



Report To: Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder
Lead Officer: Executive Director

21 November 2017

RURAL SETTLEMENTS LIST 2018-19

Boundaries of Rural Settlements for the Purposes of Rural Rate Relief

Purpose

1. To review and determine the boundaries of Rural Settlements for the administration of Rural Rate Relief ("Village Shop Relief") in accordance with section 42B of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.
2. This is not a key decision but it is a legal requirement that boundaries are set and published before 31st December each year, and it was first published in the July 2017 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Portfolio Holder approves the Rural Settlement List for 2018/19 as attached at Appendix A and authorises its publication.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Council is required to determine annually the rural settlements within its area where the population of the settlement is less than 3,000, and to publish a list of settlements indicating their boundaries before 31st December each year.

Background

5. Qualifying properties situated within such a designated rural settlement are eligible for relief from payment of the National Non-Domestic Rates.

Considerations

6. To be eligible for rural rate relief, a business must be located in a qualifying rural settlement, which has a population of no more than 3,000 and falls wholly or partly in a rural area designated for the purposes of the rate relief scheme by the Secretary of State.
7. It is the responsibility of the local authority to determine which settlements in its area meet this criterion, to identify their boundaries and place them on the authority's Rural Settlements List. The current Rural Settlements List has been reviewed to take account of the latest statistical population data obtained from the Local Government Association, who in turn use data supplied by the Office for National Statistics. Details can be found in APPENDIX B
8. Details of the qualifying settlements can be found in APPENDIX B. There is one change from last year in that the population of Teversham is no longer considered to be a rural settlement, with its estimated population now exceeding 3,000. As a result, there is one ratepayer in Teversham who would no longer be entitled to receive this relief. However, it is likely that the business will qualify for Small Business Rate Relief.

Options

9. To consider the boundaries for Rural Settlements within the district. The Council has a legal duty to set and publish the list in order to facilitate the award of Rural Rate Relief.

Implications

10. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

11. To date, the current Rural Settlements List facilitated the award of mandatory and discretionary rural rate relief to 42 businesses to the sum of £157,119.30 in 2017, at a cost to the Council of approximately £62,000.

Legal

12. The Council has a legal duty to set and publish the rural settlements list for each financial year by 31st December of the previous year. Authority to agree the settlements has been delegated to the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder.

Risk Management

13. The Council must agree and publish its Rural Settlement list by 31st December 2017 in order for businesses to benefit from relief in 2018/17

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

14. No consultation has taken place as it is a legal requirement that boundaries are set and published

Effect on Corporate Objectives

Connected Communities.

15. Rural rate relief plays an important role in ensuring the financial viability of rural businesses which are essential to the quality of life of local residents.

In particular, relief is awarded to post offices, petrol stations, general stores and public houses, recognising the value they add to the local community.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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