

HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

26 FEBRUARY 2024

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND IT)

A.1 FORMAL CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL TAX AMOUNTS FOR 2024/25 FOLLOWING THE NOTIFICATION OF THE PRECEPTS FROM THE MAJOR PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To set out and seek confirmation of the final Council Tax amounts for 2024/25 including the precepts issued for 2024/25 by Essex County Council, Essex Fire and Essex Police.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on the 13 February 2024, Council considered the Executive's Budget and Council Tax proposals for 2024/25 and as part of this process the Council Tax for District and Parish / Town Council Services was approved.

Once the precepts are received from the major precepting authorities, the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee has the delegated responsibility to agree the total Council Tax for 2024/25. The total Council Tax for the year is made up of the District and Parish / Town Council amounts approved by Council on 13 February 2024 and the corresponding amounts agreed by the major precepting authorities. Legislation requires this formal confirmation even though the process is dictated by legislative formulae and there is no actual judgement or choice to be made.

The precepts from the major precepting authorities for 2024/25 result in the final Council Tax amounts, as set out in **Appendix C**, for formal confirmation by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

- (a) the precepts issued by Essex County Council, Essex Fire and Essex Police, as set out in Appendix A attached to this report, be noted; and**
- (b) that the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25, as shown at Appendix C, for each of the categories of dwellings be confirmed.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

To confirm the Council tax amounts for 2024/25 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option would be for this to be agreed at full Council, but the timing of this decision would require a change to our usual timetable for Council meetings.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Confirmation of the council tax amounts is the final step in the Council's budget setting process and will therefore have direct implications for the Council's ability to deliver on its objectives and priorities. Council tax income is a key income stream in the Council's financial forecast which seeks to establish a sound and sustainable budget year on year through maximising income whilst limiting reductions in services provided to residents, businesses and visitors where possible.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

The arrangements for setting and collection of council tax are defined in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The confirmation of the council tax amounts following the receipt of precepts from the major precepting authorities is delegated to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee (Delegated Powers Part 3.19).

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This report forms part of the Council's budget setting process and follows on from the final budget proposals agreed by Full Council on 13 February 2024. The implications of the wider budget proposals are set out in that report.

The impact on the Council's financial position if this decision is delayed are set out in the section on Associated Risks and Mitigations.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	This is the final step in the budget/council tax setting process, these issues were covered in detail in the report A1 Executive's Proposals - General Fund Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 which went to Council 13 February 2024.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	As above
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	As above

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

This reports forms part of the Council's wider budget setting process and follows the final budget proposals agreed by Full Council on 13 February 2024. Following this decision the

council tax bills can be prepared and dispatched.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Legislation requires this formal confirmation even though the process is dictated by legislative formulae and there is no actual judgement or choice to be made.

The risk arises if this decision is either delayed or not made at all. The Council would have to continue meeting its contractual and legislative financial commitments (including paying the precepts to the major precepting authorities) but without being able to collect Council Tax to cover these outgoing costs. This would cause serious financial difficulties.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation on the Council's element of council tax takes place as part of the Council's approach to developing the budget and is set out in detail in the report A1 Executive's Proposals - General Fund Budget and Council Tax 2024/25 which went to Council 13 February 2024.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications regarding the confirmation of council tax amounts. However, the ability of the Council to appropriately address such issues will be strongly linked to its ability to fund relevant schemes and projects. The funding stream provided by council tax income significantly contributes to enabling the Council to deliver on these areas.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct considerations that arise specifically from the confirmation of council tax amounts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030

There are no direct implications regarding the confirmation of council tax amounts. However, this issue will be considered when relevant schemes and projects provided for within the budget are being approved.

OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder	No direct significant direct issues
Health Inequalities	No direct significant direct issues
Area or Ward affected	This affects all areas, the tax amounts for each Parish/Town area are set out in Appendices B and C.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

None.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL TAX AMOUNTS 2024/25 - AGGREGATION OF PRECEPTS

Although the calculation of the Council's Council Tax Requirement is a function of the full Council and may not be delegated, the final confirmation of the Council Tax amounts is delegated to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee. Legislation requires this formal confirmation even though the process is dictated by legislative formulae and there is no actual judgement or choice to be made.

In respect of the Council Tax for District and Parish / Town Councils' Services for 2024/25, these were approved by Full Council on 13 February 2024 and are set out in **Appendix B**.

The Council Tax amounts for 2024/25 expressed as Council Tax Band D equivalents for each of the major precepting authorities are as follows:

Precepting Authority	Council Tax Amount	Increase
Essex County Council	£1,522.53	4.99%
Essex Fire Services	£82.62	2.91%
Essex Police Services	£246.42	5.55%

When added to the amounts relating to the District and Parish / Town Council Services as approved by Council on 13 February 2024, the average Band D Tax totals **£2,094.28** for 2024/25. **Appendix A** sets out the full precept details.

Appendix C sets out for confirmation the 2024/25 Council Tax amounts including the precepts from the major precepting authorities by property band for the unparished and parished areas of the district.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE ETC.

Executive's Proposals – General Fund Budget and Council Tax – 2024/25 - Item A.1 Council 13 February 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Precepts on the Collection Fund

Appendix B - District and Parish/Town Council Tax Amounts 2024/25 (as approved by Council on 13 February 2024)

Appendix C - County, Fire, Police, District and Parish/Town Council Tax Amounts 2024/25

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