

Council Report

Full Council - 21 February 2024

COUNCIL BUDGET 2024/25

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Lauren Townsend Cabinet member for Resources
Report sponsor	Steve Richardson Director Finance and Resources
Report author	Vicky Errington Senior Finance Manager – Corporate Accounting

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	1 – Balanced Budget
Wards affected	All wards

Executive summary

To outline changes to the Cabinet Budget Report, which include the additional recommendations that the Council must adopt when setting the level of Council Tax (the Cabinet Report was circulated as a separate document for the Council meeting). The changes also include confirmation of the precepts from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and parish / town councils.

1. Decision/s to be made

- 1.1 That Council approve the revisions to the Local Council Tax Policy (**Appendix E**) to:
 - a) charge a premium of 100% on properties that are empty for a period of between 1 and 2 years from 1 April 2024, subject to any exceptions that may be subsequently agreed by the Secretary of State; and
 - b) adopt a new Second Homes Premium from 1 April 2025 of 100%, subject to any exceptions that be subsequently agreed by the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 [the “Act”]:
 - (a) £653.977m Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish and town councils. (Gross expenditure including precepts)

- (b) £478.859m Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3). (Net income excluding Council Tax requirement)
- (c) £175.118m As its Council Tax requirement for the year, being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4).
- (d) £1,801.72 As the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts), being the amount at (c) above, divided by the Council Tax Base agreed on 5 December 2023
- (e) £12,211,734 Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £1,676.08 Being the amount at (d) less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by the Council Tax Base agreed on 5 December 2023, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year for Milton Keynes City Council, excluding Parish and Major Precepting Authorities.

That the following amounts be calculated for Milton Keynes City Council Tax:

Table A – Milton Keynes City Council Tax

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
MKCC With 2.99% Increase	975.06	1,137.57	1,300.08	1,462.59	1,787.61	2,112.63	2,437.65	2,925.18
ASC Levy With Further 2.00% Increase	142.33	166.05	189.77	213.49	260.93	308.37	355.82	426.98
MKCC Total 4.99%	1,117.39	1,303.62	1,489.85	1,676.08	2,048.54	2,421.00	2,793.47	3,352.16

- 1.3 That the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (f) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to all dwellings listed in each particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act.
- 1.4 That for the year 2024/25, Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, has confirmed the following precepts to the Council for each of the categories of dwellings:

Table B – PCC for Thames Valley Council Tax

VALUATION BANDS							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
179.52	209.44	239.36	269.28	329.12	388.96	448.80	538.56

- 1.5 That for the year 2024/25, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, has recommended the following precepts to the Council for each of the categories of dwellings:

Table C – Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Council Tax

VALUATION BANDS							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
52.97	61.80	70.63	79.46	97.12	114.78	132.43	158.92

- 1.6 That as a result of the above, the amounts of Council Tax (shown in **Appendix A and B**) be set in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown in the Schedule.
- 1.7 That the 2024/25 levies payable to the Buckingham and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency be noted.
- 1.8 That the summary results of the CIPFA Resilience Index 2022/23 (shown in **Appendix C**) be noted.
- 1.9 That the Cabinet response to the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommendations on the 2024/25 budget, (shown in **Appendix D**) be noted.
2. Why is the decision needed?
- 2.1 There are a number of decisions the Council must make to set the level of Council Tax with regard to precepts and levies from the following bodies:
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley
 - Parish and town councils
 - Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
 - Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency.
- 2.2 Confirmation of the precepts / levies from all of those bodies was not available when the Cabinet met on 6 February 2024 and therefore the necessary recommendations are included in this report.
- 2.3 All 48 parish and town precept notifications have been received, equating to an average Band D equivalent charge for parish and town councils of £125.64.

- 2.4 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley approved a £13 increase from the 2023/24 charge, equating to a Band D equivalent charge of £269.28.
- 2.5 The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority are recommending a 2.98% increase from the 2023/24 charge, equating to a Band D equivalent charge of £79.46.
- 2.6 This report also covers additional statutory requirement for Council to formally set the Council Tax and changes to the Cabinet Budget Report.

Changes to the Cabinet Budget Report

- 2.7 The Local Government Final Finance Settlement 2024/25 was published on the 5 February 2024. This contained a number of changes from the Provisional Settlement that was published in December 2023.

National Key Changes from Provisional Settlement

- 2.8 Since the publication of the 2024/25 provisional settlement which was published on 19 December 2023, there has been some changes to increase in Core Spending Power (CSP), which has changed from 6.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent since the provisional settlement, an increase of £606 million. The changes are due to:
- An increase in the Social Care Grant of £500 million. **MKCC has gained £1.589m**
 - An increase of £72 million in the Funding Guarantee. **No impact on MKCC.**
 - An increase in the Services Grant of £11 million. **MKCC has gained £0.029m**
 - A decrease of £1 million in the New Homes Bonus. **No impact on MKCC.**
 - An Increase of £15 million in the Rural Services Delivery Grant. **No impact on MKCC.**
- 2.9 Assumptions based on the draft settlement and recent announcements had been estimated in the 2024/25 budget papers, however we are now able to confirm the final position. An Addendum report was provided to Cabinet on 6 February which outlined the changes reflected in the settlement and the impact on the 2024/25 MKCC General Fund (GF) budget.
- 2.10 The table below outlines the assumptions made and the changes in the final settlement.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
MTFP – Final Budget	0.000	2.637	20.308	2.370	25.315
<i>Changes:</i>					
Public Health Grant Final Allocation	(0.340)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.340)
Public Health Grant Expenditure	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.340
Revenue Support Grant	0.000	(0.029)	0.000	0.000	(0.029)
Service Grant funding	(0.029)	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.000
Environment Agency Levy	(0.008)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.008)
Shared service overhead contributions	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.080
Drawdown from Shared service reserve	(0.080)	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.000
Contingency and Other Corporate	0.037	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.037
Final Budget after Settlement	0.000	2.717	20.308	2.370	25.395

2.11 Attached is a revised **Final Annex I** (2024/25 General Fund Budget Summary) to the Cabinet’s budget report. This annex reflects presentational corrections within the cost of services for income and expenditure, and to reflect the confirmed 2024/25 Parish Precepts.

2.12 It was reported to Cabinet on 6 February that government were consulting on proposed changes to the Statutory Guidance for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) on Pre-2008 debt that would apply from April 2024. One of these changes if adopted would change the profile of MRP charges that the Council would need to make from 2024/25. Whilst this could be mitigated in 2024/25 by offsetting Voluntary MRP, this would impact in later years. The consultation closed on 16 February and we can confirm that a response was submitted by MKCC to set out why this change was not considered appropriate, and its impact on MKCC. The Councils Treasury Management advisors estimate that this proposed change would impact in excess of 70% of Councils if adopted.

Levies 2024/25

2.13 Levies are payments that a local authority is required to make to a particular body (a levying body). Levying bodies are defined in Section 117(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

2.14 In the case of Milton Keynes Council, the Environment Agency and the Buckingham and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board both charge levies through the Council. The levies for 2024/25 are detailed in the table below:

Table D – Levies

Levying Authority	£
Environment Agency – Flood Defence	174,232
Buckingham and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board	433,770
Total	608,002

Robustness of Budget

- 2.15 Section 25 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires that ‘the Chief Finance Officer of the authority must report to it on the following matters –
- a) the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations, and
 - b) the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.’
- 2.16 An assessment of the adequacy of the Council’s level of reserves is set out in Annex P to the Cabinet report and the earmarked reserves are listed in Annex Q. They have been reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant, have clear objective(s) and where appropriate an expiry date has been shown as to when the funds should be fully utilised.
- 2.17 The General Fund Balance of £33.048m is estimated to be £0.269m above the recommended minimum level. This proposal provides a small buffer above our recommended minimum balance to help manage future risk and volatility in the budget. This reflects the high level of uncertainty around the Councils budget over the short to medium term. Within the budget we have set aside a £2.763m contingency base budget which will be used as the first call to meet increasing costs from rising inflation and demand. There is also a one-off budget contingency of £2.647m.
- 2.18 The budget is therefore considered to be robust and supported with an adequate level of reserves to manage volatility and risk inherent within the Councils budget.

CIPFA Financial Resilience Index

- 2.19 CIPFA have now published an updated version of its Financial Resilience Index based on 2022-23 data. This diagnostic tool is intended to support good financial management by showing a council’s performance against a range of measures associated with financial risk. A summary of the results for Milton Keynes is included as **Appendix C** together with a brief commentary. CIPFA’s aim for the index is to support key decision makers by highlighting the relative strengths and potential weaknesses in the overall financial position of individual local authorities.
- 2.20 There are no significant issues or concerns for Milton Keynes in these latest results, but it should be noted that this is largely based on historical published financial data and does not reflect the effectiveness of individual Council strategies, plans or contractual risks that Council’s may be exposed to.

Response to Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report

2.21 The recommendations made by Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee following their work on the 2024/25 budget have now been reviewed. The responses to the recommendations are shown in **Appendix D**.

List of annexes

Final Annex I - 2024/25 General Fund Budget Summary

Appendix A and B reflecting the precept information.

Appendix C – Summary of CIPFA Financial Resilience Index

Appendix D – Response to Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Appendix E – Local Council Tax Policy 24-25

2024/25 General Fund Final Budget Summary excluding SERCOP recharges

ANNEX I Final

	Gross Expenditure		Gross Expenditure		Gross Income		Gross Income	Net Budget
	2023/24	Movements	2024/25	2023/24	Movements	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
SERVICES:								
Adult Services	159,433	14,285	173,718	(67,235)	(5,834)	(73,069)		100,649
Public Health	13,033	0	13,033	(13,315)	0	(13,315)		(282)
Children's Services	243,415	8,902	252,317	(193,932)	(30)	(193,962)		58,355
Customer and Community Services	12,310	759	13,069	(5,148)	(349)	(5,497)		7,572
Planning & Placemaking	3,731	221	3,952	(2,687)	(484)	(3,171)		781
Environment and Property	92,173	3,695	95,868	(16,836)	(2,383)	(19,219)		76,649
Finance and Resources	85,974	1,009	86,983	(65,026)	82	(64,944)		22,039
Law & Governance	5,298	191	5,489	(211)	0	(211)		5,278
Debt Financing	9,174	(1,560)	7,614	(6,347)	(3,327)	(9,674)		(2,060)
Corporate Items (Contingency)	5,165	246	5,411	0	0	0		5,411
Corporate Items (ASC Contingency)	1,513	(913)	600	0	0	0		600
Corporate Items (Pay Inflation, other)	(1,390)	5,073	3,683	(1,963)	(600)	(2,563)		1,120
Total	629,829	31,908	661,737	(372,700)	(12,925)	(385,625)		276,112
Contribution to/(from) Reserves								8,322
Levies								608
Asset Management								(26,030)
Recharges to HRA								(2,872)
Parish Precepts Paid								12,212
Total Expenditure								268,352
FUNDED BY:								
Revenue Support Grant								(7,177)
Retained Business Rates								(80,356)
Council Tax (including parish precepts)								(175,118)
New Homes Bonus								(5,377)
Services Grant								(324)
Total Funding								(268,352)
Budget Gap								0

2024/25 BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX

NOTE: Basic Amount of Council Tax includes parish precepts but excludes Police and Fire Authority precepts

AREAS	BAND A £	BAND B £	BAND C £	BAND D £	BAND E £	BAND F £	BAND G £	BAND H £
ABBEY HILL	1,133.40	1,322.29	1,511.19	1,700.09	2,077.89	2,455.68	2,833.49	3,400.18
ASTWOOD and HARDMEAD	1,161.47	1,355.05	1,548.62	1,742.20	2,129.35	2,516.51	2,903.67	3,484.40
BLETCHLEY & FENNY STRATFORD	1,252.16	1,460.86	1,669.55	1,878.24	2,295.62	2,713.01	3,130.40	3,756.48
BOW BRICKHILL	1,231.65	1,436.92	1,642.20	1,847.47	2,258.02	2,668.56	3,079.12	3,694.94
BRADWELL	1,168.95	1,363.77	1,558.60	1,753.42	2,143.07	2,532.71	2,922.37	3,506.84
BROUGHTON and MILTON KEYNES VILLAGE	1,157.90	1,350.88	1,543.86	1,736.84	2,122.80	2,508.76	2,894.74	3,473.68
CALVERTON	1,117.39	1,303.62	1,489.85	1,676.08	2,048.54	2,421.00	2,793.47	3,352.16
CAMPBELL PARK	1,262.70	1,473.14	1,683.59	1,894.04	2,314.94	2,735.83	3,156.74	3,788.08
CASTLETHORPE	1,175.32	1,371.20	1,567.09	1,762.97	2,154.74	2,546.51	2,938.29	3,525.94
CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES	1,154.06	1,346.40	1,538.74	1,731.08	2,115.76	2,500.44	2,885.14	3,462.16
CHICHELEY	1,125.80	1,313.44	1,501.07	1,688.70	2,063.96	2,439.23	2,814.50	3,377.40
CLIFTON REYNES and NEWTON BLOSSOMVILLE	1,144.56	1,335.32	1,526.08	1,716.84	2,098.36	2,479.88	2,861.40	3,433.68
COLD BRAYFIELD	1,117.39	1,303.62	1,489.85	1,676.08	2,048.54	2,421.00	2,793.47	3,352.16
EMBERTON	1,161.06	1,354.57	1,548.08	1,741.59	2,128.61	2,515.63	2,902.65	3,483.18
FAIRFIELDS	1,172.75	1,368.21	1,563.66	1,759.12	2,150.03	2,540.95	2,931.87	3,518.24
GAYHURST	1,132.86	1,321.67	1,510.48	1,699.29	2,076.91	2,454.53	2,832.15	3,398.58
GREAT LINFORD	1,194.20	1,393.23	1,592.26	1,791.29	2,189.35	2,587.41	2,985.49	3,582.58
HANSLOPE	1,194.48	1,393.56	1,592.64	1,791.72	2,189.88	2,588.04	2,986.20	3,583.44
HAVERSHAM/ LITTLE LINFORD	1,171.82	1,367.12	1,562.42	1,757.72	2,148.32	2,538.92	2,929.54	3,515.44
KENTS HILL, MONKSTON & BRINKLOW	1,160.72	1,354.17	1,547.62	1,741.07	2,127.97	2,514.87	2,901.79	3,482.14
LATHBURY	1,128.62	1,316.73	1,504.83	1,692.93	2,069.13	2,445.34	2,821.55	3,385.86
LAVENDON	1,159.11	1,352.29	1,545.48	1,738.66	2,125.03	2,511.39	2,897.77	3,477.32
LITTLE BRICKHILL	1,173.56	1,369.15	1,564.74	1,760.33	2,151.51	2,542.69	2,933.89	3,520.66
LOUGHTON & GREAT HOLM	1,148.00	1,339.33	1,530.66	1,721.99	2,104.65	2,487.31	2,869.99	3,443.98
MOULSOE	1,152.54	1,344.62	1,536.71	1,728.80	2,112.98	2,497.15	2,881.34	3,457.60
NEW BRADWELL	1,174.28	1,369.99	1,565.70	1,761.41	2,152.83	2,544.25	2,935.69	3,522.82
NEWPORT PAGNELL	1,261.50	1,471.74	1,681.99	1,892.24	2,312.74	2,733.23	3,153.74	3,784.48
NORTH CRAWLEY	1,160.06	1,353.40	1,546.74	1,740.08	2,126.76	2,513.44	2,900.14	3,480.16
OLNEY	1,199.20	1,399.06	1,598.93	1,798.79	2,198.52	2,598.25	2,997.99	3,597.58
OLD WUGHTON	1,162.23	1,355.93	1,549.64	1,743.34	2,130.75	2,518.15	2,905.57	3,486.68
RAVENSTONE	1,174.08	1,369.75	1,565.43	1,761.11	2,152.47	2,543.82	2,935.19	3,522.22
SHENLEY BROOK END	1,188.06	1,386.06	1,584.07	1,782.08	2,178.10	2,574.11	2,970.14	3,564.16
SHENLEY CHURCH END	1,172.06	1,367.40	1,562.74	1,758.08	2,148.76	2,539.44	2,930.14	3,516.16
SHERINGTON	1,171.76	1,367.06	1,562.35	1,757.64	2,148.22	2,538.81	2,929.40	3,515.28
SIMPSON	1,177.50	1,373.75	1,570.00	1,766.25	2,158.75	2,551.25	2,943.75	3,532.50
STANTONBURY	1,214.23	1,416.60	1,618.97	1,821.34	2,226.08	2,630.82	3,035.57	3,642.68
STOKE GOLDINGTON	1,177.78	1,374.07	1,570.37	1,766.66	2,159.25	2,551.84	2,944.44	3,533.32
STONY STRATFORD	1,192.74	1,391.53	1,590.32	1,789.11	2,186.69	2,584.27	2,981.85	3,578.22
TYRINGHAM & FILGRAVE	1,128.14	1,316.16	1,504.18	1,692.20	2,068.24	2,444.28	2,820.34	3,384.40
WALTON	1,190.22	1,388.59	1,586.96	1,785.33	2,182.07	2,578.81	2,975.55	3,570.66
WARRINGTON	1,117.39	1,303.62	1,489.85	1,676.08	2,048.54	2,421.00	2,793.47	3,352.16
WAVENDON	1,157.66	1,350.61	1,543.55	1,736.49	2,122.37	2,508.26	2,894.15	3,472.98
WEST BLETCHLEY	1,233.64	1,439.25	1,644.85	1,850.46	2,261.67	2,672.88	3,084.10	3,700.92
WESTON UNDERWOOD	1,177.40	1,373.63	1,569.86	1,766.09	2,158.55	2,551.01	2,943.49	3,532.18
WHITEHOUSE	1,170.72	1,365.84	1,560.96	1,756.08	2,146.32	2,536.56	2,926.80	3,512.16
WOBURN SANDS	1,193.28	1,392.16	1,591.04	1,789.92	2,187.68	2,585.44	2,983.20	3,579.84
WOLVERTON	1,253.18	1,462.04	1,670.90	1,879.76	2,297.48	2,715.20	3,132.94	3,759.52
WUGHTON	1,327.40	1,548.64	1,769.87	1,991.10	2,433.56	2,876.03	3,318.50	3,982.20
AVERAGE AMOUNT	1,201.15	1,401.34	1,601.53	1,801.72	2,202.10	2,602.48	3,002.87	3,603.44

2024/25 TOTAL AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX

NOTE: Amount of Council Tax includes Police, Fire Authority and parish precepts

AREAS	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ABBEY HILL	1,365.89	1,593.53	1,821.18	2,048.83	2,504.13	2,959.42	3,414.72	4,097.66
ASTWOOD and HARDMEAD	1,393.96	1,626.29	1,858.61	2,090.94	2,555.59	3,020.25	3,484.90	4,181.88
BLETCHLEY & FENNY STRATFORD	1,484.65	1,732.10	1,979.54	2,226.98	2,721.86	3,216.75	3,711.63	4,453.96
BOW BRICKHILL	1,464.14	1,708.16	1,952.19	2,196.21	2,684.26	3,172.30	3,660.35	4,392.42
BRADWELL	1,401.44	1,635.01	1,868.59	2,102.16	2,569.31	3,036.45	3,503.60	4,204.32
BROUGHTON and MILTON KEYNES VILLAGE	1,390.39	1,622.12	1,853.85	2,085.58	2,549.04	3,012.50	3,475.97	4,171.16
CALVERTON	1,349.88	1,574.86	1,799.84	2,024.82	2,474.78	2,924.74	3,374.70	4,049.64
CAMPBELL PARK	1,495.19	1,744.38	1,993.58	2,242.78	2,741.18	3,239.57	3,737.97	4,485.56
CASTLETHORPE	1,407.81	1,642.44	1,877.08	2,111.71	2,580.98	3,050.25	3,519.52	4,223.42
CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES	1,386.55	1,617.64	1,848.73	2,079.82	2,542.00	3,004.18	3,466.37	4,159.64
CHICHELEY	1,358.29	1,584.68	1,811.06	2,037.44	2,490.20	2,942.97	3,395.73	4,074.88
CLIFTON REYNES and NEWTON BLOSSOMVILLE	1,377.05	1,606.56	1,836.07	2,065.58	2,524.60	2,983.62	3,442.63	4,131.16
COLD BRAYFIELD	1,349.88	1,574.86	1,799.84	2,024.82	2,474.78	2,924.74	3,374.70	4,049.64
EMBERTON	1,393.55	1,625.81	1,858.07	2,090.33	2,554.85	3,019.37	3,483.88	4,180.66
FAIRFIELDS	1,405.24	1,639.45	1,873.65	2,107.86	2,576.27	3,044.69	3,513.10	4,215.72
GAYHURST	1,365.35	1,592.91	1,820.47	2,048.03	2,503.15	2,958.27	3,413.38	4,096.06
GREAT LINFORD	1,426.69	1,664.47	1,902.25	2,140.03	2,615.59	3,091.15	3,566.72	4,280.06
HANSLOPE	1,426.97	1,664.80	1,902.63	2,140.46	2,616.12	3,091.78	3,567.43	4,280.92
HAVERSHAM/ LITTLE LINFORD	1,404.31	1,638.36	1,872.41	2,106.46	2,574.56	3,042.66	3,510.77	4,212.92
KENTS HILL, MONKSTON & BRINKLOW	1,393.21	1,625.41	1,857.61	2,089.81	2,554.21	3,018.61	3,483.02	4,179.62
LATHBURY	1,361.11	1,587.97	1,814.82	2,041.67	2,495.37	2,949.08	3,402.78	4,083.34
LAVENDON	1,391.60	1,623.53	1,855.47	2,087.40	2,551.27	3,015.13	3,479.00	4,174.80
LITTLE BRICKHILL	1,406.05	1,640.39	1,874.73	2,109.07	2,577.75	3,046.43	3,515.12	4,218.14
LOUGHTON & GREAT HOLM	1,380.49	1,610.57	1,840.65	2,070.73	2,530.89	2,991.05	3,451.22	4,141.46
MOULSOE	1,385.03	1,615.86	1,846.70	2,077.54	2,539.22	3,000.89	3,462.57	4,155.08
NEW BRADWELL	1,406.77	1,641.23	1,875.69	2,110.15	2,579.07	3,047.99	3,516.92	4,220.30
NEWPORT PAGNELL	1,493.99	1,742.98	1,991.98	2,240.98	2,738.98	3,236.97	3,734.97	4,481.96
NORTH CRAWLEY	1,392.55	1,624.64	1,856.73	2,088.82	2,553.00	3,017.18	3,481.37	4,177.64
OLNEY	1,431.69	1,670.30	1,908.92	2,147.53	2,624.76	3,101.99	3,579.22	4,295.06
OLD WOUGHTON	1,394.72	1,627.17	1,859.63	2,092.08	2,556.99	3,021.89	3,486.80	4,184.16
RAVENSTONE	1,406.57	1,640.99	1,875.42	2,109.85	2,578.71	3,047.56	3,516.42	4,219.70
SHENLEY BROOK END	1,420.55	1,657.30	1,894.06	2,130.82	2,604.34	3,077.85	3,551.37	4,261.64
SHENLEY CHURCH END	1,404.55	1,638.64	1,872.73	2,106.82	2,575.00	3,043.18	3,511.37	4,213.64
SHERINGTON	1,404.25	1,638.30	1,872.34	2,106.38	2,574.46	3,042.55	3,510.63	4,212.76
SIMPSON	1,409.99	1,644.99	1,879.99	2,114.99	2,584.99	3,054.99	3,524.98	4,229.98
STANTONBURY	1,446.72	1,687.84	1,928.96	2,170.08	2,652.32	3,134.56	3,616.80	4,340.16
STOKE GOLDINGTON	1,410.27	1,645.31	1,880.36	2,115.40	2,585.49	3,055.58	3,525.67	4,230.80
STONY STRATFORD	1,425.23	1,662.77	1,900.31	2,137.85	2,612.93	3,088.01	3,563.08	4,275.70
TYRINGHAM & FILGRAVE	1,360.63	1,587.40	1,814.17	2,040.94	2,494.48	2,948.02	3,401.57	4,081.88
WALTON	1,422.71	1,659.83	1,896.95	2,134.07	2,608.31	3,082.55	3,556.78	4,268.14
WARRINGTON	1,349.88	1,574.86	1,799.84	2,024.82	2,474.78	2,924.74	3,374.70	4,049.64
WAVENDON	1,390.15	1,621.85	1,853.54	2,085.23	2,548.61	3,012.00	3,475.38	4,170.46
WEST BLETCHLEY	1,466.13	1,710.49	1,954.84	2,199.20	2,687.91	3,176.62	3,665.33	4,398.40
WESTON UNDERWOOD	1,409.89	1,644.87	1,879.85	2,114.83	2,584.79	3,054.75	3,524.72	4,229.66
WHITEHOUSE	1,403.21	1,637.08	1,870.95	2,104.82	2,572.56	3,040.30	3,508.03	4,209.64
WOBURN SANDS	1,425.77	1,663.40	1,901.03	2,138.66	2,613.92	3,089.18	3,564.43	4,277.32
WOLVERTON	1,485.67	1,733.28	1,980.89	2,228.50	2,723.72	3,218.94	3,714.17	4,457.00
WOUGHTON	1,559.89	1,819.88	2,079.86	2,339.84	2,859.80	3,379.77	3,899.73	4,679.68
AVERAGE AMOUNT	1,433.64	1,672.58	1,911.52	2,150.46	2,628.34	3,106.22	3,584.10	4,300.92

CIPFA Financial Resilience Index

CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index is a comparative analytical tool that may be used by Chief Financial Officers to support good financial management, providing a common understanding within a council of their financial position. The index shows a council's position on a range of measures associated with financial risk. The selection of indicators has been informed by extensive financial resilience work undertaken by CIPFA, public consultation and technical stakeholder engagement.

Section 151 officers may also use the index in their annual report to the council setting out the proposed budget for the year and medium-term financial strategy.

The overall summary of indicators presented in this annex for Milton Keynes is measured against other Unitary Councils.

The index is focused around the following key areas:

- Financial Reserves
- Level of Financial Exposure to Interest and Debt Levels
- Proportion of spending on Social Care (demand spending)
- Reliance on income from Fees and Charges to support services
- Level of Council Tax relative to Net Revenue Expenditure
- Business Rates Growth

The majority of Indicators for Milton Keynes are rated as lower risk, reflecting the relatively positive position the Council holds in relation to its levels of reserves and manageable level of spending on social care. The Council also generates a strong level of income from Council Tax (which is regarded as a more secure level of funding) and relatively low reliance on income from fees and charges which the Index views as more volatile.

We have summarised some of the key indicators and provided context to the results for Milton Keynes.

Reserves

The Council whilst holding a prudent level of reserves has earmarked the majority of these for specific purposes. Comparatively the Council does hold the majority of these in the form of 'earmarked' reserves which reflects planned future spending. The Index identifies Milton Keynes as 'Lower Risk' in terms of its level of unallocated reserves. This is summarised below:

	Lowest Level		Milton Keynes		Highest Level	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Level of Earmarked Reserves	-3.08%	1.84%	45.34%	35.23%	118.87%	113.33%
Section 151 Commentary: Milton Keynes is considered low risk under this indicator, being the 27 th highest of 55 Unitary Councils. Without an understanding of the financial plans, commitments and liabilities this indicator should be used with caution. The Council carries out an annual review of all earmarked reserves to ensure that these are needed, sufficient and that where one-off material liabilities have been identified resources have been specifically set aside.						
	Lowest Level		Milton Keynes		Highest Level	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Level of Unallocated Reserves – ratio of unallocated reserves to net revenue expenditure	0.00%	3.66%	14.52%	14.28%	20.88%	16.79%
Section 151 Commentary: The Council holds a strong level of unallocated reserves relative to its net revenue expenditure, with the 5 th highest out of 55 Unitary Councils. This reflects the level of risks inherent within the MKCC budget and provides a prudent level of buffer.						

Debt and Interest Costs

The Council holds £443m total external debt at 31 March 2023, this is higher than most other Unitary Authorities. A lot of the factors connected with the Councils level of debt are historic. However, in 2012 the Council (as a stock holding authority) borrowed £170.360m to pay to the government to buy itself out of the HRA Subsidy system as part of a national reform. In 2014 the Council also borrowed £95m from the PWLB to part finance the new Residual Waste Treatment Facility.

Both the cost of financing the debt (interest) and repayment of principle is fully factored into the Councils base revenue budget. The Councils external debt is at fixed interest rates and therefore any rise in interest rates will not impact on actual debt financing costs.

	Lowest Level		Milton Keynes		Highest Level	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Interest Payable to Net Revenue Expenditure	0.28%	0.56%	4.78%	5.02%	20.67%	26.3%
Section 151 Commentary: Despite holding a greater level of external debt compared with other Unitary Councils, the level of interest payments to net revenue expenditure is low, with MKCC 28th highest out of 55 Unitary Councils. This reflects more recent borrowing activity which has by comparative standards been at very low interest rates.						
Gross External Debt	£0.002m	£0.002m	£452.7m	£442.5m	£1,651m	£1.821m

Section 151 Commentary: The level of debt held reflects historic decisions taken by the Council to invest in infrastructure, assets, the limited amount of capital resources it has access to and HRA Self Financing. The cost of serving the debt has been fully reflected in the Council's budget and interest costs are fixed. Not all Unitary Councils hold HRA's which makes comparison more difficult without this being separated out.

Risks to Revenue Expenditure and Income

The Council is relatively lower risk compared with other Unitary Councils when it comes to the proportion of spend on social care. This is significant as this is demand led and can put pressure on other budgets. The indicator does not include homelessness which for Milton Keynes is a bigger challenge in terms of rate of change in spending.

Other Indicators focus on how reliant the Council is on different sources of revenue income to pay for services. The Council again compares relatively favourably with a below average reliance on income from fees and charges and higher proportion of income through Council Tax. Whilst the growth on the business rates baseline is average, ranking 27th out of 55 Unitary Councils.

	Lowest Level		Milton Keynes		Highest Level	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Social Care Ratio	28.70%	50.37%	65.62%	66.44%	93.25%	96.82%
Adult Social Care Ratio	27.23%	32.86%	40.63%	40.28%	54.73%	55.26%
Children Social Care Ratio	1.47%	14.52%	24.99%	26.16%	46.86%	49.76%
Section 151 Commentary: The Council has been successful in containing demand and controlling costs and this is reflected with an Index Rating of Low Risk. Out of 55 Unitary Councils, MKC is ranked 10 th lowest on this index.						
Fees and Charges to Service Expenditure Ratio	3.11%	3.91%	9.26%	10.52%	25.73%	25.76%
Section 151 Commentary: Fees and Charges represent an important source of financing for services. It can be a volatile source of revenue for some service areas. The Council has the 17 th lowest level of income to net revenue expenditure out of 55 Unitary Councils.						
Council Tax Requirement / Net Revenue Expenditure	38.8%	38.6%	67.25%	70.88%	89.69%	96.82%
Section 151 Commentary: The Council has a strong and fast growing Council Tax baseline, with the 21 st highest ratio of revenue generated through Council Tax out of the 55 authority group. The loss of government grant since 2008 has seen a significant shift in the proportion of Net Revenue Expenditure being funded locally.						
Business Rates Growth Above Baseline*	-4.19%	-4.19%	9.89%	9.89%	61.75%	61.75%

Section 151 Commentary: The Council has average growth amongst other Unitary Councils ranking 27th out of 55. This reflects a combination of factors including real growth above the government baseline and the level of appeal losses.

*The information reported in the resilience index has not been updated from 21/22. The outturn in 22/23 for Milton Keynes was 41.08% an increase from 21/22 due to the recalculation of appeals provision.

Cabinet Response to the Recommendations of Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report on the 2024/25 budget.

General

1. That the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee commends the connection in the 2024/25 draft budget between the financial strategy and delivery of the priorities set out in the Council Plan.
2. That wherever possible, when planning new or revised service provision the Council always considers whether or not the internal provision of services would be the most appropriate mechanism to ensure that they remain efficient, cost effective and fit for purpose.

Response: Agreed.

3. That any possible impacts of future pressures on, or reductions to, service delivery should be scrutinised, and recommendations made accordingly, by the relevant scrutiny committee before the financial implications are brought before the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Response: Agreed.

Pressures

4. That a review of Home to School Transport costs be added to the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25.

Response: Noted.

This will be added to the work programme with timing agreed to be agreed with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

5. That scrutiny of the Council's Self-funded Insurance scheme to assess whether or not this provides Value for Money to the Council be added to the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25.

Response: Noted. This will be added and timing agreed with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

6. That the Council considers including the funds to support the ongoing provisions of an annual festival (eg Urban Living, IF, Code & Light, CMK Events Fund) in the base budget rather than as one-offs, as at least one event takes place each year.

Response: Comments are noted.

7. That the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee receives a report from the Councillor Champions at the end of the financial year on how they spent their grants and what difference this has made to the residents of Milton Keynes.

Response: Noted.

8. That the Finance Team monitors the Council's borrowing strategy over the medium term in order to take advantage of any changes in interest rates and that the Finance Team reports any changes to the Council's borrowing strategy to the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee as and when these occur.

Response: Noted. The borrowing strategy is reviewed on a monthly basis with the Council's Treasury Advisors. Any change to the strategy will be brought forward as part of the Mid-Year Review which forms part of the Quarter 2 budget monitoring report or the annual Treasury Management Strategy which is approved as part of the Annual Budget.

9. That the Committee commends the work done by the Environment and Waste Service Team to manage and resolve problems at the Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park which could have had a detrimental financial impact on the Council and the proactive way the Team assisted the contactor to resolve a number of technical issues, particularly the disposal of bulky waste items.

Response: Noted.

10. That following scrutiny of the problems at the Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park by the Public Realm & Environment Scrutiny Committee (10 January 2024) the Budget & Resources Committee endorses and supports the recommendations made by the Committee in relation to the future operation of the Waste Recovery Park.

Response: Noted.

11. That the Public Realm & Environment Committee considers adding an annual monitoring review of the operation of the Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park to its Work Programme to ensure that the Council's environmental and financial ambitions are being met.

Response: Referred to the Public Realm & Environment Committee for consideration.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

12. That with reference to Recommendation 3 above, the Housing, Planning & Placemaking Scrutiny Committee considers adding scrutiny of:

- a) The Council's policies in relation to Right to Buy procedures and how Right to Buy properties can be replaced in a timely and cost effective manner;

- b) The core principles of the Council's Acquisitions Programme for residential stock once these have been developed;

to its 2024/25 Work Programme.

Response: Referred to the Housing, Planning & Placemaking Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

13. That a more detailed look at the costs/time involved in processing void council residential properties be scrutinised by the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee as part of its 2024/25 Work Programme.

Response: Noted. This will be added to the work programme with timing agreed to be agreed with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

14. That the Council considers adopting a pre-sale condition/clause in Right to Buy contracts of sale for the purchaser to continue to contribute to any relevant HRA service charges pertaining to that location (Minute BR26, 6 December 2023 refers).

Response: We will review regulations to see if this is possible and report back to Cabinet.

15. That the Cabinet Members for Adults, Housing & Healthier Communities and Resources liaise with other local authorities through support organisations such as the LGA, develop a strategic approach to lobbying the Government about local authorities being allowed to set their own local rents for council housing given the long term impact government imposed rent setting formulae/caps are having on the finances of Housing Revenue Accounts.

Response: Noted and agreed.

Reductions and Income Growth

16. That the Health & Adult Social Care Committee considers including in its 2024/25 Work Programme scrutiny of the revised Community Alarm Service, exploring how it can be effectively marketed to residents in Milton Keynes who would benefit from the support the service provides and how it can also be marketed as a complete package to other local authorities.

Response: Referred to the Health & Social Care Committee for consideration.

17. That the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee receives an update on the level and cost of the Council Tax Reduction scheme at a future meeting during 2024/25.

Response: Agreed.

18. That the Committee supports the establishment of the Corporate Vacancy Panel and would like to incorporate an annual report on its effectiveness and whether the promised savings are being achieved, into the Committee's "Business as Usual" part of its Work Programme.

Response: Agreed.

Local Council Tax Policy

2024/2025



Version Control

D Collins	Update to long term empty homes premium and addition of second home premium	Feb24

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Council Tax Empty Homes Policy

1. Background

The [Council Tax \(Prescribed Classes of Dwellings\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#) allows the Council to determine the level of discount applicable to certain classes of unoccupied dwellings.

[Section 11B of Local Government Finance Act 1992](#), as amended by the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) allows the Council to apply a premium to long term empty dwellings and dwellings that are occupied periodically (second homes) .

2. Empty Homes

(a) Short Term Empty Homes

Milton Keynes Council has determined that the following discounts will apply to prescribed classes of unfurnished dwellings shown on the table below:

Prescribed Class	Description	Discount
Class C	A dwelling which is no-one sole or main residence and is substantially unfurnished	100% for a period not exceeding 14 days
Class D	An unfurnished dwelling that (i) requires or is undergoing major repair work to render it habitable, or (ii) is undergoing structural alteration; or (iii) has undergone major repair work to render it habitable, if less than six months have elapsed since the date on which the alteration was substantially completed and the dwelling has continuously remained vacant since that date;	50% discount for up to 12 months

(b) Long Term Empty Homes

Long-term empty homes are dwellings that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a defined period. In determining whether a dwelling is a long-term empty dwelling, no account is taken of any one or more periods of not more than 6 weeks during which either it was not unoccupied or substantially unfurnished.

On 20 February 2019 Milton Keynes City Council decided that

- from 1 April 2019 a 100% premium would apply to dwellings that had been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 2 years
- from 1 April 2020 a 200% premium would apply to dwellings that had been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 5 years
- from 1 April 2021 a 300% premium would apply to dwellings that had been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 10 years

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amended the definition of 'long term empty homes' so that, for financial years from 2024-25 onwards, dwellings unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least 1 year may become liable to the council tax premium.

On 21 February 2024 Milton Keynes City Council decided that

- from 1 April 2024 the period from which a 100% premium would apply is amended from 2 years to 1 year.

Exceptions to the long term empty premium

The Secretary of State may issue guidance on classes of dwellings that may be excepted from the long term empty premium and Milton Keynes City Council will have regard to that guidance.

Appeals

An appeal may be made to the Valuation Tribunal against the application of a premium within 2 months of being notified of the decision by the Council. No appeal can be made against the level of the premium that is applied.

3. Second Homes

Class A and Class B of the [Council Tax \(Prescribed Classes of Dwellings\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#) defines a 'second home' as a furnished dwelling which is no-one's sole or main residence.

From 1 April 2013 Milton Keynes City Council decided that no discount would be applicable to dwellings that fell within these classes of dwelling.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act provides powers to the Council to charge a council tax premium of up to 100% for dwellings which are periodically occupied (to be known as second home premium). This is defined as a dwelling that is substantially furnished and has no resident (i.e., it is not someone's sole or main residence).

On 21 February 2024 Milton Keynes City Council decided that

- from 1 April 2025 a 100% premium will apply to dwellings that are substantially furnished but are not the sole or main residence of any resident.

In deciding whether a dwelling should be subject to a second home premium, Milton Keynes City Council will make a determination whether a property is a second home rather than a sole or main residence.

Exceptions to the second home premium

The Secretary of State may issue guidance on classes of dwellings that may be excepted from the second home premium and Milton Keynes City Council will have regard to that guidance.

Appeals

An appeal may be made to the Valuation Tribunal against the application of a premium within 2 months of being notified of the decision by the Council. No appeal can be made against the level of the premium that is applied.

You can call us on 01908 691691

Our customer service team are available 9.00am to 5.15pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 10.00am to 5.15pm on Wednesday

Our website is always available
www.milton-keynes.gov.uk