**South and Vale district councils launch online form to help businesses access government grants**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are committed to supporting all local businesses and have launched an online form to help them apply for small business and retail grants.

Businesses in South Oxfordshire, can find the form and more details via the South [website](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/business/business-rates) and businesses in the Vale of White Horse can access the information via the Vale [website](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/business/business-rates).

The two councils are working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to understand the UK Government’s support for businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19. The Government’s package of measures to support businesses include:

* a 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England
* grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
* small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief

Both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils are responsible for administering these programmes. Officers are working with BEIS to ensure the payment process adheres to the latest Government guidance. The businesses that are eligible for the grants and rates relief will be notified when the grants are ready to be distributed.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused distress to a lot of business owners and the councils want to do all they can to support them. Officers are working hard to issue the grants as soon as possible and provide feedback to BEIS on specific issues raised by businesses in our districts.

Cllr Robin Bennet the Cabinet Member for member for Economic Development and Regeneration at South Oxfordshire District Council said: “Small businesses in particular are likely to find the coming weeks and months difficult – that’s why we’ve made it as easy as possible for them, and all businesses in South Oxfordshire, to apply for the financial relief they’ll need.”

Cllr Bethia Thomas the Cabinet member for Economic Development and Regeneration for the Vale of White Horse District Council said: “I am pleased we have been able to get these online forms up and running so quickly. We’re doing everything we can to make sure our local businesses are able to see this incredibly difficult time through with all the support we can give.”

For further advice and support, please visit the South and Vale Business Support website: <https://www.svbs.co.uk/coronavirus-guidance-and-support/> .

The quickest way for South and Vale businesses to receive information about the latest government support is to sign up to receive the newsletter at  [www.svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk).