



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Cabinet

5 December 2023

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Deputy Leader of the council

Council Tax Base 2024/25

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To recommend the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2024/25.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. **Recommends to Full Council the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 of 49,710.0 in accordance with the relevant legislation. This will form the basis upon which the Council will estimate Council Tax income for the 2024/25 budget.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision? No

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? High Performing Council

Which wards are impacted? All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 These are contained within the report. Setting the tax base is an important milestone in the annual budget setting process and allows the Council to project the anticipated Council Tax that will be collected for the following financial year.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The approval of the Council Tax Base detailed in this report is required in accordance with the legislation referred to in Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which sets out the requirements for council tax setting which can be discharged by full Council.
- 1.3 The proposals in this report will be considered by Council at its budget setting meeting scheduled for 29 February 2024.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 amended by s84 of the Local Government Act 2003 set out the requirements allowing each local authority to make its own arrangements for adopting the Council Tax base. The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012:2914) provides amended statutory guidance to incorporate the changes resulting from the introduction of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS).
- 2.2 The Council Tax Base forms part of the calculation for the council tax for the local area; the number of properties that will form the Council Tax Base must therefore be agreed.
- 2.3 As well as setting out the requirement that the Council Tax Base be calculated, statute also sets out the timeframe in which this must be completed. The Council is required to inform its preceptors of the Council Tax Base by 31 January 2024.
- 2.4 The council tax varies between different bands according to proportions laid down in legislation. These proportions 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.

2.5 In determining the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 the following factors have been taking into considerations:

- (a) The tax base for parish purposes is based on the number of properties as at 11 September 2023 and the discounts and exemptions applicable on 2 October 2023, as prescribed by legislation;
- (b) An adjustment for the impact of the local Council Tax Support Scheme that has been adopted by South Kesteven District Council;
- (c) An adjustment for the empty property premium, which allows South Kesteven District Council to charge a premium of between 100% and 300% depending upon the period the property has remained empty.

2.6 Table 1 summarises the position showing the proposed tax base for South Kesteven for 2024/25 is 49,710.0 Band D equivalents. This is an increase of 0.77% on the previous financial year 2023/24. Appendix A analyses these figures at Parish level.

Table 1: Band D Equivalent Properties

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Total Band D equivalents	53,404.5	53,017.6	52,663.2	52,170.4
Impact of LCTSS Discounts and Work Incentive	(3,694.5)	(3,688.6)	(3,956.5)	(4,048)
Total Band D Equivalent properties	49,710.0	49,329.0	48,706.7	48,122.4
Tax Base Growth	0.77%	1.28%	1.21%	0.4%

Adjustment for the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

2.7 The localisation of Council Tax Support which was introduced from 1 April 2013 has a direct impact on the setting of the Council Tax base.

2.8 The Council Tax base must therefore be adjusted to include the impact of the Localised Council Tax Support scheme that has been adopted by South Kesteven District Council.

2.9 As set out in Table 1, the LCTSS reduces the tax base and therefore the Council tax income collected by individual precepting bodies.

Adjustment for empty property premiums

2.10 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 first introduced the power for local authorities to charge a premium of up to 50% where a property was left unoccupied and unfurnished.

2.11 The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 allowed Councils to increase these premiums in line with legislation from 1 April 2019 and each year thereafter for a further two years.

2.12 The Council Tax Base is increased as a result of the empty premium which allows a billing authority to charge a premium on properties left unoccupied and unfurnished. These premiums are as follows: -

- (a) Up to 100% premium for properties empty between two and five years – resulting in a full charge of 200%
- (b) Up to 200% premium for properties empty between five and ten years – resulting in a full charge of 300%
- (c) Up to 300% premium for properties empty for at least ten years – resulting in a full charge of 400%

2.13 As set out in Table 1, the empty property premium increases the tax base and therefore the Council tax income collected by individual precepting bodies.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 These are set out in the report.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 None.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 If the recommendation is supported, it will be used in the calculation and budget preparations for 2024/25.

6. Consultation

6.1 None – this report contains technical calculations for the council's tax base for 2024/25 as prescribed by legislation.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – 2024/25 Council Tax Base by Parish.