

Subject:	Discretionary Relief NNDR (Spring Budget 2017 changes)	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Full Council	Date:	22 nd March 2017
Report of:	Head of Finance & Property Services	Portfolio Holder:	Resources & Performance
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Ian Walker	Telephone:	01706 252592
Email:	ianwalker@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	Members are recommended to approve the application of relief (discounts) to Non-Domestic Properties in line with the measures outlined in the Spring Budget 2017 for all cases in which relief awards will be fully funded by Government grant.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to formally adopt changes in the criteria for the award of NNDR relief. In recent years, when Government has made similar changes such as retail relief in 2014-2016, there was no new legislation laid in order to grant the discounts. Instead, Government advised that any awards made under discretionary relief powers would be fully funded and local authorities compensated for awards made. It is anticipated that this approach will be adopted for 2017/18.
- 2.2 Awards are therefore technically discretionary and represent a change to local policy on discretion. In previous years these matters have been included in budget setting. The lateness of the Government's changes (8th March 2017) means that this year a separate report is required.
- 2.3 It is proposed that where specific criteria are set out by government for relief to be awarded; and that those amounts of relief are fully funded, then awards will be made to the affected businesses automatically and as soon as is practicably possible.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
 - **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The adoption of this policy ensures that authority is contained within the Council's discretionary scheme with resources funded by Central Government.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 As part of the Spring budget, on 8th March 2017 the Government announced changes to the calculation of Non Domestic Rates bills for the 2017/18 charge year. In particular:
- 5.2 A commitment to award £1,000 relief to all pubs with a rateable value of less than £100,000.
- 5.3 To cap any increase in rates payable to £50.00 per month for those companies who have lost small business rate relief as a result of the revaluation. Small business rate relief is based on the rateable value of the property being occupied rather than in relation to the business itself.
- 5.4 To make available additional funding for discretionary relief. It is not yet clear if this funding will simply cover the amounts outlined in 5.2 & 5.3 above or if there will be an additional funding pot.
- 5.5 There is also a separate discretionary fund which is not specifically allocated for pubs and former small businesses. Government has opened a period of consultation on the design and administration of relief schemes for this funding. Further updates will be brought to Members once funding and criteria issues are clarified.
- 5.6 All awards will be subject to state aid rules.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Financial matters are noted in the report.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 There are no legal or constitutional matters to note.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 8.1 Policy changes are noted in the report.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Awards of NNDR relief for pubs and those businesses newly falling outside of small business rate relief criteria should be made as soon as clear criteria and any relevant software upgrades are available.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
Business Rates Information Letter (Department for Communities and Local Government)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/22017-spring-budget-support-for-business