



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 16 APRIL 2026
Subject	DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Patrick Coleman – Cabinet Member for Finance Email: Patrick.Coleman@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Frank Wilson – Managing Director, Publica Email: frank.wilson@cotswold.gov.uk
Report Author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: mandy.fathers@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider and approve amendments to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
Annexes	Annex A – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Annex B – Examples of Reliefs
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1) Approve the amendments to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as detailed within the report 2) Delegate to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, any future amendments to the Policy in respect of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and Electric Vehicle Forecourts.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering Good Services• Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/	Council Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance, Chief Executive and



Consultation	Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Accountant and Deputy S151 Officer, Director of Governance and Development, Director of Communities and Place, Head of Legal Services, Assistant Director, Managing Director (Publica)
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** To consider proposed changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy following recent government announcements and to note the policy to underpin these schemes, as appended to this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Local Government Finance Act 1988 and subsequent legislation require the Council to grant mandatory relief for premises occupied by charities and similar organisations that own or occupy them wholly or mainly for charitable purposes. Likewise, certain premises situated within a rural settlement area are eligible for mandatory relief. Powers have also been granted under the Localism Act 2011, which allow for the granting of discretionary rate relief to any premises where the Council feels the granting of such relief would be of benefit to the local community.
- 2.2** Whilst the Council is obliged to grant relief to premises, which fall within the mandatory category, the Council also has powers to grant discretionary relief and reductions to ratepayers, subject to certain criteria being met.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** The Council already has a Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (the 'Policy'), which, following recent announcements from Government in respect of new reliefs, has been reviewed.
- 3.2** In the case of the new reliefs, some guidance has been issued by central government outlining actions expected to be taken by local authorities. The amended Policy for the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief includes government guidance where appropriate but also looks to target discretionary relief in line with the Council's visions and priorities.
- 3.3** Addendum 2, of the Policy has been included, which details the new relief for Pubs and Live Music Venues.
- 3.4** Addendum 3, of the Policy has been included, which details the new Supporting Small Business relief.



3.5 From 1 April 2026, a new 10 years 100% business rate relief will also be introduced for standalone electric vehicle (EV) charging points and EV-only forecourts. The guidance for this has not yet been published. However, when this has been published, the Policy will be updated to reflect this.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All rate relief is accounted for within the Collection Fund. Most discretionary rate relief is funded by Section 31 grant provided by Central Government. From 1 April 2026, Section 31 grant will also be accounted for within the Collection Fund.

4.2 For 2026/27 to 2028/29, the Government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out in Addendum 2 and 3, reimburse the Council with additional Section 31 Grant for using its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to grant Pubs and Live Music Venues Relief and 2026 Support Small Business Relief.

4.3 In addition to funded discretionary reliefs, Councils can also provide 'unfunded' relief for charitable occupation, non-profit making bodies, community amateur sports clubs and small rural businesses. The loss of business rates revenue associated with such relief is shared as follows:

- Central Government 50%
- County Council 10%
- District Council 40%

4.4 The loss of business rates revenue associated with unfunded discretionary rate relief in 2026/27 is estimated to be £0.070m of which the Council's share is £0.028m. This has been incorporated within the approved budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy agreed by Council in February 2026.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives powers to local councils to grant discretionary rate relief for the full or a part of the amount due. Subsequent legislation in the Localism Act 2011 has extended these powers to allow wider granting of local discretionary relief.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 There is a risk that if government increases the rate retention percentage of 50% (of which 10% is for the County Council) to 75% (as previously anticipated) the financial impact on the local Councils would increase significantly.



7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 These are no specific equality issues, but the Council will consider more favourably applications for discretionary relief from organisations that work in the district with vulnerable, disadvantaged, or underrepresented groups.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Government is implementing significant business rate reliefs to accelerate the installation of EV charging infrastructure, with a 100%, 10-year relief on business rates for eligible EV charging points and EV-only forecourts starting from 1 April 2026 with the aim to make EV charging more affordable and accessible, thereby accelerating the transition to electric vehicles and supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

9.1 None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)