

8. Business Rates Growth Policy

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits

- a. presented the draft City of Lincoln Business Rates Growth Policy for comment.
- b. advised that the policy aimed to provide a time limited rate relief discount to new and extended business premises within the City, in the interest of building the Business Rates base, supporting economic growth and job creation.
- c. advised that eligibility for the proposed scheme would depend on the extent of the business premises, creation or extension, location and the impact of the new business or expansion plan would have on the local authority.
- d. referred to paragraph 3 of the report and advised on the background to the report advising that North Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council had also approved a Business Rates Growth Policy.
- e. summarised the proposed eligibility criteria for the rate relief as detailed at paragraph 4.1 of report.
- f. advised that for growth businesses an initial 'audit of suitability' would be undertaken before any formal invitation to apply for relief was issued to the business.
- g. advised that applications would be scored by an Officer board and gave an overview of the scoring criteria as detailed at paragraph 4.6 of the report.
- h. invited members questions and comments.

Comment: Members supported the principles and initiatives of the scheme and suggested that a commitment to the social responsibility charter and the living wage be included within the eligibility criteria.

Response: It would be difficult to make the living wage a mandatory requirement and suggested that a commitment towards signing up to the Social Responsibility Charter as oppose to it being mandatory be included within the eligibility criteria.

Question: Did any other areas have a similar scheme in place and how would this attract businesses to the City.

Response: There were similar schemes in other areas, it would not be the tipping point for attracting businesses to the city but would be part of a package.

Question: Referred to the eligibility criteria number 3 and asked how would small and medium size businesses meet the criteria if they only employed 1 or 2 people?

Response: The expected growth in jobs would be worked out as percentage to ensure it was fair across all sized businesses.

**BUSINESS RATES GROWTH POLICY:
APPENDIX 2 – 23RD JULY 2018 – EXECUTIVE**

RESOLVED that

1. the draft Business Rates Growth Policy be supported.
2. the following addition to the Business Rates Growth Policy eligibility criteria be considered.
 - i. A commitment towards signing up to the Social Responsibility Charter.