

# Cherwell District Council

## Executive

3 April 2018

<p><b>Notification of Urgent Action: Amendment to the Local Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for 2017-2018</b></p>
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### Report of Chief Executive

This report is public

#### Purpose of report

To note the urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive to revise the Local Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for 2017-2018 in order to.

#### 1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the urgent action taken by the Chief Executive to revise the Policy and to maximise the funding to support local businesses.

#### 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In the Spring Budget 2017, the Chancellor announced £300m funding for local councils to help local businesses facing an increase in their business rates following the 2017 Revaluation. Any unspent funding will be returned to central government. The total funding for Cherwell District Council in 2017-2018 is £736,000.
- 2.2 Each billing authority is required to devise its own Discretionary Relief Scheme for the financial year 2017-2018. The Policy for Cherwell District Council was agreed by Executive on 4 September 2017.
- 2.3 Initial analysis and financial modelling showed that 127 businesses may qualify for the Relief and were invited to make an application. Take-up has been very low and removing the need for an application process and making automatic awards has not resulted in maximisation of the funding.

#### 3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 In order to spend the funding in 2017/18 further financial modelling has been carried out and options considered. This has resulted in some changes to the Policy for 2017-2018:

- A change in the qualifying criteria to exclude the requirement for the ratepayer to be in occupation of the property as at 31 March 2017. This enables support to be given to businesses who occupy after 1 April 2017.
- Removal from the exclusions ratepayers occupying on or after 1 April 2017 and properties which were not on the Rating List on 1 April 2017.

3.2 The changes to the Policy will result in expenditure of £733,999 (99.7% of the total funding) for Cherwell District Council. The Policy will be reviewed for 2018-2019.

## 4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The timescale for making use of this funding is extremely tight and exceptional arrangements are therefore necessary. The taking of urgent action associated with the proposals set out in this report give the Council the best chance of utilising the available funds and delivering consequent benefits to local businesses. In accordance with the Constitution, the urgent action is reported to Executive for information.

## 5.0 Consultation

Lead Member for Financial Management

Supported the use of urgency provisions to take a decision to ensure no delay to the Policy changes and subsequent use of funding

Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

Agreed to waive call in of the decision taken using urgency provisions to ensure no delay to the schemes commencing

## 6.0 Alternative Option and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative option has been identified and rejected for the reasons given below.

Option 1: Not to note the report. This is not recommended as the urgent action has been taken and it is a constitutional requirement for it to be reported to the body that would ordinarily have taken the decision.

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report as it is reporting urgent action already taken.

Comments to be checked by: Cecilie Booth, Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer, Cecilie.booth@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report as it is reporting urgent action already taken.

Comments checked by: Chris Mace, Solicitor, 01327 322125,  
[@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:chris.mace@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## Risk Implications

- 6.3 There are no risk implications arising directly from this report as it is reporting urgent action already taken.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian, Team Leader, Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team, 01295 22 1786; [louise.tustian@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:louise.tustian@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Key Decision

**Financial Threshold Met:** No

**Community Impact Threshold Met:** No

### Wards Affected

All wards

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Corporate Priorities: Sound budgets and customer focused council.

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management.

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Local Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2017-2018 (amended)
Background Papers	
None	
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