

Council Tax 2013/14



Making every penny count

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0SH
www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk
Help Line 01737 276000

This booklet gives you information about how much your Council Tax will be, the Council's budget for this year and how we are performing.

Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

Dear Resident

In our effort to deliver our promise to provide better for less, we have made substantial savings of over £1.3 million in our annual budget without compromising the services that we provide. In the last five years we have saved almost £11.5 million. We have significantly reduced the size of our management team from 16 to six over the past two years, reduced our staff headcount and invested in technology to improve efficiency.



Your Council Tax payments help to ensure that we can continue to deliver our services to keep the borough clean and green, our residents and visitors safe and healthy and enable continued investment in our communities to make this a great place to live and work. Over the past year we have introduced a new recycling and refuse collection service, refurbished the Harlequin Theatre in Redhill and continued to invest in the regeneration of our town centres in Horley and Redhill and communities in Merstham and Preston.

Protecting services

This year we have had to increase our share of the Council Tax bill for the first time in four years.

The Government offered local authorities a Council Tax freeze grant equivalent to a 1% increase. If we had accepted this short-term grant we would need to find an extra £1.5 million in savings over the next five years to meet the budget gap it would create, in addition to the already ambitious savings targets we have set ourselves. This is not sustainable, even for a well managed council like ours.

Instead we are making a 2% increase in Council Tax - equivalent to 7p a week for the average household - to ensure we can continue to protect and improve our services.

Reigate & Banstead provides the services we do for just 13% of the annual Council Tax bill. The rest of the money collected goes to Surrey County Council (74%) and Surrey Police (13%).

Appeals

The grounds for appeal about banding are restricted to the following cases:

- because there has been a material increase or material reduction in the dwelling's value (this is explained below)
- where you start or stop using part of your dwelling to carry out a business, or the balance between domestic and business use changes
- where the Listing Officer has altered a list without a proposal having been made by a taxpayer
- where you became the taxpayer for a dwelling for the first time (your appeal must be made within six months, but if the same appeal has already been considered and determined by the Valuation Tribunal, it cannot be made again).

A material increase in value may result from building, engineering or other work carried out on the dwelling. In these cases revaluation does not take place until after a sale – so the person appealing would usually be the new owner or resident.

Making a complaint

If you have a complaint about a council service, please make it to the department concerned. A complaint form is available on our website www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk. If you are not satisfied with the outcome and you think you have suffered injustice through maladministration by the Council, you can then ask the Local Government Ombudsman to consider your complaint.

A material reduction in value may result from the demolition of any part of the dwelling, any change in the physical state of the local area or an adaptation to make the dwelling suitable for use by someone with a physical disability. In these cases revaluation should take place as soon as possible.

You may also appeal if you consider that you are not liable to pay Council Tax, for example, because you are not the resident or owner, your property is exempt, or the Council has made a mistake in calculating your bill. If you wish to appeal on these grounds you must first notify the Council in writing so that they have the opportunity to reconsider the case.

Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of tax owing in the meantime. If your appeal is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid tax.

Details of the appeal procedures (including the role of valuation tribunals) may be obtained from the Valuation Office at First Floor, Warwick House, 67 Station Road, Redhill, RH1 1DL. Telephone 03000 503900. Website: www.voa.gov.uk.

You can obtain a free booklet about this service from our Help Shops, by calling 0300 061 0614 or by writing to the Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH.

Alternative formats

We are happy to provide information in other languages, large print, Braille or on audio tape. Please contact our Help Line on 01737 276000 if you would like this service.

We have saved £11.5 million in five years

Discounts and exemptions

Exempt dwellings: Some dwellings are exempt from Council Tax, including properties occupied only by students, and vacant properties which:

- are owned by a charity (exempt for up to six months)
- have been repossessed
- are the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee
- are waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion
- are waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted (and for up to six months after)
- are empty because their occupation is forbidden by law.

Properties left empty by:

- students
- someone who has gone into prison, or who has moved to receive personal care in a hospital, a care home or elsewhere
- someone who has moved in order to provide personal care to another person.

Forces' barracks and married quarters are also exempt. Their occupants contribute to the cost of local services through a special arrangement. If you think your property may be exempt you should contact us.

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 property (as their main home), the Council Tax bill will be reduced by a quarter (25%).

Certain people are not counted towards the number of adults living in a dwelling, including:

- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and Youth Training trainees
- patients resident in hospital
- people who are being looked after in care homes and hospices
- people who are severely mentally impaired
- people staying in certain hostels or night shelters
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at or have just left school
- care workers working for low pay, usually for charities
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18
- members of visiting forces and certain international institutions

- members of religious communities (monks and nuns)
- people in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine).

For dwellings that are unfurnished and unoccupied a discount of 100% for 28 days will be applied.

If a dwelling is no-one's main home and it remains unfurnished after 28 days, the full Council Tax charge will be payable.

A discretionary reduction may be considered where exceptional circumstances apply.

If you think you may be entitled to a discount, email council.tax@reigate-banstead.gov.uk or call 01737 276779.

If your bill indicates that a discount has been allowed, you must tell us of any change of circumstances which affects your entitlement. If you fail to do so, you may be required to pay a penalty.

Empty homes premium: Properties that have been empty for over two years will attract a Council Tax Premium of 50% on top of full Council Tax.

People with disabilities: If you, or someone who lives with you, need a room, an extra bathroom or kitchen or extra space in your property to meet special needs arising from a disability, you may be entitled to a reduced Council Tax bill. The bill may be reduced to that of a property in the band immediately below the current band shown in the valuation list. If your home is in Band A you will also be entitled to a reduction. These reductions ensure that disabled people do not pay more tax on account of space needed because of a disability.

'Granny Annexes': Where an annex or similar self-contained part of a property is occupied by an elderly or disabled relative of the residents living in the rest of it, then it is not regarded as a separate dwelling for Council Tax purposes. If you think this affects you, please contact the Local Taxation team on 01737 276537.

Planning for the future

Over the coming years, we want to do more to help our communities. We are supporting more people into work and helping the local economy to grow through new business investment. We are also putting more effort into helping older people remain independent and enjoy a good quality of life for as long as possible.

We have already started to identify how we can save a further £2.7 million over the next four years through changing how we work and where we work to cut costs and improve our services to you. We will continue to make the investment needed to make these savings while striving to protect services.

Cllr Joan Spiers, Leader, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

Council Tax 2013/14

Band D average Council Tax

For 2013/14 the average Council Tax for a Band D property is £1,577.77, which is an increase of 2% on last year's bill. This is broken down as follows:

	2013/14	2012/13	Increase since 2012/13
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	£197.70	£193.83	2%
Surrey County Council	£1,172.52	£1,149.66	2%
Surrey Police	£207.55	£203.49	2%
Plus one of the following charges if you live in a parished area:			
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council	£21.23	£21.23	0%
Horley Town Council	£33.95	£33.30	2%

How your Council Tax is set

Your overall Council Tax bill is decided by Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and us, with the level of Council Tax that the County Council sets having the greatest impact, as they get the largest share.

If you live in the Salfords and Sidlow or Horley Town Council areas of the borough, you will pay a little more Council Tax to meet the costs of the services provided by your local parish council.

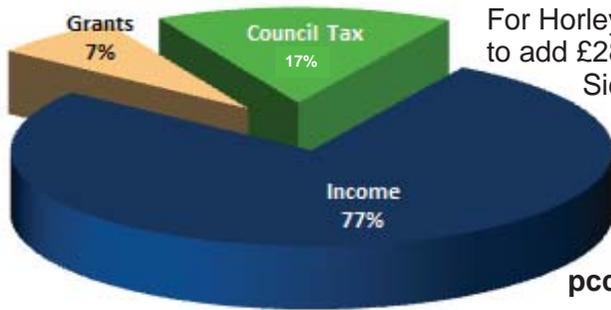
Council Tax is collected by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council on behalf of these authorities.

We made budget savings of £1.3 million in 2013/14

For every pound you pay in Council Tax, 13p will go to Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, 13p to Surrey Police and 74p to Surrey County Council to provide services such as road maintenance, schools and social services.

At Reigate & Banstead Borough Council we spend £66 million providing services to residents (excluding capital charges). Of that, £49.7 million (75%) is met by income (such as fees for services, grants and investments). This means our net budget for services in 2013/14 is £16.3 million.

The Government gives us £5.1 million (8%), so the amount we need to raise from Council Tax is £11.2 million (17%).



For Horley Town Council's budget we need to add £283,890 and for Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council we need to add £29,021.

For more information on the Surrey Police element of your Council Tax, visit www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk or call 01483 630200.

How much Council Tax each band pays

The Council Tax payments for Reigate and Banstead Borough for 2013/14 for all bands (based on a two adult household) are:

Band	Horley Town Council area	Salfords & Sidlow Parish area	Rest of Borough	% of properties in Band
A	1,074.48	1,066.00	1,051.85	1.6%
B	1,253.56	1,243.67	1,227.16	6.2%
C	1,432.64	1,421.33	1,402.46	19.9%
D	1,611.72	1,599.00	1,577.77	28.7%
E	1,969.88	1,954.33	1,928.38	17.8%
F	2,328.04	2,309.66	2,279.00	12.2%
G	2,686.20	2,665.00	2,629.62	12.0%
H	3,223.44	3,198.00	3,155.54	1.6%

We are investing £6.88 million in new leisure and community facilities in Preston

How to claim

To find out whether you qualify for help or for a claim form:

Telephone: 01737 276497 (hours as below)

Email: benefits@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

Personal callers: Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate RH2 0SH, weekdays between 8.45am and 5pm (4.45pm Fridays). Please write, email or telephone for a time outside these hours

Hearing impaired: SMS text 07974 325 272
Communication support can be arranged by emailing or writing to Benefits Services

Elderly, disabled or housebound: Home visits can be arranged on request

Non English speaking: Interpretation/translation can be arranged by appointment

Normally, benefits can only be paid from when we receive your form, so don't delay in applying.

Council Tax Demand Notice explanatory notes

Most domestic dwellings, whether rented or owned, are subject to Council Tax. There is one bill per dwelling, whether it is a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat. Council Tax bands are set by the Valuation Office. Each property has been allocated to one of eight bands according to its open market value at 1 April 1991:

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

Your Council Tax bill states which band applies to your dwelling.

Need help to pay your Council Tax?

If you are on a low income, you may be entitled to a reduction in your Council Tax bill.

Council Tax Support

Council Tax Support replaces Council Tax Benefit from April 2013. If you are responsible for paying Council Tax and you receive state benefits, Pension Credit or you have a low income, you may be able to get Council Tax Support to reduce your Council Tax bill. Generally your savings and investments must be £16,000 or less if you are disabled, care for someone or are of pension age and receive Pension Guarantee Credit. If you are of working age, then your savings and investments must be £10,000 or less. How much you are entitled to will depend on your personal circumstances.

If you receive Council Tax Support and are of working age, you may now be asked to pay more towards your Council Tax bill. If you previously received full Council Tax Benefit, you may now be asked to pay some Council Tax, but generally this will not exceed 10% of your bill.

If you receive Council Tax Benefit up to 31 March 2013, you do not need to reapply for Council Tax Support. We will calculate your new entitlement and include it on your Council Tax bill, so please check your bill carefully.

Alternative Maximum Council Tax Reduction (formerly Second Adult Rebate)

You may get a reduction in your bill if you are disabled, care for someone or are of pension age and you are the only person liable to pay Council Tax, and share your home with another adult who is not your partner but is on a low income. Your income and capital will not be taken into account for this kind of reduction.

Housing Benefit

If you pay rent and are entitled to Council Tax Support, you may also qualify for Housing Benefit.

Change of Circumstances

If you are claiming Council Tax Support and there is a change in your circumstances (such as a change in income, capital, people moving into or out of your home) then please contact us. You can report changes in circumstances by calling **01737 276497** or sending an email to **benefits@reigate-banstead.gov.uk**.

How your Council Tax is spent

For 2013/14 the budget for providing services is:

Services	Expenditure (£000)	Income ¹ (£000)	2013/14 Net (£000)	2012/13 Net (£000)
Housing and Leisure	5,181.8	-1,120.1	4,061.7	3,297.0
Planning and Regeneration	2,925.8	-1,987.3	938.5	1,270.9
Building Control and Development Management	2,131.3	-1,265.9	865.4	1,290.6
Council Tax and Benefits	37,801.3	-37,188.0	613.3	975.8
Neighbourhood Services	14,570.9	-7,443.4	7,127.5	7,450.3
Corporate Resources	7,277.7	-93.7	7,184.0	6,261.5
Cost of services	69,888.8	-49,098.4	20,790.4	20,546.1
Horley Town Council precept	368.0	-84.1	283.9	295.8
Salfords & Sidlow Parish Council precept	30.0	-1.0	29.0	30.0
Investment income and expenditure	0.0	-562.6	-562.6	-977.5
Less Capital Charges ²	-3,899.4	0.0	-3,899.4	-3,162.8
Total budget	66,387.4	-49,746.1	16,641.3	16,731.6
Government grants			-5,119.4	-4,891.7
Council Tax requirement			-11,521.9	-11,839.9
Total funding			-16,641.3	-16,731.6

¹ From grants, fees for services and investments

² Capital Charges to services for the use of Capital Assets (such as buildings), which have impact on the level of Council Tax.

Further details will be given in the Council's annual financial report, available on our website at **www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk** or on request by telephoning 01737 276000.

How many staff we employ

As at 1 February 2013 we employ 470 people. This equates to 434.21 full-time equivalent staff once the effect of part-time staff has been calculated.

We have reduced our salary budget by over £759,000 in the last year.

How to pay your bill

For full details of how to pay, please see the back of your bill.

Direct Debit: The easiest and most convenient way to pay your Council Tax bill is by Direct Debit. Your Council Tax will be deducted automatically from your bank account each month. Payments are protected by the Direct Debit guarantee.

You can also cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply informing your bank or building society.

Direct Debit payments cost us less to process than payments by cheque or cash, freeing up more Council funds for providing local services.

Should the amount or date of collection of Council Tax change, we will advise you in writing well in advance.

For more information or to download a Direct Debit mandate, visit our website **www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk** or telephone 01737 276779.

Online: You can pay online using a credit or debit card at **www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk** and select 'Pay it'.

By phone: If you do not have access to the internet you can make a credit or debit card payment by phoning our Payments Line on 01737 276727.

Query on your Council Tax bill?: Call us on 01737 276779.

Did you know? New rules mean that you can now request to pay your bill over 12 months rather than the standard 10 to help make budgeting easier. Contact us on 01737 276779 if you would like this service and we will recalculate your monthly instalments for you.

Having difficulty paying your bill?

If you are finding it difficult to make a payment, it is important that you contact us as soon as you can, rather than falling behind with your payments. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, there are organisations that can offer advice and support:

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) offer free, confidential advice face-to-face or by phone. Most CABs also offer home visits, and some give email advice.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Phone: 08444 111 444

Text Relay users should call 08444 111 445

National Debtline

National Debtline is a free, confidential service offering independent advice about dealing with debt. You can get information online or by calling the free helpline.

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Phone: 0808 808 4000

The Money Advice Service

The Money Advice Service is an independent service, set up by the Government to help people make the most of their money. They give free, unbiased money advice online, over the phone and face to face.

www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Phone: 0300 500 5000

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