

Council Tax Guide

Your guide to council tax in 2012–2013
including police and fire authorities' budgets

**STOP PRESS
0% RISE**

No increase in council tax
for services provided by
North Somerset Council



Council tax frozen for second year running

North Somerset Council has decided to freeze council tax again in the year ahead to help residents during this difficult economic time.

We already set the second lowest council tax in the South West but have taken up the Government's challenge of freezing council tax again to help ease the burden on local people.

During the past year, the council has begun to deliver a four year £47.3m savings programme. These savings are needed because of significant reductions in funding from central government and increasing demand on services, particularly those for vulnerable adults and children. The scale of the savings is equivalent to the council having £1 less by 2015 for every £3 it spends.

The council remains committed to delivering quality services at an affordable cost, but given the scale of the challenge it's inevitable that there will be some impact on residents, communities, organisations and our own staff.

Wherever possible, the council is looking at different ways to deliver services rather than cutting them. This approach involves working closely with local communities, town and parish councils and other organisations to find alternative ways of providing services which are less reliant on council funding.

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact: 01934 888 144

What is council tax?

It's a local property tax levied by councils to top up central government funding of the local services they provide.

What does it pay for?

North Somerset Council provides more than 600 services, including education, planning, transport, highways, social services, libraries, leisure and recreation, recycling and waste collection, environmental health and trading standards among many others.

The money you pay also funds the police and fire and rescue service, as well as supporting work in your local parish or town.

Parish and town councils raise their money primarily from a levy called a precept. We collect the precept on behalf of town and parish councils and pass it on to them.

Who decides how much I have to pay?

Council tax is based on property value. Every property is put into a banding and charged accordingly after certain other factors are taken into account.

If you think your house is in an incorrect council tax band, you can appeal in writing to:

Bristol Valuation Office
4th Floor, City Point
Temple Gate
Bristol BS16PL
Tel: 03000 501 501



Budgeting for the future

Budgeting is a year-round process and balancing this year's figures has proved particularly difficult in a climate of vastly reduced grants from central government.

Current estimates indicate that over the four year period to 2015 we will need to save £47.3m – more than we have ever had to save in the past. In the first year alone (2011/2012) we have found savings of more than £17million.

So, the focus for the next four years will be on service and organisational transformation – redesigning services so they can be provided more cost effectively.

Keep reading North Somerset Life for regular updates about our budget setting process.

Where does the money go?

The table below shows how the money will be spent on services and how that relates to the average council tax bill.

Service	Money spent £ millions	Share of Band D £
Children and Young People – including educating 28,000 pupils, 74 schools (including academies), pre-school provision, children at risk, adoption and fostering	24.8	189
Housing and Adult Social Services – including residential care, community meals, services for people with learning difficulties, tackling homelessness and adult education	60.8	465
Development and Environment – including maintaining 683 miles of roads, collecting household waste, recycling, parks, libraries, economic development, public transport and environmental health	34.4	264
Corporate services – including registration of births, deaths and marriages, legal, democratic and electoral services, council tax collection and benefits administration	10.1	78
Capital financing – new buildings and refurbishment e.g. schools and play areas	13.4	103
Special Expenses	0.1	1
Transition	1.0	8
Non-service items – included in your council tax and provided by others, e.g. flood defence, magistrates courts and Drainage Boards	0.2	1
Contingency	2.0	15
Contribution to Capital & Reserves	2.9	22
Net North Somerset requirement	149.7	1,146

Proposed budget for 2012/2013

2011/2012		2012/2013		
Net exp £000		Gross exp £000	Income £000	Net exp £000
27,235	Children and Young People	167,057	142,320	24,737
61,510	Adult Social Services and Housing	82,260	21,478	60,782
34,791	Development and Environment	47,159	12,726	34,433
10,957	Corporate Services	102,339	92,212	10,127
12,880	Capital financing	15,768	2,342	13,426
350	Special expenses	121	0	121
0	Transition	1,000	0	1,000
3,177	Non-service items	569	387	182
150,900	Gross Expenditure	416,273	271,465	144,808
0	Contingency	1,978	0	1,978
0	Contribution to Capital & Reserves	2,910	0	2,910
700	Use of Reserves	0	0	0
150,200	North Somerset Requirement	421,161	271,465	149,696
3,393	Parish Precepts	3,679	0	3,679
153,593	Budget Requirement	424,840	271,465	153,375

To be funded by:

13,507	Revenue Support Grant	0	1,038	1,038
43,696	National Non Domestic Rates	0	53,565	53,565
2,278	Council Tax Freeze Grant	0	2,267	2,267
0	New Homes Bonus	0	2,074	2,074
500	Net Collection Fund Adjustment	0	250	250
93,612	Council Tax Requirement	424,862	330,659	94,181

The Collection Fund adjustment is the difference between the amount the council expects to raise from the council tax and the amount which is actually collected.

The above table shows a reduction in special expenses, which reflects the decision of Nailsea Town Council and Weston-super-Mare Town Council to include the cost of special expenses within their town precept. The effect of this decision has no impact on the overall tax bill received by residents in these areas.

Council tax summary 2012/2013

The information below shows the amount needed to fund public services in North Somerset – not just those of the council but also the police, fire and rescue service, and parish and town councils.

2011/2012			2012/2013	
£000	£000		£000	£000
	150,900	North Somerset Council requirement		149,696
	3,393	Parish and town council precepts		3,679
	154,293	North Somerset's Budget requirement less:		153,375
(43,696)		contribution from national business rate pool	(53,565)	
(13,507)		Government Grant	(1,039)	
(2,278)		Council Tax Freeze Grant	(2,267)	
		New Homes Bonus	(2,074)	
(500)		Collection Fund Balance	(250)	
(700)		Use of reserves	0	
	(60,681)			(59,195)
	93,612	North Somerset's precept		94,181
	13,172	Avon and Somerset Police Authority precept		13,247
	4,733	Avon Fire Authority precept		4,949
	111,517			112,377

The average Band D council tax for North Somerset 2012/2013 will be:

2011/2012			2012/2013	
£			£	
168.03	Avon and Somerset Police Authority		168.03	
60.38	Avon Fire Authority		62.77	
1,150.87	North Somerset Council		1,147.93	
43.28	Average parish/town council		46.67	
1,422.56			1,425.40	

Parish and town councils

Five parish and town councils in North Somerset raise more than £140,000 each through council tax contributions.

Local council	2011/2012	How much needed	2012/2013
Clevedon Town Council	74,234	Recreation	67,540
	20,000	Highways	25,450
	141,627	Other	137,079
	(69,671)	Contingency/Balances	(55,331)
	166,190		174,738
Nailsea Town Council	102,692	Recreation	113,641
	27,850	Highways	57,500
	261,720	Other	255,620
	7,500	Contingency/Balances	17,500
	399,762		444,261
Portishead Town Council	156,565	Recreation	181,442
	6,000	Highways	3,000
	135,550	Other	126,078
	26,000	Contingency/Balances	6,000
	324,115		316,520
Weston-super-Mare Town Council	204,979	Recreation	357,425
	70,000	Highways	70,000
	41,211	Other	42,241
	860,044	Contingency/Balances	894,002
	1,176,234		1,363,668
Yatton Parish Council	54,479	Recreation	36,653
	10,800	Highways	800
	158,860	Other	158,830
	(46,860)	Contingency/Balances	(11,004)
	177,279		185,279

How much will you pay?

Local council	2012/2013 precept £	2011/2012 precept £	Parish precept amount for Band D	Band A £
Abbots Leigh	21,000	21,000	49.48	951.13
Backwell	115,460	105,265	58.81	957.35
Banwell	58,010	57,805	52.51	953.15
Barrow Gurney	7,000	8,500	43.56	947.18
Blagdon	32,000	32,000	60.94	958.77
Bleadon	40,000	37,500	74.69	967.93
Brockley	2,800	2,340	22.24	932.97
Burrington	3,000	3,000	11.76	925.98
Butcombe	1,450	1,450	13.37	927.05
Churchill	56,500	55,000	61.74	959.30
Clapton-in-Gordano	2,500	3,000	13.83	927.36
Cleeve	12,524	12,400	33.08	940.19
Clevedon	174,738	166,190	21.78	938.65
Congresbury	103,950	99,000	73.62	967.22
Dundry	9,000	7,000	22.88	933.39
Flax Bourton	23,000	23,000	65.01	961.48
Hutton	61,170	61,170	53.94	954.10
Kenn	5,000	5,000	31.76	939.31
Kewstoke	38,500	38,500	60.51	958.48
Kingston Seymour	8,900	8,300	49.55	951.17
Locking	57,000	50,500	55.99	955.47
Long Ashton	137,477	133,475	52.38	953.06
Loxton & Christon	3,000	3,600	31.53	939.16
Nailsea	444,261	399,762	70.04	964.83
Pill & Easton-in-Gordano	92,828	88,408	50.59	951.87
Portishead	316,520	324,115	31.89	942.68
Portbury	17,540	14,141	44.90	948.07
Puxton	5,000	5,000	36.88	942.73
St. Georges	17,478	17,332	15.00	928.14
Tickenham	6,666	6,666	14.53	927.83
Walton-in-Gordano	2,485	3,100	21.48	932.46
Weston-in-Gordano	3,500	3,750	23.50	933.81
Weston-super-Mare	1,363,668	1,176,234	50.57	951.85
Wick St. Lawrence	6,000	6,000	10.71	925.28
Winford	20,000	20,000	20.29	931.67
Winscombe & Sandford	110,000	105,000	55.91	955.41
Wraxall & Failand	33,400	31,800	29.20	937.61
Wrington	80,860	79,352	65.94	962.10
Yatton	185,279	177,279	66.91	962.75

Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
1,109.63	1,268.16	1,426.68	1,743.73	2,060.76	2,377.81	2,853.36
1,116.89	1,276.46	1,436.01	1,755.13	2,074.24	2,393.36	2,872.02
1,111.99	1,270.86	1,429.71	1,747.43	2,065.14	2,382.86	2,859.42
1,105.03	1,262.90	1,420.76	1,736.49	2,052.21	2,367.94	2,841.52
1,118.55	1,278.35	1,438.14	1,757.73	2,077.31	2,396.91	2,876.28
1,129.24	1,290.57	1,451.89	1,774.54	2,097.18	2,419.82	2,903.78
1,088.45	1,243.95	1,399.44	1,710.43	2,021.41	2,332.41	2,798.88
1,080.30	1,234.63	1,388.96	1,697.62	2,006.28	2,314.94	2,777.92
1,081.55	1,236.06	1,390.57	1,699.59	2,008.60	2,317.62	2,781.14
1,119.17	1,279.06	1,438.94	1,758.71	2,078.47	2,398.24	2,877.88
1,081.91	1,236.47	1,391.03	1,700.15	2,009.27	2,318.39	2,782.06
1,096.88	1,253.58	1,410.28	1,723.68	2,037.07	2,350.47	2,820.56
1,095.07	1,251.52	1,407.96	1,720.85	2,033.72	2,346.61	2,815.92
1,128.41	1,289.62	1,450.82	1,773.23	2,095.63	2,418.04	2,901.64
1,088.95	1,244.52	1,400.08	1,711.21	2,022.34	2,333.47	2,800.16
1,121.71	1,281.97	1,442.21	1,762.71	2,083.19	2,403.69	2,884.42
1,113.10	1,272.13	1,431.14	1,749.18	2,067.20	2,385.24	2,862.28
1,095.85	1,252.41	1,408.96	1,722.07	2,035.17	2,348.27	2,817.92
1,118.21	1,277.97	1,437.71	1,757.21	2,076.69	2,396.19	2,875.42
1,109.69	1,268.22	1,426.75	1,743.81	2,060.86	2,377.92	2,853.50
1,114.70	1,273.95	1,433.19	1,751.68	2,070.16	2,388.66	2,866.38
1,111.89	1,270.74	1,429.58	1,747.27	2,064.95	2,382.64	2,859.16
1,095.67	1,252.21	1,408.73	1,721.79	2,034.83	2,347.89	2,817.46
1,125.63	1,286.44	1,447.24	1,768.85	2,090.46	2,412.07	2,894.48
1,110.50	1,269.15	1,427.79	1,745.08	2,062.36	2,379.66	2,855.58
1,099.78	1,256.90	1,414.01	1,728.24	2,042.46	2,356.69	2,828.02
1,106.07	1,264.09	1,422.10	1,738.13	2,054.15	2,370.17	2,844.20
1,099.83	1,256.96	1,414.08	1,728.33	2,042.56	2,356.81	2,828.16
1,082.82	1,237.51	1,392.20	1,701.58	2,010.96	2,320.34	2,784.40
1,082.45	1,237.10	1,391.73	1,701.01	2,010.28	2,319.56	2,783.46
1,087.86	1,243.27	1,398.68	1,709.50	2,020.32	2,331.14	2,797.36
1,089.43	1,245.07	1,400.70	1,711.97	2,023.23	2,334.51	2,801.40
1,110.48	1,269.13	1,427.77	1,745.06	2,062.34	2,379.62	2,855.54
1,079.48	1,233.70	1,387.91	1,696.34	2,004.76	2,313.19	2,775.82
1,086.93	1,242.22	1,397.49	1,708.05	2,018.60	2,329.16	2,794.98
1,114.64	1,273.88	1,433.11	1,751.58	2,070.05	2,388.52	2,866.22
1,093.86	1,250.14	1,406.40	1,718.94	2,031.47	2,344.01	2,812.80
1,122.44	1,282.79	1,443.14	1,763.84	2,084.54	2,405.24	2,886.28
1,123.19	1,283.66	1,444.11	1,765.03	2,085.94	2,406.86	2,888.22



Your policing £ pounds

Setting the budget has provided more certainty for 2012/13 for which the force can plan. As well as financial challenges there are also many changes to the policing landscape including the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners.

However both the Authority and the Chief Constable are committed to protecting the standard of policing service delivered to Avon and Somerset. We are developing with the

Chief Constable a challenging plan for 2012/13 to keep delivering improvements. It is an ambitious approach with fewer resources but together we will do everything we can to maintain an efficient, motivated and modern police service that is ready to tackle the issues that affect you.

2012/13
£275m
Total
budget

2011/12
£282m
Total
budget

The Police Authority will be replaced in November by a Police and Crime Commissioner; find out more on the last page.

SPENDING	2011/12	2012/13
Gross expenditure	£290m	£286m
Specific grants and other income	(£10m)	(£10m)
Net Budget requirement	£280m	£276m
WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM	2011/12	2012/13
Funding from central government	£185m	£173m
Amount paid by council tax	£90m	£97m
Government & Council Tax Freeze Grants	£2m	£5m
TOTAL INCOME	£282m	£275m

Changes in spending

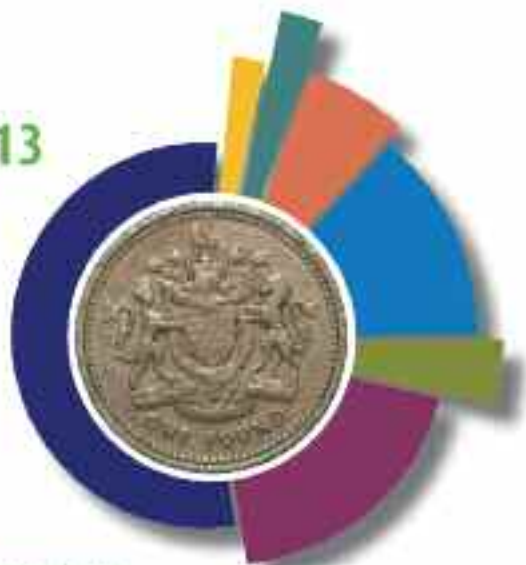
The gross expenditure for the Police Authority will be £7m lower in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12 because of a 7% reduction in central government funding. We have taken the difficult decision to freeze the policing part of the council tax in order to take the Government's one-off grant for 2012/13. This means that

the average band D precept will remain unchanged at £368.03. Inflation and other unavoidable spending pressures will increase our costs by £5m. Therefore, we will have to reduce our spending by £12m in 2012/13 to balance our budget.

Spending plans 2012/13

This chart shows how we are planning to spend the budget this year on policing.

Police Officers	£153m
Police Staff	£54m
Community Support Officers	£10m
Police Pensions	£6m
Capital Funding Costs	£5m
Running Expenses	£37m
Other Costs	£23m



Policing Objectives 2012/13

Despite fewer resources challenging performance targets have been set in the next Policing Plan to sustain and improve the Constabulary's performance.

THE POLICING PLAN 2012/13 PRIORITIES . . .

- **Respond when you need us**
 - Ensure that you can contact us in ways that suit you
 - Ensure that our response is proportionate to the harm faced by you and the wider community
 - Ensure we accurately identify those who are most vulnerable
 - Ensure we have the right staff available at the right time and in the right places
 - Ensure we resolve your issue at the earliest opportunity
- **Investigate crime and protect you from criminals**
 - Further develop Integrated Offender Management
 - Modernise and centralise our custody and investigative functions in readiness to exploit the opportunities provided by our Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Project
 - Improve crime investigation, focusing on public satisfaction with the way we deal with you

How are the police performing...

We have seen continuing performance improvements, in the most recent British Crime Survey results, we achieved the 3rd highest score nationally for doing a good job and our quality of service was significantly higher than the national average.

Community confidence in us as a police force placed us 10th out of 43 forces and, in our own survey, satisfaction with the way we deal with anti-social behaviour reached 80%.

Latest performance figures against 2011/12 targets

RESPOND WITHIN YOU NEED US	Current Performance	National Position at December 2011	Target	Achieved Y/N
Overall satisfaction amongst victims of crime: ** (% completely, very or fairly satisfied)	87.6%	4/43	Top 10 nationally	yes
Overall satisfaction amongst victims of anti-social behaviour: ** (% completely, very or fairly satisfied)	80.0%	N/A †	80%	yes
INVESTIGATE CRIME AND PROTECT YOU FROM CRIMINALS	Current Performance	National Position at December 2011	Target	Achieved Y/N
Total recorded crime rate: ** Aim: Improve our performance position nationally	72.4	38/43	28th	no
Sanction detection rates for overall crime: *** Aim: Improve our performance position nationally	33.6%	19/43	30th	yes
Serious violence: ** Aim: Maintain top 10 performance nationally	0.4	3/43	10th	yes
Detection rates for serious violence: *** Aim: Maintain top 10 performance nationally	59.7	11/43	10th	no
Serious acquisitive crimes, (domestic burglaries, robberies and vehicle crimes): ** Aim: Improve our performance position nationally	9.8	24/43	23rd	no
Detection rates for serious acquisitive crimes, (domestic burglaries, robberies and vehicle crimes): *** Aim: Improve our performance position nationally	14.7%	26/43	23th	yes
Detection rates for serious sexual offences: *** Aim: Maintain top 10 performance nationally	37.1%	9/43	10th	yes

** 12 months ending December 2011 *** Annual estimate of crime per 1,000 population, based on Apr-Dec 2011

††† 1st April - 31st December 2011 † Not all forces survey anti-social behaviour therefore a national position is not available

Listening to you

This year we have consulted with residents online and face-to-face on the police budget and your policing priorities. Overall the budget results in January showed that the majority of people either face-to-face or online favoured the Police Authority taxing the Government's one off grant for a freeze to the policing part of the council tax.

It is vital that we consult with you over the decisions that we face. You can have your say and influence decision making online at www.consultation.avonandsomerset.police.uk. This website is a cost effective way to gain your views and will always be supported by postal, telephone and face-to-face consultation. Keep checking the website to take part in our latest consultation.



New era for policing

Changes to who holds the police to account

This is the last year Avon and Somerset Police Authority will be responsible for the governance and finances of Avon and Somerset Police. On Thursday, November 15, you will go to the polls to vote for a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The

Commissioner will replace the Police Authority and take over governance of your local police force as well as a wider role in community safety and criminal justice. Find out more at www.aspoca.org.uk/pcc

Contact us...

Budget questions

Police Authority Treasurer
Valley Road, Portishead
Bristol BS20 8JJ
01275 816377

www.aspoca.org.uk

Policing issues

Chief Constable's Office
PO Box 37
Valley Road, Portishead
Bristol BS20 8GJ

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

AVON AND SOMERSET
CONSTABULARY



101

IN AN
EMERGENCY
ALWAYS
CALL 999

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk



AVON
FIRE AUTHORITY

Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) protects the communities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Covering an area of 134,753 hectares and a population of over one million, we are committed to ensuring a safer place for people to live, work and visit.

Your fire and rescue service is provided by Avon Fire Authority (AFA), which is made up by councillors from the four unitary areas. This year AFA faces intense pressures on its budget and for the first time in two years Members took the difficult decision to increase the amount of money we ask from you.

To an average household the increase is £2.39 a year – or 20p a month, however the extra revenue will ensure we can continue to provide you with 23 fire stations and a first class emergency service.

Your fire and rescue service

You can also do your bit to keep safe in your home. The best way you can look after loved ones is to make sure you have a smoke alarm and that you test it is working on a regular basis.

For more information about Avon Fire & Rescue Service, Avon Fire Authority or fire safety visit www.avonfire.gov.uk

Where does each pound go?



Running costs 26p

Employee costs 74p



AVON
FIRE & RESCUE

Working smoke alarms save lives

Top tip



Buy it

Top tip



Fit it

Top tip



Test it

PROVIDING AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Annual budget

Avon Fire Authority has set its budget for 2012/13 at £46.454 million. After allowing for the use of reserves and an adjustment to reflect the 2011/12 council tax freeze grant no longer being paid as a separate grant, net expenditure has increased by £0.4 million or 0.9% which is less than the inflationary pressures of £0.6 million. The net budget of £46.454 million represents a council tax for a band D property of £62.77 which is a 3.96% increase.

Spending plans

	2011/12 (£m)	2012/13 (£m)
Total fire expenditure	47.771	48.090
Income	-2.241	-1.636
Net budget before use of reserves	45.530	46.454
Use of reserves	-0.800	0.000
Total net budget	44.730	46.454
Revenue support grant	5.322	0.437
Share of NNDR*	17.210	22.515
Collection fund surplus/deficit	-0.029	0.168
Council tax requirements	22.218	23.334
Total funding	44.730	46.454

* NNDR - Business rates

The main changes in spending from 2011/12 to 2012/13 are listed below.

Main changes in expenditure	(£m)
2011/12 Budget	44,730
Inflation	0.518
Capital financing	0.543
2011/12 Council Tax Freeze grant	0.555
Other	0.055
Use of reserves	0.800
Savings	-0.947
Total	46,454

Savings

This year savings totalling £0.947 million have been identified in the following areas:

Savings	2012/13 (£m)	
Employees	-0.684	
Running Costs	Premises	-0.114
	Transport	-0.030
	Other	-0.119
Total	-0.947	

Capital requirements

Avon Fire Authority has set a capital programme for 2012/13 of £3.115 million. The programme includes the replacement of vehicles, equipment, IT and essential building maintenance.

	2011/12 (£m)	2012/13 (£m)
Premises	0.820	0.500
Vehicles and equipment	1.770	1.215
PPE	0.000	1.300
IT and communications	0.100	0.100
Total	2.490	3.115

Help with your bill

Council tax benefit

If you are on a low income and currently pay council tax the chances are you will be eligible for council tax benefit. Even if you receive other benefits or council tax discounts you may still be entitled to more help towards your bill.

Please pick up a claim form for council tax benefit from the Town Hall, North Somerset Housing offices or your local library. The form is also available on-line at www.n-somerset.gov.uk

You can also make an appointment for a new claim at the Town Hall. You will need to take with you original documents to prove your ID, national insurance number, and all forms of income and savings.

A benefit officer will help you with the form.

Are you entitled?

Check whether you might be entitled before submitting a claim:

1. call **01934 888 144** to go through a trial calculation
2. make an appointment at the enquiry desk at the Town Hall
3. check the trial calculator on our website at www.n-somerset.gov.uk

More help with your bill

Even if you are not eligible for council tax benefit based on your income and savings there are other ways to reduce your bill:

- **Exemptions:** Some properties will be exempt from council tax altogether, for example if your previous home is unoccupied or you are being cared for or a full-time carer yourself.
- **Disability reduction scheme:** Your property may be placed in a lower band if it has features such as extra space for a wheelchair (for more details telephone 01934 888 144).
- **Discounts:** Some bills can be reduced by up to 50 per cent. There is a 25 per cent discount for all properties where only one person is liable to pay council tax.