



COUNCIL TAX & BUDGET INFORMATION 2023/2024



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Revenue Budget	7
Capital Budget	7
Efficiency Savings	8
Audit Judgement on Value for Money	8
Financial Charts	9
Connect with BFRS	11



INTRODUCTION

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service delivers a first class and effective prevention, protection and response service to the people of Bedfordshire through our highly trained and well-equipped personnel, giving you an outstanding fire and rescue service. Our focus over the next year will be on the following **six priorities**;



PREVENTING

... fires and other emergencies from happening.



PROTECTING

... people and property when fires happen.



RESPONDING

... to fires and other emergencies promptly and effectively.



EMPOWERING

... our people as we work together to make Bedfordshire safer.



UTILISING

... our assets and resources efficiently and effectively.



MAXIMISING

... the use of data and digital solutions to drive improvements.

From April 2021 we attended **6877** emergency incidents; including **1581** fires, **407** road traffic collisions, **134** flooding incidents and **727** other special incidents (which includes animal rescues, aircraft and railway incidents). There were **563** deliberate fires and **100** hoax calls. We undertook **8457** Home Fire Safety Visits, our operational crews and Prevention team installed **4416** ten-year battery smoke alarms.

We carried out **647** fire safety audits and inspections, checking that local companies have assessed their fire risks and are keeping their staff and customers safe. We continue to inspect high rise residential buildings and with the assistance of the Local Authorities, undertake joint inspections of Houses of Multiple Occupation to check on fire safety standards. We plan our services to deal with these varied risks but there is no typical day for our firefighters and support staff. From house fires to road traffic collisions, from water rescues to assisting at **48** animal incidents, we get there swiftly so our well trained, professional teams can deal with the incident using the best possible equipment.

IN NUMBERS



6877
emergency incidents attended



1581
fires attended



407
road traffic collisions



134
flooding incidents



727
special incidents



563
deliberate fires



100
hoax calls



8457
Home Fire Safety Visits



647
fire safety audits and inspections

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK



[Back to Contents](#)

Our firefighters are just as likely to be found giving safety advice at a school or community event as fighting a fire or assisting paramedics gain entry to a house where a vulnerable person needs their help. We also inspect the hundreds of fire hydrants around the county to make sure they are working, and no one has parked over them.

We carry out Home Fire Safety Visits for vulnerable people within our communities. During these visits we provide advice and guidance and the installation of equipment if it is needed, including smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and lockable letterbox plates. We also discuss health, wellbeing and crime prevention. We can refer people to appropriate partner agencies for further help and support.



Our support teams continue to make sure we get the best value for money for our purchases, that our books balance, that bills get paid promptly and that our fire appliances and equipment are well maintained. They ensure we have good health and safety systems in place and communicate well internally and with you, our council taxpayers. The work that we do in collaboration with other Blue Light Partners is also aimed at keeping costs down and providing even better services.

For £2.10 a week (for a Band D property) Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service provides you and your family with a round-the-clock, 365 days a year emergency service. This enables your fire and rescue service to respond effectively to incidents, manage the risks you face and reduce the number of emergency incidents we attend. We are constantly working to develop our employees and create a safe, fair, equal and caring workplace for all our staff.

Finally, the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority ensure the highest standards of governance and continually seek improvements to the services we provide. We have recently consulted on our refreshed Community Risk Management Plan, which sets out how we assess local risks, put preventative measures in place and respond quickly if incidents occur. This will have a greater impact on the way we deliver our services over the next year.

After receiving 439 responses to our budget consultation in January 2023, the Fire and Rescue Authority has increased its Band D Council Tax requirement for 2023/24 by £5, just under 10p per week, which is an annual total of £109.45. This will help us to continue to provide excellent protection services across the county from our fourteen strategically located Community Fire Stations.

Alongside a programme of efficiency savings, this small increase will enable us to continue to meet the needs of all our communities while at the same time delivering the necessary reductions in overall costs and continuing to give you excellent value for money.



Cllr Paul Duckett

Chairman, Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority



Andrew Hopkinson

Chief Fire Officer, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

REVENUE BUDGET

Our revenue budget sets out the money necessary for the day to day running of the Service. The increase in this year's council tax of £5 is equivalent to an increase of just under 10 pence per week for a Band D household.

There has been a small increase in Government grant to the Authority (compared to 2022/23) of £244k, and the effect of inflation which is forecast to increase our costs this year by £1.891m.

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 total £2.258m and these are predominantly being funded by contributions from the revenue budget.

Projects for this year include:

- Investment in our vehicle fleet, to maintain effective, economic and efficient fire appliances
- Investment in operational equipment.
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings.

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 the lowest possible cost.

Some of the key areas where the Authority has been 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 firefighter crewing arrangements.
- 💧 Savings to the public through collaborative work.
- 💧 Procurement savings from new contracts.
- 💧 Income generation.



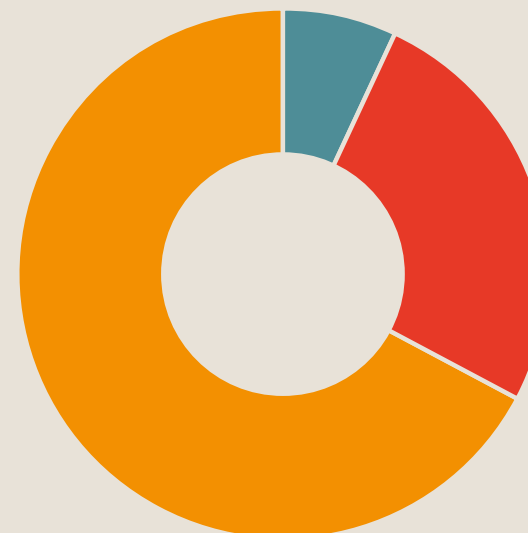
AUDIT JUDGEMENT ON VALUE FOR MONEY

In the 2021 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. We are yet to receive the audit opinion for 2022 due to a delay in the audit of our accounts.

FINANCIAL CHARTS

Where does the money come from

	2023/2024 (£m)	2022/2023 (£m)
Gross Budget	37.6	35.8
● Income	-2.7	-2.5
Budget Requirement	34.9	33.3
● Central & Local Government Funding	9.9	9.9
● Council Tax	25	23.4
Total	34.9	33.3



65% COUNCIL TAX
**28% CENTRAL
& LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
FUNDING**
7% INCOME

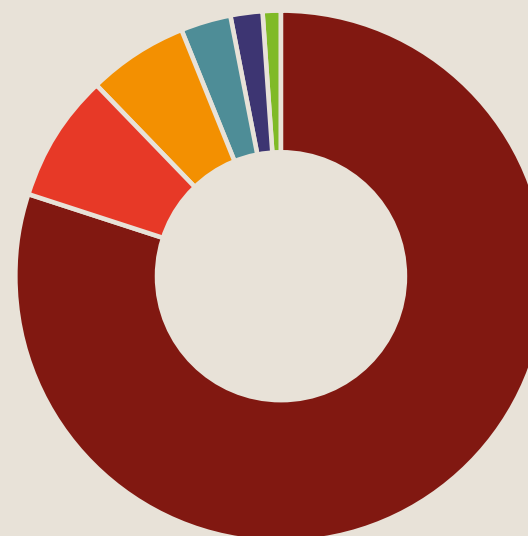
What the money is spent on

	2023/2024 (£m)	2022/2023 (£m)
Employees	29.4	27
Premises	0.9	0.9
Transport	0.7	0.7
Supplies & Services	3.2	2.5
Agency & Contracted Services	0.5	0.7
Capital Financing	2.3	1.6
Total	37	33.4
Reserves Funding	- 2.1	-0.1
Budget Requirement	34.9	33.3

The Band D council tax for 2023/24 will be £109.45. The Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed a budget requirement of £34.898 million for 2023/24.

Council Tax Per Band

Valuation Band	Council Tax for 2023/24
A	£72.97
B	£85.13
C	£97.29
D	£109.45
E	£133.77
F	£158.09
G	£182.42
H	£218.90



80% EMPLOYEES
8% SUPPLIES & SERVICES
6% CAPITAL FUNDING
3% PREMISES
2% TRANSPORT
1% AGENCY & CONTRACTED SERVICES






Bedfordshire


Fire & Rescue Service

CONNECT WITH BFRS

 bedsfire.gov.uk

   @bedsfire

 contact **BFRS**

 **BFRS Headquarters**, Southfields Road, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7NR



WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT



EVERY CONTACT COUNTS



WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK



WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE