

Management Committee

7 March 2017

Rates Relief

For Decision

Briefholder(s)

Cllr J Cant - Finance & Assets

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

J Vaughan, Strategic Director

Report Author:

S Dawson, Head of Revenues and Benefits

Statutory Authority

Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended)

Purpose of Report

- 1 For Committee to agree to award relief (of up to a maximum of £1,500 per year) in respect of qualifying local newspapers.

Officer Recommendations

- 2 That Committee agrees to use its powers under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to award rates relief as follows:
 - I. That relief of up to £1,500 a year be awarded from 1 April 2017 for 2 years to office space occupied by local newspapers. The relief to be awarded as follows:
 - That a maximum of one discount be awarded per local newspaper title and per hereditament, for two years from 1 April 2017 (subject to state aid limits)
 - That the hereditament must be occupied by a local newspaper and wholly or mainly used as office premises for journalists and reporters
 - For the purpose of awarding the relief, the definition of “local newspaper” be considered to be a “traditional local newspaper” and that relief will not be available to magazines.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To ensure proper administration arrangements for the awarding of Rates Relief.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 In his Autumn Statement on 23 November 2016, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that Government is committed to supporting a strong and vibrant local press. With this in mind, Government has asked Councils to use their powers, under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), to award relief of up to £1,500 for 2 years from 1 April 2017, for office space occupied by local newspapers. The relief is to be awarded up to a maximum of one discount per local newspaper title and per hereditament (i.e. rating assessment), and up to state aid limits. Government has agreed to reimburse Councils for the actual costs in awarding the relief.

Implications

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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