

Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief – Proposals approved.

4 Councillor Bell, Depute Leader of the Council, City Treasurer and Convener for Financial Inclusion, presented a report regarding an update on changes to the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Empty Property Relief Regulations with effect from 1st April 2023, advising that

- (1) the NDR, sometimes referred to as Business Rates was a property-based tax levied on business premises and was used to fund local services provided by the Council, including those provided to businesses;
- (2) the regulations in force until 31st March 2023 prescribed that all empty NDR properties could be entitled on application to 50% relief for the first 3 months they were empty, with a 10% discount being applicable thereafter, however there were some exceptions where different timeframes and relief values could be applied, as detailed in the report;
- (3) with effect from 1st April 2023, Scottish local authorities could adjust the value of NDR Empty Property Relief, however the award value and criteria must be formally agreed each year, however due to the time required to undertake an options appraisal, including stakeholder engagement, consideration by committee and then to allow time for the changes to be implemented and tested in the NDR system, the only feasible option for 2023/24 would be to continue with the current scheme;
- (4) the Scottish Government had allocated £105m to local authorities as part of the 2023/24 local government settlement, with Glasgow's share of that being £28.5m and taking into account expected increases in demand and the rate poundage from 2021/22, an estimate of £25.5m was forecast for 2023/24 with the balance of £3m being used to reduce the spending gap when setting the 2023/24 budget; and
- (5) of the proposed options to be considered for reviewing the current scheme during 2023/24.

After consideration, the committee agreed to

- (a) continue to award Empty Property Relief in line with the current regulations from 1st April 2023; and
- (b) conduct a wider review of options for further consideration of potential changes to be implemented from 1st April 2024.