

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21 January 2019

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Mohammed Nazir, Cabinet Member for Corporate Finance & Housing

PART I **KEY DECISION**

BUSINESS RATES POLICIES 2019-20 – RETAIL DISCOUNTS

1 **Purpose of Report**

To provide a Council policy for the financial year 2019-20 in respect of Business Rates Retail Discount as announced in the Autumn budget 2018.

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the policy for Retail Discounts as set out in Appendix A be approved

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

This report supports the 5 Year Plan through support to adults as retaining and encouraging smaller businesses to the borough will provide jobs and opportunities to our residents

3a **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The awarding of relief for businesses in line with government guidance is a the key priority of the Council.

3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

This report will primarily have implications for Outcome 5 as it will assist in retaining smaller businesses and local businesses in the borough as well as attracting small businesses to the borough which will provide jobs and opportunities for our residents.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The Council proposes to develop a scheme within the guidance supplied by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which means that any Retail Discounts awarded will be fully reimbursed to by central government to the Council.

(b) Risk Management

| Recommendation from section 2 above | Risks/Threats/ Opportunities | Current Controls | Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk | Future Controls |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---|-----------------|
| To note the report. | There are none | | | |

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no EIA as this report relates to Business Rates only.

5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The government in the Budget on 29 October 2018 announced that it “recognises that changing consumer behaviour presents a significant challenge for retailers in our town centres and is taking action to help the high street evolve”
- 5.2 The government stated that it will provide a business rates Retail Discount scheme for occupied retail properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000 in each of the years 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- 5.3 The value of discount will be one third of the bill, and must be applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by section 31 grants have been applied.
- 5.4 Local Relief’s will be funded after the Retail Discount has been awarded.
- 5.5 The government has issued guidance on the implementation of the Retail Discount but on the basis that they have issued the changes under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended; the local authority has to define a policy for the administration of the relief.

- 5.6 As the grant of the relief is discretionary, the government has stated that *“authorities may choose not to grant the relief if they consider that appropriate, for example where granting the relief would go against the authority’s wider objectives for the local area”*.
- 5.7 This policy follows closely the government guidance for Retail Discount, but also adds the following local exclusions from the Retail Discount
- takeaways (Defined as A5)
 - off licences (premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption off the premises)
 - Licensed Sex Establishments.
- 5.8 Central government will fully reimburse Slough Borough Council for all the Retail Discount’s that it awards under a Section 31 grant paid to the authority.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

This report has not been considered by any other committees.

7 **Conclusion**

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the policy for Retail Discounts based on the guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as set out in Appendix A be approved

8 **Appendices Attached**

‘A’ - New Retail Discount Scheme

9 **Background Papers**

- “1” - Business Rates Information letter (5/2018) from DCLG
- “2” - Retail Discount Guidance November 2018
- “3” - Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended
- “4” - Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended