

2016 EXPLANATORY NOTES

Non-Domestic Rates

Additional information may be found in the Business Rates section of the Crawley Borough Council website www.crawley.gov.uk or in the Government website <https://www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates>

Non-Domestic Rates, or business rates, collected by local authorities are the way that those who occupy non-domestic property contribute towards the cost of local services. Under the business rates retention arrangements introduced from 1 April 2013, authorities keep a proportion of the business rates paid locally. This provides a direct financial incentive for authorities to work with local businesses to create a favourable local environment for growth, since authorities will benefit from growth in business rates revenues.

The money, together with revenue from council tax payers, revenue support grant provided by the Government and certain other sums, is used to pay for the services provided by your local authority and other local authorities in your area. Further information about the business rates system, including Potential relief's, may be obtained at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/business/premises-rates>

Rateable Value

Apart from properties that are exempt from business rates, each non-domestic property has a rateable value which is set by the valuation officers of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), an agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. They draw up and maintain a full list of all rateable values, available on their website www.2010.voa.gov.uk/rli/. The rateable value of your property is shown on the front of this bill. This broadly represents the yearly rent the property could have been let for on the open market on a particular date. For the revaluation that came into effect on 1st April 2010, this date was set as 1st April 2008.

The valuation officer may alter the value if circumstances change. The ratepayer (and certain others who have an interest in the property) can appeal against the value shown in the list if they believe it is wrong. The Government has announced there will be limits on the backdating of changes to rating assessments with effect from 1st April 2015. If the Valuation Office Agency receive your appeal on or after 1st April 2015 then the earliest they can back date any changes is that date. Your billing authority can only back-date any business rates rebate to that same date. You will continue to have your full legal rights to appeal your rating assessment.

The Valuation Office Agency will continue to fulfil their legal obligations to alter rating assessments if new information comes to light indicating the valuation is inaccurate. Any alterations they make on or after 1st April 2016 can only be backdated to 1st April 2015. Further information about the grounds on which appeals may be made and the process for doing so can be found on the www.gov.uk website or obtained from your local valuation office. Further information about the grounds on which appeals may be made and the process for doing so can be found on the

<https://www.gov.uk/business-rate-appeals> website page or from your local valuation office whose address is:-

Rates South East, Valuation Office Agency, St. Anne's House, 2 St. Anne's Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3LG. Telephone 03000 501501 email ratingsoutheast@voa.gsi.gov.uk

National Non-Domestic Rating Multiplier

The local authority works out the business rates bill by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the appropriate multiplier. There are two multipliers; the standard non-domestic rating multiplier and the small business non-domestic rating multiplier. The former is higher to pay for small business rate relief. Except in the City of London where special arrangements apply, the Government sets the multipliers for each financial year for the whole of England according to formulae set by legislation. Between revaluations, the multipliers generally change each year in line with the Retail Price Index in September of the previous year and to take account of the cost of small business rate relief. The current multipliers are shown on the front of this bill

Business Rates Instalments

Payment of business rate bills is automatically set on a 10-monthly cycle. However, the Government has put in place regulations that allow businesses to ask for their annual business rate bills to be spread over 12 months (Apr-March) to help with cash flow. If you wish to take up this offer, you should contact the local authority as soon as possible.

Revaluation 2017

All rateable values are reassessed at a general revaluation to ensure bills paid by any one ratepayer reflect changes over time in the value of their property relative to others. This helps maintain fairness in the rating system by updating valuations in line with changes in the market. The current rating list is based on the 2010 revaluation. The Government has confirmed that the next revaluation will take place in 2017 based on rental values at 1st April 2015. More information on revaluation 2017 can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/revaluation-of-business-rates>.

In the year of revaluation the multipliers are rebased to account for overall changes to total rateable value and to ensure that the revaluation does not raise extra money for Government. Similarly, the change in the revaluation date to 2017 has no effect on the total amount of revenue raised from business rates.

Unoccupied Property Rating

Business rates will not be payable in the first three months that a property is empty. This is extended to six months in the case of certain industrial properties. After this period rates are payable in full unless the unoccupied property rate has been reduced by the Government by order. In most cases the unoccupied property rate is zero for properties owned by charities and community amateur sports clubs. In addition, there are a number of exemptions from the unoccupied property rate. Full details on exemptions can be obtained from the local authority. If the unoccupied property rate for the financial year has been reduced by order, it will be shown on the front of this bill.

The Government is introducing a new temporary measure for unoccupied new builds from October 2013. Unoccupied new builds will be exempt from unoccupied property rates for up to 18 months (up to state aid limits) where the property comes on to the list between 1 October 2013 and 30 September 2016. The 18 month period includes the initial three or six month exemption and so properties may, if unoccupied, be exempt from non domestic rates for up to an extra 15 or 12 months.

Partly Occupied Property Relief

A ratepayer is liable for the full non-domestic rate whether a property is wholly occupied or only partly occupied. Where a property is partly occupied for a short time, the local authority has discretion in certain cases, to award relief in respect of the unoccupied part. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Small Business Rate Relief

Ratepayers who are entitled to another mandatory relief or are being charged unoccupied property rates will not qualify. Those who actually occupy a property with a rateable value which does not exceed £17,999 outside London, or £25,499 in London will have their bill calculated using the lower small business non-domestic rating multiplier, rather than the national non-domestic rating multiplier.

In addition, if the sole or main property is shown on the rating list with a rateable value which does not exceed £12,000, the ratepayer may receive a percentage reduction in their rates bill for this property. The level of reduction would normally be up to a maximum of 50% for a property with a rateable value of not more than £6,000. However, until 31st March 2017, the Government has doubled the usual level of relief with sliding scale reductions for those with rateable values between £6,001 and £11,999.

This percentage reduction (relief) is only available to ratepayers who occupy either--

- (a) one property, or (b) one main property and other additional properties, providing those additional properties each have a rateable value which does not exceed £2,599, and the rateable value of the property mentioned in (a), or the aggregate rateable value of all the properties mentioned in (b), must not exceed £17,999 outside London or £25,499 in London on each day for which relief is being sought.

If the rateable value, or aggregate rateable value, increases above those levels, relief will cease from the day of the increase.

However, the Government has introduced additional support to small businesses. For those businesses that take on an additional property which would normally have meant the loss of small business rate relief, the Government has confirmed that they will be allowed to keep that relief for a period of 12 months. The original statutory application form for Small Business Rate Relief is no longer required but, where a ratepayer meets the eligibility criteria and has not received the relief they should contact their local authority who will have their own verification processes in place. Provided the ratepayer continues to satisfy the conditions for relief which apply at the relevant time as regards the property and the ratepayer, they will automatically continue to receive relief in each new valuation period.

Certain changes in circumstances will need to be notified to the local authority by a ratepayer who is in receipt of relief (other changes will be picked up by the local authority). The changes which should be notified are--

- (a) the ratepayer taking up occupation of an additional property, and

(b) an increase in the rateable value of a property occupied by the ratepayer in an area other than the area of the local authority which granted the relief.

Charity and Community Amateur Sports Club Relief

Charities and registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs are entitled to 80% relief where the property is occupied by the charity or the club, and is wholly or mainly used for the charitable purposes of the charity (or of that and other charities), or for the purposes of the club (or of that and other clubs). The local authority has discretion to give further relief on the remaining bill. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Retail Discounts

The Government agreed to fund local authorities so that they could provide a discretionary discount worth up to £1,000 a year - in 2014-15 and up to £1,500 in 2015-16 - to retail premises with a rateable value of up to £50,000 where applications were approved within six months of the end of the relevant financial year. This provided support to premises including pubs, cafes, restaurants and shops. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

The Government also agreed to fund local authorities who provided a discretionary 50% discount for 18 months for those businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more. This was available for businesses which move into empty premises between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2016. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Local Discounts

Local authorities have a general power to grant discretionary local discounts. Full details can be obtained from the local authority

State Aid

The award of such discounts is considered likely to amount to state aid. However it will be state aid compliant where it is provided in accordance with the De Minimis Regulations (EC 1407/2013). The De Minimis Regulations allow an undertaking to receive up to €200,000 'de minimis' aid over a rolling three year period. If you are receiving, or have received, any 'de minimis' aid granted during the current or two previous financial years (from any source), you should inform the local authority immediately with details of the aid received.

Hardship Relief

The local authority has discretion to give hardship relief in specific circumstances. Full details can be obtained from the local authority.

Rating advisers

Ratepayers do not have to be represented in discussions about their rateable value or their rates bill. Appeals against rateable values can be made free of charge. However, ratepayers who do wish to be represented should be aware that members of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS--website www.rics.org) and the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV--website www.irrv.org.uk) are qualified and are regulated by rules of professional conduct designed to protect the public from misconduct. Before you employ a rating adviser, you should check that they have the necessary knowledge and expertise, as well as appropriate indemnity insurance. Take great care and, if necessary, seek further advice before entering into any contract.

Information Supplied with Demand Notices

Information relating to the relevant and previous financial years in regard to the gross expenditure of the local authority is available at http://www.crawley.gov.uk/pw/Council_Services_and_Democracy/Council_Finance/index.htm where the information is published. A hard copy is available on request by writing to the council or at telephone number 01293 438615.

HOW TO PAY

PAYMENT BY INSTALMENTS

The Government default scheme is that an Annual National Non-Domestic Rate Demand issued in March may be paid in 10 instalments (April to Jan). Ratepayers wishing to spread their payments over 12 month (April to March) should write to the Council to make such a request. The payment dates of your instalments are detailed overleaf. Failure to pay any instalments on or before the dates shown may lead to the immediate withdrawal of your right to pay by instalments and the Council will have the legal power to demand the immediate payment of all monies outstanding.

OTHER INSTALMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Delayed or apportioned bills are normally spread over the instalment dates remaining in the year. Where no dates are left or where the ratepayer's liability ceases, payment is due within 14 days of demand. If you wish to pay an annual bill either annually or bi-annually please advise the Business Rates office in writing by 15 April. In that case, the due payment dates are:- annual - 1 May or bi-annually 50% 1 May and 50% 1 October.

DIRECT DEBIT (IF YOU ARE SHOWN AS ALREADY PAYING BY DIRECT DEBIT FOR THE PROPERTY SHOWN OVERLEAF A NEW MANDATE IS NOT REQUIRED)

The direct debit system is the easiest way to pay your National Non-Domestic Rates. More than 60% of rates are collected using this method. You have the assurance of the Direct Debit Guarantee and the confidence that your payment has been credited on the due date. A blank mandate attached overleaf.

ON LINE VIA THE INTERNET, AT OUR CASH OFFICE OR BY TELEPHONE

On line internet payments can be made 24 hours a day via the "payments" page available on the Council's website www.crawley.gov.uk

Payment may be made at the Town Hall Cash Office between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm Monday to Friday.

You can also make payment by debit or credit card by telephoning (01293) 438312 or 438738. Please ensure that you have your account reference number to hand, credit card handling charges apply (currently 1.8%) and you will be advised of this at the time.

BY POST

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to 'CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL' and crossed "A/C PAYEE" and sent to The Cashiering Service (PY), Crawley Borough Council, Town Hall, Crawley, RH10 1UZ, quoting your A/C Ref. No.

VIA A BANK OR ON LINE

You can pay by standing order, Bacs or Chaps and the Council's bank details are as shown below. Please ensure that your bank quotes the account ref. no. (overleaf) and for multiple payments, either post a remittance advice to Accountancy Services here at the Town Hall or send a remittance advice by email to Remittances@crawley.gov.uk

FOR YOUR INFORMATION THE COUNCIL'S NEW BANKERS FROM JANUARY 2015 ARE

LLOYDS BANK The account details for payment of Business Rates are as follows:

Bank Sort Code:	30-80-12	Account Name:	CBC No.2
Account Number:	10625660	Account Reference:	See Over

Bic/Swift details are LOYDGB21F09

IBAN GB21 LOYD 3080 1210 6256 60

IF YOUR OCCUPATIONAL STATUS CHANGES, PLEASE CONTACT (01293) 438615/438357 OR EMAIL: rates@crawley.gov.uk