

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

The Council proposes to maintain spend within the grant allocated by central government so as not to put any additional pressure on the Council's general fund budget.

The Council received an allocation for Discretionary Relief equivalent to £350,000 for 2017-18.

(b) **Risk Management**

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	The scheme is based on the legislation enacted after the Spring budget 2017 to allow a discretionary scheme approved by each local authority to support businesses affected by the change in the revaluation.	
Property		
Human Rights		
Health and Safety		
Employment Issues		In being able to retain smaller businesses in the borough or to encourage small local businesses to open in the borough can provide opportunities for jobs.
Equalities Issues		
Community Support		
Communications		Ensuring by various publicity and communications that those eligible receive discretionary relief will receive it
Community Safety		
Financial		
Timetable for	The change is effective	

delivery	from April 2017. However the enabling legislation was only released in May which has delayed the report	
Project Capacity		
Other		

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no EIA as this policy refers to businesses in the borough only.

5 Supporting Information

5.1 The Business Rates Relief Policy (Spring 2017 budget) is included in appendix A.

5.2 The Business Rates were revalued with effect from April 2017, and a number of businesses both nationally and in the borough of Slough saw an increase in their Rateable Values (RV)

5.3 In addition the multiplier, the figure determined by the government, which is multiplied by the RV to determine the charge was reduced, however for a number of properties more especially in the South East of England including Slough this meant that the overall charge for Business Rates increased.

5.4 The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced three schemes in the Spring budget of March 2017 to addition business rates relief to those affected by the revaluation.

5.5 Small Business Rate Relief, a copy of which is attached at Annex B

5.6 Relief for Public Houses, following the Budget announcement the government released a consultation document on the definition of Public Houses, and the details of the scheme, however final guidance on the operation and funding of the scheme was not released before the General Election was called we have been lead to believe that this will be issued as soon as possible.

5.7 Local discretionary relief scheme, in this instance Local Authorities have been provided with a sum of money under discretionary powers which means there is no proposed national scheme or guidance on

awarding the relief, this needs to be determined locally and members have to agree a policy.

- 5.8 In this year's Budget, the Government announced £300 million for local councils to finance business rates relief for revaluation support. The Government's extra funding will only support relief schemes targeted at businesses facing an increase in their business rate bills following the 2017 revaluation.
- 5.9 Allocations of funding were sent to Local Authorities on 28th April 2017 and taking into consideration the funding awarded the Council has developed in line with the legislation the scheme attached at Appendix A.
- 5.10 Slough Borough Council was awarded the following, against the full costs of the Business Rates. This will be pro rata on the basis of the amount of Business Rates that the authority actually keeps, below is the total amount that can be awarded to ratepayers.

Amount of discretionary pot awarded (£000s)					
LA	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Slough Borough Council	350	170	70	10	600

- 5.11 The grant has been awarded under Section 31 of the Business Rates legislation and on the condition that any underspend of the grant on discretionary relief for Business Rates may be reclaimed by the Treasury and there will be no additional funding for authorities spending over the allocated grant this will have to come from local budgets.
- 5.12 The scheme has been developed to maximise the use of the grant but not to spend more than the allocation.
- 5.13 A condition of the scheme is that the Local Authorities have consulted with their precepting authorities, which in the case of Slough is only the Fire Service. The Fire Service have been consulted and have agreed the scheme attached at Appendix A
- 5.14 The scheme has been developed to ensure that the recipients are businesses that are not getting any other award to help with their business rates.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

n/a

7 **Conclusion**

That members are requested to review and approve these policies

8 **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' - New Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme
- 'B' - Small Business Rates Relief scheme set by Central Government

9 **Background Papers**

- "1" - Business Rates Information letter (2/2017) from DCLG
- "2" - Discretionary Rates Relief Scheme Grant determination 2017-18 from DCLG
- "3" - Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended
- "4" - Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended