

Report to Council

Agenda
Item:

15(i)

Meeting Date: 6 January 2015
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY AMENDMENTS
Report of: Director of Resources
Report Number: RD.40/14

Purpose / Summary:

The Council has recently been granted the discretion to grant rate relief (NNDR) in respect of the following categories that meet certain conditions:-

- i) New Build Empty Properties
- ii) Retail Relief
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
- iv) Flood Support relief

This report requests that the current Rate Relief Policy be updated to include new discretions in this respect.

Recommendations:

The City Council is asked to approve the proposed additions to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as set out in the report, and note that the cost of such relief is met by Section 31 Government Grant.

Tracking

Executive:	13 October and 10 November 2014
Overview and Scrutiny:	30 October 2014
Council:	6 January 2015

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

A.12

Meeting Date: 10th November 2014
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY AMENDMENTS
Report of: Director of Resources
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Purpose / Summary:

The Council has recently been granted the discretion to grant rate relief (NNDR) in respect of the following categories that meet certain conditions:-

- i) New Build Empty Properties
- ii) Retail Relief
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
- iv) Flood Support relief

This report requests that the current Rate Relief Policy be updated to include new discretions in this respect.

Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to consider the proposed additions to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as set out in Appendix 1 covering the following business premises:-

- i. New Build Empty Properties discretion.
- ii. Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
- iii. Flood Support Relief

together with the observations of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, before recommendation to Council.

Members are asked to note that the cost of such relief is met by Section 31 Government Grant.

Tracking

Executive:	10th November 2014
Overview and Scrutiny:	30th October 2014
Council:	6th January 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Council has the discretion to provide both mandatory and discretionary rate relief for charities and non profit organisations. The Council's current policy was agreed by Council on 10th January 2012.
- 1.2** The Council has recently been granted the discretion to grant rate relief (NNDR) in respect of the following categories that meet certain conditions:-
- v) New Build Empty Properties
 - vi) Retail Relief
 - vii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
 - viii) Flood Support relief
- 1.3** No new regulations are to be issued for any of these initiatives, but instead they are to be granted using discretionary rate relief powers under s47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Central Government will fully reimburse Local Authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief (using a grant under s31 of the Local Government Act 2003), and expects Local Authorities to grant the relief to qualifying ratepayers.
- 1.4** The award of relief under these new categories is just a temporary measure, with the appropriate dates as follows;
- i) New Build Empty Properties - 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2016
 - ii) Retail Relief – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
 - iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
 - iv) Flood Support relief – originally 1st December 2013 to 31st March 2014, but has now been extended into 2014/15
- 1.5** It is recommended our current discretionary relief policies be extended to cover the award of relief under these new categories. The new Policy is set out in the Appendix 1 to this Report.

2. DETAILS OF NEW CATEGORIES OF BUSINESS PREMISES AND ELIGIBILITY FOR RELIEF

- 2.1 New Build Empty Properties - 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2016**

All newly built commercial property will be exempted from empty property rates for the first 18 months following completion, up to State Aid limits. Properties which will benefit from the relief will be all unoccupied non-domestic properties that all wholly or mainly comprised of new qualifying structures.

In this context, “structure” means foundations and/or permanent walls and or permanent roofs.

“New” means (a) completed less than 18 months previously and (b) completed after 1st October 2013 and before 30th September 2016.

A structure is “complete” when the building or part of the building which it forms is ready for occupation for the purpose it was constructed – unless a Completion Notice has been served, in which case it is the date specified in that notice.

“Wholly or mainly comprised of qualifying new structures” means more than half. This policy is not intended to cover refurbishments – but instead it is intended to cover substantial structural constructions, so those built on existing foundations or around a retained façade will qualify. For splits, mergers and changes to existing hereditaments, the same tests will apply i.e. the property must be wholly or mainly comprised of new structures completed within the necessary timeframe.

Under this discretion, applications can be backdated to 1st October 2013.

At the end of the 18 month period the funding of the relief will end. If the property continues to be unoccupied, rates will then be payable in accordance with s45 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

2.2 Retail Relief – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years

Shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments with a rateable value of £50,000 or less will be eligible for retail relief during 2014/15 and 2015/16. The amount of relief to be granted for each qualifying property will be £1,000 in each year (but for smaller premises where the net rates liability is less than £1,000 then the maximum retail relief will be the net rates liability).

Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be entitled to relief for each of their eligible properties, up to State Aid limits.

A new property created by split or merger, or where there is a change of use, will be eligible to receive the relief.

Under this discretion, applications can be backdated to 1st April 2014.

This discretion is automatic providing the rate payer meets the criteria.

2.3 Reoccupation Relief for retail premises – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years

50% rate relief will be given during 2014/15 and 2015/16 for 18 months from the date the premises become occupied as long as that date falls between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2016, subject to the premises remaining occupied. There is no rateable value limit on this relief, either in the previous or reoccupied use.

The 50% relief is given on the net liability after any mandatory or other discretionary relief (other than retail relief) is given, up to State Aid limits.

To qualify under this policy the property must;

- when previously in use, have been used wholly or mainly for retail purposes as defined in Appendix A
- have been empty for 12 months or more immediately before their reoccupation
- have become reoccupied between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2016
- be being used for any use (i.e. not just retail use) but not as a betting shop, payday loan shop or pawnbroker

Under this policy, applications can be backdated to 1st April 2014.

Where a new property has been created by a split or merger of previous properties, the new property will be eligible for the Reoccupation Relief where at least half of its floor area is made up of retail premises that have been empty for 12 months or more.

Where a property in receipt of Reoccupation Relief splits or merges to form new properties, the new properties will not be eligible for the remaining term of Reoccupation Relief.

Where a property in receipt of Reoccupation Relief becomes unoccupied for any period of time less than 12 months, it will not be eligible for any further Reoccupation Relief on occupation. However, if a property that has previously received Reoccupation Relief becomes empty for 12 months or more it will be eligible for up to an additional 18 months Reoccupation Relief if criteria are met.

Noted at Appendix 2 is details of retail premises that have been empty for more than 12 months.

2.4 Flood Support relief – 1st December 2013 to 31st March 2014 only

100% **business rates** relief will be provided for three months where the following conditions are met;

- i) The flood was caused by adverse weather conditions, not for example by failure of a water main, an internal water system or a sewerage system (unless the failure of the sewerage system was itself caused by adverse weather conditions)
- ii) The business activity undertaken at the property was adversely affected as a result of the flooding
- iii) The rateable value is under £10 million.

Very small or insignificant impacts are not eligible, will be ignored and no relief will be granted.

The three months relief will be given starting on the day the above criteria were met, and will apply irrespective of how long the adverse impact of the flooding lasts.

Where a property has been flooded more than once, only one period of three months relief will be granted.

Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be granted relief under the policy for each of their eligible properties.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Executive is asked to consider the proposed additions to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief policy as set out in Appendix 1 covering the following business premises:-

- i. New Build Empty Properties discretion.
- ii. Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
- iii. Flood Support Relief

together with the observations of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, before recommendation to Council.

3.2 Members are asked to note that the cost of such relief is met by Section 31 Government Grant.

Contact Officer: Peter Mason

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Economic Development – These new discretions will be of assistance to the Council and it's partners as we seek to develop the City Centre as a prosperous and attractive place for retail and tourism.

Governance – Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended. Awards such as rate relief are required to comply with the EU law on State Aid. It will be necessary for each ratepayer who is awarded relief to complete a declaration to the Council if they have received any other De Minimis State Aid, including any other Retail Rate Relief they may have received on other property(s). The declaration will include confirmation that the award of Reoccupation Rate Relief does not exceed the 200,000 euros an undertaking can receive under the De Minimis Regulations EC 1407/2013.

The Discretionary Rate Relief Policy is a policy reserved to the Council under Article 4 of its Constitution. As such, any amendment must follow the Budget & Policy Framework procedure rules with any amendment, ultimately, being approved by Council.

Resources - Any discretionary rate relief awarded under this amended policy will be a charge on the Collection Fund and the costs will be shared between the Pooling authorities and Central Government; subject to any direct reimbursement for relief awarded to the categories set out in paragraph 1.4 of this report. This will then be reimbursed by a grant under S31 of the LGA 2003. The proposed revisions to the existing policy should therefore be cost neutral for the authority.

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

POLICY STATEMENT ON DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

1. The Policy

From the financial year commencing 1 April 2012 and each subsequent financial year it is the Policy of the Council of the City of Carlisle to award 100% rate relief to all eligible local charities and non profit making enterprises, such eligibility being specified in section 2 of this Policy.

2. Charities and Not For Profit Organisations

Also from 1st April 2014 grant rate relief to qualifying business premises as set out in Section 3.

2.1 Eligibility

For an organisation to apply to be considered for discretionary business rate relief the following conditions must be met:

1. The ratepayer is a charity or trustees for a charity and the property is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes
2. The property is all or mainly occupied by a not for profit making enterprise concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature, religion or the fine arts or recreation.
3. The organisation is a Community Amateur Sports Club (or similar) or Community Interest Company.
4. The property portfolio held by the organisation is below £18,000 rateable value and eligible organisations have their Head Office or Registered Office in Carlisle and District, as evidenced by records published on the Charities Commission or Companies House website. Where there is no information on the website the billing address will be deemed to be their Head Office or Regional Office.
5. Organisations with a Rateable Value above £18,000 will be restricted to 80% mandatory or discretionary relief.
6. Eden Valley Hospice is considered an exception and will receive 100% relief

2.2 Rationale

The policy is designed to target financial resources at those small, local organisations that provide opportunities for people living in Carlisle and District's communities in a transparent and consistent manner.

The £18,000 rateable value limit is the ceiling applied by central government for small Business rate relief and as such acts as an appropriate delineation point.

While registered charities are entitled to 80% mandatory relief this policy gives charities and not for profit enterprises which meet the eligibility criteria, top up to 100% relief.

2.3 Transitional Arrangements – applicable in the year 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012

These arrangements apply to local charities that lost relief with effect from 1 April 2011

- Top up relief up to a maximum of 10% is available to organisations with their Head Office or Registered Office in Carlisle and District, as evidenced by records published on the Charities Commission or Companies House website. Where there is no information on the website the billing address will be deemed to be their Head Office or Regional Office.
- Funding is available up to £18,000

Each application will be examined individually and treated on its own merits.

2.4 General

The Council reserves the right to seek additional information as necessary All organisations subject to National Non-Domestic Rate Charges have

3. Other Business Premises qualifying for Rate Relief (NNDR)

3.1 New Build Empty Properties - 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2016

All newly built commercial property will be exempted from empty property rates for the first 18 months following completion, up to State Aid limits. Properties which will benefit from the relief will be all unoccupied non-domestic properties that all wholly or mainly comprised of new qualifying structures.

In this context, “structure” means foundations and/or permanent walls and or permanent roofs.

“New” means (a) completed less than 18 months previously and (b) completed after 1st October 2013 and before 30th September 2016.

A structure is “complete” when the building or part of the building which it forms is ready for occupation for the purpose it was constructed – unless a Completion Notice has been served, in which case it is the date specified in that notice.

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Under this discretion, applications can be backdated to 1st October 2013.

At the end of the 18 month period the funding of the relief will end. If the property continues to be unoccupied, rates will then be payable in accordance with s45 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

3.2 Retail Relief – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years

Shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments with a rateable value of £50,000 or less will be eligible for retail relief during 2014/15 and 2015/16. The amount of relief to be granted for each qualifying property will be £1,000 in each year (but for smaller premises where the net rates liability is less than £1,000 then the maximum retail relief will be the net rates liability).

Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be entitled to relief for each of their eligible properties, up to State Aid limits.

A new property created by split or merger, or where there is a change of use, will be eligible to receive the relief.

Under this discretion, applications can be backdated to 1st April 2014.

This discretion is automatic providing the rate payer meets the criteria.

3.3 Reoccupation Relief for retail premises – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years

50% rate relief will be given during 2014/15 and 2015/16 for 18 months from the date the premises become occupied as long as that date falls between 1st April

2014 and 31st March 2016, subject to the premises remaining occupied. There is no rateable value limit on this relief, either in the previous or reoccupied use.

The 50% relief is given on the net liability after any mandatory or other discretionary relief (other than retail relief) is given, up to State Aid limits.

To qualify under this policy the property must;

- when previously in use, have been used wholly or mainly for retail purposes as defined in Appendix A
- have been empty for 12 months or more immediately before their reoccupation
- have become reoccupied between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2016
- be being used for any use (i.e. not just retail use) but not as a betting shop, payday loan shop or pawnbroker

Under this policy, applications can be backdated to 1st April 2014.

Where a new property has been created by a split or merger of previous properties, the new property will be eligible for the Reoccupation Relief where at least half of its floor area is made up of retail premises that have been empty for 12 months or more.

Where a property in receipt of Reoccupation Relief splits or merges to form new properties, the new properties will not be eligible for the remaining term of Reoccupation Relief.

Where a property in receipt of Reoccupation Relief becomes unoccupied for any period of time less than 12 months, it will not be eligible for any further Reoccupation Relief on occupation. However, if a property that has previously received Reoccupation Relief becomes empty for 12 months or more it will be eligible for up to an additional 18 months Reoccupation Relief if criteria are met.

Noted at Appendix 2 is details of retail premises that have been empty for more than 12 months.

3.4 Flood Support relief – 1st December 2013 to 31st March 2014 only

100% **business rates** relief will be provided for three months where the following conditions are met;

- i) The flood was caused by adverse weather conditions, not for example by failure of a water main, an internal water system or a sewerage system

(unless the failure of the sewerage system was itself caused by adverse weather conditions)

- ii) The business activity undertaken at the property was adversely affected as a result of the flooding
- iii) The rateable value is under £10 million.

Very small or insignificant impacts are not eligible, will be ignored and no relief will be granted.

The three months relief will be given starting on the day the above criteria were met, and will apply irrespective of how long the adverse impact of the flooding lasts.

Where a property has been flooded more than once, only one period of three months relief will be granted.

Ratepayers that occupy more than one property will be granted relief under the policy for each of their eligible properties.

Re-occupation relief – summary of eligible properties as at 01.09.2014

	Number of properties	Rateable Value (£)
Total number of empty properties	498	6,012,996
Number of empty retail properties	129	2,952,330
Number of eligible properties (i.e. retail properties empty for more than 12 months as at 01.09.2014)	63	1,884,800

Breakdown of eligible properties

Category	Total	Number by Street	Rateable Value (£)
Pubs and clubs	9	3 Rural area 2 Botchergate 1 London Road 1 Lowther Street 1 Wigton Road 1 West Walls	315,500
Petrol stations	1	1 London Road	27,500
Cafes and restaurants	5	1 Rural (Brampton) 2 Earls Lane 1 Lonsdale Street 1 Devonshire Street	57,150
Shops	29	2 Rural area 1 Abbey Street 2 Botchergate 3 Earls Lane 1 Cecil Street 1 Chapel Street 1 Citadel Station 2 Denton Street 1 Devonshire Street 1 Viaduct Estate Rd 6 English Street 1 The lanes 1 Carlyle's Court 2 London Road 1 Lowther Street 1 Petteril Street 1 Shaddongate 1 Wood Street	608,300
Hairdressers	3	1 Lonsdale Street 1 Salisbury Road 1 Warwick Road	14,350
Showrooms	3	1 Parkhouse 2 St Nicholas	862,000
Undergoing alteration (may be eligible when brought back into use)	13	6 Rural area 1 Bridge Street 1 Newtown Road 1 Wilfred Street 1 English Street 1 Warwick Road 1 Cecil Street 1 Shaddongate	0
Total	63		1,884,800

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2014

EX.110/14 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY AMENDMENTS (Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Finance, Governance and Resources

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel Resources

Subject Matter

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder reported (RD.32/14) that the Council had the discretion to provide both mandatory and discretionary rate relief for charities and non profit organisations. The Council's current Policy had been agreed by Council on 10 January 2012.

The Portfolio Holder informed Members that the Council had recently been granted the discretion to grant rate relief (NNDR) in respect of the following categories which met certain conditions:

- i) New Build Empty Properties
- ii) Retail Relief
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail Premises
- iv) Flood Support Relief

No new regulations were to be issued for any of those initiatives, but instead they were to be granted using discretionary rate relief powers under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Central Government would fully reimburse Local Authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief (using a grant under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003), and expected Local Authorities to grant the relief to qualifying ratepayers.

The award of relief under those new categories was a temporary measure, the appropriate dates being as follows:

- i) New Build Empty Properties – 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2016
- ii) Retail Relief – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail Premises – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
- iv) Flood Support Relief – originally 1 December 2013 to 31 March 2014, but now extended into 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder drew attention to Section 2 which provided details of the new categories of business premises and eligibility for relief. He added that the proposal tied in with the Executive's vision and priorities of working more effectively with partners; and supporting business growth and tourism.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder then moved the recommendation that the Council's current Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (Appendix 1) be extended to cover the award of relief under the new categories.

The Leader seconded the recommendation.

Summary of options rejected Not to extend the current Discretionary Relief Policies to cover the award of relief under the new categories

DECISION

That the Executive:

1. Had considered the proposed additions to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report RD.32/14, covering the following business premises:
 - i. New Build Empty Properties discretion
 - ii. Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
 - iii. Flood Support Relief

before recommendation to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, prior to coming back to the Executive for recommendation to Council.

2. Noted that the cost of such relief was met by Section 31 Government Grant.

Reasons for Decision

To enable the current Rate Relief Policy to be updated to include new discretions to grant rate relief

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2014

ROSP.63/14 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The Director of Resources presented Report RD.32/14 which related to proposed Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Amendments.

The Executive had considered the new discretions at their meeting held on 13 October 2014 and decided:

“That the Executive:

1. had considered the proposed additions to the City Council’s Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report RD.32/14, covering the following business premises:

- i. New Build Empty Properties discretion
- ii. Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
- iii. Flood Support Relief

before recommendation to the resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, prior to coming back to the Executive for recommendation to Council.

2. Noted that the cost of such relief was met by section 31 Government Grant.”

The Director of Resources reported that the Council had the discretion to provide both mandatory and discretionary rate relief for charities and non profit organisations. The Council’s current Policy had been agreed by Council on 10 January 2012.

The Director informed Members that the Council had recently been granted the discretion to grant rate relief (NNDR) in respect of the following categories which met certain conditions:

- i) New Build Empty Properties
- ii) Retail Relief
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail Premises
- iv) Flood Support Relief

No new regulations were to be issued for any of those initiatives, but instead they were to be granted using discretionary rate relief powers under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Central Government would fully reimburse Local Authorities for the

local share of the discretionary relief (using a grant under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003), and expected Local Authorities to grant the relief to qualifying ratepayers.

The award of relief under those new categories was a temporary measure, the appropriate dates being as follows:

- i) New Build Empty Properties – 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2016
- ii) Retail Relief – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail Premises – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
- iv) Flood Support Relief – originally 1 December 2013 to 31 March 2014, but now extended into 2014/15

Section 2 of the report provided details of the new categories of business premises and eligibility for relief.

With regard to flood relief the Director of Resources advised that the Government had given rate relief to a number of businesses during flooding last winter. However none of the businesses affected was within the Carlisle District.

The Director of Resources advised that the Council had a policy of not charging rates to charities and sports clubs and had added empty properties to that list.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Why was Retail Relief missing from the list of recommendations?*

The Director of Resources explained that £1,000 Retail Rate relief was automatically granted and if a business applied for rate relief and did not qualify there would need to be a valid reason and the matter would be considered by the Executive. Businesses within the other three categories would have to apply for Rate Relief.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder advised that the growth in the economy was not so evident in the north and therefore it was important to promote the rate relief and open it up to small businesses. The calculations were complex and if there was a dispute the matter would be referred to the Executive. The Portfolio Holder hoped that the rate relief would lead to empty shops being filled.

The Director of Resources confirmed that there would be no cost to the Council who had always had the power to waive rates but that had been a cost to the Council in the past. The new legislation meant that a developer had eighteen months from completion of premises before rates would be required.

- *There were a high number of empty properties on Botchergate. Was there a period of concession for businesses?*

The Director of Resources explained that the premises had to be empty for a year to qualify for rate relief. Some businesses moved equipment and items into a shop for a few weeks then removed them again so they would qualify again for rate relief.

- *Was the Council confident that there was enough staff and empathy to help new businesses?*

The Director of Resources advised that Officers were being proactive and if a business qualified for rate relief they would be contacted and advised and an officer would help with the completion of the necessary forms. The Deputy Chief Executive had taken responsibility to help to promote the City Centre economy.

- *In the past businesses in rural areas would have received 50% rate relief. Things had progressed since then.*

The Director of Resources explained that the City Council would have been responsible for meeting that rate relief.

RESOLVED: 1. That report RD.32/14 – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Amendments – be noted.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2014

EX.131/14 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY AMENDMENTS (Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Finance, Governance and Resources

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel Resources

Subject Matter

Pursuant to Minute EX.110/14, the Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder reported (RD.40/14) that the Council had the discretion to provide both mandatory and discretionary rate relief for charities and non profit organisations. The Council's current Policy had been agreed by Council on 10 January 2012.

The Portfolio Holder reminded Members that the Council had recently been granted the discretion to grant rate relief (NNDR) in respect of the following categories which met certain conditions:

- i) New Build Empty Properties
- ii) Retail Relief
- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail Premises
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No new regulations were to be issued for any of those initiatives, but instead they were to be granted using discretionary rate relief powers under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Central Government would fully reimburse Local Authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief (using a grant under S31 of the Local Government Act 2003), and expected Local Authorities to grant the relief to qualifying ratepayers.

The award of relief under those new categories was a temporary measure, the appropriate dates being as follows:

- i) New Build Empty Properties – 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2016
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- iii) Reoccupation Relief for Retail Premises – 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years
- iv) Flood Support Relief – originally 1 December 2013 to 31 March 2014, but now extended into 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder drew attention to Section 2 which provided details of the new categories of business premises and eligibility for relief. He added that the proposal demonstrated the Executive's vision and priorities of working more effectively with partners; and supporting business growth and tourism.

The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel had considered the matter on 30 October 2014 and resolved "That report RD.32/14 – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Amendments – be noted."

A copy of Minute Excerpt ROSP.63/14 had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel confirmed that he had nothing further to add.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder concluded that this was indeed a good news story. He then moved the recommendation that the Council's current Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (Appendix 1) be extended to cover the award of relief under the new categories.

The Leader seconded the recommendation.

Summary of options rejected Not to extend the current Discretionary Relief Policies to cover the award of relief under the new categories

DECISION

That the Executive:

1. Had considered the proposed additions to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report RD.40/14, covering the following business premises:
 - i. New Build Empty Properties discretion
 - ii. Reoccupation Relief for Retail premises
 - iii. Flood Support Relief

together with the observations of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and recommended the report to Council.

2. Noted that the cost of such relief was met by Section 31 Government Grant.

Reasons for Decision

To enable the current Rate Relief Policy to be updated to include new discretions to grant rate relief