



Council tax information 2020/21

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 2020 to 31 March 2021.

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 2020 to 31 March 2021.

For 2020-21 Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority agreed a 1.98 per cent rise in its council tax, which means that the amount paid by a band D taxpayer will rise from £64.57 a year to £65.85 a year. This £1.28 increase, which equates to just under 11p a month, will come into effect on 1 April 2020.

We will spend £31.3 million (£38.75 per head of population) on providing services to you. Our services are funded by Government grants and business rates (£13.11 per head of population) and council tax (£25.64 per head of population).

Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets, said: “In its report published in December 2019, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services noted that they would like to see improvements to our service in the year ahead, but they also stated that without increased funding it would be difficult to see where progress can be made.

“Although our budget for the year has increased by £1 million in cash terms, the reality is that half of this is required to meet the inflationary cost pressures. This leaves a limited amount available to invest in improving the service. This year we have adopted a zero-based approach to our budgeting, which has reviewed every area to ensure that every pound is being spent as effectively as possible.

“In spite of the budgetary constraints I am pleased to say that over the coming year we are investing in up to twenty more firefighters, as well as strengthening our protection and prevention teams.”

Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE, Chairman of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, said: “It is disappointing that even with the results of the inspection report that no additional Government funding has been made available for the service. We will continue to make our case to the Government in the hope of securing additional funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review.”

Council tax bills in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes include the following totals per home to pay for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) in 2020-21.

- Band A, £43.90
- Band B, £51.22
- Band C, £58.53
- Band D, £65.85
- Band E, £80.48
- Band F, £95.12
- Band G, £109.75
- Band H, £131.70

For a band D property, this equates to a council tax charge of £1.26 per week. Less than 4p from every £1 of council tax paid in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes goes to BFRS. The rest goes towards the cost of services provided by councils and the police.

Where the money comes from

The funding settlement for 2020-21 was announced on 06 February 2020. The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from:

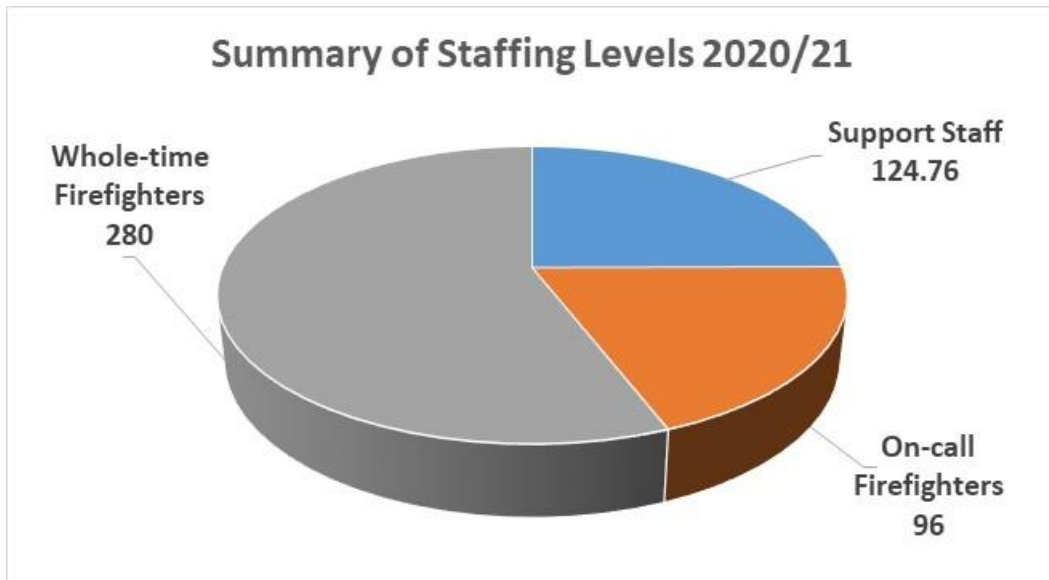
Table: Where the money comes from	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000
Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates	£8,876	£9,499
Specific Grants	£1,097	£1,106
Council Tax	£19,993	£20,734
Use of Reserves	£366	£0
Total	£30,332	£31,339

Where the money goes

The Medium Term Financial Plan will support the recently approved Public Safety Plan 2020-2025. For 2020-21 we will continue to improve our efficiency and effectiveness through a number of initiatives, which involve better ways of working to meet our vision for the longer term.

Table: Where the money goes	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000
Employees	£22,018	£23,443
Premises	£1,561	£1,594
Transport	£995	£1,045
Supplies and services	£3,476	£4,514
Agency payments	£940	£0
Capital charges	£2,024	£1,315
Contributions to reserves	£0	£11
Income	-£682	-£583
Net budget requirement	£30,332	£31,339

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]

From April 2020, we will be increasing the number of Wholetime Firefighter posts from 260 to 280. This will help to further strengthen our intelligence-led risk and demand model. Increases to our Protection and Prevention teams are shown within Support Staff in the above chart.

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 monitoring of our budgets, always looking to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. We continue to strive to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.