

Why not pay your Council Tax by Direct Debit?



A convenient way to pay your Council Tax

Direct Debit is the method of payment used by over half of the Council taxpayers in Solihull because it provides so many advantages:

Peace of mind

Peace of mind knowing your Council Tax instalments are being paid automatically on the 1st of each month and payment dates will not be missed.

Cheaper

The expense of posting 10 cheques a year is eliminated.

Convenient

No more journeys to make your payments or standing in queues.

Quick and Easy to set up

To switch to Direct Debit, simply contact us on ☎ 0121 704 8100 and we will set up your Direct Debit over the telephone. All you need is your bank details to hand.

Data Protection

We may use any information you provide to work out your Council Tax and any entitlement to a discount or Council Tax benefit. We may pass it on to other organisations to confirm information, to protect public funds and prevent and detect fraud, crime or as required by the law. We may also share it with other Council services and partner organisations to make sure our records are accurate and to help us identify services you may be entitled to or interested in. For more details about how we will use your information, please contact us on ☎ 0121 704 8100.

For a large print or audio CD version of this booklet please phone ☎ 0121 704 8100

Council Tax

information



2009-2010

C'est le livret du Conseil de Solihull concernant l'information d'impôt du Conseil. Si vous voudriez qu'il soit traduit dans une autre langue, veuillez appeler au 0121 704 6238 ou envoyez un courrier électronique à ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

Kjo është broshura e Bashkisë së Solihull-it me Informacione rreth Taksës së Bashkisë. Nëse do e dëshironit këtë broshurë të përkthyer në ndonjë gjuhë tjetër ju lutemi telefononi 0121 704 6238 ose dërgoni letër elektronike (email) te: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

هذا الكتيب لمجلس بلدة السوليهول Solihull Council حول معلومات ضريبة المجلس. فإذا كنت ترغب في أن يترجم هذا الكتيب إلى لغة أخرى فرجاءاً إتصل بهاتف رقم 0121 704 6238 ، أو عن طريق إرسال البريد الإلكتروني إلى: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

এটি সলিহল কাউন্সিল এর কাউন্সিল ট্যাক্স বিষয়ক তথ্যাদি সম্পর্কিত বুকলেট। আপনি যদি অন্য কোন ভাষায় এর অনুবাদ পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 0121 704 6238 নম্বরে ফোন করবেন, ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk এ ইমেইল করবেন।

這是蘇利浩(Solihull)政府有關地方稅(Council Tax)的資料手冊。如果你想要翻譯成其它語言的版本，請致電 0121 704 6238 或寄電子郵件到 ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

این کتابچه کانسل سولیحال Solihull Council در باره معلومات کانسل تکس میباشد. اگر شما میخواهید که این به زبان دیگری ترجمه شود لطفاً به شماره ۰۱۲۱۷۰۴۶۳۶۸ ، تلفن کنید و یا به ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk ایمیل بفرستید.

કાઉન્સિલ ટેક્સની માહિતી વિષે આ સોલિહલ કાઉન્સિલની પુસ્તિકા છે. જો તમને અન્ય કોઈ ભાષામાં તેનું ભાષાંતર ઈચ્છો તો કૃપા કરી 0121 704 6238 પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઈમેઇલ મોકલો: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

これは、地方税について記載したソリハル・カウンスルのガイドブックです。この冊子の他言語への翻訳を希望する場合は、電話 0121 704 6238 もしくはEメール ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk にてご連絡ください。

نہمہ نامیلکہی نہنجومہنی سولیهولہ Solihull Council دہربارہی زانیارہکانی باجی نہنجومہن. نہگہر نارہزوت ہہیہ نہم نامیلکہیہ وہرگبردرنت بؤ زمانیکی تر تکایہ پہیوہندی بکہ بہ ژمارہی تہلہفون 0121 704 6238 ، یاخود بہ ریگای ناردنی نامہی ئەلکترونی بؤ: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

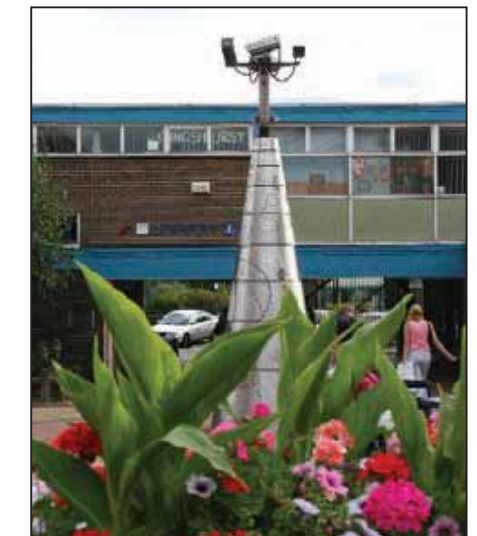
دا د سولیحال کانسل Solihull Council د کانسل تکس پہ بارہ کی د معلوماتو کتابچہ دہ کہ تاسو غواری چی دا پہ بلہ ژبہ ترجمہ شی لطفاً ۰۱۲۱۷۰۴۶۳۶۸ شمیری تہ تلفون وکړی او یا ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk تہ ایمیل واستوی.

ਇਸ ਕਿਤਾਬچے ਵਿੱਚ ਸੋਲਿਹਲ ਕਾਉਂਸਿਲ ਦੇ ਕਾਉਂਸਿਲ ਟੈਕਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਤਸਾਹ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0121 704 6238 ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਈਮੇਲ ਕਰੋ: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

یہ سولی ہل کاؤنسل کا کتابچہ ہے جو کاؤنسل ٹیکس سے متعلقہ معلومات کے بارے میں ہے۔ اگر آپ چاہتے ہیں کہ اس کا ترجمہ دوسری زبان میں کیا جائے میں کیا جائے تو براہ مہربانی 0121 704 6238 پر فون کریں یا ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk پر ای میل کے ذریعے رابطہ قائم کریں۔

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Council Tax - information and ways to reduce your bill

Paying the Council Tax

- Council Tax bills sent before the 30th April 2009 are payable in 10 monthly instalments.
- Where we send bills at other times of the year, the number of instalments are reduced proportionately.
- Bills sent after 31st December 2009 are payable in a single instalment.

Paying on time

- **Unable to pay, don't delay, contact us today. Solihull Connect Customer Contact Centre** Phone: ☎ 0121 704 8100
E-mail: council.tax@solihull.gov.uk
Website: www.solihull.gov.uk
- You can pay your Council Tax monthly, but your payment needs to reach us by the **1st of the month**.
- If you do not pay on time we will send you a reminder notice, giving you **seven days** to bring your payments up to date.
- If you do not pay as explained on the reminder notice, or continue to pay late, **you will lose the right to pay by monthly instalments and you will need to pay the remainder of the year's tax in one instalment**.
- If you lose the right to pay by instalments and payment in full is still not received, you may receive a **summons**, which means you will incur court costs.

Direct Debit



Why not pay your Council Tax by Direct Debit? It reduces administration costs and means we can spend more on services. It is covered by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

Direct Debit Guarantee

- This guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that take part in the Direct Debit scheme. The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own bank or building society.
- If the amounts to be paid by Direct Debit or the payment dates change, we will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by us or your bank or building society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your bank or building society. **Please also send a copy of your letter to us.**

To change to Direct Debit

Simply contact us on ☎ 0121 704 8100 and we can take your Direct Debit details over the telephone. All you need is your bank details to hand.

To pay using your debit card

Phone: ☎ 0121 704 0869 for our 24 hour automated telephone service.

Website: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/epay> to pay on our secure internet payment facility.

Exempt properties

There is nothing to pay for a period of time where a property falls into one of the following categories:

- Class A** An unoccupied and unfurnished property that needs structural or major repair work for a period of less than twelve months
- Class B** A property owned by a charity that is unoccupied for less than six months
- Class C** A property that is unoccupied and unfurnished for less than six months
- Class D** A property left unoccupied by a prisoner
- Class E** A property left unoccupied by a permanent resident in a hospital or care home
- Class F** A property left unoccupied because the former occupier has died
- Class G** A property where occupation is prohibited by law
- Class H** An unoccupied property awaiting occupation by a minister of religion
- Class I** A property left unoccupied by a person who lives elsewhere to receive personal care
- Class J** A property left unoccupied by a person who lives elsewhere to provide personal care
- Class K** A property left unoccupied by a student who lives elsewhere to be near his/her place of education
- Class L** A repossessed property
- Class M** Students' halls of residence
- Class N** A property only occupied by students

Class O Properties used by the armed forces

Class P Properties occupied by visiting forces

Class Q A property left unoccupied by a bankrupt individual

Class R A vacant caravan pitch or boat mooring

Class S Properties occupied only by people under 18 years of age

Class T Unoccupied annexes

Class U Properties occupied only by people who are severely mentally impaired

Class V Properties occupied by diplomats or members of certain international organisations

Class W Self contained annexes and "granny flats" occupied by elderly or disabled relatives

Where a property exemption has been granted we will show the appropriate class on your bill.

Please note you should not withhold payment of Council Tax whilst we are processing your application for an exemption.

You can get further information about exemptions from:

Phone: Solihull Connect Customer Contact Centre
☎ 0121 704 8100

E-mail: council.tax@solihull.gov.uk

Website: www.solihull.gov.uk

Council Tax - information and ways to reduce your bill

Discounts

You may be entitled to a discount of 25% if you are the only person, aged 18 or over, living in your property.

You may also be entitled to a discount of 25% if all but one of the adults living in your property are not counted.

The following people are not counted:

- People detained in prison or hospital by a court order
- People with severe mental impairment
- People who are resident in certain hostels
- Students or a student's non-British spouse or dependants
- Full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth trainees
- Long term patients in hospitals or care homes
- Certain care workers and carers
- People who are entitled to child benefit or 18 and 19 year olds who leave school or college between 30 April and 1 November
- Members of certain religious communities
- Members of visiting forces and their families
- Members of international headquarters and defence organisations and their families.

You can apply for a 50% discount if all the adults are not counted.

If there are no adults living in your property you may be entitled to a 10% reduction.

Reductions for people with disabilities

You may be able to claim a reduction if you (or someone who lives with you) are disabled and your property has one or more of the following features to meet the needs of the disabled person:

- A room is needed for a special purpose, e.g. a room used for dialysis treatment or a downstairs room converted to a bedroom
- Or there is an additional kitchen or bathroom
- Or the disabled person needs to use a wheelchair indoors and there is sufficient floor space for them to do so.

The reduction is the same as moving down one band. In the case of a band A property, the reduction is one ninth of the charge for a property in band D.

Please note you should not withhold payment of Council Tax while we are processing your application for a discount.

You can get further information regarding discounts and reductions from:

Phone: Solihull Connect Customer Contact Centre

☎ 0121 704 8100

E-mail: council.tax@solihull.gov.uk

Website: www.solihull.gov.uk

Council Tax Benefit

Council Tax Benefit is money off your bill. If you are liable to pay Council Tax you may be able to claim Council Tax Benefit if:

- You live on a low income and
- You and your partner have savings of less than £16,000 (unless you are entitled to the Guaranteed Credit component of Pension Credit).

The amount of Council Tax Benefit you receive is also dependent on the personal circumstances of you and your partner and all other members of your household.

Second Adult Rebate

Second Adult Rebate is help if you share your home with one adult or more. You can qualify for a rebate of up to 25% off your Council Tax bill. The person who shares your home must not be your partner. Your income is not taken into account.

You may be able to apply for Second Adult Rebate if the person who shares your home is:

- Aged 18 or over and **not** your partner
- Not paying you rent
- Not paying Council Tax themselves
- On a gross income of less than £228 per week, from April 2009 (if you share your home with more

than one person we will use their combined gross income).

Please note you should not withhold payment of Council Tax while we are processing your Council Tax benefit application.

Changes in circumstances

You are required to notify us immediately of a change in your circumstances. For example:

- **If you or your partner move house**
- **If you or your partner stop, or start getting income support, state benefits or any other income**
- **Changes in income or savings of all members of your household**
- **Changes in the amount of rent that you pay.**

If you are aged 60 or over and you receive Pension Credit, the majority of changes must be reported directly to the Pension Service.

If in doubt about what changes need to be reported or if you require further information please contact us.

Council Tax Benefit Enquiries

Phone: ☎ 0121 704 6214

E-mail: benefits@solihull.gov.uk

Website: www.solihull.gov.uk

Council Tax - information and ways to reduce your bill

Property Bands

All properties in the Borough have been valued by the Valuation Office Agency and placed into one of the eight bands shown below. The property value is based on market values on **1st April 1991**. Your Band is shown on the front of your bill.

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

Appeals against banding

You can appeal against the banding of your property if:

- Your property has recently been built
- You have occupied your property within the last six months
- Part or all of your property has been demolished or used for non domestic purposes

Further information can be obtained from:

**Birmingham Valuation Office,
Regent Court,
14-17 George Road,
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1NU
Phone: ☎ 0121 410 3700
Fax: 0121 410 3799**

You can get more details by visiting:

www.voa.gov.uk

Please note that you can not withhold payment of Council Tax whilst your appeal is being considered. If your appeal is successful, any overpayment made will be credited to your account or refunded to you.

Liability and appeals

You should advise us if a bill has been sent to the wrong person or your bill is incorrect. We will look into the matter for you. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you may appeal in writing, telling us why you are appealing. Please write to:

**Income and Awards,
P O Box 1761, Council House,
Solihull, West Midlands, B91 9RR**

If you remain dissatisfied you may make a further appeal to:

**The Valuation Tribunal, 2nd Floor,
Walton House, 11 The Parade,
Leamington Spa, CV32 4DG.**

Phone: ☎ 01926 421875

Useful Contacts ☎

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Age Concern | 0121 705 9128 |
| Benefit Fraud Hotline | 0800 328 6340 |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | 0870 120 2425 |
| Chelmsley Advice & Resource Agency | 0121 770 3773 |
| Revenues & Customs | 0845 302 1437 |
| Job Centre Plus - Chelmsley Wood | 0121 480 4600 |
| Job Centre Plus - Solihull | 0121 480 4099 |
| Land Registry | 02476 860 860 |
| Magistrates Court | 0121 705 8101 |
| Severn Trent Bill Enquiries - Domestic | 08457 500 500 |
| Tax Credit Helpline | 0845 300 3900 |
| National Debtline | 0808 808 4000 |

Write:

For Council Tax enquiries write to us at:

**Income and Awards
P O Box 1761, Council House,
Solihull, West Midlands B91 9RR**

Phone:

You can call the following enquiry lines:

- **Council Tax** ☎ 0121 704 8100

- **Council Tax Benefits**

☎ 0121 704 6214

Minicom: For hearing impaired customers ☎ 0121 704 8058

Visit:

You can pay your bill and get information on Council services at:

- **Solihull Connect, Library Square, Solihull**

Monday 8:30am - 5:30pm
Tuesday, Thursday,
Friday 9am - 5:30pm
Wednesday 10am - 5:30pm
Saturday 9am - 1pm

Or at any of our other offices:

- **Chelmsley Wood Area Office
6/8 Coppice Way, Chelmsley Wood**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
9am - 5pm
Wednesday 10am - 5pm
Friday 9am - 4:30pm

- **Kingshurst Area Office
Church Close, Kingshurst**

Monday, Tuesday 9am - 4pm
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 10am - 3pm
Friday 10am - 4pm

- **Smith's Wood Area Office
Westfield House, Arran Way,**

Monday, Tuesday 9am - 4pm
Wednesday 10am - 3pm
Thursday Closed,
Friday 10am - 4pm

Kingshurst and Smith's Wood Area Offices do not accept payments by cash or cheque over the counter.

E-mail:

You can e-mail us on:

- **Council Tax**

council.tax@solihull.gov.uk

- **Council Tax Benefits**

benefits@solihull.gov.uk

The Environment Agency will charge us £84,304 (2008-2009 = £81,600) for providing flood defence functions in 2009-2010.

Details of the Environment Agency's Midland region are:

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Spending before deductions | £44,277,000 | £56,100,000 |
| Spending after deductions | £4,514,000 | £3,464,000 |
| Charges necessary for the whole of the Midland region | £3,000,000 | £3,075,000 |
| Total Council Tax base | 2,884,354 | 2,888,934 |
| Council Tax base for Solihull | 78,456 | 79,203 |

Changes in charges from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010 caused by:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Inflation (including economies and efficiency savings) | £482,000 |
| Changes in quality or quantity of service and funding capital from revenue | £11,341,000 |
| Differences in income received or expected by way of grants, fees and charges (this includes contributions from Internal Drainage Boards and Government grants) | -£12,873,000 |
| Changes in net expenditure | -£1,050,000 |
| Transfers to/(from) balances | £1,125,000 |
| Changes in levy requirements | £75,000 |

Transport Charge

The 2009-2010 budget must include the following amount:

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority charge (WMPTA) | £10,619,985 | £10,870,381 |

Our budget requirement affects the level of Council Tax that is set, as shown below:

| 2008-2009 | | 2009-2010 |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| £ million | | £ million |
| 153.3 | Estimate of total spending | 157.8 |
| -11.0 | less Police and Fire precepts | -11.5 |
| -2.5 | less reserves | -1.3 |
| 1.2 | plus Parish precepts | 1.2 |
| 141.0 | Our Budget Requirement | 146.2 |

Reasons for the increase in our Budget Requirement:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 2008-2009 Budget Requirement | £ million | 141.0 |
| plus additional spending needs | | 8.8 |
| less efficiency savings | | -3.6 |
| 2009-2010 Budget Requirement | | 146.2 |

Our budget requirement (excluding Parish precepts) is divided by our Council Tax base (79,203) to give us the band D Council Tax.

Reasons for the increase in the Council Tax:

The Council Tax (including Police and Fire precepts) for a band D property in 2008-2009 for a non-parish area was

Increase due to additional spending needs net of achieved savings

Increases in amounts for Police and Fire precepts (which we collect on their behalf)

- Police
- Fire

The Council Tax (including Police and Fire precepts) for a band D property in 2009-2010 for a non-parish area is

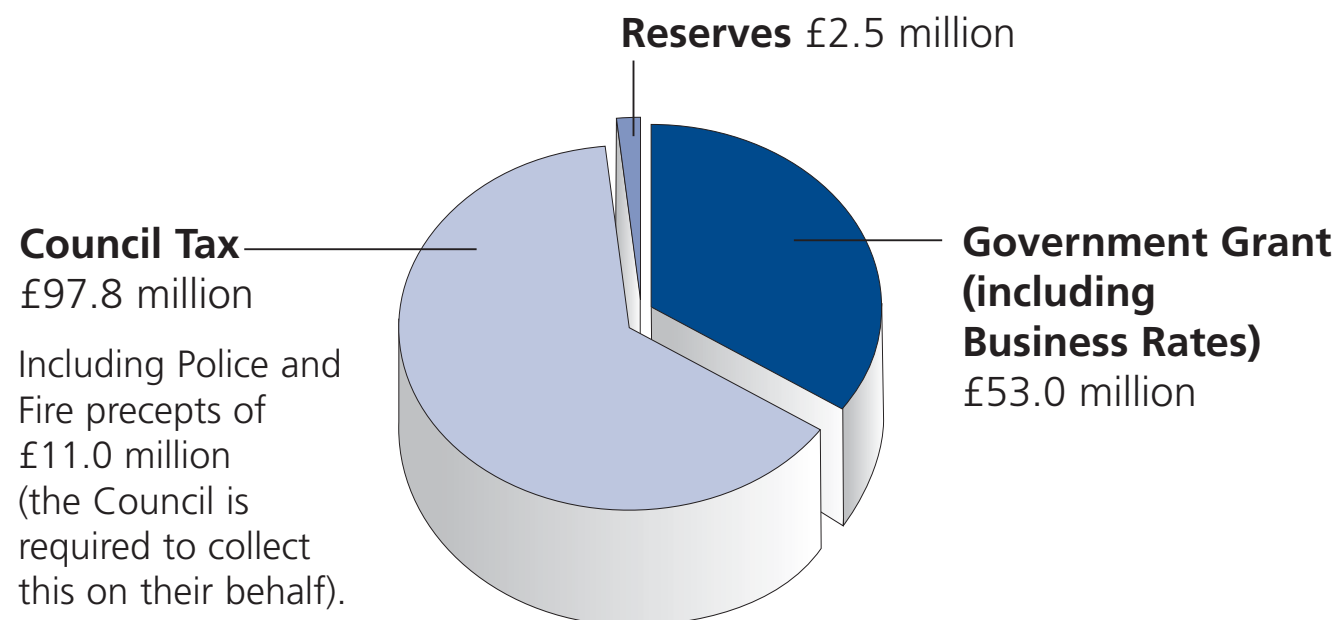
| |
|------------------|
| £1,238.91 |
| £49.44 |
| £3.31 |
| £1.16 |
| £1,292.82 |

Financial Information

Where the money comes from

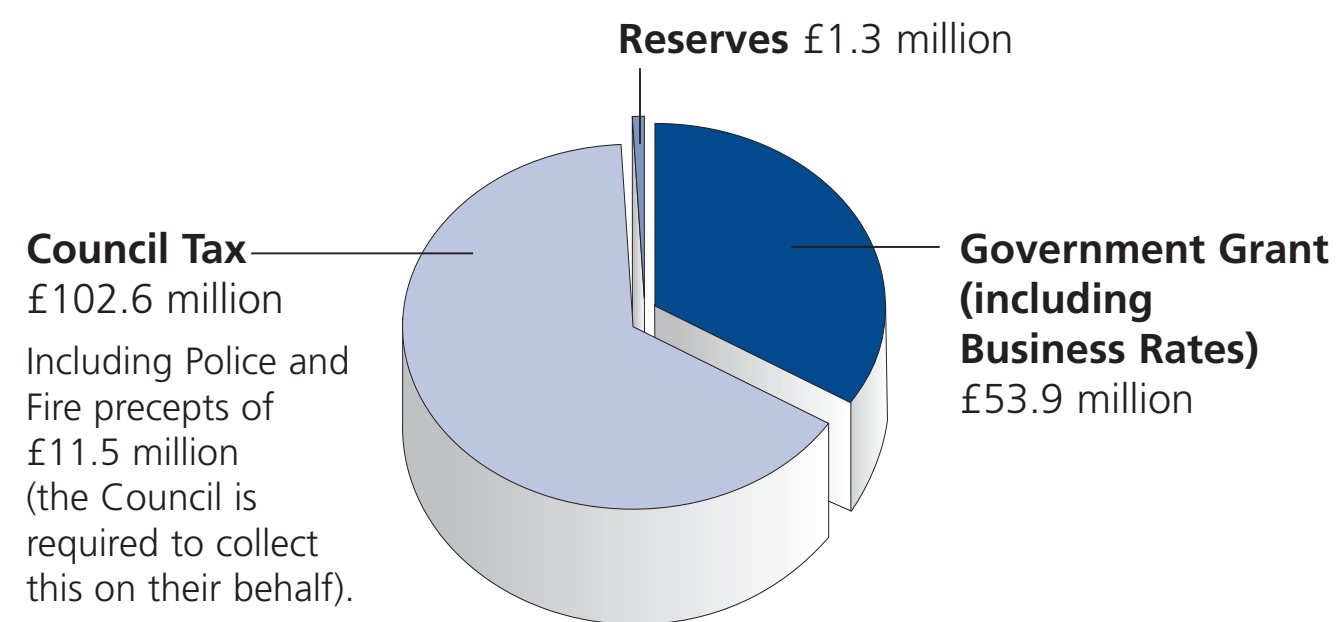
2008-2009

Total income £153.3 million



2009-2010

Total income £157.8 million

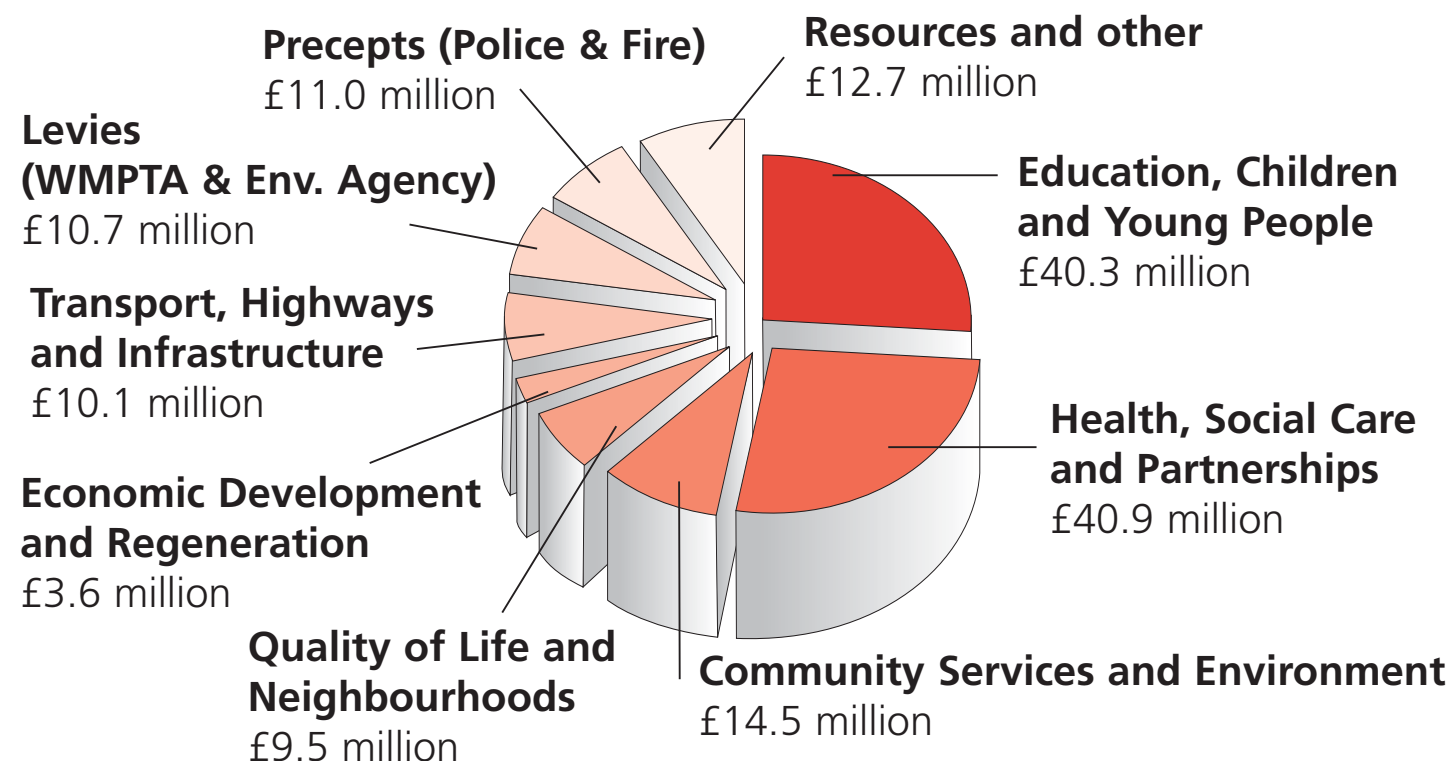


Financial Information

How the money is spent

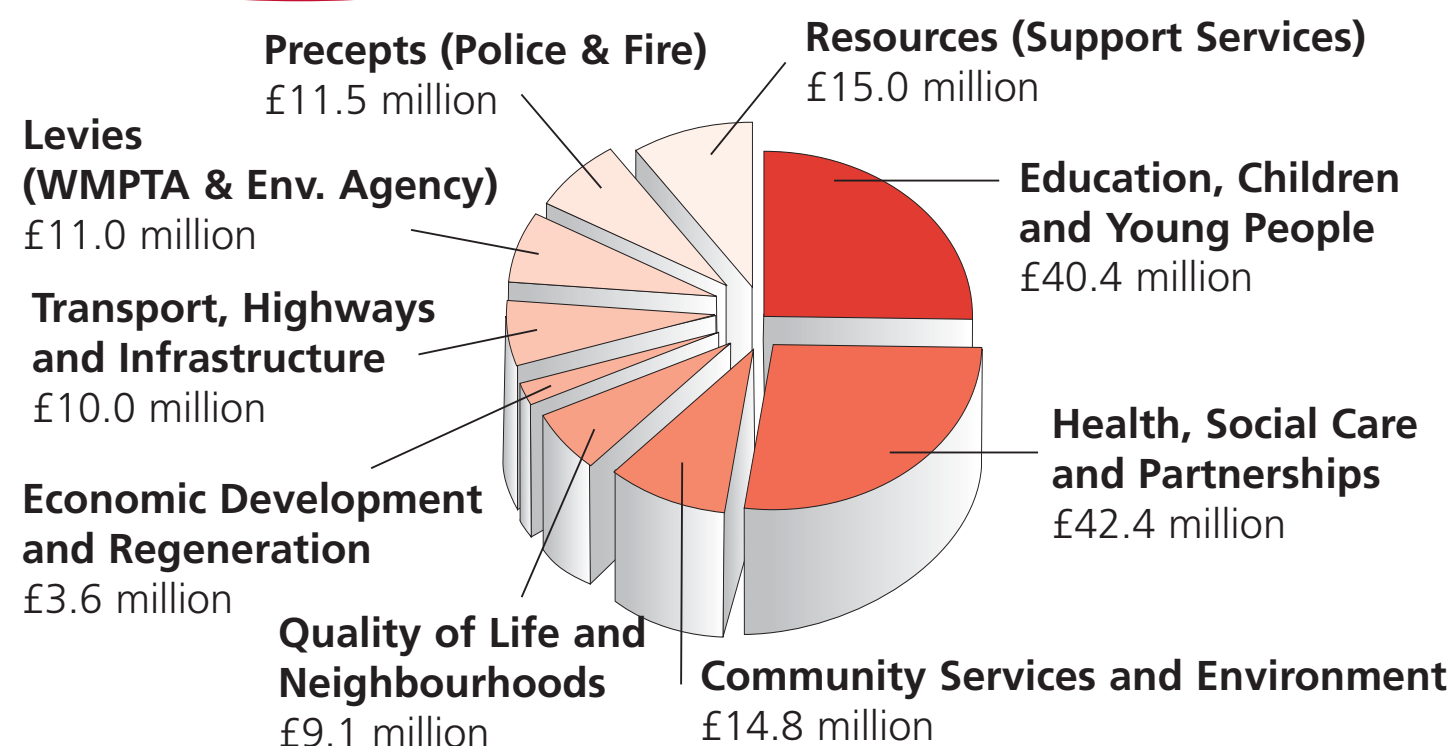
2008-2009

Estimate of total spending £153.3 million



2009-2010

Estimate of total spending £157.8 million



How many staff we employ

| (Full time equivalents) | Jan 2008 | Jan 2009 |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Teachers | 1,911 | 1,944 |
| Other | 3,376 | 3,158 |
| Total staff | 5,287 | 5,102 |

Borrowing

Our borrowing on 31 January 2009 was £192 million.

£11 million of this relates to former West Midlands County Council debt.

Capital spending

As well as spending on day-to-day services, we also provide new assets (e.g. buildings) and replace and improve existing assets. This is known as capital spending.

For 2009-2010 we plan to spend £51.7 million.

To find out more

Information about how we spend your money can be found on page 12. If you would like more information please write to us at:

Financial Operations Division, Solihull Council, P O Box 9, Council House, Solihull, B91 9QR

Email: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

As a billing authority we have to collect the Parish precept amounts on behalf of the Parish Councils. Each Parish Council is responsible for setting their own precept charge. Details of the charges for each Parish Council are shown below:

| | 2008-2009 | | 2009-2010 | |
|------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| | Charge | Amount for each property in band D | Charge | Amount for each property in band D |
| Balsall | £86,514 | £29.54 | £92,847 | £31.24 |
| Barston | £3,234 | £11.89 | £3,330 | £12.38 |
| Berkswell | £30,000 | £19.69 | £30,000 | £19.44 |
| Bickenhill | £115,701 | £46.50 | £120,400 | £48.10 |
| Castle Bromwich | £204,750 | £49.73 | £214,988 | £52.14 |
| Chelmsley Wood | £238,000 | £67.08 | £247,500 | £69.39 |
| Cheswick Green | - | - | £50,000 | £51.87 |
| Dickens Heath | - | - | £36,000 | £20.49 |
| Fordbridge | £125,000 | £54.42 | £125,000 | £53.26 |
| Hampton-in-Arden | £22,150 | £24.29 | £22,150 | £23.82 |
| Hockley Heath | - | - | £40,000 | £49.88 |
| Kingshurst | £47,300 | £20.59 | £49,657 | £21.67 |
| Meriden | £51,750 | £43.34 | £53,157 | £44.37 |
| Smith's Wood | £115,000 | £41.34 | £120,500 | £44.43 |
| Tidbury Green | - | - | £15,000 | £32.54 |

Note: Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Hockley Heath and Tidbury Green parishes will replace the current Hockley Heath parish on 1 April 2009. In 2008-2009 the precept amount charged by the current Hockley Heath Parish Council was £139,000 (£35.71 for each property in band D).

Details of Parish charges over £140,000

Castle Bromwich

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Arden Hall | £212,088 | £193,615 |
| Finance and administration | £82,044 | £83,067 |
| Open spaces | £85,974 | £85,584 |
| Contingency | £25,000 | £25,000 |
| Less use of reserves | -£36,767 | -£24,508 |
| Less income | -£163,589 | -£147,770 |
| Precept charge | £204,750 | £214,988 |

Chelmsley Wood

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Organised events and community activities | £21,150 | £24,650 |
| Trading activities | £144,000 | £144,000 |
| Finance and administration | £127,000 | £128,250 |
| Open spaces | £23,500 | £23,500 |
| Buildings | £72,000 | £75,000 |
| Less income | -£149,650 | -£147,900 |
| Precept charge | £238,000 | £247,500 |

Our Vision for Solihull:

“ Where well-being, pride and quality of life are enjoyed by all. ”

We have in place a number of customer outcomes. These are our medium term goals that are helping us to achieve our Vision. They were agreed with the help of local people, staff and the partners we work with.

The following are some of our headline achievements delivered over the last year which are helping us to achieve these five customer outcomes. Full details of how we are doing will be in our 2008-2009 **Annual Report**. This will be available on our website www.solihull.gov.uk in Summer 2009.

Customer Outcome 1

A brighter future for our children and young people

We want to give our children and young people the best possible start in life and keep them safe from harm.

- Pupils' performance in GCSEs continues to improve. The 2008 results show the number of pupils getting five GCSE grades A*- C is up from **69.1%** in 2007 to **73.7%**. This performance places Solihull sixth in the country.
- The overall pass rate for pupils gaining grades A-E at A Level in the 2007/08 academic year was **97.6%** which is above the national average of **97.2%**.
- In the 2007/08 academic year the number of pupils excluded from school reduced significantly. Fixed term exclusions fell from **1,937** in 2006/07 to **1,598** and permanent exclusions fell from **71** to **37**.
- Across Solihull **5,000** children took part in our 2008 Summer Reading Challenge, compared to **4,810** in 2007. Furthermore **1,100** children took part in our homework clubs, compared to **906** in 2007, an increase of **21%**.
- At the end of 2008 the Education inspectorate Ofsted assessed our services for children and young people and concluded that the Council 'has sustained continued high standards that are above average for most children and young people whose achievement ranks as some of the best nationally'.

Customer Outcome 2

Improved quality of life

We all like living in clean, attractive and safe surroundings.

- We achieved our Government set target to reduce overall crime by **20%** between 2003 and 2008 whilst between 2006/07 and 2007/08 vehicle related crime went down **23%**, falling from **3,311** incidents to **2,538**.
- Our NS Fusion programme continues to be successful in using sport to help combat crime and anti-social behaviour. It identifies crime hotspots and targets sport activity in these areas. West Midlands Police have identified increased numbers attending Fusion sessions coinciding with fewer young people roaming the streets and youth crime levels dropping as a consequence.
- We won three top awards at the national Britain in Bloom competition held in Summer 2008 where judges examine standards of horticulture, cleanliness and efforts made by the community across the Borough. These included a Gold award in the regional Heart of England in Bloom category; a silver gilt award for our clean and green environment in Solihull and we were named overall winners in the city category of Britain in Bloom. For more information go to:
www.solihull.gov.uk/solihullinbloom
- During 2008/09 we extended our kerbside recycling scheme to cover paper, green waste and glass for **78,000** households across the Borough. In the first two weeks of the glass recycling service over **237** tonnes were collected. For more information go to:
www.solihull.gov.uk/environment/recycling.htm
- Our Shipshape Register now details **105** local home improvement professionals. This gives consumers a list of reliable traders and allows legitimate businesses the opportunity to show they are committed to good service. For more information visit our Shipshape website:
www.solihull.gov.uk/tradingstandards/shipshape.htm

Customer Outcome 3

Closing the gap of inequality

We are tackling the things that can put people at a disadvantage, including physical, economic and social factors.

- The regeneration of north Solihull is transforming education with the building of ten **£7m** primary schools. One of these, Kingshurst, opened last year and another, Kingfisher, is due to open in 2009.
- Last year our Business Investment Team assisted more than **20** companies to relocate or expand in the Borough, creating a total of **860** jobs.
- In 2006 Solihull Community Housing, who provide housing services on behalf of the Council, introduced a programme of homelessness prevention measures, which has resulted in a continuing reduction in the number of homeless acceptances. In the first six months of 2008/09 there were **131** cases which compares to **583** in 2005/06.
- The first three new housing schemes have been completed as part of the North Solihull Regeneration Programme delivering **83** new homes, with **18** being designated affordable housing. Six further developments are on site, which will produce another **335** homes with **67** allocated for affordable housing.
- In the first nine months of 2008/09 **1,206** people had completed a Learn Direct course through Solihull's libraries, exceeding the target of **1,067**.

Customer Outcome 4

To be treated as an individual

It is important to us that everyone has the opportunity to be involved and have their say in the delivery of the services we provide.

- We continue to offer more people choice in how they receive social care. At the end of 2008 **217** people were using direct payment packages compared to **151** at the end of 2007, an increase of **44%**. These give people control over their own life by providing an alternative to the services provided by the Care Trust.
- The percentage of older social care clients being assessed within acceptable waiting times has increased from **81%** in 2005/06 to **92%** at the end of 2008, an increase of **11%**.

Council Results Summary 2008-2009

- With help from Sport England we began a Step into Solihull Programme in July 2008 to help increase the participation of the over 50s in sport and active recreation. So far two new walks have been set up at Tudor Grange and Smith's Wood as well as Tai Chi classes in the north of the Borough.
- From those surveyed, our customer satisfaction rates for overall service when contacting our Contact Centre were at an average of **99%** for the first nine months of 2008/09.

Customer Outcome 5

Good value services

Providing Good Value applies to everything we do. We are committed to providing high quality services at a reasonable cost.

- Solihull Community Housing was awarded the top rating of three stars by the Audit Commission who assessed the service as excellent with excellent prospects for improvement.
- During 2008 the Council was inspected by the Audit Commission and graded a 'good' council and one that is 'improving well'.
- As part of the Government's assessment framework for councils we received a maximum score of **4** from our external auditors in the way we deliver value for money through our use of resources.
- We are amongst the top performing councils in the country and are continuing to improve. In 2007/08 we improved our performance in **54%** of the areas of council services which are measured by Government.
- As we receive the lowest government grant per head of population of all metropolitan authorities and set one of the lowest levels of council tax, our medium term financial strategy is based on identifying substantial savings to continue to fund local priorities and protect front line services. In 2008/09, we identified more than **£4m** of savings and set one of the lowest band D council taxes of all metropolitan authorities. We continue to face a number of pressures on our resources including rising utility costs and additional costs of providing services for increasing numbers of elderly people and vulnerable children in the Borough. The focus of the 2009/10 budget process has been on identifying **5%** savings to meet these and other service pressures across the authority.

Efficiency Savings 2008-2009

All councils are required to measure and report the value of efficiency savings they have achieved since April 2008. Efficiency savings are those where the same or an improved level of service is delivered at a lower cost.

The table below shows the value of efficiency savings forecast to be achieved in 2008-2009:

| | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council | West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Forecast efficiency savings April 2008 - March 2009 | £4.362 million | £0.560 million |
| Proportion of spend in 2007-2008 | 2.4%* | 0.5% |
| Efficiency savings per band D dwelling | £56 | £1 |
| Average efficiency savings per band D dwelling for all metropolitan authorities | £110 | £2 |

* This compares to an average of 2.7% for all metropolitan authorities.

The forecast for Solihull Council includes planned efficiency savings identified by Solihull Community Housing and the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority, as shown in the table below:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council - core | £3.070m |
| Solihull Community Housing | £1.214m |
| West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority | £0.078m |
| Total Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council | £4.362m |

Each year, councils are assessed by the Audit Commission on their use of resources and given a score of 4 (where '4' means 'performing strongly' and '1' means 'inadequate performance'). In January 2009, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council scored 3, with a score of 4 for value for money, recognising the Council's good performance in making efficiency savings and improving services.

Council Contacts

Phone and fax:

0121 704 6000 (general enquiries)

0121 704 8000 (environmental queries eg refuse, abandoned cars, litter)

Minicom: 0121 704 8058
(for customers with a hearing loss)

Main Fax: 0121 704 6114

E-mail: connectcc@solihull.gov.uk

Web address: www.solihull.gov.uk

Other useful phone numbers:

Automated Telephone Payments

0121 704 0869

Adult Protection - if you have a concern about an adult call

0121 703 0820 or 0121 704 0869

Benefit Fraud Hotline

0800 328 6340

Box Office, Solihull Arts Complex

0121 704 6962

Business Rates 0121 704 8175

Cemeteries

Robin Hood and Widney Manor

0121 744 1121

Woodlands 01675 464835

Child Protection 0121 788 4333

Council Tax Hotline 0121 704 8100

Councillors 0121 704 6049

Electoral Register 0121 704 6042

Emergencies (out of hours)

0121 704 8000 (general)

0800 138 2935 (housing)

0121 605 6060 (social services)

Fostering and adoption

0800 0730769

Graffiti Hotline 0121 717 1580

Highways/Pavements/Potholes

Area 1 - Bickenhill, Kingshurst and Fordbridge, Castle Bromwich, Chelmsley Wood, Smith's Wood 0121 704 6358

Area 2 - Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton, Silhill, St Alphege, Shirley 0121 704 8751

Area 3 - Blythe, Dorridge and Hockley Heath, Knowle and Meriden 0121 704 8031

Housing Benefit 0121 704 6214

Housing 0121 717 1515

Leisure Centres

North Solihull sports centre
0121 770 3822

Tudor Grange leisure centre
0121 704 6371

Libraries

Solihull Central Library 0121 704 6965
Also Heritage and Local Studies service;
Learning Shop

Chelmsley Wood Library
0121 788 4380

Renewals line 0121 704 8400

Mobile and home library service
0121 704 6947

Parks 0121 704 8000

Pest control - treatment of rats, mice and insects in homes and businesses
0121 704 8000

Planning 0121 704 6373

Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages 0121 704 6099

School Admissions 0121 704 6693

School Meals 0121 704 6623

Shopmobility

Drury Lane 0121 711 8701

Touchwood 0121 711 4231

Social Services 0121 704 6000

Street Lighting - report faults
0121 704 8217

Tourist Information Centre

0121 704 6130

Trading Standards

0121 704 6844

Youth and Community Services

0121 704 8074 or 8046

As well as producing this Council Tax information booklet, we also produce an Annual Report.

Solihull's first Annual Report for the financial year 2007-2008 is available on the Council's website:

www.solihull.gov.uk/Attachments/AnnualReport2007-08.pdf

We would like to know what you think of the Annual Report - is it interesting and informative? Does it present information clearly?

Is there anything else you would like to see in future Annual Reports?

Please let us know by filling in the short online survey or contact us using one of the methods shown below.

There is a legal requirement for councils to provide information on Council Tax and Council Results. By combining this information into one booklet we can produce it at a lower cost. Please send any comments or suggestions to the address below.

Write: Communications, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
P O Box 18, Council House, Solihull B91 9QS

Email: ctaxbooklet@solihull.gov.uk

Phone: ☎ 0121 704 6238