

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 011692
Date 18 January 2016

Council Tax Rate

Request:

I am requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

1. The currently proposed increase (if any) in the council tax rate charged by the council for 2016/17. Please give a total figure and then divide it into (a) non-ringfenced increase and (b) adult care precept (if applicable). So, if the increase is 3.99%, please respond with 3.99% comprising of (a) 1.99% and (b) 2%. In this question, "proposed" includes where a council is consulting on a preferred option, or in the absence of this, where a council has temporarily assumed a certain level of increase (possibly in its Medium Term Financial Plan) prior to a final decision?

On 13 January Cabinet approved that the Director of Finance notifies the Secretary of State that the council intends to take up the 2% option to increase council tax to support Social Care. This report can be found at the following link:

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s19313/201617%20budget%20and%20medium%20term%20financial%20strategy%20201617%20-%20201819%20-%20provisional%20local%20government%20.pdf>

A formal decision on the 2% Adult Social Care Precept increase and any general increase in council tax will be made by Full Council on 2 March (see answer to Question 8).

2. Please state what level of council tax rate rise (if any) is currently assumed or forecast for (a) 2017/18, (b) 2018/19 and (c) 2019/20 (this may be via the MTFP)?

Details of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found at the following link:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/budgetsavings>

3. In which financial year did the council last increase the council tax rate? Please note that the responses to questions 1 and 2 should be percentage figures, not monetary values. Questions 1-3 only concern the council tax rate charged by the council, not by any other organisations (e.g. other councils, town councils, police and fire authorities etc).

2015/16

Questions 4 and 5 apply to councils in England with responsibility for delivering adult care services:

4. What is the forecast shortfall in the council's 2016/17 adult care services budget, including cost pressures and central government funding cuts, but *prior* to applying any savings proposals, fee increases, and forecast revenue from the council tax adult care precept?

In 2016/17 the forecast budget pressure in relation to Adult Social Care Services Budget is approximately £6 million.

This is being dealt with through a combination of savings within Adult Care budgets, the 2% increase on council tax for the Adult Social Care Precept and savings and income from other council services.

5. How much additional revenue does the council expect to generate through its proposed council tax adult care precept in 2016/17?

£1.7 million

6. Has the council been given dispensation by the UK government to increase its council tax rate by more than 2% in 2016/17 without a referendum, by virtue of its pre-existing low council tax rates?

No

7. On what date is the council cabinet/executive (or equivalent) due to finalise its proposed council tax rate for 2016/17?

24 February

8. On what date is the council (presumably via a meeting of full council) due to formally approve its council tax rate for 2016/17?

2 March

Questions 9-12 apply to English councils with responsibility for Council Tax Support/Reduction schemes:

9. What was the maximum percentage of a working-age Council Tax Support (CTS) claimant's council tax bill that was paid by the council under the council's 2015/16 CTS scheme (excluding specified protected/vulnerable groups)?

78%

10. What is the maximum percentage of a working-age Council Tax Support (CTS) claimant's council tax bill that will be paid by the council under the council's 2016/17 CTS scheme or proposed CTS scheme (excluding specified protected/vulnerable groups)?

78%

11. What other changes (if any) is the council making (or proposing to make) to working-age entitlement under its CTS scheme in 2016/17? (This excludes minor routine alterations that do not affect working-age claimants' entitlement to

receive CTS)

No change planned

12. On what date is the council due to formally approve its CTS scheme for 2016/17 (if not already done so)?
27 January 2016

Please note that while this request is being sent to all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, certain questions will not apply to certain councils.