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| PART B: | RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL |
| REPORT TO: | FULL COUNCIL |
| DATE: | 17 FEBRUARY 2022 |
| REPORT OF THE: | CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (S151) ANTON HODGE |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | COVID-19 ADDITIONAL RELIEF FUNDING (CARF) SCHEME |
| WARDS AFFECTED: | ALL |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Full Council of the proposed Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) Full Council supports the proposed Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Central Government has provided Ryedale District Council with funding of £1,090,079 to assist those ratepayers whose businesses have been (and continue to be) affected by the Covid-19 pandemic but are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 Businesses within Ryedale who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic would continue to suffer.
- 4.2 Reputational damage to Ryedale District Council if this funding was not to be distributed to the businesses who it is aimed at supporting.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 **Our economy: harnessing Ryedale's unique economy to deliver, growth, homes and jobs – Open for business.** We will work with Government, industry and businesses to bring new investment to the area, expanding the commercial space on offer within the district in a sustainable way. We will develop the council's role in providing workshop, incubator and scale-up space for all small start-up businesses and facilitate the expansion of business parks.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 The purpose of the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme is to provide assistance where the business property does not qualify for other relief.
- 6.2 Over the past few years, a number of schemes (such as Expanded Retail Discount) have been led by Central Government but without any specific legislative changes.
- 6.3 Ryedale District Council is keen to support such initiatives especially where they are designed to help local businesses and will look to maximise the reliefs given as well as maximise any grants received.
- 6.4 In view of this, Ryedale District Council has decided that where a ratepayer meets all of the relevant criteria, relief will be awarded at a maximum 15% of the 2021/22 liability after any other reliefs and reductions have been applied. The relief awarded may increase or decrease in future if the Rateable Value (RV) is increased or decreased retrospectively.
- 6.5 The criteria in the Government's guidance for the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme is as follows:-
- 6.5.1 The ratepayer is not eligible (or would be eligible) for the Expanded Retail Discount (covering Retail, Hospitality and Leisure), the Nursery Discount or the Airport and Grounds Operations Support Scheme (AGOSS);
- 6.5.2 The ratepayer is not entitled to either Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief granted at 100%;
- 6.5.3 The rate payer is not entitled to mandatory relief (80%) and discretionary (top up) of 20% which is funded through business rates retention;
- 6.5.4 The hereditament is treated as occupied by the council;
- 6.5.5 The ratepayer confirms that they have been adversely affected by the pandemic and been unable to adequately adapt to that impact and
- 6.5.6 The ratepayer is not subject to Subsidy Controls
- 6.6 Eligible businesses have been identified from the current database and all will have the 15% discount relief applied to the 2021/2022 account.

- 6.7 Where adding the 15% relief to the 2021/2022 account places the Business Rates account into credit, before issuing any refund all businesses will be contacted requesting they confirm the following details;-
- (a) Has your business been affected by Covid?
 - (b) Business was operational during 2021/2022
 - (c) Subsidy Control?
 - (d) Do you want to opt out of the scheme?
- 6.8 This administration process of the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme has been discussed and approved by our Internal Auditors - Veritau. In all cases, Ryedale District Council will notify ratepayers of all decisions made.
- 6.9 Where a ratepayer falsely applies for any relief, or where the ratepayer provides false information, makes false representation, or deliberately withholds information in order to gain relief, the relief will be removed and prosecutions will be considered under the Fraud Act 2006.
- 6.10 Members of the Policy & Resources Committee were informed at the meeting held on 3 February 2022 that a report on the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme would be brought directly to Full Council due to the tight timescales for delivering this scheme.
- 6.11 Following approval from Full Council the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme will be implemented.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications would have to be considered if the matter was to be looked into in further detail:
- a) Financial – As Central Government leads this initiative funding will be provided through section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Ryedale District Council has been allocated £1,090,079 for this scheme. The total amount of relief awarded may exceed the funding allocated to Ryedale District Council, if as a result of any future Rateable Value (RV) amendments. Any overspend would be shared 50/50 by Ryedale District Council and Central Government.
 - b) Legal – There are no Legal implications to this paper.
 - c) Other -
 - d) Equalities – The aim of the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme is to support those businesses who do not receive any mandatory relief and have been impacted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - e) Staffing – The administration of the Covid-19 Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme will have an impact on staffing resource within the Revenues & Benefits team due to the additional workload the scheme will bring.
 - f) Planning – N/A
 - g) Health & Safety – N/A
 - h) Environmental – N/A
 - i) Crime & Disorder – N/A

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Background Papers:

COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF): local authority guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-additional-relief-fund-carf-local-authority-guidance>

Draft Ryedale DC COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) Policy