

Record of an individual Cabinet member decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	David Dodds
Key decision?	No
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Paul Howden Revenues and Benefits Client Manager
Officer contact details	Tel: 01235 422484 Email: Paul.howden@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	To approve an increase in the award of revaluation discretionary rate relief to qualifying Non-Domestic (business) ratepayers from 18% to 19.2% for 2018/2019 (excluding previously eligible accounts which have now vacated).
Reasons for decision	<p>Government announced in the Spring Budget 2017 a £300m discretionary relief fund over four-year period from 2017/2018 to 2020/2021 to support businesses facing the steepest increases in their rates bill following the 2017 revaluation of non-domestic properties. Every authority was provided with a share of the fund (for South, this has been confirmed at £183,000 for 2018/19) and was expected to consult and discuss options with their major precepting authorities (in the South's case this was Oxfordshire County Council) before adopting any scheme. This was done and, along with the other Oxfordshire districts and the City council, the following general qualifying criteria were agreed:</p> <p>i) The ratepayer must be in occupation on 31 March 2017. No relief will be awarded to those taking up occupation on or after 1 April 2017 or to unoccupied properties.</p> <p>ii) All other mandatory reliefs must have been applied for prior to an application for Local Discretionary Relief being considered.</p> <p>iii) The 2017 rateable value must be under £200,000</p> <p>iv) The business rates bill must have increased after</p>

revaluation by more than 12.5%

v) Where a property is formed following a split or merger after 31 March 2017 but qualified before the split or merger, a new calculation will be carried out.

vi) The property must have been in the rating list at 31 March 2017. Relief will not apply to new properties entered into the rating list retrospectively (unless under point v. above).

vii) An application form must be completed. All applications will be considered on their merits. Initially relief will apply from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. A new application will be required in each subsequent year if applicable.

viii) Increases to the 2017 rateable value will only affect the award if effective from 1 April 2017 and are due to the 2017 rateable value being incorrect and not due to a material change to the property.

ix) Recalculations will be made where reductions in rateable value for either the 2010 or 2017 rateable value are made.

Exclusions

i) Relief will not be awarded to precepting bodies (i.e. County, District or Parish Councils).

ii) Applications will not be invited from banks, building societies or other major financial institutions.

iii) Applications will not be invited from multi-national businesses or large chains.

iv) Applications will not be invited from the NHS.

v) Applications will not be invited from charities.

South was able to set awards at **18 per cent** for 2018/2019 for the **55** qualifying ratepayers, based on Government guidance and the local qualifying criteria (listed above). This was expected to amount to approximately **£176,997** if all qualifying ratepayers applied, with the remaining **£6,002** retained for changes in awards and unforeseen circumstances. There is no provision to carry forward any unspent funding to **2019/20** (*although retrospective 2018/19 awards can be made up until 30 September 2019*).

We were able to award the **55** eligible ratepayers **18 per cent** relief for 2018/2019 (**in accordance with the ICDM of 10 July 2018**). Two ratepayers vacated during the financial year and this has left an underspend of just under **£10,307**.

	<p>As Government is keen for the council to spend the full budget, we are now proposing to increase the award for 2018/2019 to 19.2 per cent to the remaining 53 eligible ratepayers (excluding previously eligible accounts which have now vacated) with the remaining £3,161 retained for changes in awards and unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>The funding for 2019/2020 to be made available will be reduced to £75,000. For 2020/21 provisional funding has been set at £11,000. Further modelling will be undertaken in due course to determine awards for future years.</p>			
Alternative options rejected	Various percentage awards were costed to take the council as near as possible to the available funding but to retain an amount for changes in awards and unforeseen circumstances. The option not to exercise discretion and therefore not award relief was dismissed.			
Legal implications	There are no legal implications emanating from this decision. Awards of relief will be made in accordance S.47 Local Government Finance 1988.			
Financial implications	The awards of relief will be fully funded by Government, so will not be detrimental to the council. New burdens funding has been made available to help cover the administrative costs of implementing the relief.			
Other implications	None			
Background papers considered	Government guidance/circulars			
Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member?	None			
List consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward councillors	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Legal	Ian Price	No Comments	04Apr2019
	Finance	William Jacobs	Happy with Proposal	19Mar2019
	Human resources	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Sustainability	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Diversity and equality	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Communications	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Chief Executive	Mark Stone	N/A	N/A
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt	No			

category?	
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	
Cabinet member's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature <u><i>Lee Stans</i></u> Date <u>29th April 2019</u>

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date:	Time:
Date published to all councillors	Date:	
Call-in deadline	Date:	Time: