

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL SPENDING PLANS 2021-22

The level of council tax

Council tax is the main source of locally-raised income for this authority and is used to meet the difference between the amount a local authority wishes to spend and the amount it receives from other sources such as business rates and government grants. In determining the level of council tax payable, the Cabinet has borne in mind the difficult economic and financial climate that many of our residents face, although our funding from Central Government has declined sharply during the period 2010 to 2021 (although there has been increased funding in 2020-2021 to help with the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic), with uncertainty over future funding levels after March 2022. With this in mind, the Council has to consider what level of increase in council tax is sustainable, without creating an increased risk of service cuts and/or larger tax increases in the future. The average council tax you will pay for services provided by the District Council is £189.03 for a Band D taxpayer equating to £3.64 per week. This is an increase of £5.00 over last year, equating to less than 10 pence per week.

Service delivery

The Council aims to maintain the delivery and high standard of its services to residents, protecting front line services within the reduced funding available. The Council has no funding gap in 2021-22 although we have increased costs, the continued impact of low interest rates on investment income, impact of Covid-19 Pandemic as well as additional government support throughout the pandemic. The Council continues to review alternative methods of delivery of services through some services being provided through partnership and shared working arrangements, reducing costs and creating efficiencies of service.

The Council expects to employ 8 full time equivalent staff in 2021-2022. The Council transferred the majority of its staff to Publica Group Ltd in November 2017. This is a company wholly owned by Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council to deliver services on their behalf.

The Council has not used any contribution from the Future Deficits Reserve to support the budget in 2021-2022 and is able to strengthen this reserve this financial year. There are planned savings within the 2021-2022 budget as well as use of other reserves such as the Covid-19 reserve to cover ongoing costs and lost income due to the pandemic. Full details of the savings and additional income are contained within the Council's 2021-2022 budget setting papers dated 18th February 2021, available on the Council's website.

There is still a need to move to a more commercial model, both from a services and asset aspect. Part of our drive towards financial sustainability includes identifying new opportunities to generate income and invest in projects which provide good financial returns and regeneration of areas within the District ensuring industries and jobs remain in the District now and long into the future. We will work with partners who share our ambition and values and will continue to put the best interests of Forest residents at the heart of everything we do.

Working together to plan for the Forest of Dean's future

A formal budget consultation took place during December 2020 and January 2021. Interested parties including businesses, tenants, residents, staff and trade unions were encouraged to comment on the budget proposals.

Spending plans 2021-22

Spending	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000
Finance, Business Support & Jobs	3,646	3,969
Planning Policy, Performance, Shared Working & Climate Emergency	498	309
Housing, Town & Parish Councils (inc Town Centre development)	39	(142)
Governance, Sport & Leisure, Tourism, Arts & Communities (inc Community Safety)	894	716
Development, Asset Management, FEP & Infrastructure	506	564
Environment, Wildlife, Heritage & Culture (inc waste & recycling & AONB Designation)	3,679	3,695
Policy & Strategy, Cross Border Issues, Future Generations & Health & Well Being	1,652	1,679
Levies and Special Expenses	42	44
Asset Management Adjustment	(361)	(310)
Parish Precepts	2,442	2,578
Net Spending	13,037	13,100
<i>which is partly funded by:</i>		
Specific Reserves	77	(1,906)
Which means we have a budget requirement of	13,114	11,194
<i>which is financed by:</i>		
Government Grants	152	1,568
New Homes Bonus	819	617
Business Rates Retained	4,242	796
Collection Fund Surplus	68	14
Which leaves council taxpayers to pay	7,833	8,199
FODDC	5,391	5,621
Parish Precepts	2,442	2,578
	7,833	8,199

How our budget compares with last year

Budget Comparison	£000
Budget Requirement 2020/21	13,114
Inflation & Contractual Changes	342
Parish Precepts	136
Savings	(816)
Changes in spending on services	401
Movements in reserves & balances	(1,983)
Budget Requirement 2021/22	11,194

For further information on the budget including a full list of improved services and savings please contact Financial Services on 01594 810000. A full breakdown of the Forest of Dean budget is available at www.fdean.gov.uk and Gloucestershire County Council on <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/performance-and-spending/budget-and-medium-term-financial-strategy/>

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Town and parish Councils issue a precept which is the amount of money they require from council tax payers in their area. The District Council works out the amount for each tax band which is shown on your bill with the percentage change from the previous year. Precepts for 2020-21 and 2021-22 are shown below. More detailed information for town and parish councils where the precept exceeds £140,000 can be found on the individual town/parish website links to which can be found on the Forest of Dean website :

<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/council-tax/where-your-council-tax-goes/>

Parish	2020-21	2021-22
	£	£
Alvington	8,979	9,428
Awre	16,660	16,660
Aylburton	16,452	16,450
Blaisdon	3,765	3,765
Bromsberrow	7,440	8,300
Churcham	12,000	12,000
Cinderford	294,670	374,560
Coleford	423,689	444,500
Corse	4,500	6,500
Drybrook	31,688	32,638
Dymock	19,403	19,403
English Bicknor	3,900	3,900
Gorsley & Kilcot	5,808	5,808
Hartpury	10,315	10,315
Hewelsfield/Brockweir	9,243	9,243
Huntley	21,118	21,118
Kempley	5,748	5,748
Littledean	37,903	39,419
Longhope	24,000	24,000
Lydbrook	20,000	20,000
Lydney Town	579,240	579,240
Mitcheldean	88,086	90,730
Newent Town	289,147	302,439
Newland	26,555	27,000
Newnham	36,502	40,152
Oxenhall		
Pauntley	5,332	5,600
Redmarley	11,927	12,166
Ruardean	16,249	16,735
Rudford & Highleadon	4,000	4,000
Ruspidge & Soudley	48,903	49,020
St. Briavels	24,000	24,000
Staunton (Coleford)	8,596	12,000
Staunton (Glos)	4,868	4,868

Parish (continued)	2020-21	2021-22
	£	£
Taynton	3,750	3,750
Tibberton	8,320	8,362
Tidenham	97,147	99,964
Upleadon	3,000	1,500
West Dean	167,643	167,643
Westbury-On-Severn	23,250	26,000
Woolaston	18,330	18,605
	2,442,126	2,577,529

Special expenses

Expenses relating to closed churchyards are treated as special expenses and charged to the relevant parishes. There is currently one town and one parish to which this applies.

		2020-21	2021-22
		£	£
Newent Town Council	Precept	2,100.00	2,100.00
	Band D	0.98	0.97
Lydbrook Parish Council	Precept	3,500.00	3,800.00
	Band D	4.87	5.18