

Your council tax 2014/15

As your community council, we're committed to ensuring services are shaped around your needs.

This year we followed up last year's hugely successful Big Question budget consultation, which attracted 4,500 responses, with a follow up Big Question.



Around 2,000 of you have taken part in this year's online consultation, to let us know which council services you most value.

With over 6,500 responses over the two years, we can assure you, we have listened carefully to your views in shaping this year's budget.

Dudley Council has continued to receive drastically reduced government funding, making local budget setting more difficult than ever.

After making around £40million of savings over the last three years, financial indications from government now show a further £60million of savings will be needed, equating to a total of £100million. In the face of these continuing cuts, it's simply impossible for us to deliver all council services in the same way in the future.

We fully appreciate that times are tough for you too and we don't want to put more pressure on your household budget so we have taken the difficult decision to freeze our element of council tax for another year.

However, the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire and Rescue Authority have both published their intention to increase their elements of Council Tax by just under 2%. Dudley Council does not control these decisions but we do collect it on their behalf, so your overall bill will increase by 0.2% (that is 6p per week for an average Band D property).

This will ensure **Dudley borough residents will continue to pay some of the lowest council tax rates in the country and the lowest in the Black Country.**

We can assure you **we will continue to work with reduced funding we have at our disposal to try and protect the services you most value.**

Thank you to all of you who have taken part in our Big Question consultations.

How to pay

Whilst nobody likes paying council tax we want to make it as easy for you as possible to pay it. You can pay in a variety of ways but the easiest is by direct debit. Remember, you can set this up over 12 monthly payments or 10. To set this up please visit www.dudley.gov.uk/counciltax or call the council tax helpline on **0300 555 8000**.

SIGN UP FOR FREE E-BULLETINS

email your postcode to community.council@dudley.gov.uk

Get involved with your community council

Dudley Council is proud to be your community council and we are committed to listening to local people, and working with you to offer you the services you want.

We have changed the way we do things and have set up 10 community forums which take place across the borough and we want to see you there.

www.dudley.gov.uk/about/community-council/community-forums/

Despite the cuts we face, we're still investing around your priorities...

Over the last two years, through the Big Question consultation exercises, you have told us which services you most value and we have listened:

| Services you most value include: | We have listened by... |
|---|--|
| Refuse collection and recycling | Improving our recycling performance by adding plastic and card to our household recycling collections, at the same time replacing plastic sacks with wheelie bins. |
| Services for older people | Investing in our nationally celebrated dementia gateways and in our care budgets to meet the increased costs of people with dementia. |
| Disabilities and mental health services | Increasing investment to help provide a wider choice of cost effective services for people with a disability. |
| Child protection | Increasing our support for looked after children and safeguarding across the borough. |
| Litter and street cleansing | Delivering over 160 community litter picks as part of our Love Your Community campaign and being recognised nationally for providing a top performing service. |

In addition to this, over the last year we've overseen the regeneration of Stourbridge town centre and this year Dudley town centre's historic marketplace will be transformed as we continue to improve your community.

Keep in touch with your community council

Remember you can sign up to our free e-bulletin by emailing your postcode to community.council@dudley.gov.uk where we will update you with news and information from across the borough and ensure you don't miss the chance to take part in future consultations.

You can also contact your council through Dudley Council Plus by emailing dudleycouncilplus@dudley.gov.uk, calling **0300 555 2345** or visiting us at Dudley Council Plus, 259 Castle Street, Dudley, DY1 1LQ.

Contact us at our [Dudley borough facebook page](#) or follow us on twitter [@dudleymbc](#) and [@dudleyplus](#)