



West
Northamptonshire
Council

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCIL

22 February 2023

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCE:
COUNCILLOR MALCOLM LONGLEY**

Report Title **2023-24 Council Tax Calculations and Council Tax Resolution**

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Council Tax Resolutions 2023-24

Appendix B – Parish and Town Council Precepts 2023-24

Appendix C – Summary of Council Tax per Band D property 2023-24

Appendix D – Total Council Tax Schedule 2023-24

Appendix E – Breakdown of the Council Tax charge 2023-24

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 2023-24.

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 2023-24. This report details the calculations for the amounts of Council Tax for West Northamptonshire Council for 2023-24.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that Council:
- 3.1.1. Note that the Cabinet agreed the Council Tax Base for 2023-24 on 20 December 2022:
- For the whole Council area as **142,060.8** (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 2023-24 (excluding Parish Precepts but including Special Expenses) as **£240,612,639**
- 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 at 6.3 below:
- 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 is not deemed to be excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992

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 Cabinet 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. The Shadow Executive agreed the equalisation of Council Tax over a period of 3 years from 2021-22 to 2023-24, with full harmonisation being reached from 2023-24.

6.2. 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.

6.3. The information from the Police and Fire precepting bodies is as follows:

Valuation Band	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire - Police	Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority - Fire
A	195.36	48.80
B	227.92	56.93
C	260.48	65.07
D	293.04	73.20
E	358.16	89.47
F	423.28	105.73
G	488.40	122.00
H	586.08	146.40

6.4. 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 is used for calculating the amount of Council Tax set by West Northamptonshire Council. The tax base of **142,060.8** is reflected in 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 Cabinet at its meeting on 13 February 2023. 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 Council Tax proposals for 2023-24 formed part of the public consultation exercise for the draft budget. The full, six-week public consultation exercise began 21 December 2022 and concluded on 31 January 2023, with the council undertaking an extensive communications campaign to support the consultation and encourage public participation. This included issuing media releases and reminder news articles to 370 newsrooms and individuals (hyperlocal, local, regional and national, print, digital and broadcast). It was promoted regularly through the Council's website, with 14 posts on social media channels reaching more than 60,000 users and generating nearly 5,000 engagements including comments, reactions, and click-throughs to the consultation information. The consultation was also promoted in three editions of the council's e-newsletter as well as parish council briefings and through internal channels (e.g. staff) to encourage further participation.
- 7.4.2 Councillors, local MPs, town and parish councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, representatives of protected characteristic groups, local business groups, and members of the West Northamptonshire Residents' Panel and the Council's Consultation Register were invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, or within their local area where appropriate.
- 7.4.3 The feedback of the public consultation exercise was considered by Cabinet on the 13 February 2023 to further shape the budget recommendations being made to Council, with consideration

around balancing the consultation feedback with the need to ensure the Council can address its severe financial pressures, protect the most vulnerable and meet the rising demand for services.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions (either through a public committee meeting or a task and finish group) to consider the draft budget on the following dates:

- 7 November 2022
- 5 January 2023
- 19 January 2023
- 31 January 2023
- 6 February 2023

7.5.2 Details of these meetings are given in paragraphs 9.32 – 9.39 of the 2023-24 Final Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan presented to Cabinet on 13 February 2023.

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.

7.8 Communications

7.8.1 The Council will keep the public, partners and other stakeholders informed and updated the on Council Tax and budget-setting process, with the Communications Team working closely with Finance colleagues on publication of information via the website, annual billing and other channels.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Various budget reports relating to the harmonisation of Council Tax and the Council Tax reduction scheme and the draft budget that have been considered by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny committee