



**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

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to  
**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
3 FEBRUARY 2022**

**URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS**

**ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT AND COVID-19 ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUND  
POLICIES**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report seeks approval for two new policies to allow the distribution of grants and rates relief to businesses following additional government funding.
- 1.2 This matter is brought forward for consideration with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman as approval of the business grants and relief policies will enable the Council to provide urgent support to local businesses impacted by the Covid-19 Omicron variant.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That the Additional Restrictions Grant policy at **APPENDIX 1** is approved and delegation is given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee to amend the policy to respond to business need;
- (ii) That the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund policy at **APPENDIX 2** is approved and delegation is given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee to amend the policy to respond to business need.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Following additional restrictions announced in response to the Omicron variant the government allocated billing authorities additional funding to be used to support businesses.
- 3.2 Funding of £145,623.74 has been awarded to Maldon District Council (DC) to provide grants to businesses and £914,862 has been awarded to fund a discretionary business rates relief scheme.
- 3.3 The Council has been providing support in this form to businesses throughout the pandemic and has a good knowledge base from which to develop these policies and understand the needs to local businesses.
- 3.4 The Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) Policy at **APPENDIX 1** is in line with published guidance and provides a framework for the award of direct grants to

businesses which are out of scope for the mandatory Omicron grant scheme. The level of grant (£1,000) has been set at an amount that is lower than the minimum grant being paid to rated businesses under the mandatory scheme in order to maximise the number of businesses that can be supported from what is a relatively small amount of funding.

- 3.5 The COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) Policy at **APPENDIX 2** is in line with published guidance and provides a framework for the award of discretionary rate relief for 2021/2022 to businesses that have been affected by the pandemic but have been ineligible for existing support, provided primarily for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.
- 3.6 **APPENDIX 2** provides for a fair approach using a standard percentage relief, across eligible businesses. The exact percentage cannot be confirmed at the current time as the exact number / nature of the businesses in our District is, in many cases, unknown and flexibility on this point is required whilst further work is undertaken in order to maximise the benefit to those businesses and the Section 31 grant to Maldon District Council.
- 3.7 In order that the support is directed towards businesses and to those that are most likely to have been impacted the policy includes provision for a number of business 'special categories' to be excluded from the scheme. This list at **APPENDIX 3** has been created with reference to knowledge gained during administration of previous grant schemes and to the information provided within the CARF guidance. Annex A to **APPENDIX 4** outlines the financial impact on different business sectors.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Approval of the policies will allow the Council to support local businesses.
- 4.2 If approved, the Covid Additional Relief scheme will be appended to the Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy due to be considered by the Council at its next meeting.

#### **5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 5.1 The funding will support the local economy.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Direct grants and reductions support local business.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on resources (financial)** – The schemes are fully funded by central government.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Council staff will be required to administer the schemes.

(vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.

Background papers: None.

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