

Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme – Criteria for granting discretionary relief following the revaluation 2017.

1. The Scheme

1.1 The Council has decided that relief under the scheme will be awarded using the following criteria:

- a. The scheme is designed to assist ratepayers who have suffered increases in rate liability due to the revaluation and the subsequent increase to their Rateable Value;
- b. Relief will not be granted where a hereditament has a rateable value of £100,000 or more at 1st April 2017;
- c. Relief will not be awarded where mandatory relief is granted;
- d. In assessing any potential entitlement to an award under this scheme, the Council will compare the following:
 - i. The rate liability of the ratepayer at 31st March 2017 after any reliefs and reductions; and
 - ii. The rate liability of the ratepayer at 1st April 2017 taking into account any transitional relief or discretionary relief within this policy;
- e. Relief will be awarded where the calculation in d. above would result in an increase of more than £600. (determined by the Council as an acceptable increase);
- f. Relief will only be given to premises which are liable for occupied rates. No relief within this scheme will be granted for unoccupied premises;
- g. Relief will only be granted to ratepayers who were in occupation at 31st March 2017 and in occupation on 1st April 2017 and for each day subsequently.
- h. Ratepayers taking up occupation after the 1st April 2017 will not be eligible for relief on the basis that new ratepayers would not have suffered from increases due to a revaluation;
- i. Relief will be targeted to local businesses and not those businesses that are national or multi-national in nature. Local businesses are, for the purposes of this scheme, those which have premises wholly in the Council's area;
- j. Relief may be awarded for more than one premise as long as all other criteria are met;
- k. Relief will not be awarded where:
 - i. mandatory relief is awarded; or
 - ii. where the ratepayer has applied for a reduction under S44a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988; and
 - iii. the hereditament has an increase in Rateable Value after the 1st April 2017 which increases the rate charge above the 1st April 2017 value.

- I. Relief will not be awarded for hereditaments that are wholly or mainly used for:
- i. Communications hereditaments, communications related services or advertising rights.
 - ii Local authority and public sector hereditaments

2. Applications for relief under this scheme

2.1 The Council is keen to identify ratepayers who may qualify for the relief and as such will look to encourage certain ratepayers to apply. The Council will look to simplify the application process wherever possible, but it will expect any ratepayers to provide such information as is required by the Council to support their application.

2.2 Applications must be made by 30 June of the following financial year for example for 2017/18 applications by 30 June 2018.

3. Fixed amount of relief with case by case award Year 3 & 4

3.1 Amount of Relief - The amount of relief is tapered and will be calculated as follows:

2017/18

Award = Increase in rate liability calculated in (1.1d above) LESS £600 (acceptable increase)

2018/19

Award = 2017/18 award x 50% (for clarity this will be half of the relief awarded in 2017/18)

Amount to be determined by the Council based on modelling of relief – as follows:

- Amount of acceptable increase:
- For Year 2 the relief will be based on a 50 percentage reduction of a Year 1 award;

2019/20 & 2020/21

For the final year of the scheme, the Council will determine any award on an individual case by case basis and will take into account:

- the amount of the increase in rate liability due to the revaluation;
- the amount of rates in relation to other business expenses and income of the business;
- the amount of reserves held by the business; and
- the ability of the business to pay the increase.

4. Right of Appeal

The process of appealing against a decision regarding discretionary relief made by the Council can be found in the Business Rates Discretionary and Hardship Relief Policy.