



Councillor Cliff Lunn, Executive Member for Finance and Resources - Report to Council on 19 April 2022

Annual Billing

In the week commencing 14th March just over 41,500 council tax bills were posted out to residents and 2790 National Non-Domestic Rates bills. An extension to the retail relief scheme of a further 50% rates relief for 2022/23 was recently announced and following a quick turnaround of the required software changes the team managed to get the NNDR bills out on time with this change included.

Test and Trace support payments

Since September 2020 the Benefits and Taxation Section has been administering the £500 payments on behalf of the Department for Health & Social Care. Following changes to the requirement to self-isolate the scheme closed for new applications on the 24th February 2022. Since the scheme began the team have dealt with over 2340 applications from customers and payments totalling £506,000 have been made to residents of the district to help them during self-isolation.

Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant

The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grants were announced in December 2021 to support hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses in rated premises. In recognition that the rise of the Omicron variant meant that some businesses were likely to struggle due to reduced trade. The amount of grant was based on the rateable value of the premises, with the amounts being either £2667, £4000 or £6000 and the scheme closed for applications on the 18 March 2022. Over 220 businesses have been paid a total of £692,721. A further small top-up of the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant was also received to assist businesses outside of the rating system and a further 49 businesses received a total of £136,682.

Energy rebate

Following the increase in energy and gas prices, the Government announced that households in England in Council Tax bands A-D will get a £150 rebate to help with the cost of living and local councils have been tasked with administering this. The government guidance is still being developed however local authorities have been advised the preferred method of payment is direct to customers banks. If customers pay by direct debit the council will seek to do this as soon as the first direct debit for the financial year has been taken. There will be an application process to collect the bank details for those customers where we don't hold details. There will be a discretionary scheme to provide support for vulnerable households who may not qualify for the £150 council tax rebate. This will be for lower income households in council tax bands E-H, but the fund will be limited. The council is required to develop a policy for this scheme and the full details are currently being prepared.

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