



Council tax information 2021/22

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 2021 to 31 March 2022.

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 2021 to 31 March 2022.

For 2021-22 Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority agreed a 1.99 per cent rise in its council tax, which means that the amount paid by a band D taxpayer will rise from £65.85 a year to £67.16 a year. This £1.31 increase, which equates to just under 11p a month, will come into effect on 1 April 2021.

We will spend £32.3 million (£39.68 per head of population) on providing services to you. Our services are funded by Government grants and business rates (£12.87 per head of population), council tax (£25.44 per head of population) and use of reserves (£1.37 per head of population).

Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets, said: "Producing a budget this year has been especially challenging due to the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on the economy, and in turn, public finances. Even at this stage, there is still uncertainty regarding the amount of Government support the Authority will receive during the coming year. This will depend on, amongst other things, the outturn position on the council tax and business rates collection funds, which won't be apparent for a number of months."

"With no flexibility to increase council tax above 2 per cent without triggering a referendum, the Authority is currently forecasting it needs to use £1.1m of reserves to balance the budget for the coming year."

Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE, Chairman of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, said: "I am extremely honoured to be Chairman of such a superb service that does so much for the residents that we look after."

"But using our reserves to balance the budget is obviously not sustainable. We will continue to lobby Government for the flexibility to increase council tax by up to £5 without the need for a referendum in 2022-23. However, should this not be forthcoming, the Authority has earmarked £600,000 to cover the cost of a potential referendum, should Members decide this is required in a future year".

Council tax bills in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes include the following totals per home to pay for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) in 2021-22:

Band	Per Week (£)	Per Month (£)	Per Year (£)
A	£0.86	£3.73	£44.77
B	£1.00	£4.35	£52.24
C	£1.14	£4.98	£59.70
D	£1.29	£5.60	£67.16
E	£1.57	£6.84	£82.08
F	£1.86	£8.08	£97.01
G	£2.15	£9.33	£111.93
H	£2.58	£11.19	£134.32

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 2021-22 was announced on 10 February 2021. The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from:

Table: Where the money comes from	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000
Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates	£9,499	£9,345
Specific Grants	£1,106	£1,123
Council Tax	£20,734	£20,696
Use of Reserves	£0	£1,113
Total	£31,339	£32,277

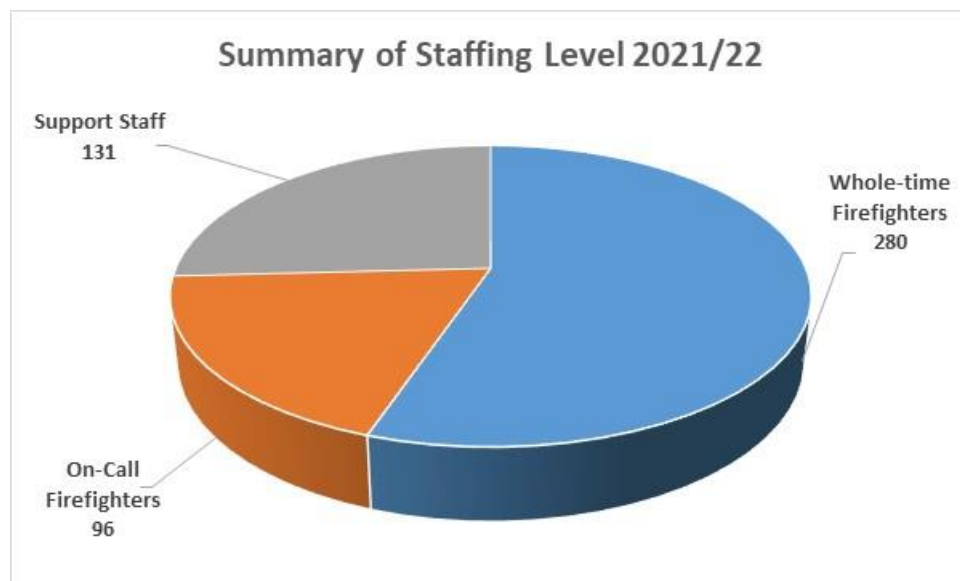
Where the money goes

The Medium-Term Financial Plan will support the recently approved Public Safety Plan 2020-2025. For 2021-22 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	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000
Employees	£23,443	£24,102
Premises	£1,594	£1,542
Transport	£1,045	£1,098
Supplies and services	£4,514	£4,189
Capital charges	£1,315	£1,784
Contributions to reserves	£11	£0
Income	-£583	-£438
Net budget requirement	£31,339	£32,277

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

Staffing Levels



[Figures in the table above are based on full-time equivalents]

From April 2020, we have increased the number of Whole-time Firefighter posts from 260 to 280. This has helped to further strengthen our intelligence-led risk and demand model. We have supported other front-line services throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have been able to support our South-Central Ambulance service by seconding our staff and allowing them to support the ambulance service. Furthermore, with the development of the Covid vaccine, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have actively been involved and played a key part in the set-up and supporting the roll out of vaccine via the mass vaccination centres.

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.

The pandemic has had a direct impact on the level of funding we have budgeted for 2021/22. With the increasing level of unemployment and businesses having to close throughout the lockdown, this has had a considerable impact on our funding as most of our funding is from council tax and business rates. In order to mitigate the impact this has on the level of service Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue provide to its community, we will continue to closely monitor our budgets, always looking to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. We will continue to strive to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.