

Decision Maker:	The Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Date:	Monday, 29 March 2021
Title:	Business Rates Relief and Discounts 2021/22 Restart Grants 2021/22		
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Summary

1. In response to the ongoing public health emergency, Corona Virus (Covid-19) the Chancellor announced in the Budget on 3 March 2021 the government will continue to provide financial support to businesses by extending the business rates reliefs and discounts, plus providing additional restart grants.
2. Business Rate reliefs will be awarded to eligible retail, hospitality, leisure and nursery properties in England and will not be restricted by the rateable values;
 - 100% from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.
 - 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022
3. The updated Business Rates Relief and Discounts Policy is attached as Appendix A.
4. Government are providing businesses that are listed on the business rates valuation list with Restart Grants to support them in the recovery phase of restrictions being eased across the country.
5. Due to the urgency of the delivery of the government initiatives to support local businesses the amended Business Rates Policy is to be approved by Adrian Webb, Director of Finance and Corporate Services (section 151 officer) by urgent officer decision, attached as Appendix B.

Recommendations

6. It is requested that Council notes the report and the updated Business Rates Relief policy and Restart Grant Scheme which were determined by an urgent Officer Decision.

Using its discretionary powers under S47 of the Local Government Act 1988 (as amended) approves;

- the updated business rates relief policy as set out in this report and appendix A

- the Restart Grants for non essential retail premises and the hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym premises as set out in this report

Financial Implications

7. Government will reimburse Local Authorities that use their discretionary relief powers under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended) for the additional rate relief via the Section 31 grant.
8. Government will fully fund all Restart Grants awarded

Background Papers

9. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

[Expanded Retail Discount - Local Authority Guidance](#)

[Nursery Discount - Local Authority Guidance](#)

[Restart Grants - Local Authority Guidance](#)

Impact

10.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

11. In response to the Corona Virus emergency and subsequent trading restrictions for all shops and premises where people gather, the government have provided additional support for businesses whilst they are unable to operate and during the recovery period.
12. Both schemes will be administered locally using the council's discretionary powers and all reliefs given will be fully reimbursed under S47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended) via the section 31 grant.

Expanded Retail Discount and Nursery Discount

13. In the October 2018 budget the Government announced the introduction of a Business Rates Retail Discount for 2019/20 and 2020/21. In response to the Corona Virus pandemic in 2020/21 this discount was increased to 100% relief and expanded to include other sectors, including leisure and hospitality sectors.
14. The Retail Discount was previously restricted to premises with a rateable value of £51,000, this limit was removed in 2020/21 and all premises are now eligible subject to meeting all other criteria.
15. The Expanded Retail Discount and Nursery Discount have been extended for the first three months of the 2021/22 financial year; eligible businesses will be entitled to 100% relief for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021.
16. From the 1 July to 31 March 2022, both the Expanded Retail Discount and the Nursery Discount will be reduced to 66% for eligible businesses. For this period of entitlement a cash cap will be applied to the award, which will include all the premises occupied by the person or business.
17. Businesses will be required to complete a declaration that they will not exceed the following limits.
 - Expanded Retail Discount -Businesses shall not receive (from 1 July 2021 onwards) more than £2 million of Expanded Retail Discount in 2021/22 for properties which based on the coronavirus rules at 5 January would have been required to close and £105,000 for other eligible properties which remained open.
 - Nursery Discount - From 1st July 2021 the 66% discount will subject to a cap of £105,000 in total.

Restart Grants

18. The Government has provided additional support in the form of Restart Grants for businesses to assist them in the recovery phase of the Governments roadmap.
19. Local Authorities are required to administer the Restart Grants using their discretionary powers and will be receive direct funding for all grants awarded.
20. The grants will be separated into two strands and paid based on the rateable values as at the 1 April 2021 and both strands are a one off payment.
21. Strand one will support the non essential retail premises and is payable using the following thresholds;
 - Exactly £15,000 or under will receive a payment of £2,667
 - Over £15,000 but less than £51,000 will receive a payment of £4,000
 - Exactly £51,000 or over will receive a payment of £6,000
22. Strand two will support the hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym and is payable using the following thresholds;
 - Exactly £15,000 or under will receive a payment of £8,000
 - Over £15,000 but less than £51,000 will receive a payment of £12,000
 - Exactly £51,000 or over will receive a payment of £18,000
23. This scheme is covered by 3 subsidy allowances and grants under these 3 allowances can be combined for a potential total allowance of up to £10,935,000 (subject to exchange rates).
 - Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance – you're allowed up to £335,000 (subject to exchange rates) over any period of 3 years
 - COVID-19 Business Grant Allowance – you're allowed up to £1,600,000
 - COVID-19 Business Grant Special Allowance - if you have reached your limits under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance and COVID-19 Business Grant Allowance, you may be able to access a further allowance of funding under these scheme rules of up to £9,000,000, provided certain conditions are met

Risk Analysis

24.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the local scheme is not administered based on the guidance and eligibility criteria	2 – data is collected and checked. Need to be aware of the urgency of the situation and detailed checks not done due to current emergency measures	2 – incorrect allocations of grants and reliefs, loss of income from government reimbursement	Staff are collecting and checking details against data bases and will have the support of software provided by HMRC to check for fraudulent claims

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.