

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **18th** day of **FEBRUARY 2014** at **11.30am**

Present: Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman
Cllr R E Baldwin – Vice-Chairman
Cllr S C Bailey Cllr W G Cann OBE
Cllr C M Marsh Cllr C R Musgrave
Cllr T G Pearce

Substitute: Cllr A F Leech for Cllr T J Hill
Cllr J Sheldon for Cllr J R McInnes
Cllr M J R Benson for Cllr P J Ridgers

In attendance: Cllr A Clish Green Cllr D Cloke
Cllr J B Moody Cllr N Morgan
Cllr D Whitcomb

Head of ICT and Customer Services
Chief Revenue Accountant
Member Services Manager

***RC 38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E H Sherrell. Apologies were also received from Cllr T J Hill (Cllr A F Leech substituted), Cllr J R McInnes (Cllr J Sheldon substituted) and Cllr P J Ridgers (Cllr M J R Benson substituted).

***RC 39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed. At this point the Monitoring Officer was invited to provide clarity for Members who held the position of Trustee for other organisations. The Monitoring Officer advised that the position of Trustee would not ordinarily require a declaration of a disclosable pecuniary interest, however, this would depend on the precise role that each Trustee undertook, and it was likely that a personal interest should be declared as membership of another body. In each case, the member must decide how to declare their interest.

Following this advice, the following declarations were made:

Cllr C Marsh declared a personal interest as a trustee of OCRA;
Cllr A F Leech declared a personal interest as a trustee of Dartmoor Life Museum and a trustee of the Ockment Centre;
Cllr T G Pearce declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Coronation Hall at Mary Tavy; and
Cllr W G Cann OBE declared a personal interest as a trustee and Chairman of the Village Hall Committee at South Zeal.
All Members, having declared their interests, remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote thereon.

BUSINESS RATES RETAIL RELIEF

The Chairman presented a report of the Head of ICT and Customer Services that provided details of the Retail Relief scheme announced in the Autumn Statement based on the guidance received in February 2014.

The Head of ICT and Customer Services set out the detail of the report. Each Local Authority had to agree to apply the relief. 100% of the relief awarded would be reimbursed by Central Government. There would be a saving to the Council from applying the relief, however Members would need to decide whether to apply a blanket relief, particularly in relation to charity shops, some of whom currently qualified for discretionary relief whilst others did not. Whilst there may be concerns in allowing relief to 'national' charities, they were subject to a state aid de minimis limit and it was their responsibility to declare once they had reached that limit.

Members raised some concerns that a blanket relief would support large chains, when they particularly wanted to support small local businesses. However the relief would only apply to qualifying business premises with a rateable value of less than £50,000. One Member felt that this relief may help some chains to keep smaller shops in more rural locations open, so should be supported in full. In respect of charities, the Head of ICT and Customer Services advised that differentiating between charities could leave the Council open to challenge. Of 481 premises identified that could benefit from this relief, only 30 were identified as retail chains.

In terms of savings to the Council, the Head of ICT and Customer Services advised that the savings would come from not having to collect the business rates. There would also be benefits to local businesses.

During discussion, it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and on being put to the vote declared **CARRIED** that the first recommendation be amended to allow for a review of the scheme after the first year.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to:

1. agree to provide the Retail Relief scheme for 2014/15, and to review the scheme prior to 2015/16, in accordance with Central Government guidance to support local businesses;
2. authorise the Head of Service in consultation with the Chairman of Resources Committee to decide on the details of the application and determination process; and
3. agree that registered charities should receive Retail Relief on top of the existing rate reliefs already available.

(The Meeting terminated at 12.45 pm)