



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Marcus Jones MP

Minister for Local Government

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**

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Dear Councillor,

SPRING BUDGET 2017 BUSINESS RATE RELIEF SCHEMES

At Spring Budget, my Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor announced a £435 million package of support for ratepayers over five years following the 2017 business rate revaluation. At Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced that the Support for Pubs scheme is to continue for an additional year in 2018/19.

I wrote to you on 14 September thanking those authorities that had begun rebilling and encouraging those which had not to do so quickly. On 20 November I wrote to all English MPs setting out the progress made by their relevant local authority and level of support provided to each through the £300m Discretionary Scheme.

I am grateful to the vast majority of authorities that have made progress and awarded relief to their local businesses. However, I understand that there are still a few authorities that have either not notified DCLG of their progress, or are yet to commence re-billing. This is mainly related to the Discretionary Scheme. I will shortly be contacting these authorities directly, but I should be clear, this delay is unacceptable.

We are continuing to maintain and regularly update the list of authorities that have begun rebilling on Gov.UK. The list can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-relief-schemes-2017-rebiling-progress>

This is reliant on authorities providing the necessary updates. Authorities should therefore notify DCLG once rebilling has begun by sending an update to: DCLG-SBSchemes@communities.gsi.gov.uk

I also understand from the responses to the recent data collection exercise that many authorities are forecasting an underspend on their year one allocation for the Discretionary scheme, due for example, to a lower than expected take-up rate. As you are aware, there is no end year flexibility and any unspent allocation will be returned to central government later next year as part of the normal reconciliation

process. In order that your local businesses do not miss out, I would encourage you to take all necessary steps to publicise your scheme and award available relief as soon as possible. For instance, you may consider an 'opt out' version of any application scheme, or automatic allocation, if viable within the terms of your scheme.

Additionally, all authorities should be in a position to apply the reliefs for year two without delay at the start of the 2018/19 billing cycle. Billing authorities should assure themselves that they have in place clear and swift arrangements for a smooth rolling over of all schemes. If your authority needs to consult, run a new application process, present a newly designed Discretionary scheme to council to approve, or undertake any preparatory work, this process must begin as soon as possible and in time to ensure businesses are provided with support as part of the normal billing cycle.

I would like to thank you for your continued cooperation and assistance in providing this support to eligible businesses in your area.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Marcus Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marcus" and the last name "Jones" clearly distinguishable.

MARCUS JONES MP