



Council Tax – the Parished vs the Unparished.

It is yet to be established by the West Surrey Council whether it will change the current arrangements but for the moment, within Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) arrangements, both Parished and Unparished areas all pay the same basic local tax, by bands, with the Parished areas paying an extra precept to fund hyper local amenities such as Parish Halls, allotments, cemeteries or local play areas etc by their choice.

A fairness issue arises because, in the Unparished areas, the Local Authority steps in to maintain those local amenities funded by the general Council Tax. This means that Parish residents are effectively paying twice, once to maintain their own amenities through their Parish Precept and again through their Borough Tax to maintain the Unparished areas.



Unlike other parts of the country, SHBC does not employ a “special expenses” levy to artificially raise the tax rate for Unparished areas, instead, Unparished residents pay the baseline rate (only), while Parished residents pay exactly the same baseline rate, plus their local Parish Council precept.

SHBC is divided as follows:

- The Unparished areas (the Western Urban sprawl) Camberley, Frimley, Frimley Green, Mytchett and Deepcut.
- The Parished areas (the Eastern rural and semi rural) Bisley, Chobham, West End, Windlesham, Bagshot & Lightwater.

Every resident of SHBC pays the core baseline bill consisting of three components, regardless of where they live;

- Surrey County Council (approx 74% of the total)
- Police and Crime Commissioner (approx 13% of the total)
- SHBC (approx 10% for its core services).

The variation in final bills comes down to who “owns” and manages the local micro services. In the Unparished areas to the west, residents pay only the core baseline bill – with no Parish Councils to charge an extra precept, the Borough steps in and manages the hyper local amenities out of their general budget. In the Parished areas to the East, residents pay not only the core baseline bill but plus the extra Parish Precept set independently by each Parish Council to maintain their hyper local amenities.

As Parish Councils can set their tax requirements independently without a government cap, the extra amount varies from village to village. The Unparished are the electoral majority within West Surrey – estimated 70% and in Surrey Heath estimated 67%. The disparity must be seen as a matter of concern in my view along with a redefinition of roles to meet the needs of 2026.

windlesham.life is in the business of opinions as in this case. Your views will be welcomed.

