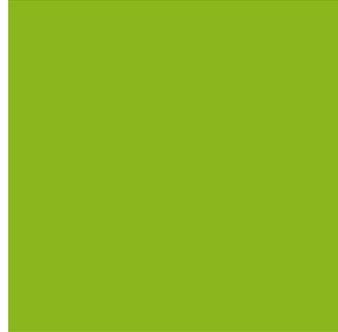


Ribble Valley Borough Council Annual Report 2011/2012





Vision

An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life sustained by vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

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Welcome

Welcome to Ribble Valley Borough Council's 2011/12 annual report, which outlines what we have achieved in the past financial year.

As you can see on pages 6 and 7, we have had a busy year. From award-winning schemes such as Warm Homes, Healthy People to crime-busting projects such as Farm Watch, Ribble Valley Borough Council and its partners have been at the forefront of some groundbreaking work.

At the same time, Ribble Valley's council tax remains the lowest in Lancashire and one of the lowest in the North West – our share of the council tax on a Band D property is just £140.69 – and you can read about our thrifty financial management on pages 8 and 9.

Pages 10 and 11 throw the spotlight on how we are performing, while pages 12 and 13 take a look at how we are joining forces with partner agencies and organisations to make Ribble Valley a better place in which to live and work.

Like all other local authorities, Ribble Valley Borough Council has seen a large reduction in financial support from the Government, but this reduction was inevitable and we have been preparing for it for some time.

We commenced a review of our services last year and, while some tough decisions had to be taken, the council has saved the £645,000 needed to produce a balanced budget.

This budget is the result of strong financial discipline, prudent management and a committed and dedicated workforce.

Ribble Valley residents quite rightly expect high levels of service and our dedicated staff have proved time and again that they are willing to go the extra mile for our customers. But don't just take our word for it. This report also features some of the comments received from appreciative residents throughout the year.

We hope you enjoy reading this annual report and would welcome your comments at ce@ribblevalley.gov.uk. Meanwhile, we look forward to continuing to serve our residents, partners and visitors.

I am writing to express my thanks and congratulations that council tax has been frozen for the third year running. As a disabled senior citizen, I have to express my relief at not having to find the money to pay an increase.



Michael Ranson

Leader, Ribble Valley Borough Council



Marshal Scott

Chief Executive, Ribble Valley Borough Council



L-R: Chief Executive Marshal Scott, Director of Resources Jane Pearson and Director of Community Services John Heap

Meet the team

Ribble Valley Borough Council has 40 councillors representing 24 wards. The council is run by the Conservative group, which has 34 seats, while the remaining 10 seats are split between the Liberal Democrats, with five, and one independent. The Conservative Group is led by Michael Ranson, who is known as the Council Leader, and the Liberal Democrats by Allan Knox, who is known as the Leader of the Opposition.

Ribble Valley councillors are generally approachable people, with the best interests of the community at heart.

If you are concerned about a local issue, they will be happy to hear what you have to say. Visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk for your councillor's contact details.

Ribble Valley Borough Council's constitution sets out how the organisation operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that ensure those decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable.

Decisions at Ribble Valley Borough Council are made by four service committees, namely planning and development, community, health and housing, policy and finance.

Their work is supported by a licensing committee and an accounts and audit committee that deal with regulatory business.

Day-to-day business at Ribble Valley Borough Council is overseen by a corporate management team comprising a chief executive and two directors, one for Resources and one for Community Services.

Committee meetings are held in the Ribble Valley Civic Suite in Church Street, Clitheroe, and usually start at 6.30pm.

Members of the public are welcome to attend and a calendar of meetings and committee agendas are available at www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

“ This is just a quick note to say the street party was a great success and the administration remarkably straightforward. Thank you for your help. ”

At your service

Chief Executive Marshal Scott has day-to-day responsibility for Ribblesdale Borough Council and its 270 staff. He is assisted by a management team of two, namely Director of Community Services John Heap and Director of Resources Jane Pearson.

The Chief Executive's Department is divided into three service units: Regeneration and Housing, Legal and Democratic Services and Environmental Health.

Regeneration and Housing is responsible for the authority's economic development, regeneration, forward planning and strategic housing functions. Production of the Sustainable Community Strategy, which coordinates the actions of the public, private and voluntary sectors in meeting community aspirations, needs and priorities, also falls within its remit. Legal and Democratic Services is responsible for legal matters, licensing, electoral registration and elections. It prepares and distributes agendas, and offers support to the borough mayor. Environmental Health deals with food safety, pollution and pest control, building control and manages Clitheroe Market and Clitheroe Cemetery.



The Resources Department, headed by Jane Pearson, is also divided into three service units, namely Financial, Revenues and Benefits, and Human Resources. Financial Services and Revenues and Benefits are responsible for accounting, collecting council tax and business rates, processing claims for housing and council tax benefit, debt collection and information technology, while Human Resources provides personnel and corporate support to the authority, including communications, policy and performance, health and safety, printing and typing.



Community Services, headed by John Heap, is also divided into three service units: Engineering, Culture and Leisure, and Planning, which deal with many of the council's "essential" services, such as engineering, refuse collection, recycling and street cleansing, as well as other "quality of life" services, such as tourism and arts, sports and leisure, health and fitness, and crime prevention, and of course planning applications.



“ The refuse collectors did a fine job over Christmas, despite the awful conditions. Please thank them for us. In this season of local authority bashing, we just want to say that we appreciate the good service. ”

A year in Ribble Valley

From Warm Homes, Healthy People to Together We Can, Farm Watch to Weigh-2-Go, Ribble Valley Borough Council was at the forefront of some exciting initiatives in 2011/12 with the lowest council tax in Lancashire.

April

- Budding knights slay their boredom at Clitheroe Castle by trying their hand at medieval combat training during a St George's Extravaganza also featuring a dragon hunt, storytelling and weapons handling.
- Company director and bell-ringer Simon Hore is installed as the new Mayor of Ribble Valley and names his chosen charities as Crossroads Care and Macmillan Cancer Support.



August

- Thousands of food enthusiasts descend on Clitheroe for the second Clitheroe Food Festival sponsored and supported by Ribble Valley Borough Council.
- Ribble Valley Borough Council launches grants of up to £30,000 for disabled people to alter their houses with a range of adaptations, from ramps and stair-lifts, to walk-in showers and even ground floor extensions, with up to 40 properties a year receiving assistance.



May

- Ribble Valley goes to the polls in local elections, with over 90 candidates standing in 21 of the borough's 24 wards, as well as in two parishes and four out of five wards for Clitheroe Town Council. There is also a referendum on a proposed alternative voting system.
- Thousands of arts and music enthusiasts descend on Ribble Valley for MayFest, a month-long celebration of art, music, dance and theatre.



September

- A Ribble Valley Borough Council partnership project aimed at tackling rural isolation and improving access to services wins the Government's Together We Can Award that showcases projects improving neighbourhoods and supporting the Big Society.
- Up to £500 is made available to Ribble Valley households for the installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar heating panels and domestic wind turbines.



June

- Ribble Valley councillor Joyce Holgate is awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to local government after 16 years as ward representative for Whalley.



October

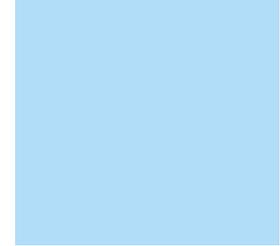
- The award-winning Ribble Valley Food Trail featuring 34 food producers, shops and restaurants noted for top-quality food, exceptional customer service and provenance: food produced, sourced and consumed locally, is re-launched three years after being a runaway success.
- Energy efficiency at Ribble Valley Borough Council buildings goes into the green thanks to the installation of environmentally-friendly technology, including motion-sensory lighting and state-of-the-art hand-dryers.



July

- Ribble Valley Borough Council launches a sporting campaign, called 20-12, offering free taster sessions in 20 activities over 12 days to encourage residents of all ages to take part in sport in the build-up to the London 2012 Olympics.





November

- Ribble Valley Borough Council backs a £50,000 Lottery bid for the restoration of a 13th Century chapel and choir pits that have fallen into disrepair at historic Whalley Abbey.



- Clitheroe Market joins the resurgence in Ribble Valley food by welcoming specialist food trader Continental Foods stocking a feast of European delicacies, such as German soup, Italian pasta, cured meats from Poland, Spain and Germany, and speciality breads.

December

- Ribble Valley Borough Council launches a campaign to improve domestic recycling featuring stickers on the lids of blue wheelie bins advising householders what can and cannot be recycled and posters on the sides of refuse collection vehicles outlining the dos and don'ts of recycling.
- Landlords are offered up to 50 per cent of the cost of converting or renovating properties as part of a Ribble Valley Borough Council scheme to tackle the borough's chronic shortage of affordable housing.



January

- Elderly residents are invited to get cosy thanks to a new Ribble Valley Borough Council scheme offering free warm home packs and energy efficiency advice. Warm Homes Healthy People offers free electric blankets, fleece shawls, hats and gloves, flasks and thermos cups, nightlights, slippers vouchers, draft-proofing and radiator reflectors, and is subsequently cited by the Government as an example of best practice.



February

- Thrifty Ribble Valley Borough Council announces a council tax freeze for the third year running, despite a 13 per cent reduction in Government grants. Support for charities and voluntary organisations is also maintained.
- Popular Ribble Valley Borough Council weight management scheme Weigh-2-Go is made available by self-referral to anyone with weight problems.
- Residents and shoppers in Ribble Valley are now able to "spend a penny" in shops and restaurants for free thanks to a new Community Toilet Scheme, whereby shops and businesses across the borough make their toilet facilities available to the general public without the need to make a purchase.



March

- Ribble Valley Borough Council joins forces with the police in a tough crackdown on criminals travelling into the borough from surrounding towns and cities to steal livestock, fuel, scrap metal, agricultural machinery and vehicles. Bold signs with the message, Thieves Beware, are placed on all roads into the borough.
- Refurbishment work starts on the main reception at the Ribble Valley Borough Council Offices in Clitheroe to make it more customer-friendly and cost-effective featuring three customer service desks, three new interview rooms, two payments areas, a public IT point allowing public access to the internet, a new customer-facing location for the council's contact centre and a staff entrance. The Clitheroe visitor information centre sited at the council's main reception moves to the Platform Gallery in Station Road, Clitheroe.



Thrifty Business

As with other councils, our funding from the Government, called formula grant, has been substantially reduced in 2011/12 and will reduce by 25 per cent over the next two years.

Our Band D council tax for 2012/13 has been frozen at £140.69, which is only £2.71 per week and remains the lowest of all the district authorities in Lancashire, and one of the lowest in the country.

We have managed to achieve this as a result of our strong financial discipline, prudent management and a committed and dedicated workforce.

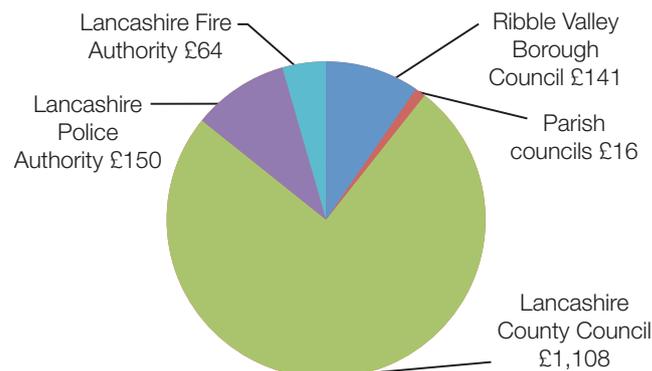
Band D Council Tax 2012/13



Council tax includes charges, known as precepts, from other organisations, such as Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire Police Authority, which determines the final bill received by householders.

	2011/12 £	2012/13 £
Ribble Valley Borough Council	141	141
Parish Councils	16	16
Lancashire County Council	1,108	1,108
Lancashire Police Authority	146	150
Lancashire Fire Authority	64	64
Total	£1,475	£1,479

Precepts 2012/13

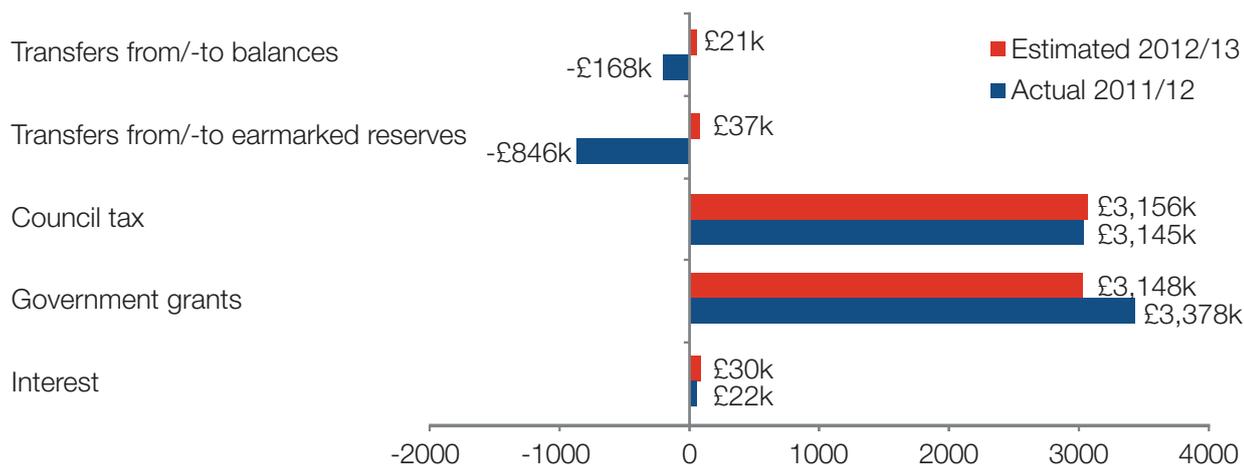


Income

After reducing expenditure by fees and charges, Ribble Valley Borough Council's spending plans are financed via the following income sources:

- Government grants, such as revenue support grant and redistributed business rates
- Interest
- Use of balances and reserves
- Council tax

Income Sources	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000
Interest	22	30
Government grants	3,378	3,148
Council tax	3,145	3,156
Transfers from/-to earmarked reserves	-846	37
Transfers from/-to balances	-168	21
	5,531	6,392



Expenditure

Each year, Ribble Valley Borough Council sets a budget based on its corporate priorities. The table shows our spending plans for the current and last financial year.

For 2011/12 our share of the council tax equates to £2.71 per week per household, which is 9.5 per cent of the total council tax bill.

We use this money to provide a wide range of services, such as planning and development control, recycling and refuse collection, strategic housing, sports and leisure, tourism and arts, environmental health and housing benefit.

Service	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000
Management and administration Corporate management, council tax and business rates collection, treasury management, meals-on-wheels, elections, democracy, mayoral services, grants to voluntary organisations, administration, land charges and economic development	1,736	2,245
Community services Cultural activities, environmental health, recreation and leisure, tourism, refuse collection, recycling, highways, car parks and CCTV	3,345	3,322
Planning and development Planning, building control, countryside management, footpaths and bridleways	578	515
Health and housing Housing and council tax benefits, homelessness, administration of improvement grants, markets and environmental health	455	671
Net expenditure on services	6,114	6,753



Working for you

Ribble Valley Borough Council's corporate strategy sets out the strategic direction of the borough from 2011 to 2015.

It ensures that council services meet the needs of the community and is reviewed annually.

It contains five corporate priorities, each of which has a number of objectives, underlying actions and key measures of success:

- To ensure that Ribble Valley Borough Council is well managed and provides efficient services based on identified customer needs
- To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- To help make people's lives safer and healthier
- To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the borough
- To match the supply of homes in the borough with identified housing needs

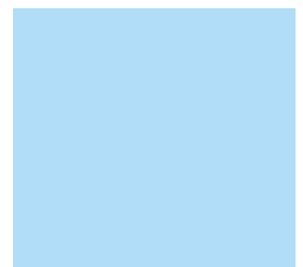
“ You do a wonderful job of keeping the cemetery looking so nice. It is such a peaceful place to visit, with all the trees and flowers. I still find it hard to live without my wife. We were married for almost 50 years. At least I have somewhere to visit, where I can feel close to her. ”

Working together

Ribble Valley Borough Council also works closely with key partners, such as Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary, East Lancashire Primary Care Trust and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, as well as business and community leaders.

- The Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership – Working together to identify and implement ways to reduce crime and disorder
- Clitheroe Town Team – Working together to drive forward the future economic prosperity of Clitheroe and the Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan
- The Lancashire Waste Partnership – Working together to implement an integrated waste management system, including comprehensive kerbside collection of recyclable and non-recyclable waste
- The Collaborative Research and Consultation Service – Working together to offer consultation and research into all aspects of life in East Lancashire

“ Just a line to say that a week or so ago I rang and asked for the leaves between my house and the house opposite to be cleared. Your staff came today and made an excellent job of it. Please pass on my thanks. ”





Measuring up

Ribble Valley Borough Council monitors and manages its performance against a range of performance indicators and actions.

The indicators capture and manage information relevant to the community.

Some indicators reflect people's perception about the area and others monitor services provided by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

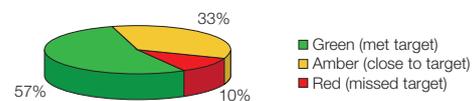
Our high-performing areas in 2011/12 included:

- High level of invoices paid within 30 days
- Low level of residual household waste per household
- Low level of fly-posting
- Low level of graffiti
- Fast benefits processing times (new claims and changes)
- Low level of working days lost due to sickness absence
- High percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting
- High level of council tax and non-domestic rates collected

Analysis shows that of 70 indicators compared to target for 2011/12:

- 57 per cent met target (green)
- 33 per cent were close to target (amber)
- 10 per cent missed target (red)

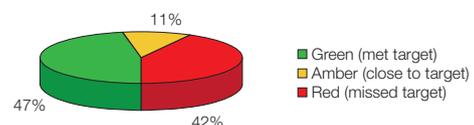
Performance compared to target



Analysis shows that of 79 indicators where performance can be compared over the years:

- 47 per cent improved
- 11 per cent stayed the same
- 42 per cent worsened

Performance over time



Areas for improvement

Ribble Valley Borough Council still has a number of measures that are not meeting the standards expected and we will be working to address these.

Some of the areas we will be targeting for improvement this year are:

- Number of affordable homes delivered
- Reducing dog fouling
- Recycling of waste material
- Number of people participating in sport three or more times per week

Figures you can count on

Ribble Valley Borough Council takes data quality seriously, as financial and performance data provides vital management information, and informs day-to-day decision-making. The council has a policy setting out its commitment to data that is accurate, reliable, complete, relevant, understandable, timely and valid. This is supported by an action plan, working procedures, regular training and clear responsibilities to make data quality a reality. We undertake rigorous internal checks on performance data and have received a clean bill of health for our results.

“ Would you please pass on our thanks and appreciation to your street cleansing team for their prompt, efficient and courteous service. The residents are very grateful. ”





Have your say

Would you like to influence Ribble Valley Borough Council's policies and services?

Ribble Valley Borough Council has joined forces with Burnley, Pendle and Hyndburn Borough Councils, and the East Lancashire Primary Care Trust, to run an interactive web site, www.feedbackonline.org.uk.

Feedb@ck Online is an interactive and user-friendly web site featuring information from a wide range of public service providers and community reporters that allows residents to tailor the content to their area and interests.

The web site keeps residents informed about decisions that are being made about the area, allows them to take part in consultations and look at previous results, join discussion forums, create or add their name to petitions on local issues and read community reports.

A survey of the web site found that 75 per cent of respondents agreed it kept them up-to-date.

The council also has a citizens' panel called Feedb@ck, which is consulted on a wide range of issues and provides regular and accurate information on public opinion,

feedback on new ideas and development, input into service improvement and the opportunity for focused surveys among particular sub-groups.

Further information about Feedb@ck Online or joining the citizens' panel is available from the council's policy team on 01200 414421.

Otherwise, call us on 01200 425111, or pop into STAN the Van next time it is over your way. We will be happy to hear from you.

“ One of the main reasons we visit Ribble Valley, apart from its beauty, is the way in which the council's dedicated staff maintain the environment. ”



Contact us

Ribble Valley Borough Council's main offices are at Church Walk, Clitheroe. Please call in. Our opening hours are 8.45am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The council runs the Allpay card payment system at village outlets across Ribble Valley for the payment of council tax. Further details are available from the council tax team 01200 414441.

A mobile office called STAN: Services to a Neighbourhood, also tours Ribble Valley on a regular basis

STAN is a state-of-the-art mobile unit with a host of information, advice and access to Ribble Valley Borough Council services. A full timetable is available at www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk

Pay your council tax, view planning applications or find out what's on. You can do it all online at www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk

Finally, give us a call on 01200 425111. Our contact centre staff will be happy to deal with your query or forward you to the relevant department.



Everyone featured in this publication is an employee, member, customer or partner of Ribble Valley Borough Council. This report was produced by Ribble Valley Borough Council's communications unit. If you have any feedback, require further copies, or copies in other formats, please phone 01200 414483.

Front cover photographs: Martin Cowey, Jon Sparks, Clitheroe Advertiser and Times, Sunrise Photography.

