



SPECIAL COUNCIL - 24TH FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT: COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2016/17 AND COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with details of the Authority's Council Tax for the 2016/17 financial year prior to passing the necessary statutory resolutions.
- 1.2 To seek Council approval to continue with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of the Council Tax Setting Resolutions for 2016/17 along with a recommendation that they be approved.
- 2.2 The report also recommends continuing to operate a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2016/17 financial year, on the same basis as the scheme used in 2015/16.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council is required annually to approve a balanced budget and agree Council Tax levels.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Council Tax Resolutions

- 4.1.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 set out the rules for the calculation of the Council Tax base. This is the amount required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to be used in the calculation of the Council Tax.
- 4.1.2 At its meeting on the 9th December 2015, Cabinet agreed the Council Tax base for 2016/17 as 59,575.14.
- 4.1.3 Earlier in this evening's meeting Council was asked to agree the total revenue budget for 2016/17 as £324.384m, which included a proposed Council Tax increase of 1% i.e. Council Tax Band D set at £1,001.94 per annum (an increase of 19p per week).
- 4.1.4 In accordance with the requirements of The Local Government Act 1992, the resolutions attached as Appendix 1 are submitted for consideration along with a recommendation that they be approved.

4.2 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016/17

- 4.2.1 On 28th January 2014, the Council adopted a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014/15 (its local scheme) in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (as amended). These regulations prescribe the main features of the scheme to be adopted by all Councils in Wales and allow for some limited local discretions. The scheme provides for claimants to receive a reduction of up to 100% of their Council Tax bill in certain circumstances.
- 4.2.2 At its meeting on the 25th February 2015, Council endorsed the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 in line with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. These amended regulations reflected changes related to social security benefits and uprated figures in line with Housing Benefit for the 2015/16 financial year, together with minor technical changes and some administrative improvements.
- 4.2.3 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 have now been agreed and these apply in relation to a Council Tax Reduction Scheme made for a financial year beginning on or after 1 April 2016. The regulations uprate certain figures used to calculate an applicant's entitlement to a reduction under a Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and the subsequent level of reduction. It also makes consequential amendments as a result of changes to the wider welfare system.
- 4.2.4 As the 2016 regulations do not contain any significant changes for claimants, it is proposed that the Council continues its local scheme in line with the regulations as recently amended for the financial year 2016/17, effective from 1st April 2016, and continues to exercise the previously approved discretions.
- 4.2.5 The 2016/17 budget for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme totals £14.780m.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As part of the 2016/17 budget-setting process Equalities Impact Assessments have been completed for the savings proposals that impact on service users and/or the public.
- 5.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has previously been carried out for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. As the proposed Scheme for 2016/17 has no significant changes from previous years, a further impact assessment will not be required at this time.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As detailed throughout the report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Council:-

9.1.1 Approves the statutory Council Tax Resolutions as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.

9.1.2 Agrees that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme should continue for the 2016/17 financial year along with the previously agreed local discretions.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Council is required annually to agree a Council Tax rate and adopt the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and local discretions.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Finance Act 1992 and regulations made under the Act.

11.2 Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (as amended).

Author: Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance

Tel: 01443 863022 E-mail: harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer

Andrew Southcombe, Finance Manager, Corporate Finance

Nicola Roberts, Principal Group Accountant, Corporate Finance

John Carpenter, Council Tax & NNDR Manager

Amanda Main, Acting Housing & Council Tax Benefits Manager

Gail Williams, Acting Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

- Council Report 28th January 2014 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2014/15.
- Special Council Report 25th February 2015 – Council Tax Resolution 2015/16 and Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Cabinet Report 9th December 2015 – Council Tax Base 2016/17.
- Cabinet Report 17th February 2016 - Budget Proposals 2016/17 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2016/2021.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Council Tax Resolutions 2016/17.