



Policy & Resources Committee 12 February 2018

Discretionary Rate Relief Working Party

Purpose of report

To propose the establishment of a Discretionary Rate Relief Working Party.

Attachment

Appendix A - Draft Terms of Reference.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 2012, members approved the adoption of a policy for granting Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) to business rate payers in East Northamptonshire.
- 1.2 Since 2012 the policy has been amended several times mainly in response to legislative changes.
- 1.3 The most recent amendments to the policy were made following a new set of reliefs announced by the Chancellor in the Spring Budget. Details of these reliefs were presented to this committee on 4 September 2017 and following satisfactory consultation were approved on 4 October 2017.

2.0 Review of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 4 September 2017 the committee acknowledged that the DRR Policy needed reviewing in its entirety due to the changes over the last few years and the forthcoming changes to business rates retention; it was resolved to approve a full review of the DRR Policy to look at all of the reliefs given.
- 2.2 It is proposed that a member working party supported by officers is established to undertake the review; Appendix A details the draft Terms of Reference.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.0 Risk Management

- 5.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

6.0 Resource and Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any implications arising from future decisions will be considered in the relevant reports.

7.0 Constitutional Implications

7.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

8.0 Implications for our Customers

8.1 There are no implications for our customers arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate Outcomes

9.1 The Corporate Outcomes are:

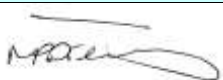
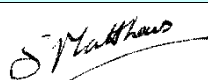
- Good Quality of Life – Prosperous – reviewing the DRR Policy will ensure that the appropriate reliefs are being applied to support businesses financially.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is recommended to:-

- establish a Discretionary Rate Relief Working Party with the Terms of Reference as noted in Appendix A; and
- appoint members to the Working Party

(Reason – To ensure the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy is reviewed and the reliefs being applied are appropriate)

Legal	Power: Local Government Finance Act 1988 and Local Government & Rating Act 1997				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: Policy & Resources Committee minutes 4 September 2017.					
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Date: 25/01/18					
CFO		MO		CX	



East Northamptonshire Council

Discretionary Rate Relief Working Party

Draft Terms of Reference

1 Name

1.1 The name of the Working Party is the Discretionary Rate Relief Working Party.

2 Purpose

2.1 The Working Party was established to review the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

2.2 The Working Party has no statutory role and has no formal decision making powers. It will make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee as necessary.

3 Membership

3.1 The Working Party will comprise of three members drawn from the Policy & Resources Committee, together with the Benefits Manager, Finance Manager, Business Rates Officer, Head of Economic & Commercial Development and other officers where relevant and as required.

3.2 A chair and vice chair will be appointed at the first meeting.

3.3 The Working Party will invite individuals or representatives of other organisations, consultants, contractors and advisers to attend a particular meeting when an item of relevance to them is to be discussed or where particular specialist input is needed.

4 Role

4.1 The Working Party will:

- Work with offices to review and agree a revised Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, taking into consideration all existing policies and strategies including Enterprising East Northants.
- Ensure that the Council fulfils consultation requirements when considering changes to the policy (including Equality Impact Assessments).
- Evaluate the financial impact of the proposed changes to both the customer and the Council.
- Make recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee regarding the revised Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

4 Meetings

4.1 Frequency of the meetings will be agreed at the first meeting of the Working Party and reviewed on a meeting by meeting basis thereafter.

4.2 The business of the meeting shall be set out in an agenda and notified to members of the Working Party five days in advance of the date of the meeting. At least 50% of the Working Party will need to be present for the meeting to be quorate.

4.3 Items for inclusion on the agenda will be agreed with the Chair (or Vice-Chair in their absence) and should be submitted for consideration at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting.

4.4 The minutes of the previous meeting shall be submitted for agreement at the start of every meeting.

5 Members' Responsibilities

5.1 Councillors and officers must declare at the start of any meeting an interest in any matter for discussion in which they have a personal interest or involvement.

6 Voting

6.1 The Working Party will work towards securing mutual agreement on all aspects of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, but should a vote be necessary each Councillor will have a single vote and decisions will be made on the show of hands. In the event of a tie in the number of votes, the Chair will have a second, or casting, vote.

7 Variation of the Terms of Reference

7.1 These Terms of Reference may be altered by approval from the Policy & Resources Committee.