

Council tax guide

Your guide to council tax in 2014–2015
including police and fire budgets

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Open your own self-serve account today to manage and view your council tax online. Register at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/myaccount



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 (please turn to 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



Over 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 01275 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 services, 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

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.

Current estimates indicate that over the next three years we will need to identify and save a further £37m as the austerity pressures continue.

So, the focus for the next three years will be on service and organisational change, so that we can continue to invest in priority areas including the care of older people, children and investing in the roads network.

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	92.9	693.23
Development and environment – including maintaining 684 miles of roads, collecting household waste, recycling, parks, libraries, economic development, public transport and environmental health	35.0	261.51
Corporate services – including registration of births, deaths and marriages, legal, democratic and electoral services, council tax collection and benefits administration	8.9	66.62
Capital financing – new buildings and refurbishment e.g. schools and play areas	14.6	108.99
Transition	0.8	5.60
Contingency	2.1	16.02
Non-service items – included in your council tax and provided by others, e.g. magistrates courts, coroners service	0.9	7.01
Special expenses	0.1	0.68
Levy – Environment Agency	0.3	1.92
Special levy – drainage boards	0.4	3.26
Net North Somerset requirement	156.0	1,164.84

Proposed budget for 2014/2015

2013/2014		2014/2015		
Net exp £000		Gross exp £000	Income £000	Net exp £000
95,578	People and communities	261,218	168,369	92,849
34,588	Development and environment	46,845	11,820	35,025
9,965	Corporate services	101,215	92,292	8,923
14,046	Capital financing	16,657	2,060	14,597
1,000	Transition	750	0	750
1,500	Contingency	2,146	0	2,146
1,068	Non-service items	939	0	939
157,745	Gross expenditure	429,770	274,541	155,229
90	Special expenses	251	160	91
250	Levy – Environment Agency	257	0	257
413	Special levy – drainage boards	437	0	437
158,498	North Somerset requirement	430,715	274,701	156,014
3,562	Parish precepts	3,794	0	3,794
162,060	Budget requirement	434,509	274,701	159,808
To be funded by:				
41,735	Revenue support grant	0	34,634	34,634
28,215	National non-domestic rates	0	29,478	29,478
0	Council tax freeze grant	0	938	938
3,244	New homes bonus	0	4,167	4,167
1,173	Net collection fund adjustment	0	1,175	1,175
1,175	Contribution from council tax freeze grant reserve	0	0	0
400	Use of reserves	0	336	336
86,118	Council tax requirement	434,509	345,429	89,080

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

Council tax summary 2014/2015

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.

2013/2014 £000		2014/2015
157,745	North Somerset Council	155,229
90	Special expenses	91
250	Levy - Environment Agency	257
413	Special levy - drainage boards	437
3,562	Parish and town council precepts	3,794
162,060	North Somerset's budget requirement less:	159,808
(28,215)	National non-domestic rates	(29,478)
(41,735)	Revenue support grant	(34,634)
0	Council tax freeze grant	(938)
(3,244)	New homes bonus	(4,167)
(1,173)	Collection fund balance	(1,175)
(1,075)	Contribution from council tax freeze grant reserve	0
(500)	Use of reserves	(336)
86,118	North Somerset's precept	89,080
	Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner precept	
11,908	Avon Fire Authority precept	12,547
4,537		4,781
102,563		106,408

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

2013/2014 £		2014/2015 £
168.03	Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner	171.37
64.02	Avon Fire Authority	65.30
1,164.88	North Somerset Council	1,164.84
50.26	Average parish/town council	51.81
1,447.19		1,453.32

Parish councils

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

Local council	2013/2014	How much needed	2014/2015
Clevedon Town Council	48,715	Recreation	36,214
	25,450	Highways	16,000
	165,057	Other	193,191
	(36,439)	Contingency/balances	17,670
	202,783		263,075
Long Ashton Parish Council	65,000	Recreation	69,500
	10,750	Highways	14,750
	89,380	Other	101,450
	(28,121)	Contingency/balances	(43,810)
	137,009		141,890
Nailsea Town Council	143,061	Recreation	138,630
	67,375	Highways	45,825
	235,170	Other	266,151
	12,000	Contingency/balances	7,000
	457,606		457,606
Portishead Town Council	114,106	Recreation	115,256
	3,000	Highways	3,000
	160,100	Other	164,355
	15,000	Contingency/balances	(15,000)
	292,206		267,611
Weston-super-Mare Town Council	611,122	Recreation	648,866
	0	Highways	0
	110,047	Other	41,238
	528,584	Contingency/balances	684,013
	1,249,753		1,374,117
Yatton Parish Council	39,370	Recreation	46,900
	800	Highways	11,300
	140,084	Other	142,763
	194	Contingency/balances	(5,963)
	180,448		195,000

How much will you pay?

Local council	2014/2015 precept £	2013/2014 precept £	Parish precept amount for Band D	Band A £
Abbots Leigh	24,000.00	22,000.00	57.97	972.16
Backwell	114,397.46	113,243.27	60.22	973.66
Banwell	71,873.00	54,020.00	72.52	981.86
Barrow Gurney	6,500.00	7,000.00	40.52	960.52
Blagdon	37,350.00	36,000.00	73.67	982.62
Bleadon	38,000.00	38,000.00	72.71	981.98
Brockley	3,300.00	3,300.00	25.80	950.71
Burrington	3,000.00	3,000.00	11.81	941.38
Butcombe	1,550.00	1,450.00	14.64	943.27
Churchill	56,451.72	53,924.12	62.34	975.07
Clapton-in-Gordano	3,700.00	3,250.00	19.98	946.83
Cleeve	13,500.00	13,150.00	37.28	958.36
Clevedon	263,075.49	202,783.09	35.03	961.98
Congresbury	99,336.42	98,828.00	75.61	983.92
Dundry	8,598.79	8,476.88	22.89	948.77
Flax Bourton	22,000.00	18,000.00	63.20	975.64
Hutton	62,275.00	58,612.11	59.04	972.87
Kenn	5,844.00	5,400.00	35.76	957.35
Kewstoke	42,000.00	40,000.00	71.01	980.85
Kingston Seymour	9,200.00	8,600.00	52.36	968.42
Locking	56,000.00	62,000.00	57.44	971.80
Long Ashton	141,890.00	137,009.46	56.04	970.87
Loxton and Christon	2,500.00	2,915.85	26.48	951.16
Nailsea	457,606.00	457,606.00	76.59	984.57
Pill and Easton-in-Gordano	87,500.00	84,082.10	51.59	967.90
Portbury	19,087.00	14,528.00	44.90	963.44
Portishead	267,611.00	292,206.00	27.41	954.05
Puxton	4,622.83	4,316.80	36.66	957.95
St. Georges	16,335.00	16,546.80	15.00	943.51
Tickenham	6,732.66	6,334.12	15.09	943.57
Walton-in-Gordano	3,016.00	2,552.00	22.11	948.25
Weston-in-Gordano	5,000.00	4,000.00	35.41	957.12
Weston-super-Mare	1,374,117.00	1,249,753.00	58.27	972.36
Wick St. Lawrence	7,500.00	7,500.00	13.76	942.68
Winford	20,500.00	19,200.00	21.24	947.67
Winscombe and Sandford	118,000.00	113,000.00	62.55	975.21
Wraxall and Failand	34,200.00	32,200.00	30.29	953.70
Wrington	90,452.00	86,616.00	76.37	984.42
Yatton	195,000.00	180,448.40	76.34	984.40

Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
1,134.19	1,296.21	1,458.24	1,782.29	2,106.34	2,430.40	2,916.48
1,135.94	1,298.21	1,460.49	1,785.04	2,109.59	2,434.15	2,920.98
1,145.50	1,309.14	1,472.79	1,800.08	2,127.36	2,454.65	2,945.58
1,120.62	1,280.70	1,440.79	1,760.96	2,081.14	2,401.31	2,881.58
1,146.40	1,310.16	1,473.94	1,801.48	2,129.02	2,456.56	2,947.88
1,145.65	1,309.31	1,472.98	1,800.31	2,127.64	2,454.96	2,945.96
1,109.17	1,267.61	1,426.07	1,742.97	2,059.88	2,376.78	2,852.14
1,098.29	1,255.18	1,412.08	1,725.87	2,039.67	2,353.46	2,824.16
1,100.49	1,257.69	1,414.91	1,729.33	2,043.76	2,358.18	2,829.82
1,137.59	1,300.09	1,462.61	1,787.63	2,112.66	2,437.68	2,925.22
1,104.64	1,262.44	1,420.25	1,735.86	2,051.47	2,367.08	2,840.50
1,118.10	1,277.82	1,437.55	1,757.00	2,076.46	2,395.91	2,875.10
1,122.32	1,282.65	1,442.98	1,763.64	2,084.30	2,404.96	2,885.96
1,147.91	1,311.89	1,475.88	1,803.85	2,131.82	2,459.80	2,951.76
1,106.90	1,265.03	1,423.16	1,739.42	2,055.67	2,371.93	2,846.32
1,138.26	1,300.86	1,463.47	1,788.68	2,113.90	2,439.11	2,926.94
1,135.02	1,297.16	1,459.31	1,783.60	2,107.89	2,432.18	2,918.62
1,116.91	1,276.47	1,436.03	1,755.15	2,074.26	2,393.38	2,872.06
1,144.33	1,307.80	1,471.28	1,798.23	2,125.18	2,452.13	2,942.56
1,129.82	1,291.22	1,452.63	1,775.44	2,098.24	2,421.05	2,905.26
1,133.78	1,295.74	1,457.71	1,781.64	2,105.58	2,429.51	2,915.42
1,132.69	1,294.49	1,456.31	1,779.93	2,103.56	2,427.18	2,912.62
1,109.70	1,268.22	1,426.75	1,743.80	2,060.86	2,377.91	2,853.50
1,148.67	1,312.76	1,476.86	1,805.05	2,133.24	2,461.43	2,953.72
1,129.23	1,290.54	1,451.86	1,774.49	2,097.13	2,419.76	2,903.72
1,124.02	1,284.59	1,445.17	1,766.32	2,087.47	2,408.61	2,890.34
1,113.06	1,272.06	1,431.08	1,749.10	2,067.11	2,385.13	2,862.16
1,117.61	1,277.27	1,436.93	1,756.25	2,075.56	2,394.88	2,873.86
1,100.77	1,258.01	1,415.27	1,729.77	2,044.28	2,358.78	2,830.54
1,100.84	1,258.09	1,415.36	1,729.88	2,044.41	2,358.93	2,830.72
1,106.30	1,264.33	1,422.38	1,738.46	2,054.55	2,370.63	2,844.76
1,116.64	1,276.16	1,435.68	1,754.72	2,073.76	2,392.80	2,871.36
1,134.42	1,296.48	1,458.54	1,782.66	2,106.78	2,430.90	2,917.08
1,099.80	1,256.91	1,414.03	1,728.26	2,042.49	2,356.71	2,828.06
1,105.62	1,263.56	1,421.51	1,737.40	2,053.29	2,369.18	2,843.02
1,137.75	1,300.28	1,462.82	1,787.89	2,112.96	2,438.03	2,925.64
1,112.66	1,271.60	1,430.56	1,748.46	2,066.36	2,384.26	2,861.12
1,148.50	1,312.56	1,476.64	1,804.78	2,132.92	2,461.06	2,953.28
1,148.48	1,312.54	1,476.61	1,804.74	2,132.88	2,461.01	2,953.22

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



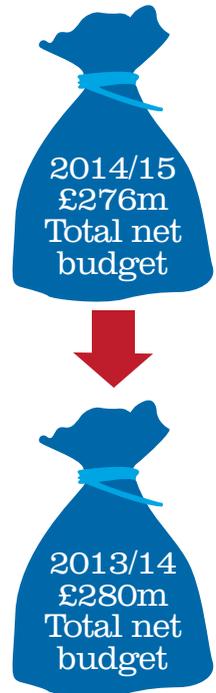
Despite the financial challenges crime and risk of crime continues to fall. Satisfaction levels amongst victims has increased to the highest level ever recorded in Avon and Somerset and the risk of domestic burglary is now one of lowest in the country.

There is still much more work to do. Domestic and sexual violence, exploitation and hate crime remain significantly under-reported. In 2014/15 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 2014/15 are shown below with comparative figures for 2013/14 (in millions) and details of how the budget is financed:

Spending Plans	2013/14	2014/15
Gross expenditure	£296m	£290m
Specific grants and other income	£16m	£14m
Net Budget requirement	£280m	£276m

Where does the money come from	2013/14	2014/15
Funding from central government	£191m	£182m
Amount paid by council tax	£85m	£90m
Government council tax grants	£4m	£4m
Total income	£280m	£276m



CHANGES IN SPENDING

The net expenditure for the Police will be £4 million lower in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14 following a 4.5% reduction in central government funding. The PCC has taken the decision to increase the policing part of the council tax by £3.34 a year for the average band D household.

This follows extensive consultation with over 3,000 residents.

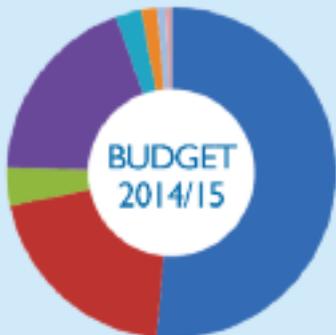
Although inflation and other unavoidable spending pressures will increase costs by £8 million, spending will be reduced to balance the budget.

This means that the average band D precept will be £171.37.



HOW WE SPEND THE BUDGET 2014/15

The chart below shows where the budget goes



- Police Officers - £142.2m
- Police Staff - £56.0m
- Community Support Officers - £10.3m
- Running Expenses - £52.5m
- Police Pensions - £7.0m
- Capital Funding Costs - £4.2m
- Community Safety Fund - £2.8m
- 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 £65.30 a year – or £1.26 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.

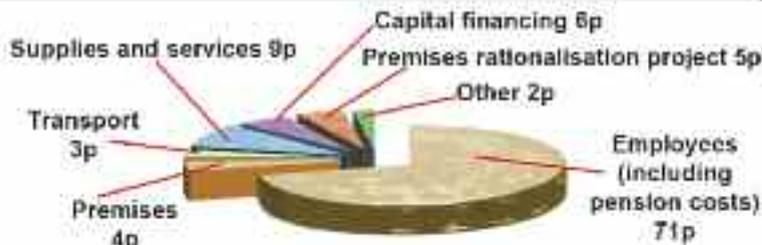
The 'Investing for the Future' programme proposes the building of three new fire stations, the relocation of Headquarters to Keynsham town centre and the major

expansion of an existing fire station. The plans will also see the closure of five fire stations, with their resources amalgamated at the new fire stations.

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 2014/15 at £44.332 million. This represents a Council Tax level of £65.30 a year for a Band D property, an increase of just below 2%.

The Government has restated the 2013/14 grant settlement, rolling in a number of previously separately identified specific grants, to provide a start-up funding assessment for comparison purposes. The funding assessment for 2014/15 is £22.056m, a reduction of £1.795m (7.53%) compared to the restated start-up funding assessment of £23.851m for 2013/14.

Spending plans

	2013/14 (£m)	2014/15 (£m)
Total fire expenditure	46.852	46.689
Income	-1.739	-1.857
Net budget before use of reserves	45.113	46.832
Use of reserves	-0.300	-2.500
Net budget	44.813	44.332
Funding:		
Central Government		
Revenue Support Grant	14.322	12.342
Business rate - Top-up	5.061	5.160
Local funding		
Locally retained business rates	4.460	4.541
Collection fund surplus	0.067	0.420
Council tax	20.683	21.869
Total	44.813	44.332

Capital requirements

The capital programme for 2014/15, excluding capital expenditure included within the 2013/14 capital programme but which is anticipated will be delayed or slipped into 2014/15, is shown in the table to the right:

The main changes in spending from 2013/14 to 2014/15 are listed below:

Main changes in net expenditure	(£m)
2013/14 Budget	44.813
Inflation etc.	0.801
Other	2.898
Use of reserves	-2.200
Savings	-1.980
Total	44.332

Savings

This year savings totalling around £2 million have been identified in the following areas:

Savings	2014/15 (£m)
Employees	-1.077
Running costs:	
Premises	-0.020
Transport	-0.050
Supplies and services	-0.321
Other	-0.512
Total	-1.980

	2013/14 (£m)	2014/15 (£m)
Premises	0.500	0.500
Vehicles and equipment	7.000	2.420
Protective equipment	1.765	1.580
IT and communications	0.200	0.200
Total	9.465	4.700

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

Free early learning for 2 year olds



See if you're eligible

Call us on **01934 426 305**
or visit

www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk



Could you become a North Somerset foster family in 2014

trust children learning
empathy open minded
fostering time
listening fun patience
kindness energy nurture
commitment spare room
resilience safety support
understanding weekly payments
caring

For more details about fostering for North Somerset
please email fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk ; call **01275 888 999**;
or check out our website <http://fostering.n-somerset.gov.uk>