

## **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **CABINET**

**DATE:** **TUESDAY, 16 JUNE 2015**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE)**

**SUBJECT:** **BUSINESS RATES - RETAIL RELIEF 2015 - 16**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01 For members to endorse the implementation of the 2015-16 Business Rates 'Retail' relief scheme which will provide grants of up to £1,500.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The Minister for Economy, Science and Transport at Wales Government recently announced the continuation of the retail rate relief scheme in 2015-16 which offers grants of up to £1,500 for all occupied retail properties with a rateable value of £50,000 or less. The grant level during 2014-15 was capped at £1,000 so qualifying businesses will now benefit from a 50% increase in grant levels during 2015-16.
- 2.02 In order to provide Retail Rate Relief grants, the Council must also adopt a local scheme using discretionary relief powers following the guidance issued by Wales Government (WG)
- 2.03 The cost of awarding retail grants will be fully funded by WG and the policy proposed in this report reflects guidance to award grants to occupied retail premises.

### **3.00 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY FOR RETAIL RELIEF**

- 3.01 The Retail Rate Relief Policy will award individual grants of up to £1,500 to all 'retail' properties providing that :
- The 'retail' property has a rateable value of £50,000 or less
  - The property is occupied and 'wholly or mainly' used as a shop, Restaurant, café or drinking establishment.
- 3.02 It is considered that 'retailers' will be defined as any property falling within any one of three categories :

a) Property that is being used 'wholly or mainly' for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:

- Shops (such as florist, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, opticians, off licence, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, charity shop, supermarkets etc)
- Charity Shops
- Opticians and Pharmacies
- Post Offices
- Furnishing shops & display rooms
- Car/Caravan showrooms
- Second hand car lots
- Markets
- Petrol Stations
- Garden Centres
- Art Galleries (where art is for sale/hire)

b) Property that is being used 'wholly or mainly' for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Hair and beauty services (such as hairdressers, nail bars, beauty salons)
- Shoe repairs/key cutting
- Travel agents
- Ticket Offices, e.g. theatre booking
- Dry Cleaners
- Launderettes
- PC/TV/Domestic appliance repairs
- Funeral directors
- Photo processing
- DVD rentals
- Tool Hire & Car Hire
- Cinemas
- Estate and Letting Agents

c) Property that is being used 'wholly or mainly' for the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public:

- Restaurants
- Drive through/drive in restaurants
- Takeaways, Sandwich shops, Cafes & Coffee Shops
- Pubs & Wine Bars

3.03 The list set out above is not intended to be exhaustive as it would be impossible to list the many and varied retail uses that exist. However, it is intended to be a guide as to the types of uses that the Council and Wales Government considers eligible for the purposes of this scheme.

- 3.04 The Council can determine whether particular properties not listed above are broadly similar in nature to those above and, if so, to consider them for a grant of up to £1,500. Conversely, properties that are not broadly similar in nature to those listed above will not be eligible for a grant.
- 3.05 In line with WG guidance the following property falls outside of the 'retail' definition to be for the purposes of this scheme and **would not** qualify :

Property that is used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:

- Financial services (such as: banks, building societies, cash points, bureau de change, payday lenders, betting shops, pawn brokers)
  - Medical services (such as: vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
  - Professional services (such as: solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisers, tutors)
  - Post Office sorting office
  - Tourism Accommodation (B&B's, hotels, caravan parks)
  - Sports clubs
  - Children's Play Centres, Day Nurseries
  - Gyms and Outdoor Activity Centres
  - Kennels and Catteries
  - Show Homes
  - Employment Agencies
- 3.06 Grants of up to a maximum £1,500 will be applied to the net bill after all other reliefs, including Small Business Rate Relief, have been awarded, so if the net liability for a property after all other reliefs is less than £1,500, the maximum grant will be capped at the net bill amount.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 Members are asked to approve the introduction of the scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and award 'retail relief' of up to £1,500 to qualifying businesses for the financial year 2015-16.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 The cost of the retail relief awards will be fully reimbursed by WG.
- 5.02 A £1,500 grant is also offered to the Council to partly support the administration associated with re-billing and postage costs resulting from the implementation of the scheme.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- Section 47 Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended)
- Welsh Government Guidance– Retail Relief – 2015-16

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