

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Decision Made: 12 January 2022

Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme

Issue for Decision

To consider the adoption of the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme.

Decision Made

The decision to implement the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme in line with the announcement and guidance issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1044354/omicron-hospitality-and-leisure-grant-guidance.pdf

Reasons for Decision

The scheme provides support to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses, in recognition that the rise of the Omicron variant means that some businesses are likely to struggle over the coming weeks.

The support will take the form of a one-off grant and is for businesses on the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) ratings list only.

The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant will support hospitality, leisure and accommodation business premises with one-off grants of up to £6,000.

The following thresholds apply for these businesses:

- Businesses with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 or under will receive a payment of £2,667.
- Businesses with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a payment of £4,000.
- Businesses with a rateable value of exactly £51,000 or over will receive a payment of £6,000.

The primary principle of the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant scheme is to support businesses that offer in-person services, where the main service and activity takes place in a fixed rate-paying premises, in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors.

As part of their application process for the scheme, all businesses will be required to self-certify that they meet all eligibility criteria and provide evidence in the form of bank statements to enable pre-payment checks. Those pre payment checks will be supplemented with electronic checks to validate company details.

Central Government will fully reimburse the council in line with the guidance and the grant offer letter sent to Local Authorities, for the cost of the grant (using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).

Maidstone Borough Council expects approx. 520 local business to qualify for the grant.

The Powers to implement such a scheme are contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic the Government has introduced a series of different packages to financially support businesses.

The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme is an important part of those measures and provides support to businesses adversely affected by the Omicron variant.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

Whilst the council could decide not to implement a scheme, this would be to the detriment to local businesses, the wider economy and residents of the borough.

Part 2.3.1 para 12 of the Constitution enables the Chief Executive to take any action necessary in connection with any civil emergency or disaster including response, recovery and business continuity as may be required from time to time.

The decision has been taken in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chair of Economy, Regeneration and Leisure Committee.

Background Papers

None.