

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE CONSULTATION

Notes of a National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) Consultation Meeting of Bolsover District Council held in Chamber Suite 1, The Arc, Clowne on Thursday 28th January 2016 at 1800 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors A. Anderson, J.A. Clifton, M. Dixey, S.W. Fritchley (as both a Councillor and a local business ratepayer) and S. Statter

Officers:-

B. Mason (Executive Director – Operations) and A. Brownsword (Governance Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE CONSULTATION

The Executive Director – Operations informed those present that legislation required that a consultation meeting be held, but the Council no longer had the power to set the level of NNDR. Consultation therefore was focussed on the services provided by the Council. Questions raised by Councillor S.W. Fritchley in his capacity as a business ratepayer included the following:

1. What are the Council's ambitions regarding the continuation of small business rate relief if government devolve NNDR?

The Executive Director – Operations noted that the small business rate relief was currently a national scheme funded by central Government. Although Government had indicated that it wanted to devolve NNDR, no consultations had yet been held. Following any national consultation then, reports would be submitted to Members for any decision concerning local elements of the scheme.

2. Prior to 1990, most precepting authorities had a share of NNDR and there were concerns regarding what would happen if devolution should happen. What was the opinion of precepts post devolution?

The Executive Director – Operations noted that this would depend on the outcomes of the consultation process. Any consultation would involve the business community. The Government would keep control of the rate in £ level.

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE CONSULTATION

A re-valuation was scheduled for 2017 which would impact significantly on the levels that business will be required to pay.

3. Not many services were received by NNDR payers, does the Council have any policy to change this?

The Executive Director – Operations commented that there were no plans to change services provided.

4. The Council could provide reduced rate services to encourage local businesses. There have been complaints regarding broadband speeds, particularly on Brook Park, Shirebrook where there are some international businesses. The issue has been raised with the Chief Executive Officer. The Council needs to support local businesses in return for NNDR.

The Executive Director – Operations noted that NNDR was used to fund education etc which clearly had a benefit to business. Digital Derbyshire was currently being rolled out by DCC, but it was noted this would not fully address the problem. As Councillor Fritchley mentioned the Chief Executive Officer was looking into the situation.

Members noted that there were also issues with broadband speeds at Pleasley Vale and that technical infrastructures were as important as road infrastructures.

5. What is Bolsover District Council doing to promote areas for development?

The Executive Director – Operations noted that the Council was part of the North Midlands Partnership and Sheffield City Region which brings in additional funding. Local Enterprise Partnerships were currently the only way to bring in funding for economic development. The Economic Development Team will visit any business and can offer access business support and apprenticeships.

6. What about promotion? Bolsover District has a lot to offer and could be promoted a lot better. Has any thought been given to making promotional videos, etc?

The Executive Director – Operations noted that the Council had a Tourism budget and had recently received £1m investment to improve the historic infrastructure of Bolsover.

It was agreed that a number of important issues had been raised at the meeting and that these should be taken forward by the Growth Scrutiny Committee e.g. Internet Speeds, Road Infrastructure, Promotion of the District and how the Council could better engage with local businesses.

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE CONSULTATION

The Executive Director – Operations noted that although the meeting had been advertised in the local press, attendance was once again poor and suggested that the consultation might better be linked to one of the Local Business Breakfast Briefings that took place throughout the year. Again this would be referred back to Growth Scrutiny Committee to take a view.

The Executive Director – Operations thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 1835 hours.