



## **Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone – Business Rates Relief policy**

### **Introduction**

The aim of Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone is to stimulate business growth in the designated area by providing financial incentives to businesses and simplified planning to assist with development. The Enterprise Zone is intended to create jobs and drive local and national growth.

Businesses that occupy new properties in the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone may be eligible for discretionary relief of up to 100% of the business rates payable, up to a limit of £55,000 per year and a maximum of £275,000 in any 5 year period, provided occupancy on site commenced before 31 March 2022, subject to meeting the criteria set out within this policy. This will be subject to State Aid limits.

In applying for Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief, businesses will need to demonstrate how their business supports the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone aim of supporting the growth for the area within the target sectors.

### **Target Sectors**

The Enterprise Zone's vision is themed upon an advanced engineering and manufacturing cluster, building upon existing strengths in marine, energy, and defence related activities. This includes the supply chains and support sectors to assist the target sector in delivering growth.

### **Business Rate Relief Scheme – scoring criteria**

To qualify for Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief:

- The property must be situated within the defined boundary of the Dorset enterprise zone.
- The enterprise zone project group must have agreed that the business satisfied the sector test as defined in the occupancy policy.
- The business premises must be occupied in accordance with section 43 of the Local Government Finance act 1988.
- Occupation on site must have commenced before 31 March 2022.
- The award of relief will be made on an annual basis and the business will be required to reapply each year.
- State Aid thresholds must not be exceeded.

The decision whether a business qualifies for relief will be made by Purbeck District Council which, as the business rates collection authority, retains the right to exercise the discretion to grant Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief on a case by case basis.

### **Appeals**

If a request for Business Rate Relief has been rejected, the applicant may appeal to Purbeck District Council's Housing and Revenues Committee. A request for an appeal should be made in writing. The decision of the Committee will be final with no right to further appeal.



### **Monitoring**

Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief is subject to annual monitoring to make sure that the qualifying business is still eligible for the relief, namely to ensure that the business is still in the sector, remains in occupation of the premises and has not received other State-Aid.

On-going relief will not be unreasonably withheld, but businesses will only be granted relief for one financial year at a time and relief will automatically terminate at the end of the financial year for which it is granted.

In cases where State Aid thresholds are exceeded, Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief will be terminated with immediate effect with any previously awarded Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief in excess of the state aid limit being recovered from the business, with compound interest.

### **State Aid De Minimis Regulations**

When awarding the Enterprise Zone Business Rate Relief, Purbeck District Council must do so within the State Aid De Minimis Regulations. Discounts such as business rates relief are classed as state aid but providing the benefit does not exceed €200,000 over a three year period, the European Commission considers it complies with the De Minimis regulations and has a negligible impact on trade and competition.

Purbeck District Council is responsible for ensuring the state aid limits are not breached and so will have to ask detailed questions of any business that applies for a discount about other financial support that it may have received.

Full detail on State-aid can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/enterprise-zones-state-aid-and-business-rate-discounts](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enterprise-zones-state-aid-and-business-rate-discounts)