**Spring Budget Announcements**

 **Supporting Small Businesses**

In the Spring Budget on 8 March 2017 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that a scheme of relief would be made available to those ratepayers facing large increases as a result of the loss of small business or rural rate relief.

The transitional relief scheme does not provide support in respect of changes in reliefs. Therefore, those ratepayers who are losing some or all of their small business or rural rate relief may be facing very large percentage increases in bills from 1 April 2017.

The supporting small businesses relief will help those ratepayers who as a result of the change in their rateable value at the revaluation are losing some or all of their small business or rural rate relief and, as a result, are facing large increases in their bills. To support these ratepayers, the supporting small businesses relief will ensure that the increase per year in the bills of these ratepayers is limited to the greater of:

* a cash value of £600 per year (£50 per month). This cash minimum increase ensures that those ratepayers currently paying nothing or very small amounts are brought into paying something, or
* the matching cap on increases for small properties in the transitional relief scheme.

**Discretionary Relief Scheme**

At the Spring Budget the Government announced the establishment of a £300m discretionary fund over four years from 2017-18 to support those businesses that face the steepest increases in their business rates bills as a result of the 2017 revaluation.

The intention is that every billing authority in England will be provided with a share of the £300m to support their local businesses. Billing authorities will be expected to use their share of the funding to develop their own discretionary relief schemes to deliver targeted support to the most hard-pressed ratepayers. The £300m will cover the four years from 2017/18.

**Support for Pubs**

The Government has also announced a new relief scheme for pubs that have a rateable value of below £100,000. Under the scheme, eligible pubs will receive a £1000 discount on their bill. DCLG plan to publish a consultation on the operation of the relief scheme for pubs shortly. The relief will have effect for 2017/18.

Information regarding the Spring Budget announcement can be found at:https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/22017-spring-budget-support-for-business

**What happens next?**

The Revenues Service are working towards identifying any businesses which may receive further support as a result of the spring budget announcements.

At such point that the Council are provided with further guidance from Central Government regarding the new relief schemes introduced, the Council will contact businesses directly who may be eligible to receive the support outlined above. Those qualifying for a relief will have the appropriate relief applied to their Business Rates account as soon as is practicable and where appropriate a new Business Rates bill will be issued. Payment should be made in accordance with the current Business Rates bill issued until advised otherwise.

Regular updates in terms of guidance on all of the above matters received from Central Government will be made available when received.