



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service



Precept – Budget Information 2015/16

Foreword by Councillor Colleen Atkins MBE, Chair of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Paul Fuller, Chief Fire Officer.

In 2015/16, the Fire and Rescue Authority aims to continue to provide an excellent response service to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies, whilst also striving to reduce the number and severity of such incidents.

We have prepared a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which shows how the Fire and Rescue Authority will achieve this, by understanding community risks, highlighting how we respond to the full range of emergencies we are called to, and how our prevention and protection activities are targeted to reduce the risks facing our communities.

Last year, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service attended around 5,550 emergency incidents including: over 2,000 house fires; 371 road traffic collisions; 109 flooding incidents; and 1,117 special incidents which includes animal rescues, aircraft, and railway incidents.

Our fire fighters rescued **60 people from fires** and extricated **99 from road traffic collisions**, with a further **68 extricated** or released from other special service incidents.

Our wide range of prevention activities includes: providing free home fire safety checks and smoke detectors; road safety and home safety education campaigns; and working closely with children and adults of all ages, abilities and cultures.

Operational crews and specialist fire safety inspecting officers provide guidance to owners and occupiers of commercial and public buildings, to help them fulfil their legal fire safety responsibilities.

In common with all public services, the current economic downturn will require us to make some difficult decisions to achieve significant savings over this and future years. We are confident our careful planning will help us meet those challenges, whilst maintaining high quality services.

For 2015/16, the Fire and Rescue Authority has increased its Band D Council Tax requirement by about 3 pence per week.

In conjunction with our programme of efficiency savings, this small increase will help ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our communities whilst delivering the necessary reductions in overall costs. This means your Fire and Rescue Service is provided for a Council Tax amount of just 24 pence per day for a Band D household, which we believe continues to represent excellent value for money.



Councillor Colleen Atkins MBE, Chair of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Colleen Atkins



**Paul M Fuller QFSM MSc BSc FIFire MinstLM
Chief Fire Officer, Bedfordshire Fire and
Rescue Service**

Paul M Fuller

Revenue Budget

Our revenue budget sets out the money necessary for the day to day running of the Service. Through our on-going programme of efficiency savings we have managed to minimise the increase in our revenue budget requirement for this year compared to last year. Our efficiency measures have allowed us to continue with key service improvements whilst restricting the increase in this year's Council Tax to 1.99% (equivalent to an increase of just 3 pence per week for a Band D household).

This has been achieved despite the impact of a 9% reduction in Government grant (compared to 2014/15) totalling £1.079m, and the effect of inflation which has increased our costs this year by £0.421m.

Capital Budget

Our capital programme highlights spending on assets such as our fire stations and fire engines. Each year the Authority draws up a rolling four year programme of capital projects. The capital projects for this year totals £1.519m and these are being funded from Government grants and contributions from the revenue budget.

Projects for this year include:

- Investment in our vehicle fleet, to maintain effective, economic and efficient fire engines and appliances;
- Investment in IT;
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings;
- Investing in vital operational equipment such as defibrillators and thermal imaging cameras.

Efficiency Savings

An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity is reduced but its quality and effectiveness remains the same or improves. The Fire and Rescue Authority continues to focus on finding new ways to deliver the highest quality services at lowest possible cost.

In 2010, the Government announced reductions in central grant funding for fire and rescue authorities over the four years 2011/12 to 2014/15 that equated to a 25% reduction, nationally, on 2010/11 levels. There has been a further reduction of 9% for 2015/16. In order to meet the local impact of this whilst continuing to improve services and minimise Council Tax rises, the Fire and Rescue Authority has developed a comprehensive efficiency savings plan.

Total achieved and planned savings and efficiencies between 2010/11 and 2014/15 total £3.5m, with a further savings and efficiencies of £1.7m by 2018/19.

Some of the key areas where the Authority is achieving its planned efficiency savings include:

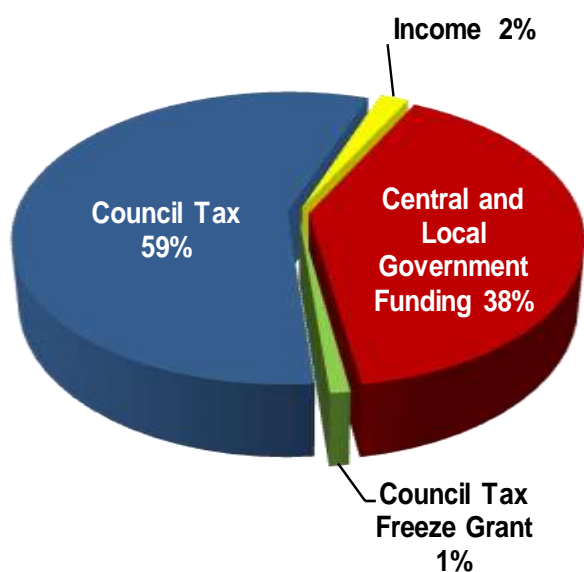
- Savings in managerial and support staff costs through shared service arrangements, organisational restructure and improvements to working systems;
- Savings in temporary appointments through improved vacancy management;
- Savings in property leasing costs through creation of additional office capacity at other sites;
- Savings in fire safety advertising and promotion costs through improved targeting of campaigns at higher risk groups;
- Savings in the Service Vehicle Replacement Programme through improved asset management and maintenance.

Audit Judgement on Value for Money

In the 2014 Annual External Audit Letter from Ernst & Young, the Fire and Rescue Authority was awarded an 'unqualified conclusion', meaning that we were judged to have satisfactory arrangements in place in all areas.

Financial Charts

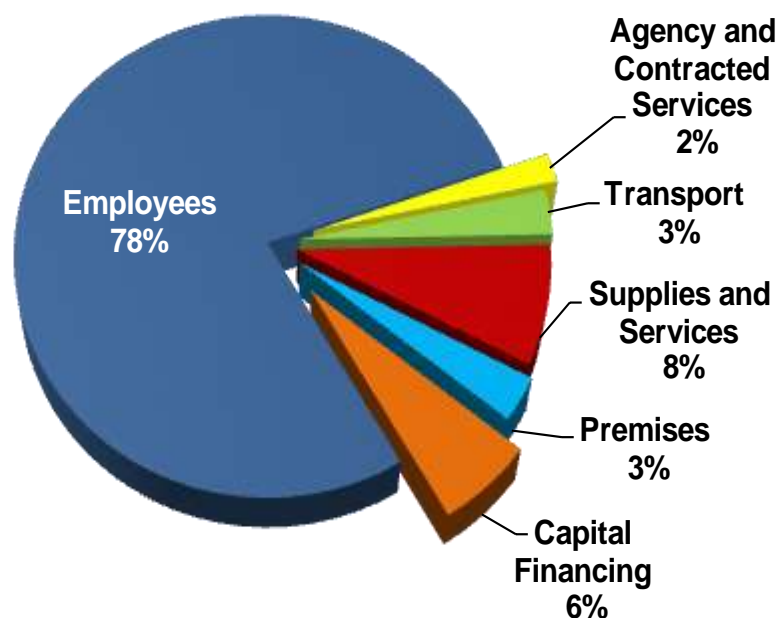
Where the money comes from:



| | 2015/16 | 2014/15 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | (£m) | (£m) |
| Gross Budget | 29.5 | 29.2 |
| Income | -0.6 | -0.6 |
| Budget Requirement | 28.9 | 28.6 |
| Central and Local Government Funding | 11.2 | 11.7 |
| Council Tax Freeze Grant | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Council Tax | 17.3 | 16.5 |
| | 28.9 | 28.6 |

What the money is spent on:

| | 2015/16 | 2014/15 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | (£m) | (£m) |
| Employees | 22.1 | 22.5 |
| Premises | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Transport | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Supplies and Services | 2.4 | 2.1 |
| Agency and Contracted Services | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Capital Financing | 2.2 | 1.8 |
| | 28.8 | 28.6 |
| Reserves Funding | 0.1 | 0 |
| Budget Requirement | 28.9 | 28.6 |



The Band D Council Tax for 2015/16 will be £89.22

The Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed a budget requirement of £28.9 million for 2015/16



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