

Local Business Rates Relief

FACTS



Opportunity Sutton

Opportunity Sutton is the borough's plan for economic growth; its vision is for Sutton to be an enterprising, enabling borough that is a magnet for business investment. One of our Seven Priority Projects "Open for Business" aims to create an enterprising borough by supporting start ups and helping our existing businesses to grow. This involves addressing and removing local barriers to enterprise that currently affect the business community. The Local Business Rate Relief Scheme acts to remove one of these barriers by reducing a fixed cost for businesses which the London Borough of Sutton understands can be more burdensome for businesses during times of economic difficulties.

Introduction to the Local Business Rate Relief scheme

It has been well publicised that small to medium sized enterprises have been responsible for leading growth in the UK over the past two decades. With a business base in Sutton made up of predominantly micro businesses and SMEs the borough is aware of the increasingly important role they play in the growth of the local economy.

Sutton aims to assist new business start ups and existing businesses to grow by offering them the opportunity to receive business rate discounts.

The Scheme

Rate relief will be offered to new businesses locating within the defined Sutton Town Centre Business Improvement District area (see below for further details) and also to expanding SMEs looking to relocate within this same area.

The Local Business Rate Relief Scheme will be offered to all eligible businesses for a maximum of 12 months for applications received between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015.

- The maximum amount of relief will be 50% of the net liability after all mandatory or discretionary reliefs have been applied to the account.
- Occupiers must take out a minimum 12 month lease and if the business moves out the council reserves the right to request repayment of any local discretionary business rate relief granted.

Eligibility Criteria

The scheme is open to all businesses which meet the criteria below. The business must be:

- A new business to the area or a business expanding their operation in Sutton and moving to significantly larger premises provided they identify a minimum increase in job creation (minimum of 1 new full-time employee or equivalent)

- Within the designated Sutton High Street Business Improvement District area, (see map)
- Have a rateable value between £6,000 and £50,000
- Is not among the type of retailer which the council believes should not qualify for the relief
- The scheme will be available to Small and Medium sized Enterprise's only (less than 250 employees and an annual turnover less than £40m)

The types of property which can qualify for the relief include but not are exclusive to the following:

1. Properties being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public, e.g.
 - Shops (such as florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, chemists, supermarkets, newsagents etc)
 - Charity shops
 - Opticians
 - Post offices
 - Furnishing shops/display rooms
 - Car showrooms
 - Second hand car lots
 - Markets
 - Petrol stations
 - Garden centres
 - Craft Shops
 - Art galleries

2. Properties being used for the provision of certain services to visiting members of the public, e.g.
 - Hair & beauty services
 - Shoe repairs/key cutting
 - Travel agents
 - Dry cleaners
 - Launderettes
 - PC/TV/domestic appliance repair
 - Funeral directors
 - Photo processing DVD/video rentals
 - Tool hire
 - Car hire

3. Properties being used for the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public, e.g.

- Restaurants (excluding takeaways)
- Sandwich shops
- Coffee shops
- Pubs
- Wine bars

4. Properties being used for the following agency, professional or financial services

- Accountants
- Solicitors
- Insurance Brokers
- Employment Agencies
- Estate/Letting Agencies
- Tutors

5. Medical services

- Vets
- Dentists
- Doctors
- Osteopaths
- Chiropractors

This list is not definitive, and other businesses who are of a similar type to those listed above may also qualify for the local business rate relief.

Properties which do not qualify for retail relief

- Takeaways
- Banks
- Building societies
- Cash points
- Bureau de change
- Payday lenders
- Betting shops
- Pawnbrokers
- Properties that may bring the scheme / area into disrepute

Sutton Council reserves the right to re-assess the eligibility for this programme.

If you have any questions regarding eligibility then please email the Business Rates team at businessrates@sutton.gov.uk. or call 020 8770 5000 and ask for Business Rates.

How to apply

To apply for local business rate relief please fill out our application form and then email your completed application back to us at the following address: businessrates@sutton.gov.uk.

Please note that additional evidence/documentation will be required to support your application. This will include:

- The length of your new lease (e.g. lease agreement)
- Confirmation of the rateable value of your new premises
- If a business is expanding/relocating into the designated Sutton High Street Business Improvement District area then evidence of the numbers of employees and increased floorspace will be required
- Business plan

Additional information

- A review of the applicant will take place by an Assessment Panel to consider the eligibility of the application - in some cases this may lead to additional information being required
- If the applicant is an expanding business looking to relocate then the applicant must satisfy Sutton Council that they are an expanding business with a viable growth plan and are creating new jobs
- Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application within 10 working days of the completed application
- The business rate relief will start from the following month after the rate relief is awarded

Appeals Process

The London Borough of Sutton has a panel in place to examine all elements of an application. However if it is decided that the business application does not meet one or more of the eligibility criteria then a letter will be sent to the business explaining why the application has been unsuccessful. The letter will also set out the Right to Appeal and the Appeals process.

For any further details about the Local Business Rate Relief Scheme please contact a member of the Business Rates team on:

Email - businessrates@sutton.gov.uk.

Support from the Opportunity Sutton Team

Applicants who are successful in participating in the scheme will be offered a full package of business support alongside their business rate relief. The Start-Up Sutton programme will be supporting businesses through a series of workshops, one-to-one clinics and ongoing support to meet each individual business' needs.

For both new and expanding businesses this programme will prove beneficial by meeting with one of our business experts (from our partners Branduin Business Support). Businesses can go through any questions, queries or issues which they may be experiencing and receive some first-hand advice.

Opportunity Sutton will also keep applicants up-to-date with our planned business events, conferences and networking opportunities. Any apprenticeship schemes and funding will also be circulated.

To find out more about Opportunity Sutton and Business Support available please email: opportunitysutton@sutton.gov.uk

