



Lead Member Decision

Published on 02 September 2022

Decision: COVID Additional Relief Fund (CARF) Policy

Decision taker: Portfolio Holder for Finance

Decision Date: 2 September 2022

Is decision subject to Call-in? Yes

Deadline for Call-in: Noon on 7 September 2022

Is decision Exempt? No

Is decision urgent? No

Summary

To update the Portfolio Holder on the options for spending the discretionary fund allocations for Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) payment and to recommend the attached proposed policy.

Decision

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed policy for the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) (annexe 1) be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Finance (S151) to agree the final percentage of the award and/or maximum Rateable Value threshold using the latest information for businesses eligible to receive the award and the reliefs they are entitled to in order to ensure use of the fund is maximised

Reasons for Decision

Option 5 (Model 5 below) is the preferred approach. Option 5 focuses the relief on businesses classed as “small and medium” and so focuses the resource on the smallest businesses which will have seen significant struggles.

It is recommended that due to movement in rateable values and businesses receiving other reliefs that delegated power to review the % of the award or maximum RV threshold is held by section 151 to ensure maximised spending of the fund.

Options Considered

The following alternative options have been identified and models 1 to 4 were rejected for the reasons as set out below and model 5 is the recommended option to take forward.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Criteria	35% of rates liability with £50K monetary cap & max RV cap of £100k	9% off all eligible accounts in 2021/22. No cap on RV or award	11% of rates liability. No cap on RV or award	Same as model 1 with RV cap of £50,999. All accounts in 2021/22 - 50% award	Same as model 4 with RV cap of £50,999. All accounts in 2021/22 - 56% award with 50K monetary cap
Total £ awarded	£ 3,622,707.15	£ 3,541,536.40	£ 3,685,739.52	£ 3,527,467.50	£ 3,950,763.60
Percentage of Cherwell's funding allocation	90.8%	88.8%	92.4%	88.4%	99.1%

Model 1: Similar to Oxford City	Excludes all ATMs, Advertising boards, Energy Suppliers & Networking, Telecommunications mast, schools - independent and maintained, government and justice, betting and gambling, fire, police, solar panels, banks and liable on 1.4.2021 and still liable and must be occupying for more than 60 days. Maximum Rateable Value = £100,000
Model 2: Similar to West Oxon	Excludes car parks, schools and colleges and army barracks then standard percentage across the board. All businesses, no cap on amount of award. This includes open and closed accounts. Caveat: will have to check Companies House pre-award
Model 3:	Excludes all ATMs, Advertising boards, Energy Suppliers & Networking, Telecommunications mast, schools - independent and maintained, government and justice, betting and gambling, fire, police, solar panels, banks and liable on 1.4.2021 and still liable and must be occupying for more than 60 days. No Max RV or cap on award
Model 4:	Excludes all ATMs, Advertising boards, Energy Suppliers & Networking, Telecommunications mast, schools - independent and maintained, government and justice, betting and gambling, fire, police, solar panels, banks and liable during 2021/22 and must be occupying for more than 60 days. Maximum Rateable Value = £50,999
Model 5:	Excludes all ATMs, Advertising boards, Energy Suppliers & Networking, Telecommunications mast, schools - independent and maintained, government and justice, betting and gambling, fire, police, solar panels, banks and liable during 2021/22 and must be occupying for more than 60 days. Maximum Rateable Value = £50,999

By awarding relief to businesses in properties with a rateable value of £51,000 or higher risks the relief being rejected due to the business exceeding subsidy levels.

Awarding a lower value percentage to all businesses will adversely impact those businesses determined as most in need.

By capping the rateable value at £50,999 this would assist small and medium businesses within Cherwell. Option 4 would leave a discretionary fund available, however if insufficient applications received then the funds would be returned to central government.

Conflicts of Interest Declared and Dispensations Granted by Head of Paid Service

None

Information about this decision statement

Call-in

Notice of call-in must be submitted in writing, by email or text to the Chief Executive by the deadline specified above, and must state the reason or reasons why "call-in" has been requested;

Call-in can be requested by any six non-executive members of the Council.

However, if at any point during a municipal year the total number of opposition councillors is six or less the total number of non-executive members required to call-in a decision shall be the total number of opposition councillors less two.

Decisions not called-in by the deadline specified above will become effective immediately the deadline has expired (unless they are recommendations to the Council).

The Council has stipulated that the call-in procedure should not be used to challenge decisions as a matter of course and should be used only when fully justified.

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive