

Council tax guide

Your guide to council tax in 2015–2016
including police and fire budgets

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Your guide to council tax

This leaflet provides information about the budgets for local public services for the year ahead and explains your council tax bill.

Depending on your household income, you may be eligible for help with paying your bill (see page 11 for more information).

With the ongoing reduction to public spending, North Somerset Council continues to work hard to save money and rise to the most significant financial challenge it has ever faced.

The council remains committed to providing excellent value for money through the services it delivers, and to maintaining an affordable level of council tax.

Sometimes it's good to be part of a crowd



Almost 70% of households in North Somerset pay their council tax by Direct Debit meaning they never put themselves in danger of missing a payment.

Set up a Direct Debit and join the crowd today. Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/counciltax or call **01934 888 144**.



Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact: 01934 888 144

What is council tax?

It's a local property tax levied by councils to top up central government funding of the local services they provide.

What does it pay for?

North Somerset Council provides a wide range of services including education, planning, transport, highways, social care, public health, libraries, leisure and recreation, recycling and waste collection, environmental health and trading standards among many others.

The money you pay also funds the police and fire and rescue service, as well as supporting work in your local parish or town.

Parish and town councils raise their money primarily from a levy called a precept. We collect the precept on behalf of town and parish councils and pass it on to them.

Who decides how much I have to pay?

Council tax is based on property value. Every property is put into a banding and charged accordingly after certain other factors are taken into account.



If you think your house is in an incorrect council tax band, you can appeal in writing to:

Bristol Valuation Office
4th Floor, Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol, BS1 6PN

or visit: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency
or call: 03000 501 501

Budgeting for the future

Budgeting is a year-round process and the ability to balance the books is becoming increasingly difficult in a climate of continued reduction of grants from central government.

However North Somerset Council has a track record of managing its financial affairs efficiently and is on course to achieve over £100m of annual savings during the period 2011 to 2018, with much of this coming from 'back office' services in order to protect front-line service delivery as much as possible. Much of this is being achieved through a wide ranging transformation programme.

We are also 'investing in the future' with a significant focus on regeneration and economic development, leading to new businesses, jobs and homes.

Keep reading North Somerset Life for regular updates about our budget setting process.

Where does the money go?

The table below shows how the money will be spent on services and how that relates to the average council tax bill.

Service	Money spent £ millions	Share of Band D £
People and communities – including educating 28,000 pupils, 74 schools (including academies), pre-school provision, children at risk, adoption and fostering, residential care, community meals, services for people with learning difficulties, tackling homelessness and adult education	90.3	694.51
Development and environment – including maintaining 684 miles of roads, collecting household waste, recycling, parks, libraries, economic development, public transport and environmental health	34.5	265.48
Corporate services – including registration of births, deaths and marriages, legal, democratic and electoral services, council tax collection and benefits administration	8.1	62.28
Capital financing – infrastructure projects, new buildings and refurbishment e.g. schools and play areas	15.0	115.23
Contingency	2.0	15.12
Non-service items – included in your council tax and provided by others, e.g. magistrates courts, coroners service	0.7	5.64
Special expenses	0.1	0.70
Levy – Environment Agency	0.3	2.01
Special levy – drainage boards	0.5	3.87
Net North Somerset requirement	151.5	1,164.84

Proposed budget for 2015/2016

2014/2015		2015/2016		
Net exp £000		Gross exp £000	Income £000	Net exp £000
92,849	People and communities	226,649	136,322	90,327
35,025	Development and environment	46,936	12,408	34,528
8,923	Corporate services	113,378	105,278	8,100
14,597	Capital financing	16,966	1,979	14,987
750	Transition	0	0	0
2,146	Contingency	1,967	0	1,967
939	Non-service items	923	190	733
155,229	Gross expenditure	406,819	256,177	150,642
91	Special expenses	251	160	91
257	Levy – Environment Agency	261	0	261
437	Special levy – drainage boards	503	0	503
156,014	North Somerset requirement	407,834	256,337	151,497
3,794	Parish precepts	3,880	0	3,880
159,808	Budget requirement	411,714	256,337	155,377
To be funded by:				
34,634	National non-domestic rates	0	30,508	30,508
29,478	Revenue support grant	0	26,488	26,488
938	Council tax freeze grant	0	953	953
4,167	New homes bonus	0	5,530	5,530
1,175	Net collection fund adjustment	0	1,135	1,135
336	Use of reserves	0	689	689
89,080	Council tax requirement	411,714	321,640	90,074

The collection fund adjustment is the difference between the amount the council expects to raise from the council tax and business rates and the amount which is actually collected.

Council tax summary 2015/2016

The information below shows the amount needed to fund public services in North Somerset – not just those of the council but also the police, fire and rescue service, and parish and town councils.

2014/2015 £000		2015/2016 £000
155,229	North Somerset Council	150,642
91	Special expenses	91
257	Levy - Environment Agency	261
437	Special levy - drainage boards	503
3,794	Parish and town council precepts	3,880
159,808	North Somerset's budget requirement less:	155,377
(29,478)	National non-domestic rates	(30,508)
(34,634)	Revenue support grant	(26,488)
(938)	Council tax freeze grant	(953)
(4,167)	New homes bonus	(5,530)
(1,175)	Net Collection fund adjustment	(1,135)
(336)	Use of reserves	(689)
89,080	North Somerset's precept	90,074
	Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner precept	
12,547		12,933
4,781	Avon Fire Authority precept	4,928
106,408		107,935

The average Band D council tax for North Somerset will be:

2014/2015 £		2015/2016 £
171.37	Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner	174.78
65.30	Avon Fire Authority	66.60
1,164.84	North Somerset Council	1,164.84
51.81	Average parish/town council	52.44
1,453.32		1,458.66

Parish councils

Six parish councils in North Somerset raise more than £140,000 each through council tax contributions.

Local council	2014/2015	How much needed	2015/2016
Clevedon Town Council	36,214	Recreation	55,014
	16,000	Highways	24,500
	193,191	Other	210,318
	17,670	Contingency/balances	6,430
	263,075		296,262
Long Ashton Parish Council	69,500	Recreation	71,117
	14,750	Highways	15,098
	101,450	Other	106,011
	(43,810)	Contingency/balances	(47,226)
	141,890		145,000
Nailsea Town Council	138,630	Recreation	147,919
	45,825	Highways	43,750
	266,151	Other	263,937
	7,000	Contingency/balances	2,000
	457,606		457,606
Portishead Town Council	115,256	Recreation	138,946
	3,000	Highways	0
	164,355	Other	158,967
	(15,000)	Contingency/balances	(40,000)
	267,611		257,913
Weston-super-Mare Town Council	648,866	Recreation	586,761
	0	Highways	0
	41,238	Other	42,485
	684,013	Contingency/balances	760,150
	1,374,117		1,389,396
Yatton Parish Council	46,900	Recreation	38,800
	11,300	Highways	6,300
	142,763	Other	152,403
	(5,963)	Contingency/balances	(2,503)
	195,000		195,000

How much will you pay?

Local council	2015/2016 precept £	2014/2015 precept £	Parish precept amount for Band D	Band A £
Abbots Leigh	26,000.00	24,000.00	62.25	978.16
Backwell	125,808.96	114,397.46	65.94	980.62
Banwell	74,729.00	71,873.00	71.59	984.39
Barrow Gurney	7,500.00	6,500.00	40.83	963.88
Blagdon	37,555.00	37,350.00	75.14	986.75
Bleadon	38,000.00	38,000.00	73.66	985.77
Brockley	3,500.00	3,300.00	26.86	954.57
Burrington	3,000.00	3,000.00	11.65	944.43
Butcombe	1,600.00	1,550.00	15.00	944.66
Churchill	57,146.55	56,451.72	63.23	978.81
Clapton-in-Gordano	3,700.00	3,700.00	19.84	949.89
Cleeve	13,905.00	13,500.00	38.22	962.14
Clevedon	296,262.00	263,075.49	39.25	967.92
Congresbury	101,831.00	99,336.42	75.61	987.07
Dundry	8,663.26	8,598.79	23.12	952.07
Flax Bourton	22,000.00	22,000.00	63.06	978.70
Hutton	65,085.00	62,275.00	61.40	977.59
Kenn	5,500.00	5,844.00	33.78	959.18
Kewstoke	42,000.00	42,000.00	69.69	983.12
Kingston Seymour	10,700.00	9,200.00	60.49	976.99
Locking	61,000.00	56,000.00	60.47	976.97
Long Ashton	145,000.00	141,890.00	56.60	974.39
Loxton and Christon	2,500.00	2,500.00	26.82	954.54
Nailsea	457,606.00	457,606.00	76.23	987.48
Pill and Easton-in-Gordano	91,700.00	87,500.00	53.69	972.45
Portbury	19,630.00	19,087.00	44.90	966.59
Portishead	257,913.00	267,611.00	25.91	956.16
Puxton	6,360.00	4,622.83	50.04	970.02
St. Georges	16,335.00	16,335.00	14.77	946.51
Tickenham	6,800.00	6,732.66	15.03	946.68
Walton-in-Gordano	4,107.00	3,016.00	30.29	956.85
Weston-in-Gordano	5,000.00	5,000.00	35.26	960.17
Weston-super-Mare	1,389,396.00	1,374,117.00	58.27	975.51
Wick St. Lawrence	10,000.00	7,500.00	18.26	948.83
Winford	21,000.00	20,500.00	21.73	951.15
Winscombe and Sandford	122,000.00	118,000.00	64.30	979.53
Wraxall and Failand	34,200.00	34,200.00	30.25	956.83
Wrington	90,025.00	90,452.00	76.37	987.57
Yatton	195,000.00	195,000.00	75.98	987.31

Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
1,141.19	1,304.21	1,467.24	1,793.29	2,119.35	2,445.40	2,934.48
1,144.06	1,307.49	1,470.93	1,797.80	2,124.68	2,451.55	2,941.86
1,148.45	1,312.52	1,476.58	1,804.71	2,132.84	2,460.97	2,953.16
1,124.53	1,285.17	1,445.82	1,767.11	2,088.41	2,409.70	2,891.64
1,151.21	1,315.67	1,480.13	1,809.05	2,137.97	2,466.88	2,960.26
1,150.06	1,314.36	1,478.65	1,807.24	2,135.83	2,464.42	2,957.30
1,113.66	1,272.76	1,431.85	1,750.04	2,068.23	2,386.42	2,863.70
1,101.83	1,259.24	1,416.64	1,731.45	2,046.26	2,361.07	2,833.28
1,104.44	1,262.21	1,419.99	1,735.54	2,051.10	2,366.65	2,839.98
1,141.95	1,305.08	1,468.22	1,794.49	2,120.76	2,447.03	2,936.44
1,108.20	1,266.52	1,424.83	1,741.46	2,058.09	2,374.72	2,849.66
1,122.50	1,282.85	1,443.21	1,763.92	2,084.64	2,405.35	2,886.42
1,129.24	1,290.56	1,451.88	1,774.52	2,097.16	2,419.80	2,903.76
1,151.58	1,316.09	1,480.60	1,809.62	2,138.64	2,467.67	2,961.20
1,110.75	1,269.43	1,428.11	1,745.47	2,062.83	2,380.18	2,856.22
1,141.82	1,304.93	1,468.05	1,794.28	2,120.52	2,446.75	2,936.10
1,140.53	1,303.46	1,466.39	1,792.25	2,118.12	2,443.98	2,932.78
1,119.04	1,278.91	1,438.77	1,758.50	2,078.22	2,397.95	2,877.54
1,146.97	1,310.83	1,474.68	1,802.39	2,130.09	2,457.80	2,949.36
1,139.82	1,302.65	1,465.48	1,791.14	2,116.80	2,442.47	2,930.96
1,139.80	1,302.63	1,465.46	1,791.12	2,116.78	2,442.43	2,930.92
1,136.79	1,299.19	1,461.59	1,786.39	2,111.19	2,435.98	2,923.18
1,113.63	1,272.72	1,431.81	1,749.99	2,068.17	2,386.35	2,863.62
1,152.06	1,316.64	1,481.22	1,810.38	2,139.54	2,468.70	2,962.44
1,134.53	1,296.60	1,458.68	1,782.83	2,106.98	2,431.13	2,917.36
1,127.69	1,288.79	1,449.89	1,772.09	2,094.29	2,416.48	2,899.78
1,115.52	1,274.88	1,434.24	1,752.96	2,071.68	2,390.40	2,868.48
1,131.69	1,293.36	1,455.03	1,778.37	2,101.71	2,425.05	2,910.06
1,104.26	1,262.01	1,419.76	1,735.26	2,050.76	2,366.27	2,839.52
1,104.46	1,262.24	1,420.02	1,735.58	2,051.14	2,366.70	2,840.04
1,116.33	1,275.80	1,435.28	1,754.23	2,073.18	2,392.13	2,870.56
1,120.19	1,280.22	1,440.25	1,760.31	2,080.36	2,400.42	2,880.50
1,138.09	1,300.68	1,463.26	1,788.43	2,113.60	2,438.77	2,926.52
1,106.97	1,265.11	1,423.25	1,739.53	2,055.81	2,372.08	2,846.50
1,109.67	1,268.20	1,426.72	1,743.77	2,060.82	2,377.87	2,853.44
1,142.78	1,306.04	1,469.29	1,795.80	2,122.31	2,448.82	2,938.58
1,116.30	1,275.77	1,435.24	1,754.18	2,073.12	2,392.07	2,870.48
1,152.17	1,316.76	1,481.36	1,810.55	2,139.74	2,468.93	2,962.72
1,151.87	1,316.42	1,480.97	1,810.07	2,139.18	2,468.28	2,961.94

Council tax support changes

The minimum charge for all working age applicants will be 24.5 per cent.

This will apply to all applicants of working age. The bill you receive shows how much support you will receive. Please note that you do not have the right to appeal against the fact that you have to pay something, or an increased amount towards your council tax simply because of this scheme. However, your rights of appeal if you think we have not applied this scheme properly (for example, your income, capital or household details are not accurate) still remain and you should write to us with evidence of your correct details as soon as possible. More details of the scheme for North Somerset can be found on our website: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/benefits

Please note: This scheme does not apply to retirement age pensioners who will continue to receive the same level of assistance they would have received had the council tax benefit scheme continued.

Council tax and housing benefits have gone digital

The council tax and benefit service is now an online service. To access these services you must register and create an account. Registration is quick, easy and secure and will allow you to apply for benefits, discounts and exemptions. You can also let us know about a change of circumstances or a change of address, set up a direct debit or just view your account balance.

Going digital means we can process many of your requests earlier and provided any additional documents are submitted with your application, you may receive your benefit earlier.

For those customers who may have difficulty getting online or have additional needs, support is available. Please visit us at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, visit one of our libraries or call us on **01934 888 144** and one of our customer service advisers will assist you.

Help with your bill

Council tax support

If you are on a low income and currently pay council tax, you may be eligible for council tax support even if you receive other benefits or council tax discounts.

Please visit our website to register for self-serve and make your application online. If you are unable to get online or have additional needs please visit us at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare or call us on **01934 888 144** and one of our customer service advisers will assist you.

You can also visit any of our libraries and use one of the public access computers to make your application.

More help with your bill

Even if you are not eligible for council tax support based on your income and savings there are other ways to reduce your bill:

- **Exemptions**

Some properties will be exempt from council tax altogether, for example if you are living elsewhere to receive personal care, or if you have gone to live in a care home.

- **Disability reduction scheme**

Your property may be placed in a lower band if it has features such as extra space for a wheelchair.

- **Discounts**

Some bills can be reduced by up to 50 per cent. There is a 25 per cent discount for all properties where only one person is liable to pay council tax.

For more details visit our website or call **01934 888 144**.

YOUR POLICING POUNDS



**AVON &
SOMERSET**
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER

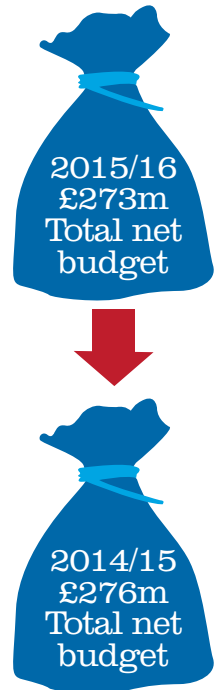
Despite the financial challenges crime and risk of crime remains below average in Avon and Somerset and, in our area, public confidence in policing remains amongst the highest nationally.

There is still much more work to do. Domestic and sexual violence, exploitation and hate crime remain significantly under-reported. In 2015/16 Sue Mountstevens will continue to focus on ensuring policing meets local needs, provides value for money and importantly supports you to be safe and feel safe.

The spending plans for 2015/16 are shown below with comparative figures for 2014/15 and details of how the budget is financed:

Spending Plans	2014/15	2015/16
Gross expenditure	£290m	£287m
Specific grants and other income	£14m	£14m
Net Budget requirement	£276m	£273m

Where does the money come from	2014/15	2015/16
Funding from central government	£186m	£179m
Amount paid by council tax	£90m	£94m
Total income	£276m	£273m



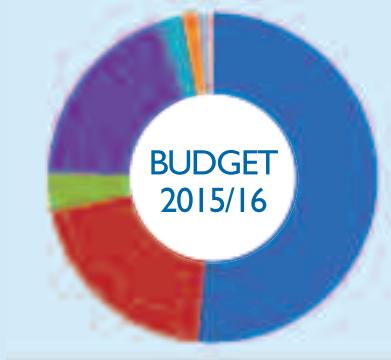
CHANGES IN SPENDING

The net expenditure for the Police will be £3m lower in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15 following a 5.1% reduction in central government funding. The PCC has taken the decision to increase the policing part of the council tax by £3.41 a year for the average band D household. This follows extensive consultation with over 3,000 residents. Although inflation and other unavoidable spending pressures will increase costs by £8m, savings have been agreed to balance the budget. This means that the average band D precept will be £174.78.



HOW WE SPEND THE BUDGET 2015/16

The chart below shows where the budget goes



- Police Officers - £137.2m
- Police Staff - £56.3m
- Community Support Officers - £10.1m
- Running Expenses - £53.5m
- Police Pensions - £7.1m
- Capital Funding Costs - £4.1m
- Community Safety Fund - £3.3m
- Office of the PCC - £1.4m



YOUR AREA NOW HAS ITS OWN POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

North Somerset has its own Police & Crime Plan which sets out the local priorities for your area and tells you what the police are doing to keep you safe and to reduce crime.

It focuses specifically on requirements from our consultation with you, the council and other partners and shows that by working together we can make your streets and homes safer.

To read your area's Police & Crime Plan visit www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk or pick up a copy in your local library or council building.

WE ALL WANT TO LIVE IN A COMMUNITY THAT IS STRONG AND SAFE.



Remember call **101** in a non-emergency and always dial **999** in emergency

To contact your PCC Sue Mountstevens
call **01275 816377**
email pcc@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

AandSPCC **@AandSPCC**
visit www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk



**AVON &
SOMERSET**
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER



Your fire and rescue service

Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) protects the communities of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.



This service costs the average Band D household £66.60 a year – or £1.28 a week.

Since 2010 our overall budget has been decreasing and in January 2014 we announced plans that will help us achieve £4.5million of annual savings.

The Investing for the Future programme is now well underway with the first project already completed.

This year the redeveloped Kingswood Fire Station in South Gloucestershire was re-opened. The station now

has an increased capacity, providing a modern, efficient facility serving a wider community. As part of the changes Speedwell Fire Station was closed, however local people will still receive the same emergency response standards from the new station at nearby Kingswood.

Work is also underway to build new fire stations at Hicks Gate near Keynsham and at Temple Back in Bristol. These projects will allow the rationalisation of our premises, providing long term financial savings.

Despite the changes, we have made a commitment that our emergency response standards will remain unchanged in areas affected. You can read more about the plans at www.avonfire.gov.uk/investing-for-the-future.

If you would like fire safety advice about your home, or the home of a loved one, find out how we can help. Please call us on 0117 926 2061 or visit our website at www.avonfire.gov.uk

Where
does each
pound
go?



Annual budget

Avon Fire Authority has set its net budget for 2015/16 at £43.252 million(m). This represents a Council Tax level of £66.60 a year for a Band D property, an increase of just below 2%.

The Government's funding assessment for Avon Fire Authority has been reduced to £20.062m for 2015/16, a reduction of £1.994m (9.04%). The impact of this is that the funding provided by Central Government has been reduced by £2.082m (11.9%).

Spending plans

	2014/15 (£m)	2015/16 (£m)
Total fire expenditure	46.689	45.556
Income	-1.857	-1.904
Net budget before use of reserves	46.832	43.652
Use of reserves	-2.500	-0.400
Net budget	44.332	43.252
Funding:		
Central Government		
Revenue Support Grant	12.342	10.162
Business rate - Top-up	5.160	5.258
Local funding		
Locally retained business rates	4.541	4.660
Collection fund surplus	0.420	0.343
Council tax	21.869	22.829
Total	44.332	43.252

Capital requirements

The capital programme for 2015/16, excluding any capital expenditure within the 2014/15 capital programme that may be delayed or slipped into 2015/16, is shown to the right:

The main changes in spending from 2014/15 to 2015/16 are shown below:

Main changes in net expenditure	(£m)
2014/15 Budget	44.332
Inflationary pressures	0.760
Other	-1.617
Use of reserves	2.100
Savings	-2.323
2015/16 Budget	43.252

Savings

This year savings totalling around £2.3 million have been identified in the following areas:

Savings	2015/16 (£m)
Employees	-1.638
Running costs:	
Premises	-0.060
Transport	-0.050
Supplies and services	-0.010
Other	-0.585
Total	-2.323

	2014/15 (£m)	2015/16 (£m)
Premises	0.500	0.500
Investing for the Future programme	2.420	8.170
Vehicles and equipment	1.580	1.500
IT and communications	0.200	0.200
Total	4.700	10.370

For further information please contact: Avon Fire & Rescue Service,
A: Temple Back, Bristol, BS1 6EU **T:** 0117 926 2061 **W:** www.avonfire.gov.uk

Give the gift of family...



...foster a teenager

Fostering North Somerset

01275 888 999 www.n-somerset.gov.uk/fostering

