



Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)
Date:	
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	1) Community impact assessment 2) Proposed CARF policy
Background papers:	COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF): local authority guidance CARF Guidance.docx (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	CARF – COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund DLUHC – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities LGFA – Local Government Finance Act 1988

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	To obtain Cabinet approval for a discretionary business rates relief policy, using Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund received from the Government.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Cabinet reviews and approves the proposed policy for awarding Covid-19 Additional Relief to businesses.
Period for post policy/project review:	September 2022

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 The Government has provided significant support through business rates relief during 2020/21 and 2021/22 for businesses in the retail, hospitality, leisure and childcare sectors. This is through Extended Retail relief and Nursery relief, which provided for 100% rate relief from April 2020 to June 2021 and 66% relief from July 2021 to March 2022. The retail, hospitality and leisure sectors will continue to receive 50% business rate relief for 2022/23.
- 1.2 In March 2021, the Government announced that it would also make funding available to provide rate relief for businesses in other sectors which had also been impacted by the pandemic. However, this was also linked to the removal of one of the grounds under which a business could seek a change in rateable value, and so detailed guidance was not published until late December 2021 following the passage of the Rating (Coronavirus) and Directors Disqualification (Dissolved Companies) Act.
- 1.3 This funding is known as the Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) and is to be used to award business rate relief for the 2021/22 year.

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

- 2.1 Dacorum Borough Council has been allocated £3,816,120 to use to award this rate relief.
- 2.2 The proposed policy for awarding this to businesses is attached as appendix 2.
- 2.3 The proposal is for an application window of six weeks, with an expectation of opening for applications in mid-April 2022. This should allow sufficient time for all eligible businesses to make applications, ensuring that the relief is used as effectively as possible.

3 Options and alternatives considered

- 3.1 While it would have been preferable to provide businesses with certainty about the relief level they are applying for, this option has been rejected because there is not sufficient data available to be able to set a fixed award level. As noted in paragraph 2.1, the Council has been allocated £3.8m, and modelling shows that there are a maximum of about 1,500 accounts which may be eligible for this relief, with rates bills totalling £37.9m.
- 3.2 It would also be possible to restrict the types of business which may be supported, however this option has been rejected because there is not sufficient data about how individual businesses may have been impacted by the pandemic.

4 Consultation

No formal consultation has taken place as the proposed policy has no restrictions to eligibility other than those stated by Government. However, we have received correspondence from a small number of businesses, which request that this unrestricted policy is the one we choose.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The financial relief awarded will support local businesses and the conditions whilst ensuring the government grant conditions are be adhered to, the scope of the conditions will be designed to ensure as much as possible of the government grant benefits the local Dacorum economy.

6 Legal Implications

The COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund will be administered through discretionary Business Rate Relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

7 Risk implications:

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 Community Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out and annexed - the CIA raises no positive or negative impacts for protected groups.

8.2 Human Rights –there are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

There are no sustainability implications from this report

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no implications for council infrastructure arising from this report

11 Statutory Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The proposed policy is consistent with Government guidance in respect of the funding provided and powers under the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

S151 Officer:

The comments of the S151 officer are included in the body of this report.

12 Conclusions:

The proposed CARF policy addresses the requirements of Government guidance in respect of the funding provided and offers the best mechanism for using it to support local businesses.