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Local Government Finance
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Chief Finance Officers of English Billing Authorities

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE BUSINESS RATES SECTION

Dear Chief Finance Officer

Business Rates Information Letter (7/2012): Technical Consultation on Business Rates Retention

This is the seventh business rates information letter to be issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government this year. Previous letters are available on the internet at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localgovernmentfinance/businessrates/busratesinformationletters/>

This letter covers:

- Publication of technical consultation and supporting documents, including a Plain English Guide to Business Rates Retention; and
- Publication of a revised pooling prospectus.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON BUSINESS RATES RETENTION

1. On 17 July, the Government published a technical consultation on business rates retention, which will be implemented from April 2013. The consultation can be found on the Local Government Finance website, as well as the Communities and Local Government website, at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/businessratestechnical>

2. The consultation will close on 24 September 2012, and responses should be sent to Brrtechnicalconsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk.
3. Accompanying the consultation, and also available on the website, is a Plain English Guide to Business Rates Retention, which intends to set out in general terms how the new scheme will work and who may be affected. You may wish to bring this guide to the attention of your councillors. The

guide can be found on the Communities and Local Government website, at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/businessratesplainenglish>

4. An Equality Statement and a step-by-step guide detailing how the new scheme will be set up and will operate are also provided. These documents can be found here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/businessratesequality>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/businessratesstepguide>

5. The Government has published a revised version of the Pooling Prospectus. This follows previous correspondence between the Department and Local Authority Chief Executives. The prospectus details the requirements for those local authorities thinking seriously about pooling. It sets out a more detailed timetable than previously provided, which includes a 'cooling off' period for authorities to consider whether or not they wish to proceed with pooling following the publication of the draft Local Government Finance Report. The revised prospectus can be found on the Communities and Local Government website, at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/businessratespooling>

6. Queries regarding this letter or the associated documents should be directed to Andrew Lock on the technical consultation on 03030 444 2137, or, for pooling issues, to Elizabeth Cowie on 0303 444 3810.