



Buckinghamshire
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
we save lives

Council tax information 2022/23

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 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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 2022 to 31 March 2023.

This year the government have given the option to the lowest eight charging fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) the flexibility to increase their band D precept by £5 in 2022-23 without the need to hold a referendum. This is to assist these FRAs in addressing immediate pressures and to maintain a sustainable income baseline for future years. Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is included within these eight FRAs.

For 2022-23 Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority agreed a £5 increase in its council tax, which means that the amount paid by a band D taxpayer will rise from £67.16 a year to £72.16 a year. This £5 increase, which equates to just under 10p a week, will come into effect on 1 April 2022. The Service's most recent report (December 2021) by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) noted in its summary that they "are encouraged by the service's work to improve value for money, but [we] still have concerns about the service's funding model as its limited reserves are being used to supplement funding of its response functions." The £5 increase in precept has resulted in approximately £1.15m additional funding compared to a precept increase of 2%.

We will spend £33.48 million (£40.97 per head of population) on providing services to you. Our services are funded by Government grants and business rates (£12.85 per head of population) and council tax (£28.12 per head of population).

Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets, said: "We welcome the additional precept flexibility for which we have been lobbying for several years. This funding will predominantly be utilised to recruit additional Firefighters to enhance our response functions and increase the funding for our capital programme, in the process addressing concerns raised within the HMICFRS report."

Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE, Chairman of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, said: "It has taken several years of lobbying to allow the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority to raise the precept by £5. Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority provides a superb service to the residents of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and the many communities it serves, this additional funding will allow us to improve the quality of service we offer."

"It was not an easy decision to make in the current economic climate. However, we believe we provide a vital service that our communities need to keep themselves safe. The additional funding will also go a long way in maintaining a sustainable income base and it will assist us in balancing our budget for the future."

Council tax bills in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes include the following totals per home to pay for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority in 2022-23:

Band	Per Week (£)	Per Month (£)	Per Year (£)
A	£0.92	£4.01	£48.11
B	£1.08	£4.68	£56.12
C	£1.23	£5.35	£64.14
D	£1.38	£6.01	£72.16
E	£1.69	£7.35	£88.20
F	£2.00	£8.69	£104.23
G	£2.31	£10.02	£120.27
H	£2.77	£12.03	£144.32

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 2022-23 was announced on 07 February 2022. The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from:

Table: Where the money comes from		2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates		£9,345	£9,389
Specific Grants		£1,123	£1,110
Council Tax		£20,696	£22,981
Use of Reserves		£1,113	£0
Total		£32,277	£33,480

Where the money goes

The Medium-Term Financial Plan will support the approved Public Safety Plan 2020-2025. For 2022-23 the additional precept flexibility will allow us to recruit additional firefighters, as well as allowing us to invest more in our capital programme than we could have done without this additional flexibility.

Table: Where the money goes	2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Employees	£24,102	£25,048
Premises	£1,542	£1,853
Transport	£1,098	£1,093
Supplies and services	£4,189	£4,298
Capital charges	£1,784	£1,616
Income	-£438	-£428
Net budget requirement	£32,277	£33,480

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 (FTEs) as at 1st April 2022]

We currently have an establishment of 280 Whole-time Firefighter posts which was increased from 260 in April 2020. Our On-call establishment is 96.76 FTEs and Support Staff is 129.56 FTEs. Every role within the fire service plays a vital part in ensuring that we provide a quality service to the communities we serve. The plan is to increase the total number of posts within the organisation during 2022-23, which will further improve our response and other functions.

In 2021/22 we continued to support other emergency services in response to Covid-19. A number of operational staff were seconded and supported the South Central Ambulance Service. With the introduction of the booster vaccine and new Covid variants, we have been involved in the smooth running of vaccination centres across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

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 incidents. 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. We will continue to strive to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.