

Record of Executive Member Decision Taken Under the Scheme of Delegation	On
	24 March 2021

Title	Report of
Non-Domestic Rates - Discretionary Rate Relief Expanded Retail & Nursery Discount 2021/22	Director of Customer & Digital

Is this report confidential?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. To gain approval to amend the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy to include Budget 2021 changes to the Expanded Retail Discount and Nursery Discounts for the financial year 2021/22.

Recommendations

2. That the amended Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (Appendix A) be approved.
3. That the S151 Officer be granted delegated authority to authorise a responsible officer to decide upon any application for the discount made under this policy taking into account the contents of the policy, the council's priorities and policies and in addition the guidance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's "Expanded Retail & Nursery Discount 2021/2022 Guidance". (This mirrors the provisions already contained within our existing Discretionary Rate Relief Policy).

Reasons for recommendations

4. The changes proposed in this report are aimed at extending the support we already offer to businesses with their business rates by ensuring that the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy is up to date and consistent with local and statutory requirements.

Other options considered and rejected

5. None. The Government have requested that local authorities administer these amendments to the discounts, there are therefore no alternatives.

Corporate outcomes

6. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council		Thriving communities	
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A fair local economy that works for everyone	✓	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places	
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Background to the report

7. As part of the 2021 Budget on 3 March 2021, the Chancellor announced that the Government will provide additional temporary Business Rates support for eligible retail, leisure, hospitality and nursery businesses occupying a qualifying property in England.
8. The details of the announcement require the Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy to be amended to incorporate these additional temporary support measures.
9. The Discretionary Rate Relief Policy permits cost neutral changes under delegated powers (EMD) by the Executive Member for Finance, Property and Assets.

Rationale/Detail

10. As temporary measures for the financial year 2021/22 the Chancellor announced that:
 - a. The Expanded Retail Discount (2020/21) will be extended for three months for eligible properties, at 100% relief, uncapped, for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.
 - b. From 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, the Expanded Retail Discount would apply at 66% relief for eligible properties in the scheme, with a cash cap of £2m for businesses that were required to close as at 5 January 2021, and up to £105,000 for business permitted to open at that date.
 - c. The Nursery Discount (2020/21) would also be extended for three months, at 100%, uncapped, for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.
 - d. From 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 the Nursery Discount would apply at 66% relief for eligible properties, with a cash cap of £105,000.
 - e. For the Expanded Retail and Nursery Discount 2021/22, businesses may choose to 'opt' out of receiving the support by providing billing authorities notification of their request to refuse the support, per eligible hereditament.
11. Local Authorities are expected to use their discretionary relief powers (under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended) to grant these discounts in line with the relevant eligibility criteria.
12. No new legislation will be required to deliver the schemes, but local discretionary policies must be amended to include this temporary support. The policy must also include the option to for businesses to 'opt' out of the available support by providing billing authorities notification of their request to refuse support.
13. Local Authorities will be compensated for the cost of granting the discount through a section 31 grant from Government.

Risk

14. If the recommendation at Point 2 is not approved the Council will not have discretionary powers to award Expanded Retail Discount and Nursery Discount in 2021/22 and will therefore not be able to provide the additional support contained within the Government's announcements to the businesses in our area.

Equality and diversity

15. The discounts will be available to all eligible/qualifying businesses.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

16. As outlined in the report, South Ribble Council will be compensated for the cost of granting the discount through a section 31 grant from Government.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

17. The proposed changes to our Discretionary Rate Relief Policy are designed to reflect changes introduced by the Government's Budget. They will extend Retail and Nursery Relief. There are no concerns from a Monitoring Officer perspective.

Background documents


Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended).
 Local Government Act 2003 (as amended)
 Local Government Finance Act 2012 (as amended)
 Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government - "Expanded Retail & Nursery Discount 2021 to 2022 Guidance"

Appendices

Appendix A - Local Discount Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2021

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
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Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained within this report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.

Signed:	
	<i>Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets)</i>
Date:	24.3.2021
Publication Date (DSO use only):	24.3.2021

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.