

New Discretionary Grant Scheme to help small businesses

I have today received this update about the new discretionary grant scheme to help small businesses. Applications can be submitted from today to Wokingham Borough Council until Friday 12 June:

A new discretionary grant scheme to help specific types of small business during the Covid-19 crisis will be launched in Wokingham Borough next week.

The support is targeted at those small businesses with high fixed property-related costs that were not eligible for the earlier grant schemes that the council has been administering and will initially be funded from the same Government funding pot as earlier schemes.

The grants are primarily and predominantly aimed at:

- Small and micro businesses (as defined in Section 33 Part 2 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and the Companies Act 2006).
- Businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs
- Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis
- Businesses which occupy property, or part of a property, with a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000.

The Government has asked local authorities to prioritise the following types of businesses for grants:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces. Examples could include units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Bed & Breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and Wokingham Borough Council's decision making executive last night (Thursday May 28) approved a policy that will allow flexibility on what eligible businesses and self-employed people to support and those who believe they fit the criteria are encouraged to apply.

Cllr John Kaiser, executive member for finance and housing said: "We know businesses and the self employed have been hit hard by this crisis and want to provide as efficient and flexible support as we can. There has to be eligibility criteria to make sure the support goes to those who truly need

it, but within the government guidance, we will take as broad a view as we can."

Applications to the new discretionary grant scheme **open online on Monday June 1 and close on Friday June 12**. Money will be allocated on a first come first served basis until the allocated funds have run out.

For full detail on who can apply and how, visit:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/business-andlicensing/business-and-growth/coronavirus-advice-for-businesses/>.

Yours sincerely