



Council tax information 2023/24

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 2023 to 31 March 2024.

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 2023 to 31 March 2024.

This year the government proposed additional precept flexibility to all FRAs to increase their precept by up to £5 for 2023/24 only without the need to hold a referendum. The inability to increase precepts significantly had been a major limiting factor for the Service as FRAs are restricted by the core referendum principles for Council Tax increases, which until recently had effectively restricted precept increases to either 2% or 3% each year. The impact this has on our Service is significant given most of our funding is from Council Tax and we have one of the lowest Band D equivalent charges of any standalone FRS.

For 2023-24 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 £72.16 a year to £77.16 a year. This £5 increase, which equates to just under 10p a week, will come into effect on 1 April 2023. In the previous year, we also had the opportunity to increase our council tax by £5 (an option only available to services in the lowest quartile for Band D Council Tax) which enabled us to increase our operational establishment by 20 to 300. The £5 precept increase in 2023/24 will allow the Service to maintain those staffing levels in the face of substantial pay and non-pay inflationary pressures.

We will spend £36.45 million (£40.39 per head of population) on providing services to you. Our services are funded by Government grants and business rates (£16.35 per head of population) and council tax (£29.99 per head of population). The business rates funding for 2023/24 contains a significant one-off amount due to adjustments made in relation to prior years. Therefore, an amount of £2.478 million will be transferred to reserves to fund our future transformation and capital programme, and mitigate the impact of potential funding reductions in 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 2023-24:

Band	Per Week (£)	Per Month (£)	Per Year (£)
A	£0.99	£4.29	£51.44
B	£1.15	£5.00	£60.01
C	£1.32	£5.72	£68.59
D	£1.48	£6.43	£77.16
E	£1.81	£7.86	£94.31
F	£2.14	£9.29	£111.45
G	£2.47	£10.72	£128.60
H	£2.96	£12.86	£154.32

Approximately 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 2023-24 was announced on 06 February 2023. The table below shows the breakdown of where our funding comes from:

Table: Where the money comes from	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates	£9,389	£12,745
Specific Grants	£1,110	£989
Council Tax	£22,981	£25,194
Use of Reserves/ (Contribution to Reserves)	£0	-£2,478
Total	£33,480	£36,450

Where the money goes

The Medium-Term Financial Plan will support the approved Public Safety Plan 2020-2025. For 2023-24 the additional precept flexibility will allow the Service to maintain current operational staffing levels in the face of substantial pay and non-pay inflationary pressures, 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		2022-23 £'000	2022-23 £'000
Employees		£25,048	£26,577
Premises		£1,853	£2,441
Transport		£1,093	£1,180
Supplies and services		£4,298	£5,652
Capital charges		£1,616	£1,876
Income		-£428	-£1,275
Net budget requirement		£33,480	£36,450

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 2023]

We currently have an establishment of 300 Whole-time Firefighter posts which was increased from 280 in April 2022. Our On-call establishment is 96 FTEs and Support Staff is 129.98 FTEs. Every role within the fire service plays a vital part in ensuring that we provide a quality service to the communities we serve.

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.