.

Phone: contact centre 01983 821000

For information on any council-related service, telephone our contact centre where an advisor will deal with your enquiry.

- Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm
- Saturday 9am to 1pm

For enquiries regarding the following services, please dial:

Automated payments	0207 1381970
Building control	01983 823580
Business rates	01983 823920
Children's and young people's services	01983 823455
Council tax	01983 823901
Highways	01983 823777
Housing benefits	01983 823950
Housing services	01983 823040
Parking services	01983 823714
Planning	01983 823552
Registrars	01983 823233
Waste collection	01983 823777

Face to face

If you need to visit us for assistance with your enquiries, the council's Help Centre is available. For opening times and further information on where you can visit please call **01983 821000** or refer to our website.

Email: customer.services@iow.gov.uk

Your guide to the council's budget

The Isle of Wight Council believes it is important to provide you with information about your council tax bill, which is enclosed with this booklet.

The following pages give you details of the council's budget for 2012-2013 and explains how your council tax bill is calculated.

If you would like more information about the Isle of Wight Council and its services, please contact us in one of the following ways:

Telephone: (01983) 821000

Email: customer.services@iow.gov.uk

Website: www.iwight.com

Spending changes

The Isle of Wight Council plans to spend £338.3 million in 2012-2013 on providing services for Islanders.

After deducting grants and income of £206.5 million, the net budget requirement is £131.8 million. This is £3.2 million lower than the 2011-2012 budget requirement.

Budget gap

The budget gap will be funded during 2012-2013 in the ways shown below.

Extra spending by the council

£5,155,000

Increased investment in key priorities

£2,800,000

Net cost of maintaining existing service levels

£2,355,000

Management and business infrastructure costs

£2,783,000

Increased income generation and grants

£647,000

Savings from realigned services

£3,771,000

Savings and increased income

£7,201,000

New homes bonus grant

£1,143,000

Factors which offset budget gap

£8,344,000

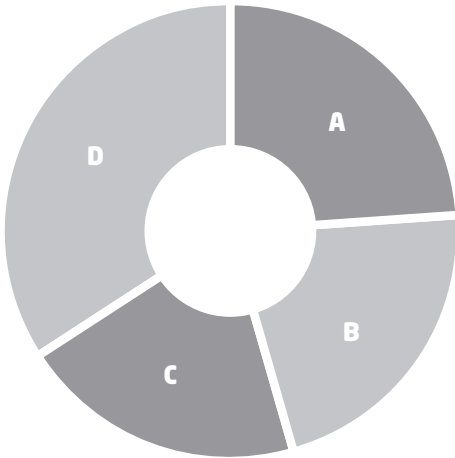
Net budget reduction

£3,189,000

Where the money comes from

The money the council uses to provide services comes from sources including:

- formula grant from the government;
- the council tax;
- core grants for specific services and projects;
- dedicated schools' grant;
- income from charging and contributions for certain services;
- other grants including Council Tax Freeze Grant.



A Dedicated Schools' Grant*

23.9% (£81,008,000)

B Council Tax and Council Tax Freeze Grant

21.7% (£73,459,000)

C Formula grant and core grants

20.2% (£68,224,000)

D Fees, charges, contributions and other grants

34.2% (£115,659,000)

*Provisional figure pending confirmation from the Department for Education.

Investing in the future

In addition to its day to day spending, the council also plans to invest up to £49 million in capital assets which support its key priorities including:

- schools – £22 million;
- highways – £3.7 million;
- housing – £3.3 million.

Investments will also be made in infrastructure including:

- Eastern Yar/Duver seawall – £1.1 million;
- Cowes floating bridge – £1 million in 2012-2013 with a further £2 million in 2013-2014; £500,000 has also been set aside to improve public conveniences across the Island.

New projects to support economic development include:

- super-fast broadband - £500,000 in 2012-2013 with a further £2.5 million in future years;
- SEEDA land sites - £500,000 in 2012-2013 with a further £500,000 in 2013-2014;
- Solent Ocean Energy Centre – £1 million.

Prudential borrowing will be used where necessary to augment other capital resources.

At 31 March 2011 our total net borrowings were £107.4 million.

Council workforce

At the end of December 2011 the council employed the equivalent of 3,520 full time posts (3,251 permanent and 269 temporary). This compares with the equivalent of 4,416 full time posts (3,974 permanent and 442 temporary) at 31 December 2010. This reduction is due to the restructuring of the council's services and the transfer of teaching and other schools staff to the new academies.

Where the money will go in 2012-2013

	This year £'000	Last year £'000
Adult social services	63,317	60,454
Housing services (including housing benefit)	76,098	72,821
Schools' budgets ¹	87,431	95,178
Children's services	35,421	34,516
Fire service	7,369	7,441
Environmental services	2,155	2,182
Community safety	4,247	4,439
Street and beach cleansing	2,027	2,020
Waste management	10,390	9,067
Highways including Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	10,576	10,298
Car parking ²	2,083	1,915
Street lighting	956	869
Public transport support	6,356	6,608
Planning and development control	3,964	3,535
Recreation and sport	4,116	4,795
Parks and open spaces	2,164	2,436
Economic and tourism development	2,273	1,708
Cultural, leisure and libraries	3,878	4,923
Other services	8,919	9,332
Other financing	4,610	5,099
Gross expenditure	338,350	339,636
Less: income	-206,492	-204,589
Net budget requirement	131,858	135,047
Less: formula grant	-60,197	-63,595
Estimated collection fund deficit	158	58
Council tax requirement³	71,819	71,510

¹ The reduction in the schools' budgets reflects the funding arrangements for the newly created academy schools which receive their grants direct from the Department for Education.

² The car parking figure represents expenditure on the service; income is included in the line with grants and other income.

³ The council tax has again been frozen. The increase in the council tax requirement is due to increases in both the council tax base and the estimated collection fund deficit.

Four factors that affect what you pay

1 The level of tax set by the Isle of Wight Council

The level of tax set by the council to cover the cost of services it will provide in 2012-2013 is unchanged from 2011-2012. By setting a zero increase the council will receive a grant equivalent to a 2.5 per cent increase.

2 The property band you are in

The value of your property, on 1 April 1991, will have been assessed by the independent listing officer, a central government agent. Your property will then have been placed in one of eight bands – your bill will show which one.

Want to appeal against your property banding?

Further information about this is provided on page 12 of this booklet.

3 The level of spending set independently by the Hampshire Police Authority

The element of council tax that relates to the Hampshire Police Authority is unchanged from 2011-2012. The Hampshire Police Authority also receives a grant equivalent to a 2.5 per cent increase.

4 Charges for local services

Your bill includes an amount towards the cost of the town or parish council for the area in which you live.

Band	Value of property 1 April 1991	Proportion of band D	Council tax (IW Council element)
A	Up to £40,000	6/9	859.87 716.56*
B	£40,001 to £52,000	7/9	1,003.18
C	£52,001 to £68,000	8/9	1,146.49
D	£68,001 to £88,000	9/9	1,289.80
E	£88,001 to £120,000	11/9	1,576.42
F	£120,001 to £160,000	13/9	1,863.04
G	£160,001 to £320,000	15/9	2,149.67
H	Over £320,000	18/9	2,579.60

* Disabled reduction

Council, police, parishes and towns

This table shows the combined costs for a band D council tax payer. The figures include the Isle of Wight Council, the Hampshire Police Authority and the Island's town and parish councils.

	£ per band D	£ Total 2012-2013	£ Total 2011-2012		£ per band D	£ Total 2012-2013	£ Total 2011-2012
Isle of Wight Council	1,289.80	71,818,644	71,510,381	Nettlestone & Seaview	16.88	29,070	29,910
Hampshire Police Authority	146.25	8,143,493	8,108,539	Newchurch	13.43	14,880	14,380
Parish/town councils				Newport	15.60	126,678	127,245
Arreton	18.08	7,172	7,172	Niton & Whitwell	14.29	14,200	12,200
Bembridge	56.25	117,000	117,000	Northwood	15.42	14,000	11,228
Brading	81.77	68,570	56,775	Rookley	23.95	6,130	6,130
Brighstone	23.78	20,179	16,596	Ryde	37.39	331,100	319,800
Calbourne	29.98	12,000	10,500	Sandown	47.20	122,000	115,000
Chale	30.54	8,600	8,600	Shalfleet	36.86	27,849	27,849
Chillerton & Gatcombe	37.86	7,530	7,530	Shanklin	39.11	145,898	127,981
Cowes	20.20	86,700	86,700	Shorwell	17.81	6,000	6,000
East Cowes	33.45	85,000	82,324	St Helens	36.89	21,650	21,650
Fishbourne	20.62	8,638	8,638	Totland	35.65	48,735	40,277
Freshwater	40.70	104,140	98,469	Ventnor	48.77	135,000	135,000
Godshill	23.74	14,500	14,500	Whippingham	30.99	10,750	10,759
Gurnard	39.57	32,000	32,000	Wootton Bridge	43.64	65,000	57,800
Havenstreet & Ashey	22.00	7,778	7,778	Wroxall	16.14	10,870	10,350
Lake	19.50	37,500	37,500	Yarmouth	42.37	22,350	20,318

Please note: the council is required to show costs in this table as they affect band D council taxpayers. In accordance with government guidelines we are required to detail parish or town council precepts exceeding £140,000. This is shown in the table below:

	Gross spend £	Income £	Reserve movement £	Budget requirement 2012-2013 £	Budget requirement 2011-2012 £
Ryde Town Council	364,900	-28,100	-5,700	331,100	319,800
Shanklin Town Council	192,233	-6,390	-39,945	145,898	127,981

Commentary by individual parish or town councils in respect of their budget for 2012-2013 is provided in appropriate parish communications such as newsletters or websites.

Hampshire Police Authority - ensuring efficient and effective policing for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

We are all continuing to face very challenging times during this period of austerity. This year again brings the challenge of working within a reduced budget to provide a more efficient and effective police service for the future which will continue to deliver an excellent service for the people of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

During the first year of the policing budget reductions we have managed to provide the same level and quality of service as previous years by adapting our delivery. We will continue to make the most of our resources to provide best value for money for the taxpayer.

Your Police Authority

Hampshire Police Authority is the independent body responsible for overseeing the work of Hampshire Constabulary and ensuring effective and efficient policing in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This includes setting the policing budget, local policing priorities and representing the voice of the public.

The 17 members of Hampshire Police Authority, comprising nine local councillors and eight

independent members, work hard to ensure Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are even safer places in which to live, work and visit.



Policing priorities

Our priority is to protect the funding of as many frontline services as possible, including targeted patrol, safer neighbourhood and local crime investigation teams.

Hampshire Police Authority and the Chief Constable jointly agree on three-year policing priorities, and these are published in the Policing Plan. The priorities are informed by results of consultation exercises with the public, local authorities and other agencies, along with the latest crime statistics.

A full copy of the Policing Plan is available by visiting www.hampshirepoliceauthority.org

The priorities are underpinned by a set of values which aims to secure the trust and confidence of our communities.

In everything we do, we **CARE**:

Common sense and sound judgement

Act with integrity, courage and compassion

Respect people and keep our promises

Experiences used to learn and improve

Police funding

The majority of funding for policing comes through Government grants, with around one third coming from Council Tax. The comprehensive spending review meant the Government grant paid to Hampshire Police Authority was reduced by 5.1 per cent last year and will be reduced by a further 6.7 per cent for 2012/13 as a part of a 20 per cent saving in real terms between 2011 and 2015.

We are pleased to tell you we are able to freeze our part of the Council Tax precept for another year, meaning that properties in bands A to H will not have any increase in their Council Tax. By freezing the Council Tax Hampshire Police Authority will receive a government grant equivalent to 3 per cent of Council Tax.

BAND	ANNUAL COST £
A	97.50
B	113.75
C	130.00
D	146.25
E	178.75
F	211.25
G	243.75
H	292.50



Hampshire Police Authority budget

	£'000	£'000
	2011/12	2012/13
Employees	286,325	270,465
Other net costs	32,458	33,084
Contributions to/(from) reserves	(4,687)	2,063
Total	314,096	305,612
Funded by:		
Grant funding	(212,256)	(203,594)
Council Tax	(100,798)	(101,433)
Council Tax collection fund surplus	(1,042)	(0,585)



Making the savings

Due to reductions in the grant last year the authority had to make savings of £16 million. The authority has to save a further £20 million in 2012/13. The savings have been identified through a change programme which has reviewed all workings of the authority and constabulary. Additional options for savings continue to be developed in order to offset further reductions in Government grant in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Despite the savings needed in 2012/13 the authority will maintain frontline personnel numbers at the same level as at April 2011. Reductions have focused on

reducing costs through improved processes and different ways of working, which do not adversely impact on performance.

The authority has taken a considered and structured approach to delivering savings over many years. The biggest budget reduction planned for 2012/13 is in support functions (£6.5 million) which includes introducing a new centralised service centre. A further £3 million will be saved through more efficient ways of gathering and distributing intelligence along with other changes. The constabulary is seeking to improve access to its service by placing local officers within local communities, allowing frontline policing services to be at the heart

of the communities they serve. This will result in some police stations being sold, however, safer neighbourhood policing teams will not be leaving local areas but moving to new locations within the same communities.

The investment in our website will also give greater access to information, such as crimes in specific locations, and access to more services, including crime reporting. This investment, along with other changes, will save £3 million.

Further savings will be made through merging units and improving criminal investigations and Criminal Justice processes (£4 million). In addition £1 million will be saved through collaboration with Thames Valley Police on operational policing, which includes roads policing, and firearms and operation support, which contains elements such as dogs and training.

Where your money goes

Hampshire Police Authority has been praised for the way its finances have been managed. The Audit Commission independently assesses public sector bodies in the way money is spent, and has

concluded that “the authority has a good track record of sound financial planning”. Hampshire has the sixth lowest cost per head of population out of the 43 forces in England and Wales.

By 2015 we will be a top quartile force in key performance areas and a bottom quartile force in cost. A combination of low cost and high achievement will make the constabulary one of the best value for money forces in the country.

Frontline numbers will be maintained and additional funds have been included for more technology that will improve efficiency and improve the quality of the services we deliver. For example, funding for additional mobile information devices will allow more officers and staff to update and access information without the need to return to a police station.

The future

This will be the last year Hampshire Police Authority will decide on the precept level for policing. From November, a directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire will oversee policing.

Council tax - explanatory notes

This information forms part of your bill

Council tax valuation bands

Council tax is charged on most dwellings. There is one bill per dwelling, whether it is a house, bungalow, mobile home or houseboat and each dwelling is placed in one of eight bands according to its open market value on 1 April 1991.

The valuation band and values are as follows:

- 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** Over £320,000.

Valuation banding proposals

If you are responsible for paying the council tax, or an agent acting on behalf of someone who is, you may make a formal proposal against your council tax band. The circumstances in which you can make a formal proposal are very limited but if you have a genuine concern that your home may be in the wrong band, you should contact your local valuation office and ask to have your band reviewed. The occasions when a challenge by 'proposal' is permitted include the following:

- Property demolished.
- If part of the property have been separately banded but should now be banded as one.
- Physical changes in the locality affecting values.
- Within six months of a band change to your property by the listing officer.

If you think you meet one of the above by which a valid proposal can be made – for example, if you have moved into a property within the last six months and you think the band is wrong you can complete a proposal form online at www.voa.gov.uk or in writing to the council tax listing officer at:

Overline House, Central Station, Blechynden Terrace, Southampton SO15 1GW.

Tel: 03000 501501

Fax: 0300 504370

Making a proposal does not allow you to withhold payment of your council tax. If your proposal is successful you will be refunded any money you have overpaid.

Any proposal must be made within six months of you becoming the responsible person for council tax at your property; however the valuation office may consider late applications.

You can only appeal a valuing office agency decision if your case has been accepted as a valid proposal. An appeal must be lodged with the valuation tribunal within three months of the decision at www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk

Appeals

As well as banding issues you may appeal if:

- you have been billed for council tax but do not believe you are responsible for paying the tax as you do not fall into one of the owner/occupier categories given above;
- you have claimed a discount or exemption and this has been refused;
- you think any item on your bill has been calculated incorrectly.

To appeal about these matters, please mark

your letter or email 'APPEAL' and send it to: Isle of Wight Council Offices, Broadway, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9EA.

Email: council.tax@iow.gov.uk

We should respond to your appeal within two months. If you are not satisfied with the response, or you do not get a reply, you may apply to a tribunal to hear your appeal. Certain time limits apply. More details can be found at www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk

Making an appeal/proposal does not allow you to withhold payment of your council tax.

How to contact us

Tel: 01983 823901 (Lines are open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm Saturday).

Email: council.tax@iow.gov.uk

Fax: 01983 823900

Or you can write to the address shown above.

People with disabilities

If anyone living in your home has a disability and uses a wheelchair at home, or needs an extra bathroom or room adapted to meet their special needs, they may be entitled to a reduced bill. The room or the wheelchair must also be essential, or of major importance to the disabled person's well-being, due to the nature and extent of their disability. If this applies the bill will be reduced to the rate for the band immediately below that shown in the banding list. If your home is in Band A, a reduction of one ninth of band D will be made. Application forms for disabled relief are available on www.iwight.com

Exempt properties

Council tax is not charged on some properties (known as exempt properties), including

empty properties which are:

- unfurnished and requiring major repairs (this lasts for up to 12 months);
- unfurnished (this lasts for six months and granted on the property irrespective of owner);
- owned by charities (this lasts for up to six months);
- Annexes (granny flats) which cannot be let separately without breaching planning conditions;
- not allowed to be lived in by law;
- repossessed;
- waiting to be lived in by a minister of religion;
- a deceased person's former dwelling (may be exempt for up to six months after probate granted);
- left empty by a bankrupt;
- left empty by students, prisoners, patients in hospitals or care homes, people receiving or providing care elsewhere.

Other exempt properties are:

- homes lived in only by people with severe mental impairment;
- halls of residence;
- homes lived in only by students;
- homes lived in only by persons under 18;
- dwellings which form part of a single property and which are occupied by a dependant relative/relatives of the family living in the rest of the building, eg properties with an annexe or similar self-contained unit;
- armed forces accommodation, owned by the Ministry of Defence;
- visiting forces accommodation.

For further information www.iwight.com

Discounts

- The full council tax bill assumes that there are two adults (over 18) living in a dwelling. If only one adult lives in a dwelling (as their main home) the council tax bill will be reduced by 25 per cent.

If your property is no-one's main home, certain discounts can apply. A property will count as someone's main home if it is furnished and it is the only property owned, however if you are contracted to live elsewhere then a reduction may apply.

- You can get ten per cent off your bill if your property is your second residence, and is furnished and unoccupied. This also applies after you or your tenants have moved out. You must send us the full address of your main home and a copy of the latest council tax bill.
- You can apply for a 50 per cent discount if you are required to live elsewhere for work. You must also send us full details of where and for whom you work, together with a copy of your contract which states that you must live at that address to conduct your employment effectively.
- There is a change to the charge levied on unfurnished empty properties. Previously if the property remained empty for more than six months you could claim a 50 per cent discount. From 1 April 2004 this no longer applies. If your property has previously been exempt, when that exemption ends you will have to start paying the full charge. There is now no discount awarded.

If you do not permanently live in the UK, or have moved abroad, you may not qualify for a discount, as the empty property may count as your main home in the UK.

If the property is furnished and unoccupied after your tenants have moved out, please confirm the date they vacated and give any new address you may have for them.

If you are a company, you must tell us your company name and registered address.

There is no discount if the property is unoccupied and unfurnished, however you could qualify for a period of exemption from council tax.

- A 25 per cent discount applies if a property is only occupied by one adult aged 18 or over.

Some people are disregarded from council tax if they meet certain conditions, and the following discounts may apply:

- A 25 per cent discount may apply if all but one of the occupiers of a property are disregarded.
- A 50 per cent discount may apply if all the occupiers are disregarded.

Examples of people disregarded from council tax are:

- people aged over 18 who have child benefit paid for them;
- some school or college leavers aged under 20;
- students, student nurses and foreign language assistants;
- apprentices;
- people on youth training schemes;
- severely mentally impaired people;
- long-term residents of hospitals, residential care homes or nursing homes;
- volunteer care workers;
- people providing care for someone they live with;
- members of religious communities;
- members of international headquarters, defence organisations and visiting forces;
- people who are in prison or detention

(except for non-payment of fines or local taxes);

- people staying in hostels or night shelters.

For further information and to apply visit www.iwight.com

Discounts have been granted based on existing council tax records and will be shown on the front of your bill. If you have not been allowed a discount but think you are entitled to one, you should contact us. If you believe you have been allowed a discount you are not entitled to **you must tell us within a period of 21 days of this belief** or you may have to pay a £70 penalty. For more information visit www.iwight.com or contact the council tax office on 01983 823901.

Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, inserted by section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003

This gave councils new powers to create their own discounts and exemptions, including powers to grant relief on a case by case basis of between one and 100 per cent. Any discount given has to be met by the council.

The council has the power to agree discounts but is not obliged to do so, as council tax is a tax related to property and not directly to the provision of any specific services. Any specific application for discount is referred to the cabinet member for resources, under their delegated authority, and they will decide on the merits of the case.

Privacy notice

The Isle of Wight Council as data controller will process your personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The personal details provided by you may be shared with other departments within the council for the recovery of any

debts, for providing assistance in relation to tenancies, maximising claimants' income bringing empty properties back into use and to identify persons responsible for business rates and/or council tax. The departments include council tax, benefits, parking services, business rates, electoral registration, housing services, supporting people, community services financial assessment and sundry debts (including housing benefit overpayments).

The council may also be required to disclose personal information to third parties (such as the police or Department for Work and Pensions) for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime or apprehending or prosecuting offenders.

The council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use council tax information for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

The council is required under section 6 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 to participate in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise. Council tax data will be provided to the Audit Commission for NFI and will be used for cross-system and cross-authority comparison with other relevant organisations' data for the prevention and detection of fraud.

Council tax benefit

Main Scheme

If you are in receipt of income support, jobseekers' allowance, employment support allowance, pension credits, other state benefit or low income, you may qualify for council tax benefit. Application forms should be

returned without delay to avoid loss of benefit. If your joint capital, eg savings or investments, exceeds £16,000 you are unlikely to qualify for council tax benefit from the main scheme, unless you receive pension credit (guarantee element).

Second adult rebate

This is a form of council tax benefit that is available to council tax payers who share their home with someone on a low income but who do not have a partner or a paying lodger. It may be payable even if the council tax payer has a high income themselves and would not normally qualify for benefit.

Application forms and further advice are available from www.iwight.com or contact the benefit office, tel: 01983 823950

Please note: Benefit is normally paid from Monday following the date a claim is treated as being received.

Fraud Hotline: 01983 823969

If you know someone who is fraudulently claiming council tax or housing benefit please call our hotline, your call will be dealt with confidentially. Email: benefit.fraud@iow.gov.uk

Your rights

The council wishes to give the best possible service and hopes to resolve your concerns quickly, if you have a complaint about Council services please make it to the council department concerned. If we cannot deal with your concerns ourselves, or if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint, you can talk to the local government ombudsman advice team on 0300 061 0614 or go to their website at www.lgo.org.uk. Alternatively you can write to:

The Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH

How to pay your council tax/ business rates

Paying by direct debit

Collecting local taxation by direct debit is much cheaper for the council as it saves substantial administrative time and expense, such savings free more council funds for providing local services.

We offer a choice of payment dates – **1st, 10th or 20th** of the month and half-yearly (**two instalments, 1 April and 1 October**).

Go to www.iwight.com/online and select 'apply online' to download a direct debit instruction, or contact the council tax office on 01983 823901, and the business rates office on 01983 823920.

For other payment methods please see reverse of the council tax/business rates bill.

Non-domestic rates explained

Non-domestic rates, or business rates, collected by local authorities are the way that those who occupy non-domestic property contribute towards the cost of local services. Except in the City of London where special arrangements apply, the rates are pooled by central government and redistributed to local authorities as part of the annual formula grant settlement. The money, together with revenue from council tax payers, revenue support grant provided by the government and certain other sums, is used to pay for the services provided by your local authority and other local authorities in your area. Further information about the business rates system, including transitional and other reliefs, may be obtained at www.businesslink.gov.uk

Rateable value

Apart from properties that are exempt from business rates, each non-domestic property has a rateable value which is set by the valuation officers of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), an agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. They draw up and maintain a full list of all rateable values, available on their website at www.voa.gov.uk

The rateable value of your property is shown on the front of the bill. This broadly represents the yearly rent the property could have been let for on the open market on a particular date. For the revaluation that came into effect on 1 April 2010, this date was set as 1 April 2008.

The valuation officer may alter the value if circumstances change. The ratepayer (and certain others who have an interest in the

property) can appeal against the value shown in the list if they believe it is wrong. Further information about the grounds on which appeals may be made and the process for doing so can be found on the VOA website or from your local valuation office.

National non-domestic rating multiplier

The local authority works out the business rates bill by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the appropriate multiplier. There are two multipliers – the standard non-domestic rating multiplier and the small business non-domestic rating multiplier. The former is higher to pay for small business rate relief. Except in the City of London where special arrangements apply, the government sets the multipliers for each financial year for the whole of England according to formulae set by legislation. Between revaluations the multipliers change each year in line with inflation and to take account of the cost of small business rate relief. In the year of revaluation the multipliers are rebased to account for overall changes to total rateable value and to ensure that the revaluation does not raise extra money for the government. The current multipliers are shown on the front of your bill.

Revaluation 2010 and transitional arrangements

All rateable values are reassessed every five years at a general revaluation. The current rating list is based on the 2010 revaluation.

Five-yearly revaluations make sure each ratepayer pays their fair contribution and no more, by ensuring that the share of the national rates bill paid by any one ratepayer reflects changes over time in the value of their property relative to others. Revaluation does not raise extra money for the government.

For those ratepayers who would otherwise see significant increases in their rates liability, the government has put in place a £2 billion transitional relief scheme to limit and phase in changes in rate bills as a result of the 2010 revaluation. To help pay for the limits on increases in bills, there were also limits on reductions in bills. Under the transition scheme, limits continue to apply to yearly increases and decreases until the full amount is due (rateable value times the appropriate multiplier). The scheme applies only to the bill based on a property at the time of the revaluation. If there are any changes to the property after 1 April 2010, transitional arrangements will not normally apply to the part of a bill that relates to any increase in rateable value due to those changes. Changes to your bill as a result of other reasons (such as because of changes to the amount of small business rate relief) are not covered by the transitional arrangements.

The transitional arrangements are applied automatically and are shown on the front of the bill.

More information on revaluation 2010 can be found at www.voa.gov.uk

Unoccupied property rating

Business rates will not be payable in the first three months that a property is empty. This is extended to six months in the case of certain industrial properties. After this period rates are

payable in full unless the unoccupied property rate has been reduced by the government by order. In most cases the unoccupied property rate is zero for properties owned by charities and community amateur sports clubs. In addition, there are a number of exemptions from the unoccupied property rate. Full details on exemptions can be obtained from the local authority. If the unoccupied property rate for the financial year has been reduced by order, it will be shown on the front of the bill.

Partly occupied property relief

A ratepayer is liable for the full non-domestic rate whether a property is wholly occupied or only partly occupied. Where a property is partly occupied for a short time, the local authority has discretion in certain cases to award relief in respect of the unoccupied part. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Small business rate relief

Ratepayers who are not entitled to another mandatory relief, or are liable for unoccupied property rates and occupy a property with a rateable value which does not exceed £17,999 outside London, or £25,499 in London, will have their bill calculated using the lower small business non-domestic rating multiplier, rather than the national non domestic rating multiplier.

In addition, if the sole or main property is shown on the rating list with a rateable value which does not exceed £12,000, the ratepayer will receive a percentage reduction in their rates bill for this property of up to a maximum of 50 per cent for a property with a rateable value of not more than £6,000.

This percentage reduction (relief) is only

available to ratepayers who occupy either:

- a) one property; or
- b) one main property and other additional properties providing those additional properties each have a rateable value which does not exceed £2,599.

The rateable value of the property mentioned in (a), or the aggregate rateable value of all the properties mentioned in (b), must not exceed £17,999 outside London, or £25,499 in London, on each day for which relief is being sought. If the rateable value, or aggregate rateable value, increases above those levels, relief will cease from the day of the increase.

An application for small business rate relief is not required. Where a ratepayer meets the eligibility criteria and has not received the relief they should contact their local authority. Provided the ratepayer continues to satisfy the conditions for relief which apply at the relevant time as regards the property and the ratepayer, they will automatically continue to receive relief in each new valuation period.

Certain changes in circumstances will need to be notified to the local authority by a ratepayer who is in receipt of relief (other changes will be picked up by the local authority). The changes which must be notified are:

- a) **the ratepayer taking up occupation of an additional property; and**
- b) **an increase in the rateable value of a property occupied by the ratepayer in an area other than the area of the local authority which granted the relief.**

Charity and community amateur sports club (CASC) relief

Charities and registered community amateur sports clubs are entitled to 80 per cent relief

where the property is occupied by the charity or the club, and is wholly or mainly used for the charitable purposes of the charity (or of that and other charities), or for the purposes of the club (or of that and other clubs).

The local authority has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill. Full details can be obtained from the local authority by contacting the business rates section on (01983) 823920.

Non-profit making organisation relief

The local authority has discretion to give relief to non-profit making organisations. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Local discounts and hardship relief

The local authority has discretion to give relief in special circumstances. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Rate relief for businesses in rural areas

Certain types of properties in a rural settlement with a population below 3,000 may be entitled to relief. The property must be the only general store, the only post office or a food shop and have a rateable value of less than £8,500, or the only public house or the only petrol station and have a rateable value of less than £12,500. The property has to be occupied. An eligible ratepayer is entitled to relief at 50 per cent of the full charge while the local authority also has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill. In addition, the local authority can give relief on certain other occupied property in a rural settlement where the rateable value is less than £16,500.

Full details on how to apply for this relief are available from the local authority or at www.iwight.com/online selecting 'apply online'.

Cancellation of backdated rates liability

The government has through the Localism Act 2011 taken a power to allow for the cancellation of certain backdated rates bills that accrued on the 2005 rating list only. Information on the type of backdated rates liability that can be cancelled is available with business rates information letter titled 'cancellation of backdated rates'.

[www.communities.gov.uk/
localgovernmentfinance/businessrates/
busratesinformationletters/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernmentfinance/businessrates/busratesinformationletters/)

Rating advisers

Ratepayers do not have to be represented in discussions about their rateable value or their rates bill. Appeals against rateable values can be made free of charge. However, ratepayers who do wish to be represented should be aware that members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS – www.rics.org.uk) and the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV – www.irrv.org.uk) are qualified and are regulated by rules of professional conduct designed to protect the public from misconduct. Before you employ a rating adviser, you should check they have the necessary knowledge and expertise, as well as appropriate indemnity insurance. Take great care and, if necessary, seek further advice before entering into any contract.



Isle of Wight Council

High Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1UD
Tel: (01983) 821000

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