



St. Helens Council

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St. Helens Council

## Council Tax & Business Rates Information 2014-2015



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## Message from the Leader

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Dear Resident,  
This booklet contains important and useful information about the Council's budget and how your Council Tax is calculated. It also contains important information on the levying and precepting bodies.

Whilst the Council continues to face the most challenging financial circumstances in living memory, it has responded strongly to losses in Central Government funding and continued to deliver effective and essential services across the Borough.

However, further reductions in Local Government funding will continue over the next 2 years with the scale of the losses weighted heavily against areas like St.Helens that are defined as 'deprived'. The latest grant settlement has confirmed that the Council will lose an additional **£24.9m** over the next 2 years. This takes its total reduction for the period 2010-2016 to **£65m** and has resulted in the loss of 1,400 Council jobs.

In addition, fundamental changes to Local Government financing introduced last year in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates bring further uncertainty to the Council's

ability to raise revenue. The fragile state of the economy, the strained financial position of many businesses and households all bring additional risk to the delivery of vital public services and the communities that rely on them.

Despite these pressures, the Council remains committed to delivering savings in a responsible and targeted way, minimising the impact of the cuts to the community and protecting vital services. The Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, Merseytravel and Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority have also made savings. When coupled with the efficiencies delivered by the Council, this has resulted in St.Helens delivering the lowest Council Tax rate of all Merseyside authorities and maintaining its position as having one of the lowest in the North West.

As always, we have continued to consult with our key partners and the wider community, taking on board the views of all interested parties when setting the budget for 2014-2015. Additionally, we will be consulting with the people of St.Helens about future savings requirements for 2015-2016 over the coming months. We remain strongly committed to not only maintaining the provision of services, but continuing the investment in our strategic

priorities and support for the most vulnerable in our community. This year will see the Council providing much needed financial support for local business development and job creation, financial assistance to potential home owners, continuing investment in the creation of further work opportunities for young people, the targeting of significant resources to provide effective adult care and support, and the extended provision of free nursery places for two-year olds.

We will continue to deliver value for money and become as efficient as possible, ensuring that the services delivered meet people's needs, whilst minimising future increases in Council Tax.

Further information about planned activity for the year can be found within the St.Helens Plan, which is available on the Council's website.

We welcome your comments on the information provided, or indeed, views on the Council and its services, what we are doing well and what we can do differently.

**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 and Parks & 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 Merseytravel and Merseyside Waste and Recycling 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 2014-2015 the Council has set a Council Tax that equates to a 1.99% increase when compared to the 2013-2014 level. The Council's Budget and sources of funding for these two financial years are summarised below:

NB: the table below excludes the impact of any parish precepts

	2013-2014 £000	2014-2015 £000
Gross Expenditure on St.Helens Services	411,022	408,923
Less: Income from Fees & Charges, Grants & Contributions	-279,749	-285,131
<b>Equals: Net Spending on St.Helens Services</b>	<b>131,273</b>	<b>123,792</b>
Plus: Expenditure incurred by Levying Bodies	24,669	24,491
<b>Equals: Budget Requirement</b>	<b>155,942</b>	<b>148,283</b>
Less: General Government Grants	-78,675	-67,872
Less: Business Rates	-23,329	-24,835
<b>Equals: Amount met from Council Taxpayers</b>	<b>53,938</b>	<b>55,576</b>
Divide by: Tax Base (Equivalent Property numbers)	46,240	46,715
<b>Equals: Band 'D' Council Tax</b>	<b>£1,166.47</b>	<b>£1,189.68</b>

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

- 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 **£125m** 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 2014-2015 levels are expected to exceed **£73m**.
- The Council has undertaken 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 **£9m** of service related expenditure being taken out of the 2014-2015 budget.
- ring-fenced funding sources and any variations between years (e.g. **£2.3m** additional Pupil Premium Grant for use by schools in 2014-2015).
- It follows that the reduction in non ring-fenced expenditure on St.Helens services is more significant than the overall reduction in gross expenditure shown in the table opposite, and has been driven mainly from the need to reduce spending as a direct result of cuts in General Government Grant funding.
- General Government Grants reduced by **£10.8m** for 2014-2015. Even higher levels of funding reductions are to be experienced in 2015-2016.
- Levying Bodies spend has actually been maintained at 2013-2014 levels, but a reduction in St.Helens' share has arisen, primarily due to the significant increase in recycling rates and the consequential reduction in non-recycled waste disposed by way of landfill.
- Retained Business Rate receipts are estimated to increase in 2014-2015, though there does remain significant downside risk to this forecast. The levels of outstanding appeals not yet processed by the Governments Valuation Office Agency add to the risks and uncertainties that the Council faces when assessing its longer-term financial position.

## 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 2014-2015

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Bold	951.38	1,109.95	1,268.51	1,427.08	1,744.21	2,061.34	2,378.46	2,854.16
Rainford	958.27	1,117.99	1,277.69	1,437.41	1,756.83	2,076.26	2,395.68	2,874.82
Eccleston	953.71	1,112.67	1,271.61	1,430.57	1,748.47	2,066.38	2,384.28	2,861.14
Windle	952.55	1,111.31	1,270.07	1,428.83	1,746.35	2,063.86	2,381.38	2,857.66
Rainhill	953.50	1,112.42	1,271.33	1,430.25	1,748.08	2,065.91	2,383.75	2,860.50
Billinge	959.92	1,119.91	1,279.89	1,439.88	1,759.85	2,079.82	2,399.80	2,879.76
Seneley Green	966.70	1,127.83	1,288.94	1,450.06	1,772.29	2,094.53	2,416.76	2,900.12
All other parts of the Council's area	944.25	1,101.63	1,259.00	1,416.38	1,731.13	2,045.88	2,360.63	2,832.76

## 3. Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority (MRWA)

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority is the public body responsible for dealing with household waste once it's been collected from your home.

We use the latest technology to make sure as much of it as possible is recycled so we can

avoid sending it to landfill. 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, 36% of household waste was reused, recycled and composted. You can read more about our principal aims, objectives and targets in our 2013 Annual Plan, available on [www.merseysidewda.gov.uk](http://www.merseysidewda.gov.uk)

### Financial Summary

A comparison of Expenditure and Income for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 is as follows:

	2013-2014	2014-2015
	£000	£000
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	38,522	41,489
<b>Landfill Tax (1)</b>	27,989	24,212
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>66,511</b>	<b>65,701</b>
<b>Contribution to reserves</b>	0	0
<b>Total Requirement</b>	<b>66,511</b>	<b>65,701</b>

(1) Landfill Tax: the tax paid by MRWA to Central Government for disposing of residual waste to landfill. In 2013-2014 it is £72 per tonne, and for 2014-2015 it will be £80 per tonne.



This is financed by:

	2013-2014	2014-2015
	£000	£000
<b>Use of reserves</b>	(920)	(110)
<b>Leaving a balance to be met by Levy Income</b>	65,591	65,591
<b>Levy per head of population</b>	<b>£47.48</b>	<b>£47.34</b>

The total levy demand in 2014-2015 is the same as in the previous year.

\*The Levy for St.Helens Council based upon the levy apportionment system is: **£8,217,370.**

For more information, contact MRWA:

Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority  
7th Floor, No.1 Mann Island, Liverpool L3 1BP

Tel: 0151 255 1444

Fax: 0151 227 1848

Email: [enquiries@merseysidewda.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@merseysidewda.gov.uk)

Web: [www.merseysidewda.gov.uk](http://www.merseysidewda.gov.uk)

## 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 6,500 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:

<b>North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee</b>		
	2013-2014	2014-2015
	£000	£000
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>40,930</b>	<b>74,205</b>
<b>Levies Raised</b>	<b>3,638</b>	<b>3,638</b>
<b>Total Council Tax Base</b>	<b>1,932</b>	<b>1,955</b>

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 'matching' funding the Agency may seek funding from Councils in the form

of a Local Levy. The Local Levy is shared on the basis of Band D Equivalents between all contributing bodies within the Committee Area. Changes in the Gross Budgeted expenditure between the years both reflects the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of projects.

The Environment Agency  
PO Box 263, Peterborough  
PE2 8YD

For 2014-2015 we have included Grant Aided Expenditure on all Risk Management Authority Programs. The total Local Levy raised has increased by 0%.

The total Local Levy raised has remained the same in 2014-2015 as 2013-2014 at **£3,638,000.**

## 5. Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority

1. Given the severe spending pressures on the Merseyside District Councils, the Authority has resolved to freeze its levy for 2014-2015 at the same level as the previous 4 years.

2. The Authority has been asked to ensure that it can maintain its core services, and at the same time maintain a levy freeze by a savings and efficiency package of **£3.0m**.

J Fogarty, BA Hons, IPFA  
Director of Finance  
Merseyside Integrated  
Transport Authority and  
Passenger Transport Executive  
(Merseytravel)  
No. 1 Mann Island,  
Liverpool L3 1BP  
Tel: 0151 227 5181

Levy Changes	2013-2014 Levy £000	2014-2015 Levy £000	Decrease/ Increase £000
Knowsley	13,458	13,411	-47
Liverpool	42,956	43,175	+219
St.Helens	16,179	16,187	+8
Sefton	25,274	25,158	-116
Wirral	29,497	29,433	-64
<b>Total</b>	<b>127,364</b>	<b>127,364</b>	<b>-</b>

The public transport capital programme for 2014-2015 is **£23.5m**, of which **£9.3m** is allocated for new schemes. The Mersey Tunnels capital programme for 2014-2015 is **£9.0m**, financed from Tunnels' tolls.

Revenue Budget 2014-2015	Expend £000	Income/ Recharges £000	Grants/ Balances £000	Levy £000
Bus Services	30,340	(11,796)	-	18,544
Rail Services	123,202	(19,657)	(102,061)	1,484
Travel Concessions	83,514	(26,608)	-	56,906
Customer Services: Hubs	11,305	(2,508)	-	8,797
Mersey Ferries	11,171	(9,242)	-	1,929
Mersey Tunnels	31,961	(41,717)	-	(9,756)
DRCM	3,655	(742)	-	2,913
Policy & LTP Development	4,243	-	(1,172)	3,071
Funds' Management	52,857	(11,708)	(323)	40,826
Asset Management	13,666	(13,666)	-	-
People & Customer Development	5,417	(2,256)	(511)	2,650
Information Technology	4,468	(4,468)	-	-
Resources Directorate	3,672	(3,672)	-	-
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>379,471</b>	<b>(148,040)</b>	<b>(104,067)</b>	<b>127,364</b>

DRCM = Democratic Representation & Corporate Management

## 6. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

As Police and Crime Commissioner, 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 the budget has not been an easy task, particularly in the face of continuing financial constraints on the police service. However, with the delivery of **£13.4m** of savings by the Force, along with **£0.1m** of savings from

my own office, and the utilisation of **£4.6m** of reserves, I have been able to set a balanced budget for 2014-2015, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of **£52.375m**.

In Council Tax terms this is equivalent to **£104.42** per property at Band A and **£156.63** at Band D, a 1.95% increase on the 2013-2014 current level.

The budget in 2014-2015 will provide sufficient resources to enable the Chief Constable to maintain a budgeted establishment of 3,945 Police Officers and protect frontline operations as far as possible in 2014-2015. In addition, the resources will assist the Chief Constable in achieving the priorities set out in my Police and Crime plan.

However, I am aware that there remains a very significant financial and policing challenge for the Police Service in the years ahead, with estimated savings of over **£40m** being required to be made by the end of 2017-2018. 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 as low as possible 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

2013-2014 £m		2014-2015 £m	%
<b>334.756</b>	<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>328.148</b>	
(2.131)	Income	(1.813)	
(7.266)	Specific Government Grants	(4.273)	
<b>325.359</b>	<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>322.062</b>	
(0.417)	Contribution from Reserves	(4.642)	
0.124	Contribution to General Balances	0.911	
<b>325.066</b>	<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>318.331</b>	
(134.729)	Less: Police General Grant	(131.199)	41.2%
(124.038)	DLG Formula Funding	(118.205)	37.1%
(14.058)	Council Tax Support Grant	(14.103)	4.4%
(1.538)	Council Tax Freeze Grant	(1.538)	0.5%
(0.124)	Collection Fund Surplus	(0.911)	0.3%
<b>50.579</b>	<b>Council Tax Requirement</b>	<b>52.375</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
<b>329,224</b>	<b>Tax base</b>	<b>334,386</b>	
<b>£153.63</b>	<b>Band D Equivalent</b>	<b>£156.63</b>	
	<b>Increase in Band D Equivalent</b>	<b>£3.00</b>	<b>1.95%</b>

#### WHY HAS THE GROSS EXPENDITURE CHANGED?

	£m
<b>Gross Expenditure 2013-2014</b>	<b>334.756</b>
Merseyside Police Savings Already Recognised	(13.396)
OPCCM Savings Already Recognised	(0.100)
Inflation	4.180
Net Committed Growth	2.261
Victims Services Expenditure	0.447
<b>Gross Expenditure 2014-2015</b>	<b><u>328.148</u></b>

#### WHY HAS THE COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT CHANGED?

	£m
<b>Council Tax Requirement 2013-2014</b>	<b>50.579</b>
Increase in Tax Base	0.793
Increase in Band D Equivalent	1.003
<b>Council Tax Requirement 2014-2015</b>	<b><u>52.375</u></b>

## 7. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

### Precept Information 2014-2015

The Government has confirmed the level of grant it will provide to the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2014-2015 and announced an indicative reduction for 2015-2016. The Authority's funding is being cut by 7.6% and 8.5% respectively in those years, resulting in a **£6.8m** cash reduction. This will mean the Authority's grant reduction between 2010-2011 and 2015-2016 will be over 35%.

The Authority has previously planned to try and minimise the impact on frontline services by cutting management, back office and support costs. It had already set a financial plan for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 based on the expected cuts that, despite saving **£7m** from back office and support

areas, still required front line savings of **£3m**. These are being met by reducing the number of fire appliances in Merseyside from 42 to 28.

With the latest grant cuts the Authority has approved a two year financial plan to deal with the additional financial challenges up to 2015-2016. The two year plan requires yet further savings of **£6.3m**. The Authority's priority has again been to maintain the frontline service but after identifying a further **£2.9m** from back office and support areas the remaining **£3.4m** inevitably falls on the front line. The Authority has considered 'the least worst' options on operational response based upon the Chief Fire Officers recommendations and is seeking to make savings by

station mergers. This approach has been endorsed in initial public consultation and engagement.

As part of the two year plan the Authority has decided to increase Council Tax by just below 2% (the maximum allowable without holding a public referendum). The Band D Council Tax is therefore now **£70.07**. Most Council Taxpayers in Merseyside will pay about 13p per day towards their Fire and Rescue Service.

The Authority has set a budget of **£64.356m** for 2014-2015, **£2.365m** lower than that in 2013-2014.

Further savings will be required for 2015-2016. The main changes between this year's budget and last year's are:



• Reductions in support service, management & other costs	(£0.9m)
• Unavoidable cuts in front line staffing	(£1.5m)
• Net movement on reserves	(£0.6m)
• Increase in Specific Grants	(£0.3m)
• Increase in capital financing costs to fund capital expenditure	£0.1m
• Forecast inflationary cost increases	£0.8m
	<u>(£2.4m)</u>

The Authority has issued a precept on the five Merseyside District Councils of **£23.430m**, which is equivalent to a Council Tax of **£70.07** for a Band D property. St.Helens contribution to expenditure financed by precept is **£3.273m**, which represents 14% of the total precept.

<b>Summary of Revenue Budget &amp; Council Tax Requirement</b>	
<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>71,117</b>	<b>71,548</b>
-1,682	-1,227
-2,714	-5,965
<b>66,721</b>	<b>64,356</b>
-55	-407
-44,048	-40,519
<b>22,618</b>	<b>23,430</b>
<b>329,224</b>	<b>334,386</b>
<b>£68.70</b>	<b>£70.07</b>

#### **Contact Us**

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

**Kieran Timmins, CPFA**  
**Deputy Chief Executive**  
**Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority**  
**Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters**  
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