



Council tax information 2018/19

Explaining the amount of council tax which you will pay towards the services we will provide over the course of the financial year, 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Your council tax helps pay for services in the local area, such as education, caring for people in need, maintaining the road network, and protecting our environment. It also pays for services at town and parish level, as well as supporting the emergency services such as the fire service and the police.

The money raised through Council Tax is shared out between the following authorities:

- Your local council/s (including town and parish)
- Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner

This page explains the amount of council tax which you will pay towards the services we will provide over the course of the financial year, 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

For 2018-19 Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority agreed a 2.99 per cent rise in its council tax, which means that the amount paid by a band D taxpayer will rise from £60.88 a year to £62.70 a year. This £1.82 increase, which equates to about 15p a month, will come into effect on 1 April 2018.

Councillor Roger Reed, Chairman of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, said: "Over the previous seven years, our council tax increases have amounted to an average of 25p a year. "Our staff have been excellent in changing the way they work and are certainly doing more than they ever have before to ensure that the community gets the best possible service." He added: "The government placed a three per cent cap on our council tax rise this year, even though we put the case strongly for a much higher limit. "We will continue to make our case to the government in the hope of securing additional funding next year. For example, a rise in the region of an extra £10 a year on council tax would still put us below the average for fire authorities across England and below the average for parish councils."

We will spend £28.5 million (£35.65 per head of population) on providing services to you. Our services are funded by Government grants and business rates (£11.58 per head of population) and council tax (£24.07 per head of population).

Council tax bills in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes include the following totals per home to pay for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) in 2018-19.

Band	Amount
A	£41.80
B	£48.77
C	£55.73
D	£62.70
E	£76.63
F	£90.57
G	£104.50
H	£125.40

Less than 4p from every £1 of council tax paid in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes goes to Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. The rest goes towards the cost of services provided by councils and the police.

Where the money comes from

The funding settlement for 2018-19 was announced on 6 February 2018. The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from:

Table: Where the money comes from	2017-18 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Revenue Support Grant and business rates	£8,635	£8,158
Specific grants	£1,074	£1,097
Council tax	£18,327	£19,237
Use of Reserves	£150	£0
Total	£28,186	£28,492

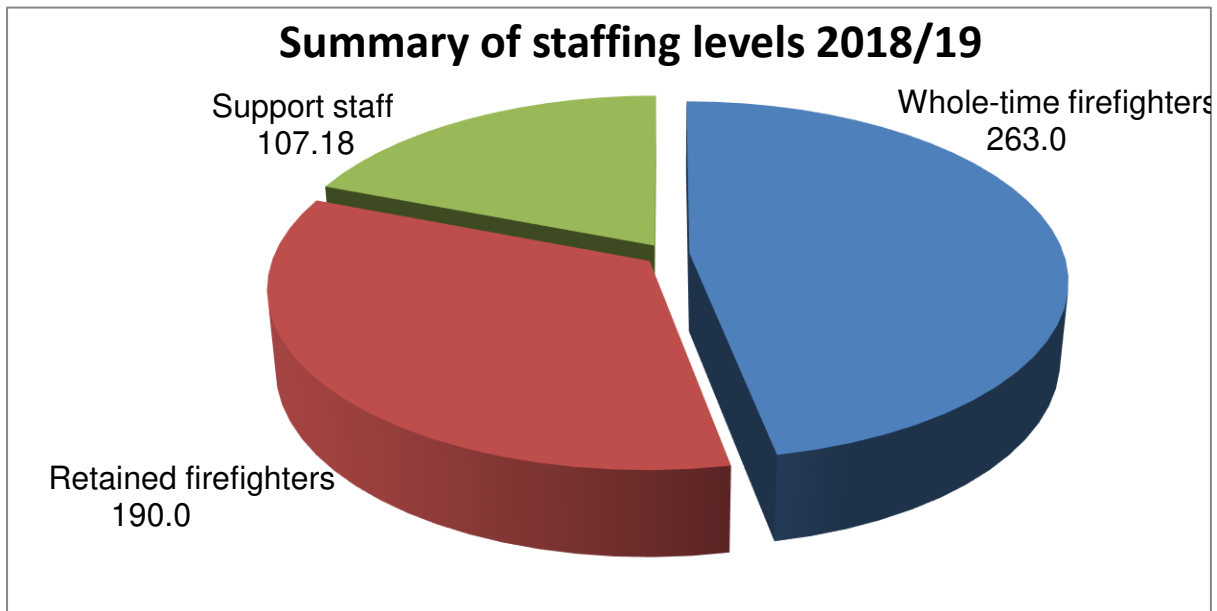
Where the money goes

In this challenging financial environment, work continues to achieve a balanced budget, progressing in line with our Public Safety Plan for 2015-20 so that we can carry on as usual without detriment to public safety or emergency responses.

The Fire Authority has taken a number of measures already and plans to do more to ensure that it continues to meet the priorities set out in the Public Safety Plan. For 2018-19 we will continue to make further savings through a number of initiatives, which involve better ways of working and consolidating workforce plans to meet our vision for the longer term. We are investing in more up-to-date technology, new ways of working and are pursuing avenues which aim to share costs with our community partners and other fire authorities.

Table: Where the money goes	2017-18 £'000	2018-19 £'000
Employees	£19,676	£20,067
Premises	£1,765	£1,516
Transport	£765	£1,070
Supplies and services	£2,762	£3,047
Agency payments	£1,774	£1,181
Capital charges	£2,324	£2,433
Contributions to reserves	£0	£0
Income	-£880	-£822
Net budget requirement	£28,186	£28,492

Included within employee costs are the National Insurance contributions required by employers, and pension contributions set in accordance with relevant pension schemes regulations.



(Figures in the table above are based on full-time equivalents and exclude apprentices)

In 2018-19 BFRS will welcome a further 12 apprentice firefighters, continuing its plan to recruit and develop young people into careers across the Authority and the Government's nationwide commitment to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020.

The firefighter apprentices will train for the same qualification that trainee firefighters have to attain and are employed via the Apprentice Training Agency (ATA). They offer BFRS an opportunity to refresh the workforce, while the organisation continues to plan and develop its operational resources for the future.

Retained firefighters represent an efficient and flexible alternative to traditional staffing methods while maintaining response capabilities. As a result of this, we plan to recruit and retain more of these firefighters over the coming years.

Employee costs include costs for training our staff to ensure that they are well prepared for any event that they may be required to attend, and are skilled to the appropriate level to help you at a variety of different types of incident.

As well as responding to fires, our firefighters are needed in situations involving road traffic collisions, flood response, specialist rescue, hazardous substance incidents, home fire risk checks and fire safety enforcement. Each requires highly qualified, experienced and expert staff, ready to respond to an emergency 24 hours a day.

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority will continue the close scrutiny and challenge of revenue growth and savings proposals as well as all capital projects. Funding for initiatives in the capital programme comes from a mixture of specific Government grants and contributions from revenue. The Authority currently has no plans to borrow any additional money.

We continue to strive to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel, but also to achieve this at the lowest cost to those we serve.