

Minister Hamilton
Minister for Finance and Personnel
DFP Private Office
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

19 December 2014

Dear Minister Hamilton

Re: Non Domestic Revaluation

At the meeting of the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of Belfast City Council on the 19 December 2014, the Committee considered the potential impact of the non domestic revaluation on rate bills for residents of the new Belfast Area in 2015/16.

Whilst the Committee noted that the total amount of money to be raised through the non domestic rate will not change as a result of revaluation, the Committee expressed concern regarding the potential economic impact on some non domestic ratepayers whose NAVs have increased significantly as a result of the revaluation.

The Committee is particularly concerned at the potential impact on small businesses where their NAV has increased to an extent where their current Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) would be reduced or no longer applicable.

Members welcomed the Minister's announcement that the draft budget for 2015/16 proposes the continuation of a Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) scheme offering £20million of support next year to thousands of Northern Ireland's small businesses and that a further announcement would be made on the extended scheme.

The Committee also recognised that £30m had been set aside by the Executive to manage the process of district rate convergence by phasing in increases attributed to that convergence over an extended period of time.

However given the significant impact of the revaluation on a number of businesses in the city, the Council agreed that I should write to ask you to consider implementing a Transition Relief Scheme for those business severely affected by the non domestic revaluation and that the current thresholds for the SBRR scheme be reviewed to take account of the overall movement in non domestic property valuations to ensure that the impact of the revaluation does not adversely impact on small businesses in the city.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Wylie
Chief Executive