



COUNCIL TAX & BUDGET INFORMATION 2025/26



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

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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 until 2027, as stated in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), is on the following **six priorities**;



PREVENTING

... fires and other emergencies from happening.



EMPOWERING

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



PROTECTING

... people and property when fires happen.



UTILISING

... our assets and resources efficiently and effectively.



RESPONDING

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



MAXIMISING

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

Emergency incidents

During the last full-year period (2023/24), Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service responded to a total of 7,580 emergency incidents across the county. These incidents comprised various categories:

Fires: A total of 1,524 fires were attended to by our dedicated teams. Among these, 520 were identified as having been deliberately started.

False alarms: There were 3,049 incidents classified as false alarms, with 103 of these deemed malicious in nature. Additionally, we received 41 hoax calls that did not warrant attendance.

Other non-fire incidents: Our teams also responded to 3,007 non-fire incidents, including 476 road traffic collisions, 189 flooding incidents, and 97 animal rescue incidents. Many of the remaining incidents involved providing assistance to other agencies such as the police and ambulance service, as well as attending medical emergencies, effecting entry and exit, lift rescues, hazardous materials incidents, and spills and leaks.

Preventive measures

In addition to our emergency response efforts, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service remains dedicated to proactive measures aimed at preventing emergencies and safeguarding the community.

Home Fire Safety Visits: Our teams conducted 6,770 home fire safety visits during the reporting period, reaching out to residents to assess and mitigate fire risks. As part of these visits, 3,921 ten-year battery smoke alarms were installed to enhance the safety of households across the region.

Fire Safety Audits and Inspections: A total of 2,855 fire safety audits and inspections were carried out, ensuring that local businesses and establishments adhere to fire safety regulations and standards. These efforts are essential in promoting fire prevention and mitigating risks in various settings.

Conclusion

The year 2023/24 presented diverse challenges for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, with our teams demonstrating unwavering dedication and professionalism in responding to emergencies and promoting fire safety within the community. As we continue to evolve and adapt to emerging risks, we remain committed to our mission of protecting lives and property through proactive measures and effective emergency response.

IN NUMBERS



7580

emergency incidents attended



1524

fires attended



476

road traffic collisions



189

flooding incidents



97

animal rescue incidents



3007

other special incidents
(including assistance to other agencies,
medical incidents, etc.)



520

deliberate fires



103

malicious false alarms



41

hoax calls (not attended)



6770

Home Fire Safety Visits



2855

fire safety audits and inspections

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

Our firefighters do much more than tackle fires. They visit schools and community events to share vital safety advice, helping to keep people informed and protected. We work closely with the ambulance service to assist the most vulnerable when they need support the most. Ensuring fire hydrants are functional and free from obstructions, such as parked vehicles, is also part of our role.

We carry out home visits for those at greater risk, offering tailored safety advice and fitting essential equipment like smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Our work goes beyond fire safety—we also provide guidance on health, wellbeing, and crime prevention. Where necessary, we connect people with other agencies to ensure they receive the support they need.



Our dedicated support teams persistently strive for the optimal use of resources, maintaining financial balance, and ensuring the effective upkeep of our firefighting equipment. Prioritising health and safety, they communicate seamlessly, both internally and with our valued council taxpayers. Collaborating with our blue light partners remains a cornerstone for enhanced services at a reasonable cost.

For just £2.26 a week (for a Band D property), Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service remains committed to providing a continuous, year-round emergency service. This funding enables us to respond swiftly to incidents, manage risks effectively, and reduce the number of emergency callouts. Our commitment to developing our colleagues ensures a safe, fair, and supportive work environment for everyone.

The recent decision by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority, approved on Thursday, 13 February, involves a £5 increase in the council tax precept. This is essential for balancing the budget amid unprecedented financial challenges. This increase, coupled with substantial efficiency savings and prudent use of reserves, underscores our commitment to fiscal responsibility.



Cllr Jacqui Burnett
Chair, Bedfordshire Fire
& Rescue Authority

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacqui Burnett'.



Andrew Hopkinson
Chief Fire Officer, Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Hopkinson'.



REVENUE BUDGET

Our revenue budget delineates the necessary funds for the day-to-day operations of the Service. The recent increase in this year's council tax, amounting to £5.00, equates to just 10 pence per week for a Band D household.

This year, the Authority has observed a modest rise in Government grant, amounting to £43k compared to the previous year (2024/25). However, the impact of inflation is forecasted to escalate our operational costs by £1.488m.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Our capital programme outlines investments in essential assets such as fire stations and fire engines. Annually, the Authority devises a rolling four-year plan for capital projects. The projected capital expenditure for this fiscal year amounts to £2.778m, primarily funded by contributions from the revenue budget.

Projects for this year include:

- Investment in our technology, software and equipment
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings
- Operational and support vehicles



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 coming years will see the Service transform and make unprecedented efficiency savings. We plan to find revenue savings of £2.015 million to balance our budget in the next three years – but we also will need to invest to build solid foundations to ensure we keep pace with the growth across Bedfordshire and the evolving demands on the fire and rescue service.

We will see great transformation in how we provide key services as we drive forward our invest-to-save agenda, whilst protecting frontline services as we work together to make Bedfordshire safer.

The Fire and Rescue Authority continues to focus on finding new ways to deliver the highest quality services at the lowest possible cost.



Total achieved and planned savings and efficiencies between 2010/11 and 2024/25 total £8m, with further savings and efficiencies planned between now and 2028/29.

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

- Further operational and non-operational reviews
- Investment in ICT
- Procurement savings from new contracts.
- Income generation.

AUDIT JUDGEMENT ON VALUE FOR MONEY

In the most recent Annual Report from KPMG on the 2023/24 financial year, it was noted that there were no actual significant weaknesses identified, meaning that we were judged to have satisfactory arrangements in place in all areas.

Due to ongoing national issues regarding the audit of public sector accounts the 2023/24 account received a 'Disclaimed' opinion. However, it was noted that no significant issues were found during 2023/24.

FINANCIAL CHARTS

Where does the money come from?

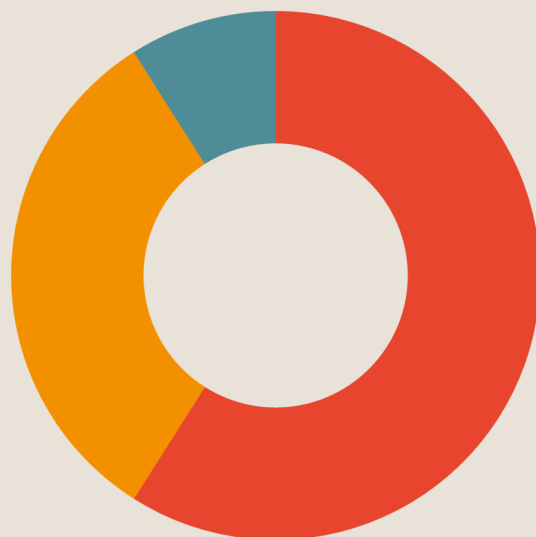
	2024/25 (£m)*	2025/26 (£m)
Gross Budget	43.4	46.9
Income	-1.6	-1.6
Use of Reserves	-0.3	-2.6
Budget Requirement	41.5	42.7
Central & Local Government Funding	15.3	14.9
Council Tax	26.2	27.8
Total	41.5	42.7

*Restated as a Pension Grant (£1.7m) is now treated as Central Government Funding.

**59% CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT
FUNDING**

32% COUNCIL TAX

**9% INCOME/USE OF
RESERVES**



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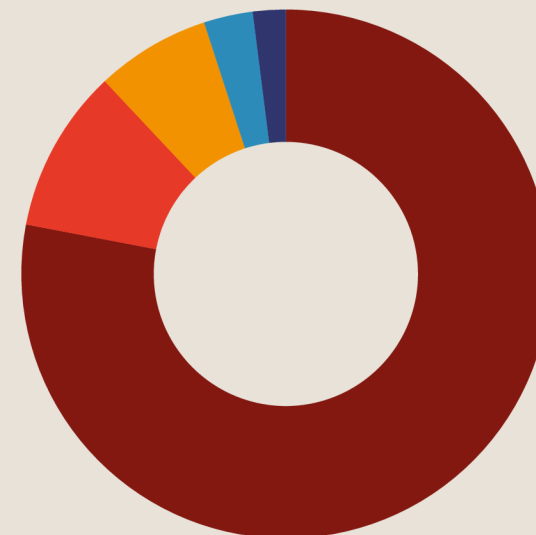
What the money is spent on

	2025/26 (£m)
Employees	36.7
Supplies & Services	4.6
Capital Financing	3.4
Premises	1.4
Transport	0.8
Expenses Total	46.9
Income	-1.6
Reserves funding	-2.6
Budget Requirement	42.7

The Band D council tax for 2025/26 will be £117.72. The Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed on a budget requirement of £42.685 million for 2025/26.

Council Tax Per Band

Valuation Band	Council Tax for 2025/26
A	£78.48
B	£91.56
C	£104.64
D	£117.72
E	£143.88
F	£170.04
G	£196.20
H	£235.44



78% EMPLOYEES
10% SUPPLIES
& SERVICES
7% CAPITAL
FUNDING
3% PREMISES
2% TRANSPORT



Bedfordshire

Fire & Rescue Service

CONNECT WITH BFRS

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BFRS Headquarters

Southfields Road, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7NR



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