



EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Council Tax and Budget Information 2020/21



East Sussex Fire Authority has agreed an increase of 1.99% in Council Tax. This means that Band D Council Tax will increase from £93.67 to £95.53 in 2020/21, providing a 24/7 emergency response for just £1.84 per week.

The funding, alongside a better than anticipated grant settlement from central government and savings

of £0.396m (none of which affect frontline services) means East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service can balance its budget for the coming year and can continue its work to provide emergency response, fire safety regulation and community safety programmes. It carries out a large range of preventive work with vulnerable people, care homes and other businesses.

What you pay for fire and rescue - council tax bands

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
Annual Cost	£63.69	£74.30	£84.92	£95.53	£116.76	£137.99	£159.22	£191.06
Weekly Cost	£1.22	£1.43	£1.63	£1.84	£2.25	£2.65	£3.06	£3.67

We make our communities safer

Fire Authority Chairman, Cllr. Roy Galley, said:

“We have made steady progress with delivering savings and efficiencies, a fact which has been recognised by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service. Despite this, we are still facing financial challenges and we believe that this increase is a reasonable way to ensure we can continue to protect the public.”

To ensure that we can continue to work to make our communities safer at home, at work and on the roads, we are carrying out a full risk based review of our services taking account of demographic changes including expected growth in housing, population and road traffic and will be making proposals for change as part of our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). This will be considered by the

Fire Authority in April before a period of public consultation. Final decisions on how we shape our service for the future will be taken in September.

To find out more about how we are doing this read about our Integrated Risk Management Plan on our website:

www.esfrs.org/cra

For more information visit: www.esfrs.org



Our plans for the future (our revenue budget)

The additional income from Council Tax along with the better than expected Local Government Finance Settlement and savings of £0.4m mainly from reductions the cost of non-pay spend e.g. an improved contract for providing firefighters with protective equipment, will help us balance the Authority's budget and will enable us to continue to invest in the Service's life-saving work as set out in our Integrated Risk Management Plan. Our revenue budget (for day-to-day spending) will increase by £0.7m. This includes an additional £0.5m to operate the our mobilising centre whilst we work towards a new partnership with Surrey and West Sussex

Fire Services and setting aside £0.5m in invest initiatives that will make us more efficient.

There is significant uncertainty about our funding beyond 2020/21. The Government is planning to review how much it spends on public services, how much of this goes to the fire service, how this is divided between each fire authority and how much of this funding comes from business rates. This makes it difficult make firm plans for the future. In our Medium Term Finance Plan we have modelled a range of scenarios and these suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.7m and £3.5m by 2024/25.

We will be identifying opportunities for new savings through our Efficiency Strategy. This will focus on a range of areas including:

- improving the way we procure goods and services
- using investment in our IT and estate to reduce our running costs
- reviewing all our support services
- working in collaboration with other emergency services and public sector bodies where that can make our services more effective and efficient.

What we spend:

	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	Proportion %
Employees	30.1	30.1	76%
Running Expenses	10.0	10.1	25%
Capital Financing	0.9	0.8	2%
Gross Service Expenditure	41.0	41.0	103%
Income & Specific Grants	-3.7	-2.4	-6%
Net Contribution to Reserves	1.7	1.1	3%
Net Budget Requirement	39.0	39.7	100%

How we are funded:

	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	Proportion %
Government Grants	0.0	3.2	8%
Business rates	11.6	8.6	22%
Council tax	27.4	27.9	70%
Total Funding	39.0	39.7	100%

Investing for the future (our capital budget)

As well as our day to day spending, in 2020/21 we will be investing £6.0m in total, including: £3.3m in new fire appliances and other vehicles and £2.6m in improving our buildings. This includes the refurbishment of Preston Circus Community Fire Station at a total project cost of £3.1m. This is part of a wider improvement plan for our estate over the next

eight years which see a total investment of £13.8m which will improve its efficiency and effectiveness and the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff We expect this investment and other measures will reduce the day to day running costs of our Estate by 15-25%.

Income from the sales of our old HQ and other buildings, along with other money we have set

aside provide a fund of £8.8m to support the delivery of the Capital Asset

Strategy, nevertheless the Authority is expected to require new borrowing from 2021/22, the first since January 2008.

Read more in our Fire Authority papers:

www.esfrs.org/fireauthority