

Are you missing out on your



FairShare

Did you know that in Aberdeenshire Council:

- Our Government grant per head of population is now 12.7% below the Scottish average?
- £63 million has had to be cut from budgets between 1996 and 2002 - meaning we have £63 million less each year to spend on your services?
- Spending is 9.7% below the Scottish average?

This means that you are missing out!

Government grant meets about three quarters of our spending. Aberdeenshire Council's FairShare campaign, which has all-party support within the Council, has been pushing to try to increase the Government's financial support to the area. We do not want to do better than other councils, we just want a fairer share of public funds, on your behalf.

Read on to see what we could do for you if we had our fair share of funds and how you can help us make the case...

What could we do with the money?

If we were funded at the average rate per head in Scotland, we would gain an additional **£61 million** every year.

That would let us:

- Maintain all roads to national minimum standards (£9 million).
- Provide more Social Work services to our most vulnerable citizens (£4 million).
- Put more teachers into classes (£4 million).

- Maintain and enhance publicly-owned buildings such as schools and libraries to acceptable standards (£37 million).
- Tackle waste management issues (£4 million).
- Improve the quality of service to the public across the board by providing appropriate staff resources (£2 million).
- Address the challenges of demographic change within Aberdeenshire (£1 million).
- Avoid cutting services as a result of the reduction in Government Grant.
- And tackle many other issues our residents tell us about.

Why not increase Council Tax?

In 1996 Aberdeenshire took over an unacceptable position where spending had to be cut to stay within Government-imposed spending limits, while demand for services was unmet.

Our Council Tax was one of Scotland's lowest. But many urban councils in the Central Belt had high spending levels and were allowed to go on spending at this level and levy high Council Taxes.

In 2001, Aberdeenshire Council took the bold decision to set Council Tax increases well above inflation to avoid further cuts in services.

Despite this, in 2012/13 Aberdeenshire has the 15th lowest Council Tax out of 32 Scottish councils, and is rated by Audit Scotland, HM Inspector of Schools and others as one of the best managed and prudent councils.

In 2011/12 & 2012/13 Aberdeenshire Council did not raise Council Tax.



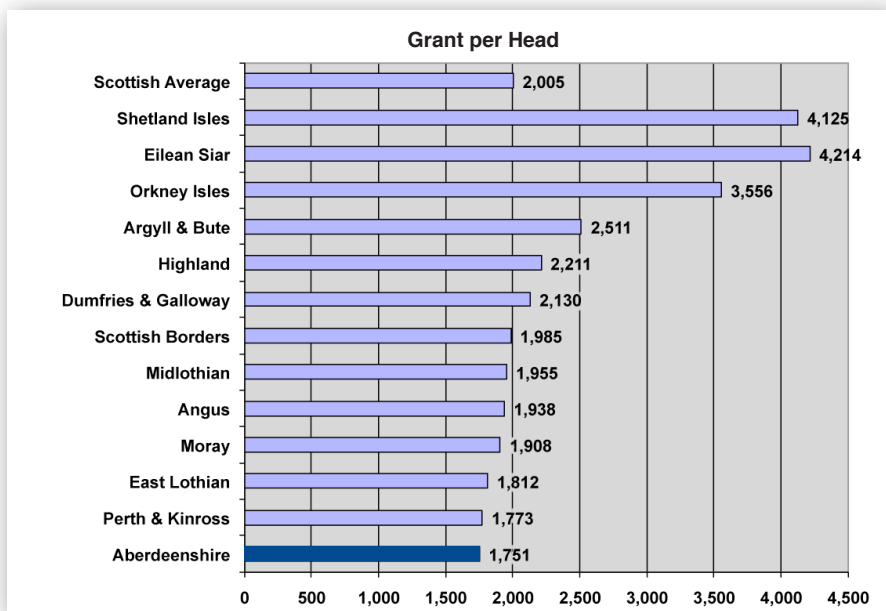
However, the Council has had to make **£52 million** of savings to achieve a balanced budget. This was somewhat mitigated by a robust review of Service budget assumptions and the continuing pursuit of economies and efficiencies.

In future years Aberdeenshire Council will have to make significant savings as it tackles a growing and ageing population, greater demand for services and reductions in Government Grant.

What about others like us?

Aberdeenshire's grant in 2012/13 is 12.7% below the Scottish average. While it is true that we do not have the problems of some other areas, you might expect that councils similar to ourselves would have similar funding. However, this table of similar councils clearly shows that this is not the case:

Aberdeenshire is the worst off of all rural councils. Whatever way you look at it, this simply doesn't stack up.



What needs to be done?

Improve the existing arrangements:

Our grant is based on nearly 100 factors, including the number of shellfish farms! Several of these factors are seriously flawed. For example, our grant for school transport is **£4 million**, yet we need to spend **£15.5 million** every year.

Simplify the grant system:

The way council grants are shared out is unfair. The existing system, which has been in place since the 1970s, is no longer fit for its purpose. About 75% of the grant is based on 12 factors mostly relating to population and numbers of school children.

As so much of what we do relates to people, population should be the major factor in any new scheme. A simpler grant system could give us an extra **£19 million** each year to spend on your services.

Support the FairShare campaign

A full paper on our FairShare campaign can be found on our website at:

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/fairshare

Details are also available from:

Alan Wood
Head of Finance
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
ABERDEEN
AB16 5GB
Tel: 01224 664202

Email: finance@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

If you are an individual or a member of a community council, residents' association, club or society and want to help us campaign for a fairer share of Government grant to provide you with better council services, please contact us.

March 2012

