**Discretionary Policy for Business Rates Discount for Public Houses.**

Background

In the Spring Budget 2017, the government announced a £435m package to support small businesses.

Part of this package included public houses that faced significant increases in rate bills as a consequence of the 2017 revaluation.

Public houses with a rateable value up to £100,000 will be awarded a discount up to £1000 for one year from 1 April 2017.

Eligibility Criteria

The scheme will be open to eligible occupied properties with a rateable values of less than £100,000.

The majority of pubs are independently owned or managed and will not be part of a chain.

Where pubs are part of a chain, relief will be available for each eligible property in the chain, subject to meeting State Aid requirements

Although there is no definitive description of a traditional public house in law, the scheme will incorporate premises that demonstrate the following criteria:

* Open to the general public
* Allow free entry other than when occasional entertainment is provided
* Allow drinking without the need to consume food
* Permit drinks to be purchased at a bar

For these purposes, it should exclude:

* Restaurants
* Cafes
* Nightclubs and Music Venues
* Hotels and Guesthouses
* Sporting Venues
* Festival sites
* Museums
* Cinemas
* Theatres
* Casinos
* Exhibition and Concert Halls

This list is not exhaustive. Torbay Council will consider other licensed premises on their own merit, and will take into consideration the planning classification of the premises together with information that can demonstrate the property has the characteristics of a local pub

Process for awarding relief

The local authority will use information held on existing Business Rate records to identify qualifying property. Relief will then be awarded to the value of the annual charge from 1 April 2017, up to a maximum of £1000.

For pubs owned by a chain, a completed State Aid Relief Application form will be required before relief is granted.