

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No 14

meeting date: 19 NOVEMBER 2019
title: COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020/21
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform members of the council tax base for 2020/21.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council tax base is set each year between 1 December and 31 January and is an important calculation which sets out the number of dwellings to which council tax is chargeable in an area or part of an area.
- 2.2 To calculate the tax base for an area, the number of dwellings in each council tax band is adjusted to take account of any discounts, premiums or exemptions. The resulting figure for each band is then multiplied by its proportion relative to Band D (from 6/9 for Band A to 18/9 for Band H) and the total across all eight bands is calculated. These are then multiplied by the authority's estimated collection rate for the year.
- 2.3 The tax base is used for the purposes of calculating the band d council tax for the billing authority and also major precepting authorities and parish councils.

3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 2012

- 3.1 The *Local Government Finance Act 2012* allowed changes to the discounts on council tax for second homes and empty properties. From 1 April 2013, second homes may be charged 100% of their normal rate of council tax, instead of the previous maximum of 90%. "Unoccupied and substantially unfurnished" properties are subject to a discount of anything between 0% and 100% of their council tax, at the discretion of the billing authority. Properties undergoing "major repair work" or "structural alteration", which are vacant, can be subject to a discount of any amount between 0% and 100%, for a maximum of 12 months.
- 3.2 The full 50% discount must be retained on a second home where the liable person is required as part of his/her employment to live in job-related accommodation.
- 3.3 From 1 April 2013, local authorities can also set an 'empty homes premium' for long-term empty properties. Properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over two years may be charged up to 150% of the normal liability.
- 3.4 In 2013/14, i.e. the first year of the new changes, the Council agreed to leave the rates of our current discounts/exemptions unchanged.
- 3.5 From 2014/15 however the Council, after detailed consideration, implemented the following change:
- For long term empty properties (empty from 6 months up to two years) remove the current 50% discount i.e. owners are liable for the full 100% council tax due.

4 THE RATING (PROPERTY IN COMMON OCCUPATION) AND COUNCIL TAX (EMPTY DWELLINGS) ACT 2018

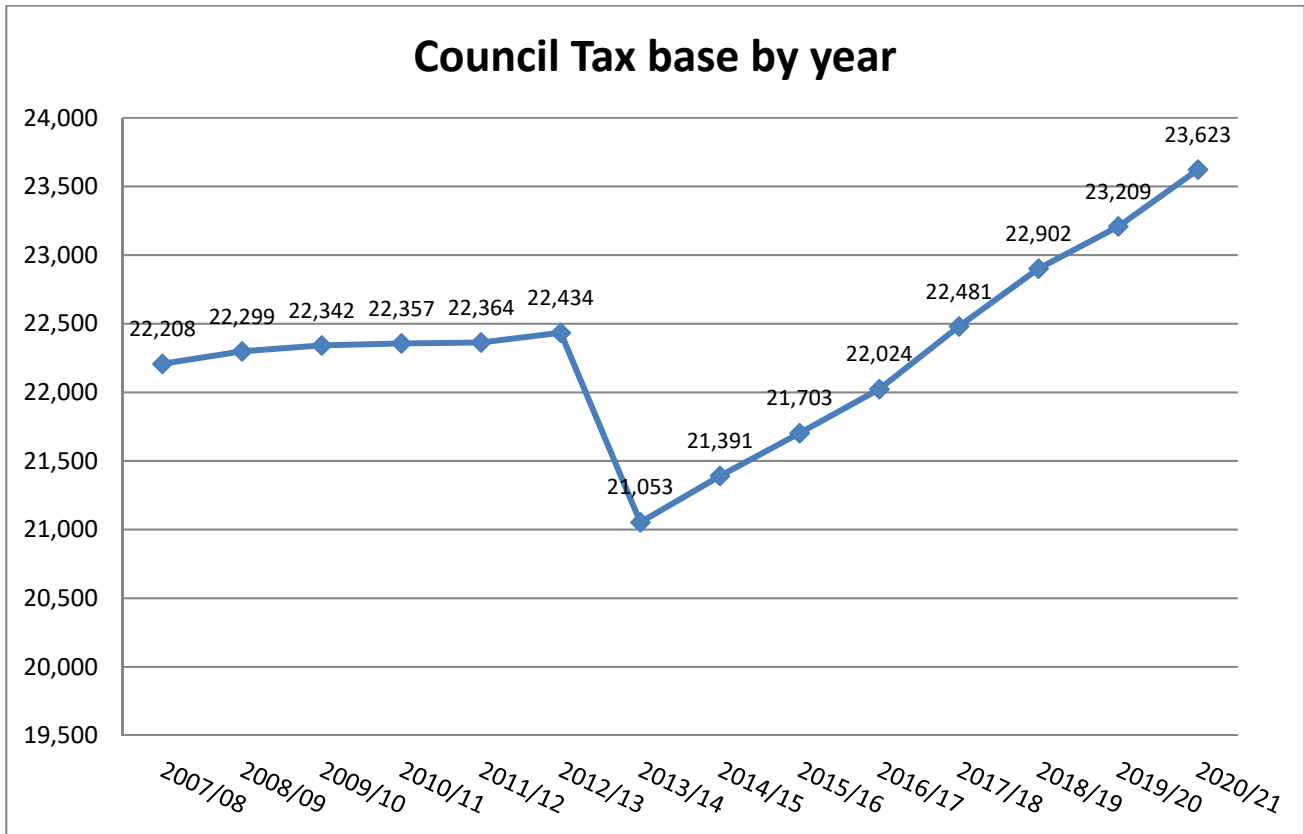
- 4.1 Legislation was passed on 1st November 2018 that gave Billing Authorities greater freedoms in the charges that are levied on long term empty homes. The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 increased the premium that Billing Authorities can impose on properties that have been vacant i.e. unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years from 50% to 100%.
- 4.2 Furthermore from 1st April 2020 for properties that have been vacant for more than 5 years the premium can be increased to 200% and from 1 April 2021 the premium can be increased to 300% for properties that have been unoccupied for more than 10 years.
- 4.3 It is important to note that this legislation does not apply to second homes or properties that are exempt from Council Tax e.g. where a property may be unoccupied because the owner has passed away or gone into a nursing home etc.
- 4.4 In the Ribble Valley there are currently 209 properties that are classed as being vacant for more than 6 months, that are not second homes or exempt from Council Tax. For these properties a full Council Tax charge is levied but we do not currently also charge a premium. However it should be noted that only 99 (30 of which are on the Calderstones hospital site) of these have been unoccupied for more than 2 years. Furthermore if we were to take advantage of this new flexibility this Council would only retain 9% of any extra council tax revenues raised.
- 4.5 As last year it is not proposed that we introduce any changes for the forthcoming year but perhaps reconsider in the future depending on the experience of other local authorities introducing the new premiums.

5 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020/21

- 5.1 Our calculation has now been carried out across all of our parishes and has resulted in an overall tax base of 23,623 for 2020/21 of which is an increase of 1.8% on the tax base for 2019/20 of 23,209.
- 5.2 Our overall tax base is shown by parish in Annex 1.

6 MOVEMENT IN OUR TAX BASE

- 6.1 The following graph shows the movement in our overall tax base by year since 2007/08.



6.2 Our tax base rose steadily for the period 2007/08 to 2012/13. In 2013/14 local council tax support schemes (LCTS) were determined which replaced the national council tax benefit scheme. The impact of new local council tax support is that the amount awarded now appears as a discount against the claimant's council tax bill. As discounts impact on the council's tax base this meant overall our tax base fell significantly in 2013/14 as a direct result of the implementation of our scheme. Overall our tax base fell by 1,486.

6.3 From 2013/14 you can see our tax base has increased significantly by around 1.5%– 2% each year.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Our council tax base increased steadily over the period 2007/18 to 2013/14 however since then we have averaged increases of 1.5% to 2% each year.

7.2 The Council Tax Base 2020/21 is 23,623.

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

PF54-19/JP/AC
24 October 2019

	2020/21 taxbase	2019/20 taxbase	difference
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	452	442	10
Balderstone	198	198	0
Barrow	554	484	70
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	205	203	2
Billington & Langho	2,149	2141	8
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	487	493	-6
Bowland Forest (High)	75	73	2
Bowland Forest (Low)	80	79	1
Bowland with Leagram	83	80	3
Chatburn	393	379	14
Chipping	500	490	10
Clayton le Dale	520	514	6
Clitheroe	5,549	5372	177
Dinckley	47	47	0
Downham	51	49	2
Dutton	103	106	-3
Gisburn	226	218	8
Grindleton	363	362	1
Horton	48	46	2
Hothersall	75	69	6
Longridge	2,867	2804	63
Mearley	9	9	0
Mellor	981	995	-14
Newsholme	20	18	2
Newton	143	142	1
Osbaldeston	105	110	-5
Paythorne	46	45	1
Pendleton	107	106	1
Ramsgreave	284	280	4
Read	571	562	9
Ribchester	658	658	0
Rimington & Middop	235	242	-7
Sabden	523	521	2
Salesbury	190	191	-1
Simonstone	497	496	1
Slaidburn & Easington	153	148	5
Thornley with Wheatley	170	169	1
Twiston	37	37	0
Waddington	454	454	0
West Bradford	364	368	-4
Whalley	1,745	1699	46
Wilpshire	1,081	1082	-1
Wiswell	181	183	-2
Worston	44	45	-1
	23,623	23,209	414