

BUSINESS RATES RECOVERY POLICY

Executive Summary

Business rates provide a large income stream for Woking Borough Council and Central Government. For 2018/19 the overall net collectable business rates in Woking is over £49M. Woking Borough Council will be allowed to retain in the region of £2.1M. The remainder will be pooled to Central Government, who will redistribute it. With Local Authorities facing increased funding pressures from Central Government it is important that an effective business rates recovery policy is in place.

Woking Borough Council is responsible for the billing and collection of business rates for non domestic properties located within the Borough. The collection rate for 2017/18 was 98.46%. In order to increase collection levels further it is recommended that the Council agree the recovery methods contained within this policy.

It is important that all people that receive business rates bills are treated equally during the billing, collection and recovery process. Those that pay on time should be assured that reasonable efforts are made to recover unpaid amounts from those that fail to pay. Likewise those subject to recovery proceedings should be sure that a fair and consistent approach is taken.

The policy recognises that certain debtors may be vulnerable and that some may be in serious financial difficulty. The policy ensures that sufficient checks are undertaken during the recovery process to identify these people. Certain recovery options are not appropriate where a person is identified as vulnerable and we will act to personalise recovery action to reflect this.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) the Business Rates Recovery Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and**
- (ii) the Policy be implemented with immediate effect.**

Background Papers: None.

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Business Rates Recovery Policy

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REPORT ENDS