



AGENDA ITEM: 8

SUMMARY

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	Tuesday 15 December 2015
PART:	I
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Council Tax Base															
Contact:	Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources James Deane, Corporate Director (Finance and Operations) Richard Baker, Group Manager (Financial Services)															
Purpose of report:	1. To agree the estimated Collection Fund surplus as at 31/03/2016 2. To determine the Council Tax Base for 2016/17															
Recommendations	<p>1. That Cabinet approves the Collection Fund surplus estimate of £392,423.62 as at 31 March 2016</p> <p>2. That Cabinet approves the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2016/17 incorporating an estimated collection rate of 99.4%</p> <p>3. That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by the Council as its tax base for the year 2016/17 shall be 55,282.0 and its constituent elements shall be:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Part of Area - Parished and Non Parished</th> <th style="text-align: right;">100% Tax base</th> <th style="text-align: right;">99.4% Tax base</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hemel Hempstead</td> <td style="text-align: right;">29,099.8</td> <td style="text-align: right;">28,925.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aldbury</td> <td style="text-align: right;">456.7</td> <td style="text-align: right;">454.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Berkhamsted</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,328.8</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8,278.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bovingdon</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,056.2</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2,043.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Part of Area - Parished and Non Parished	100% Tax base	99.4% Tax base	Hemel Hempstead	29,099.8	28,925.2	Aldbury	456.7	454.0	Berkhamsted	8,328.8	8,278.8	Bovingdon	2,056.2	2,043.9
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Corporate objectives:	Not applicable																																										
Implications:	<p>Financial</p> <p>Providing details of the Collection Fund surplus estimated as at 31 March 2016 assists the Council and other precepting authorities in the setting of their Council Tax for 2016/17.</p> <p>The recommended Council Tax Base shows a 644.3 increase on the previous year which is due to additional Band D equivalent dwellings in the Borough.</p> <p>Legal</p> <p>Cabinet has delegated authority to set the Council Tax Base by virtue of Section 67 Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) and the resolution of Council dated 19 January 2005.</p> <p>Value for money</p> <p>Not applicable</p>																																										
Risk Implications	Not applicable																																										
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Deputy Monitoring Officer</p> <p>No further comments to add</p> <p>Section 151 Officer</p> <p>This is a Section 151 officer report</p>																																										

Consultees:	Not applicable
Background papers:	None

1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council is required to set the Council Tax Base for 2016/17 so that it can be used in budget preparations and for the formal setting of the Council Tax by Full Council in February 2016. It is also necessary to approve the estimated Collection Fund surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2016.

2. **Declaration of Collection Fund Surplus**

How does a surplus or deficit occur?

- 2.1 The income collected from Council Tax goes into the Collection Fund. Throughout the year the actual number of properties in the borough (as well as allowances for exemptions, discounts or appeals) inevitably varies from the figure estimated at the start of the year. This leads to a change in the amount of Council Tax collected. Despite this variation in *collection*, the amount *paid* to the preceptors remains the same as the amounts specified at the start of the year, and does not reflect in-year changes to the amount of Council Tax. It is this emergent variance which creates a surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund.
- 2.2 In 2015/16 a surplus position has arisen on the Collection Fund primarily due to the increase in new properties across the borough being higher than that forecast in December 2014. This surplus is shared between the Major Preceptors, i.e. the County, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Borough, in proportion to their precepts for the year.

Declaration of Surplus

- 2.3 The actual surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2015, together with an estimate of the surplus or deficit for the current year, is required to be approved by Cabinet on behalf of the Council.
- 2.4 The actual surplus balance on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2015 was £402,206.53 compared to an anticipated surplus of £589,504.66 in 2014/15; a difference of £187,298.13.
- 2.5 In 2015/16, the Collection Fund is estimated to achieve a total projected surplus of £579,721.75, of which the Council's share will be a projected surplus of £75,014.48.

2.6 The distribution of the difference between the anticipated surplus and the actual surplus as at 31 March 2015 (a deficit of £187,298.13, as shown in paragraph 2.4), means that there is now a projected total surplus on the Collection Fund at 31 March 2016 of £392,423.62.

2.7 The proportion of this surplus that each of the Major Preceptors will receive from the Collection Fund when calculating the Council Tax for 2016/17 is as follows:

Dacorum Borough Council	£48,693.67
Hertfordshire County Council	£304,778.07
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner	£38,951.88
Total Surplus	£392,423.62

2.8 Cabinet approval of the Collection Fund Surplus estimated at 31 March 2016 is sought in Recommendation 1.

3. Council Tax Base 2016/17

3.1 On an annual basis, all local authorities are required to calculate a Council Tax Base which is used to set the level of Council Tax. The process is governed by the Local Authorities' (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992.

3.2 The tax base is set having regard to:

- The Valuation List;
- Current exemptions, reductions and discounts;
- Discretionary discounts;
- Anticipated developments that may occur during the year;
- Expected long term collection rate.

3.3 Local discounts and premiums arising from the Council Tax Support Scheme and Council Tax Reforms brought in from 1 April 2014 have been taken into account in the tax base calculation.

3.4 The basic methodology for calculating the tax base is as follows:

- Calculations are made of the 'relevant amount' for the year in respect of the valuation bands shown in the Council's Valuation List. For each band, this amount represents the estimated full year equivalent number of chargeable dwellings listed in the band after taking into account the impact of disabled band reductions and discounts.
- The 'relevant amounts' for each band are then aggregated and expressed as an equivalent number of band D dwellings.

- The Council then multiplies this aggregate of all relevant amounts by the estimated collection rate for the year. The resulting figure is the Council Tax Base for the year.
- The rules for calculating the Council Tax Base for any part of a Council's area (eg, a parish, or that part of its area to which a levy or special levy relates) are the same as the rules for calculating the Council Tax Base for the whole of its area for that year, and the same estimated collection rate must be used.

3.5 The estimate of the collection rate is the only area over which the Council has any discretion. A collection rate of 99.4% was adopted upon implementation of the Council Tax Support Scheme, and from the data collected so far, there is no reason to deviate from this assumption; but this will continue to be monitored closely. Recommendation 2 seeks Cabinet approval for an estimated collection rate of 99.4%.

3.6 Collection rates will be continually monitored and any adjustments will be reflected in the calculation of the 2016/17 surplus or deficit.

3.7 The tax base for 2015/16 was 54,637.7 (after adjusting for the estimated impact of Council Tax Support and a 99.4% collection rate), whereas the estimated tax base for 2016/17 is 55,282.0. This represents an increase of 644.3 Band D equivalent properties, or 1.2% on the tax base.

4. Notification of Tax Base

4.1 Major Precepting Authorities and levying bodies, are required to request their tax base figure (and notify any changes to their tax base area), from the Council, before the end of December 2015. The Council must give notification of all requested tax base figures by the end of January 2016.