

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE)**

SUBJECT: **COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2015-16**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To approve the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2015-16.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The setting of the Council Tax Base for the next financial year allows the County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales and Town/Community Councils to calculate next year's Council Tax charges based on the estimated number of chargeable properties, and expressed as the equivalent number of Band 'D' properties.

2.02 The Council Tax Base calculations are supplied to the Welsh Government and used for the distribution of Revenue Support Grant in the annual Provisional and Final Local Authority Revenue Settlement. The calculations are also used by the Council when it sets its annual budget to calculate the Council Tax levels - this is done by dividing the net budget requirement by the Council Tax Base to provide the amount of Council Tax for a dwelling in Band D. A set formula is then used to determine the Council Tax levels for the eight remaining Property Bands (A to C and E to I).

2.03 The Council Tax base is always set as at 31st October each year and for this year must be submitted in draft to the Welsh Government by 7th November 2014. The Council Tax Base for 2015-16 has therefore been sent to the Government within the prescribed deadline pending approval of this report by cabinet.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The calculation of the Council Tax Base for 2015-16 is the measure of the taxable capacity of all areas in the County and is calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The Tax Base is based on the number of chargeable dwellings, expressed as band D equivalents, taking into account the total number of property exemptions, disabled banding reductions, other status discounts together with an estimate to reflect new build and demolished properties over the forthcoming

year. The Tax Base also reflects a very small allowance of 1% for bad and doubtful debts.

3.02 The Tax Base for 2015-16 has therefore been calculated using the usual collection level of 99.0% which ensures the Council sets one the highest collection levels in Wales and demonstrates the successes and importance in collecting local Council Tax.

3.03 Each year, to determine the level of the Tax Base, the Council is also required to determine what discount, if any, is awarded to owners of second or holiday homes (known as Prescribed Classes A and B) and long term empty properties (known as Prescribed Class C). The Prescribed Classes are as detailed below:

- Class A - property which is unoccupied and furnished but occupation is prohibited by law for over 28 days each year.
- Class B - property which is unoccupied and furnished and occupation is not prohibited by law
- Class C - property which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished beyond the normal exemption period

3.04 The current policy of not awarding discounts to any Prescribed Class has also been reflected in the latest Tax Base calculations.

3.05 The Council Tax Base for 2015-16 is 61,993 as shown in Appendix A, compared with 61,501 in the previous year. This will result in an increase of 492 band D equivalent properties, or in percentage terms, an increase of 0.8%, compared to a percentage increase in the previous year of about 0.57%. The latest increase in the Tax Base is largely down to the effective management of the Tax Base by reviewing exemptions and discounts on a regular basis coupled with the positive impact of new homes being built across the County.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That cabinet continue to set a 'nil' level of discount for properties falling within any of the Prescribed Classes (A, B or C) and for this to apply to the whole of the County area.

4.02 That the Tax Base of 61,993 chargeable Band 'D' equivalent properties (as shown in Appendix A) be approved at cabinet for the financial year 2015-16.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The setting of the Council Tax Base will allow members to determine Council Tax charges for the next financial as part of the Council's overall 2015-16 budget considerations.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A to this report details the breakdown of the Tax Base for 2015-16 by Town/Community Council area.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Local Government Finance Act 1992 - section 68

Local Authorities (Calculation of C. Tax Base) (Wales) Regs 1995

Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) Amendment
Regs 2004

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