



14 April 2022

THE RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Rugby Borough Council will be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Rugby at 7.00pm on Tuesday 26 April 2022.

Members of the public may also view the meeting via the livestream available on the Council's website.

Mannie Ketley
Executive Director

A G E N D A

PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Apologies for absence.

2. Minutes.

To approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 14 March 2022.

3. Declaration of Interests.

To receive declarations of -

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;
and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 - non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

4. To receive the Mayor's Announcements.
5. Special vote of thanks to retiring Councillor Dr James Shera
To record a special vote of thanks to retiring Councillor Dr James Shera in recognition of his outstanding record of 40 years' continuous service and his commitment to public office.
6. Questions pursuant to Standing Order 10.
7. To receive the reports of Cabinet and Committees which have met since the last meeting of the Council and to pass such resolutions and to make such orders thereon as may be necessary:

(a) Licensing and Safety Committee – 10 March 2022

(1) Review of Taxi Fees – Regulation and Safety Portfolio.

8. To receive and consider the reports of officers.
 - (a) Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund - report of the Chief Officer - Finance and Performance.
 - (b) £150 Energy Rebate Discretionary Policy – report of the Chief Officer - Finance and Performance.
9. Notices of Motion pursuant to Standing Order 11
 - (a) "In light of the removal of all Covid restrictions, this Council agrees to send a request to Warwickshire County Council that the Hunters Lane Waste disposal site returns to pre Covid working hours and conditions so that residents are allowed to access the site without booking through Eventbrite."

Proposer: Councillor Mrs New
Seconder: Councillor Douglas

10. Correspondence.
11. Common Seal.
To order the affixing of the Common Seal to the various orders, deeds and documents to be made or entered into for carrying into effect the several decisions, matters and things approved by the Council and more particularly set out in the reports adopted at this meeting.

12. Motion to Exclude the Public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

To consider the following resolution:

"under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act."

PART 2 – EXEMPT INFORMATION

1. To receive and consider private reports of officers.
 - (a) HEART shared service update – private report of the Chief Officer - Communities and Homes.
 - (b) Woodside Park - Annual Pitch Fee Increase 2022 - private report of the Chief Officer - Communities and Homes.
 - (c) Phase 1 – Reshaping the Communities and Homes Service - private report of the Chief Officer - Communities and Homes.
 - (d) Town Hall Security Review - private report of the Chief Officer - Communities and Homes.
 - (e) Additional Resources – Legal Services - private report of the Chief Officer – Legal and Governance.
 - (f) Election of Mayor 2022/23 - private report of the Chief Officer – Legal and Governance.
 - (g) Leisure Services Contract Provision (QDJC) – private report of the Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing.
 - (h) Data Analyst – IT and Digital Solutions – private report of the Chief Officer - Digital and Communications.

QUESTIONS AT COUNCIL

A Councillor may ask a question at the meeting by giving notice in writing of the question to the Executive Director no later than midday on Wednesday 20 April 2022. The rules relating to Questions are set out in Part 3a of the Council's Constitution.

REPORT OF LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

10 March 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs A'Barrow (Chairman), Bearne, Cade, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Keeling, Mrs Roodhouse, Mrs Timms and Dr Williams

Note: An electronic version of the Licensing and Safety Committee report referred to below can be found [here](#).

1. REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING FEES

Licensing and Safety Committee considered a report concerning a review of taxi licensing fees.

Recommendation of Licensing and Safety Committee

Licensing and Safety Committee decided to recommend to Council that the proposed fees and charges set out at Appendix A to the report be approved for public consultation.

Recommended that – the recommendation of Licensing and Safety Committee be approved.

**COUNCILLOR MRS A'BARROW
CHAIRMAN**

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title: Covid 19 Additional Relief Fund

Name of Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: 26 April 2022

Report Director: Chief Financial Officer

Portfolio: Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance

Ward Relevance: All Wards

Prior Consultation: None

Contact Officer: Jon Illingworth - Section 151 and Chief Financial Officer jon.illingworth@rugby.gov.uk 01788 533410

Public or Private: Public

Report Subject to Call-In: Yes

Report En-Bloc: Yes

Forward Plan: Yes

Corporate Priorities: This report relates to the following priority(ies):

(C) Climate Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C)

(E) Economy Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E)

(HC) Health and Communities Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC)

(O) Organisation Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O)

[Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)

This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but is important to the financial sustainability of the Authority

Summary: The Government has provided a fund to support those businesses that didn't receive any expanded retail relief from their rates during 20/21 or 21/22 and were impacted by Covid 19.

Financial Implications:	The Council has received funding of £2,908,114 to give this relief to businesses and this policy allows the Council to spend this amount in full.
Risk Management Implications:	The risk of relief being incorrectly granted will be controlled by buying software for the computer system so that the relief will be granted automatically to the businesses that qualify within the parameters of the policy.
Environmental Implications:	There are no environmental implications arising from this report
Legal Implications:	There are no legal implications arising from this report
Equality and Diversity:	There are no implications arising from this report
Options:	We could choose not to give relief and return the money to the Government.
Recommendation:	The Covid-19 Additional Relief policy, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.
Reasons for Recommendation:	This allows the Government funding to be spent

Council - 26 April 2022

Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund for 2021/22

Public Report of the Chief Financial Officer

Recommendation

The Covid-19 Additional Relief policy, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government, through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities introduced new regulations to support businesses entitled to Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (otherwise known as CARF).
- 1.2 This fund will be available to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. Rugby Borough Council has been allocated £2,908,114 to support businesses in this way.
- 1.3 Relief will be granted to businesses using discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. This means that rather than providing a physical monetary payment, relief will be awarded through business rates accounts via our business rates systems. Revised bills will then be issued showing the amount of relief awarded. Central government will fully reimburse the Council up to the maximum level of the allocations.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. The policy has been designed in conjunction with other Local Authorities in Warwickshire and the West Midlands and serves the purpose of giving a relief by way of a percentage of their net business rates for 2021/22, as any discretionary relief cannot be backdated into a previous financial year after 30 September of the following year. This means that the relief cannot now be given for 20/21, so will be given again any business with an occupied rating liability in 21/22, subject to the criteria that the policy determines. The policy is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 All businesses will have to have the opportunity to turn down the relief and therefore a letter, either by post or email, will be sent to all businesses should they wish to refuse the relief. This is attached at Appendix 2.

3. EQUALITY

- 3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 3.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Policy will give further relief to those businesses that did not get any help during the pandemic and may help them during the recovery.

Name of Meeting: Council
Date of Meeting: 26 April 2022
Subject Matter: Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund 21/22
Originating Department: Finance and Performance

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A



Business Rates

Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund Scheme 2021-22

INTRODUCTION

The Government, through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities introduced new regulations to support businesses entitled to Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (otherwise known as CARF).

This fund will be available to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that were ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. Rugby Borough Council has been allocated £2,908,114 to support businesses in this way.

Relief will be granted to businesses using discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. This means that rather than providing a physical monetary payment, relief will be awarded through business rates accounts via our business rates systems. Revised bills will then be issued showing the amount of relief awarded. Central government will fully reimburse local authorities up to the maximum level of the allocations.

GENERAL PRINCIPALS/REGULATIONS

1. This relief is payable in the 2021-22 financial year only and cannot be carried over to 2022/23.
2. Businesses must have been adversely affected by the pandemic and have been unable to adequately adapt to that impact.
3. Businesses that have or could have received Expanded Retail relief or Nursery Discount or those which are unoccupied in 2021-22 are ineligible for CARF. The relief cannot also be claimed in respect of properties owned or funded by a local authority.
4. Reliefs must be awarded after mandatory and other discretionary reliefs funded by Section 31 grants have been applied.
5. Where a change in circumstance occurs during 2021-22 the award of relief may need to be recalculated.
6. Changes reported after 1st January 2022 will not be taken into account and will not be amended retrospectively after this date.

BUSINESSES SUPPORTED

1. Guidance notes provided by the government to accompany the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding details business sectors along with the percentage positive or negative financial impact they have experienced as a result of the Covid pandemic.
2. This information was matched to Rugby's rating list in order to identify individual businesses in each sector.
3. Having taken into account those businesses which the Council is instructed cannot be supported through this relief, it has been deemed that accounts in the following business sectors (as identified by the official Valuation Office Agency rating) will receive a reduction in their 2021-22 Business Rates bills: •

- Information and Communication
- Wholesale and Retail
- Offices not included in other business sector categories
- Retail and hospitality properties not receiving relief elsewhere
- Mining and quarrying
- Transport
- Manufacturing

The Award Process

1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which Rugby Borough Council will administer this discretionary relief, which will take the form of a direct award to those businesses that we identify as meeting the eligible criteria.
2. This policy will insist that businesses must be trading prior to 1st January 2021 to qualify for the relief. If businesses were not trading prior to this date then it is assumed that they will have started up their business during the pandemic and so would already have been aware of the financial situation.
3. Reliefs will be calculated and applied manually to each account on the Business Rates computer system. Following the award of relief a revised Business Rates Bill will be issued along with a covering letter explaining the award and instructing businesses to declare if they do not qualify as a result of the Covid subsidy rules or are not financially impacted by Covid-19. Any business contacting the council to instruct they do not qualify will have their relief removed and a revised bill will be issued accordingly.
4. Where relief applied to an account subsequently puts the account into credit if possible we will move this credit to the next financial year 2022- 23. Where a refund is formally requested by a business this will be refunded.
5. To calculate the amount of relief we will award we have divided the £2.9m funding available to Rugby Borough Council by the total liability of all accounts at 31 December 21 that we are supporting, to determine the percentage relief each account would receive.
6. The amount of relief awarded to each eligible business will be equal to 19% of their Business Rates liability irrespective of their rateable value. By awarding 19% this will allow some of the funding being kept back for any businesses that feel they are eligible but have not been identified by the Council as such.
7. If having made all awards (and after addressing any potential challenges) some of the funding remains unallocated, payments will be allocated to some of those other businesses that were not initially included in the list of those we wish to support. This funding will be allocated to those businesses evidencing the biggest negative financial impact.

This is a one off policy which will only be required for the 2021-22 financial year and as such will not require further review outside of this financial year.

This policy has been produced in line with the Council's EIA. No adverse impact on any protected characteristic has been identified as a result of this policy.

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers. However, the Council will accept a customer's request for a re-determination of its decision. A request for a review / re-determination must be made within four weeks of receipt of notification of the decision and must set out the reasons for the request and any supporting information. The Council will consider each request on its merits and will consider whether the customer has provided any additional information against the required criteria that will justify a change to its decision. The Council will notify a customer of its decision within 28 days of receiving a request for a review or re-determination.

In late December 2021 the Government, through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities introduced new regulations to support businesses entitled to Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (otherwise known as CARF).

This fund will be available to support those businesses affected by the pandemic but that are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates.

This relief is payable in the 2021-22 financial year only to businesses that have been adversely affected by the pandemic and have been unable to adequately adapt to that impact.

You have been automatically awarded this relief and a revised bill is enclosed/will follow shortly. You **MUST declare below and return this form within 14 days if you should not qualify for this relief** as a result of the Covid subsidy rules or are not financially impacted by Covid-19. Relief will then be removed, and a revised bill will be issued accordingly.

To be awarded CARF you must not have claimed over the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 more than £2,243,000 from schemes which fell within the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance or COVID-19 related allowances. COVID-19 business grants you have received from local government and the 2019/20 Retail Relief should count towards this limit, but you should not count any Extended Retail Discount you have received since 1 April 2020. Further details of subsidy control can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-additional-relief-fund-carf-local-authority-guidance>.

Should your circumstances change, and you no longer meet the qualifying criteria, you must notify us so that the relief can be reviewed from the date the change occurred.

Failure to do so or making a false representation on this form is an offence under Section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006, as would be failing to disclose information that you are under a legal duty to disclose and dishonesty intending, by that failure, to make a gain or cause a loss which is an offence under Section 3 of the Fraud Act 2006.

By signing the form, you agree that, to the best of your knowledge this information is correct.

Declaration:

I confirm that the business is **NOT** entitled to this relief and that I am authorised to sign on behalf of:

_____ (Insert name of Ratepayer\Company)

Your Name:

Signature:

Date:

Position in Organisation:

Telephone:

Email:

Please return this declaration to: **Rugby Borough Council, Town Hall, Rugby, CV21 2RR**

Privacy notice: We will use your personal data to assess and administer your Non-Domestic Rates.

We may share your information with other departments in the substantial public interest and in the exercise of our official authority. Your data will be held in accordance with our Retention and Destruction Policy. For further information, or to access your information rights, please visit [rugby.gov.uk/privacy](https://www.rugby.gov.uk/privacy)

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

Context

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty as set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires Rugby Borough Council when making decisions to have due regard to the following:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sex/gender
 - sexual orientation
3. In addition to the above-protected characteristics, you should consider the crosscutting elements of the proposed policy, such as impact on social inequalities and impact on carers who look after older people or people with disabilities as part of this assessment.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document is a tool that enables RBC to test and analyse the nature and impact of what it is currently doing or is planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. The questions will enable you to record your findings.
6. Where the EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. Once completed and signed off the EqIA will be published online.
8. An EqIA must accompany all **Key Decisions** and **Cabinet Reports**.
9. For further information, refer to the EqIA guidance for staff.
10. For advice and support, contact:
Minakshee Patel
Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisor
minakshee.patel@rugby.gov.uk
Tel: 01788 533509

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area	Fianance and Performance
Policy/Service being assessed	Covid 19 Additional Relief Fund Scheme
Is this is a new or existing policy/service? If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment	New
EqlA Review team – List of members	Chryssa Burdett
Date of this assessment	17 February 2022
Signature of responsible officer (to be signed after the EqlA has been completed)	

A copy of this Equality Impact Assessment report, including relevant data and information to be forwarded to the Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisor.

If you require help, advice and support to complete the forms, please contact Minakshee Patel, Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisor via email: minakshee.patel@rugby.gov.uk or 01788 533509

Details of Strategy/ Service/ Policy to be analysed

<u>Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining</u>	
(1) Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the Strategy/Service/Policy (or decision)?	To provide a discretionary relief to businesses that have not been eligible for the expanded retail relief and have been impacted by Covid 19.
(2) How does it fit with Rugby Borough Council's Corporate priorities and your service area priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide excellent, value for money services and sustainable growth • Promote sustainable growth and economic prosperity • Ensure that the council works efficiently and effectively
(3) What are the expected outcomes you are hoping to achieve?	To provide additional financial assistance to businesses adversely effected by COVID-19.
(4) Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Employees • Wider community or groups 	The policy will affect businesses
<u>Stage 2 - Information Gathering</u>	
	As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).
(1) What does the information tell you about those groups identified?	There are approximately 1,500 businesses that have already received the grant according to the type of business that they are and the type of premises that they occupy. The additional fund is to assist those businesses have had to still pay business rates during the pandemic.

Appendix 3

<p>(2) Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the strategy/ service/policy you want to implement? If yes, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p>	<p>This policy has been designed using the Government guidance and in conjunction with other local authorities in Warwickshire and the West Midlands.</p>		
<p>(3) If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary.</p>	<p>The policy has been designed around giving all businesses a percentage of their rates payable.</p>		
<p><u>Stage 3 – Analysis of impact</u></p>			
<p><u>(1)Protected Characteristics</u> From your data and consultations is there any positive, adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group, which could amount to discrimination? If yes, identify the groups and how they are affected.</p>	<p>RACE</p> <p>No</p>	<p>DISABILITY</p> <p>No</p>	<p>GENDER</p> <p>No</p>
	<p>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</p> <p>No</p>	<p>AGE</p> <p>No</p>	<p>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</p> <p>No</p>
	<p>RELIGION/BELIEF</p> <p>No</p>	<p>PREGNANCY MATERNITY</p> <p>No</p>	<p>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</p> <p>No</p>

<p><u>(2) Cross cutting themes</u> (a) Are your proposals likely to impact on social inequalities e.g. child poverty, geographically disadvantaged communities? If yes, please explain how?</p> <p>(b) Are your proposals likely to impact on a carer who looks after older people or people with disabilities? If yes, please explain how?</p>	No
<p>(3) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?</p>	
<p>(4) What actions are going to be taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact? (this should form part of your action plan under Stage 4.)</p>	The scheme is in accordance with Government guidance.
<p>(5) How does the strategy/service/policy contribute to the promotion of equality? If not what can be done?</p>	N/A
<p>(6) How does the strategy/service/policy promote good relations between groups? If not what can be done?</p>	N/A
<p>(7) Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service? If yes how can they be overcome?</p>	N/A

<p><u>Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review & Monitoring</u></p>					
<p>If No Further Action is required then go to – Review & Monitoring</p> <p>(1) Action Planning – Specify any changes or improvements that can be made to the service or policy to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.</p>	<p>EqlA Action Plan</p>				
<p>(2) Review and Monitoring State how and when you will monitor policy and Action Plan</p>	<p>The scheme will be administered to spend all of the Government funding.</p>				

Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments

Please annotate your policy with the following statement:

‘An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on (date of assessment) and will be reviewed on (insert review date).’

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title: £150 Energy Rebate Discretionary Policy

Name of Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: 26 April 2022

Report Director: Chief Officer - Finance and Performance

Portfolio: Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance

Ward Relevance: all

Prior Consultation: Leadership team, Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder for Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance

Contact Officer: Jon Illingworth, jon.illingworth@rugby.gov.uk, 01788 533410

Public or Private: Public

Report Subject to Call-In: Yes

Report En-Bloc: No

Forward Plan: No

Corporate Priorities: This report relates to the following priority(ies):
 Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C)
 Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E)
 Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC)
 Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O)
[Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)
 This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but

(C) Climate
(E) Economy
(HC) Health and Communities
(O) Organisation

Summary: This report outlines the proposed policy for the discretionary element of the £150 householder grants and to seek approval to establish a budget for resourcing the whole project based on the New Burdens Funding allocated by Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC)

Financial Implications:	<p>The discretionary scheme will have a cost of £0.165m but will be fully funded through a government grant.</p> <p>The Council has been awarded £0.063m for the early set-up costs related to the implementation of the Council Tax Rebate scheme and this will be maximised to deliver the scheme.</p>
Risk Management/Health and Safety Implications:	To comply with government guidance this scheme will include compliance checks to ensure that the risk of fraud and error is minimised
Environmental Implications:	None as a direct result of this report.
Legal Implications:	None as a direct result of this report
Equality and Diversity:	The payments for A - D scheme will follow National guidelines and alternative payment arrangements will be looked into where no direct debit is in place. The E -H payments will also follow National guidelines and will support the most vulnerable in bands A-D.
Options:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To approve the policy as outlined in appendix 1 2) To reject the policy and propose an alternative approach
Recommendation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A supplementary budget of £0.063m be established to implement the scheme which will be funded through the New Burdens Grant awarded from DLUHC; and 2) the policy for distributing the discretionary £150 householder grant to residents living in properties E-H, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
Reasons for Recommendation:	<p>The policy has been designed to support the most vulnerable residents and minimise the disruption and uncertainty from an application process.</p> <p>The implementation of the scheme will require significant resourcing which has been recognised through the grant award.</p>

Council - 26 April 2022

£150 Energy Rebate Discretionary Policy

Public Report of the Chief Officer - Finance and Performance

Recommendation

- 1) A supplementary budget of £0.063m is established to implement the scheme which will be funded through the New Burdens Grant awarded from DLUHC; and
- 2) the policy for distributing the discretionary £150 householder grant to residents living in properties E-H, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 3 February 2022 the government announced an energy bills rebate to help with the cost of living. This includes a £150 council tax rebate for households in bands A to D.
- 1.2. Around 20 million households in council tax bands A to D - including 95% of rented properties - are set to benefit from the £3 billion scheme, which does not have to be repaid. It is part of an extensive package of government measures to help families with rising energy costs.
- 1.3. For the Borough of Rugby this equates to 38,000 grants and an outlay of approximately £5.600m.
- 1.4. An extra £144 million has also been provided to councils to provide discretionary support to vulnerable households who may not qualify for the £150 council tax rebate. This includes people on low incomes in council tax bands E to H.
- 1.5. For the Borough for Rugby this is a grant of £0.165m

2. Resourcing

- 2.1. The implementation of the whole scheme will be a significant challenge on resources as the work will be completed alongside the rest of the functions of the Revenues Team. There is pressure to pay the grants as soon as practically possible and although the software provider which partners the Council has produced system updates to allow the work to take place, there is still going to be significant manual intervention to ensure government guidance is followed when paying the grants and that the risk of fraud and error is managed as far as possible when the payments to householders that

do not pay through direct debit takes place.

2.2. DLUHC has recognised this and has provided an allocation of a down-payment prepared under the New Burdens Doctrine to fund Local Authorities for the early set-up costs related to the implementation of the Council Tax Rebate scheme. For Rugby this amounts to £0.063m.

2.3. The receipt of the grant will allow the organisation to cover the cost of the software updates to enable automation of part of the process and initial overtime that has been incurred by the Revenues Team in order to move from the testing stage to the payment of the first grants on the 9 April. From a wellbeing perspective relying on staff overtime is not sustainable especially given the pressures on the team over the last two years when it was deployed into paying grants to Businesses to support the recover from COVID-19. It is therefore proposed that the remaining grant is initially used to employ temporary agency workers for the duration of the project to ensure that the disruption to the team and the customers using the service is managed.

2.4. At this stage the scale of the work is still unknown and the Revenues Manager will be scoping up the requirements of the temporary support. If the grant allocation is deemed insufficient for the requirements, a further report will be presented to Cabinet with the proposed next steps.

3. Policy

3.1. The policy attached at Appendix 1 has been designed in conjunction with other Local Authorities in Warwickshire and has been designed to target the residents currently provided with support through one of the variety of measures that the Council can offer.

3.2. After these groups have been targeted it is expected that there will be an opportunity to provide further support to residents in bands A-D in receipt of council tax support.

3.3. Apart from non direct debit payers needing to provide bank details, this scheme does not require anyone to apply for the grant

Name of Meeting: Council
Date of Meeting: 26 April 2022
Subject Matter: Householder Grant Discretionary Policy
Originating Department: Finance and Performance

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY **YES** **NO**

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A



£150 Energy Rebate – Discretionary Policy bands E-H

Phase 1 – April 2022

Background

The government has announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion in 2022-23. This includes:

- A £200 discount on their energy bill this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain. This will be paid back automatically over the next 5 years.
- A £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in council tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, known as the Discretionary Fund.

Local Authorities have been tasked with distributing the £150 to be eligible households based on the criteria :

1. The property is valued in council tax bands A to D. (This includes properties that are valued in band E but has an alternative valuation band of band D as a result of the disabled band reduction scheme);
2. It is someone's sole or main residence;
3. It is a chargeable dwelling, or in exemption classes N, S, U or W (these classes are all students, under 18s only, severely mentally impaired and granny annexes)

For those where the Council holds a direct debit instruction, it is hoped the payment will be made once we have received a payment from their bank account during April. This is to ensure that the account details held are still valid.

For those where no direct debit instruction is held, officers will be making contact with the account holder to provide bank details. If they fail to do there is an option to pay the money directly onto their council tax account (reducing the amount owed in the year). Officers are also investigating alternative means of getting this money to the householders.

Discretionary funding

Rugby has received £165,450 in discretionary funding. Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities guidance states that billing authorities may also wish to provide support to other energy bill payers who are not eligible under the terms of the above core scheme, or to provide carefully targeted 'top-up' payments to the most vulnerable households in bands A to D.

£150 will be paid to those residents within Rugby households in bands E –H if they meet the following criteria and it is the sole or main residence of the account holder:

1. In receipt of council tax support on 1 April 2022
2. must be occupied as empty properties cannot receive the funding
3. In receipt of disabled reductions from their council tax (F – H only as those in E get funding from the above core scheme)
4. In exempt class N, S, U or W (these classes are all students, under 18s only, severely mentally impaired and granny annexes)
5. In receipt of a severely mentally impaired disregard for council tax purposes

The remainder of the funds to be paid at £30 to each person in band A – D that is in receipt of council tax reduction scheme.

Once all the payments allocated to the eligible householders have been paid, a final reconciliation will be completed. If there are any funds remaining, then an amendment to the policy will be completed and presented to Council for approval as phase 2 of the scheme.