



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	15 December 2020
PART:	I
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Council Tax Base 2020/21
Contact:	<p>Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources</p> <p>James Deane, Corporate Director (Finance and Operations)</p> <p>Nigel Howcutt, Assistant Director (Financial and Resources)</p> <p>Fiona Jump, Group Manager Financial Services.</p>
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree the estimated Collection Fund surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2021. 2. To determine the Council Tax Base for 2021/22.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet approves the Collection Fund surplus estimate of £43,362.84 as at 31 March 2021. The Dacorum Borough Council share of this surplus is £5,268.18. 2. That Cabinet approve the distribution profile for the surplus identified at 1.) as required by the Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit (Coronavirus)(England) Regulations 2020. This is contained at section 2.8 to this report. 3. That Cabinet approves the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2021/22 incorporating an estimated collection rate of 99.4%. 4. That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the Council as its tax base for the year 2021/22 shall be 58,693.7 and its constituent elements shall be:

	Part of Area - Parished and Non Parished	100% Tax base	99.4% Tax base
	Hemel Hempstead	31,519.5	31,330.4
	Aldbury	479.4	476.5
	Berkhamsted	8,611.6	8,559.9
	Bovingdon	2,132.3	2,119.5
	Chipperfield	867.5	862.3
	Flamstead	647.5	643.6
	Flaunden	178.8	177.7
	Great Gaddesden	456.0	453.3
	Kings Langley	2,316.0	2,302.1
	Little Gaddesden	640.4	636.6
	Markyate	1,358.6	1,350.4
	Nash Mills	1,244.2	1,236.7
	Nettleden with Potten End	802.7	797.9
	Northchurch	1,301.5	1,293.7
	Tring Rural	690.6	686.5
	Tring Town	5,120.6	5,089.9
	Wigginton	680.8	676.7
	Total	<u>59,048.0</u>	<u>58,693.7</u>
Corporate objectives:	Agreement of the Council Tax Base 2021/22 and the Council Tax surplus estimate as at 31 March 2021 supports sound financial planning and achievement of the corporate objective of ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.		
Implications:	<p>Financial</p> <p>Providing details of the Collection Fund surplus or deficit estimated as at 31 March 2021 assists the Council and other precepting authorities in the setting of their Council Tax for 2021/22.</p> <p>The recommended Council Tax Base shows a 126.3 increase on the 2020/21 Taxbase 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 2012 and the resolution of Council dated 19 January 2005.</p>		
'Value for money' implications:	<p>Value for money</p> <p>Agreement of the Council Tax Base 2021/22 and the Council Tax surplus estimate as at 31 March 2021 supports</p>		

	sound financial planning within the authority.
Risk Implications:	Failure to agree a tax base for 2021/22 would compromise the Council's ability to set its Council Tax for 2021/22.
Community Impact Assessment:	Not applicable.
Health and Safety Implications:	There are no Health and Safety implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officer Comments:	<p>Deputy Monitoring Officer</p> <p>No comments to add to the report.</p> <p>Section 151 Officer</p> <p>This is a Section 151 officer report.</p>
Consultees:	Not applicable
Background papers:	None.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	None

1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council is required to set the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 so that it can be used in budget preparations and for formal setting of Council Tax by Full Council in February 2021. It is also necessary to approve the estimated Collection Fund surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2021.

2. **Declaration of Collection Fund Surplus or Deficit**

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 The key driver in respect of the surplus or deficit position is the timing of when anticipated developments are completed. If there are more than expected, or they are completed more quickly, a surplus will arise; but if there are fewer, or they take longer to complete, then a deficit will result. Any surplus or deficit is shared between the major preceptors (i.e. Hertfordshire County Council, the

Police and Crime Commissioner and the Borough) in proportion to their precepts for the year.

Declaration of Surplus or Deficit

- 2.3 The actual surplus or deficit as at 31 March 2020, together with an estimate of the surplus or deficit for the current year (the 'in- year' surplus or deficit), 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 2020 was £1,306,622.83 compared to an anticipated surplus of £1,231,344.55 in 2019/20; a difference of £75,278.28. The surplus is 0.08% of the value of the precepts declared when the Council Tax for 2019/20 was set. The Council will receive 100% of its share of this surplus in 2021/22, which is £9,145.59.
- 2.5 In 2020/21, the Collection Fund is estimated to achieve a total projected in-year deficit of £31,915.44. The deficit is 0.03% of the value of the precepts declared when the Council Tax was set.
- 2.6 The economic implications of the coronavirus pandemic mean that many local authorities may be reporting in-year Council Tax deficits for 2020/21. In recognition of this and the associated burden on local authority budgets, the Government has introduced new regulations: Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit (Coronavirus) (England) Regulations 2020. These regulations require local authorities to spread the 2020/21 in- year deficit over a three- year period, commencing 2021/22, in instalments of equal thirds. The Council's total share of the in- year 2020/21 deficit is £3,877.42. The Council will be required to fund one third of this in 2021/22, a further third in 2022/23 and the final third in 2023/24.
- 2.7 The distribution of the difference between the anticipated surplus and the actual surplus as at 31 March 2020 (a surplus of £75,278.28, as shown in paragraph 2.4), plus the 2020/21 in-year deficit of £31,915.44, means that there is now a projected total surplus on the Collection Fund at 31 March 2021 of £43,362.84.
- 2.8 The proportion and profile of this total surplus that each of the Major Preceptors and the Borough will (receive)/ have to fund when calculating the Council Tax is as follows:

Precepting or Billing Authority	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£
Dacorum Borough Council	(7,853.12)	1,292.47	1,292.47	5,268.18
Hertfordshire County Council	(49,812.51)	8,198.19	8,198.19	33,416.13
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire	(6,974.17)	1,147.82	1,147.82	4,678.53
	(64,639.80)	10,638.48	10,638.48	43,362.84

2.9 Cabinet approval of the Collection Fund surplus estimated at 31 March 2021 is sought in Recommendation 1. Approval of the surplus distribution profile at 2.8 is sought in Recommendation 2.

3. Council Tax Base 2021/22

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 2012.

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 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 (including Council Tax Support).
- 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 (e.g. 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.

3.4 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 performance data collected so far, there is no reason to deviate from this assumption; but this will continue to be monitored closely. Recommendation 3 seeks Cabinet approval for an estimated collection rate of 99.4%.

3.5 Collection rates will be continually monitored and any adjustments will be reflected in the calculation of the 2020/21 surplus or deficit.

3.6 The tax base for 2020/21 was 57,567.4 (after adjusting for the estimated impact of Council Tax Support and a 99.4% collection rate), the proposed tax base for 2021/22 is 58,693.7. This represents an increase of 126.3 Band D equivalent properties, or 0.22% on the tax base. Recommendation 4 seeks approval for this proposed tax base for 2021/22.

4. Notification of Tax Base

4.1 Major Precepting Authorities, 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 2020. The Council must give notification of all requested tax base figures by the end of January 2021.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Cabinet has delegated authority to set the Council Tax Base for 2021/22.

5.2 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the following:

- The Collection Fund surplus estimate of £43,362.84 as at 31 March 2021 and the distribution profile of this surplus as set out at 2.8 of this report.
- That calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2021/22 incorporating an estimated collection rate of 99.4%.
- In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the Council as its tax base for the year 2021/22 be 58,693.7.