

Kent County Council

# Your Council Tax

**2006-07**



## Your Council Tax 2006-07

### Introduction

Another difficult grant settlement for 2006-07 has seen Kent County Council given an initial increase of just 2% in government grant. The increase in real terms, however, is as low as 0.3% because Kent will not receive a £1.8m grant for looking after vulnerable children. Kent has also been told it will now have to fund the cost of borrowing money for building new schools and roads. The national average grant increase for all councils from the government this year is 3%.

Kent County Council has therefore had to make savings of £35m across the authority in order to keep the increase in council tax down to just 4.75%.



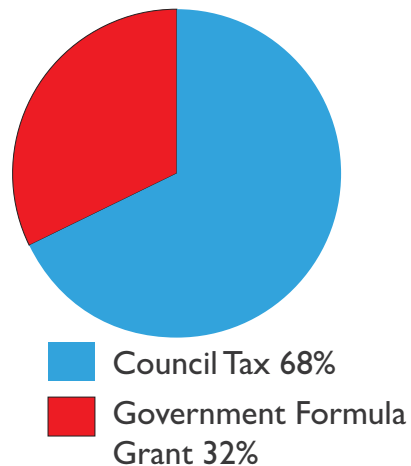
#### *New school funding arrangements*

From April 2006, the government will give each local authority (such as KCC) a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This grant will fund spending by individual schools as well as other pupil services such as special educational needs and pupil referral units.

The new DSG will not make a difference to the amount of council tax you pay because some of the general government grant that was previously paid to KCC will now be used to fund schools directly.

### Council tax in 2006-07

The way KCC is funded has significantly changed over the past decade. The amount that business rates and government grant (revenue support grant) contributed to KCC spending fell from 75% in 1996-97 to 66% in 2005-06. This contribution will be 32% in 2006-07 because of the introduction of the DSG. Because of the way the government funding is applied, for every 1% extra the county council spends, the council tax will rise by 1.5%.



**Your Council Tax 2006-07**

The amount you pay in council tax is shared between Kent County Council, your local borough, city or district council, the police and fire authorities and (in many areas) a parish or town council.

**The council tax you pay for KCC services has increased by 4.75% - an extra 80p a week for a Band D household.**

KCC's charges for the different property bands are shown below for last year (2005-06) and this year (2006-07).

Tax Band	Council Tax charge £	
	2005-06	2006-07
A	584.70	612.48
B	682.15	714.56
C	779.60	816.64
D	877.05	918.72
E	1,071.95	1,122.88
F	1,266.85	1,327.04
G	1,461.75	1,531.20
H	1,754.10	1,837.44

Please note that your total bill will be larger, as it will include contributions towards the other councils and authorities outlined above.

**Your Council Tax 2006-07**

**How Kent County Council's spending has changed**

<b>£m</b>	
<b>Budget 2005-06</b>	<b>1,344.9</b>
Base adjustments	14.4
Re-based budget	1,359.3
Pay and prices	26.9
Government/legislative pressures	10.6
Demand-led pressures & delivering <i>Next 4 Years</i> targets	9.5
Schools budget	35.4
Service strategies and improvements, best value and strategic risk management	24.2
Savings	- 35.3
<b>Less Dedicated Schools Grant*</b>	<b>- 720.6</b>
<b>Budget 2006-07</b>	<b>710.0</b>

\*see page two

**Where your money goes**

<b>KCC Services</b>	<b>2006-07 Budget £m</b>	<b>2006-07 Approx Spend Per Day £'000</b>
Children and Family Services	129.2	354
Education and School Improvement	780.8	2,139
Adult Services	270.3	741
Environment, Highways and Waste	131.0	359
Regeneration and Supporting Independence	37.4	102
Communities	59.5	163
Corporate Support and Health	9.0	25
Other (Policy & Performance and Finance)	13.4	36
<b>Total spending on services</b>	<b>1,430.6</b>	<b>3,919</b>

## Our value for money budget

Budget	2005-06 £m	2006-07 £m
<b>Gross Expenditure*</b>	<b>1,887.9</b>	<b>1,986.7</b>
Specific grants and income	-543.0	-1,276.7
<b>Budget Requirements</b>	<b>1,344.9</b>	<b>710.0</b>
Government funding/business rates	-888.6	-226.2
Collection fund surplus/deficit	-0.7	-1.7
<b>Council Tax income</b>	<b>455.6</b>	<b>482.1</b>

The tax base has increased by 1.0%

\*Includes estimated levies for Environment Agency (£0.3m) and Joint Sea Fisheries (£0.2m)

**Increase in government formula grant was effectively 0.3%, and increase in schools grant was 6.9%**

**+**

**£35.3m in savings in running costs and administration**

**=**

**5.2% increase in services combined with a 4.75% increase in council tax**

### More information

You can also access KCC's financial publications online by visiting:

**[www.kent.gov.uk/financialpublications](http://www.kent.gov.uk/financialpublications)**

## Your Council Tax 2006-07

### Future funding pressures

- Investment in education and schools
- Growing numbers of very elderly people and increased demand for care
- More people with disabilities needing care
- Community safety initiatives such as Community Wardens and HomeSafe Vans
- Increasing amounts of waste, with the amount of household waste produced rising by 2% each year
- Increasing costs of sending waste to landfill and recycling different types of material
- Legislative pressures from government



### Can you help reduce the £54.2m it costs in a single year to get rid of Kent's household waste?

It will cost Kent residents £54.2m for the county council to manage the disposal of some 841,000 tonnes of household waste next year - and that does not include the cost of collecting it. The 17% (£8m) rise in costs from last year is because of the increasing volume of waste and the increased cost of dealing with it.

Each household in Kent generates nearly one and a half tonnes of household waste a year, a figure that increases by 2% each year. This problem needs to be tackled NOW to avoid bigger problems in the future.

So what can you do to help? If every Kent resident reduced their waste by 5% it would save a total of £2.2m a year. Visit [www.kent.gov.uk/reducewaste](http://www.kent.gov.uk/reducewaste) to discover six easy things that you can do at home and to learn about our campaigns on recycling, rubbish and waste.

## Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

The Audit Commission's annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment measures how well councils deliver services to local people and communities. Last year KCC was rated as an 'excellent' council for the third year running.



The 2005 CPA framework was even tougher, making it harder to achieve top marks. Despite this, KCC achieved the highest possible rating of four stars for quality of services and delivery of value for money. Kent was also judged to be "Improving Strongly" in the new direction of travel statement, which rates the level of improvement being made in services.

In its report, the Audit Commission said of KCC:

*"Securing value for money and improving efficiency is at the heart of service improvement. The Council's success in these is strong.*

*"It has robust improvement plans to continue developing innovative services. It is building its capacity well by identifying efficiencies and strengthening partnership working. Financial planning is also strong."*

Kent County Council's comparison to the other two county councils which are also rated "four star", "improving strongly" AND have the highest mark for use of resources, shows that KCC has the lowest Band D council tax. KCC offers good value for money.

Further details about KCC's CPA can be found at [www.kent.gov.uk/cpa](http://www.kent.gov.uk/cpa), by emailing [performance@kent.gov.uk](mailto:performance@kent.gov.uk) or by writing to: Room 2.60, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ. A full annual report on service performance 2005-06 will be published on 30 June 2006.

## Council Tax reform and The Lyons Inquiry

The Lyons Inquiry has been tasked to look at the future of how councils are funded, particularly council tax. It is due to report its findings in December 2006.

**For more information on the Lyons Inquiry, visit  
[www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk](http://www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk)**

## Your Council Tax 2006-07

### Do you pay too much?

Most council tax payers have to pay the full bill, but KCC is working with borough, city and district councils to help everyone who is entitled to council tax benefit to claim it.

#### *Kent Benefits Partnership*

So far, more than 2,700 Kent pensioners have received council tax refunds totalling more than £2.5m.

You could be one of around 30,000 pensioners who could be, on average, £9 per week better off after applying for council tax benefit.

If you pay council tax, claim state pension AND have less than £16,000 in savings, contact the Kent Benefits Partnership for more information by calling 0845 345 0310.

#### *Help for other people*

You could also be paying too much council tax if you have less than £16,000 in savings and are on a low income – even if you do not qualify for other benefits.

The level of benefit available depends on your income and savings, the size of your council tax bill and whether or not anyone else lives with you (such as a grown up son or daughter or a lodger).

To find out if you are eligible for a discount, contact your borough, city or district council (their name and contact details will be on your bill).

#### **More information**

For questions regarding your council tax payment, bills or Council Tax Benefit please contact the borough, city or district council that sent your bills to you.

If you have any questions about any services covered in this leaflet:

Telephone 08458 247 247 (lines open 24 hours a day, seven days a week)  
Email [council.tax@kent.gov.uk](mailto:council.tax@kent.gov.uk)  
Write to Kent County Council  
Sessions House, Room 3.17  
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ

**This leaflet is also available in alternative formats  
please contact 08458 247 247.**