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Tuesday, 10 December 2024

Dear Councillor

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

Notice is hereby given that the following decisions made by a member of the cabinet will be made on Wednesday, 18 December 2024.

1. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 1994 THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (PRECEPTS) (WALES) REGULATIONS 1995 - Proposed Payment Schedule** 1 - 4

Division/Wards Affected: All Wards
CABINET MEMBER: County Councillor B Callard

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2. **COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/26 AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS** 5 - 8

Division/Wards Affected: All Wards
CABINET MEMBER: County Councillor B Callard

AUTHOR: Ruth Donovan Assistant Head of Finance: Revenues, Systems and Exchequer

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Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officers – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation, including DDAT Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships including CJsCs. PSBs and cross boarder Emergency Planning</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader Lead Officers – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor</p> <p>Economic Strategy Skills and Employment Replacement Local Development Plan Placemaking and the development of market and affordable housing Placemaking and Transforming Towns Car parking and civil parking enforcement Development Management Building Control</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse</p> <p>Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Revenue and Benefits Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Strategic procurement</p>	Llanfoist & Govilon
Martyn Groucutt	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education</p>	Lansdown

	<p>School standards and improvement Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport</p>	
Ian Chandler	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children’s services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health Wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision</p>	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officers – Debra Hill-Howells, Craig O’Connor, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport Planning including home to school transport Highways and MCC Fleet Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces and parks Pavements and Back lanes Flood Alleviation Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and River health</p>	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Ian Saunders, Jane Rogers, James Williams</p> <p>Community development, inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars, communications, public relations and marketing Leisure centres, play and sport Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Ethics and standards Welsh Language</p>	Town

	Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Protection, and Licencing	
Sara Burch	<p>Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism Lead Officers – Craig O'Connor, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture Homelessness, Temporary accommodation, private sector housing, (empty homes leasing schemes, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive technology), Allocation of social housing Broadband connectivity Active Travel Countryside Access and Rights of Way Tourism Development and Cultural Services</p>	Cantref

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our Purpose

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.



REPORT

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 1994 THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (PRECEPTS) (WALES) REGULATIONS 1995 – Proposed Payment Schedule

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member – Councillor B. Callard

DATE: 18th December 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. To seek Member approval of the proposals for consultation purposes regarding payments to precepting authorities during the 2025/26 financial year as required by statute.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That the following schedule of payments be proposed pending consultation:
- (i) The Police Authority precept is paid from the Council Fund by twelve monthly equal instalments on the third Tuesday in each month.
 - (ii) The Community Council precepts are paid by three equal instalments on the last working day in April, August and December in each year.
- 2.2. That the Community Councils are consulted prior to the determination and that the response of the consultation is considered when making the final determination.
- 2.3. That a further report be produced on the results of consultation enabling a determination to be made by 31st January in accordance with statute.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. The Council as a billing authority is required to determine the schedule of instalments for payment of Precepts from the Council Fund for each year.
- 3.2. The Regulations provide that on or before the 31st December each year a billing authority must inform each precepting authority of its proposals for a schedule of instalments to satisfy all of the precepts. This proposal should be followed by a determination on or before the 31st January, with at least 21 days elapsing between decision on the proposals and the making of a determination.
- 3.3. In each schedule the billing authority must specify the number of instalments, the proportion of each precept which is to be paid in each instalment and the dates in the year on which

instalments are to be paid. The payment to the Police Authority must be made on the same day and should not be less than twelve instalments in any one financial year. In the case of Town and Community Councils the agreement can be one of the following:

- (i) Payment by three instalments in April, August and December, or;
- (ii) Payment by one instalment on the last working day in April.

3.4. For the existing financial year Monmouthshire County Council operate the arrangement identified in (i) above for Town and Community Councils and pay the Police Authority precept on the third Tuesday of each month.

4. REASONS:

4.1. To approve the proposals for consultation purposes regarding payments to precepting authorities during the 2025/26 financial year as required by statute.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1. Options are laid out by Statute and no further assessment is required.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. Not applicable.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Negligible cash flow advantages would be achieved should a decision be made to pay the Police Authority precept on the last working day of each month.

7.2. Similarly, any decision to move Town and Community Council precept payment to one instalment at the end of April is unlikely to introduce a material cashflow disadvantage but would reduce our payment administration by two thirds and may also assist the financial management within town & community councils.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

8.1. There are no implications directly arising from the recommendations and decisions highlighted in this report.

9. CONSULTEES

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet Members
Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. None

AUTHORS

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REPORT

Subject:	COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/26 AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS
Directorate:	Resources
Meeting:	Individual Cabinet Member Decision – Cabinet Member for Resources
Date:	18th December 2024
Divisions/Wards Affected:	County Wide

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To agree the Council Tax base figure for submission to Welsh Government, together with the collection rate to be applied for 2025/26 and to make other necessary related statutory decisions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995, the amount calculated by the Council as its Tax Base for 2025/26 shall be notified as **48,566.96** and the collection rate set at **98.2%**.
- 2.2 That no Special Resolution declaring Drainage Rates as Special Expenses be made.
- 2.3 That any expenses incurred by the Council in performing in part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by a Community Council shall not be treated as a special expense for the purpose of Section 35 of the Local Govt. Finance Act 1992.
- 2.4 That Council Tax setting continues to be a function of full Council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Council Tax Base

- 3.1 For each financial year, the Council shall set its Council Tax, taking account of its own total net budget requirement and amounts receivable for redistributed Non-Domestic Rates, Revenue Support Grant and any other additional grants. It will also take account of any precepts it receives from other authorities and the value of the Council Tax Base. In simple terms, the net spending not met by grant is divided by the Tax Base to give the amount of Council Tax for a dwelling in Band D. The budget requirement, grant calculations and precepts will be addressed in the Council Tax Setting report.
- 3.2 It was previously agreed by Council in January 2005 that the largely technical matter of setting the Council Tax Base be dealt with by Executive decision. Legally, whilst the annual council tax setting decision could also be decided by the Executive, this has always been referred to full Council, given its wide interest and importance. It is

therefore recommended that council tax setting continues to be a decision for full Council.

- 3.3 The ratified council tax base information must be passed to Welsh Government (WG) by 7th January 2025 with reference to dwellings in the Valuation List as of 31st October 2024 and considering anticipated changes likely to occur during 2025/26. Provisional information has been provided to Welsh Government, if any changes to policy are considered which affect the tax base, revised information will need to be submitted. Significant differences may require Welsh Government to adjust the RSG entitlements via an amending report. The prescribed period during which Councils would notify major precepting authorities of the council tax base figure is normally 1st November to 31st December.
- 3.4 The tax base calculated for 2025/26 reflects Council's decision, on 9th March 2023, to use its discretionary powers under Section 12A and 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to charge a council tax premium on long term empty properties and second homes in the county. From 1st April 2024 the following council tax premiums apply:
- Long term empty properties: a 100% premium for properties empty for 1 year, a 200% premium for properties empty for 2 years and a 300% premium for properties empty for 3 years or more.
 - Second homes: a premium of 100%.
- 3.5 The 2025/26 tax base has been prepared based on the new parishes, as determined under The Monmouthshire (Communities) Order 2021. All changes took effect from 1st April 2022.

Collection Rate

- 3.6 It should be recognised that council tax is being perceived as an increasing burden on taxpayers with more arrangements outside the statutory scheme being sought, thereby increasing the time over which the debt is paid.
- 3.7 Between 2004/5 and 2017/18 the collection rate was increased incrementally from 96% to 99%. The collection rate has since remained at 99%, as generally the overall long term collection rate has continued to meet this target. Whilst overall collection remains relatively strong, despite the continuing cost of living crisis and challenging economic environment for households, it has been necessary to reset the collection rate for 2025/26. This follows the introduction of council tax premiums in 2024/25. To ensure consistency between Councils across Wales, Welsh Government have asked the Council to adjust how premiums are accounted for in the tax base. This change has resulted in a 0.8% reduction in the collection rate, which is set at 98.2% for 2025/26.
- 3.8 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) was introduced by the Welsh Government on 1st April 2013, replacing what was the Council Tax Benefit Scheme. On inception the Welsh Government fully funded the scheme, pending a full review. This review was concluded in the summer of 2014, with Welsh Government announcing its intention to continue to fund the scheme for another 2 years (2015/16 and 2016/17). The scheme has since been extended further for the financial years 2017/18 through to 2024/25. During the year, Welsh Government have consulted on a number of technical changes to the Scheme, which will be introduced in 2025/26 and 2026/27. A separate report is scheduled for full Council on 23rd January 2025 to approve next year's Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

- 3.9 The Covid 19 pandemic put significant pressure on the CTRS budget in 2020/21 and 2021/22. However, demand has since returned to pre pandemic levels.
- 3.10 Funding of the CTRS from Welsh Government forms part of the annual revenue budget settlement and is expected to remain at current levels for next year. As part of its annual budget setting, the Council can determine how much budget to allocate to this Scheme taking account of levels of take up and any additional costs arising from any increases in council tax. From a household perspective, they will not be required to make any contributions.

Special Items and Expenses (Section 34)

- 3.11 Certain items of expenditure, and precepts made upon the Council by Community Councils are applicable only to certain parts of the area and special rules exist to deal with these items. These rules apply to all the Town and Community Council precepts in respect of each of their respective areas. They also apply to Drainage Rates which are charged only in certain parts of the East and South of the County area. The Council has always considered that the general body of taxpayers should be treated equally in this respect and such expenditure should be defrayed over the whole area rather than charged as an additional item on those who happen to be in a particular catchment area. If this view continues to prevail then no special resolution declaring these to be special expenses will be necessary.
- 3.12 Finally, expenses incurred by an authority in performing in part of its area a function performed elsewhere by a Community Council (concurrent functions) must be treated as a special expense unless a negative resolution is in force.
- 3.13 The effect of the above result in a recommendation leading to drainage rates and concurrent functions being charged equally across the County.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

- 4.1 There are no implications for sustainability, safeguarding and corporate parenting. The Council Tax base itself is mainly calculated from information about the numbers of properties within the County, adjusted to an equivalent band D figure for things such as discounts, exemptions and reliefs, and is therefore based on fact and provided for information. Annually Council considers council tax setting as part of the wider budget proposals in March. At this time, these proposals are subject to an overall WFG assessment. Our Sustainability Community Officer has confirmed that under these circumstances there is no requirement to complete a Future Generations Evaluation.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Not applicable. This is a statutory report.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To agree the council tax base figure and the collection rate for the forthcoming financial year, as required by legislation.

- 7.2 To determine whether a special resolution should be made declaring Drainage Rates a special expense.
- 7.3 To determine whether any expenses incurred in part only of the area should be treated as special expenditure in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- 7.4 To confirm that the important matter of tax setting should continue to be a function of full council rather than be devolved for executive decision.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Overall the Council Tax base calculated for 2025/26 has risen by 0.2% compared to 2024/25. This increase reflects the current level of exemptions and discounts, anticipated changes in dwellings and the inclusion of council tax premiums.
- 8.2 Any income generated from council tax premiums (net of direct administration expenditure) will be transferred to an earmarked reserve to be used in future to further the Council's progress in addressing housing issues in the County.
- 8.3 The remaining estimated income derived from the council tax base will be included in the draft budget proposals to be considered by Cabinet on 22nd January 2025.

9. CONSULTEES:

Acting Chief Executive
Cabinet Member for Resources
Head of Finance

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

11. AUTHORS:

Ruth Donovan – Assistant Head of Finance: Revenues, Systems and Exchequer

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