



Bedford Borough Council

Your Council Tax 2013 / 2014



This leaflet explains:

- How your Council Tax is spent on local services
- How your Council Tax bill is calculated

Your Council Tax 2013 / 2014

This leaflet explains how your Council Tax is used to help provide Council services in 2013/2014 and it also explains how your Council Tax bill is calculated.

The Council agreed its budget for 2013/2014 at Full Council on the 27 February 2013. There is an existing Corporate Plan for the four years 2012-2016. Together, these will shape the way the Council develops in the future and determine the priorities and services we provide.

A copy of the Corporate Plan can be found online at http://www.bedford.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/key_plans_and_strategies.aspx

The Council set a budget that will freeze the Borough's average Council Tax level at £1,304.84, the same as last year.



Council Budget

The 2013/2014 budget has been set in the context of the continuing downturn in the financial climate and a number of significant legislative changes affecting the funding of Local Government, including the localisation of Business Rates, and the changes to the benefits system resulting in the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Bedford Borough Council faced cuts in central government funding of £6 million, and as a result has had to make difficult decisions in order to set a balanced budget and keep Council Tax bills down whilst protecting front line services. A total of £9.9 million of modernisation proposals were agreed following consultation with local residents, enabling the Council to keep the Council Tax at a zero per cent increase whilst still maintaining front line services. In addition, the Council has been able to further invest in key services for vulnerable children, and adult social care.

Corporate Plan

The Council must spend every pound as efficiently as possible. This may mean providing services in different ways and certainly means the Council must respond to service needs as quickly and effectively as possible.

Bedford Borough Council is working with other public service providers in the region to improve local quality of life and works with its partners, as part of the Bedford Borough Partnership. The Corporate Plan 2012 – 2016 sets out the vision to make the Borough a better place to live, work and visit and identifies what needs to be done to tackle the pressing problems that have been identified.

Corporate Plan (Continued)

To deliver this vision effectively the Council will focus on four distinct themes over the four years (2012-2016). These themes are the foundation of the Corporate Plan and are:

Providing a Healthy Future

Providing safe, sound, supportive, cost effective services which promote independence, health, well-being and choice.

Protecting and Preserving the Local Environment

Protecting and preserving the natural and built environment whilst enabling and supporting sustainable growth.

Brighter Futures for Children

Improving outcomes and life chances for all children, particularly vulnerable children through early intervention.

Serving Residents Effectively

Providing residents with helpful, efficient and cost effective customer services that meet their needs.

How Council Tax is spent on Local Services

Bedford Borough Council provides major services within its boundaries such as Education, Social Care, Highways, Waste Collection and Disposal, Housing Benefits and Economic Development.

From April 2013 Local Authorities will also be responsible for Public Health, which was previously the responsibility of the NHS.

The Council is responsible for setting the Council Tax requirement for its own services. Separate arrangements exist for the other precepting authorities – the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Town and Parish Councils are responsible for setting their own level of Council Tax. This is then included in the overall Council Tax demand.

A summary of the revenue budget approved by Bedford Borough Council is summarised below:

2012/2013 ¹ (restated)				2013/2014		
Gross Budget	Income Budget	Net Budget	Service Area	Gross Budget	Income Budget	Net Budget
£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m
74.213	19.820	54.393	Adult Services	72.890	21.687	51.203
11.868	5.093	6.775	Chief Executive's Services	10.389	3.841	6.548
159.072	132.559	26.513	Children's Services ²	130.079	103.726	26.353
57.017	29.887	27.130	Environment & Sustainable Communities	53.890	25.803	28.087
27.351	13.815	13.536	Finance & Corporate Services	27.072	15.115	11.957
91.856	72.043	19.813	Corporate Budgets ³	82.406	59.783	22.623
0.000	0.000	0.000	Public Health	6.676	6.676	0.000
421.377	273.217	148.160	Cost of Services	383.402	236.631	146.771

¹ For 2013/2014 the government changed the way that some Council services are funded, for example, Learning Disability services and Homelessness. The funding is removed from the Council's budget and added to the Government Grants shown in the Council Tax table further below, with no increase in net expenditure. The 2012/2013 figures have therefore been restated to reflect the changes in Government funding (£22.132m) and the accounting for historical pension costs.

² This includes the cost of Schools and associated grant.

³ This includes a change of £2.033m for the new Business Rate tariff (see section on Business Rates).

How the Council's budget has changed

	Net Budget £m
2012/2013 Base Budget	126.028
Changes in Government funding	22.132
2012/2013 Base Budget (restated)	148.160
Inflation	1.445
Investments in services (ongoing)	6.046
Investments in services (one-off)	0.438
Business Rate tariff	2.033
Modernisation Proposals	-9.892
Other efficiencies	-1.150
Changes in specific grants	-0.309
2013/2014 Budget	146.771

In addition to the revenue budget, the Council has agreed a Capital Programme of £52 million for 2013/2014 on new and existing schemes. A summary of planned capital expenditure is set out below:

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Services	2.760	2.511	1.136	6.407
Chief Executive's Services	5.151	2.411	3.204	10.766
Children's Services	14.797	5.734	4.389	24.920
Finance & Corporate Services	3.070	2.119	1.039	6.228
Environment & Sustainable Communities	26.007	20.348	10.804	57.159
Total Gross Budget	51.785	33.123	20.572	105.480
Less:				
Grants & Contributions	32.013	19.877	9.049	60.939
Revenue Financing	11.299	9.726	7.873	28.898
Capital Receipts	1.120	0.177	2.586	3.883
Borrowing requirement	7.353	3.343	1.064	11.760

Capital expenditure is financed from grants, contributions, capital receipts, revenue, or borrowing. All capital projects are evaluated to ensure that any resulting ongoing revenue costs are affordable within current Council funding.

Council Tax

Your Council Tax includes charges levied by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire and Rescue Authority and, where appropriate, Town or Parish Councils – so that the overall rise in Council Tax differs from the Borough Council element. The average Council Tax at Band D for the area is £1,570.56 (£1,563.59 in 2012/2013).

The following table summarises where the money comes from to fund the Borough Council's net revenue expenditure plus the average Band D Council Tax equivalent for the other authorities.

Council Tax (continued)

2012/2013 ¹			2013/2014		Increase
	Council Tax at Band D			Council Tax at Band D	
£m	£		£m	£	%
148.160		Bedford Borough Net Budget	146.771		
		Less:			
-73.289		Government Grants & Business Rates	-78.570		
-1.095		Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	-2.105		
73.776	1,304.84	Bedford Borough Council Tax	66.096	1,304.84	0.00
1.367	24.17	Parish Council Precept	1.340	26.46	9.475
75.143	1,329.01	Council Tax including Parishes	67.436	1,331.30	0.172
8.509	150.49	Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner	7.775	153.49	1.993
4.755	84.09	Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority	4.345	85.77	1.998
	1,563.59	Total Council Tax		1,570.56	0.446

1. The 2012/2013 figures have been restated to reflect the changes in Government funding (£22.132m)

The average Bedford Borough's element of the Council Tax is frozen for 2013/2014 for the average Band D property. The average Band D Council Tax including Parish Council Precepts increased by £2.29 (0.17%).

The Council has continued to perform well regarding the collection of Council Tax which has resulted in a surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund. The Borough's element is used to reduce the Council Tax charged to taxpayers by £41.56 at the Band D property level.

Special Area Charges

The Borough Council provides services in some parts of the Borough that are provided by Parish Councils in other parts of the Borough. Examples of the services include allotments, community centres, litter bins and parks. An adjustment is made to the average amount of Council Tax for the different areas to ensure that the amount of Council Tax paid reflects these services. The Special Area charges also take into account the changes in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and apportion part of the grant received to each special area. The table below shows the total adjustment for each part of the Borough that is subject to a special area charge.

Although the average Council Tax for the Borough has not increased from 2012/2013 there is a small increase for some areas due to adjustments in the calculation of the special area charge. The table below shows the adjustment to the average Bedford Borough Council Tax for special area charges in 2013/2014.

	Bedford Urban Area	Kempston Urban Area	Brickhill Parish	Other Parishes
	£	£	£	£
Average Council Tax	1,304.84	1,304.84	1,304.84	1,304.84
Adjustment to Average	-21.95	-21.95	-21.95	-21.95
Special Area Charge	43.66	23.37	32.62	1.56
Band D Council Tax	1,326.55	1,306.26	1,315.51	1,284.45

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The way that support with meeting the cost of Council Tax is provided to households on a low income is changing from 1 April 2013. Up until 31 March 2013 households qualifying for help with the cost of Council Tax received Council Tax Benefit and the Council received a subsidy payment from the Government to make up for the Council Tax that was not received due to the award of Council Tax Benefit.

From 1 April 2013 the Council is required to award discounts under a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to households qualifying for help with the cost of Council Tax. The award of discounts reduces the amount of Council Tax income for the Council. The Council will receive a new Council Tax Support grant to offset part of the reduction in Council Tax income. This grant is for a fixed amount of 10% less than the amount of subsidy that the Government estimated the Council would have received under the Council Tax Benefit Scheme. These changes to Council Tax support have been taken into account in setting the Council Tax for 2013/2014.

Business Rates

The way that local government, including Bedford Borough Council, is funded is changing from 1 April 2013 and in future the Council will receive part of its funding directly from a share of the business rates it collects. However, because the share of business rates is higher than the Government's calculation of the Council's funding requirement, the Council is required to pay an annual tariff to the Government of £2.033m in 2013/2014. This tariff increases the Council's net expenditure.

Further Information

The detailed Revenue Budget and Capital Programme is included in the Council's 'Revenue Budget and Capital Investment Programme', which is published on the Council's website www.bedford.gov.uk

Precepts and Levies

Listed below are the Parish Council precepts and the levies made on the Borough Council applicable to dwellings listed in Band D equivalents.

2012/2013			2013/2014	
Parish Precept	Band D charge		Parish Precept	Band D charge
£	£		£	£
40,000.00	35.81	Biddenham	39,752.00	35.81
13,080.00	109.21	Bletsoe	12,324.00	109.21
9,000.00	26.71	Bolnhurst and Keysoe	9,769.00	29.75
107,855.00	33.16	Brickhill	98,249.00	33.16
103,720.00	48.39	Bromham	101,614.00	49.36
7,000.00	48.63	Cardington	6,297.00	48.63
14,892.00	38.64	Carlton and Chellington	14,892.00	39.67
66,000.00	41.97	Clapham	59,015.00	41.97
8,000.00	42.96	Colmworth	8,000.00	46.16
17,730.00	55.45	Cople	16,471.00	55.46
4,286.00	23.74	Dean and Shelton	4,263.00	23.74
49,000.00	44.72	Eastcotts	46,047.00	45.61
15,000.00	14.87	Elstow	15,000.00	15.83
15,000.00	41.99	Felmersham and Radwell	15,000.00	42.70
46,500.00	57.42	Great Barford	48,325.00	63.14
18,644.76	29.89	Great Denham	26,588.00	38.93
72,704.00	103.17	Harrold	68,806.00	105.23
17,500.00	35.05	Kempston Rural ¹	21,500.00	39.02
202,500.00	32.83	Kempston Town Council ¹	176,638.40	32.83
3,439.80	27.88	Knotting and Souldrop	3,508.78	30.06
0.00	0.00	Little Barford	0.00	0.00
4,928.00	22.90	Little Staughton	5,000.00	23.10
4,500.00	21.87	Melchbourne and Yelden	4,500.00	22.28
13,856.00	40.88	Milton Ernest	13,213.00	41.76
50,100.00	51.54	Oakley	48,552.00	51.54
6,600.00	46.91	Odell	6,930.00	51.12
8,890.00	25.06	Pavenham	9,066.00	26.85
5,000.00	29.89	Pertenhall and Swinehead	5,000.00	31.64
10,000.00	54.90	Podington	10,000.00	58.08
6,987.00	8.80	Ravensden	15,800.00	20.00
17,000.00	16.69	Renhold	17,000.00	16.54

2012/2013			2013/2014	
Parish Precept	Band D charge		Parish Precept	Band D charge
£	£		£	£
23,600.00	43.46	Riseley	23,836.00	46.67
13,000.00	60.10	Roxton	14,300.00	73.47
48,500.00	50.77	Sharnbrook	46,057.00	50.76
7,500.00	44.67	Stagsden	7,700.00	46.14
6,300.00	46.24	Staploe and Duloe	6,627.00	52.13
12,500.00	44.83	Stevington	12,500.00	46.40
60,000.00	156.74	Stewartby	60,000.00	171.67
5,500.00	19.18	Thurleigh	6,000.00	22.48
16,500.00	31.47	Turvey	17,250.00	34.80
10,000.00	52.72	Wilden	10,000.00	54.96
9,000.00	24.40	Willington	10,000.00	27.88
63,200.00	46.54	Wilshamstead	66,000.00	47.74
105,120.00	68.51	Wootton	107,222.00	75.43
10,839.00	35.61	Wyboston, Chawston & Colesden	10,276.00	35.61
15,500.00	52.04	Wymington	15,500.00	58.92
1,366,771.56			1,340,388.18	

1. The Kempston Town Council precept includes £35,327 and Kempston Rural precept £4,500 to be paid to the Kempston Burials Joint Committee.

Parish precepts over £140,000 require further disclosure.

This is set out below:

Kempston Town Council	2012/2013	2013/2014
	£	£
Gross expenditure	286,767	282,062
Income	-84,267	-105,424
Precept	202,500	176,638

This publication has been issued by the Director for Finance & Corporate Services, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP.

To request a paper copy of this leaflet please email localtax@bedford.gov.uk or telephone 01234 718097

CITIZENS PANEL

Want to tell us what you think about local issues?

Want to voice your opinions?

Then why not join our panel and help make a difference...

The Citizens Panel was established in 1999 and has been used ever since as a method of gathering public ideas and opinions on a wide range of topics that relate to Bedford Borough Council and the services we provide.

As a panel member, you will be asked to take part in at least two surveys a year. Your responses will make a big difference to key decisions that are taken by the Council. Don't miss your chance to take part. Sign up today!



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**Consulting Bedford
Freepost ANG5840
Bedford
MK40 1ZD**

Or alternatively fill out the form on our website

www.bedford.gov.uk/citizenspanel

Please note that the information supplied will be computerised by Bedford Borough Council for maintaining the citizens panel and sending information on consultations.