



Discretionary Business Rates Relief Policy

2026

General Information

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (OWBC) wants to attract new businesses to the Borough and wants to offer higher skilled, higher paid employment opportunities to its residents. To support this the authority will offer a discretionary business rate relief grant to businesses moving into the area.

The key criteria considered by OWBC in awarding up to 50% discretionary relief for the first two years of trading to new businesses is based on:

- Creating at least 10 quality, skilled jobs in the Borough. It is expected that the number of employees qualified to level 4+ is at least equal to national average at the time of investing (currently 43.6%).
- Proposes to pay average salary rates greater than +15% of the borough's average salary rate at the time of investment.
- Is a carbon neutral business and/or has a robust sustainability policy, aligning to the council's environmental objectives.
- Is new to the area or is expanding to an additional site within Leicester and Leicestershire; when a business is expanding, the expansion must result in the creation of new jobs meeting the criteria quota, as highlighted above; will not result in business or job displacement or relocation from elsewhere within Leicester and Leicestershire; and the business must be seriously considering alternative options outside of the city and county.
- Is creating new added value employment to the borough, avoiding displacement from the same company or within the parent group.
- Businesses must apply and be granted approval before committing to the expansion/relocation, no retrospective claims will be considered.
- Businesses must commit to lease agreements greater than 10 years.
- Must not be unethical businesses at the discretion of an investment advisory group, such as those involved with pay day loans, gambling, sex industry and performing animals.

In considering applications that meet the above essential criteria, priority consideration will be given to the following factors:

- The impact of the business on the local community and environment, is the business one that the council feels is desirable to have in the area.
- Whether the organisation provides a significant number of jobs which are likely to result in the recruitment of local people and will be advertised locally.
- Whether the organisation currently has or plans to provide skills and training for its staff, particularly to upskill its staff and where possible provide apprenticeship opportunities.
- Whether the organisation provides inward investment from a country outside the United Kingdom and is one of the initial companies from that country locating in the OWBC area.

Note: To be eligible for relief the applicants will also have to agree if they leave the area or cease trading within five years, they will have to pay the council the level of relief given.

An applicant may not be expected to deliver against all these criteria but will be required to demonstrate that they will make an impact on the economy of the borough and bring benefit to our communities through the combined delivery against these criteria.

The level of any small business rate relief scheme discount and any other discounts that the business may be entitled to, will be considered in determining the level of additional business rates discount under this scheme.

In addition to the criteria set out above, to avoid businesses relocating from other district areas within Leicester and Leicestershire, the scheme would be that the new business should: -

- Represent a new economic activity for the company within Leicester and Leicestershire
- Represent net new jobs in Leicester & Leicestershire
- Not create jobs that have a significant risk of displacing similar employment from existing businesses in the area.

An exception to the considerations, where relief can be used to prevent businesses leaving the Leicestershire area as part of a wider planned expansion of an existing business, or a relocation of an existing business, which would have a negative impact for the economy and the employment of the area.

Application Process

All businesses that want to be considered for the discretionary business rate relief would be required to complete the application form which can be found at **Appendix 1** of this document. Oadby and Wigston staff would be able to assist the business in completing the application, but it will be the responsibility of the business to sign the completed document and provide any additional evidence that is required.

Completed applications should be sent to the Business Rates Team at the council, businessrates@oadby-wigston.gov.uk who will check through the application to ensure all the information required has been provided. The application will then be passed to the Economic Regeneration Team to consider whether the application should be supported or not. The Economic Regeneration Team will make a recommendation to the Senior Leadership Team to inform the final decision.

Decision Making

All applications for the discretionary business rate relief will be considered by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Section 151 Officer will have delegated authority to approve applications. Following the discussion at SLT, businesses will be informed of the outcome within 15 working days of the meeting taking place to discuss the application. An outcome letter will be sent to the applicant by the Business Rates Team.

Subsidy Act 2022

The UK Subsidy Control Regime enables UK public authorities, including devolved administrations and local authorities, to give subsidies that are tailored to their local needs, and that drive economic growth, while minimising distortion to UK competition and protecting our international obligations.

Support offered under this policy is given under Subsidy Control Rules.

All those who are successful in their application will be required to complete a confirmation and financial assistance declaration form, this can be found at **Appendix 2/A**. Businesses must agree to maintain records for ten years following the grant of the subsidy.

Appeals

All appeals must be made by contacting the Business Rates Team, through the contact details on the refusal letter. Appeals will be dealt with in writing detailing the appellant's rationale for why they believe that they are eligible for relief.

Appeals will be assessed in line with the agreed criteria as set down in this policy. The S151 Officer and the Senior Leadership Team will hear and consider any appeals. All appeals will be reviewed within four weeks of submission of all necessary information. All decisions taken on appeal are final and the outcome will be recorded and delivered to the business in writing. If an appeal is successful business rate relief will be backdated for the full eligible period, within the fiscal year.