

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING APPLICATIONS FOR RATE RELIEF
WHERE PART OF A PROPERTY IS UNOCCUPIED

1. An inspection of the vacant part of the property is to be undertaken by an officer of the Council and a report, including a site plan where necessary, will be considered by the Sub-Committee.
2. The vacant part must be totally empty of all goods and equipment etc and should be separated from the occupied parts by a wall or similar structure ensuring the boundary of the unoccupied part is clearly defined.
3. Before applying for a certificate under Section 44A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Sub-Committee must be satisfied that the unoccupied part will remain so for a short time only. Whilst short time is not defined in the Act it is expected that this will be for a period of 12 months or less.
4. In considering the requirements of Para. 3 above the liable person's plans for re-use of the premises including the following should be taken into account:
 - a) Has planning permission been sought for alterations/improvements to the property?
 - b) If planning permission is not required have arrangements been made for improvements to be made to the vacant part with a view to its re-use?
 - c) Has the unoccupied part been advertised for sale or letting?
 - d) What factors resulted in the previous occupation ending?
 - e) Are there any conditions imposed by a public body which prohibit occupation of the vacant part?
5. If it is evident in considering the matters in Para 4 above that it is not reasonable for the re-occupation of the vacant part within a 12 month period then this period may be extended for a period deemed to be reasonable in the light of circumstances leading to the application for a certificate under Section 44A of the Act.
6. Where it is decided that it is appropriate to apply for the certificate such application is to be made to the District Valuer & Valuation Officer within 14 days.
7. The ratepayers will be advised of the decision within 14 days together with their right of appeal if they disagree with the decision.