

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Resources Committee

3rd December 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Relief from Non Domestic Rates for General Stores etc in Rural Settlements

Report by Depute Chief Executive

Summary

This report offers Members the opportunity to consider an application received from an outside body for extension of the Council's Rural Relief scheme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Government and Rating Act 1997 contains the statutory framework for the introduction of Rates Relief to qualifying businesses in rural areas. The scheme, which came into affect on 1 April 1998, provides for (a) Mandatory Rates Relief for "village shops and post offices" and (b) Discretionary Rates Relief for other non-domestic properties in rural areas.

Mandatory Relief is fully reimbursed to the Council via the National Non Domestic Rates pool. Only 75% of the cost of Discretionary Relief is met in this way, the remaining 25% being met from local Council Tax.

2. Relief Currently Awarded

- 2.1 To date, the Highland Council has awarded Rural Relief as follows:

- (a) Village shops receive 50% Mandatory Relief with a 50% Discretionary "top-up".
- (b) Post Offices with a rateable value of <£7,000 receive 100% Mandatory Relief.
- (c) Post Offices with a rateable value of between £7,000 and £14,000 receive 100% discretionary Relief.
- (d) Chemist Shops receive 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (e) Filling Stations with a rateable value of < £10,500 receive 100% Mandatory Relief.
- (f) Filling Stations with a rateable value between £10,500 and £14,000 receive 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (g) Public Houses with a rateable value of <£10,500 receive 50% Mandatory Relief with a 50% Discretionary "top-up".
- (h) Council owned properties receive 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (i) Tourist Information Centres receive 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (j) Auction Marts receive 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (k) Community Radio Stations receive 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (l) Jetties receive 100% Discretionary Relief.

- (m) Highlands and Islands Fire Brigade receives 100% Discretionary Relief.
- (n) Natural Burial Sites receive 100% Discretionary Relief.

The awarding of the above Discretionary Relief has resulted in costs to the Council during 2008/09 of £304,480. When Council-owned properties are excluded the total costs are £116,709.

(For information, £1 of Council Tax at Band D is equivalent to approximately £91,228).

3. Discretionary Relief

3.1 The Highland Council has adopted a 100% Discretionary Relief policy in respect of “Lifeline Businesses in Rural Communities”. The discretionary provisions allow Councils to grant Rates Relief, at whatever level they consider appropriate, provided:

- (a) the property is within a qualifying settlement
- (b) the Rateable value is not more than £14,000, and
- (c) the Council is satisfied that the property is used for purposes which are of benefit to the community and it is reasonable to grant such relief having regard to the interests of Council Taxpayers generally.

4. Application for Discretionary Rural Relief

4.1 An application has been received for relief from the Northern Joint Police Board, seeking rates relief for qualifying police properties in rural communities.

The Police provide an essential service to local communities across the Highland Council area and rural relief to remote / rural Stations will release additional funds in the annual budget which can only enhance the service provided by Northern Constabulary to these communities.

4.2 Appendix 1 lists qualifying properties occupied by the Northern Constabulary within the Highland Council area where the rateable values are not more than the £14,000 discretionary limit, and which are situated within a designated rural settlement.

Awards of 100% Discretionary Relief to these subjects would result in an annual cost to the Council of £11,710.

Recommendation

Members are invited to consider the above application for Discretionary Relief, and extend the coverage of the Rural Relief Scheme to qualifying police premises.

Signature:

Designation: Depute Chief Executive

Date: 25th November 2008

Ref:

Background Papers

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Appendix 1

Property Ref	Full Property Address		RV
01140828000	Main Street, Lybster.	KW3 6BN	850
01160329857	1 Churchill Place, Castletown, Thurso.	KW14 8UN	1,400
02010464005	Gordon Terrace, Bettyhill, Thurso.	KW14 7SX	2,500
02020180506	Tongue, Lairg.	IV27 4XQ	2,400
02050064001	Dornoch Road, Bonar Bridge, Ardgay	IV24 3EB	2,100
02080064002	Main Street, Golspie.	KW10 6TQ	1,750
02090057504	Temp. Buildings, Lairg Police Station.	IV27 4DB	1,150
02100515008	20, Lochinver, Lairg.	IV27 4JY	1,300
02110222958	Police Station, Rhiconich, Lairg.	IV27 4RN	625
02130036007	Col Bhein Road, Brora	KW9 6NZ	4,200
03010528005	8 Argyle Street, Ullapool.	IV26 2UB	7,300
03030284305	Auchtercairn, Gairloch.	IV21 2BN	1,450
03030663500	Aultbea, Achnasheen.	IV22 2JA	375
03040428106	Lochcarron, Strathcarron.	IV54 8YD	1,775
03080604007	Great North Road, Muir of Ord.	IV6 7SX	5,750
03153952600	87 High Street, Fortrose.	IV10 8TX	5,300
03190552609	Bank Street, Cromarty	IV11 8UY	70
03190552702	Bank Street, Cromarty	IV11 8UY	800
03200395055	Drummond Road, Evanton, Dingwall	IV16 9UT	600
04030718007	Main Street, Kyle.	IV40 8BY	11,200
04050335109	Broadford, Skye By Kyle.	IV49 9AB	1,200
04070364112	1-2, Uig, Portree, Skye.	IV51 9XP	1,000
04090408106	Kilmuir, Dunvegan, Skye.	IV55 8WA	725
05031998100	At Kilmallie Road, Caol, Fort William.	PH33 7AR	6,750
05033273005	Lochaber Road, Kinlochleven.	PA40 4QW	675
05061009007	Spean Crescent, Spean Bridge.	PH34 4ER	925
05100031008	Strontian, Acharacle.	PH36 4HZ	3,500
05130539006	Carnoch Glencoe, Ballachulish.	PA39 4HP	10,750
06197605329	Station road, Ardersier.	IV2 7ST	1,300
06215600206	Mid Lairgs, Farr, Inverness.	IV2 6XH	13,500
06243501803	At Foyers.	IV2 6XU	875
06253101365	Fort William Road, Fort Augustus.	PH32 4BH	2,350
06262540443	Drumnadrochit, Inverness	IV63 6TX	850
06272650529	East End, Dingwall Road, Beauly.	IV4 7DF	4,600
06275400305	8, Maccoll Road, Cannich.	IV4 7LP	375