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COUNCIL TAX INFORMATION LETTER 4/2003

Local Government Bill

The Local Government Bill completed Report stage in the House of Lords on 17 July. The only amendments to the council tax clauses were to replace the existing provisions on changing nationally set discounts in Wales with the same kind of provisions which are being introduced in England by clause 76.

We now expect that Lords Third Reading and Commons Consideration of Lords Amendments will take place in early September, leading to Royal Assent shortly after. The council tax clauses, other than clause 84 relating to combined fire authorities as preceptors, will come into force two months after Royal Assent. Clause 84 will be brought into force by commencement order and it is intended this will be done so as to allow the new arrangements to take effect for 2004/05.

Because the Bill has not yet completed its passage through the Lords and could still be amended, we will not circulate draft regulations for comment during the summer as we originally intended. However we aim to consult immediately after Third Reading so that we can make the necessary statutory instruments as soon as the new powers come into effect. It is still the intention that the provisions should come into force from 1 April 2004 and local authorities should proceed on this basis.

If you have any enquiries about this matter please contact Brian Entwistle on 020 7944 4186 or fax to 020 7944 4179. Email: council.tax@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

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