

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

REFERRAL OF A BILL AT STAGE 1: NON-DOMESTIC RATES (CORONAVIRUS) (SCOTLAND) BILL

Introduction

1. The Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Parliament on 14 December 2021 by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Economy, Kate Forbes MSP.

Discussion

2. The Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Bill provides that matters attributable to coronavirus, arising on or after 2 April 2020, cannot be taken into account in calculating the rateable value or annual net value of properties.
3. It expands on the policy put in place by The Valuation and Rating (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Order 2021 (S.S.I. 2021/445). This came into force on 1 December 2021 and provided that, in calculating the rateable value of properties in the 2017 valuation roll, any matter attributable to coronavirus arising on or after 1 April 2021 could not be considered. The Bill covers the period back to 2 April 2020 and also covers net annual value, in addition to rateable value.
4. The rateable value of properties is used to determine the non-domestic rates that are payable. The Bill therefore prevents potential reductions in income from non-domestic rates that could occur as a result of appeals based on matters attributable to coronavirus.
5. The Bill falls within the remit of the following committees:

Local Government, Housing and Planning

The remit of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee includes to consider and report on matters relating to local government, housing and planning falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy. The Bill concerns non-domestic rates which is a significant source of funding for local government. The remit of this committee is therefore engaged.

Economy and Fair Work

The remit of the Economy and Fair Work Committee is to consider and report on matters relating to the economy falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy. This Bill was introduced by the Cabinet Secretary for

Finance and the Economy and concerns taxation, which is within her remit. The remit of this committee is therefore also engaged.

Finance and Public Administration

The remit of the Finance and Public Administration includes to consider and report on any matter relating to or affecting the revenue or expenditure of the Scottish Administration. This Bill relates to revenue from non-domestic rates which is collected by the Scottish Administration (though then re-distributed to local authorities).

6. It is understood that the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee has the main interest in this Bill. Furthermore, the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee considered the previous SSI on the same matter.

Recommendation

7. It is suggested that the Bureau recommends to the Parliament that the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee be designated as the lead committee. We are not aware of any desire on the part of any other committee to be designated as a secondary committee. However, the lack of a formal designation does not prevent any committee from considering the Bill if it so wishes.

**Parliamentary Business Team
December 2021**

DRAFT MOTION

Designation of Lead Committee: That the Parliament agrees that the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.