

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

MEETING

23 February 2021

Report Title	Calculating the amounts of Council Tax for 2021-2022 and setting the Council Tax for 2021-2022
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Council Tax Resolutions 2021-2022

Appendix B – Parish and Town Council Precepts 2021-2022

Appendix C – Summary of Council Tax per Band D property 2021-2022

Appendix D – Total Council Tax Schedule 2021-2022

Appendix E – Breakdown of the Council Tax charge 2021-2022

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to detail the calculations for the amounts of Council Tax for West Northamptonshire Council for the financial year 2021-2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council as the billing authority must calculate a Council Tax Base and set Council Tax for the financial year 2021-2022. This report details the calculations for the amounts of Council Tax for West Northamptonshire Council for 2021-2022.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Shadow Authority:
- 3.1.1. Note that the Executive Director for Finance in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance calculated the Council Tax Base for 2021-2022:

- For the whole Council area as 137,520.22 (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1991, as amended (the “Act”) and;
- For dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as shown in the attached Appendix B

3.1.2. Approves the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2021-2022 (excluding Parish Precepts but including Special Expenses) as £215,410,297

3.1.3. Approves the additional Council Tax Resolutions as set out in Appendix A of this report

3.1.4. Note that Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council’s area as shown in the table below:

<u>Valuation</u>	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire – Police	Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority – Fire
<u>Band</u>	£	£
A	178.69	42.13
B	208.48	49.16
C	238.26	56.18
D	268.04	63.20
E	327.60	77.24
F	387.17	91.29
G	446.73	105.33
H	536.08	126.40

3.1.5. Approves that, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in Appendix D as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021-2022 for each part of its area and for each category of dwellings.

3.1.6. Notes Appendix E which sets out in detail how the charge is made up for each town and parish council area and by Council Tax band.

3.1.7. Note that the Council’s basic amount of Council Tax for 2021-2022 is not deemed to be excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992

3.1.8. Notes the recommendation by Shadow Executive that Council Tax is equalised over a period of 3 years.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1. The Council is required to set a balanced budget and to approve a level of Council Tax is an integral part of this. The draft budget has been considered and endorsed by Shadow Executive and is the subject of an earlier report on this agenda.

5. Report Background

- 5.1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and modified by Part 4 of The Local Government (Structural Changes) ((Finance) Regulations 2008), requires billing authorities to calculate the Council Tax requirement and the Council Tax to be charged for the coming year. This report details the calculations for the amounts of Council Tax for West Northamptonshire Council.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1. As a new unitary authority West Northamptonshire Council may calculate its basic amount of Council Tax for 2021-2022 by equalising Council Tax in year one (under section 31B of the 1992 Act)
- 6.2. However, the Shadow Executive has recommended equalisation of Council Tax over a period of 3 years and therefore calculating different basic amounts for each predecessor area under Part 4 of The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Finance) Regulations 2008
- 6.3. The Shadow Executive also recommended that council tax harmonisation should be carried out using the average council tax approach, this is referred to as the 'Alternative Notional Amount' (ANA).
- 6.4. Alongside the resolutions detailed in section 3 Appendix A of this report provides further Council Tax resolutions setting out how they have been calculated and a plain English explanation of what each resolution is designed to achieve.
- 6.5. The information from the Police and Fire precepting bodies is as follows:

<u>Valuation</u>	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire – Police	Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority – Fire
<u>Band</u>	£	£
A	178.69	42.13
B	208.48	49.16
C	238.26	56.18
D	268.04	63.20
E	327.60	77.24
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G	446.73	105.33
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6.6. The Town and Parish Precepts are shown at Appendix B of this report

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

7.1.1. The Council Tax base supports the final budget considered by Shadow Executive at its meeting on 12 February 2021 and the tax base is an integral part of the budget.

7.1.2. Through setting council tax levels in accordance with the recommendations, the tax set should raise the amount required to be met from the Collection Fund to pay the precepts to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire as well as to meet West Northamptonshire Council's demands, which includes town and council precept requests.

7.2. Legal

7.2.1. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, local authorities must set a Council Tax that takes into account its budget requirement, and any authority proposing an excessive increase in Council Tax must hold a local referendum and obtain a 'yes' vote before implementing the increase. An authority proposing an excessive increase must also make substitute calculations, based on a non-excessive Council Tax level. This takes effect if the excessive increase is rejected in the referendum. Accordingly, authorities must raise less than the threshold to avoid a referendum. Council Tax setting legally requires a recorded vote.

7.2.2. Members should be aware that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to decisions made in accordance with this report. Accordingly, any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year which could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

7.3. Risk

7.3.1. The Council Tax base supports the final budget which was considered by Shadow Executive at its meeting on 12 February 2021. The tax base calculation is an estimate for the year and the actual position is likely to be different based on the number of factors that are contained within the calculation. The tax base estimate will be monitored throughout the year and reported on as part of the budget monitoring process.

7.4. Consultation

- 7.4.1. The draft budget was subject to a full public and business consultation exercise which ran for four weeks and closed on 2 February 2021.
- 7.4.2. The Council Tax harmonisation approach was considered by the relevant task and finish group, shadow executive and the shadow overview and scrutiny committee.

7.5. Consideration by Shadow Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.5.1. The draft budget was considered by Shadow Overview and Scrutiny on 12th January 2021.
- 7.5.2. The Council Tax harmonisation approach was considered by the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 August 2020.

7.6. Climate Impact

- 7.6.1. The Council is mindful of the requirement to consider climate and ecological concerns within its decision-making process. However, this report is concerned with the Council's finances and agreeing council tax levels rather than driving or delivering any climate/environmental policy.

7.7. Community Impact

- 7.7.1. The Council has a strong commitment to equality and diversity and will consider how all groups and individuals within our community access the services they require and that services are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs. An overall Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the budget proposals and a separate assessment was carried out on the proposals to harmonise Council Tax. The potential impact of the proposals has been assessed and, taking into account the mitigating actions that are planned, many of the proposals are considered to have no or low or in some cases a positive impact on service users.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. Various budget reports relating to the harmonisation of Council Tax, the Council Tax reduction scheme, the draft budget and the final budget that have been considered by the shadow executive and the shadow overview and scrutiny committee.

