



Contents

Me	essage from the Leader	-
1.	The Council's Budget	2
2.	Council Tax Banding	۷
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
8.	Information About You	16

Message from the Leader



Dear Resident, Your Council Tax and Business Rates Booklet for 2016/17 contains useful information about the Council's budget and how we work out your Council Tax. Council Tax pays for a wide range of critical services in St.Helens

provided by the Council and other organisations, including Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority. Here we set out how that money will be spent, and how we are trying to make it go as far as possible in building a better future for St.Helens and its communities.

There is no denying that the last few years have been difficult, but further Government cuts to public spending mean we now face budget pressures like never before. Once again deprived areas like St Helens come off far worse than many less deprived authorities due to our disproportionately high levels of funding reduction. Despite delivering huge savings and efficiencies, tough choices lie ahead requiring increasingly difficult decisions.

The latest Local Government Finance settlement sees the Council facing a reduction of £8.9 million for 2016/17 and further cuts of £15.9 million for the following 3-years. Over the period 2010/17 the Council will have lost over £74 million in Government funding. By the end of 2020, grant support will have reduced by three

quarter and funding cuts will top £90 million, the equivalent of £510 lost for every person in St.Helens.

On top of these reductions the Council is facing a number of spending pressures due to additional demand for services and increasing costs. Our greatest budget challenges lie within care services; with the duty to protect our children and young people, whilst providing effective care and support for growing numbers of elderly residents.

Councils with social care responsibilities like St. Helens have been allowed to raise Council Tax levels by an additional 2% with the condition that the extra funds be used to relieve pressures on care provision. Despite doing all we can to reduce costs, manage growing demand and generate additional income, the service and financial pressures the Council is under have led to agreement for a 3.99% rise in Council Tax for 2016/17. This increase amounts to approximately £4 per month over the coming year for a Band D rated property and supports our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable in our community. In setting the 2016/17 budget we have talked with and consulted widely across the community and with key partners, and will continue to do so as we move forward.

Looking ahead the challenges remain great as we will need to do more with less, but opportunities to maximise the potential of our people and communities also exist. We will need to adapt and innovate if we are to continue to deliver the current range of highly effective services on offer Planning for this has now begun and there are a number of exciting developments on the horizon. A renewed focus on economic growth will see planning permission for the development of Parkside and other key business locations coming forward during the year. We will see further efforts to regenerate the town centre and growing investment in our transport and housing infrastructure. The new Employment Support programme is planned to improve people's skills and create hundreds of local jobs over the coming 2 years. The new Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be developed to raise people's expectations about their health and improve lives in St. Helens. The Council will continue to deliver and review a wide range of people and placed based services, ensuring their on-going effectiveness, efficiency and value for money. Further information about our planned activities for the year can be found in the St. Helens Council Delivery Plan 2016/17.

Any feedback or comments you may have on the Council's budget or the delivery of services is valued and welcomed.

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 2016-17 the Council has set a Council Tax that equates to a 3.99% increase when compared to the 2015-16 level. This increase is made up of 1.99% general increase and an additional 2% "precept" for adult social care services. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has offered councils with adult social care responsibilities the flexibility to increase council tax from April 2016 by an additional 2% provided this is spent on adult social care services. This is in recognition of demographic changes which are leading to growing demand for adult social care, and increased pressure on council budgets.

The Council's Budget and sources of funding for 2015-16 and 2016-17 are summarised below:

			Increase+/
	2015-16	2016-17	Decrease-
	£000	£000	(%)
Gross Expenditure on St.Helens Services	402,127	401,415	-0.18%
Less: Income from Fees & Charges, Grants & Contribution	s <u>-286,080</u>	-285,756	-0.11%
Equals: Net Spending on St.Helens Services	116,047	115,659	-0.33%
Plus: Expenditure incurred by Levying Bodies	22,679	20,875	-7.95%
Equals : Budget Requirement	138,726	136,534	-1.58%
Less: Formula Grants	-54,082	-46,204	-14.57%
Less: Business Rates & S31 Grants	-24,892	-25,835	3.79%
Less: Earmarked Reserves	-741	-2,034	
Collection Fund (surplus) / deficit	1,003	-756	
Equals: Amount met from Council Taxpayers	58,008	61,705	6.37%
Divide by Tax Base (Equivalent Property numbers)	47,808	48,904	2.29%
Equals: Band "D" Council Tax	£1,213.35	£1,261.76	3.99%
Adult Social Care Precept Basic St Helens Band D Equivalent	£0.00 £1,213.35	£24.27 £1,237.49	2.00% 1.99%

NB the table above excludes the impact of any parish precepts

The following commentary highlights some of the issues related to the Council's budget as detailed on page 2:

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 £125 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 2016-17 levels are expected to exceed £72 1 million

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 £4.3 million of service related
 expenditure being taken out of the
 2016-17 budgets and £3.5 million
 savings from a fundamental review of
 debt repayment practices.
- General Government Grants reduced by £8.9 million for 2016-17. It is currently anticipated that funding reductions will continue to 2019-20 with anticipated further reductions of £15.9 million
- There has been a reduction of £1.8m in the local cost of levied services, flowing from reductions in the levy made by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.
- Income from Retained Business Rate receipts in 2016-17 are estimated to be marginally greater than the income generated the previous financial year. There is however still a significant downside risk to receipts posed by the significant level of outstanding appeals not vet processed by the Governments Valuation Office Agency. The financial impact of any successful 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.

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 2016/17								
Band	A	В	С	D	E	F	G	Н
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bold	1,005.64	1,173.25	1,340.86	1,508.47	1,843.69	2,178.91	2,514.11	3,016.94
Rainford	1,014.96	1,184.12	1,353.29	1,522.45	1,860.78	2,199.10	2,537.41	3,044.90
Eccleston	1,007.75	1,175.72	1,343.68	1,511.64	1,847.56	2,183.49	2,519.39	3,023.28
Windle	1,006.59	1,174.36	1,342.13	1,509.90	1,845.44	2,180.98	2,516.49	3,019.80
Rainhill	1,009.09	1,177.27	1,345.46	1,513.64	1,850.01	2,186.38	2,522.73	3,027.28
Billinge	1,013.96	1,182.96	1,351.95	1,520.95	1,858.94	2,196.94	2,534.91	3,041.90
Seneley Green	1,020.85	1,190.99	1,361.14	1,531.28	1,871.57	2,211.86	2,552.13	3,062.56
All other parts of the Council area	998.29	1,164.68	1,331.06	1,497.45	1,830.22	2,162.99	2,495.74	2,994.90
Adult Social care Precept (included above)	16.18	18.87	21.57	24.27	29.66	35.05	40.44	48.53

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. By the end of this year our Energy from Waste facility will open, which will divert from landfill over 92% of Mersevside'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, 42% of Merseyside's household waste was re-used, recycled and composted. You can read more about our Sustainability, Accountability and Deliverability on www.mersevsidewda.gov.uk.

The Levy for St Helens Council for 2016-17 will be £7.359.243.

Financial Summary

A comparison of Expenditure and Income for 2015-16 and 2016-17 is as follows.

	2015-16	2016-17
	£M	£M
Gross expenditure	44.418	55.001
Landfill Tax	27.246	20.591
Total Net Expenditure	71.664	75.592
Use of Reserves	-6.073	-10.001
Levy	65.591	65.591
Levy per head	£47.30	£47.15



For more information contact: Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority 7th Floor

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Tel: 0151 255 1444 Fax: 0151 227 1848

E-mail:

enquiries@merseysidewda.gov.uk Web: www.merseysidewda.gov.uk

4. Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Food 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		
	2015/2016 '000s	2016/2017 '000s
Gross expenditure	£80,544	£75,649
Levies Raised	£3,771	£3,785
Total Council Tax Base	1,995	2,039

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 £3,710,760 in 2015/2016 to £3,784,975 for 2016/2017.



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.

As part of its transport responsibilities the Combined Authority provides resources to Merseytravel to provide direct transport activities within Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral.

This is funded through a transport levy across each of the five Merseyside District Councils.

All transport-related activity provided by Halton Council continues to be funded directly from their main Council Tax requirement and not through this levy. There is a provision with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority that Halton may, in time, become part of a

joint levy but this will not be the case in 2016/17.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority budget for transport will reduce in 2016/17 as a result of financial savings made by Merseytravel.

These savings will allow the transport levy for 2016/17 to reduce by £8.3m from £113.7m (2015/16) to £105.4m.

In creating the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, each district committed that the new body would not impose additional costs on the Council Tax payer.

Since its establishment, the Combined Authority has reduced the transport levy by £22m.

This significant saving to Council Tax payers has been made possible by the Combined Authority working with Merseytravel to increase efficiency while protecting front-line transport services.

The transport levy funds the provision of transport-related services across the City Region outside Halton. Such services include the Concessionary Travel scheme, certain subsidised bus services,

the Mersey Ferries and a range of other services.

The transport levy for each of the constituent Councils within the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority are presented in the table below.

	Transport Levy 2015/16 £000	Transport Levy 2016/17 £000
Knowsley	11,979	11,093
Liverpool	38,604	35,843
St Helens	14,450	13,425
Sefton	22,403	20,724
Wirral	26,264	24,315
Total	113,700	105,400

Note: Transport provision in Halton Council for 2016/17 will be funded directly from its main Council Tax requirement and is not subject to a transport levy from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. This reflects historic funding arrangements that pre-date the creation of the Combined Authority.

In addition to its revenue expenditure, the Combined Authority is also responsible for an ambitious capital programme that is, in part, funded from a successful Growth Deal Bid that will see around £71m invested across the region in 2016/17.

The delivery of this programme will be key to improving the prosperity of the City Region through the promotion of economic growth.

Mr John Fogarty, B.A. Hons, I.P.F.A.

Treasurer of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Director of Resources at Merseytravel

CIIr Liam Robinson

Chair of the Merseytravel Committee of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Joe Anderson

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 again not been an easy task, particularly in the face of continuing financial constraints on the police service. However, by making £9.6m of savings and the utilisation of £2.4m of one-off funding, I have been able to set a balanced budget for 2016/17, resulting in a council tax requirement of £57.9m. In council tax terms this is equivalent to £108.53 per property per year at Band A and £162.80 at Band D, a 1.95% increase on the 2015/16 current level.

The budget in 2016/17 will provide sufficient resources to enable the Chief Constable to address the key priorities

set out in my Police and Crime Plan, which are:-

- Prevent Crime and Anti-social Behaviour:
- Provide a Visible and Accessible Neighbourhood Policing Style;
- Tackle Serious and Organised Crime; and
- Support Victims, Protect Vulnerable People and Maintain Public Safety.

With regard to beyond 2016/17, there still remains a very significant financial and policing challenge for the Police Service in the years ahead, with estimated savings of over £22.1m being required to be made by the end of 2020/21. 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



2015/16		2016/17	
£m		£m	
322.935	GROSS EXPENDITURE	318.581	
(1.951)	Income	(1.776)	
(5.590)	Specific Government Grants	(5.462)	
315.394	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	311.343	
(8.394)	Contribution from Reserves	(0.318)	
2.263	Contribution to General Balances	0.000	
309.263	NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	311.025	
(123.170)	Less: Police General Grant	(122.467)	39.4%
(113.491)	DCLG Formula Funding	(112.843)	36.3%
(14.103)	Local Council Tax Support Grant	(14.103)	4.5%
(1.538)	Legacy Council Tax Freeze Grant	(1.538)	0.5%
(2.263)	Collection Fund Surplus	(2.151)	0.7%
54.698	COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	57.923	18.6%
342,548	Tax base	355,792	
£159.68	Band D Equivalent	£162.80	
£3.05	Increase in Band D Equivalent	£3.12	1.95%

Why has the Gross Expenditure Changed?	
	£m
Gross Expenditure 2015/16	322.935
Net Committed Growth	6.191
Pay and Prices Inflation	3.348
One-off Commitments for 2016/17	1.986
Reduction in Specific Grant Related Gross Expenditure	(0.286)
Removal of Previous Years One-off Commitments	(5.951)
Merseyside Police Savings	(9.642)
Gross Expenditure 2016/17	318.581

Why has the Council Tax Requirement Changed?		
	£m	
Council Tax Requirement 2015/16	54.698	
Increase in Tax base	2.115	
Increase in Band D Equivalent	1.110	
Council Tax Requirement 2016/17	57.923	



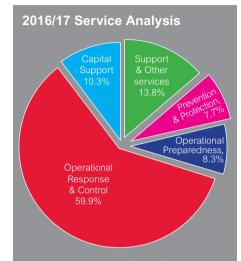
7. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Over 30% or £18.7m of the Authority's funding in 2015/16 came from a Government Grant which is known as Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The Government has reduced the Authority's RSG in 2016/17 by £2.2m or 11.8%, and plans to reduce it by £7.7m to £11.0m by 2019/20. The RSG reduction in 2019/20 would represent a 50% cut in grant in real terms after factoring in future anticipated inflation.

After taking into account unavoidable future cost pressures and the impact of the reduction in the RSG the Authority identified an £11.0m financial challenge by 2019/20. To deal with this the Authority has approved a four year financial plan (2016/17 - 2019/20) that delivers £11.0m of savings 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 £7.0m from technical and support areas, was left with no alternative but to find £4.0m of savings from operational response.

The Authority will consider operational response saving proposals from the Chief Fire Officer during 2016/17 but it will have no option but to reduce the number of firefighters employed by up to 100 posts or 15% of the current establishment. This will mean fire stations will no longer be staffed as they are now and the number of appliances will be reduced.

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



As a consequence of the financial challenge facing the Authority it must adhere to its approved financial plan and increase council tax by just below 2% (the maximum allowable without holding a public referendum). The band D Council Tax is therefore now £72.89. Most council taxpayers in Merseyside will pay about 13p per day towards their Fire and Rescue Service

The Authority has set a budget of £61.507 million for 2016/17, £0.662m lower than that in 2015/16. The main changes between this year's budget and last year's are:-

Reductions in support service,	(£1.3m)
management & other costs	

Unavoidable cuts in front line	(£2.7m)
staffing	
Increase in capital financing	£0.3m

Increase in capital financing	£0.3m
costs to fund capital	
expenditure	

Forecast inflationary cost	£0.6m
increases	

Changes to Employer National	£1.0m
Insurance contributions	

Reserves adjustment	£1.4m
	(£0.7m)

The Authority has issued a precept on the five Merseyside District Councils of £25.934 million, which is equivalent to a Council Tax of £72.89 for a Band D property. St Helens contribution to expenditure financed by precept is £3.565 million, which represents 14% of the total precept.

Summary of Revenue Budget & Council Tax Requirement					
2015-16		2016-17			
£000		£000			
69,593	Gross Expenditure	72,205			
-1,229	Net Contribution from Reserves	-4,316			
-6,100	Income & specific Grants for services	-6,357			
62,264	Budget Requirement	61,532			
-778	Collection Fund Surplus	-647			
-37,004	Government Grant & Business Rate Funding	-34,951			
24,482	Council Tax Requirement	25,934			
342,548	Tax-base	355,792			
£71.47	Band D Equivalent	£72.89			

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.

Ian Cummins, CIPFA, Treasurer

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle Liverpool, L30 4YD iancummins@merseyfire.gov.uk

8. Information About You

By giving your details to the Council, you help us to provide you with the services vou need. Your personal data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and will remain secure at all times. We will use this information to administer your Council Tax and/or Business Rates. Your information may also be used when you request other services from the Council, to create an accurate record for you in our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This will help us to improve the services we deliver to you. You may ask us to stop processing your data for this purpose at any time. As we are under a duty to protect public funds, we may disclose your personal data to other Council departments or third parties for these or related purposes. These may include bailiffs, tracing agents, debt collection agencies, the courts, the police, HM Revenue & Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Council's Benefits Service. the Valuation Office Agency, housing providers such as Helena Partnerships, and other local authorities.

Disclosure of this information will only take place when you have consented to do so or where the Council is allowed to by law.

Contact Us

If you require further information about Data Protection, or how the Council holds your personal data, please contact us using one of the methods below.

Tel: 01744 673474

Email:

dataprotection@sthelens.gov.uk

Web: www.sthelens.gov.uk



Contact Centre

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Please contact us to request translation of Council information into Braille, audio tape or a foreign language.

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