



To: Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources  
Report by: Alison Cole, Head of Revenues and Benefits  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Wards affected: All Wards

## **ADOPTING A RETAIL RELIEF POLICY FOR NON DOMESTIC RATES**

### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of a policy to award “Retail Relief” in accordance with the Discretionary Rate Relief powers as contained within Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended) for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16. The policy is attached as Appendix A.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- adopt the Retail Relief policy (appendix A) for qualifying businesses in occupation of retail premises which have a rateable value of £50,000 or less, for the financial years 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 only
- delegate authority to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to award the “Retail Relief” where a ratepayer demonstrates their entitlement.

### **3. Background**

3.1 The Government announced in the Autumn Statement that it will provide a relief of up to £1000 to all occupied retail premises with a rateable value of £50,000 or less in each of the years 2014/15 and 2015/16. In late January, the Government issued guidance to support local authorities in administering the “Retail Relief” which is attached as Appendix B.

- 3.2 The “Retail Relief” awarded by the Council will be fully reimbursed by the Government if made in accordance with the Government Guidance. The Policy proposed in Appendix A reflects fully the Government’s guidance.
- 3.3 This relief must be awarded by the Council in accordance with the Discretionary Rate relief powers as contained within the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended).
- 3.4 State Aid (De Minimis Regulations) will apply when granting this and any other relief and ratepayers may be required to complete a declaration to confirm that they would not exceed state aid limits (currently 200,000 euros) through the granting of this relief.
- 3.5 Some preliminary work has been carried out to identify properties and approximately 800-850 ratepayers are likely to qualify.

### **Recommendations for adopting the policy**

- 3.6 The retail sector is changing, particularly due to internet shopping, and many High streets are experiencing challenges as they look to adapt to changing consumer preferences in how people shop. The Government wishes to support town centres in their response by providing particular support to retailers.
- 3.7 The relief to be awarded for the 2014/2015 and 2015/16 financial years only.

## **4. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 In awarding the “retail relief” in accordance with the Guidance the Council will be fully reimbursed through the NNDR claim process. This will be done by a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 4.2 The relief must be applied after entitlement to any other relief has been applied (eg Small Business Rate Relief) therefore in some cases an amount less than the maximum £1,000 will be granted to reduce the amount payable to zero.
- 4.3 The total value of Retail Relief awarded in Cambridge would be approximately £800,000 - £850,000.

## **Equal Opportunities Implications**

4.4 This Policy reflects the Governments intentions to award up to £1000 of discretionary relief to assist retail traders for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 years.

## **Environmental Implications**

4.5 There are no environmental implications from this proposal.

## **Procurement**

4.6 There are no additional procurement implications from this proposal.

## **Consultation and communication**

4.7 No consultation required.

## **Community Safety**

4.8 There are no additional implications from this proposal.

## **5. Background papers**

None

## **6. Appendices**

None

## **7. Inspection of papers**

If you have queries on the report please contact:

Author's Name:

**Alison Cole**

Author's Phone Number: 01223 457701

Author's Email:

[alison.cole@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:alison.cole@cambridge.gov.uk)