2016/17
Council tax
How we pay for local services
Incorporating council tax information for Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Do it online
The simple way to manage your council services

Pay
For council tax or housing rent

Apply
For a school place

Report
A change of address

www.luton.gov.uk
Useful contacts

Luton Borough Council
www.luton.gov.uk
email: revenues@luton.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 790 0340
Fax: 01582 546977
Text/minicom: 01582 414367
Phone lines open 9am-5pm weekdays (10am Wed)

Visit us at:
Customer Service Centre
Town Hall
Upper George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire LU1 2BQ

Benefits
Housing benefit and council tax reduction
www.luton.gov.uk/Benefits
email: revenues@luton.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 790 0345 (open 24/7)

Council Tax
Paying by phone
0300 456 2725 (open 24/7)
Information about your council tax and discounts and exemptions
www.luton.gov.uk/CouncilTax
email: revenues@luton.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 790 0340 (open 24/7)

Direct debit setup for council tax
www.luton.gov.uk/counciltaxdd
Tel: 0300 790 0340 (open 24/7)

Department for Work and Pensions
www.dwp.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 055 6688

Valuation Office Agency
Council tax valuation bandings and appealing them
gov.uk/voa/contact

Valuation Tribunal
If you have appealed to the Council about your bill and disagree with our decision, you can appeal to this independent organisation:
www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk
email: vtdoncaster@vts.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 01302 342324
Fax: 01302 321447
Write to: Hepworth House
2 Trafford Court
Doncaster DN1 1PN
What is council tax?

Council tax is the way people pay for local services such as education, refuse collection, libraries and care for the elderly. This year, a band C council taxpayer in Luton will be charged £1374.53. Of this, £1148.88 goes to the council, £144.76 to the police and £80.89 to the fire authority.

Based on property values set by the Inland Revenue’s valuation office in 1991, the amount of tax you pay makes a contribution towards the cost of local services but most of the cost is paid by Central Government.

Statement concerning adult social care funding

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made an offer to adult social care authorities. (“Adult social care authorities” are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in
England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.)

The offer is the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge a “precept” of up to 2% on its council tax for the financial year beginning in 2016 without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting expenditure on adult social care. Subject to the annual approval of the House of Commons, the Secretary of State intends to offer the option of charging this “precept” in relation to each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019-20.

In relation to the financial year beginning in 2016 the Secretary of State has determined (and the House of Commons has approved) a referendum principle of 4% (comprising 2% for expenditure on adult social care and 2% for other expenditure), for adult social care authorities. These authorities may therefore set council tax up to this percentage in 2016 without holding a referendum.”

Ways to pay your council tax

**Direct debit**
The easiest and most convenient way to pay. Switch to Direct Debit online at www.luton.gov.uk/counciltaxdd or by phoning us on 0300 790 0340.

**Bank transfer**
Pay online through your own bank’s website. You will need to quote your council tax account number. Our bank account bank details are:
Lloyds Bank sort code: 30 66 76 account number: 17 25 68 62

**Online or telephone**
Please visit our website www.luton.gov.uk/payonline or call our 24 hour payment line on 0300 456 2725 and follow the instructions.

**Telephone banking**
You need to sign up with your bank to pay your bills by this method. You can make payment 24 hours a day, 7 days a week simply by quoting our bank sort code: 30 66 76 account number 17 25 68 62 and your council tax account number.
Remember:

- ensure you have your council tax reference available when making payments
- if you pay your council tax by cash or credit/debit card, your instalments are due on 1st of each month (unless you have specifically requested an alternative day); you must ensure these payments are received on or before the due date
- if you pay by cheque, you should allow six extra days.

Council tax is now payable in a maximum of 12 monthly instalments. The default number of instalments is still 10. If you wish to move from your current 10 monthly instalments to 12 please contact us before the 15th April by emailing revenues@luton.gov.uk. Payment usually starts in April and ends in January for 10 instalments, or March for 12 instalments. The amount you have to pay, and when, is shown on your bill.

If you provide the Council with your mobile telephone number we can send you an SMS reminder if you miss a payment. This may help you to avoid costs as a result of recovery action automatically triggered if you are late in paying your bill.
Sign up to MyAccount

Regular users of the council’s website will know there are lots of ways to find information and get things done. We are developing a great new system, MyAccount, that lets you do all this and more from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

One big improvement is entering details like your name and address once, which will make everything easier and faster.

Just give us your name, address, email and that’s it. This information is kept safe and secure and won’t be passed onto anyone else.

With MyAccount you can report problems, order services, check your council tax, make payments and claim benefits – all at a few clicks of a button.

Some of these facilities are available now and others will be rolling out shortly. Sign up today at: www.luton.gov.uk/myaccount

Paperless billing

You will receive your bills by email rather than through the post unless you opt out. To register or opt out go to: www.luton.gov.uk/ebilling
Who has to pay?

To work out who is responsible for your home, look down the list below until you come to the category of resident that applies to you.

1. Owner of the property (who owns the freehold).
2. Person who owns the lease.
3. Tenant (including council tenants).
4. Someone who has a licence to live in the property.
5. Someone who just lives there.

If no adults live in the property as their main home, the owner or person entitled to possession is responsible for paying the council tax bill.

In some special cases, (including houses in multiple occupation such as bedsits), it is the owner who is responsible for paying the council tax and not the residents.

A resident is a person aged 18 years or over who lives in the dwelling as their only or main home.

Joint owners or tenants are jointly liable for one council tax bill for the dwelling. Husbands and wives and civil partners of liable people are also jointly responsible for paying the bill.

What if you do not pay?

If you fail to pay or pay late, you will lose your right to pay by instalments and have to pay the outstanding balance in full immediately. You will receive a reminder and ultimately you could receive a court summons and have to pay costs.

Your case could then be referred to enforcement agents for collection. You could also be made bankrupt and lose your home, or even be jailed for up to 90 days.

So, please let us know straightaway if you are having difficulty paying your council tax. We will do our very best to help and advise. Email us at revenues@luton.gov.uk or call us on 0300 790 0340.
Council tax discounts

You may be entitled to a discount on your council tax bill if you, or someone in your household, falls into one of these categories:

- students, apprentices, YTS trainees, student nurses and foreign language assistants
- people under 20 who are on, or have just completed, a qualifying course of further education
- young people for whom child benefit is still payable
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18
- severely mentally impaired people
- live-in care workers on low pay, such as community service volunteers
- patients usually resident in hospital, residential care homes, nursing homes or hostels providing a high level of care
- residents of certain hostels or night shelters
- prisoners, convicted or on remand, except where imprisonment is for non-payment of fines or council tax.

Changes to discounts and premiums

Under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, Luton does not offer:

- discount on second homes (property that is nobody’s sole or main residence and is furnished)
- exemption on an unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property (used to be up to 6 months payment exemption)
- exemption on an unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property requiring or undergoing structural alterations or major repair works to make it habitable (used to be up to 12 months payment exemption)
- second adult rebate if you have another adult living with you, such as an elderly relative on a low income or getting income support, or someone on jobseeker’s allowance (income based) not paying rent to you and not paying council tax themselves.
Reductions for people with disabilities

If you or anyone who lives with you is disabled, you may be entitled to reduced council tax if:

- your home has an extra bathroom or kitchen that is essential or of major importance to the disabled person’s well being
- your home has a room (not a bathroom, kitchen or lavatory) specifically used or adapted for the disabled person, which is essential or of major importance to the disabled person’s well being
- if a wheelchair is used inside the home and it is essential or of major importance to the disabled person’s well being.

You can still apply even if your home is in the lowest banding (band A).

To claim, please go to www.luton.gov.uk/Council_tax/discount/

If you care for someone with a disability who is not your spouse, partner, or a child under 18, you may be entitled to be ‘disregarded’ for council tax.

Council tax: empty homes

Any homes that have been empty and unfurnished for more than two years will be charged one and a half times their normal council tax rate.

Discount for annexes

The Government wishes to support extended families living together (ie children saving for a new home or elderly parents). If parts of a home are constructed or adapted for separate occupation and separately banded for council tax as an annexe, a 50% discount can be awarded.

If you think this discount applies to you please contact us (see the contact details shown at the start of this booklet).
You don’t have to pay council tax on a property if it falls into any of the following exemption categories. If your bill has an exemption code printed on it, you must tell us if you think the exemption is incorrect. If you have not been granted an exemption but think you may be entitled to one, please let us know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class B</td>
<td>Owned by charity and unoccupied. <strong>Exempt for up to six months.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class D</td>
<td>Unoccupied because the owner or tenant is in prison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class E</td>
<td>Unoccupied because the owner or tenant now lives in a hospital or care home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class F</td>
<td>Unoccupied after a death. <strong>Exempt for up to six months after grant of probate.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class G</td>
<td>Unoccupied because occupation is forbidden by law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class H</td>
<td>Unoccupied and is being held for occupation by a minister of religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>Unoccupied as the person has moved to receive personal care elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class J</td>
<td>Unoccupied as persons have moved to provide personal care elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class K</td>
<td>Unoccupied properties owned and last used by a student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class L</td>
<td>Unoccupied properties that have been repossessed by the mortgage lender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class M</td>
<td>Student hall of residence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class N</td>
<td>Properties only occupied by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class O</td>
<td>UK armed forces accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class P</td>
<td>Occupied by a member of visiting armed forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Q</td>
<td>Unoccupied property that is the responsibility of a bankrupt’s trustee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class R</td>
<td>Unoccupied caravan pitch or boat mooring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class S</td>
<td>All occupiers under 18 years of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class T</td>
<td>Unoccupied granny flat or annexe which cannot be let out separately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class U</td>
<td>All occupiers are severely mentally impaired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class V</td>
<td>Main residence of a person with diplomatic privilege or immunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class W</td>
<td>Granny flat or annexe that is occupied by a dependant relative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Council tax reduction for working age claimants

This is the local scheme that replaced council tax benefit from 1st April 2013 (pensioners are protected) which has been revised this year for working age claimants. The main change is the maximum amount that can be awarded for working age claimants has reduced from 100% to 75%, except for those households with a disabled person.

Council tax reduction helps those on a low income, even if they are working, by providing a discount on their council tax liability.

If you receive Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance (income based) or Employment Support Allowance (income related), claiming council tax reduction will result in a maximum council tax reduction of 75% of your liability, unless you have another adult living in the property who is not your partner.

People who are joint owners or joint tenants, who are neither married nor living together as if they were married, may all be liable for council tax. If you are on a low income you can claim council tax reduction for your share of the bill.

Council tax reduction for pension age claimants

There is protection from any changes for those of pension age. Those receiving guaranteed pension credit will receive the maximum council tax reduction.

Council tax exceptional hardship relief

If you experience exceptional circumstances of financial hardship you may be able to claim discretionary help. The budget for this is limited so the help available will be for a limited period and amount.

To apply, please read the criteria below and complete the application form which will be available on the Council's website from 1 April 2016.

- Applications must be made in writing by completing the application form.
- Applications will be evaluated on their individual merits by reference to the following criteria: The application must be due to exceptional
financial or personal hardship usually brought about by events outside the applicants’ control.

Evidence required – financial or personal hardship

- summary of reason for application
- any evidence to substantiate reason
- statement of how this reduction will assist and what will happen next
- completed income and expenditure form
- bank statement
- utility bills
- evidence of rent and mortgage
- employment details with pay advice
- evidence of benefits received

A decision on your claim will be made within one month of receipt of the application, but this will be extended if you are asked to provide further evidence. Then a decision will be made within one calendar month of receiving all the evidence.

Discretionary reductions are funded by the council tax payers of the borough. Payment of any award under this scheme is dependent upon sufficient funds being available within the Council’s budget. An award will only be made for council tax within the current financial year.

If you disagree with the decision on your application, you can ask for a review of the decision, which will be completed within one calendar month of the decision notification letter.
Universal Credit is coming to Luton

On 22nd February 2016 a new benefit was introduced in Luton. Called Universal Credit, it replaces certain existing benefits and has a housing cost element to replace housing benefit. Universal Credit is being introduced in stages. Initially it affects single people, without childcare or caring responsibilities, who are of working age and fit for work. This new benefit does not cover council tax costs so applications for council tax reduction should still be made through the Council. To find out more about Universal Credit and if it affects you please visit www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Disagree with our benefits decision?

If you think our decision is wrong you can ask us to look at it again. Your request needs to be made in writing and include the reasons why you think our decision is wrong plus any additional evidence you want to be taken into account. There is no time limit for asking us to look at a decision again.

If we decide that our original decision was correct you have the right to appeal directly to the Valuation Tribunal Service which is independent of the Council.
Help with your rent: housing benefit

If you are on a low wage or get certain benefits, you may get help with your rent through housing benefit. You can apply for council tax reduction at the same time. We will also treat it as a claim for free school meals unless you tell us otherwise. Please see www.luton.gov.uk/benefits for more details.

Council tax reduction appeals

If you believe our decision is wrong you have a right of appeal to the Valuation Tribunal Service.

You can appeal against the:

- amount of council tax reduction we have granted you
- information we have used to calculate your council tax reduction.

You cannot appeal against any of the rules of our council tax reduction scheme itself.

Before you can appeal to the Valuation Tribunal, you must write to us first, asking us to look at our original decision. You can only appeal to the Valuation Tribunal once we have considered our decision and decided that it is correct.

If you appeal directly to the Valuation Tribunal without first asking us to look at the original decision again, the appeal will not be accepted or considered.

If we have decided our original decision is correct, you then have two months in which to appeal directly to the Valuation Tribunal.

If we don't respond to your request to look at the original decision again within two months, you can appeal directly to the Valuation Tribunal,

In these circumstances the appeal must be made within four months of the original decision that you think is incorrect.

Please note you must continue to pay your council tax while awaiting the result of an appeal hearing.
Claim housing benefit today

For more details on getting help with your bill or an application form for council tax reduction and/or housing benefit see www.luton.gov.uk/benefits, email revenues@luton.gov.uk or call us on 0300 790 0345.

Help us fight fraud

If you think someone is claiming benefit fraudulently, you can report it online at gov.uk/report-benefit-fraud, email fraud@luton.gov.uk, or contact the benefit fraud hotline on 0800 854 440, which is a 24 hour free phone service. Any information provided will be treated in strictest confidence.

Moving home?

Please remember to tell us if you move home. You can either complete the online form at www.luton.gov.uk/benefits, email us at revenues@luton.gov.uk or call us on 0300 790 0345.

Let us know immediately about any changes in your circumstances, particularly if you are claiming council tax reduction or any other discount or a tax exemption

You must also tell us if you have been given a discount to which you are not entitled.

We rely on accurate information from council tax payers to make the system work. If you knowingly provide inaccurate information or refuse to supply details we need, you could be liable for a penalty of up to £70 and/or risk prosecution.
How to request a review of your bill

If you disagree with our decision about the bill or your responsibility to pay council tax, please write to us giving the reasons why you think your bill is wrong.

You can ask for a review of the decision if you think:

- we are sending bills to the wrong person for your home
- your home should be exempt from council tax
- the amount of the bill is wrong, for example if you think you're entitled to a discount or a reduction
- we have not reduced the bill for a disability.

Appeals to the Valuation Tribunal

If you asked for a review of your bill and do not receive a reply within two months, or you receive a reply within two months and you still disagree with the Council's decision, you have a further two months in which to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. (Contact details can be found at the front of this booklet).

You cannot appeal if your only reason for doing so is that you do not agree with the Council’s local council tax reduction scheme.

Disagree with the banding of your property?

Your property has been allocated to one of eight bands by the Inland Revenue's Valuation Office on the basis of its open market value on 1 April 1991.

Each valuation band pays a different amount of council tax.

If you think the property has been placed in the wrong band you may be able to appeal by:

- asking the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to check it
- making a formal challenge to the VOA – you can only do this in certain circumstances; for example, if your property has changed significantly since it was valued.
Expenditure and income

For many years, Luton Council has kept its tax the lowest in Bedfordshire and the tax rate has also been below the average of other unitary councils. It has kept costs down with a range of money-saving and income-generating ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property band</th>
<th>Capital values (£) as at 1 Apr 1991</th>
<th>No. of properties</th>
<th>Council tax (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A with disability relief</td>
<td>0 to 40,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>859.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0 to 40,000</td>
<td>17,879</td>
<td>1,030.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>40,001 to 52,000</td>
<td>26,477</td>
<td>1,202.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>52,001 to 68,000</td>
<td>22,340</td>
<td>1,374.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>68,001 to 88,000</td>
<td>7,695</td>
<td>1,546.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>88,001 to 120,000</td>
<td>3,406</td>
<td>1,889.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>120,001 to 160,000</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>2,233.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>160,001 to 320,000</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>2,577.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>over 320,000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3,092.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tax base band D equivalents: 49,151.3
Total: 79,151

(46,635.3 in 2015/16)

The council tax attributable to Luton Borough Council includes a precept to fund adult social care.

- 2% of the increase: £24.87 per annum for a band D property is for adult social care
- 1.95% of the increase: £24.24 per annum for a band D property is for Luton’s other services.

Core grant support from government has reduced again this year, from a starting position of £64m in 2013/14 to £28.8m for 2016/17, but the Council is continuing to lessen the effect of this on public facing services by generating alternative sources of income.
For 2016/17 the Council has been able to set a balanced budget while continuing to protect services.

The Council has included £9.5 million in the budget to cover additional cost pressures on vital services including £3.4 million for adults and older persons social care, £3.0 million for children’s care and education, £0.5m for temporary accommodation and £2.6 million to meet statutory changes in pay related costs including increases in national insurance and pensions.

Cost savings or increased income have been sought in every area of the Council’s activities in order to balance the 2016/17 budget and extensive consultation has taken place on many savings proposals. Budget savings for 2015/16 totalled £14.3 million and for 2016/17 there are a further £12.7 million. The budget reductions are expected to have limited impact on current service levels, but it has not been possible to shield all public facing services from savings.

Overall, the net cost of services for 2016/17 has reduced by £7.8m compared to 2015/16. The major changes in net spending are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major changes</th>
<th>£million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service growth and contingency costs – unavoidable increased spend on services</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price inflation, national insurance, pensions and other employee costs</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions to reserves to meet future cost pressures</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; children’s services</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue effect of capital programme</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General grants, including Business Rates compensation</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased income and returns on investment</td>
<td>-13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductions in expenditure and increases in income</td>
<td>-12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net change in spend</strong></td>
<td><strong>-7.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Budget expenditure and income 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross cost of services</strong></td>
<td>535,099</td>
<td>-399,160</td>
<td>535,033</td>
<td>-391,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net expenditure</strong></td>
<td>135,939</td>
<td>2,765.72</td>
<td>143,792</td>
<td>3,083.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to/from(-)</strong></td>
<td>483</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>-5,171</td>
<td>-110.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>collection fund</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue Support Grant</strong></td>
<td>-28,769</td>
<td>-585.32</td>
<td>-37,352</td>
<td>-800.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collection Fund Business</strong></td>
<td>-33,284</td>
<td>-677.17</td>
<td>-32,533</td>
<td>-679.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Rates Top Up</strong></td>
<td>-10,841</td>
<td>-220.57</td>
<td>-10,751</td>
<td>-230.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Luton Borough Council</strong></td>
<td>63,528</td>
<td>1,292.49</td>
<td>57,985</td>
<td>1,243.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedfordshire Police Authority</strong></td>
<td>8,004</td>
<td>162.85</td>
<td>7,446</td>
<td>159.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>precept</strong></td>
<td>4,473</td>
<td>91.00</td>
<td>4,160</td>
<td>89.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beds Fire Authority precept</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Council tax</strong></td>
<td>1,546.34</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,492.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gross expenditure on services is budgeted at £535.1 million for 2016/17. The distribution of the budget across services is shown in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2016/17 expenditure £m</th>
<th>2015/16 expenditure £m</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education and Children's services</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>232.64</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing services</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143.31</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult social care</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74.32</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural, environment and planning services</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34.43</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways, roads and transport services</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.41</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Services (local tax collection, democracy, etc.)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.26</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>553</strong></td>
<td><strong>523.58</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The budget for maintaining and improving the town’s assets and infrastructure in 2016/17 is £103.9 million. The distribution across services and the resources to fund the expenditure are shown in charts below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2016/17 expenditure £m</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing (public sector)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in public buildings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing (private sector)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles and plant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major capital projects planned for 2016/17 include: £34m for a new wholly owned housing company, £16m for area redevelopment, £12m for maintenance and improvements to housing, £11m for school expansion or improvement and £10m for highways and transport infrastructure.
## Capital financing 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2016/17 expenditure £m</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported expenditure - capital grant</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudential borrowing</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major repairs allowance</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal funds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usable capital receipts</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword by Councillor David McVicar, Chair of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Paul Fuller CBE QFSM, Chief Fire Officer.

In 2016/17, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority will continue to provide our excellent response to fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues and other emergencies, whilst also working to reduce the number and severity of such incidents.

We will also be continuing to work with other emergency services to collaborate and co-respond to incidents where appropriate and where there is a clear benefit to the people of Bedfordshire to working together.

We already collaborate with Bedfordshire Police on the Bobby Van Scheme, School Crime and Arson Risk Evaluation, Biker Down and through Community Safety Partnerships. From April we will be working with our colleagues in the East of England Ambulance Service to pilot a project in Leighton Buzzard and the Biggleswade area co-responding to cardiac arrests. Should this life-saving pilot prove a success we could expand it to the whole of the county.

We will soon be publishing a refreshed summary of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which shows how the Fire and Rescue Authority uses its understanding of risks for the safety of our communities and to plan for and respond to the full range of emergencies. It also shows how our prevention and protection activities are targeted to reduce the risks facing our communities.

Last year, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service attended almost 6,000 emergency incidents including: 512 dwelling fires; 459 road traffic collisions; 27 flooding incidents; and 1,259 special incidents (which includes animal rescues, aircraft, and railway incidents).

Our fire fighters assisted people from fires on 73 occasions and including rescuing 15 people. They also extricated 119 casualties from road traffic collisions.

The success of our fire prevention activities, including free home fire safety checks and smoke detectors, have reduced the number of incidents amongst certain vulnerable groups. This means we have more
traffic collisions and we are now providing road safety education campaigns and working closely with children and adults of all ages, abilities and cultures to improve road risk awareness wherever possible.

In addition, each year our operational crews and specialist fire safety inspection 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.

After receiving over 1,000 responses to our consultation in January 2016 the Fire and Rescue Authority has increased its Band D Council Tax requirement for 2016/17 by just 3.4 pence per week.

Alongside a programme of efficiency savings, this small increase will enable us to continue to meet the needs of our communities while at the same time delivering the necessary reductions in overall costs. This means your Fire and Rescue Service is provided for a Council Tax amount of just 25 pence per day for a Band D household, which we believe continues to represent excellent value for money.

Councillor David McVicar, Chair of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Paul M Fuller CBE QFSM MSc BSc FIFire MinstLM
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. 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 over 3 pence per week for a Band D household).

This has been achieved despite the impact of a 6.1% reduction in Government grant (compared to 2015/16) totalling £0.641m, and the effect of inflation which is forecast to increase our costs this year by £0.315m.

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 £1.274m and these are 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 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 2015, the Government announced the grant funding for the Service over the four years from 2016/17 to 2019/20. This settlement equates to a 21% funding reduction from 2015/16 funding levels.

Total achieved and planned savings and efficiencies between 2010/11 and 2016/17 total £4.8m, with a further savings and efficiencies of £0.47m by 2019/20

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 firefighter crewing arrangements;
- 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 2015 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.
The Band D Council Tax for 2016/17 will be £91.00

The Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed a budget requirement of £28.985 million for 2016/17.

Where does the money come from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016/17 (£m)</th>
<th>2015/16 (£m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Requirement</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Local Government Funding</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What the money is spent on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016/17 (£m)</th>
<th>2015/16 (£m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and Services</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency and Contracted Services</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Financing</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding to / (from)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Requirement</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you would like a printed copy of this leaflet please contact Sharon Webster on 01234 845180 or email Sharon.webster@bedsfire.com

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Southfields Road
Kempston
Bedford
MK42 7NR

Tel 01234 845000

www.bedsfire.com

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V1 23/02/2016
## Council Tax for Policing 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Increase from 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>£108.57</td>
<td>£2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>£126.66</td>
<td>£2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£144.76</td>
<td>£2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£162.85</td>
<td>£3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>£199.04</td>
<td>£3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>£235.23</td>
<td>£4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>£271.42</td>
<td>£5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>£325.70</td>
<td>£6.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of your total council tax bill, approximately 10% goes towards policing. The Commissioner has set a budget of £101.483M, of which £32.578M comes from local people and the remainder is funded by the Government.

Financial reductions and cost pressures continue to stretch Bedfordshire Police's thin blue line. If the amount of council tax paid towards policing did not increase this year, it would mean a further budget cut at a time when we are still having to make efficiencies in response to the last round of austerity measures. New cost pressures such as inflation, wage rises and National Insurance changes also have to be met. To afford the extra 300 officers the Chief Constable is calling for would require £8M to £12M a year and changes to the Government's funding formula. Bedfordshire has been underfunded for many years compared with other forces – a fact that has been recognised in Parliament. The force has worked very hard to try to fill the gap, and has achieved considerable savings through its joint working with other police forces – particularly with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. By 2018-19 around £10M will have been found for Bedfordshire through this tri-force collaboration.

Bedfordshire is generally a low-cost force and recognised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary as having the third lowest non-staff costs in 2014-15 and below average officer costs.

### Getting in touch

With your PCC

E: pcc@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

T: 01234 842064

Twitter: @BedsPCC

www.bedspcc.org

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire.

Bridgebury House, Kempston, Bedfordshire MK43 9AX

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The overall budget for policing Bedfordshire in 2016-17 is £101.483M. This includes an increase of around £3 in the average householder’s annual contribution following overwhelming support from local people during consultation.

The Chancellor’s ‘no cuts to policing’ pledge, which is reliant upon a local increase in the amount of council tax paid towards policing, does little to help Bedfordshire Police afford the 300 extra police officers it needs. As it stands, the Government’s Police Grant to Bedfordshire is down by £400,000 compared with last year, and the force anticipates having to make £11M more savings in the next four years.

Changes that include joint working with other forces have saved the force £25M since 2010. In that time officer numbers have fallen by 178 (14%) - due to Government funding cuts - despite Bedfordshire having the fourth highest level of gun crime, fifth highest serious acquisitive crime, seventh in knife crime, and being at high risk for terrorism and organised crime.

Savings plans include merging the Force Control Room, closing police station front counters and reducing PCSOs – decisions that should help to maintain or slightly increase police officer numbers which are currently just 169 per 100,000 population compared to the national average of 232.
What it will cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Total annual amount</th>
<th>Increase from 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>£108.57</td>
<td>£2.12</td>
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</tbody>
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Overstretched and Underfunded

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**Getting in touch with your PCC**

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E: pcc@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk
T: 01234 842064
Twitter: @BedsPCC
www.bedspcc.org
Reducing Crime Together

• Beds Alert

This crime and community information messaging system is run by Bedfordshire Police in partnership with other organisations and offers residents details about crime and other news in their local area.

The service, which is free, also provides crime reduction advice and help to tackle crime in their neighbourhoods.

You can find out more and join Beds Alert by going to:
www.bedsalert.co.uk

• Specials

Bedfordshire Police is fortunate in having a team of volunteer Special Constables who give their time to help keep their communities safe. More recruits are now wanted to join them.

The Specials have the same powers as regular officers. In Bedfordshire last year they made more than 500 arrests and stopped more than 2,000 vehicles. Some Specials help to support areas like the force’s Football Unit, Scientific Services and Roads Policing.

If you would like to find out more about becoming part of the Special Constabulary, please go to the recruitment section at:
www.bedfordshire.police.uk
Supporting you through tough times

We cannot stop the tough times. But as a Council we are committed to providing you with local quality services delivering value for money.

Do not bury your head in the sand if you are in financial difficulty. Contact us as early as possible. We can advise you of any discounts or benefits to which you may be entitled. In special circumstances, we may be able to offer you a revised payment plan. You can also get specialist money advice from an outside organisation.

**Luton Citizens’ Advice Bureau**
Provides a range of advice services including how to cope with your debt problems.
15 New Bedford Road
Luton LU1 1SA
Tel: 0344 245 1285
www.adviceguide.org.uk

**Consumer Credit Counselling Service**
Tel: 0800 138 111
www.cccs.co.uk

**The UK Insolvency Helpline Debt Advice Service**
Tel: 0800 074 6918
www.insolvencyhelpline.co.uk

**Luton Law Centre**
6th Floor, Cresta House
Alma Street
Luton LU1 2PL
Tel: 01582 481000
email: admin@lutonlawcentre.org.uk
www.lawcentres.org.uk

**National Debtline**
Tel: 0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

**Bankruptcy line**
Tel: 0800 074 6918
Bankruptcy-Insolvency.co.uk

**Luton Rights**
15 New Bedford Road
Luton LU1 1SA
Tel: 01582 453372
www.lutonrights.org