



St. Helens
Council

Council Tax & Business Rates Information 2017/18





Contents

Message from the Leader	1
1. The Council's Budget	2
2. Council Tax Banding	4
3. Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA)	5
4. Environment Agency	6
5. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	8
6. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	10
7. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority	14

Message from the Leader



Dear Resident,
Your Council Tax and Business Rates Booklet for 2017/18 holds useful information about the Council's Budget, how we calculate your Council Tax and where the money goes.

Council Tax pays for a wide range of vital community services, including care for the elderly, support for the disabled, services to protect children and young people, refuse collection and recycling, and road maintenance to name but a few. Council Tax also contributes to critical services provided by other organisations including Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Over a sustained period, government funding cuts have brought massively reduced budgets placing enormous pressures on council services. Harder hit than most, £74 million of government revenue support has already been lost from the Council's budget since 2010. However the next 3 years bring the greatest challenges yet with a further £20.6 million of savings to be found. This comes at a time of increasing demand for services. High numbers of children in care and those

needing protection have seen the Council recently needing to make significant additional financial resources available. When coupled with a rapidly growing frail and elderly population, our duty to provide care and support for the most vulnerable now brings considerable risk.

By 2020 we are expecting to be almost totally reliant on income raised from Council Tax and Business Rates to fund essential services. The level of savings required over the coming three years mean difficult decisions need to be taken, and if we are to continue to meet our legal duties, reductions and changes in some of the services we provide are now inevitable.

During 2016/17 we have consulted widely with residents and key partners on the implications of budget cuts when developing our future spending plans and will continue to do so, whilst listening carefully to what you tell us. However, despite doing all we can to protect services by reviewing ways of working, creating efficiencies, and generating additional income, the savings required, coupled with the demand pressures we face, have led to agreement for a 4.99% increase in Council Tax in 2017/18. This includes a 3% Care precept introduced by the Government in response to the growing national crisis

in social care, which the Council will use directly to support St. Helens' most vulnerable adults. This increase in Council Tax now amounts to around 80 pence per week over the coming year for the largest proportion of residences within the Borough.

Looking ahead we shall continue to adapt and think innovatively about how services are delivered, working collaboratively with our partners and the community. Although the challenges are great, our aspirations remain high. An ambitious work-programme exists to respond to community need with key projects that include; developing a growth strategy to bring increased investment, revenue and jobs, progressing 'St. Helens Cares' to address long-term health and care needs, and transforming social care practice to improve outcomes for children and families. Further information can be found in St. Helens Council Plan 2017/20, available on our website and we welcome any comments that you may have on our budget and future plans.

Councillor Barrie Grunewald
Leader, St. Helens Council

1. The Council's Budget

St.Helens Council provides a variety of essential services such as Education, Children's and Adults Social Care, Refuse Collection and Recycling, Planning, Highways, Consumer Protection, Libraries, Public Health, Parks and Recreation facilities directly to residents of the Borough.

In addition, other organisations provide services within St.Helens as part of

their wider area responsibilities; these "Levying Bodies" (which include Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority) charge the Council for these services in the form of levies and these costs are included within the Council's overall Budget.

The Council receives some funding from Government Grants and Business

Rates to offset its overall spend and the remainder is met from the Council Tax.

For 2017-18 the Council has set a Council Tax that equates to a 4.99% increase when compared to the 2016-17 level. The Council's Budget and sources of funding for 2016-17 and 2017-18 are summarised in Table 1:

The following commentary highlights some of the issues related to the Council's budget as detailed in Table 1:

- Income from fees & charges, grants & contributions includes a number of 'ring-fenced' sources of funding, where there is no control on the part of the Council to determine how this funding may be applied in the provision of services. For example, approximately £134 million relates to Pupil Premium Grant and Dedicated Schools Grant, where use of funding is restricted to school related functions. Housing Benefit Subsidy receipts are also included. These are directly related to mandatory, prescribed expenditure, and for 2017-18 levels are expected to exceed £63 million.

Table 1	2016-17 £000	2017-18 £000	Increase+/ Decrease- (%)
Gross Expenditure on St.Helens Services	401,415	398,718	-0.67%
Less: Income from Fees & Charges, Grants & Contributions	-285,756	-283,540	-0.78%
Equals: Net Spending on St.Helens Services	115,659	115,178	-0.42%
Plus: Expenditure incurred by Levying Bodies	20,875	20,192	-3.27%
Equals : Budget Requirement	136,534	135,370	-0.58%
Less: Formula Grants & Business Rates	-72,039	-68,241	-5.27%
Less : Collection Fund (surplus) / deficit	-756	-1,060	
Less: Earmarked Reserves	-2,034	8	
Equals: Amount met from Council Taxpayers	61,705	66,077	7.09%
Divide by Tax Base (Equivalent Property numbers)	48,904	49,880	2.00%
Equals: Band "D" Council Tax	£1,261.76	£1,324.72	4.99%

NB the table above excludes the impact of any parish precepts

The Gross expenditure figures quoted above reflect the spend associated with these ring-fenced funding sources and any variations between years.

- The Council undertook a series of budget reviews across all its services to establish where spending reductions could be achieved with the least effect on priority and frontline services. These reviews resulted in over £7.4 million of service related expenditure being taken out of the 2017-18 budgets.
- General Government Grants reduced by £4.2 million for 2017-18. This reduction included an increased "top-up" grant of £2.8 million to compensate for a reduction in Business Rates as a result of the 1st April 2017 Business Rates Revaluation. The real Grant reduction for 2017-18 is £7.0m equating to 15.1%. It is currently anticipated that funding reductions will continue until at least 2019-20, with anticipated further reductions of £8.7 million during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- There has been a reduction of £0.7m in the local cost of levied services, primarily flowing from a reduction in the

levy made by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR).

- In 2017-18 the Council will be part of the LCR 100% Business Rate Retention Pilot. This will result in an increase in Business Rates income for 2017-18 which will be offset by a subsequent reduction in Formula Grant received. There is, however, still a significant downside risk to receipts posed by the significant level of outstanding appeals not yet processed by the Government's Valuation Office Agency. The financial impact of any successful historical appeals is significant as the Council bears 49% of the reduction in liability and, therefore, the Council has to make provision within its estimate of retained rates for the repayment of successful appeals. In addition to the uncertainty around historical appeals, there is a great deal of uncertainty around the future level of appeals following the Government's rating revaluation exercise for 2017
- This 4.99% Band "D" increase is made up of 1.99% general increase and an additional 3% "precept" for adult social

care services. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government offered councils with adult social care responsibilities the flexibility to increase council tax from April 2016 by an additional 2% per annum, provided this is spent on adult social care services. The Government has provided additional flexibility to bring forward the 2019-20 increase to 2017-18 & 2018-19, with no increase in 2019-20, in recognition of the growing demand for adult social care and increased pressure on council budgets.

- The split/breakdown of the Band "D" Council Tax is shown in the table below:

	2016-17 £	2017-18 £
Total Band D Council Tax	1,261.76	1,324.72
Split:		
Adult Social Care Precept	24.27	62.12
Basic St.Helens Band D Equivalent	1,237.49	1,262.60

2. Council Tax Banding

Council Tax Valuation Bands

Most dwellings are subject to Council Tax. There is one bill per dwelling, whether it is a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat, and whether it is owned or rented. Each dwelling has been allocated to one of eight bands according to its open market capital value at 1st April 1991:

Valuation Bands Range of Values

A	Up to and including £40,000
B	£40,001 - £52,000
C	£52,001 - £68,000
D	£68,001 - £88,000
E	£88,001 - £120,000
F	£120,001 - £160,000
G	£160,001 - £320,000
H	More than £320,000

Your Council Tax bill states the band which applies to your dwelling.

Council Tax Charges 2017/18

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bold	1,050.84	1,225.98	1,401.12	1,576.27	1,926.54	2,276.82	2,627.11	3,152.54
Rainford	1,060.68	1,237.46	1,414.24	1,591.03	1,944.58	2,298.14	2,651.71	3,182.06
Eccleston	1,052.81	1,228.28	1,403.74	1,579.22	1,930.15	2,281.09	2,632.03	3,158.44
Windle	1,051.65	1,226.92	1,402.20	1,577.48	1,928.03	2,278.57	2,629.13	3,154.96
Rainhill	1,054.83	1,230.64	1,406.44	1,582.26	1,933.86	2,285.47	2,637.09	3,164.52
Billinge	1,059.02	1,235.52	1,412.02	1,588.53	1,941.53	2,294.53	2,647.55	3,177.06
Seneley Green	1,065.90	1,243.55	1,421.20	1,598.86	1,954.16	2,309.46	2,664.76	3,197.72
All other parts of the Council area	1,043.35	1,217.24	1,391.13	1,565.03	1,912.81	2,260.59	2,608.38	3,130.06
Adult Social care Precept (included above)	41.41	48.31	55.21	62.12	75.92	89.73	103.53	124.24

4

3. Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA)

We are the public body responsible for dealing with household waste once it's been collected from your home.

Using the latest technologies we aim to make sure as much waste as possible is sustainably managed. Our new Energy from Waste facility at Wilton in Teeside will divert from landfill over 92% of Merseyside's non-recycled waste - and in the process save more than £100m in current landfill disposal costs.

We work hard to persuade people to use less in the first place and, through our 14 Household Waste Recycling Centres, to recycle as much as they can. Together with our District Council partners we're making steady progress. Last year, 41% of Merseyside's household waste was re-used, recycled and composted. You can read more about our Sustainability, Accountability and Deliverability at www.merseysidewda.gov.uk.

The Levy for St Helens Council for 2017-18 will be £7,660,761.

Financial Summary

A comparison of Expenditure and Income for 2016-17 and 2017-18 is as follows.

	2016-17	2017-18
	£M	£M
Gross expenditure	55,001	74,404
Landfill Tax	20,591	0
Total Net Expenditure	75,592	74,404
Contribution to Reserves	0	0
Total Requirement	75,592	74,404
Use of Reserves	-10,001	8,813
Levy	65,591	65,591
Levy per head	£47.15	46.91



MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING & WASTE AUTHORITY

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5

4. Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk

management for 6500 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation

of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion.

The financial details are:

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee		
	2016/2017 '000s	2017/2018 '000s
Gross expenditure	£62,631	£76,100
Levies Raised	£3,785	£3,861
Total Council Tax Base	2,039	2,077

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environmental

Agency a local levy.

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between the years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 2.0%.

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £3,784,975 in 2016/2017 to £3,860,675 for 2017/2018.



5. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is a strategic body charged with overseeing certain functions on behalf of, and in partnership with, the six district Councils that form the Liverpool City Region.

The Combined Authority's function is to coordinate the delivery of economic growth across the City Region. It has particular responsibilities for regeneration, employment and skills, housing and transport.

This activity is directly funded from the Combined Authority's budget, which is made up of a number of funding sources.

As part of its transport responsibilities the Combined Authority provides resources to facilitate the delivery of transport activities within Halton Knowsley, Liverpool, St.Helens, Sefton and Wirral.

This is funded through a series of transport levies across each of the six Councils.

A transport levy funds the provision of transport-related services delivered by Merseytravel across the City Region

outside Halton, including such services as concessionary travel, certain subsidised bus services, the Mersey Ferries and a range of other services.

The transport levy for each of the Merseyside Councils within the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is presented below.

For historical and legal reasons Halton Council currently provide transport activities, including concessionary travel and some supported bus services, directly within the boundaries of the borough of Halton.

	Transport Levy 2016/17 £000	Transport Levy 2017/18 £000
Knowsley	11,093	10,045
Liverpool	35,843	32,660
St Helens	13,425	12,120
Sefton	20,724	18,677
Wirral	24,315	21,899
Total	104,400	95,400

This is funded through a differential transport levy collected by Halton on behalf of the Combined Authority, paid over to the Combined Authority, who, in turn, commit a grant to Halton. This levy will be £3.5m for 2017/18.



Mr John Fogarty, B.A. Hons, I.P.F.A.
Treasurer of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Director of Resources at Merseytravel



Mayor Joe Anderson
Chair of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.



6. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

I have a statutory duty and electoral mandate to ensure an efficient and effective police service is delivered by the Chief Constable on behalf of the public.

In addition, I have a statutory responsibility to produce an annual budget, including setting the council tax requirement for the Police Service on Merseyside. The council tax requirement provides the balance of funding not covered by government grant.

Setting this year's budget has once again not been an easy task, particularly in the face of continuing financial constraints on the police service. However, by making £6.9m of savings and the utilisation of £0.9m of one-off funding, I have been able to set a balanced budget for 2017/18, resulting in a council tax requirement of £59.8m.

In council tax terms this is equivalent to £110.65 per property per year at Band A and £165.97 at Band D, a 1.95% increase on the 2016/17 current level.

The budget for 2017/18 will provide sufficient resources to enable the Chief Constable to address the key priorities set out in my Police and Crime Plan.

With regard to beyond 2017/18, there still remains a very significant financial and policing challenge for the Police Service in the years ahead, with estimated savings of over £18.0m being required to be made by the end of 2021/22. Consequently, I am working closely with the Chief Constable to develop a series of reviews across all areas of business that will achieve the savings requirement, whilst keeping the precept low and ensuring Merseyside has the most resilient and effective force possible.

Rt Hon Jane Kennedy
Police and Crime Commissioner
for Merseyside



Police and Crime Commissioner Budget			
2016/17		2017/18	
£m		£m	
318.581	GROSS EXPENDITURE	315.792	
(1,776)	Income	(1,811)	
(5,462)	Specific Government Grants	(5,541)	
311.343	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	308.440	
(0,318)	Contribution from Reserves	(0,150)	
311.025	NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	308.290	
(122,467)	Less: Police General Grant	(120,756)	39.2%
(112,843)	DCLG Formula Funding	(111,263)	36.1%
(14,103)	Local Council Tax Support Grant	(14,103)	4.6%
(1,538)	Legacy Council Tax Freeze Grant	(1,538)	0.5%
(2,151)	Collection Fund Surplus	(0,795)	0.2%
57.923	COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	(59.835)	19.4%
355.792	Tax base	360.517	
£162.80	Band D Equivalent	£165.97	
£3.12	Increase in Band D Equivalent	£3.17	1.95%

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

Why has the Gross Expenditure Changed?

	£m
Gross Expenditure 2016/17	318.581
Net Committed Growth	0.579
Pay and Prices Inflation	3.687
One-off Commitments for 2017/18	1.789
Removal of Previous Years One-off Commitments	(1.986)
Merseyside Police Savings	(6.858)
Gross Expenditure 2017/18	315.792

Why has the Council Tax Requirement Changed?

	£m
Council Tax Requirement 2016/17	57.923
Increase in Tax base	0.769
Increase in Band D Equivalent	1.143
Council Tax Requirement 2017/18	59.835



7. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

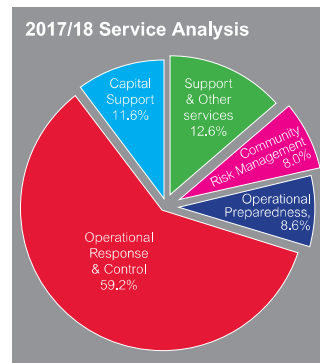
Historically the Authority has relied upon Government grants to fund a significant proportion of its revenue budget, over 63% in 2010/11. In 2010 the Government announced an austerity plan to reduce national debt and manage the crisis in public finances. The plan incorporated significant reductions in Government grants paid to fire and rescue authorities. Compared to 2010/11 the Authority's 2017/18 Government grant support has been cut by £13.8m or nearly 50% in real terms and further grant reductions have been announced up to 2019/20.

After taking into account unavoidable future cost pressures and the impact of the reduction in the Government grants the Authority identified an £11.0m financial challenge for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20. In 2016 the Authority approved a four year financial plan (2016/17 – 2019/20) that would deliver the £11.0m saving by 2019/20. The plan was prepared on the basis that the Authority's priority is to minimise the impact of grant reductions on frontline services by cutting management, technical and support costs in the first instance. In determining the saving

options the Authority, after identifying £9.1m from technical and support areas, was left with no alternative but to find £1.9m savings from operational response.

The operational response budget cut will result in a further reduction in the number of firefighters employed by up to 49 posts or 7% of the current establishment. This will mean firefighter numbers have fallen from approximately 1,000 in 2010/11 to 620 by 2019/20. Some fire stations will no longer be staffed as they are now and the number of permanently available appliances will be further reduced.

Approximately 76% of the budget remains committed to delivering frontline response and preventative services as these functions have been recognised as priority areas by the public following extensive consultation.



The Authority has set a budget of £59.490 million for 2017/18, £2.0m lower than that in 2016/17. The main changes between this year's budget and last year's are:

Reductions in support service, management & other costs	(£1.5m)
Unavoidable cuts in front line staffing	(£1.4m)
Forecast inflationary cost increases	£0.7m
New Government Apprenticeship Levy	£0.2m
	(£2.0m)

The Authority has issued a precept on the five Merseyside District Councils of £26.801 million, which is equivalent to a Council Tax of £74.34 for a Band D property. St Helens contribution to expenditure financed by precept is £3.708 million, which represents 14% of the total precept

Summary of Revenue Budget & Council Tax Requirement		
2016-17		2017-18
£000		£000
72,205	Gross Expenditure	77,181
-4,316	Net Contribution from Reserves	-9,732
-6,382	Income & specific Grants for services	-7,959
61,507	Budget Requirement	59,490
-622	Collection Fund Surplus	-221
-34,951	Government Grant & Business Rate Funding	-32,468
25,934	Council Tax Requirement	26,801
355,792	Tax-base	360,517
£72.89	Band D Equivalent	£74.34

Contact Us

The Authority values the opinions of the people it serves. If you wish to comment about the services of the Authority please contact Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on 0151 296 4000.

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