

Executive decision taken by Leader/Cabinet portfolio holder



Decision taken by:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson

Date of decision:

31 January 2022

Subject of report:

On 25th March 2021, the government announced plans to provide an additional business rates support package, worth £1.5 billion, to support businesses in England affected by COVID-19 but not eligible for existing support, namely Expanded Retail Discount (covering retail, hospitality and leisure sectors) linked to business rates. The bill received royal assent on 15 December 2021 and guidance was issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Billing Authorities are responsible for designing their own schemes using discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act. Eligible businesses will receive a reduction in their business rates bill for 2021/22.

It is essential that the Council develops a robust policy to administer the scheme whilst at the same time working within the relief allocation provided by the Department to ensure business rates support goes to those businesses that most need it.

Exempt matter (if any as given under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972):

No

Key decision:

Yes

Open summary of decision made:

The Leader of the Council approves the Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund – Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief scheme and grants the Director of Service Delivery delegated authority, to implement, and if necessary, amend each Policy (in consultation with the Leader). Such delegated authority will include any measures necessary for or incidental to its management and administration.

In accordance with section 17 of the Council's Policy and Performance Advisory Committee Procedure Rules, the call-in procedure shall not apply to this decision given its urgency. A decision is urgent if, in the view of the decision maker, any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would, for example, seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.

Reason(s) for decision:

This is a new scheme which needs to be implemented as a matter of urgency and so executive approval for the scheme is being sought from the Leader. The Leader is being asked to authorise the Director of Service Delivery to implement and administer the scheme as there is no existing officer delegation in place.

Alternative options considered:

This additional relief funding has been made available by Government as a measure to support businesses affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. Time does not permit alternative options as the relief must be awarded before the end of the current financial year.

Was an executive councillor(s) consulted before decision was taken? If so, what was the result of this consultation?

None

Does the proposal involve any unplanned expenditure? If so, please confirm that you have consulted with the Chief Finance officer and include the date of consultation

The cost of the scheme is being met by Central Government. Local Authorities will be provided with New Burdens Funding to support the administration of the scheme.

Date of consultation: Not applicable

Signed:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson

Leader/Cabinet portfolio holder