

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E3111
TITLE:	Amendment to Business Rate Relief Policy	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Draft Appendix E to the Discretionary rate relief Policy		

### 1 THE ISSUE

The updated Appendix E to the Bath and North East Somerset Council Non Domestic Rate Relief Policy gives guidance to officers administering claims for discretionary relief under discretionary powers provided by the Local Government Finance Act 1988 ("The 88 Act").

Appendix E covers:

Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme

Business Rate Local Newspaper Relief

Business Rates Revaluation Support Relief.

The update is required in order for Officers to be able to make further awards of Business Rates Revaluation Support Relief and Retail Relief to qualifying ratepayers in respect of the 2019/20 & 2020/21 financial years. It also covers the extension of Local Newspaper Relief for a further year into 2019/20.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked;

To approve the proposal relating to these reliefs in the attached Appendix E

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

There will be no financial cost to the Council in making these changes.

#### **STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The Localism Act of 2011 ("The 11 Act") amended the discretionary powers available to Councils with effect from 1st April 2012. Specifically, section 69 of The 11 Act amended section 47 of The Local Government Finance Act 1988("The 88 Act"). Section 47 of the 88 Act enables the Council to grant relief to any ratepayer, including profit making organisations and individuals, with the proviso that awarding relief is in the interests of its Council Tax payers
- 3.2 The Council will be allocated a sum of money to fund the Business Rates Revaluation Support Relief scheme for 2019/20 & 2020/21, and any underspend from this fund must be returned to the Government.

### **4 THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Council introduced the Business Rates Revaluation Support Relief scheme in 2017. The policy includes the continuation of this scheme for the next two financial years. The awards for 2019/20 are calculated by multiplying the 2018/19 awards by 0.42 percent. The awards for 2020/21 are calculated by multiplying the 2019/20 awards by 0.16 percent. This keeps the awards within the budgets of £78,000 and £11,000 respectively.
- 4.2 In the 2018 budget the Chancellor announced a new Retail Discount. This will grant a reduction of 1/3 to any qualifying ratepayer's account. The qualifying criteria for this relief are listed in the policy. Ratepayers will need to apply for this relief; the Council will be issuing application forms to those we believe will qualify for the relief in the first instance.
- 4.3 In the 2018 budget the Chancellor announced an increase in Local Newspaper relief for a further year. This Appendix adds to the previous scheme already in place.

### **5 RATIONALE**

The Non Domestic Rate Relief Policy must be updated in order to bring about these changes. The changes to Revaluation Support will enable the Council to allocate more of the funding provided by the Government directly to qualifying ratepayers. If the Policy is not updated to reflect this change any underspend will have to be returned to the Government. The new Retail Discount was a major policy point in the budget and widely reported on. This appendix allows for this relief to be granted by the Council.

### **6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

None

### **7 CONSULTATION**

The Council has sought the views of the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation, The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and has considered the views and local schemes operated by other Councils

## 8 RISK MANAGEMENT

A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Ian Savigar, Divisional Director For Customer services</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>None</i>

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