



EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Council Tax and Budget Information 2024-2025



East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is not alone in facing pressure on its budget during the current cost of living crisis primarily from inflation, higher than expected increases in pay and future funding uncertainties.

By law East Sussex Fire Authority must produce a balanced budget and cannot spend more than it receives.

The Fire Authority has agreed an increase in Council Tax of

2.99%, the maximum allowed without a referendum, in order to help navigate these pressures. At Band D that is an increase of £3.12 a year or just 6 pence per week.

Fire Authority Chairman Roy Galley said:

“No-one on the Fire Authority takes the decision to raise Council Tax lightly. The fact remains we have limited options to balance our budget and protect local

services in the face of inflation and other increasing costs, and Council Tax is our primary source of funding. Despite these pressures the Fire Authority remains totally committed to keeping our communities safe.”

Support will continue to be available through local Council Tax Support Schemes for those residents who are eligible.

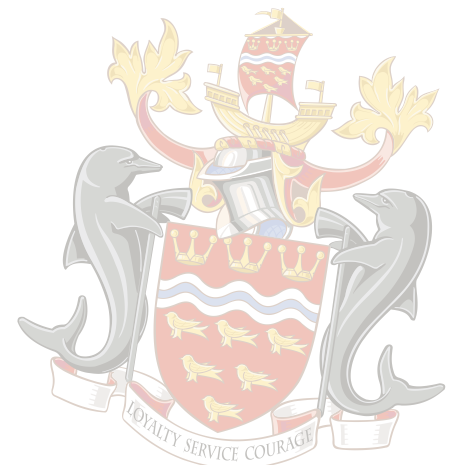
What you pay for fire and rescue - council tax bands

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
Annual Cost	£71.66	£83.60	£95.55	£107.49	£131.38	£155.26	£179.15	£214.98
Weekly Cost	£1.38	£1.61	£1.84	£2.07	£2.53	£2.99	£3.45	£4.13

Sound Financial Management

In its latest report, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services stated: “The service delivers sound financial management. There are regular reviews to consider all the

Service's expenditure, including its non-pay costs. This scrutiny makes sure the Service gets value for money”. The Service was rated good for both efficiency and effectiveness.





Budget gap

The 2024/25 budget was balanced by new savings of £1.9m and other flexibilities of £0.9m of which £1.3m are on a one-off basis.

Based on current modelling the amount required to balance the 2025/26 budget is £2.2m

The Fire Authority does not have to take final decisions on its budget for 2025/26 until February 2025 but has asked officers to identify options for achieving permanent savings to balance the budget at the earliest opportunity. This will include a review of options for the future of Mayfield Fire Station.

These measures mean East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is in the best position it can be to continue its work to provide emergency response, fire safety regulation and community safety programmes. You can find the latest information on our website: www.esfrs.org

What we spend:	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	% of budget	How we are funded:	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	Proportion %
Employees	33.7	36.4	73%	Government Grants	4.1	6.9	14%
Running Expenses	12.2	15.9	32%	Business rates	9.7	10.6	21%
Capital Financing	0.9	1.0	2%	Council tax	31.3	32.5	65%
Gross Service Expenditure	46.8	53.3	107%	Total Funding	45.1	50.0	100%
Income & Specific Grants	(2.6)	(2.5)	(5%)				
Contribution to/(from) Reserves*	0.9	(0.8)	(2%)				
Net Budget Requirement	45.1	50.0	100%				

*The contribution to reserves is the net figure of all reserve transfers and in 2023/24 included £0.6m drawdown from reserves to balance the budget.

Our plans for the future (our revenue budget)

Our revenue budget (for day-to-day spending) will increase by £4.9m, mainly due to inflationary pressures and an existing grant for firefighter pension costs being permanently added to our funding from Government. Pay agreements exceed previously agreed budget provisions and there is pressure on running costs.

Investing for the future (our capital budget)

As well as our day to day spending, in 2024/25 we will be investing £8.9m in our assets, including: £2.2m on new fire appliances and other vehicles and £6.8m in improving our buildings. The investment in our estate includes mitigating the risk of contaminants, improvements to reduce energy consumption and the provision of welfare facilities.

Major projects include refurbishment of Preston Circus Fire Station and creating of an Engineering Workshop in Newhaven. We expect this investment and other measures will reduce the day to day running costs of our Estate. Government grants and income from the community infrastructure levy fund (CIL), along with other money we have and are planning to put aside are funding some of the Capital Asset Strategy, nevertheless the Authority is expected to require new borrowing from 2024/25, the first since January 2008.