

CABINET MEETING – 12 FEBRUARY 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET- PART 1

Title of Report:

Collection Fund 2013/2014

Author(s):

Head of Financial Resources

Purpose of Report:

This report advises Cabinet of the estimated balance on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax, for 2013/2014 and the amounts available to the Council and its major precepting authorities for use in setting Council Tax levels for 2014/2015.

Description of Decision:

Members are requested to note the overall positive position in relation to the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund for 2013/2014, and the surplus of £500,000 which will be taken into account when setting the Council Tax level for the Council for 2014/2015.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? No, the decision forms part of the budget setting process for 2013/2014.

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Estimating the Collection Fund balance in respect of Council tax, available at the end of 2013/2014 for use in setting the Council Tax for 2014/2015 is a legal requirement, which the Council must fulfil, based on information available to it as at 15th January, each year.

The Council also has an obligation to notify its major precepting authorities of the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax, within 7 working days of when this calculation has been made.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Not applicable as the report is for information only.

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?

Yes

Is it included in the 28 Day Notice of Decisions?

Yes

Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Meeting – 12th February 2014

Collection Fund 2013/2014

Report of the Head of Financial Resources

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report advises Cabinet of the estimated balance on the Collection Fund, in respect of Council Tax, for 2013/2014 and the amounts available to the Council and its major precepting authorities for use in setting Council Tax levels for 2014/2015.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendation)

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the position in relation to the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund for 2013/2014 and the surplus of £500,000 which will be taken into account when setting the Council Tax level for the Council for 2014/2015.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 Following the introduction of the Retained Business Rates mechanism for funding local government from April 2013, the Collection Fund comprises two elements - Council Tax element and Business Rates element.
- 3.2 Council Tax
 - 3.2.1 The Local Authorities (Funds) (England) Regulations 1992 made under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 1988, require that billing authorities inform their relevant major precepting authorities of the amount of any estimated surplus or deficit on the Council tax element of their Collection Fund at 31st March.
 - 3.2.2 The estimate is to be made on 15th January or if that is not a working day, the next such day, in accordance with prescribed rules.
 - 3.2.3 Major precepting authorities are to be notified of the estimated surplus or deficit within 7 working days of the estimate being made.
 - 3.2.4 The amount of any surplus or deficit, which the billing authority estimates on its Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax, as at 31st March is shared by the billing authority and the major precepting authorities in proportion to their respective demands upon the Collection Fund. The amount which is estimated will be taken into account by those authorities in calculating their basic amounts of Council Tax for the following year. The estimated surplus or deficit at 31st March 2014 will therefore be taken into account in setting the Council Tax for 2014/2015.

3.2.5 The sums calculated in accordance with paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.4 above are not to be taken into account by authorities in calculating their budget levels, but are to be taken into account when calculating the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2014/2015.

3.2.6 Details in respect of the forecast surplus on the Council Tax element of the collection fund are set out at section 4.1.

3.3 Business Rates

3.3.1 The Non Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, requires the estimated surplus or deficit in respect to the Business Rates element of the Collection Fund to be calculated and submitted to Government by the 31st January each year. This calculation, and the allocation of respective shares to central government, the Council and the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority forms part of the NNDR1 form which was submitted to Government on 31st January 2014 in accordance with the regulations.

3.3.2 The final NNDR1 form is included within the Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax for 2014/2015 report set out elsewhere on this agenda.

4. Collection Fund 2013/2014 - Council Tax Element

4.1 The surplus on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund as at 31st March 2013, reported as part of the Statement of Accounts for 2012/2013, was £2.339m.

4.2 It was agreed, in a report to Cabinet on the 13th February 2013, that the Council would use some of the projected surplus on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund at 31st March 2013 as follows:

	£
Council Tax	
Sunderland City Council	500,000
Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (PCCN)	35,280
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	<u>30,844</u>
	<u>566,124</u>

These sums were consequently taken into account when setting the Council Tax for 2013/2014 by the Council and its precepting authorities.

4.3 On the basis of current collection rates and the recovery of Council Tax arrears, it is estimated that the surplus on the Collection Fund, in respect of Council Tax, as at 31st March 2014 will be £2.120m. The sum of £567,359 is therefore proposed to be used in 2014/2015 as a prudent measure with any remaining actual surplus to be used in future years. The amount of £567,359 is to be shared as follows:

Sunderland City Council, (Billing Authority)	£ 500,000
Precepting Authorities:	
Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (PCCN)	36,515
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	<u>30,844</u>
	<u>567,359</u>

The major precepting authorities have been informed of the position.

- 4.4 The sum of £500,000 has been taken into consideration in resourcing the Council's Revenue Budget for 2014/2015.
- 4.5 This positive position reflects the continued strong focus on Council Tax collection, continuous improvement in systems and processes and wider proactive initiatives to address Welfare Reform challenges.

5. Reasons for Decision

- 5.1 Estimating the Collection Fund balance, in respect of Council tax, available in 2013/2014 for use in setting the Council Tax for 2014/2015 is a legal requirement, which the Council must carry out, based on information available to it as at 15th January of each year.
- 5.2 The Council also has an obligation to notify its major precepting authorities of the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund, in respect of Council tax, within 7 working days of when this calculation has been made.

6. Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected

- 6.1 Not applicable as the report is for information only.

7. Background Papers

Council Report 29th January 2014 – Business Rates Income Forecast 2014/2015 and Projected Business Rates Income Outturn 2013/2014.

