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Please ask for:  
Alison Marston

11 February 2022

Dear Councillor

You are requested to attend a special meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL to be held on Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Roller City, Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6BX.

Yours faithfully



Governance Services Manager

**AGENDA**  
**PART 1**

1. **APOLOGIES**  
To receive apologies for absence, if any.
2. **MINUTES**  
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 (previously circulated).
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS**  
To note declarations of Members' disclosable pecuniary interests, non-disclosable pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests in respect of items on the Agenda.
4. **COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23 (Pages 3 - 12)**  
Report of the Head of Resources on setting the Council Tax for 2022/23.
5. **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS 2023/24 TO 2026/27 (Pages 13 - 14)**  
Recommendation from Audit Committee on 31 January 2022 on the appointment of external auditors 2023/24 to 2026/27.

Circulation: The Mayor and Members of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council  
Corporate Management Team  
Press and Public (except Part II Items)

**If you require any further information about this Agenda please contact Alison Marston, Governance Services on 01707 357444 or email – [democracy@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@welhat.gov.uk)**

## Part I

Main author: Richard Baker

Executive Member: Duncan Bell

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
SPECIAL COUNCIL – 22 FEBRUARY 2022  
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF RESOURCES

## **COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23**

### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council is required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set the Council Tax for its area by no later than 11th March. The Council has always aimed to approve the budget and Council Tax by February in order to ensure prompt despatch of bills and hence quicker collection of sums due. The Council approved the 2022/23 budget on 2 February 2022 and the purpose of this report is to set the Council tax for 2022/23.
- 1.2 The 2022/23 Local Government Finance Settlement was announced 7 February 2022, and does not alter the 2022/23 budget that was approved.
- 1.3 As set out in the budget report, the Council will increase the average Band D Council tax (excluding parish precepts) by £4.95 (2.26%) to £224.10 for 2022/23.
- 1.4 Parish Precepts have increased by 6% overall to £1.894m and this is an area which the council has no control over, as it is determined by Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.5 For 2022/23, the referendum limits for a band D property set by Government are as follows:
  - County Councils: a core principle of up to 2%, with an additional 1% Adult Social Care precept and the ability to roll-over up to an additional 3% of unused Adult Social Care precept from 2021/22
  - District/Borough Councils: 2% or up to £5 on a Band D, whichever is greater
  - Police: up to £10 on a Band D

### **2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That it be noted that the 2022/23 General Fund budget as approved by the Council meeting on 2 February is shown in Appendix A.
- 2.2 That it be noted that at the following amounts for the year 2022/23 were agreed in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act").
  - a) The gross 2022/23 Tax base for the Borough is 43,760.2 equivalent Band D properties before the application of a collection rate.
  - b) 43,497.6 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations), as its Council Tax Base for the year 2022/23; including deductions for council tax support and a collection rate of 99.4%.

- c) Part of the Council's Area being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;

	100% TAXBASE	99.40% TAXBASE
Welwyn Garden City	17,853.5	17,746.4
Hatfield	12,378.2	12,303.9
Welwyn	4,747.1	4,718.6
Ayot St Lawrence	70.0	69.6
Ayot St Peter	113.4	112.7
North Mymms	4,438.3	4,411.7
Essendon	431.8	429.2
Northaw & Cuffley	3,113.5	3,094.8
Woolmer Green	614.4	610.7
Total	43,760.2	43,497.6

2.3 In accordance with the statutory legislation the Council is recommended to resolve:

2.4 That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with sections 31 - 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- a) £138,038,987 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
- b) £126,397,635 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- c) £11,641,352 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2.4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2.4(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- d) £267.63 being the amount at 2.4(c) above, all divided by the Council tax base at 2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- e) £2,549,384 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- f) £209.02 being the amount at 2.4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2.4(e) by 2.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- g) Part of the Council's area:  
Being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2.4(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 2.2(c) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

	<b>Band D Amount (£)</b>
Ayot St Lawrence	220.51
Ayot St Peter	240.08
Essendon	298.57
Hatfield	293.11
North Mymms	254.10
Northaw & Cuffley	311.84
Welwyn	308.34
Welwyn Garden City	234.86
Woolmer Green	253.99

h) Part of the Council's Area:

Amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2.4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

<b>Valuation Bands (£)</b>	<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
Ayot St Lawrence	147.01	171.51	196.01	220.51	269.51	318.51	367.52	441.02
Ayot St Peter	160.05	186.73	213.40	240.08	293.43	346.78	400.13	480.16
Essendon	199.05	232.22	265.40	298.57	364.92	431.27	497.62	597.14
Hatfield	195.41	227.97	260.54	293.11	358.25	423.38	488.52	586.22
North Mymms	169.40	197.63	225.87	254.10	310.57	367.03	423.50	508.20
Northaw & Cuffley	207.89	242.54	277.19	311.84	381.14	450.44	519.73	623.68
Welwyn	205.56	239.82	274.08	308.34	376.86	445.38	513.90	616.68
Welwyn Garden City	156.57	182.67	208.76	234.86	287.05	339.24	391.43	469.72
Woolmer Green	169.33	197.55	225.77	253.99	310.43	366.87	423.32	507.98

2.5 That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the major precepting authorities, Hertfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire have stated the amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the following tables.

<b>Hertfordshire County Council (£)</b>								
	<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
Ayot St Lawrence	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Ayot St Peter	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Essendon	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Hatfield	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
North Mymms	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Northaw & Cuffley	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Welwyn	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Welwyn Garden City	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62
Woolmer Green	1,019.54	1,189.46	1,359.38	1,529.31	1,869.16	2,209.00	2,548.85	3,058.62

<b>Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire (£)</b>								
	<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
Ayot St Lawrence	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Ayot St Peter	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Essendon	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Hatfield	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
North Mymms	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Northaw & Cuffley	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Welwyn	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Welwyn Garden City	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Woolmer Green	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00

- 2.6 That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2.4(h) and 2.5 (a) and (b) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2022/23 for each part of its area and for each categories of dwellings.

<b>Part of the Council's Area (£)</b>								
	<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
Ayot St Lawrence	1,315.22	1,534.41	1,753.61	1,972.82	2,411.23	2,849.62	3,288.04	3,945.64
Ayot St Peter	1,328.26	1,549.63	1,771.00	1,992.39	2,435.15	2,877.89	3,320.65	3,984.78
Essendon	1,367.26	1,595.12	1,823.00	2,050.88	2,506.64	2,962.38	3,418.14	4,101.76
Hatfield	1,363.62	1,590.87	1,818.14	2,045.42	2,499.97	2,954.49	3,409.04	4,090.84
North Mymms	1,337.61	1,560.53	1,783.47	2,006.41	2,452.29	2,898.14	3,344.02	4,012.82
Northaw & Cuffley	1,376.10	1,605.44	1,834.79	2,064.15	2,522.86	2,981.55	3,440.25	4,128.30
Welwyn	1,373.77	1,602.72	1,831.68	2,060.65	2,518.58	2,976.49	3,434.42	4,121.30
Welwyn Garden City	1,324.78	1,545.57	1,766.36	1,987.17	2,428.77	2,870.35	3,311.95	3,974.34
Woolmer Green	1,337.54	1,560.45	1,783.37	2,006.30	2,452.15	2,897.98	3,343.84	4,012.60

### **3 Special items - Parish Precepts**

- 3.1 In accordance with the legislation under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, all Parish Precepts have to be charged to the Council's General Fund.
- 3.2 For 2022/23, the total parish precepts (net of the council tax support grant) will be increased by £106,443 (6.0%). The table below shows the precepts for each of the town/parish councils in 2022/23 and year on year change.

Parish Councils	2021/22 Parish Precepts (net of Council Tax Support grant)	2022/23 Parish Precepts	Change	Change
	£	£	£	%
Ayot St Lawrence	800.00	800.00	0.00	0.0%
Ayot St Peter	2,500.00	3,500.00	1,000.00	40.0%
Essendon	28,125.00	35,156.00	7,031.00	25.0%
Hatfield	900,951.00	936,988.00	36,037.00	4.0%
North Mymms	193,091.00	198,877.00	5,786.00	3.0%
Northaw & Cuffley	205,212.00	257,511.00	52,299.00	25.5%
Welwyn	428,957.00	433,247.00	4,290.00	1.0%
Welwyn Garden City	-	-		
Woolmer Green	27,463.00	27,463.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,787,099.00</b>	<b>1,893,542.00</b>	<b>106,443.00</b>	<b>6.0%</b>

#### **4 Special items – Special Expenses**

- 4.1 The Council meeting held on 2 February 2022 agreed the amounts to be included in the “Special Expenses” scheme for 2022/23 as £655,842.

#### **5 Billing Authority Precepts**

- 5.1 The Borough’s Council Tax requirement for 2022/23 including the parish precept will be £11,641,352.

#### **6 Hertfordshire County Council**

- 6.1 The Hertfordshire County Council precept for 2022/23 is expected to be formally approved on 22 February 2022. The band D council tax will be £1,529.31 and the County precept is £ 66,521,314.66 for 2022/23. This is a 1.99% increase in their Band D council tax, and a 2% increase for the adult social care precept for 2022/23.

#### **7 Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire**

- 7.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire’s precept for 2022/23 is expected to be formally approved at their meeting on 11 February 2022. The band D council tax will be £223.00 and the precept is £ 9,699,965 for 2022/23. This is a £10 (4.69%) increase in their Band D council tax.

#### **8 Overall average band D council tax**

- 8.1 To summarise, after taking into account the precepts from Parish Councils, Hertfordshire County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, the average band D Council tax for the borough area for 2022/23 is £2,019.64 this is an increase of £76.04 or 3.91%. However, the band D council tax varies from £1,972.82 to £2,064.15 and the table below also shows that the tax change for 2022/23 will range from 3.61% to 4.58%.

	2021/22	2022/23	
	Band D £	Band D £	% Change
Ayot St Lawrence	1,899.73	1,972.82	3.85%
Ayot St Peter	1,910.33	1,992.39	4.30%
Essendon	1,961.13	2,050.88	4.58%
Hatfield	1,970.47	2,045.42	3.80%
North Mymms	1,932.15	2,006.41	3.84%
Northaw & Cuffley	1,973.74	2,064.15	4.58%
Welwyn	1,987.17	2,060.65	3.70%
Welwyn Garden City	1,912.65	1,987.17	3.90%
Woolmer Green	1,936.48	2,006.30	3.61%
<b>Borough Area Council Tax</b>	<b>1,943.90</b>	<b>2,019.94</b>	<b>3.91%</b>

## **Implications**

### **9 Legal Implication(s)**

- 9.1 The Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make estimates of gross revenue expenditure and anticipated income, leading to a calculation of a council tax requirement and the setting of an overall budget and Council Tax. The amount of the budget must be sufficient to meet the Council's legal and financial obligations, ensure the proper discharge of its statutory duties, and lead to a balanced budget. The Council should be satisfied that the proposals put forward are a reasonably prudent use of resources in both the short and long term, and that the interests of both Council Tax payers and ratepayers on the one hand and the users of Council services on the other are both taken into account.
- 9.2 Section 25 of the 2003 Local Government Act requires the Chief Finance Officer, Head of Resources, to make a formal report to the Council on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves. This report was presented in the Budget report presented to Council at its meeting on 2 February 2022.

### **10 Financial Implication(s)**

- 10.1 Financial implications are set out in the body of the report where relevant.

### **11 Risk Management Implication(s)**

- 11.1 There are risks to the council's short and medium term budget strategy including continued government funding restrictions, the impact of the economic downturn, inflation and other changes in the national economy, spending exceeding budgets, pressures on existing budgets, legislative change demands for new spend and the delivery of challenging efficiency targets. The budget process includes the recognition of these risks in determining the 2022/23 budget and relevant risk provisions are set out in the body of the report.

### **12 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

### **13 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 13.1 There are none arising directly from this report.



**14 Climate Change Implication(s)**

14.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**15 Health and Wellbeing Implications(s)**

15.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**16 Link to Corporate Priorities**

16.1 The subject of this report is linked to the delivery of all of the Councils the Corporate Priorities.

**17 Communications Plan**

17.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**18 Equality and Diversity**

18.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report as there is no impact on services directly as a result of the recommendations.

**19 Human Resources Implications**

19.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

Name of author	Richard Baker
Title	Head of Resources
Date	11 February 2022

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**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
GENERAL FUND SUMMARY 2022/23**

**Appendix A**

Description	Original Budget 2021/22	Forecast Outturn 2021/22	Original Budget 2022/23	Year On Year Change
	£ '000	£ '000	£ '000	£ '000
Head of Resources	1,323	5,353	1,734	411
Head of Environment	6,953	7,768	7,411	458
Head of Policy and Culture	1,352	2,581	1,262	(89)
<b>Resources, Environment and Cultural Services</b>	<b>9,628</b>	<b>15,702</b>	<b>10,407</b>	<b>779</b>
Head of Law and Administration	2,281	2,246	2,314	33
Head of Planning	1,096	1,116	990	(106)
Head of Public Health and Protection	1,336	1,413	1,251	(85)
<b>Public Protection, Planning and Governance</b>	<b>4,712</b>	<b>4,775</b>	<b>4,554</b>	<b>(158)</b>
Head of Community and Housing Strategy	2,217	2,152	2,230	14
<b>Housing and Communities</b>	<b>2,217</b>	<b>2,152</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>14</b>
Budgets of the Corporate Management Team	1,598	1,513	1,642	45
<b>Net Controllable Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>18,155</b>	<b>24,142</b>	<b>18,835</b>	<b>680</b>
Net Recharge to the Housing Revenue Account	(5,066)	(5,176)	(5,485)	(418)
<b>Net General Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>13,089</b>	<b>18,966</b>	<b>13,350</b>	<b>261</b>
Income from Council Tax	(11,312)	(11,312)	(11,641)	(329)
Plus/Less Council Tax collection fund deficit/(surplus)	148	148	213	65
Business Rates Income	(3,812)	(4,612)	(3,930)	(118)
Plus/Less Rates collection fund deficit/(surplus)	522	9,476	(1,153)	(1,675)
New Homes Bonus and other grants	(609)	(609)	(712)	(103)
Lower Tier Services Grant	(124)	(124)	(131)	(7)
Services Grant	0	0	(201)	(201)
Covid Support Grant	(610)	(910)	0	610
<b>Other Operating Income and Expenditure</b>				
Less Interest and Investment Income	(30)	(30)	(30)	0
Net interest income from Now Housing	(40)	(40)	(100)	(60)
Plus capital financing	949	949	1,094	145
Borrowing Interest	420	420	490	70
Parish Precepts	1,787	1,787	1,894	107
<b>Net Total before movements in reserves</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>14,109</b>	<b>(858)</b>	<b>(1,236)</b>
Contribution (from) / to Covid Earmarked Reserves	0	(425)	250	250
Contribution (from) / to Earmarked Reserves	520	(3,969)	(259)	(779)
Contribution (from) / to Earmarked Reserves - Collection Fund	0	(8,624)	940	940
<b>Contribution (from) / to GF balances</b>	<b>(898)</b>	<b>(1,091)</b>	<b>(73)</b>	<b>825</b>

**Key of variance column = (Decrease in expenditure/increase in income), increase in expenditure/reduction in income**

Opening General Fund Balances	6,902	6,902	5,811
Use of General Fund Balances	(898)	(1,091)	(73)
Closing General Fund Balances	6,004	5,811	5,738

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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
SPECIAL COUNCIL - 22 FEBRUARY 2022

Recommendation from Audit Committee on 31 January 2022:-

10. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS 2023/24 TO 2026/27

Report of the Head of Resources on the appointment of external auditors for the period of 2023/24 to 2026/27.

Councils were required under the legislation to appoint their own external auditors and the legislation set out two options for the Council:

- The Council could run its own procurement exercise.
- The Council could utilise the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), under the appointing persons regime (Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015).

PSAA wrote to Councils in September 2021 to invite them to be part of the next procurement exercise which would seek to grant 5-year framework contracts. The Council needed to provide a response by 11 March 2022. The Council recognised that the current audit system was not ideal, with only 9% of local audits having been completed by the end of September. The areas raised in review were being considered as part of the national exercise including trying to widen the pool of potential firms that could bid for the work. Direct procurement had been considered but given the local government audit market it was unlikely that this would be the best means of securing an external auditor. Direct procurement would be resource intensive to administer and would see the Council looking to draw from the same pool of auditors that would be bidding for work under the national scheme.

The following points were highlighted and noted:

- Members thought it was a good, organised scheme.
- Members asked why would the Council not go with the scheme and was it value for money? Officers stated that some Councils had considered moving away from the national scheme given some issues that had arisen. The national market for audit had come under scrutiny recently with a number of Councils failing to have their accounts audited by the deadline as set out in the statutory guidance. Also, there were some Councils that are blaming the issue on the auditors undertaking the work and felt a more direct procurement approach may provide them with better contract management controls. The Council recognised that regardless of whether they opted for direct procurement or joined with the national scheme, the Council would attract the same pool of auditors. Officers advised that joining the national scheme would provide better value for money and offer a higher quality of service with the controls in place to manage contracts.

RESOLVED:  
**(Unanimous)**

That Audit Committee recommended to Council that the Council opts into the appointing arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments for the appointment of its external auditors for the years 2023/24 to 2026/27.

Audit Committee Document Link – [Monday 31 January 2022](#)