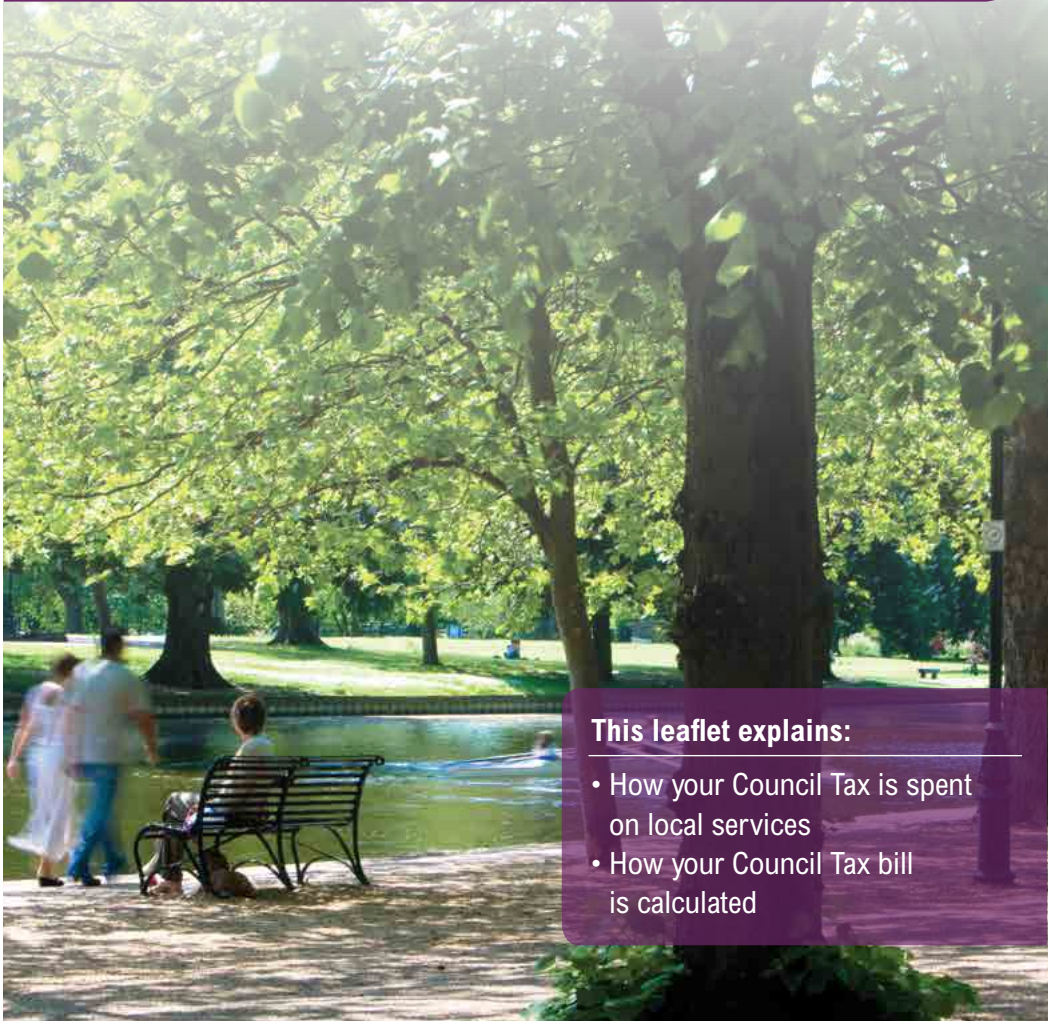




**BEDFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Bedford Borough Council

## Your Council Tax 2014 / 2015



### **This leaflet explains:**

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

## Your Council Tax 2014 / 2015

This leaflet explains how your Council Tax is used to help provide Council services in 2014/2015 and it also explains how your Council Tax bill is calculated.

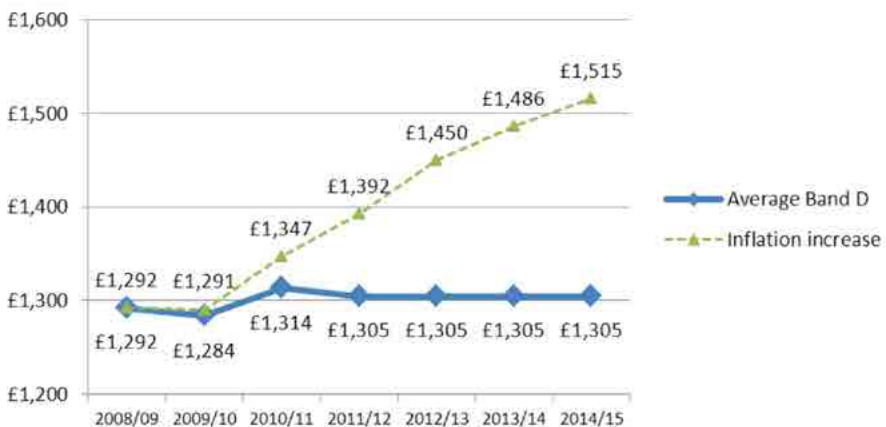
The Council agreed its budget for 2014/2015 at Full Council on the 26 February 2014 in support of the existing Corporate Plan covering the four years 2012 to 2016. Together, these will shape the way the Council develops in the future and determine the priorities and services it will provide.

A copy of the Corporate Plan can be found online at [www.bedford.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/key\\_plans\\_and\\_strategies.aspx](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, and will mean the Borough's average Council Tax has not increased for four years.**

The chart below shows that the freeze brings the level of savings to over £200 for the average Band D household compared with a Council Tax bill adjusted for inflation since 2008/2009.

### Council Tax (Band D) levels



## Council Budget

The 2014/2015 budget has been set in the context of the continuing financial austerity arising from the Government's Deficit Recovery Plan in particular the consequences of the Spending Review announced on 20 October 2010 (SR2010) and the detailed provisions of the Local Government Finance Settlement. This confirmed that local government faced a real-terms reduction in grants of 28% over the period 2011 to 2015 with substantial "front loading" of the reduction which specifically for Bedford resulted in a net cut of £6 million in central government funding for 2014/2015. In setting its budget the Council also has to take into account unavoidable spending pressures such as those arising from increases in external costs or new statutory requirements.

As a result the Council has had to make difficult decisions in order to set a balanced budget and keep Council Tax bills at the same level whilst protecting front line services. A total reduction of £13 million through modernisation proposals and other changes was agreed following consultation with local residents, enabling the Council to keep the Council Tax at a zero per cent increase. In addition, the Council has been able to continue the key front line services that matter to residents, and make further investments in services for vulnerable children, adult social care and providing free car parking in the town centre for up to two hours on Saturdays.

## 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.

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. Since April 2013 the Council is also responsible for Public Health, which was previously the responsibility of the NHS.

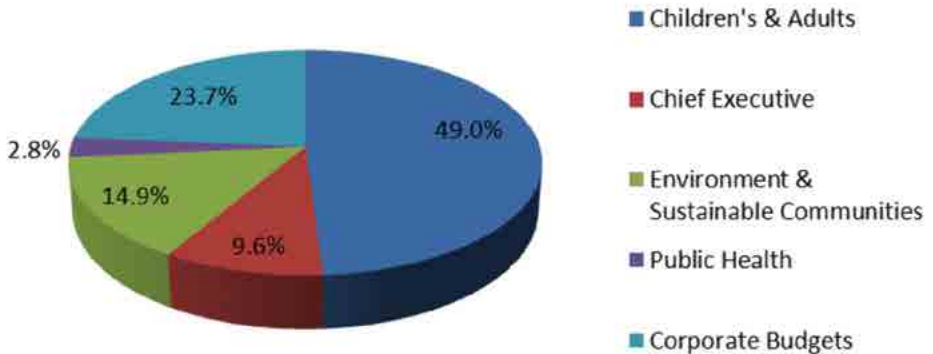
The Council is responsible for setting the Council Tax requirement for its own services. Separate arrangements exist for the other precepting authorities. The Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Town and Parish Councils are responsible for setting their 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 shown below:

	Gross Budget £m	Income Budget £m	Net Budget £m
Children's & Adults*	176.532	-102.949	73.583
Chief Executive	34.632	-17.726	16.906
Environment & Sustainable Communities	53.818	-23.834	29.984
Public Health	10.276	-10.276	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>275.258</b>	<b>-154.785</b>	<b>120.473</b>
Corporate Budgets	85.293	-60.520	24.772
<b>Total for 2014/2015</b>	<b>360.551</b>	<b>-215.305</b>	<b>145.245</b>
<b>Total for 2013/2014</b>	<b>383.402</b>	<b>-236.631</b>	<b>146.771</b>

\* Including the cost of schools and associated funding  
(Individual items are subject to rounding and may differ to the total)

## Gross Budget share



## How the Council's Budget has changed

	Net Budget £m
2013/2014 Base Budget	146.771
Base Budget Adjustments	0.247
Inflation	0.876
Investments in Services (on-going)	5.915
Investments in Services (one-off)	2.021
Modernisation Proposals	-10.585
<b>2014/2015 Budget</b>	<b>145.245</b>

In addition to the revenue budget, the Council has agreed a Capital Programme of £52.4 million for 2014/2015 on new and existing schemes, as summarised below:

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	Total
<b>Gross Directorate Budgets</b>	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's and Adults	16.472	7.081	7.174	30.727
Chief Executive	11.357	2.626	3.900	17.883
Environment & Sustainable Communities	24.534	19.896	8.182	52.612
<b>Gross Total</b>	<b>52.363</b>	<b>29.603</b>	<b>19.256</b>	<b>101.222</b>
<b>Financed by</b>				
Grants & Contributions	33.428	18.559	10.458	62.445
Revenue	7.558	6.410	5.414	19.382
Capital Receipts	3.933	4.417	4.910	13.260
Borrowing	7.444	0.217	-1.526	6.135
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>52.363</b>	<b>29.603</b>	<b>19.256</b>	<b>101.222</b>

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 Fire services 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 £1,575.47 (£1,570.56 in 2013/2014).

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.

2013/2014	Council Tax at Band D		2014/2015	Council Tax at Band D	Increase
£m	£		£m	£	%
146.771		Bedford Borough Net Budget	145.245		
		Less:			
-48.840		Government Grants	-44.006		
-29.730		Retained Business Rates	-32.710		
-2.105		Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	-0.862		
<b>66.096</b>	<b>1,304.84</b>	<b>Bedford Borough Council Tax</b>	<b>67.667</b>	<b>1,304.84</b>	<b>0.00</b>
1.340	26.46	Parish Council Precept	1.379	26.60	0.53
<b>67.436</b>	<b>1,331.30</b>	<b>Council Tax incl Parish Precepts</b>	<b>69.046</b>	<b>1,331.44</b>	<b>0.01</b>
7.775	153.49	Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner	8.118	156.55	1.99
4.345	85.77	Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority	4.537	87.48	1.99
	<b>1,570.56</b>	<b>Total Council Tax</b>		<b>1,575.47</b>	<b>0.31</b>

The average Bedford Borough element of the Council Tax is frozen for 2014/2015 for the average Band D property, for the fourth year running.

The average Band D Council Tax including Parish Council Precepts increased by £0.14 (0.01%). 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 £17.03 at the Band D property level.

## Special Area Charges

Bedford 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.

Although the average Council Tax for the Borough has not increased from 2013/2014 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 2014/2015.

	<b>Bedford Urban Area</b>	<b>Kempston Urban Area</b>	<b>Brickhill Parish</b>	<b>Other Parishes</b>
	£	£	£	£
Average Council Tax	1,304.84	1,304.84	1,304.84	1,304.84
Adjustment to Average	-21.71	-21.71	-21.71	-21.71
Special Area Charge	43.11	23.43	33.33	1.56
Band D Council Tax	1,326.24	1,306.56	1,316.46	1,284.69



## Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The way that support with meeting the cost of Council Tax is provided to households on a low income changed from 1 April 2013. From that date the Council has been 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. For 2014/2015 there have been some further changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which have been taken into account in setting the Council Tax for 2014/2015.

## 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 our website [www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)

## Precepts and Levies

Listed below are the Parish Council precepts. The table shows the total amount of the Parish Precept and the resulting parish Council Tax charge for 2014/2015 for a dwelling in valuation band D.

2013/2014			2014/2015	
Parish Precept	Band D charge		Parish Precept	Band D charge
£	£		£	£
39,752.00	35.81	Biddenham	39,752.00	35.37
12,324.00	109.21	Bletsoe	12,324.00	105.73
9,769.00	29.75	Bolnhurst and Keysoe	9,765.00	29.74
98,249.00	33.16	Brickhill	98,970.00	33.16
101,614.00	49.36	Bromham	105,700.00	50.99
6,297.00	48.63	Cardington	6,612.00	49.19
14,892.00	39.67	Carlton and Chellington	14,892.00	39.23
59,015.00	41.97	Clapham	60,009.00	41.39
8,000.00	46.16	Colmworth	8,000.00	45.50

2013/2014			2014/2015	
Parish Precept	Band D charge		Parish Precept	Band D charge
£	£		£	£
16,471.00	55.46	Cople	16,471.00	55.46
4,263.00	23.74	Dean and Shelton	4,263.00	23.39
46,047.00	45.61	Eastcotts	50,000.00	46.54
15,000.00	15.83	Elstow	15,000.00	15.59
15,000.00	42.70	Felmersham and Radwell	15,000.00	42.31
48,325.00	63.14	Great Barford	51,300.00	65.74
26,588.00	38.93	Great Denham	28,183.00	37.96
68,806.00	105.23	Harrold	70,085.00	105.23
21,500.00	39.02	Kempston Rural <sup>1</sup>	20,982.72	31.92
176,638.40	32.83	Kempston Town Council <sup>1</sup>	177,156.28	32.25
3,508.78	30.06	Knotting and Souldrop	3,542.99	30.15
0.00	0.00	Little Barford	0.00	0.00
5,000.00	23.10	Little Staughton	5,000.00	23.02
4,500.00	22.28	Melchbourne and Yelden	4,525.00	22.24
13,213.00	41.76	Milton Ernest	13,477.00	42.14
48,552.00	51.54	Oakley	48,556.00	51.30
6,930.00	51.12	Odell	6,930.00	51.12
9,066.00	26.85	Pavenham	9,240.00	27.12
5,000.00	31.64	Pertenhall and Swineshead	5,000.00	30.73
10,000.00	58.08	Podington	10,000.00	57.74
15,800.00	20.00	Ravensden	15,967.00	20.09
17,000.00	16.54	Renhold	17,352.00	16.54
23,836.00	46.67	Riseley	23,836.00	46.45
14,300.00	73.47	Roxton	14,300.00	73.47
46,057.00	50.76	Sharnbrook	48,500.00	53.19
7,700.00	46.14	Stagsden	7,700.00	45.69
6,627.00	52.13	Staploe and Duloe	7,577.00	58.17
12,500.00	46.40	Stevington	12,500.00	46.09
60,000.00	171.67	Stewartby	60,000.00	167.77
6,000.00	22.48	Thurleigh	6,000.00	22.06
17,250.00	34.80	Turvey	25,000.00	49.73
10,000.00	54.96	Wilden	10,000.00	54.56
10,000.00	27.88	Willington	9,753.00	26.15
66,000.00	47.74	Wilshamstead	71,000.00	47.63
107,222.00	75.43	Wootton	113,185.00	75.43
10,276.00	35.61	Wyboston, Chawston & Colesden	10,276.00	34.84
15,500.00	58.92	Wymington	15,500.00	58.92
<b>1,340,388.18</b>			<b>1,379,181.99</b>	

1. The Kempston Town Council precept includes £35,844.48 and Kempston Rural precept £3,982.72 to be paid to the Kempston Burials Joint Committee.

Parish precepts over £140,000 require further disclosure.

This is set out below:

<b>Kempston Town Council</b>	<b>2013/2014</b> £	<b>2014/2015</b> £
Gross expenditure	282,062	292,565
Income	-105,424	-115,409
<b>Precept</b>	<b>176,638</b>	<b>177,156</b>

This publication has been issued by Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP.

To request a paper copy of this leaflet please contact the Council at [www.bedford.gov.uk/localtax](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/localtax) 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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**Name** .....

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**Consulting Bedford  
Freepost ANG5840  
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MK40 1ZD**

Or alternatively fill out the form on our website

[www.bedford.gov.uk/citizenspanel](http://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.