

CITY OF DURHAM

COUNCIL
9 JANUARY, 2007

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC RESOURCES
AND HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

1. COUNCIL TAX - CALCULATION OF TAX BASE

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Regulations made under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended)) require each billing authority to calculate its 'Council Tax Base'. This is the measure of an area's taxable capacity, for the purpose of setting its Council Tax. Legislation requires that the Billing Authority sets out the formula for that calculation and that the Tax Base be formally approved by the Council.

1.2 Council Tax Base Calculation

1.2.1 Appendix A shows the actual number of dwellings in the district, allocated across the eight property bands. It also shows the numbers of properties in Band A that are eligible for a reduction under the Disabled Relief Scheme and the number Ministry of Defence properties in the District for which payments are received in lieu.

1.2.2 Some of these properties will be empty during the year; others will be exempt from the Tax (e.g. dwellings occupied solely by students) whilst in single person households only 75% of the Tax is payable. The actual number of dwellings, therefore, needs to be adjusted to reflect these features giving a net property base for each band.

1.2.3 The Council Tax varies between the different bands according to proportions laid down in legislation. These proportions, which are set out in the Appendix, are based around Band D, and are fixed so that the bill for a dwelling in Band A will be a third of the bill for a dwelling in Band H. Applying the relevant proportion to each band's net property base produces the number of 'Band D Equivalent' properties for the area.

1.2.4 The Tax Base is finally arrived at by anticipating the collection rate during the year. A collection rate of 99% has previously been anticipated in the first instance and this practise has continued in calculating the tax base for 2007/08.

1.2.5 Applying a 99% collection rate to the tax base of £26,375.00 produces a final figure of £26,111.25, which compares to a 2006/07 figure of £25,659.75. An analysis of the tax base between the various parish areas of the Council is provided at Appendix B.

1.3 Recommendations

1.3.1 That the report of the Director of Strategic Resources for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the year 2007/08 be approved; and

- 1.3.2 That pursuant to the Director of Strategic Resources' report, and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), the amount calculated by the City of Durham Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2007/08 shall be £26,111.25.

Background Papers:

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (S.I. 1992/612) as amended
2007/08 Revenue and Capital Budget Working Papers
Northgate SX3 Revenues and Benefits System Reports

**2. COUNCIL TAX – ESTIMATED COLLECTION FUND SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)
[THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (FUNDS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 1992]**

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Local Authorities (Funds) (England) Regulations 1992 make provision for the discharge by a Billing Authority of its liabilities to pay amounts in respect of precepts from its Collection and General Funds and to make transfers between its funds to meet its estimated expenses.
- 2.1.2 They also make provision for the discharge by a Billing Authority and its major precepting authorities, in respect of their liabilities to meet any estimated surplus or (deficit) in a Billing Authority's Collection Fund. The City of Durham is a Billing Authority and the County Council; the Durham Police Authority; and the Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority constitute the Council's major precepting authorities.
- 2.1.3 The purpose of this report is to set out for member's attention and approval the estimated position on the Council's Collection Fund.

2.2 Estimated Collection Fund Surplus / (Deficit)

- 2.2.1 Under Regulation 10, a Billing Authority is responsible for estimating, for each financial year, beginning in or after 1993, whether there is a surplus or (deficit) in its Collection Fund for the preceding financial year and, if so, the amount of that surplus or deficit. This calculation, which takes into account any residual transactions from the Community Charge, must be completed and approved by members between 1 December and 31 January each year.
- 2.2.2 In setting the 2006/07 budgets and subsequent Council Tax, members will recall that the estimated position was that the Collection Fund would be "balanced" at 31 March 2006 – in other words it was forecast that there would be neither a surplus nor a deficit on the Fund and therefore no increase or decrease were required to be charged to Council Tax payers bills in 2006/07. The actual outturn position on the Collection Fund at 31 March 2006 was a small surplus of £34,522.
- 2.2.3 Members should note that any surpluses cannot be included as income in the authority's accounts and must be passed onto the Council Taxpayer in the form of a reduction in their annual bill. Likewise, a deficit cannot be charged as any Authority's expenditure, but must be charged to Council Taxpayers as an increase on the bills.

- 2.2.4 Taking into account the continued improvement in collection rates in the current year; an increase in the Council Taxbase due to a combination of new build and the impact of the opening of the University Halls of Residence; and a prudent assessment of the likely level of the provision for bad and doubtful debts, it is estimated that the City Council's Collection Fund will be £200,000 in surplus at 31 March 2007. The forecast surplus will be allocated to the following authorities, based on the respective proportions of the total precepts and demands on the Collection Fund in the current year: -

Authority	Surplus (£)	% Share	Reduction in Council Tax 2007-08 (at Band D)
City of Durham	(29,360)	14.63	(1.12)
Durham County Council	(144,240)	72.12	(5.52)
Durham Police Authority	(15,020)	7.51	(0.58)
Durham and Darlington Fire Authority	(11,480)	5.74	(0.44)
Total	(200,000)		(7.66)

2.3 Recommendations

- 2.3.1 That Members note the forecast position on the Collection Fund, being an estimated surplus on the Collection Fund at 31 March 2007 of £200,000, and that this position be factored into the 2007/08 Council Tax Bills.

Background Papers:

2007/08 Revenue and Capital Budget Working Papers
Statement of Accounts 2005/06 – Report to Council 29.06.06
Northgate SX3 Revenues and Benefits System Reports
Agresso Financial Management System Reports

CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2007-08

Band	Properties	Disabled Relief	Exempt Properties	Chargeable Properties	25% Discounts	50% Discounts	Band D Ratio	Band D Equivalent
DR	N/A	N/A	N/A	38	3	N/A	(5/9)	20.60
A	18,561	38	617	17,930	8124	533	(6/9)	10,391.20
B	5,863	24	397	5,474	1,884	237	(7/9)	3,784.70
C	6,082	32	457	5,610	1,413	182	(8/9)	4,572.00
D	4,062	17	646	3,415	662	108	1	3,182.30
E	1,888	16	136	1,742	284	71	(11/9)	1,993.10
F	1,036	5	47	992	149	37	(13/9)	1,346.20
G	697	8	48	648	78	29	(15/9)	1,015.40
H	89	8	41	40	1	8	(18/9)	69.50
O	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	38,278	148	2,389	35,889	12,598	1,205		26,375.00

Note:

- i) Category 'DR' represents the properties in Band A that will qualify for a reduction under the Disabled Relief Scheme.
- ii) Category 'O' represents Ministry of Defence properties for which payments are received in lieu

BAND 'D' EQUIVALENTS - PARISH TAX BASE 2007-08

Parish	Band D Equivalents
Durham City	7,596.07
Bearpark	618.35
Belmont	2,936.14
Brancepeth	213.05
Brandon & Byshottles	5,445.69
Cassop-cum-Quarrington	1,374.02
Coxhoe	1,292.64
Croxdale & Hett	312.35
Framwellgate Moor	1,544.20
Kelloe	413.62
Pittington	502.43
Shadforth	626.18
Sherburn	957.23
Shincliffe	711.81
West Rainton	758.34
Witton Gilbert	809.13
Total Council Tax Base – Band 'D' Equivalents	26,111.25