



Ashford Borough Council Summary of accounts

2009 - 2010
(subject to audit)



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction



The last year saw the full impact of the recession on residents of the borough, and the services delivered by Ashford Borough Council. Unemployment rose by 4% from March 2009 to March 2010, with extra pressure also seen in the business and leisure sectors.

This meant that income the council usually relies on to help deliver services fell sharply; for example interest on our investments, car parking, planning applications and property land search enquiries all dropped significantly. This shortfall increased pressure on all services.

Last summer the council took early action to make front-line services, such as waste collection and recycling, a priority, and we also made changes to other spending plans. Action was also taken to adjust staffing levels.

Despite the pressures of the current financial climate, the council kept its books balanced as well as ensuring that the most important services continued well, with good overall performance as detailed in this Summary of Accounts.

“ I am pleased that, despite the recession, the Council has been able to maintain a stable financial position. This gives us a firm foundation from which to face the challenging times ahead. Utilising this sound base, our Five-Year Business Plan will help us to focus our efforts so that we can continue to deliver cost-effective services to our residents in future years. ”

**Cllr Peter Wood BA (Hons) FCA, Deputy Leader,
Portfolio Holder for Resource Management and Control,
Ashford Borough Council.**

“ I can confirm that this year’s statement of accounts has been prepared in line with the Accounting Code of Practice. The figures in this summary were compiled having regard to proper accounting practices. This statement is now subject to external audit. ”

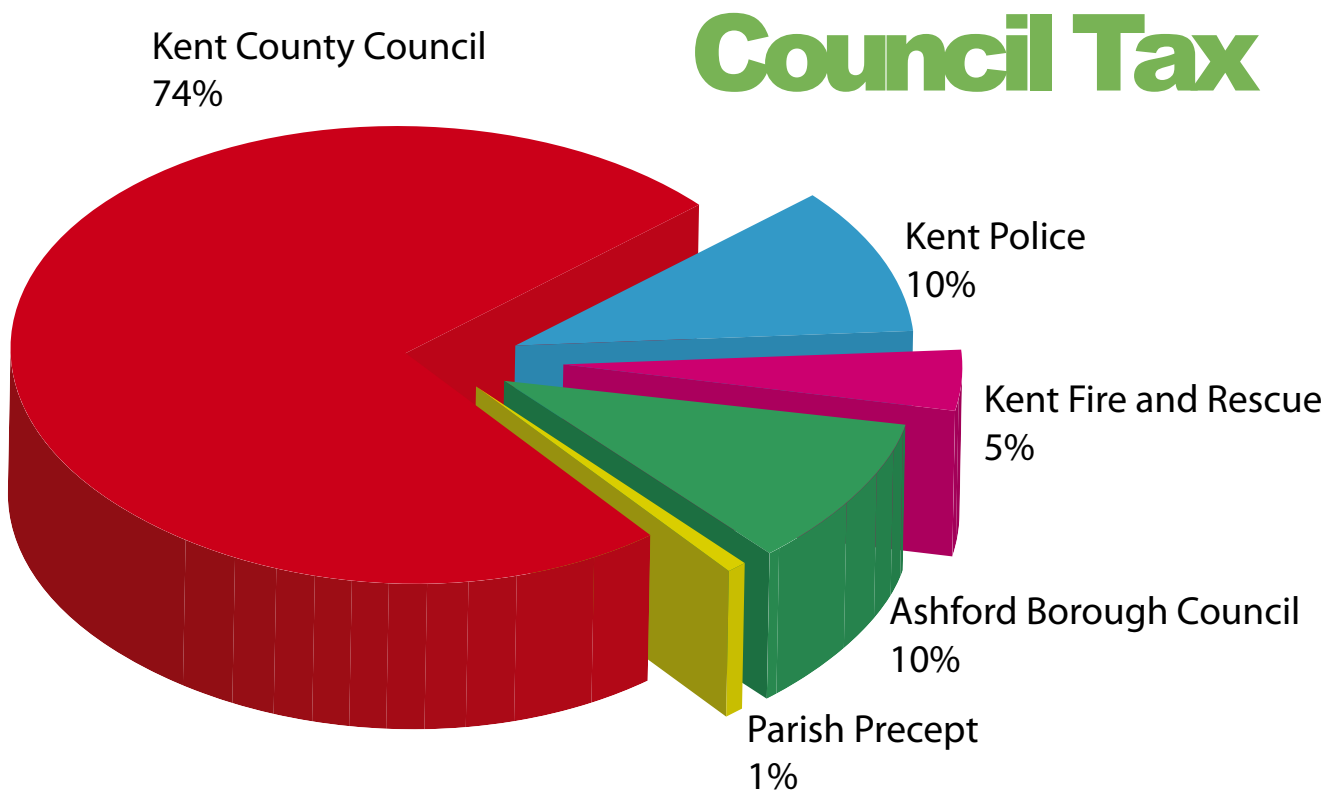
**Paul Naylor CPFA, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer,
Ashford Borough Council.**

Where does your money go?

	2009/10 Precept (Band D) £	
Ashford Borough Council	135.27	10%
Parish	25.76	1%
Kent County Council	1026.27	74%
Kent Police	134.65	10%
Kent Fire and Rescue	66.06	5%
	1388.01	
Council Tax Due		£61.8m
In Year Collection Rate		98.7%

The average bill for an Ashford borough resident living in a Band D property in 09/10 was £1,388.01 (which includes the average parish precept).

And only a small proportion (10%) of your council tax bill comes directly to the council. It's divided between other public authorities as shown by the chart below.



What did we spend the money on?

The table below shows that we spent over £77 million on various day-to-day services last year. It includes services such as recycling, street cleaning, food and hygiene, planning applications and strategic planning and cultural activities, along with necessary support services (such as personnel, finance, property, IT etc). Figures in brackets throughout this document represent income.

	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s
Environmental	6,552	(1,730)	4,822
Cultural	21,607	(765)	20,842
Planning and Development	4,803	(3,055)	1,748
Highways and Transportation	3,273	(2,146)	1,127
Housing	31,563	(29,176)	2,387
Housing Revenue Account	(6,683)	(20,303)	(26,986)
Corporate and Democratic Core	3,233	(834)	2,399
Council tax benefits and other pension costs	12,866	(9,438)	3,428
Net Cost of Services	77,214	(67,447)	9,767
Add drainage board levies and parish council precepts			967
Less net interest and investment earnings			(648)
Other accounting adjustments			4,553
Amount to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxation			14,639

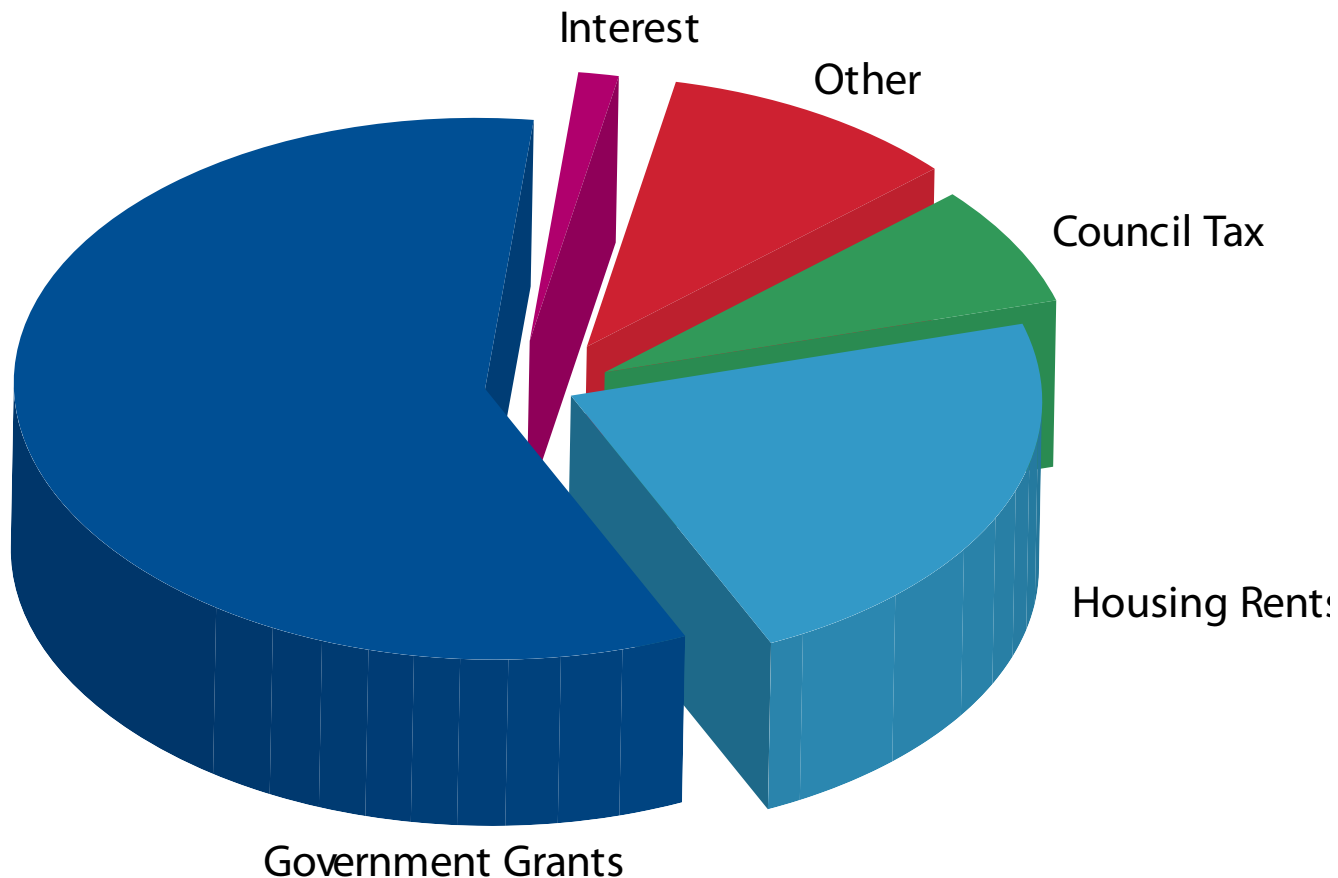


How did we pay for our services?

Our total income for day-to-day needs for 2009/2010 was £83.203 million. Council tax makes up just 8% of the council's income. We used a combination of council tax, business rates, housing stock rents and government grants to cover day-to-day expenditure.

Income

		£000s
Council Tax	7.27%	(6,048)
Housing Rents	22.58%	(18,789)
Government Grants	58.55%	(48,712)
Interest	1.27%	(1,058)
Other	10.33%	(8,596)
		(83,203)



Did we have anything left over?

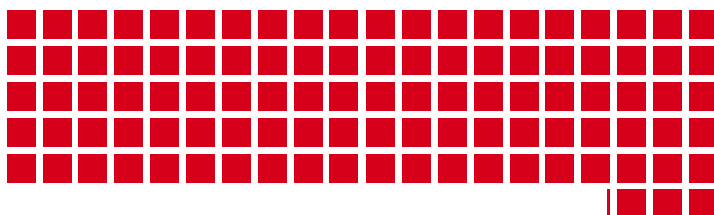
Money that is not spent in the financial year is put in reserves and invested to bring in increased income or set aside to meet other needs.

Revenue Account Surplus

	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s
Income from taxes and government grant			
Government Grant			(8,374)
Council Tax			(6,734)
Net cost of services			
Amount to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxation			14,639
Surplus for the year			
Net Surplus			(469)

We handled significant amounts of cash during the year.

Cash In
£ 103,577,000



Cash Out
£ 103,150,000

Increase in cash £469,000
(at end March 2010)



How much did we spend on longer-term investment?

As well as the day-to-day costs of running the council's services we also invest in projects that will have a longer-term value to our residents. The chart below shows how we spent more than a million pounds investing in the future of Stanhope, and nearly £200,000 improving the quality of the borough's play areas. And we invested more than £4 million in our housing stock, which includes enabling the provision of 150 new affordable homes.

	£000s
Housing	4,400
Stanhope PFI Contribution	1,088
Ashford Growth Area Projects	1,140
Disabled Facilities Grants	452
Play Areas	191
Other	1,128

What are we worth?

This summary gives a snap-shot of how much our land, buildings and investments are worth - nearly £360 million, how much we owed and how much was owed to us. It also shows how much cash we have.

Balance Sheet	£000s
Buildings and Land Owned by the Council	368,731
Cash Investments	30,677
Stock	29
PFI Balances	(27,698)
Money Owed to the Council	11,213
Money Owed by the Council	(23,041)
Total	359,911
Financed by	
Borrowing	9,014
Cash overdrawn	
Non-Distributable Reserves and Accounts	338,202
Distributable Reserves	12,695
Total	359,911



Performance highlights

Housing

- Delivered 150 new affordable homes, alongside 120 replacement properties on Stanhope.
- Ensured 100% of council housing stock was fully gas certified.
- Helped set up the groundbreaking 'Trailblazer' scheme to give advice and guidance to home-seekers on debt, local employment, benefits and working with the voluntary sector.
- Helped disabled residents to stay in their homes by funding £360,000 worth of disabled adaptations.
- Maintained previous levels of 100% of council houses being rated at a 'decent' standard or above.
- Achieved a 1% reduction in those residents living in fuel poverty.
- Successful as one of the first district councils to receive funding for building new social housing.
- Instigated an expanded Private Sector Leasing Scheme to reduce need for temporary bed and breakfast accommodation.

Planning

- Improved our performance on processing planning applications quickly and efficiently, exceeding government targets.
- One of the first district councils to have an adopted Local Development Framework Core Strategy, outlining our visions for future development.
- Worked with the Ashford's Future Company to assist the ambitious investment plans for the town centre.
- Achieved agreements for key transport and infrastructure schemes, such as remodelling of the A20 Drivers Roundabout and M20 Junction 9.

Culture

- Worked with St Mary's Church to agree the concept of a new arts space for the town centre.
- Continued to support local music through the annual Create Festival.
- Opened a new dance studio at the Stour Centre, in partnership with the Primary Care Trust.
- Provided more than £850,000 for over 150 voluntary and local community groups, including support for the Citizens Advice Bureau, Mediation Service, Shopmobility and local community forums.
- Delivered 9 sport-based (Active Ashford) programmes in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, with 10,000 people taking part. Includes Active Swim and taster sessions in activities such as dance, basketball and athletics.
- Provided sporting opportunities for 1,300 people each week at the Courtside and Pitchside centres. Involved setting up football, netball and tennis teams.
- Worked with more than 15 public and voluntary sector organisations to improve sports and arts activities for young people.
- Given 450 children and young people the chance to design, develop and run activities in their own communities, such as the play areas at Mersham and Hothfield.
- Responded to an average of 3,300 customer queries each month at the Ashford Tourist Information Centre.



Environment and Community Safety

- Worked with the Police to reduce the total number of criminal incidents by 14%.
- Placed first in the county for residents' satisfaction with the council and police services in understanding local concerns.
- 90% of businesses were satisfied with the way we regulate hygiene and licensing matters.
- 88% of food establishments complied with Environmental food hygiene standards, driven by our successful 'Scores on the Doors' scheme.
- Achieved a small reduction in waste collected and sent to landfill or incineration.
- Recycling rates remained below the Kent average.

Value for Money

- Balanced budget with £2,000,000 of savings
- Rated as a 'Good' Council by the Audit Commission for delivering value for money in our services.
- Continued to have the lowest council tax rate for a district council in Kent.



For more information and full accounts

Visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/accounts

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