

# **KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Budget Summary**

**2014 - 2015**



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## **KNOWSLEY COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

The Government has recently announced further significant cuts in funding for local authorities – and these cuts continue to be higher in the most deprived areas of the country. Using the Government's own measure of "spending power" per household, Knowsley has been hit the hardest of any Metropolitan Authority in the Country - with a cut of £172 per dwelling (5.6%) compared to the average cut across England of £62 per dwelling (2.9%). The position worsens in 2015/16 and Government announcements indicate that the cuts will continue for the foreseeable future.

The Council will continue to lobby the Government to make the future distribution of Government funding fairer and allocate funding where it is needed most – but the Government's latest announcements mean that Knowsley Council will have to manage funding cuts estimated at up to 30% (£42m) in the period from 2014/15 to 2016/17. This is a massive amount to find – particularly given that the Council has already had to implement £56m of savings in the last four years.

The Council has done what it can to plan for these cuts. In March 2013, the Council agreed a wide range of savings to balance the budget up to 31 March 2015, and the Council continues to review all of its services to see if there are more efficient ways to do business. The Council also understands that its residents continue to experience financial pressures as well - so it has once again agreed to freeze its Council Tax for 2014/15, meaning residents will pay the same today as they did back in 2010.

The Council will continue to try to protect key front-line services where it can, but the scale of the Government's funding cuts mean that services and staff numbers will have to reduce in the coming years. The Council will continue to identify and implement savings in a prioritised and planned manner with the needs of residents being the driving factor.

Given the further significant cuts in future years, the Council is also taking whatever actions it can to improve the longer-term sustainability of the Borough and help to bring in more locally generated funding. That means investing in initiatives that will bring new houses, new business and new jobs into the Borough.

### **Your Council Tax**

By freezing the Council Tax for 2014/15, Knowsley Council has set a Council Tax that remains below the national average, and will again be the second lowest on Merseyside. Knowsley Council's charge for most households in the Borough (those in Band A) will be £830.72.

Although Knowsley Council's element of your Council tax will not increase, your Council Tax bill also includes amounts to pay for Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority services who have increased their precept amounts for 2014/15. In addition, some bills will include amounts relating to precepts from Town or Parish Councils some of which have also increased. This means that the full Council Tax amount you have to pay will go up. Details on the various precepting bodies are set out in the pages below. Details of the charges for all property bands are set out on page 18 of this budget summary.

Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to Council Tax Reduction, and this will reduce the amount you have to pay. If you need any help on this, please speak to our advisors at the One Stop Shops or by calling our Contact Centre on 0151 443 4042.

If you have any other questions about the Council's budget or how your Council Tax is calculated, you can use the Council's web site ([www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)) or the contacts set out in the rest of this booklet. (Full contact details are summarised on page 24 below).

**James Duncan BA, CPFA**

**Director of Finance and Information Technology**

## Knowsley's Revenue Budget 2014/15

	2014/15 Gross Expenditure £m	2014/15 Gross Income £m	2014/15 Net Expenditure £m	2013/14 Net Expenditure £m
<b>Services provided directly by the Council</b>				
Regeneration, Economy and Skills	19.732	8.873	10.859	12.697
Children and Family Services	147.926	122.298	25.628	29.326
Finance and Information Technology	12.483	5.677	6.806	6.468
Corporate and Customer Services	10.736	2.161	8.575	7.452
Human Resources	1.816	0.569	1.247	1.192
Community Safety and Social Inclusion	1.454	1.166	0.288	0.415
Leader's Portfolio	30.806	26.432	4.374	4.197
Neighbourhood Delivery	21.110	15.777	5.333	6.446
Leisure, Community and Culture	10.933	4.600	6.333	6.621
Health and Social Care	74.585	28.200	46.385	49.952
<b>Total</b>	<b>331.581</b>	<b>215.753</b>	<b>115.828</b>	<b>124.766</b>
<b>Other council budgets</b>				
Treasury Management			10.153	10.557
Non-Cash Limited Budgets			11.964	8.911
Inflation and Contingency Budgets			1.639	3.552
Budget Investments			4.409	5.245
Workforce Remodelling			-	1.963
<b>Total</b>			<b>28.165</b>	<b>30.228</b>
<b>Total budget for services provided by Knowsley Council</b>			<b>143.993</b>	<b>154.994</b>
<b>Charges for services provided by other bodies</b>				
Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority			12.725	13.458
Waste Disposal Authority			7.393	7.182
Coroners Service			0.203	0.202
Flood Defence			0.059	0.070
Probation Service (estimate)			0.006	0.006
<b>Total</b>			<b>20.386</b>	<b>20.918</b>
<b>Knowsley Council's total revenue budget requirement</b>			<b>164.379</b>	<b>175.912</b>
<b>Government formula grant funding received by the Council</b>			(125.855)	(137.816)
<b>Amount of Knowsley Council's budget to be funded from council tax</b>			<b>38.524</b>	<b>38.096</b>
<b>Police and Crime Commissioner precept</b>			4.842	4.697
<b>Fire and Rescue Authority precept</b>			2.166	2.100
			<b>7.008</b>	<b>6.797</b>
<b>Total amount to be funded from Council Tax</b>			<b>45.532</b>	<b>44.893</b>

## Council Tax Bills

	<u>Knowsley Council</u>	<u>Police and Crime Commissioner</u>	<u>Fire and Rescue Authority</u>
<b>Amount per "Band A" property</b>	£	£	£
2013/14	830.72	102.42	45.80
2014/15	830.72	104.42	46.71
Increase (%) *	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>1.95%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>

**\*Note:** To give an indication of how your council tax bill has changed, the percentage change between the previous year and current year is detailed on the front of your Council Tax bill. This enables you to see which of the precepting authorities are responsible for changes to the overall charge you have to pay. On your bill these changes are shown rounded to 1 decimal place – so the increases for the major preceptors (Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service) each appear as 2%. The actual increases are shown above.

## **KNOWSLEY'S MAJOR PRECEPTORS**

Your Council Tax Bill includes a “precept” for the budget requirements of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority. Statements regarding the 2014/15 Budget and Precept are set out below.

### **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 2014/15, 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 2013/14 current level.

The budget in 2014/15 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 2014/15. 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 2017/18. 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**

#### **Contact Us**

If you wish to comment about the services of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside please contact [info@merseysidepcc.info](mailto:info@merseysidepcc.info) or write to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Allerton Police Station, Rose Lane, Liverpool, L18 6JE.

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER BUDGET**

2013/14 £m		2014/15 £m	
334.756	GROSS EXPENDITURE	328.148	
(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>	16.5%
329,224	Tax base	334,386	
£153.63	Band D Equivalent	£156.63	
	Increase in Band D Equivalent	£3.00	1.95%

**Why has the Gross Expenditure Changed?**

	£m
<b>GROSS EXPENDITURE 2013/14</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 2014/15</b>	<b>328.148</b>

**Why has the Council Tax Requirement Changed?**

	£m
<b>COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT 2013/14</b>	<b>50.579</b>
Increase in Tax base	0.793
Increase in Band D Equivalent	1.003
<b>COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT 2014/15</b>	<b>52.375</b>

## Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

The Government has confirmed the level of grant it will provide to the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2014/15 and announced an indicative reduction for 2015/16. 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 2010/11 and 2015/16 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 2013/14 and 2014/15 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 2015/16. 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 2014/15, £2.365m lower than that in 2013/14. Further savings will be required for 2015/16. 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	<u>£0.8m</u>
	(£2.4m)

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. Knowsley's contribution to expenditure financed by precept is £2.166m, which represents 9% of the total precept.

### Summary of Revenue Budget & Council Tax Requirement

2013/14		2014/15
£'000		£'000
71,117	Gross Expenditure	71,548
-1,682	Net Contribution from Reserves	-1,227
<u>-2,714</u>	Income & specific Grants for services	<u>-5,965</u>
66,721	Budget Requirement	64,356
-55	Collection Fund Surplus	-407
<u>-44,048</u>	Government Grant & Business Rate Funding	<u>-40,519</u>
<b>22,618</b>	<b>Council Tax Requirement</b>	<b>23,430</b>
329,224	<b>Tax-base</b>	334,386
£68.70	<b>Band D Equivalent</b>	£70.07

### 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.

**Kieran Timmins, CPFA,**

**Deputy Chief Executive**

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority,  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,  
Bridle Road,  
Bootle,  
Liverpool,  
L30 4YD

[kierantimmins@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:kierantimmins@merseyfire.gov.uk)

## PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPTS

If you live in one of Knowsley's parishes your bill will include a "precept" for the budget requirements of your Parish or Town Council. As last year, each Parish or Town Council's precept is shown below after deducting the funding that the Government has provided to help mitigate reductions in their tax bases due to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Gross Expenditure Budget				Precept		
	2013/14	2014/15	Increase + / - decrease	2013/14	2014/15	Increase + / - decrease
	£	£	%	£	£	%
Halewood	441,997	426,671	-3.47	268,703	278,234	+3.55
Whiston	252,695	245,707	-2.77	197,939	199,919	+1.00
Knowsley	365,648	362,648	-0.82	214,126	222,020	+3.68
Prescot	261,371	268,043	+2.6	184,705	186,947	+1.21
Cronton	14,592	14,623	+0.21	13,301	13,845	+4.09
Tarbock	5,340	Nil	N/a	4,931	Nil	N/a

The following narratives have been provided by your Parish or Town Council:

**Halewood Town Council:** Against a background of financial cuts by Central Government, Halewood Town Council has set a precept for 2014/15 which, along with a prudent review of previous year's budgets, provides a base which ensures that the precept raised meets the Town Council's net expenditure without being dependent upon its diminishing reserves.

**Whiston Town Council:** Whilst providing excellent facilities for the residents of the Whiston area, Whiston Town Council continues to maintain all three Community Centres to a very high standard and residents can access a number of activities at very competitive rates. Whiston Town Council has also managed to maintain a sufficient reserve amount as recommended by the external auditor. Why not visit our regularly updated website at <http://www.whiston-tc.gov.uk>

**Knowsley Town Council:** The Town Council has three indoor facilities: Knowsley Village Hall, the Bob Whiley Community Centre and the Sports Pavilion in Stockbridge Village. The Town Council is also responsible for the maintenance of several woodland sites and public open spaces. Amateur league football pitches are available for hire at Mill Lane, the Recreation Ground and Pool Hey.

The Town Council continued to provide considerable support for youth and recreational activities. Refurbishment was completed in the Bob Whiley Community Centre and continued at Knowsley Village Hall. The Bob Whiley Community Centre now has a new extension (comprising meeting/activity room) and ancillary facilities.

The main hall at the Village Hall has been totally renovated and this building now houses the Council Chamber. Other improvements at the Village Hall include toilet, meeting room and entrance enhancements. The programme of improvements at Knowsley Village Hall will continue throughout 2014/15.

The Bob Whiley Community Centre is managed on behalf of the Town Council by Knowsley Village Community Association (KVCA). The service level agreement with KVCA runs until 2018 and this example of local involvement is a model of community engagement.

The Town Council is also engaged with community groups and partner agencies in the construction of a play facility in the Hillside area of Knowsley Park South ward. It is anticipated that plans for the facility will be finalised in the summer of 2014.

The Town Council also awarded grants and concessionary prices to community groups. For example, during 2013/14, nine grants were awarded to local organisations promoting recreational, sporting, artistic, fitness, health and caring objectives. The Town Council is recognised as a Quality Council. This award places the Town Council as one of the very best town councils in the country.

***Explanatory note regarding the precept increase:*** Although the Town Council's gross expenditure has reduced in 2014/15, the small precept increase is a direct result of the significant reduction in a Government grant (Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme) to the local authority. The reduction in the grant has had an enormous impact on the Town Council's budget. The Government had maintained that the grant would remain at the level of the previous year (2013/14), but in reality, it was cut by approximately 7%. Prudent management of financial reserves has allowed the Town Council to both minimise the precept increase and freeze the hire charges of facilities. Nonetheless, continuing cuts in this annual grant will place even greater pressures on the Town Council's future budgets and precepts.

**Prescot Town Council:** Following a period of extensive redevelopment the New Town Hall will open its doors in May this year. The Town Council are very proud of the New Town Hall and the facilities it will offer. This is the first time since the Town Council was created in 1983 that it will own the premises from which it operates. The development of the New Town Hall began with the purchase of the building on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 and the Town Council have overcome a number of hurdles to ensure the finished building meets the needs of the local community and the Council.

The former Public House on Warrington Road will provide facilities including a large multi-function room, bar and kitchen facility, reception area, male and female toilets together with enhanced disabled facilities, along with office accommodation, Council chamber, conference room with two smaller meeting rooms, and two unisex accessible toilets. Further details on the New Town Hall are available on the facilities page of the Town Council's website at <http://www.prescot-tc.gov.uk>

The Town Council also remains committed to the development and enhancement of its outdoor facilities. Last year saw the installation of a new toddler playground at Eaton Street Park, with the park also gaining recognition as a Green Flag Park (the highest national award for parks). Browns Field has benefited from the creation of a master plan that will be used to guide the future development of the site.

This year the Town Council will endeavour to draw in the external funding required to make the master plan a reality, whilst further enhancements such as works to the pavilion area at Eaton Street will also be investigated.

The Town Council is pleased to report that applications to the Community Fund have increased significantly since last year. Therefore, following a 33% increase in 2013/14, funding to support local community groups has been maintained at 10k (application forms available online at <http://www.prescot-tc.gov.uk>).

Finally, following on from the great success of last year, the Town Council have once again committed funding to provide a full events calendar for 2014/15. Events include the Prescott Carnival and Mayors Parade in June (22<sup>nd</sup>) and the extremely popular Christmas Light Switch On event in November (29<sup>th</sup>).

***Explanatory note regarding the precept stand still:*** Unfortunately the effects of public sector funding cuts have impacted the Town Council this year. However, the members of Prescott Town Council are aware of the difficult financial times many of us find ourselves in. Therefore for the fourth year running the Town Council have resolved not to increase the precept asked of its residents.

**Cronton Parish Council:** The precept is always at a low level and there has been no increase in the past four years. Last year, a substantial amount of money was used to enhance the health and safety of the new Children's play area. We would like to continue giving small financial support to the local voluntary groups who play a significant part in community life. The Council is committed to delivering a quality service for the benefit of the village, but with the ever-rising cost of public utilities and inflation, plus a reduction in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant, we are this year left with no option but to slightly increase the precept by approximately £1 per Band-D equivalent.

**Tarbock Parish Council:** In accordance with section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) have undertaken a community governance review. Following that review, the Council has issued an Order which has the effect of dissolving Tarbock Parish Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

## KNOWSLEY COUNCIL'S BUDGET - LEVIES

Knowsley Council's budget includes the cost of levies that it pays to a number of organisations for the services that they provide to the Borough. Statements from the main levying organisations are set out below.

### Merseyside Recycling and 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 2013/14 and 2014/15 is as follows:

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<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 2013/14 it is £72 per tonne, and for 2014/15 it will be £80 per tonne.

**This is financed by:**

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Use of reserves</b>	(920)	(110)
<b>Leaving a balance to be met by</b>		
<b>Levy Income</b>	65,591	65,591
<b>Levy per head of population</b>	£47.48	£47.34

The total requirement is the same this year as in 2013/14

The Levy for Knowsley Council based upon the levy apportionment system is: £7,393,466

**For more information contact MRWA:**

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority,  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
No.1 Mann Island,  
Liverpool.  
L3 1BP

Tel: 0151 255 1444

Fax: 0151 227 1848

E-mail: [enquiries@merseysidewda.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@merseysidewda.gov.uk)

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

## **Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority (ITA)**

1. Given the severe spending pressures on the Merseyside District Councils, the Authority has resolved to freeze its levy for 2014/15 at the same level as the previous four 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***

### Merseyside Revenue Budget 2014/15

	<b>Expenditure £000</b>	<b>Income/Recharges £000</b>	<b>Grants/Balances £000</b>	<b>Levy £000</b>
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

	<b>2013/14 Levy £000</b>	<b>2014/15 Levy £000</b>	<b>Decrease/Increase</b>
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 2014/15 is £23.5m of which £9.3m is allocated for new schemes.

The Mersey Tunnels capital programme for 2014/15 is £9.0m financed from Tunnels tolls.

## Coroners Service

The day to day cost of running the Coroners Service is apportioned between the Councils of Knowsley, Sefton and St Helens on the basis of population and is a service very much demand led, based on mortality levels and governed largely by the high cost of professional fees for Morticians, Pathology and Forensics.

Knowsley Coroners Service has budgeted for a charge to the council of £0.203m in 2014/15 compared to £0.202m in 2013/14. The figures are subject to final confirmation.

## Environment Agency North West Region

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.

	North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee	
	2013/14	2014/15
Gross Expenditure (£m)	40.930	74.205
Levies Raised (£m)	3.638	3.638
Total Council Tax Base (Band D Properties)(000's)	1,932	1,955

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 County and Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities and London Boroughs 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 Expenditure between the years both reflects the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of projects. For 2014/15 we have included Grant Aided Expenditure on all Risk Management Authority Programs. The total Local Levy has increased by 0%.

The total Local Levy raised has remained the same in 2014/15 as 2013/14 at £3,638,000

## COUNCIL TAX DEMAND NOTICE EXPLANATORY NOTES

THE FOLLOWING NOTES FORM PART OF YOUR COUNCIL TAX DEMAND AND SHOULD BE READ CAREFULLY

### Council tax valuation bands

Council tax is charged on most homes. It does not matter whether the home is rented or owned, or whether it is lived in or not. Each home is placed in one of eight valuation bands (shown on the front of your bill) based on the amount it would have sold for on 1 April 1991. You may be able to appeal against the valuation band if:

- You have moved into the property within the last six months, or
- There has been a change in the building, or physical state of the local area, which could affect the value of your home.

### For more information you should contact the Valuation Officer at:

The Listing Officer, Council Tax North, Valuation Office Agency, King William House, Market Place, Hull, HU1 1RT. Telephone 03000 501501, or email: [ctnorth@voa.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:ctnorth@voa.qsi.gov.uk) you can visit <http://www.voa.gov.uk> to check your property banding.

### You must continue to pay your council tax in full pending any appeal decision

The actual amount you are billed will vary, dependant upon which of the eight valuation bands your home has been placed in:

		Knowsley	Police and Crime Commissioner	Fire & Rescue Authority	Totals
	<b>Net requirement £m</b>	<b>38.524</b>	<b>4.842</b>	<b>2.166</b>	<b>45.532</b>
	% increase in Council Tax	0.00	1.95	1.99	0.30
<b>Valuation Band</b>	<b>Range of values</b>				
<b>A</b>	Up to and including	830.72	104.42	46.71	981.85
<b>B</b>	£40,001 - £52,000	969.17	121.82	54.50	1,145.49
<b>C</b>	£52,001 - £68,000	1,107.63	139.23	62.28	1,309.14
<b>D</b>	£68,001 - £88,000	1,246.08	156.63	70.07	1,472.78
<b>E</b>	£88,001 - £120,000	1,522.99	191.44	85.64	1,800.07
<b>F</b>	£120,001 - £160,000	1,799.89	226.24	101.21	2,127.34
<b>G</b>	£160,001 - £320,000	2,076.80	261.05	116.78	2,454.63
<b>H</b>	Over £320,000	2,492.16	313.26	140.14	2,945.56

In addition residents who live in parishes will have to contribute towards the cost of their parish council. These additional costs are as follows:

Valuation Band	Cronton	Halewood	Knowsley	Prescot	Whiston
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>A</b>	21.27	39.21	69.85	48.21	45.44
<b>B</b>	24.81	45.74	81.50	56.25	53.01
<b>C</b>	28.36	52.28	93.14	64.28	60.59
<b>D</b>	31.90	58.81	104.78	72.32	68.16
<b>E</b>	38.99	71.88	128.06	88.39	83.31
<b>F</b>	46.08	84.95	151.35	104.46	98.45
<b>G</b>	53.17	98.02	174.63	120.53	113.60
<b>H</b>	63.80	117.62	209.56	144.64	136.32

## Discounts, status discount disregards, vacant properties, second homes and job related accommodation

When we work out the full Council Tax amount we assume two adults are living in the property.

### Single person discount

If only one adult lives in a property, we reduce the amount they have to pay by a quarter (25%). This discount is not based on your income. When considering the number of adults living in a property, we do not count certain people. These are known as **discount disregards** and include:

- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth-training trainees;
- patients living in hospital;
- people who are being looked after in care homes;
- people who are severely mentally impaired;
- people staying in certain hostels or night shelters;
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at or have just left school;
- care workers working for low pay, usually for charities;
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a husband or wife, partner or child under 18;
- members of visiting forces and certain international institutions;
- foreign diplomats and certain members of international organisations;
- members of religious communities (for example, monks and nuns);
- people in prison (except those in prison for not paying their Council Tax or a fine).

### Annexes

From 1 April 2014 a 50% reduction in the amount of council tax payable for people living in annexes (which are separately assessed and appear in the valuation list for council tax separately from the main dwelling) provided they are related to the person liable to pay the council tax of the main dwelling (or the person who would be so liable were it not for an exemption or 100% discount or reduction) and for people living in dwellings with annexes which are unoccupied provided they are using those annexes as part of their main residence.

### Vacant Properties

There is no longer a prescribed period of exemption when properties become vacant and unfurnished. The empty property charge could become payable from the first day the property becomes vacant, at the full council tax charge. However, the Government has given local authorities discretion to award discounts on empty properties, the cost of which is borne locally. In Knowsley, the first month a property is vacant and unfurnished will be covered by one month's full discount, followed by a 100% charge on empty properties.

Owners of vacant and unfurnished properties will therefore have nothing to pay for the first month they become vacant. After this time, they will be charged at the full council tax level. Properties that require major repairs will be charged at the full council tax level from the date they become vacant.

## Second homes and unoccupied furnished Property

From April 2013, if a property is not anyone's main home, the owner will be charged the full council tax. This will apply to **unoccupied properties** (which are substantially furnished) and **second homes** (furnished properties that are not used as main residences). Certain second homes would continue to have their bill reduced by 50%, in the following situations:

- The council tax payer is required to live elsewhere in job-related accommodation because of the terms and conditions of their employment, for example a caretaker, minister of religion or a member of the armed services. This does not apply to a second home that you are renting because living there is convenient for work.
- The second home is a pitch occupied by a caravan or a mooring occupied by a boat.
- A planning restriction on the second home prevents occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in a year.

## Long term unoccupied and unfurnished property

From April 2013, properties which have been vacant and unfurnished in excess of 2 years will be subject to an additional premium charge of 50%.

## Council Tax - discretionary relief

Under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003), the Council has the power to reduce liability for council tax in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine and where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.

## Property exempt from council tax

Council Tax is not charged on properties which fall under the following classes:

- **Class B** - The property is vacant (furnished or unfurnished) was last occupied by and is owned by a charity. Exempt for up to six months.
- **Class D** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because the liable person is in prison.
- **Class E** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because the liable person is a permanent patient in a hospital or a care home.
- **Class F** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because the liable person has died and probate or letters of administration have not yet been granted. Exempt for up to six months after probate or letters of administration granted.
- **Class G** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because nobody is allowed to live there by law.
- **Class H** - The property is held vacant (can be furnished) and a minister of religion will be moving in.
- **Class I** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because the liable person is receiving care elsewhere (but not in a residential care home which would come under class E).
- **Class J** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because the liable person is caring for someone elsewhere.

- **Class K** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because the liable person is a student living elsewhere to study.
- **Class L** - The property is vacant (can be furnished) because it has been repossessed.
- **Class M** - The property is a hall of residence for students.
- **Class N** - The property is lived in only by students.
- **Class O** - The property is owned by the Ministry of Defence and lived in only by members of the armed services.
- **Class P** - The property is lived in only by visiting service personnel.
- **Class Q** - The property is left vacant by a bankruptcy trustee (can be furnished).
- **Class R** - The property is an empty caravan pitch or a boat mooring.
- **Class S** - The property is lived in only by people who are under 18.
- **Class T** - The property is a vacant part (can be furnished) of another property and may not be let separately due to planning restrictions.
- **Class U** - The property is lived in only by people who are severely mentally impaired.
- **Class V** - The property is lived in by at least one foreign diplomat or specified member of an international organisation.
- **Class W** - Part of the property is lived in separately (as a self-contained flat or house) by a dependent elderly (aged 65 or over) or disabled relative of the family.

Claims for vacant (substantially unfurnished) property exemptions or discounts must be made at the time the property is empty (substantially unfurnished) so that we can verify the claim. If you make the claim after the property is reoccupied, you must give evidence to prove that the property was previously vacant (substantially unfurnished).

If your bill shows that you have an exemption or discount, you must tell us about any change in circumstance that affects your entitlement. If you do not do this, you may be required to pay a penalty.

### People with Disabilities

If someone who lives in your home is disabled, and the property has certain facilities to specifically meet their needs, you may be entitled to pay less council tax. These are:

- A disabled person must be resident in the dwelling, **and**
- A room other than a bathroom, kitchen or lavatory which is predominantly required for meeting the needs of the disabled person, **or**
- An **additional** kitchen or bathroom which is required for meeting the needs of the disabled person, **or**
- Sufficient floor to use a wheelchair indoors, and the disabled person needs the use of a wheelchair within the dwelling.

If you require more information or an application form for disabled reductions, please contact the council tax office.

## Recovery procedure

If you experience genuine difficulty in meeting your payment, please do not put off contacting the council tax office rather than wait until recovery action has been taken. Every effort will be made to assist you in clearing the debt.

## How to claim

If you have not claimed before, or think you might qualify now, you need to fill in an application form available from any of the One Stop Shops, most Registered Housing Providers or by ringing our Contact Centre on 0151 443 4042. You can also download an application form from our website at ([www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)).

## Council Tax Reduction

In April 2013, the national Council Tax Benefit scheme was abolished. This means that, from this date, the Government stopped providing benefits to support those needing help paying Council Tax. Instead, Councils had to set up local schemes within strict Government guidelines and with significantly reduced funding, to decide what level of support should be available.

Under Knowsley Council's local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, you can get help with paying your Council Tax if you have a low income or are in receipt of Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance or Pension Credit. There have been no changes to the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014/15, this means that:-

- If you are a pensioner, the reduction in your Council Tax will be very similar to the amount that you would have received during 2013/14 and under the old Council Tax Benefit scheme;
- If you are working age, the most that you can receive is 80% of the amount of Council Tax that you are charged for your home. Everyone under pension age needs to pay at least the first 20% of their bill.

If you were receiving a Council Tax Reduction under our Local Scheme up to April 2014, you will not need to re-apply. Your new award will be calculated automatically and the amount that you are awarded will be shown on your bill as normal. You will still have to check the amount and tell us if anything has changed.

The way we work out Council Tax Reduction is very similar to the old Council Tax Benefit scheme. We normally look at:

- Money you and your partner have coming in, including earnings, some benefits, tax credits and things like occupational pensions;
- Any savings you or your partner have over £6,000 (for a pensioner we ignore the first £10,000 of your savings);
- Your circumstances, such as your age; and
- The ages and size of your family, whether you or any of your family are disabled and whether anyone who lives with you could contribute towards household costs.

## In-work Benefits

You could even qualify for help if you are working for an employer and receiving a low wage or if you have started up in business as self-employed and your income is low.

## **Second Adult Rebate for Pensioners**

If you are a pensioner and you pay Council Tax but do not qualify for a Reduction in your Council Tax under our Local Scheme because your income is too high, you might still qualify for some help towards your Council Tax if someone who lives with you is on a low income. 'Second Adult Rebate' can be paid where the person responsible for the bill is single (or classed as single because their partner is disregarded) and is sharing their home on a non-commercial basis with someone who is getting Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Pension Credit or has a low income.

Second Adult Rebate is not available if you are responsible for paying Council Tax and you are of working age.

## **How to claim Second Adult Rebate**

If you have not claimed before, or think you might qualify now, you need to fill in an application form available from any of the One Stop Shops, most Registered Housing Providers or by ringing our Contact Centre on 0151 443 4042. You can also download an application form from our website at ([www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)).

## Assistance with Council Tax, Council Tax Reduction enquiries or to make a payment

The Council's Contact Centre and One Stop Shops listed below, will be pleased to assist with any enquiries you may have. You can also make a payment at any of the One Stop Shops or a card payment by calling 0151 443 4476

### Contact Centre

**Council Tax 0151 443 4476**

**Council Tax Reduction (Rebate) 0151 443 4042**

**Minicom 0151 443 4749 (all enquiries)**

**The Contact Centre Operating times are:**

**Monday – Friday : 9am – 5pm and Saturday : 10am – 12:30 pm**

### One Stop Shops

#### **Halewood**

The Halewood Centre, Roseheath Drive, Halewood, L26 9UH

#### **Huyton**

Municipal Buildings, Archway Road, Huyton, L36 9YU

#### **Kirkby**

The Kirkby Centre, Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby, L32 8XY

#### **Prescot**

Prescot Shopping Centre, Aspinall Street, Prescot, L34 5GA

**The One Stop Shops are open at the following times:**

**Monday – Friday : 9am – 5pm**

### **Other Key service numbers:**

<b>Environmental Services</b> (bin collections, street cleaning, pest control, street lighting & bulky item collections)	0151 443 2400
<b>Planning Enquiries</b>	0151 443 2381
<b>Building Control &amp; Dangerous Buildings</b>	0151 443 2380
<b>Elections</b>	0151 443 2222
<b>Hate &amp; Domestic Violence</b>	0800 953 4433
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b>	0151 443 2000
<b>Environmental Health, Consumer Protection and Licensing</b>	0151 443 2300
<b>Registrars</b>	0151 443 2900
<b>Comments, Compliments, Complaints</b>	0151 443 4031
<b>General Enquiries</b>	0151 489 6000
<b>Education General Enquiry</b>	0151 443 3232
<b>Home to School Transport</b>	0151 443 2500

### **Emergency contacts (24 Hours)**

<b>Highways</b> (footways & street lighting)	0151 443 2800
<b>Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT)</b> (repairs)	0500 96 96 94
<b>Homelessness</b>	0800 694 0280
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	0151 443 2600

## **DATA PROTECTION**

### **Your Personal Information**

Knowsley Council is committed to supporting its residents to access the services and support that they are entitled to receive. To do this, we may need to collect and use information about the people we provide services to and others we have contact with. We may share information you provide to us, such as council tax and benefits information within the council, with Government bodies and/or other local authorities. We will only do this where it is necessary and the law allows it. Under no circumstances will we share your personal information with third parties for commercial purposes.

#### **This will be in order to:**

- Make sure information is accurate;
- Make sure you receive all the benefits that you're entitled to;
- Avoid asking you for the information more than once;
- Prevent and/or detect crime;
- Protect public funds; and,
- Meet our key aims and obligations

#### **The council's promise to you:**

- We will process your personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation.
- We will only share your personal information if it is necessary to fulfil our statutory powers and duties, to check accuracy, and/or to prevent and detect crime.
- We may share your personal information to advise you about benefits and grants that you may be entitled to receive and/or services that you may find useful.
- We will not collect too much or irrelevant information and we will not share information unnecessarily.
- We will do our best to keep your information accurate and up to date. You can help us by telling us about any change of circumstances.
- We will not keep your personal information any longer than necessary.
- We will keep your personal information secure.
- We will respect your right to access your personal information and other rights under the Data Protection Act

**For further details of how we deal with your personal information please see one of the following:**

Web: [www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk), click on How we manage your information or

Pick up a 'Your information' leaflet from your local One Stop Shop

**For more specific queries please contact:**

Data Protection Team  
Knowsley Borough Council  
PO Box 24, Archway Road,  
Huyton, L36 9YZ

Email: [data.protection.officer@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:data.protection.officer@knowsley.gov.uk)

## **TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FINANCES**

### **Thinking about credit?**

If you're considering taking out credit to balance your budget, read our quick guide to make sure you make the right choice for you.

#### **1 - Shop around – are you sure you've got the right deal for you?**

You need to be clear:

- How much you need to borrow
- How much you'll be able to repay each week / month
- When you'll be able to pay it all back.

Be honest with yourself – if you won't be able to repay in full when you need to, don't be tempted by a pay day loan – you'll end up paying back far more than you need to.

Have a look in the table below to see just how much you could save in interest payments if you used a Credit Union instead (based on borrowing £350):

<b>Lender</b>	<b>Typical Interest Rate (APR)</b>	<b>Repayment Terms</b>	<b>Monthly Repayment</b>	<b>Total Interest Paid</b>
Payday Loan	4,214%	30 Days	£460.69	£110.69
Credit Union	25%	6 months	£62.32	£23.92

#### **2 - Avoid borrowing to pay off debts**

Get **free** face to face advice from a local agency, telephone one of the helpline numbers below or go online.

- Citizens Advice Knowsley 0845 122 1300 or [www.knowsleycab.org.uk](http://www.knowsleycab.org.uk)
- KUC (formerly Kirkby Unemployed Centre) 0151 548 0001 or [www.kuc.org.uk](http://www.kuc.org.uk)
- National Debtline 0808 808 4000 or [www.nationaldebtline.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk)
- StepChange Debt Charity 0800 138 1111 or [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)
- Community Legal Advice 0845 345 4345 [www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk)

Remember, you don't have to pay for advice. Local agencies will also talk to the organisations you owe money to on your behalf.

#### **3 - Know what you're signing up to**

Make sure you understand what you're signing up to and what penalties could be applied if you're not able to make the repayments.

#### 4 - Where else could you go?

Some Credit Unions can lend you money, even if you haven't been saving with them (Enterprise and Knowsley Mutual in the Knowsley area). All Credit Unions offer 'savings based' loans and a safe way to save for a special occasion or rainy day. Credit Unions in Knowsley are:

- Enterprise Credit Union 0151 482 0177 or [www.enterprisecreditunion.org](http://www.enterprisecreditunion.org)
- Knowsley Mutual Credit Union 0151 545 3380 [www.knowsleycu.co.uk](http://www.knowsleycu.co.uk)
- Southdene Credit Union (based in Kirkby) 0151 548 5200
- Halewood Community Credit Union 0151 443 2084

Or enter your postcode into [www.merseymoney.org.uk](http://www.merseymoney.org.uk) to find Credit Unions close to your home or work.

## **WANT ADVICE OR HELP BUDGETING?**

### **FREE local advice is available for all Knowsley residents**

It's probably never been more important to manage your money than it is now. Lots of people are being affected by the Government's welfare reforms while at the same time the cost of living is getting more and more expensive.

If you want some advice about how the welfare reforms affect you, or someone to sit down with you and work out how you can make your money go further, there are local services that can give you this help and support for free. **Remember, you should never have to pay to get this advice!**

The organisations below offer **free** face to face advice - from a quick benefit check, to make sure you're getting what you're entitled to, or for help with benefit claims and in-depth debt and money advice. Get in touch to see how they could help you.

**Prescot and Whiston Community Advice Centre** 0151 443 4639  
Prescot Centre, Prescot, L34 5GA

**Knowsley CAB** 0845 122 1300  
Halewood Centre, Roseheath Drive, Halewood L26 9UH  
Nutgrove Villa, Griffiths Road, Huyton L36 6NA  
2 Newtown Gardens, Kirkby, L32 8RR

**KUC Ltd (formerly Kirkby Unemployed Centre)** 0151 548 0001  
Westhead Avenue, Northwood, Kirkby, L33 0XN

**Knowsley Council's Benefit Visitors** 0151 443 4045

**Saints Community Debt Advice** 0151 289 0084  
Email – [saintsdebtadvice@gmail.com](mailto:saintsdebtadvice@gmail.com)

**Jubilee Debt Advice** 0151 546 0470  
Platform 51, 101 Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby  
Open 10am – 1pm

**Money Advice & Budgeting Service**  
(For members of Enterprise Credit Union)  
110 -112 Liverpool Road, Huyton, L36 3RF

**Centre 63** 0151 549 1494  
Old Hall Lane, Kirkby, L32 5TH

For more information, visit the Financial Advice section of Knowsley Council's website at [www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-grants/financial-advice.aspx](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-grants/financial-advice.aspx)