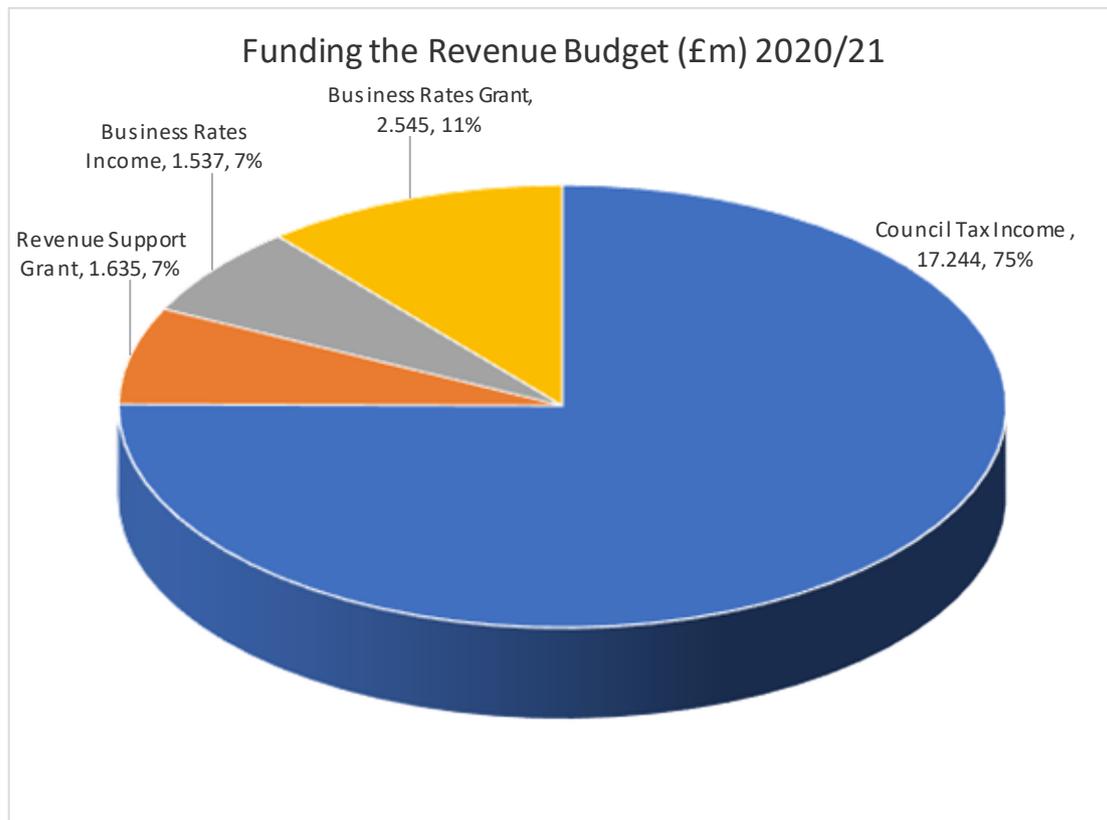


# Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Council Tax Information 2020/21

## How do we pay for your service?

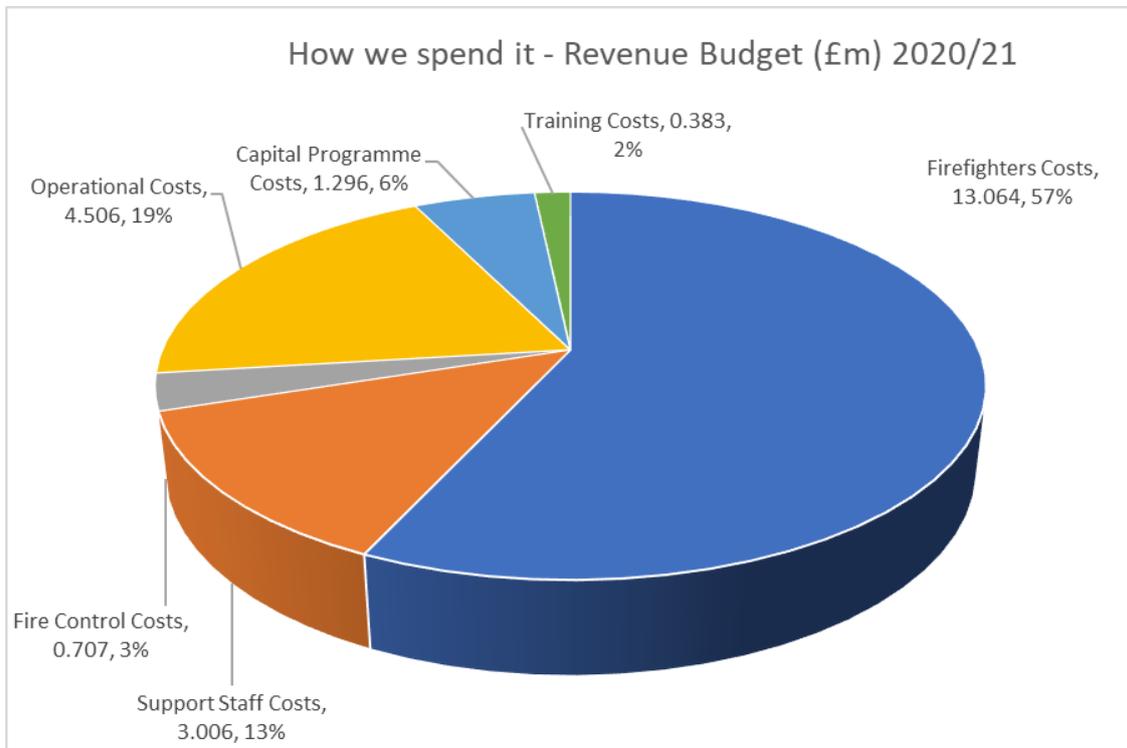


We receive around 25% of our budget from government grant and business rates, with the balance coming from council tax.

Government grant has been decreasing since 2011/12, and we have reduced our budget to deal with this fall in income.

Increases have been made to our council tax so that we can maintain a quality service to the public of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

## How do we spend it?



Around 73% of the total budget is spent on our staff: firefighters on the full time and on call duty systems, Fire Control staff, and non-uniformed support staff. The remaining balance is spent on the supply and maintenance of operational equipment, uniforms, supplies and services, information and communications technology, and funding the capital programme.

This year's capital programme includes building improvements at a number of fire stations, the replacement of service vehicles and operational equipment, and improvements to information technology and communications.

Work will also begin on a major project to improve the fire station and training facilities at Stafford Park in Telford, which will also create community space and the opportunity to work with other services.

## **Where we have saved money**

In 2011/12, we began a programme of budget cuts, which reduced the revenue budget by more than £3million over four years. Budget reductions have included:

- A reduction in both firefighters and support staff of 60 posts (around 10% of total staff)
- A reduction in operational fire officers of 25%
- An increase in the life of fire engines from 12 to 15 years
- Changes to the way in which some fire engines are crewed.

This programme of cuts, along with other budget reductions implemented by officers, meant that the Service continued to operate within its budgets.

The Fire Authority's **Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)** ensures that the Service's resources continue to be used to best effect to reduce risk within the County. A successful IRMP project to implement new shift patterns for full time firefighters has resulted in annual savings of £450,000 from the revenue budget from 2020/21.

Officers and members of the Fire Authority are currently consulting with staff on a new IRMP which will be in place from April 2020.

## **Strategic Alliance – Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority**

The Fire Authority has entered into a strategic alliance with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, to enable their two services to collaborate in a way that creates capacity and resilience for both. The first four areas of focus are ICT, Fire Control, Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) and procurement. This arrangement will help both services to meet community needs within a challenging financial climate.

## **What about 2020/21?**

The government were due to carry out a Comprehensive Spending Review during 2019, however this was delayed and will now be carried out during 2020. The 2019/20 funding settlement has been rolled forward into 2020/21, but the Fire Authority faces continued uncertainty about funding in future years. In addition, Fire pension schemes valuations have increased employer costs by over £1m per year and although the burden has been met by the Home Office for next year, there is no guarantee that this vital support will continue.

This year, we propose to increase council tax by 1.99% (around 4p per week for an average household). This is because we want to ensure that the public still receive an effective fire and rescue service, both now and into the future.

## Council Tax Bands for 2020/21

The increase in budget requirement for 2020/21 equates to a 1.99% increase in council tax. All bands and respective council tax levels, together with increases from last year, are shown in the table.

| Band | Amount<br>2020/21<br>£ | Increase from 2019/20 |               |
|------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
|      |                        | Per Year<br>£         | Per Week<br>£ |
| A    | 68.17                  | 1.33                  | 0.03          |
| B    | 79.53                  | 1.56                  | 0.03          |
| C    | 90.89                  | 1.78                  | 0.03          |
| D    | 102.25                 | 2.00                  | 0.04          |
| E    | 124.97                 | 2.44                  | 0.05          |
| F    | 147.69                 | 2.89                  | 0.06          |
| G    | 170.42                 | 3.33                  | 0.06          |
| H    | 204.50                 | 4.00                  | 0.08          |

For further information about the financial performance of the Fire Authority, please contact:

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