

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Council Tax and Budget Information 2021/22



East Sussex Fire Authority has agreed an increase of 1.99% in Council Tax. This means that Band D Council Tax will increase by £1.90 from £95.53 to £97.43 in 2021/22, providing a 24/7 emergency response for just £1.87 per week.

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

£0.5m 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 wide 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	£64.95	£75.78	£86.60	£97.43	£119.08	£140.73	£162.38	£194.86
Weekly Cost	£1.25	£1.45	£1.66	£1.87	£2.28	£2.70	£3.11	£3.74

We make our communities safer

Fire Authority Chairman, Cllr. Roy Galley, said:

“Every member of the Fire Authority recognises that Covid-19 has affected our communities, our local businesses and the finances of individual households. It was important to us to better understand the impact of the different options open to the Fire Authority. Following an in-depth debate, a decision was

made to increase the Council Tax. We believe this is the best way to ensure funding to continue to serve the public and save lives now and in the future.”

In September 2020 the Fire Authority approved its new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) “Planning for a Safer Future” which sets out how we will target our resources, including firefighters

and fire engines, more effectively, bringing about a better balance of prevention, protection and response. This will ensure that we can continue to work to make our communities safer at home, at work and on the roads.

You can find out more about our Integrated Risk Management Plan on our website:

www.esfrs.org/safer-future

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 £0.5m mainly from reductions in the cost of non-pay spend e.g. better procurement, and the implementation of our new Integrated Risk Management Plan will help us balance the Authority's budget and will enable us to continue to invest in the Service's life-saving work. Our revenue budget (for day-to-day spending) will increase by £1m. 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, £0.8m revenue costs from our investment in

Fleet, IT and People Strategies and setting aside £0.3m to invest in initiatives that will make us more efficient.

There is significant uncertainty about our funding beyond 2021/22. 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 to make firm plans for the future. In our Medium Term Finance Plan we have modelled two scenarios and these suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.3m and £2.5m by 2025/26.

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

- alternative ways of delivering our community safety services
- sharing services such as estates and fleet / engineering with other public sector partners
- using IT to make our processes more efficient
- reviewing our administration and management structures
- reviewing our planned investment in our estate and fleet.

What we spend:

	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	Proportion %
Employees	30.1	30.4	75%
Running Expenses	10.1	11.1	27%
Capital Financing	0.9	0.9	2%
Gross Service Expenditure	41.1	42.4	104%
Income & Specific Grants	(2.4)	(2.6)	(6%)
Net Contribution to Reserves	1.0	1.0	2%
Net Budget Requirement	39.7	40.7	100%

How we are funded:

	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	Proportion %
Government Grants	3.2	3.7	9%
Business rates	8.6	8.7	21%
Council tax	27.9	28.3	70%
Total Funding	39.7	40.7	100%

Investing for the future (our capital budget)

As well as our day to day spending, in 2021/22 we will be investing £6.1m in total, including: £3.1m in new fire appliances and other vehicles and £3.0m 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 five years which sees a total

investment of £12.2m 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, the community infrastructure levy fund(CIL) along with other money

we have and are planning to put aside will provide funding of £13.1m to support the delivery of the Capital Asset Strategy, nevertheless the Authority is expected to require new borrowing from 2022/23, the first since January 2008.

Read more in our Fire Authority papers:

www.esfrs.org/fireauthority