

REVENUES AND BENEFITS

Amendments to the Delegated Decision 1 August 2017 to provide relief for ratepayers adversely affected by the Business Rates Revaluation in 2017

Background

1. At the budget on 8 March 2017, the Chancellor announced that the Government would make available a Local Discretionary Scheme (LDS) of £300 million over four years from 2017/18 to support those businesses that face the steepest increases in their business rates bills as a result of the revaluation. The Chancellor stated that local government is best placed to determine how this scheme should be targeted and administered to support those businesses and locations within their area that are in the greatest need.

2. The Government's intention is that every billing authority in England will be provided with a share of the £300 million to support their local businesses. This will be administered through the Council's discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988.

3. The Government has allocated the available funding to each Billing Authority based on assumptions about how authorities will target their relief scheme. These guidelines have taken this into account.

4. Milton Keynes Council's share is

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
750	364	150	21

5. Having put in place the scheme adopted following the decision of 1 August 2017 there have been some unintended consequences identified which have resulted in the scheme not being available to all affected ratepayers and has resulted in an underspend of the available funds.

Recommendation

It is recommend that that the list of exceptions detailed in the original decision be revised to the following

- Where the award of relief would not comply with EU law on State Aid. (see 15 below)
- Ratepayers in receipt of re-occupation relief in 2016/17 and/or 2017/18
- Properties which are unoccupied.
- Properties where the applicant is the preceptors - MKC, Parishes and Fire Authority.

- Properties which are occupied and operated wholly or mainly as betting shops, payday loan shops, pawn brokers, massage parlours and sex shops.

In addition the requirement for a written application form to be completed is to be removed.

Impact

There will be no financial impact to the Council as the scheme is funded by Central Government and these amendments will ensure that that the scheme is available to more ratepayers who may have been adversely affected by the revaluation in April 2017.