

Minutes

Cabinet

9th October 2017



These minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A webcast of the meeting is available at www.braintree.gov.uk.

Present:

Portfolio	Cabinet Member	Present
Leader of the Council	Councillor G Butland	Yes
Deputy Leader of the Council	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Yes
Environment and Place	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
Planning and Housing	Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint	Yes
	Councillor Mrs G Spray	Yes
Economic Development	Councillor T Cunningham	Yes
	Councillor K Bowers	Yes
Health and Communities	Councillor P Tattersley	Yes
	Councillor F Ricci	Yes
Finance and Performance	Councillor D Bebb	Yes
Corporate Services and Asset Management	Councillor J McKee	Yes

Also present as invitees of the Leader:

Councillor Barlow, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Mrs Pell, Leader of Halstead Residents Association
Councillor Siddall, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Abbott, Green Party

Councillors Mrs Allen, Hensman and Mann were also in attendance.

29 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

30 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5th September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no statements made, or questions asked.

32 **DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC (BUSINESS) RATE RELIEF POLICY**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on a proposed update to the Council's policy for Discretionary Non-Domestic (Business) Rate Relief.

It was reported that in the budget of Spring 2017, the Government had announced three business rate reliefs to help businesses most affected by the 2017 Rating Revaluation. These reliefs were Supporting Small Businesses; Discretionary Business Rates Scheme; and Public House Relief. These reliefs were in addition to the transitional relief scheme operated at each Revaluation to limit and phase in large increases in business rates over a five-year period. The Small Business Rate and Rural Relief schemes were also still applicable. A further minor relief scheme provided £1,500 relief for two years from 1st April 2017 for office space occupied by a local newspaper.

The Council would be able to grant the Supporting Small Businesses and Public House Reliefs strictly in accordance with criteria specified by the Government, which would reimburse the actual amounts awarded by means of a Section 31 grant.

The Discretionary Business Rates Scheme was to be determined by each Local Authority to support the 'hardest hit businesses'. The scheme would operate for a four year period from 2017/18 to 2020/21. It was proposed that the criteria for Braintree District Council's scheme should focus support on local businesses, excluding those which were part of national chains; exclude public sector organisations; create a cap on the level of award at £4,000 per property for 2017/18; ratepayers must have been in occupation of premises at 31st March 2017 and 1st April 2017; properties must be occupied; exclude businesses already receiving mandatory relief or relief from other relief schemes; exclude Doctor's surgeries; and to award relief where the increase in rates payable between 2016/17 and 2017/18 exceeds 4%.

The Government had allocated a sum of £300 million to fund the Discretionary Business Rate Relief scheme overall. The amounts allocated to Braintree District Council were £287,021 for 2017/18; £139,410 for 2018/19; £57,404 for 2019/20; and £8,200 for 2020/21. In addition, each Billing Authority had received a New Burdens Grant of £12,000 from the Government to fund the changes to software which would be required to implement the new reliefs, and the costs of rebilling.

Members were advised that 272 ratepayers would be eligible for Discretionary Business Rate Relief, of which 251 would have their rate increase limited to 4% and would receive between £9.50 and £3,883.94 relief in 2017/18; and 21 would receive the maximum award of £4,000. The amount awarded in the subsequent financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 would reduce. Applications for relief would not be required as the Council would calculate the relief applicable to eligible businesses and issue an amended bill automatically.

The Council's policy for the grant of Discretionary Non-Domestic (Business) Rate Relief had been updated and a copy was attached as an Appendix to the report. Recipients of relief would be asked to contact the Council if the support caused, or

might cause, issues under State Aid rules. In these circumstances, the Council would reserve the right to review, or remove the Discretionary Business Rate Relief.

In discussing this Item, it was agreed that a list of the companies which would receive an award in accordance with the revised Discretionary Non-Domestic (Business) Rate Relief scheme should be made available to the Members of the Council.

DECISION: That the update to the Council's policy for the granting of Discretionary Non-Domestic (Business) Rate Relief, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: To agree and to implement the Business Rate Relief schemes proposed by the Government utilising the Council's discretionary powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 6.18pm.

COUNCILLOR G BUTLAND
(Leader of the Council)