your guide to Council Tax 2015-16
Welcome to our annual guide outlining the services we provide for residents in Gloucestershire. Sometimes people are unsure how we spend their council tax. This booklet deals with the facts - and explains in a clear and uncomplicated way what you’re getting for your money. You can also find out details of how to pay; discounts & exemptions, and what help is on offer.

This year, the average† home will pay £28.43 each week, split as follows:

**County Council**
Education, social care, fire service, roads, libraries

£20.97

**Police and Crime Commissioner**
Crime reduction, safer communities, criminal justice, peace & good order

£3.99

**City Council**
Rubbish collection, housing, benefits, planning, sport & leisure

£3.47

Transforming your city

Over the past five years the council has made savings of £8.9m through reductions in expenditure, service efficiencies, partnership working and increased income generation. In the next five years we need to save a further £3.6m. In order to do this we will need to continue developing these ways of working.

The past decade has seen significant progress in regeneration across the city. 2014 was another year of real achievement in this regard.

The **Kings Quarter project** continues to progress with the acquisition of land and over £6.4m of external grant funding has been secured to enable the delivery of a brand new state of the art bus station for the city centre.

We have secured £1.2m of the Townscape Heritage Investment Initiative in Southgate Street as part of the continued regeneration in the city centre.

Occupancy rates of shops in the city centre are the highest for 10 years, adding to its growing vibrancy.

In collaboration with the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership we have secured £4.1m to deliver the regeneration of the Blackfriars and Quayside sites, through the Governments Growth Deal plan.

Being a Host City for the Rugby World Cup 2015 is a huge opportunity for Gloucester and we are well on our way to making the most of it.

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Improved efficiency and reduced costs through shared services with the County Council & neighbouring District Councils
- Completion of the housing stock transfer to Gloucester City homes paving the way for new homes and investment
- Reaccredited Green Flag status for Barnwood Park & Arboretum
- 61 businesses in the city supported with grants for rent, rates and property improvements
- Introduced additional recyclables in a trial area of the city, being rolled out across the city in Spring 2015
- 24 internal apprenticeships delivered during 2014-15
- Gloucester’s strong economic performance recognised by a variety of external commentators
- £120,000 spent on refurbishing & updating eight play areas in the City. New play area & a bmx track in Kingsway adopted
- Asset Based Community Development approach has seen more people in Gloucester now taking an active lead in their community

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This document comprises part of your council tax demand notice.

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Together we can

This year, Gloucestershire County Council faces its newest financial challenge to save £75m between now and 2018. At the same time, we’re freezing council tax for the fifth year and still prioritising adult care. There’s also money for roads, schools and safeguarding.

To make these savings we have to start doing things differently so we can be there for those who need us most.

In the 1940s and 50s, people tended to turn to their families, friends and communities when they needed support. Over the years, things gradually changed and we have more customers than ever. Healthcare has improved so people with complex problems are living longer needing ongoing support. Couple that with a continued reduction in our funding and we start to see a growing gap between what people expect us to do and what we can actually afford.

Visit gloucestershire.gov.uk/togetherwecan to find out more.

GOOD TRACK RECORD

We’ve a good track record of saving £114m over the past four years whilst still protecting the most vulnerable people.

Our plan

Creating active individuals
Intervention and support to help people make the right life choices, like being fit and healthy, encouraging people to do more for themselves and their families in their own communities.

Creating active communities
Communities offering support closer to home. Investing in communities and building on existing support to signpost people to what they need within their own communities.

Getting people back to independence
Investing in providing intensive packages of support that focus on a quick recovery following an injury or trauma. We want to help people to get back to normal as soon as possible and reduce the need for long term care.

There when we’re needed most
Working with our partners to provide specialist, acute support for those who really need our help. We will target this care to people with complex needs and help them to make decisions about the long term care that is right for them.

How we spend your money

Children & Families £94.3m
Protecting children from harm, providing education support, children’s centres and looking after children in care

Adult Care £143.7m
Providing support for older people including social care, learning disabilities, independent living and adult education

Public Health £24.9m
Helping you stay fit and healthy, anti-smoking and support with ageing well

Support Services £18m

Communities & Infrastructure £84.9m
Looking after your roads, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, public transport, waste disposal, trading standards and libraries

We know it works

Last year, every councillor had £40,000 to give to local communities to support activities promoting health and wellbeing. The Active Together Scheme is running again this year, so talk to your local councillor or find out more at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/activetgether

The county council has teamed up with local employers and charities to help build a vibrant job market for people with disabilities. Gloucestershire has more people with learning disabilities in work than anywhere else in the country (19%), supporting people to live independent and fulfilling lives.

Having reliable fast broadband is crucial for residents and businesses. Fastershire is helping to make sure our rural communities are connected by the end of 2015. You can check if faster broadband is available to you at www.fastershire.com

Fostering and adoption are top priorities for us. Thirty children were placed for adoption last year and 43 new foster carers approved. We are always keen to hear from those looking to foster or adopt. It takes about six months to become approved and there’s lots of support available to you. Find out more at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering & www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/adoption

Your Guide | 5
How much you pay

**Which band?**

Your property has been assessed for council tax in one of eight valuation bands (A-H) according to its estimated sale value at 1 April 1991. The table below shows the council tax payable for each band for this year.

If you are a band D payer, £180.42 will go to Gloucester City Council, £207.73 will be going to the Police and Crime Commissioner and £1,090.50 will go towards services supplied by the county council.

**The right band**

There are very few circumstances in which appeals against banding can be made and are restricted to:

- a decrease in the property value due to the demolition of any part of the property, any changes in the physical state of the local area or an adaption for use by someone with a disability
- a change in the balance between domestic and business use of your property
- a proposal to formally challenge their band. Council tax payers need to provide reasons why they believe their banding is incorrect. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/council-tax-appeals

Appeals can also be made in writing to: Council Tax West, Valuation Office Agency, Overline House, Blechynden Terrace, Southampton SO15 1GW.

Contact 01452 396 495 for more details.

Your bill may be reduced if your home has certain features which are essential, or of major importance, to an adult or child with a disability, who lives in the property. These features are:

- a room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) which is used by the disabled person (eg, a room used for dialysis equipment).
- an additional bathroom or kitchen required for the use of the disabled person
- sufficient floor space for a wheelchair

If you qualify we will treat your property as if it is in the valuation band below. eg, if your property is in band C you will pay the council tax for band B. You can still get a reduction if your property is in band A.

**Second Homes**

Properties that are furnished but not occupied as anyone’s main home are classed as second homes. No discount is awarded.

**Properties undergoing major repair**

Unoccupied and unfurnished properties undergoing structural alteration or major repair are subject to a 25% discount for a maximum period of 12 months.

**Unoccupied and Unfurnished Properties**

Properties which are unoccupied and unfurnished will be granted a 100% discount for the first month and a 25% discount for the following five months. The full charge will then be payable.

**Discounts for Annexes**

A 50% discount may apply where an annexe is occupied by a relative of the council tax payer for the main property, or where it is used as part of the main property.

An exemption already exists for annexes occupied by elderly or disabled relatives – see page 8.

Discounts

**Disabled Persons Reductions**

Your property has been assessed for council tax in one of eight valuation bands (A-H) according to its estimated sale value at 1 April 1991. The table below shows the council tax payable for each band for this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Property values (As at 01/04/91)</th>
<th>Gloucester (£)</th>
<th>Police and Crime Commissioner (£)</th>
<th>County (£)</th>
<th>Total (£)</th>
<th>Quedgeley (£)</th>
<th>Total (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>up to £40,000</td>
<td>120.28</td>
<td>138.49</td>
<td>727.00</td>
<td>985.77</td>
<td>24.79</td>
<td>1,010.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>£40,001 - £52,000</td>
<td>140.33</td>
<td>161.57</td>
<td>848.17</td>
<td>1,150.07</td>
<td>28.93</td>
<td>1,179.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£52,001 - £68,000</td>
<td>160.37</td>
<td>184.65</td>
<td>969.33</td>
<td>1,314.35</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td>1,347.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£68,001 - £88,000</td>
<td>180.42</td>
<td>207.73</td>
<td>1,090.50</td>
<td>1,332.13</td>
<td>37.19</td>
<td>1,350.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>£88,001 - £120,000</td>
<td>220.51</td>
<td>253.89</td>
<td>1,332.83</td>
<td>1,586.65</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>1,632.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>£120,001 - £160,000</td>
<td>260.61</td>
<td>300.05</td>
<td>1,575.17</td>
<td>2,310.33</td>
<td>53.72</td>
<td>2,364.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>£160,001 - £320,000</td>
<td>300.70</td>
<td>346.22</td>
<td>1,817.50</td>
<td>2,464.22</td>
<td>61.98</td>
<td>2,526.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Exceeding £320,000</td>
<td>360.84</td>
<td>415.46</td>
<td>2,181.00</td>
<td>2,696.46</td>
<td>76.38</td>
<td>2,772.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase / decrease 0% 0% 0% 0% 3.6% 0.1%

Discounts for Annexes

- a 50% discount may apply where an annexe is occupied by a relative of the council tax payer for the main property, or where it is used as part of the main property.

An exemption already exists for annexes occupied by elderly or disabled relatives – see page 8.

**Long Term Empty Properties**

These are properties which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for 6 months or more. No discount is awarded.

**Contact** 01452 396 495 for more details.
Exemptions

Is your property exempt?

Some properties - both occupied and unoccupied - are exempt from council tax. Please contact us if your property falls into one of these categories.

Property unoccupied:

B it is owned by and was last occupied for the purpose of a charity (exempt for up to six months)
D the owner/tenant is in prison
E the owner/tenant is receiving personal care permanently in a hospital or home
F the person liable to pay council tax has died, the property has remained unoccupied since the date of death and probate has not been granted. In some circumstances the exemption may continue for up to 6 months after probate
G it is forbidden by law to occupy
H it is awaiting occupation by a minister of religion
I the owner/tenant is living elsewhere to receive personal care
J the owner/tenant is living elsewhere to provide personal care to another person
K the owner/tenant has moved to become a student
L it has been repossessed by a mortgage lender
Q it is the responsibility of a bankrupt’s trustee
R it comprises a pitch or mooring unoccupied by a caravan or boat
T it comprises a self contained unit which cannot be let separately from the main property without breaching planning conditions

Property occupied by:

M students in hall of residence
N other qualifying students
O members of the armed forces in MOD accommodation
P members and dependants of visiting forces
S person(s) under the age of 18
U the severely mentally impaired
V people with diplomatic privilege or immunity
W elderly or disabled relative living in self contained unit of the main property

Appeals against your council tax liability

If you disagree with some aspect of a council tax bill because you do not think you are liable for the council tax for that dwelling, or you think an exemption or a discount should be applied, you can appeal.

You should appeal to the council in the first instance. If you don’t get a response or continue to dispute the decision after the council has responded, you have the right to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. Contact the council tax helpline on 01452 396 495 for more details.

See page 6 for details about how to appeal against the council tax band.

Pay the easy way

You pay council tax in 10 monthly instalments. The easiest way to pay is by Direct Debit. Contact the council tax advice line on 01452 396 495 to supply your bank details.

Pay by credit* or debit card

Use our 24 hour automated telephone payment system by calling 0845 155 6000 or pay online at www.gloucester.gov.uk/payments.

Unable to pay?

Your council tax should be paid as requested on your bill otherwise recovery action may be taken which could incur you with additional costs. If you are finding it difficult to pay your council tax please contact us quickly on 01452 396 495 so we can help you. We will be able to spread your monthly instalments over 12 months instead of 10 months if you contact us by 13th March 2015.

*There may be a transaction charge for using a credit card.

Help with paying your council tax if you are on a low income

Council tax support helps people on a low income or no income to pay their council tax. The scheme is approved locally for working age customers and nationally for pension age customers.

Council tax support is means tested. The amount of support you can get depends on how much council tax you are due to pay, the number of people in your household, your household income and any savings. The more money you have coming into your home, the less support we can give you.

If you would like further information, an application form or a quick calculation, then either phone 01452 396 483, email benefits@gloucester.gov.uk or call into the council offices in Gloucester and speak to an officer.

If you need help with paying your rent, then a similar means tested scheme exists called Housing Benefit and you can contact the council using the same options above.

Receive your bill by email

E-billing is the easy way to receive your council tax bill. Instead of sending you a paper bill by post we will send it to you by email. Please visit our website www.gloucester.gov.uk/counciltax to register.

Email the council tax helpline

revenues@gloucester.gov.uk or call 01452 396 495
YOU NEED TO BE REGISTERED
IN ORDER TO VOTE IN THE
ELECTIONS ON 7 MAY

GO ONLINE TO REGISTER
If you don’t have access to the internet or can’t use it, your local electoral registration staff will be able to help. Please see the contact details at the bottom of the page.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS
MAKE SURE YOU’RE IN

WHAT’S HAPPENING ON 7 MAY?
- UK Parliamentary General Election, City Council and Parish Council Elections

Last day to register to vote
Go online to register
20 April

Last day to apply for a postal vote
5pm on 21 April

Last day to apply for a proxy vote
5pm on 28 April

For an application form to vote by post or proxy go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or contact the electoral registration staff.

01452 396203/396204
elections@gloucester.gov.uk
www.gloucester.gov.uk
A message from Gloucestershire’s Police & Crime Commissioner

I have met many inspirational people in this job and enjoyed many highlights.

So far, these include:

• Gloucestershire Constabulary is now in a secure financial position
• Community and voluntary organisations are linked to the Police and Crime Plan (more details are in this section)
• New custody suite has replaced ageing cells in Gloucester and Cheltenham
• New investigation hub scheduled to open this year
• Ground breaking improvements are being made to the Constabulary’s capability for tackling cyber crime
• Long overdue investment in new technology is underway
• Reorganisation of operational policing is on its way.

Forecasting the future is much more difficult as all commissioners have been told to expect further cuts of between 10-20% irrespective of whoever forms the next Government. However, as this is a guide to how your council tax is spent, I can reassure you that the Constabulary is living within its means whilst making important decisions about the future.

The new custody facility, which opened in January, is a good example of a project which was first talked about many years ago but never got off the ground. New technology is another example of an area which has been neglected but to which the Chief Constable and I are committed. We believe better mobile communications will enable the police to provide a service you want as it will keep officers out on the street for longer and free them from the slavery of the desktop computer.

We cannot turn back the clock to when there was a police station, a pub, a school and a post office in most communities. Nevertheless, after a great deal of re-organising and planning, the Chief Constable has produced a new blueprint for operational policing which I believe will maintain the service that Gloucestershire Constabulary has provided for 175 years and which will continue to keep the county safe.

Thank you for playing your part”

Martin Surl
Police and Crime Commissioner
In the local community

Most of the projects and organisations funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner affect Gloucester directly - or indirectly - as part of countywide schemes.

They include:

- **GLOUCESTER STREET PASTORS** - volunteers whose main objectives are to reduce low level crime & disorder on Friday and Saturday nights and support those who are vulnerable or in need of care.

- **BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BME) PROJECT** - acting on issues raised as a result of the feedback from the BME community and in turn improve the relationship between the community and the Police.

- **KINGFISHER** - working with adults with learning disabilities and reaching out to groups such as families in crisis, those struggling with issues such as addiction and domestic violence.

Others supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner include:

- Mini Coppers
- Treasure Seekers
- Gymnation
- Glos City CSP – taxi marshalls
- Increase the Peace
- Gloucester FM Radio
- REACH OUT – Quedgeley
- Together in Matson
- GEAR
- Fairshares
- Alcohol independence ARS
- Domestic Violence ISVA
- Beresford – Stroud Refuge
- Furniture Recycling – young drivers
- Nelson Trust
- Gay Glos Youth

Spending plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Requirement</th>
<th>£000</th>
<th>£000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constabulary</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>62,962</td>
<td>60,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCSOs</td>
<td>3,952</td>
<td>3,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police staff</td>
<td>19,932</td>
<td>21,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other running costs</td>
<td>21,712</td>
<td>22,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital financing</td>
<td>3,712</td>
<td>2,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>112,270</td>
<td>110,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and other income</td>
<td>-2,169</td>
<td>-2,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific grants</td>
<td>-5,123</td>
<td>-4,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net expenditure</td>
<td>104,978</td>
<td>103,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of PCC</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioning fund</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>1,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget</td>
<td>106,489</td>
<td>105,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer/ from reserves</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net budget requirement</td>
<td>106,489</td>
<td>105,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grant</td>
<td>62,747</td>
<td>60,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection fund surplus</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which leaves council tax payers to fund</td>
<td>43,267</td>
<td>44,026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of funding for the budget, nearly 60 per cent, comes from general government grant and this funding has reduced by 3.9 per cent for next year.

**How our budget compares with last year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Comparison</th>
<th>£000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original budget 2014-15</td>
<td>106,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>1,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific grant changes</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional costs</td>
<td>1,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioning fund</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary borrowing costs</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned savings</td>
<td>-4,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget requirement 2015-16</td>
<td>105,095</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Investment in the future**

The Commissioner plans to spend £5.5m in 2015-16 on capital schemes to improve operational effectiveness and service delivery. This will be paid for from government grants, proceeds from the sale of properties and revenue contributions. The running expenses of new projects are provided for in the revenue budget.

**The level of council tax**

The band D council tax you will pay this year for services provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner is £207.73, which is the same as last year. The amount we will spend on services will reduce by 1.3 per cent.

Planned savings of £4.8m are included in the budget and the Constabulary needs to identify a total of £16m savings over the four years to 2018-19.

**How many staff we employ**

The Commissioner has budgeted to employ the full-time equivalent of 1,791 staff in 2015-16 which is 60 less than in 2014-15.
### Gloucester City Council

#### Investment in the future

Our capital investment will fund regeneration, housing and sports/leisure facilities across the city.

#### Core values

One of our core values is to strive for value for money and only spend what we can afford. In 2015-16 we will make budget savings of £1.27m, focusing on efficiencies and back office savings wherever possible, to minimise impact on front-line services.

### Quedegeley Parish Council

#### Expenditure 2015-16 £000 £000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service provided</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation, amenities &amp; the environment</td>
<td>68,453</td>
<td>66,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, development &amp; strategic development</td>
<td>7,676</td>
<td>7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two community centres</td>
<td>99,588</td>
<td>131,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterwells Sports Centre &amp; Sports Pavilion</td>
<td>60,658</td>
<td>98,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish office &amp; administration of the council</td>
<td>79,297</td>
<td>80,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of long term loans</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>58,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants to local organisations</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency sum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
<td>180,580</td>
<td>233,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budget required 2014-15**: 15,929

**Budget required 2015-16**: 15,939

#### Investment in the future

Our capital investment will fund regeneration, housing and sports/leisure facilities across the city.

#### Core values

One of our core values is to strive for value for money and only spend what we can afford. In 2015-16 we will make budget savings of £1.27m, focusing on efficiencies and back office savings wherever possible, to minimise impact on front-line services.

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For further information please contact:
Jacqueline Webster, Parish Clerk, QPC, The Old School House, School Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 4PJ.
Tel: 01452 721552
E-mail: quedgeleypc@btconnect.com

Office opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am to 2pm. Residents are welcome at the office or any of our public meetings.

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Our general fund working balance is forecast to be £2.05m at the end of the 2015-16 year.

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### Further details available at [www.gloucester.gov.uk](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk)
Gloucestershire County Council

Spending Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending Plan</th>
<th>2014-15 £000</th>
<th>2015-16 £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>147,258</td>
<td>143,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>92,808</td>
<td>94,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; families</td>
<td>58,904</td>
<td>57,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities &amp; infrastructure</td>
<td>26,436</td>
<td>27,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>19,799</td>
<td>18,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services</td>
<td>61,109</td>
<td>54,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub total</td>
<td>406,314</td>
<td>395,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health</td>
<td>21,793</td>
<td>26,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net budget requirement</td>
<td>428,107</td>
<td>420,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded by:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formula grant</td>
<td>153,443</td>
<td>135,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax freeze grant</td>
<td>2,488</td>
<td>2,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS funding: social care</td>
<td>11,596</td>
<td>11,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New homes bonus</td>
<td>2,546</td>
<td>3,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education grant (incl statutory element)</td>
<td>6,564</td>
<td>5,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non ring fenced grants</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax surplus</td>
<td>2,543</td>
<td>3,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health grant</td>
<td>21,793</td>
<td>26,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax requirement</td>
<td>227,134</td>
<td>231,116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of council tax

The council’s band D council tax is £1,090.50, which is the same as 2014-15. This is the fifth year that the council has frozen council tax, utilising government grant.

The 2015-16 budget of £420.032m represents a reduction of £8.1m or 1.89% from last year’s figures. Despite the reduction the budget contains:

- £16.58m investment into services, particularly those for older people and vulnerable children and adults
- £3m to cover for increased costs due to inflation
- Funding for £61.82m of new capital investment in roads, schools and other services.

In terms of efficiencies, the council is expecting to make savings of £27.66m in 2015-16, demonstrating the continued commitment to get the most out of funds available and minimise service reductions.

How our budget compares with last year

Budget Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original budget 2014-15</td>
<td>428,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>3,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost and spending increases</td>
<td>16,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less cost reductions</td>
<td>-27,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget 2015-16</td>
<td>420,032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our vision and values

Our vision is to use the resources available to us to improve the quality of life for Gloucestershire people. Our plans are built on three clear values that underpin our direction and decision making. These values will make sure that the council remains flexible and responsive to local people’s needs and expectations:

- Living within our means
- Providing the basics
- Helping communities help themselves

Our funding

The funding which the council receives from central government has reduced dramatically in recent years. There have been reductions both in our general funding and in grants for specific services, projects and initiatives and we expect that trend to continue into the foreseeable future. Despite this, the council has avoided passing the cost of these reductions on to local people and for the fifth year running the council will be freezing council tax for local residents.

In 2013-14 responsibility for public health transferred to the council from the NHS, along with a ring-fenced grant. This grant has been extended in 2015-16 to include new responsibilities for 0-5 year olds (health visiting), and is £24.9m.

Schools

The dedicated schools grant is a specific grant funding schools, early year’s settings and children’s centres. In 2015-16 this grant was announced as £604.5m, excluding funding for two year olds. This represents an increase of £17.1m on 2014-15. The biggest part of the increase was Gloucestershire’s £12.3m share of the £390m funding allocated to poorly funded authorities.

Investment in the future

The total capital spend planned for 2015-16 is £113.8m. £61.8m new capital spend plus £52m existing capital schemes. The majority of spend is planned for schools and facilities for children (£40m) and highways and infrastructure (£70m). All of the new capital investment is being funded from developer contributions, grants and internal resources.

A full budget breakdown is available at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk. Copies are available in libraries or in council offices. For further information about the council’s budget write to Joanna Walker, Strategic Finance Director, Gloucestershire County Council, Shire Hall, Westgate St, Gloucester GL1 2TG.

Listening to your views

Four years ago we launched our last council strategy: ‘Meeting the Challenge’. It set out our response to anticipated reductions in public sector funding and the need to save money across our services. It was the result of extensive consultation with local people and detailed planning by councillors and council officers. It set out how we intended to make £114m of savings.

Four years on, we are on track to achieve that target. We have achieved that by focussing relentlessly on ensuring everything we do reflects what local people need and expect from their council. We have streamlined our organisation, reducing staff numbers, reducing our buildings and finding more and more ways to deliver service efficiently and at a lower cost to the taxpayer.

Environment Agency

A proportion of council tax is payable to the Environment Agency for flood defence. For further information please visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 2,486km of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Severn Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river systems 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:

Severn regional flood and coastal committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014-15 £000</th>
<th>2015-16 £000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross expenditure</td>
<td>9,621</td>
<td>11,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levies raised</td>
<td>1,064</td>
<td>1,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax base</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 “match” funding the Agency may seek funding from the County Council 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 reflect the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of projects. For 2014-5 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 for 2015-16 at £1.064m.
If you live in Gloucester you can now use **plastic bags** to line your food waste caddy making it even **easier to recycle your leftovers**! So why not put your surplus carrier bags, used bread and sandwich bags and old pedal bin liners to good use, and together we can help get even more food waste out of landfill.

For more information visit [www.gloucester.gov.uk](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk) or call 01452 396396