

EK SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY FOR THE GRANTING OF DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF, SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES RELIEF AND PUB RELIEF

Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council have entered into a shared service agreement to allow joint working and make savings in the Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates sections.

Where 'EK Services' and 'EKS' are mentioned this refers to the shared service between Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council and Thanet District Council.

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1.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine the level of Discretionary Business Rates Relief to be granted to certain defined ratepayers within the Partnership Councils' area.
- 1.2 The Local Government Finance Act 1988 and subsequent legislation requires each Council to grant discretionary relief for premises occupied by Charities and similar organisations that own or occupy them wholly or mainly for charitable purposes. Likewise, certain premises situated within a rural settlement area will be eligible for relief. Powers have also been granted under the Localism Act 2011, which allow for the granting of discretionary rate relief to any premises where a Council feels the granting of such relief would be of benefit to the local community.
- 1.3 In addition to the above, Central Government is keen that in certain cases, assistance should be provided to businesses who have had increases in their rate liability due to the revaluation of premises in April 2017. In these cases, and where a Council meets Central Government guidelines, grants are available under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.4 Whilst the all Councils are obliged to grant relief to premises, which fall within the mandatory category, the Partnership Councils also have powers to grant discretionary relief and reductions to ratepayers, subject to certain criteria being met.
- 1.5 This document outlines the following areas:
 - Details of the criteria for receiving an award under the Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme;
 - The EK Service's general policy for granting of all types of Discretionary Reliefs;
 - Guidance on granting and administering the reliefs;
 - European Union requirements including provisions for State Aid; and
 - The Partnership Councils' Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.6 This document covers all aspects of the new Discretionary Business Rates Relief scheme which is available from 1st April 2017. Where businesses apply for relief they will be granted (or not granted) relief in line with the following policy.

2.0 Discretionary Relief - Legislative Background

Introduction

- 2.1 The original purpose of discretionary relief was to provide assistance where the property does not qualify for mandatory relief, or to 'top' up cases where ratepayers already receive mandatory relief.
- 2.2 Over recent years, and particularly since 2011, the discretionary relief provisions have been amended to allow authorities the flexibility to provide more assistance to businesses and organisations.
- 2.3 The range of bodies, which are eligible for discretionary rate relief, is wide and has been developed by both the Council and Central Government to address certain issues with business rates.
- 2.4 Unlike mandatory relief, ratepayers are obliged to make a written application to EK Services. EK Services will expect all businesses to make applications in such a format as is required (which may vary from time to time) and for the business to provide such information, evidence, certificates etc. as required in order to determine whether relief should be awarded .
- 2.5 EK Services is obliged to consider carefully every application on its merits, taking into account the contribution that the organisation makes to the amenities within the authority's area. There is no statutory appeal process or Tribunal against any decision made by EK Services, although as with any decision of a public authority, decisions can be reviewed by Judicial Review. The authority will however, upon request, review decisions made. Details of the internal review process are given within this policy.
- 2.6 The granting of discretionary relief falls broadly into the following categories:
 - a. Discretionary Relief - Charities who already receive mandatory relief;
 - b. Discretionary Relief - Premises occupied by organisations not established or conducted for profit whose main objects are charitable or are otherwise philanthropic or religious or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts or premises occupied by organisations not established or conducted for profit and wholly or mainly used for purposes recreation;
 - c. Discretionary Relief - Granted under the Localism Act 2011 provisions;
 - d. Local Newspaper Relief (from 1st April 2017 for a period of two years);
 - e. Local Public House Relief (from April 2017 for a one year period);
 - f. Supporting Small Businesses Relief (from 1st April 2017 for a period of five years or until business pay their full rate charge or their transitional rate charge (calculated in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016); and

- g. Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme (from 1st April 2017 for a period of up to four years).

2.7 This policy document purely covers the granting of awards under e., f., and g. above. The decision to grant or not to grant discretionary relief is a matter purely for each Council. The EK Services policy for granting other reliefs can be found on the each of the partnership Councils' websites.

EK Services' general approach to granting Discretionary Relief

2.8 In deciding which organisations should receive discretionary rate relief, EK Services has considered the following factors and priorities:

- a. That any award should support business, organisations and groups that help to retain services in any partnership Councils' area and not compete directly with existing businesses in an unfair manner;
- b. It should help and encourage business, organisations, groups and communities to become self-reliant;
- c. Awarding discretionary relief should not distort competition or significantly change the provision of services within any of EK Services' areas;
- d. Local organisations will be given priority over national organisations. Where requested, the organisation will need to supply the partnership with clear evidence of all financial affairs including, and most importantly, the amounts of monies raised, used and invested locally. This will be essential where the organisation is national in nature;
- e. To enable appropriate organisations to start, develop or continue their activities, which deliver outcomes to the community and that also relate to the priorities of each Council, which, without granting discretionary relief they would be unable to do;
- f. To assist each Council in delivering services which could not be provided otherwise;
- g. To enable each Council to determine the level of rate change in comparison with the organisation's financial situation; and
- h. To ensure that the financial impact of awarding discretionary business rate relief is justified in terms of the local outcomes achieved by the organisation receiving it.

2.9 Where any reduction or remission is granted to a ratepayer under S49 Local Government Finance Act 1988 where hardship is proven, then there will be no requirement to grant Discretionary Rate Relief for that amount.

2.10 In certain cases, the order in which relief is granted is specified. Mandatory relief shall be granted in all cases where the criteria is met irrespective of whether discretionary relief can be granted or not.

The EK Services' approach to granting Government led Discretionary Relief schemes

- 2.11 Over the past few years, a number of schemes have been led by Central Government but without specific legislative changes. These are administered under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and guidance if often provided. EK Services are keen to support such initiatives especially where they are designed to help local businesses and will look to maximise both the reliefs given as well as maximising any grants receivable. However, EK Services reserves the right to vary its approach where thought appropriate.
- 2.12 In the case of the Discretionary Business Rate Relief scheme, Central Government is keen that individual Councils develop their own scheme to meet local needs. Government has allocated funds to each Council using a particular methodology, but it has been keen to point out that this should have no bearing on the actual scheme adopted.

3.0 Effect on the Partnership Councils' Finances

- 3.1 The granting of discretionary relief will, in the main, potentially involve a cost to each Council. Since the change to the funding for Non-Domestic Rating in April 2013, the effect of the relief is complex.
- 3.2 Any amounts granted prior to 1st April 2013 and continuing since that date will be included in the Councils' baseline within the Business Rates Retention Scheme. Any amounts granted for similar cases after 1st April 2013, the costs of the relief will be borne in accordance with the Business Rates Retention Scheme share namely 50% borne by Central Government, 40% by each Partnership Council and 10% by Kent County Council This also applies where mandatory relief is granted.
- 3.3 In March 2017, Central Government announced that it would make available a discretionary fund of £300 million 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 revaluation. Government determined that Councils would be best placed to determine how this fund should be targeted and administered to support those businesses and locations within their area that are in the greatest need.
- 3.4 Where Central Government leads an initiative such as the Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme, grants are often made available. This is not automatic and Central Government will look to each Council to adopt any recommended criteria when granting in these areas to ensure that any grant is paid.
- 3.5 Every authority within England is to be provided with a share of the fund to support their local businesses. This is to be administered through billing authorities' discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988. The full effects of the financial allocation are shown below.
- 3.6 The allocation of monies to authorities and the methodology of the funding award is completely separate to the scheme itself and Government believes that local authorities are best placed to judge the particular circumstances of local ratepayers and direct the funding where it is most needed to support local economies .
- 3.7 The funding is not provided equally over the four-year period but in the following approximate proportions:
- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| Year 1 (2017/18) | 58% |
| Year 2 (2018/19) | 28% |
| Year 3 (2019/20) | 12% |
| Year 4 (2020/21) | 2% |
- 3.8 Councils will be compensated for any relief granted under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government has stated that any underspend cannot be 'vired' from one year to the next.

3.9 Key criteria of reimbursement will be that all Billing Authorities will consult with major precepting authorities when formulating their schemes.

3.10 The financial effects to each Council of the Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme are shown in the following table

Council Amount of discretionary fund awarded (£000s)

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Canterbury City Council	425	206	85	12
Dover District Council	232	113	46	7
Thanet District Council	330	160	66	9

3.11 The above is to be awarded up to the maximum level set by Central Government. It is possible for the Council to grant more relief than that allocated by grant. However, once the maximum grant level has been reached, any additional amount granted is borne 40% by each Council, 10% by Kent County Council and 50% by Central Government.

4.0 Discretionary Relief - EU State Aid requirements

- 4.1 European Union competition rules generally prohibit Government subsidies to businesses. Relief from taxes, including non-domestic rates, can constitute state aid. Any Council must bear this in mind when granting discretionary rate relief.
- 4.2 Rate relief for charities and non-profit making bodies is not generally considered to be state aid, because the recipients are not in market competition with other businesses. However, where other bodies receive relief and are engaged in commercial activities or if they are displacing an economic operator or if they have a commercial partner, rate relief could constitute state aid.
- 4.3 Relief will be State Aid compliant where it is provided in accordance with the De Minimis Regulations (1407/20 13)¹. The De Minimis Regulations allow an undertaking to receive up to €200,000 of De Minimis aid in a three-year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years).
- 4.4 Where the relief to any one business is greater than the De Minim is level, then permission will need to be obtained from the European Commission. In such cases the matter will be referred to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for advice and then referred back to the Council for consideration. It will be for the ratepayer to provide confirmation as to whether the State Aid provisions apply to them.
- 4.5 In all cases, where discretionary relief is to be granted or where liability is to be reduced, when making an application, ratepayers will be required to provide EK Services with sufficient information to determine whether these provisions are applicable in their case.

5.0 Administration of Discretionary Relief - General approach

- 5.1 The following section outlines the procedures followed by officers in granting, amending or cancelling discretionary relief and reduction. This is essentially laid down by legislation 2

Applications and Evidence

- 5.2 All reliefs must be applied for. Application forms are produced by EK Services both in hard copy and electronic format. The relevant application form is included within Appendix A of this policy. EK Services will specify how applications are to be received and this may vary from time to time.
- 5.3 Organisations are required to provide a completed application form plus any such evidence, documents, accounts, financial statements etc. necessary to allow EK Services to make a decision. Where insufficient information is provided, then no relief will be granted. In some cases, it may be necessary for officers to visit premises and we would expect organisations claiming relief to facilitate this where necessary.
- 5.4 Applications should initially be made to the Revenues Section and will be determined in accordance with this policy.
- 5.5 EK Services will provide this service and guidance free of charge. Ratepayers are encouraged to approach the relevant Council direct and not pay for such services through third parties.

Granting of relief

- 5.6 In all cases, EK Services will notify the ratepayer of decisions made.
- 5.7 Where an application is successful, then the following will be notified to them in writing:
- The amount of relief granted and the date from which it has been granted;
 - If relief has been granted for a specified period, the date on which it will end;
 - The new chargeable amount;
 - The details of any planned review dates and the notice that will be given in advance of a change to the level of relief granted; and
 - A requirement that the applicant should notify EK Services of any change in circumstances that may affect entitlement to relief.
- 5.8 Where relief is not granted then the following information is provided, again in writing:
- An explanation of the decision within the context of each Councils' statutory duty; and
 - An explanation of the appeal rights (see below).

The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989

- 5.9 Discretionary relief is to be granted from the beginning of the financial year in which the decision is made. Since 1997 decisions can be made up to 6 months after the end of the financial year for which the application was made. In such cases, EK Services may backdate its decision.
- 5.10 A decision to award discretionary relief and how much relief is given is normally only applicable to the financial year for which the application is made. However, EK Services reserves the right to grant relief for any other period as appropriate. In relation to the Discretionary Business Rate Relief scheme, awards will, in the main be granted from 1st April 2017.
- 5.11 A fresh application for discretionary relief will be necessary for each financial year or at such time-period as EK Services determines.

Variation of a decision

- 5.12 Variations in any decision will be notified to ratepayers as soon as practicable and will take effect as follows:
- Where the amount is to be increased due to a change in rate charge or a change in a Council's decision which increases the award - this will apply from the date the Council as appropriate;
 - Where the amount is to increase for any other reason it will take effect at the expiry of a financial year, and so that at least one year's notice is given;
 - Where the amount is to be reduced due to a reduction in the rate charge or liability including any reduction in rateable value, awarding of another relief or exemption this will apply from the date of the decrease in rate charge; and
 - Where the amount is to be reduced for any other reason, it will take effect at the expiry of a financial year, and so that at least one year's notice is given.
- 5.13 A decision may be revoked at any time, however, a one year period of notice will be given and the change will take effect at the expiry of a financial year.

6.0 Scheme of Delegation

Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief

- 6.1 All powers in relation to reliefs are given under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Local Government Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011. However section 223 of the Local Government Act 1992 allows for delegation of decisions by each Council to Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees or Officers.
- 6.2 The Partnership Councils' scheme of delegation allows for the EK Services Income Manager to award, revise or revoke any discretionary relief applications. However, any application which is considered to be of a significant nature will be subject to consultation with the S151 Officer of the Council, and/ or the relevant Executive member prior to final determination.
- 6.3 Applications that are refused will, on request, be reconsidered if additional supporting information is provided or the refusal is subsequently considered to be based on a misinterpretation of the application.

Reviews

- 6.4 The policy for granting relief will be reviewed annually or sooner where there is a substantial change to the legislation or funding rules. At such time, a revised policy will be brought before the relevant committee of the Council.

Appeals

- 6.5 Where any Council receives an appeal from the ratepayer regarding the granting, non-granting or the amount of any discretionary relief, the case will be reviewed by the EK Services Income Manager. Where a decision is revised then the ratepayer shall be informed, likewise if the original decision is upheld.
- 6.6 Where the ratepayer continues to be aggrieved by the decision, the case will be referred to the section 151 Officer for review. Where appropriate, cases of this nature may also be referred to the Executive member as appropriate.
- 6.7 Ultimately the formal appeal process for the ratepayer is Judicial Review although EK Services will endeavour to explain any decision fully and openly with the ratepayer.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 EK Services has consulted with the major preceptors in relation to this scheme and has taken their comments into account when determining the eligibility criteria. This is an essential part of the Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme and is in line with the grant determination issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) No.31 /3071.
- 7.2 The grant determination states that a condition of the fund is that consultation is undertaken with 'relevant authorities'. Relevant authorities for the purposes of this scheme means:
- a. Any major precepting authority; and
 - b. Any combined authority.
- 7.3 In the case of Partnership Council's only the major precepting authorities have been consulted namely:
- a. Kent County Council;
 - b. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent; and
 - c. The Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

8.0 Decisions by EK Services under this scheme

- 8.1 Decisions by EK Services are made directly in line with the Scheme of Delegation as outlined within section 6 of this policy. Any decision to award relief under this scheme will follow the core principles of each Council's discretionary relief policy as defined by section 2.8.
- 8.2 It should be noted that, whilst the funding from Central Government for Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme is limited, the decision of EK Services whether to award any relief under this scheme cannot take account of any level of funding.

Applications for relief under this scheme

- 8.3 EK Services is keen to identify ratepayers who may qualify for the relief and as such will look to encourage certain ratepayers to apply. Each Council will look to simplify the application process wherever possible, but it will expect any ratepayers to provide such information as is required by the Council to support their application.
- 8.4 Each Council has decided that relief under the scheme will be awarded using the following criteria:
- a. The scheme is designed to assist ratepayers who have suffered significant increases in rate liability due to the revaluation and the subsequent increase to their Rateable Value;
 - b. Relief will not be awarded where mandatory relief is granted;
 - c. In assessing any potential entitlement to an award under this scheme, each Council will compare the following:
 - i. The rate liability of the ratepayer at 31st March 2017 after any reliefs and reductions; and
 - ii. The rate liability of the ratepayer at 1st April 2017 taking into account any transitional relief or discretionary relief within this policy;
 - d. Relief will be awarded where the calculation above would result in an increase;
 - e. Relief will only be given to premises which are liable for occupied rates. No relief within this scheme will be granted for unoccupied premises;
 - f. Relief will only be granted to ratepayers who were in occupation at 31st March 2017 and in occupation on 1st April 2017 and for each day subsequently.
 - g. Ratepayers taking up occupation after the 1st April 2017 will not be eligible for relief on the basis that new ratepayers would not have suffered from increases due to a revaluation;

- h. Relief will be targeted to local businesses and not those businesses that are national or multi-national in nature. Local businesses are, for the purposes of this scheme, those which have premises wholly in Kent;
 - i. Relief may be awarded for more than one premises as long as all other criteria are met;
- j. Relief will not be awarded where:
 - i. the hereditament has a Rateable Value of greater than £275,000;
 - ii. the hereditament is a Prescribed Education Establishments;
 - iii. the hereditament is an excepted one (occupied by any Billing or Precepting Authority);
 - iv. mandatory relief is awarded;
 - v. where the ratepayer has applied for a reduction under S44a of the Local Government Finance Act 1988; or
 - vi. the hereditament has an increase in Rateable Value after the 1st April 2017 which increases the rate charge above the 1st April 2017 value

Amount of Relief

8.5 The amount of relief is tapered and will be calculated as follows:

2017/18

Award = the following% age of the increase:

Council	%age of increase awarded as a relief
Canterbury City Council	55%
Dover District Council	70%
Thanet District Council	85%

2018/19

Award = 2017/18 award x 50% (for clarity this will be half of the relief awarded in 2017/18)

2019/20

Award = 2018/19 award x 50% (for clarity this will be half of the relief awarded in 2018/19)

2020/21

Award = 2019/20 award x 10% (for clarity this will be 10% of the relief awarded in 2019/20)

Variation and amendment of relief under the scheme

- 8.6 As with all reliefs, the amount of relief awarded under the Discretionary Businesses Rates relief scheme will be recalculated in the event of a change of circumstances. In effect relief is calculated on a daily basis in line with the ratepayer's liability on that day. This will include, for example, a backdated change to the rateable value of the hereditament. This change of circumstances could arise during the year in question or during a later year.
- 8.7 The Non -Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1059) requires the Council to provide ratepayers with at least one year's notice in writing before any decision to revoke or vary a decision so as to increase the amount the ratepayer has to pay takes effect. Such a revocation or variation of a decision can only take effect at the end of a financial year. But within these regulations, the Council may still make decisions which are conditional upon eligibility criteria or rules for calculating relief which allow the amount of relief to be amended within the year to reflect changing circumstances.

9.0 Reporting changes in circumstances

- 9.1 Where any award is granted to a ratepayer, EK Services will require any changes in circumstances which may affect the relief to be reported as soon as possible and in any event not more than 21 days from the happening of the event. This will be important where the change would result in the amount of the award being reduced or cancelled e.g. where the premises comes unoccupied or is used for a purpose other than that determined by the Partnership as eligible for relief.
- 9.2 Where a change of circumstances is reported, the relief will, if appropriate be revised or cancelled. Where any award is to be reduced, EK Services will look to recover the amount from the date the change of circumstances occurred.

10.0 Fraud

- 10.1 Where a ratepayer falsely applies for any relief, or where the ratepayer provides false information, makes false representation, or deliberately withholds information in order to gain relief, prosecutions will be considered under the Fraud Act 2006.

11.0 Supporting Small Businesses Relief

General Explanation

- 11.1 Central Government has increased the thresholds for Small Business Rate Relief from 1 April 2017 to £12,000 for the 100% relief and £15,000 for the tapered relief. They have also allowed rural rate relief to be granted up to 100% using S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as a top up to the mandatory level of 50%, albeit that the rateable value limits have not been changes in respect of rural hereditaments. Unfortunately, despite these changes, some small businesses and businesses in rural areas may lose their entitlement to the relief due to increases in Rateable Value through the revaluation on 1st April 2017.
- 11.2 The transitional relief scheme (provided under the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016 No. 1265) does not provide support in respect of changes in reliefs. Therefore, those ratepayers who have lost some or all of their small business or rural rate relief may face large percentage increases in bills from 1 April 2017.
- 11.3 In view of this, Central Government announced that a new 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 due to the revaluation. All authorities are encouraged to grant the relief in accordance with the guidelines laid down by Central Government and if granted strictly in accordance with guidance, each Council will be compensated by Central Government through a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 11.4 The relief is known as the 'Supporting Small Businesses Scheme'

Who is eligible for the relief and how much relief will be available?

- 11.5 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.
- 11.6 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. a percentage increase per annum. of 5%, 7.5%, 10%, 15% and 15% 2017/18 to 2021/22 plus inflation. (Unlike the transitional relief scheme under the Chargeable Amount regulations), for the first year of the scheme the percentage increase is taken against the bill for 31 March 2017 after small business rate relief or rural rate relief; or
 - b. a cash value off 600 per year (£50 per month).
- 11.7 This cash minimum increase ensures that those ratepayers paying nothing or very small amounts in 2016/17 after small business rate relief are brought into paying something.

- 11.8 In the first year of the scheme, this means all ratepayers losing some or all of their small business rate relief or rural rate relief will see the increase in their bill capped at £600. The cash minimum increase is £600 per year thereafter. This means that ratepayers who in 2016/17 paid nothing under small business rate relief and are losing all of their entitlement to relief (i.e. moving from £6,000 rateable value or less to more than £15,000) would under this scheme be paying £3,000 in year 5.
- 11.9 The Government has also decided that those on the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme whose 2017 rateable values are £51,000 or more will not be liable to pay the supplement (1.3p) to fund small business rate relief while they are eligible for the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme.
- 11.10 Ratepayers will remain in the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme for either 5 years or until they reach the bill they would have paid without the scheme (this would be the charge payable as their true rates payable or the charge calculated under the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2016).
- 11.11 A change of ratepayer will not affect eligibility for the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme but eligibility will be lost if the property falls vacant or becomes occupied by a charity or Community Amateur Sports Club.
- 11.12 The rules for state aid (as detailed in section 4 of this policy) shall apply when considering Supporting Small Businesses Relief.

Recalculation of relief

- 11.13 The amount of relief awarded under the Supporting Small Businesses relief scheme will be recalculated in the event of a change of circumstances including the following:
- This could include, for example, a backdated change to the rateable value or the hereditament; or
 - The awarding of another relief.
- 11.14 EK Services will, in effect, calculate the award on a daily basis taking into account the above, and the relief will be re-calculated if the rateable value changes.

Other Reliefs

- 11.15 Hereditaments eligible for charity or Community Amateur Sports Club relief or hereditaments which are unoccupied are not eligible for Supporting Small Businesses Relief. Likewise, the same principle applies to properties for which a Section 44A certificate has been granted (apportionment of rateable values for partly occupied properties). The presence of a section 44A certificate will not further reduce the bill found under the Supporting Small Business scheme.
- 11.16 In accordance with Central Government guidelines, all other discretionary reliefs, will be considered after the application of Supporting Small Businesses relief.
- 11.17 Each partnership Council has decided that EK Services can grant relief strictly in accordance with Central Government guidelines

12.0 Public House Relief

General Explanation

- 12.1 This is a temporary relief for 2017-18 and the Government is not changing the legislation around the reliefs available to premises. Central Government will reimburse local authorities that use their discretionary relief powers (under section 47(3)) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988) to grant £1000 relief in line with the eligibility criteria set out in guidance to be produced by Central Government.
- 12.2 Central Government guidelines have been issued and it has been established that any amount granted will be reimbursed by a section 31 grant.

Eligibility criteria

- 12.3 EK Service's policy, in line with Central Government requirements, will provide a relief of £1,000 relief for one year only (1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018) for all eligible public houses who have a rateable value of less than £100,000 on 1st April 2017.
- 12.4 The definition of a 'Public House' means any premises as defined in the Licensing Act 2003, which has a premises license authorising sale by retail of alcohol for consumption on the premises. In addition, the premises must be used principally for retail sales of alcohol to members of the public for consumption on the premises, and sales must not be subject to the condition that buyers reside at or consume food on the premises.
- 12.5 It will be for EK Services to decide whether any premises falls within the definition give in the above paragraph. No relief shall be given where the premises are unoccupied.

Other Reliefs

- 12.6 Pubic House relief will be granted after applying any other mandatory reliefs and reductions

Public House Relief- the Council's policy for granting discretionary relief

- 12.7 Each partnership Council has decided to allow EK Services to grant relief strictly in accordance with Central Government guidelines.

13.0 Equalities Statement

EK Services are committed to delivering a service that is accessible and fair to all of the communities that we serve. We will ensure that all people are treated with respect and dignity.

The Equality Act 2010 sets us an “Equality Duty” to:

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. promote equality of opportunity between different groups in the community;
and
3. foster good relations within the local community

We give careful consideration to equality issues in our new and existing policies, strategies and services to see what effect they will have on different groups within our communities, including those with protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty are:

- age;
- disability;
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination);
- pregnancy and maternity;
- gender reassignment;
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality;
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief;
- sex (gender);
- sexual orientation.

We also recognise that socio-economic status can be a significant barrier to equality of opportunity.

We identify potential consequences for these groups and ensure any negative impacts are eliminated or reduced. We also identify opportunities to eliminate discrimination and promote positive relations between groups and throughout our communities.

14.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and when changes dictate in order to ensure it remains valid, effective and relevant.