

Your Rates Explained

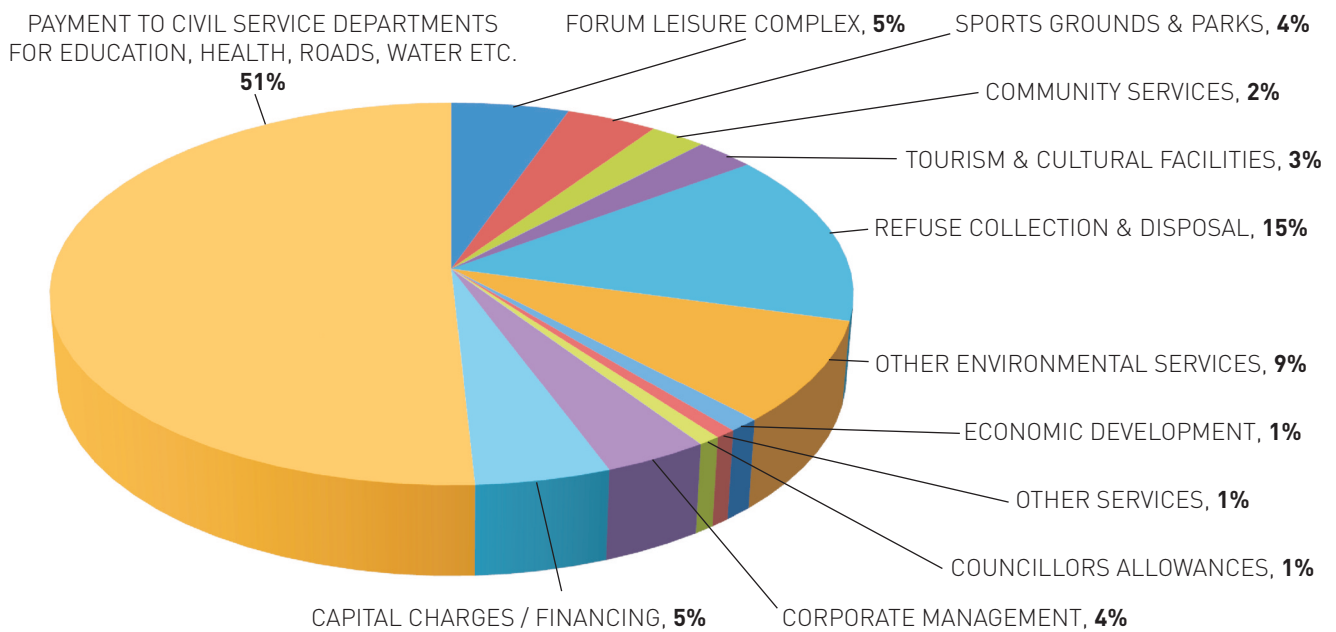
Your Rates bill is divided into two sections: **The District Rate - set by the local council and the Regional Rate - set by central government.**

From April 2011 to March 2012, the District Rate in the Antrim Borough Council area will increase by 1.45%, which is an average of 50 pence per month. At the time of going to print the Regional Rate has not been confirmed.

During the next twelve months, the Council will spend £17.6m providing services to the residents of the Borough. While we are committed to ensuring that front line services such as bin collections are delivered to the highest standard, we also want to invest in projects that will

leave a lasting legacy for our community. On page 5 of this issue of Council Eye, we have highlighted one of these projects; the restoration and development of Antrim Castle Gardens, which are destined to become one of Northern Ireland's foremost visitor attractions and a valuable asset to the Borough.

This chart shows how the Rates will be spent in the year ahead.



Frequently asked questions about the Rates

What are the Rates?

The Rates are a property tax that provides the funding needed to improve and finance public services.

The Regional Rate is set by central government. The Regional Rate is the same for every Ratepayer throughout Northern Ireland and the monies raised go to central government.

Who sets the Rates?

The District Rate is based on the estimated cost of providing services. The District Rate varies from council area to council area.

What do you mean by Domestic and Non-Domestic Rate?

Both the District Rate and Regional Rate are sub-divided into the Domestic Rate for households and the Non-Domestic Rate for businesses etc.



Are you finding it difficult to manage all your bills?



Set up a direct debit and spread the cost of your rates!

Call Land & Property Services with your Bank/Building Society details:

- **Helpline (NI):** Dial 101
- **Helpline (Outside NI or if you can't access 101):** 028 9151 3101
- **Textphone:** 18001101

Please note that these lines are extremely busy at peak times.

You can also download a Direct Debit form from: www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates

We're Working to Make the Most of Your Money

Out of every pound that you pay in Rates, Antrim Borough Council receives approximately half. The other half is allocated to Civil Service departments to provide services such as Health, Education, Roads and Water.

Here are some of the ways Antrim Borough Council is making the most of your money.

- **Reducing Staff Costs** – we have re-trained staff to cover sickness and maternity leave; we have lowered absence by 25% (09/10) by, for example, offering reduced working hours and flexible working arrangements, particularly for those with caring responsibilities.
- **Increasing Recycling Rates** – by encouraging recycling, we have cut the cost of waste going to landfill, met recycling targets and avoided taxation and potentially heavy European fines.
- **Saving money by buying in partnership with other Councils** – e.g. insurance services, legal services, print.
- **Being energy efficient at major facilities** – we have switched to natural gas, reducing costs and CO2 emissions; we have installed a bio-mass plant, solar panels, windturbine and a combined heat and power unit; we purchase more than 85% green electricity.
- **Generating income** - We generate income by maximising use of our facilities e.g. room hire and cafe franchise at Antrim Civic Centre; multi-use auditorium and cafe franchise at the Old Courthouse, Antrim.

In the coming year, we're determined to work more efficiently and find more ways to create better value for our customers and deliver even higher quality services to you the Ratepayer.

Need financial help?

If you are a home-owner on low income, or a pensioner over 70 years of age and living alone you may be entitled to Housing Benefit help towards meeting the cost of your Rates.

For advice and information contact: **Helpline (in NI): Dial 101**
Helpline (outside NI or if you can't access 101): 028 9151 3101
Textphone: 18001101