



WELWYN HATFIELD

OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014 RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

1. **SERVICE AREA**

Resources

2. **CASE REFERENCE**

3. **DECISION
TITLE**

Business Rate Retail Relief – COVID-19

4. **AUTHORITY TO TAKE THE DECISION**

(tick)

This decision has been taken under a specific express authorisation

This decision has been taken under a general authorisation

The effect of the decision is to:

(a) grant a permission or licence

(b) affect the rights of an individual

(c) award a contract or incur expenditure which materially affects
the Council's financial position

5. **DETAILS OF THE DECISION MAKING OFFICER**

6.

Name of decision making Officers

Ka Ng

Richard Baker

Job titles

Chief Executive

Head of Resources

Signatures

Date this decision was taken

9 March 2021

7. DETAILS OF THE DECISION

Decision taken

Further to the governments March 2021 budget announcement, 100% business rate discount will continue to apply for all eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality, leisure, and nursery sectors. Eligible businesses will get:

- 100% off business rates bills for the 2020/21 tax year (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021)
- 100% off business rates bills for the first 3 months of the 2021/22 tax year (1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021)
- 66% off business rates bills for the rest of the 2021/22 tax year (1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022) - up to a total value of £2 million

If a business was legally allowed to open during the national lockdown starting 5 January 2021, a discount for 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 will be capped at £105,000 rather than £2 million.

Businesses may choose to opt out of support by providing notification of their request to refuse support, per eligible premises.

The Council will be compensated in full for its loss of income as a result of these changes from the government. This compensation will be paid in the same way as it has been previously, by section 31 grant, Local Government Act 2003, and calculated on the basis of the returns that the council makes under the rates retention scheme.

There will be new burdens funding to local authorities for administrative and IT costs.

Reasons

There is an urgent need to award this retail relief discount to qualifying businesses to alleviate any financial difficulties they may suffer due to the continuing problems experienced through the Coronavirus pandemic.

Delegated authority was provided to the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services). Since this delegation, the post holder for the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) has been appointed as the Chief Executive, and the Head of Resources as the Section 151 Officer. On this basis the decision is being made by the Chief Executive and Head of Resources.

Alternative options considered and reasons for their rejection (if any)

There is no other option. This relates to much-needed support to our local business community.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS USED TO INFORM THE DECISION

Background Papers	Location
The Government is not changing the legislation around the reliefs available to properties. Instead, it is assumed that local authorities can use their discretionary relief powers, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, which amended section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.	

9. DETAILS OF ANY MEMBER(S) CONSULTED

Councillor Tony Kingsbury (Leader)

Councillor Duncan Bell (Executive Member for Resources)

Councillor Bernard Sarson (Executive Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Partnerships)

In the case of a decision made under specific express authorisation, the name of any Member who has declared a conflict of interest

n/a

10. DETAILS OF ANY OFFICER(S) CONSULTED

Client Services Support Manager

11. OPINION OF DECISION MAKING OFFICER AS TO CONFIDENTIAL/EXEMPT INFORMATION

In my opinion this record and/or background papers contain confidential/exempt information and the material is therefore not to be placed on the website or disclosed to the public

12. ACTION FOLLOWING THE DECISION

Date of publication

11 March 2021