

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

8th February 2007

Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Taylor
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Financial Services – Jayne Pickering

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 A policy is required to cover the procedure for approving the discretionary rate relief applications and the period for which they are granted.
- 1.2 A policy for granting this relief should not be too prescriptive because it is discretionary and the decision should be made for each individual case. There are criteria defined in the policy to provide guidance in making that decision.
- 1.3 Applications will be submitted to the Head of Financial Services and the Portfolio Holder for approval as per the Council Constitution. The submission will be in an agreed format making a recommendation to refuse or approve the application based on the facts supplied by the organisation, showing that it has been considered against the criteria in the policy.
- 1.4 Any appeals will be made to Members for their consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The policy at **Annex A** is approved and adopted.
- 2.2 The Council's scheme of delegation be amended to delegate authority to Head of Financial Services, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Finance, to approve the applications for discretionary rate relief within the approved Council policy and that the Executive Cabinet be given delegated authority to review any appeals.
- 2.3 It is recommended that Discretionary Rate Relief will be granted for a period of one year and then will be reviewed annually. A report will be made to Executive Cabinet annually detailing the organisations and relief granted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1988 makes provision for Discretionary Rate relief in certain circumstances and whilst a strict policy is not appropriate in these cases a procedure for assessing applications ensures a consistent and transparent process.
- 3.2 The Council's constitution currently lists delegation for both Executive Cabinet and also Head of Service to approve these applications. To clarify the process, this should be amended to Head of Service with Portfolio holder to approve the applications and Executive Cabinet to review any appeals.
- 3.3 The Rural Rate relief scheme includes award of Discretionary Rate Relief and therefore the two reports are submitted together.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Budgetary provision for this relief is currently set at £69,519 but this will increase over a period of years especially if it is granted on an ongoing basis. Therefore each case should be considered carefully with regard to the period of time that the relief is granted for.
- 4.2 A regular review of relief granted should be carried out as good practice.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Relief must be granted in accordance with the legislation

6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Approval of this policy contributes to the Council's corporate priorities of customer satisfaction as a transparent process will be followed for all applications. The policy will also seek to ensure that procedures in a non-discriminatory way.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The policy should ensure that any risks will be minimised.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The approval of the policy will ensure that applications for relief are assessed in a consistent and fair way.

9. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	None

10. APPENDICES

Annex A Discretionary Relief Policy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Finance Act 1988

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