

## Information from High Peak Borough Council March 28 2020

### Financial Support for Residents and Businesses Update

#### Measures for Residents

The Council's efforts will focus on residents facing increased hardship from the fast changing circumstances:

- The Council operates a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) which supports households of working age with low income. We are encouraging eligible residents to claim Council Tax Support as soon as possible, should the need arise.
- The Council will receive additional funding as part of the £500m Hardship Fund. This funding will initially be used to provide every household, where there is a working age person in receipt of Council Tax Support, up to an additional £150 towards their outstanding council tax liability (if there is any liability remaining). With any remaining funding we then apply this to new LCTRS claimants and Council Tax hardship applications.
- Usually, the majority of our residents pay Council Tax in 10 monthly instalments. In the current circumstances, if a resident requests it, the Council can offer the following flexible payment plans ;
  - 12 monthly payment plans running from April 2020 to March 2021
  - Instalment plans starting in June 2020 and running for 10 months until March 2021.
- Council Tax recovery action has now been temporarily suspended
- For our tenants, we are signposting anyone who is struggling to pay their rent due to a reduction in their income to apply for Universal Credit. We are not taking any possession proceedings against any tenants for rent arrears. For those tenants who contact us, we are attempting to make affordable payment arrangements where possible in the interim.

#### Measures for Businesses

The Government announced a series of measures to support businesses in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic:

##### *Business Rates*

- Businesses entitled to the extended 100% rates relief will no longer be required to pay their 2020/21 business rates bill and therefore we have cancelled the Direct Debits due for April for eligible businesses and reissued bills. There may be some we have missed; let us know and we will issue a refund asap. We will action any further Government announced extensions of rate relief as soon as possible.
- Under normal circumstances, the majority of our businesses pay their business rates in 10 monthly instalments, starting in April and finishing in January. In the current circumstances, the Council can offer special payment arrangements with any businesses who contact us – similar to the options set out above for Council Tax.
- Business Rates recovery action has now been temporarily suspended

##### *Business Grants*

- Small Businesses eligible for Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) / Rural Rates Relief (RRR) will be entitled to receive a cash grant of £10,000.
- Businesses within the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, which operate from premises with a rateable value (RV) up to £15,000 will be eligible to receive a cash grant of £10,000 and those with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000 will be eligible to receive a cash grant of up to £25,000.
- We are currently establishing the list of eligible businesses. Where we hold bank details currently, we will automatically be issuing the grant. However, we expect that for a high

number we will not hold bank details (as many of the small businesses do not currently pay business rates) so we will need to obtain these in order to send the grant electronically. Therefore we will be contacting them and requesting that they complete a webform on the website – this will request certain information, as required by Government and to reduce the risk of fraud. As details are sent in, we will verify and aim to send grant payment asap.

*Sundry Debtors*

- In terms of other invoices for services such as Trade Waste, Industrial Units etc, where requested, we will suspend recovery action. Where businesses contact the Council, we can place a temporary hold on the account to suspend the service (where applicable), suspend recovery action or make an affordable payment arrangement in the interim.