

Appendix one: Business Rates Consultation Response – basis for consultation response

Rates are critical to the financial sustainability of BCC.

78% of our income comes from rates – 65% domestic, 35% non-domestic.

The council recognises the importance of minimising the burden on the ratepayer and has set the district rate over the past number of years at below the rate of inflation.

The council welcomes the review and in particular looks forward to further examining, in collaboration with the Department of Finance, the following suggested areas:

1. Consideration of local authorities being given the power to introduce reliefs to reflect the specific circumstances of their locality and local economy.
2. How the rating system can be aligned to support growing the economy.
3. How the rating system can be used to support city centre living such as relief for build-to-rent properties and purpose built student accommodation.
4. Eliminating any form of tax avoidance or evasion.
5. Improving the collection and administration of rates.
6. The use of technology to maximise the collectable rate.
7. How the rating system can integrate the ability to pay and individual business circumstances as part of rates assessments.
8. Possibility of introducing new revenue raising powers such as:
 - vacant site levy
 - derelict land levy
 - internet transaction levy
 - green policy related levies
 - tourism tax
9. Conducting a fundamental review of reliefs, exemptions, and exclusions.
10. Introducing a business growth accelerator.
11. Reviewing the effectiveness of the rates hardship scheme.
12. How the rating system aligned to support specific sectors such as innovation, retail, and hospitality.