



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: LF/LA/0387/15

Christine Chapman AM
Chair of Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

16 April 2015

Dear Christine,

During my attendance at Committee on 26 March, when I gave evidence on the Local Government (Wales) Bill, I agreed to look into the availability of details of Council Tax levels (excluding parish council precepts) set by the new Cornwall Unitary Authority, following the merger of Cornwall County Council and the former District Councils, in 2009-10.

It was suggested during the Committee evidence session that the new Unitary Authority had set different Council Tax levels for the same property bands for properties in each of the former District Council areas.

Information published by the UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government indicates that this was not, in fact, the case (see Annex). The Annex sets out historical data which shows the combined Council Tax (excluding parish precepts) for a Band D property in each of the former Districts in the year preceding merger and the first year of the new Authority's existence. This shows that Council Tax harmonisation was implemented in full in the first year. The Council Tax increase for a Band D property represented an increase for properties in each of the former districts of between 0.5% and 4.9%.

*Yours sincerely,
Leighton Andrews*

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services

Cornwall merger in 2009

Band D Council Tax levels (£s) in Cornwall, excluding parish precepts

Area	2008-09 Band D in each area	2008-09 County + District	2009-10 Cornwall Unitary Authority	% increase
Cornwall County	1,017.73			
Caradon District	176.02	1193.75	1,209.34	1.3%
Carrick District	149.91	1167.64	1,209.34	3.6%
Kerrier District	185.06	1202.79	1,209.34	0.5%
North Cornwall District	158.68	1176.41	1,209.34	2.8%
Perwith District	134.83	1152.56	1,209.34	4.9%
Restormel District	157.28	1175.01	1,209.34	2.9%

Source of original data: Department for Communities and Local Government. Analysis: Welsh Government.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-council-tax>

Notes:

- The table above contains historical Council Tax figures published by the Department for Communities and Local Government which can be found via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-council-tax>.
- The table shows harmonisation of Council Tax in 2009-10, when six districts and one county merged into a single unitary authority.
- The original business case for the merger can be found via the following link. The Appendices document contains information on the proposals for Council Tax harmonisation: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-background/unitary-bid/>.
- Figures indicate that Council Tax harmonisation was implemented in full for the first year of the new Authority's existence.
- The original business plan indicates that the new Authority intended to use £3.4m of the savings expected from merging to hold down increases in Council Tax. The business plan also states that "most council tax bills would increase less than under an unchanged system of local government within Cornwall".