



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Overview of the Rates Waiver Schemes in Local Authorities

Value for Money Unit
Local Government Audit Service

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Local Government Audit Service

The Local Government Audit Service (LGAS), incorporating the Value for Money (VFM) Unit, being an external audit service, provides independent scrutiny of the financial stewardship of local authorities.

The sectoral goals of the LGAS are to:

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It is the responsibility of local authority management to ensure that value for money is achieved by establishing and maintaining sound arrangements including procedures for planning, appraisal, authorisation and control of resources.

This report was prepared on the basis of information, documentation and explanations obtained from the public bodies included in this report. The draft report was sent to all local authorities, relevant Government departments and agencies for comment and where appropriate the comments received were incorporated in the final version of the report.

The website of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is the primary means of publishing reports of the Value for Money Unit of the Local Government Audit Service. Should any errors arise they will be corrected in the report published at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/74ba5-value-for-money-reports/>

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the economy, as well as on society. As a result of the emergency measures introduced, the Government recognised that businesses required significant additional supports. In response, the Government introduced a number of measures including the Rates Waiver Scheme for businesses. This scheme provided relief not only to impacted businesses but also to local authorities as to their funding.

The Rates Waiver Scheme was first introduced in 2020 with a new, more limited, scheme put in place from Q1-Q3 2021 and a further, more targeted, scheme for Q4 2021 with an extension of this waiver into Q1 of 2022. Details of these new limited and targeted schemes are set out in this report. Exhibit 1 sets out the full range of COVID-19 related supports received under the Rates Waiver Schemes for 2020 and 2021 administered to eligible ratepayers by local authorities.

Exhibit 1: Breakdown of support paid out under the Rates Waiver Schemes for 2020 and 2021			
Rates Waiver Scheme	Estimated number of ratepayers availing of waiver	Amount €	% of total ratepayers
	No.	€m	%
9 month waiver 2020 (Mar to Dec 2020)	121,331	729	82
Rates Waiver Scheme 2020		729	
9 month limited waiver 2021 (Jan to Sept 2021)	70,310	424	48
3 month targeted waiver 2021 (Oct to Dec 2021)	20,138	61.5	14
Rates Waiver Scheme 2021		485.5	

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Rates Waiver Scheme 2020

The Government introduced an initial three-month waiver of rates for businesses forced to close due to COVID-19 public health measures. A 100% waiver was applied to all businesses, with the exception of a few categories. The waiver was extended initially from three to six months with a further extension until the end of December 2020.

The Government allocated €900 million to the Rates Waiver Scheme from March to December 2020. The actual amount paid out to businesses during this period was €729 million.

Rates Waiver Scheme Quarter 1 to 3 2021

A more targeted commercial rates waiver was introduced for Q1 2021. There was no overlap in terms of funding, implementation or operation of this scheme from that which previously applied in 2020. This was later extended until September 2021. This waiver was more focused than the previous nine month waiver with support to businesses targeted at those categories most severely impacted.

The cost of the Q1 Rates Waiver Scheme was estimated at €160 million per quarter totalling €480 million by the end of September 2021. However, the actual amount paid out during this period under this extended scheme was €424 million to over 70,000 ratepayers representing 48% of total ratepayers.

Targeted Rates Waiver Scheme Quarter 4 2021

The Government, in Budget 2022, announced a more targeted commercial rates waiver for Q4 2021 to mainly cover the hospitality and tourism sectors and €62.3 million was allocated for this purpose.

These waivers were intended to assist specific sectors as they continued to be severely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions beyond September 2021 and who needed support reopening once restrictions were lifted. The actual amount paid under this targeted scheme was €61.5 million to over 20,000 ratepayers and there was a further extension of the Q4 2021 waiver into the first quarter of 2022. From 1 April 2022, all Rate Waiver Schemes have finished and commercial rates are payable to local authorities as usual.

In providing this support, it was recognised by Government that these sectors make a significant contribution to local authority income through their commercial rates and to local economies generally by enticing visitors, boosting walk-in trade for other businesses and providing employment.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The levying and collection of rates are legally matters for each individual local authority. Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to levy rates on any property used for commercial and industrial purposes on an annual basis. The actual amount of commercial rates income for 2020 was €1.659 billion, representing 23% of total revenue income in local authorities. The commercial rates income for 2021 was €1.675 billion (per the unaudited 2021 AFS's).

The Government announced a three month rates collection freeze in March 2020. This measure was implemented by the individual local authorities for businesses in their area. It involved deferring rates payments for the businesses which had been most affected by the restrictions (mainly retails, hospitality, leisure and childcare). Recognising that this flexibility would have implications for local authorities in terms of cash flow and critical service delivery implications, short-term cash flow supports for local authorities were made available.

A rates waiver was subsequently introduced in May 2020. A 100% waiver was applied to all businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19, and backdated to March 2020. Some exclusions to the scheme included banks, utilities and large supermarkets. This waiver was subsequently extended until the end of December 2020. An initial fund of €260 million was provided to fully cover the cost of this initiative, based on an analysis completed by the City and County Management Association (CCMA). This measure was re-examined and adjusted throughout the pandemic as the situation evolved.

1.2 COVID-19 Restrictions in 2020

The 'Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business' was announced in May 2020. It set out a five stage plan for the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. The 'Resilience and Recovery 2020-21: Plan of living with COVID-19' was published in September 2020. A framework for the Local Government sector was launched which identified which services should operate during the different levels of public health restrictions. The framework was implemented with the coordination of the County and City Management Agency (CCMA) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) provided assistance. This included liaising on operational matters, the coordination of local services, local communication strategy and any other logistical arrangements requiring interagency co-operation with the other principal response agencies, An Garda Síochána and the HSE.

COVID-19 restrictions began to be eased from 1 December 2020, with the reopening of all non-essential retail shops, hair and beauty providers, gyms and leisure centres, cinemas, museums and galleries, while thousands of restaurants, cafes, gastropubs and hotel restaurants reopened three days later. However, hairdressers, pubs, restaurants, hotels etc. were all closed again by Government on 24 December 2020.

1.3 COVID-19 Restrictions in 2021 and 2022

On 23 February 2021, a revised plan to manage COVID-19 was published called 'COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead'.

On 29 April 2021, a reopening plan on a phased basis for May and June was announced with a further easing of restrictions for June, July and August announced on 28 May 2021.

All of these measures had an impact on the ability of some business sectors to reopen and for these sectors, this required a continuation of the support provided under the Rates Waiver Scheme for the first nine months of 2021, with a further targeted scheme in place from October to December 2021.

The 'Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting' plan was announced on 31 August 2021. This included a plan for phased easing of restrictions during September and October.

On 19 October 2021, following public health advice, the Government agreed that the remaining aspects of the hospitality, entertainment and night-time economy sector could reopen only with the full range of protective measures in place and the wide and robust implementation of the EU Digital COVID Certificate (COVID-19 pass). This allowed for a careful move forward with Ireland's plan for the next phase of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 21 November 2021, following public health advice, the Government agreed a range of measures aimed at interrupting the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Included as part of these measures was a requirement for the closing times for all on-licensed premises, including hotel bars and hotel residents' bars, to move to midnight.

On 3 December, the Government re-introduced restrictions, including all nightclubs to close until 9 January 2022. Further restrictions were imposed on 20 December 2021, including an 8pm closing time for bars, restaurants, live events, cinemas and theatres until 30 January 2022.

On 22 February 2022, the Government agreed that the following measures would be removed with effect from 28 February 2022:

- legal requirements for mask wearing in all settings where currently regulated and
- specific protective measures in place in schools and early learning and school-aged childcare facilities (for example: pods, social distancing and staggering of breaks).

Since 1 April 2022, all COVID-19 restrictions have ended.

1.4 Impact on Local Government Finances

COVID-19 and the emergency measures implemented by the Government resulted in unplanned expenditure and a reduction over various income sources within the local government sector. This in turn had an effect on the cash flows within local authorities.

The Government's introduction of schemes such as the Rates Waiver Scheme, and its continuation for 2021 and into 2022 when some business sectors were unable to reopen fully, provided the necessary financial support for local authorities and businesses.

1.5 Scope of this report

This overview report collates information on the Rates Waiver Schemes and the impact of COVID-19, which resulted in reduced income and increased expenditure in local authorities and the related Government supports provided to the sector.

The VFM Unit has previously completed, three separate reports on the COVID-19 pandemic;

- An Overview of the Restart Grants and Restart Grants Plus Scheme in local authorities (October 2021)
- An Overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Local Authorities (November 2021)
- A guide for Audit Committees on the impact of COVID-19 on the control environment in local authorities (June 2022).

1.6 Sources of information

The following information sources were used for the review;

- Local Government Circulars and Guidance
- Local Government Finance information
- Local Government Management Agency publications
- CCMA Heads of Finance working group - co-ordination of the data gathering exercise
- Acute Financial Matters Group reports
- Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) Overview Report for 2020
- 2019/2018/2017 Annual Financial Statements
- 2020/2021 Annual Budgets.

2. Support provided in 2020

2.1 Introduction

In March 2020, the potential impact on commercial rates income was analysed by local authorities. Exhibit 2 sets out this analysis by business category. It was expected, at this stage, that the COVID-19 restrictions would impact the commercial rates base in local authorities by approximately €260.6 million per quarter. As a result, the Rates Waiver Scheme announced by the Government was supported by an allocation of €260 million per quarter to the Local Government sector.

Exhibit 2: Estimated % Impact of COVID-19 by Category on Commercial Rates Warrant				
Business Category	Total Annual Commercial Rates 2020	% of Warrant	% of Warrant Impacted	% of Warrant not Impacted
Retail (Shops)	€335,314,461	20.1%	16.5%	3.6%
Industrial Uses	€430,511,530	25.9%	14.1%	11.8%
Office	€263,772,777	15.8%	12.6%	3.2%
Hospitality	€138,869,789	8.3%	8.2%	0.1%
Miscellaneous	€63,346,239	3.8%	2.7%	1.1%
Retail (Warehouse)	€40,013,893	2.4%	2.3%	0.1%
Leisure	€33,615,927	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Utility	€94,234,545	5.7%	1.7%	4.0%
Health	€28,287,201	1.7%	1.1%	0.6%
Fuel/Depot	€25,316,320	1.5%	0.9%	0.6%
Minerals	€10,559,647	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%
Central Valuation List	€200,461,733	12.0%	0.0%	12.0%
Total	€1,664,304,062	100%	62.6%	37.4%

Source: AFM Report No 32: Analysis of Rated properties impacted by COVID 19 Final - Dated 10th May 2020

In July 2020, the waiver was extended to the end of September 2020 and then later to the end of December 2020. The aim of this was to assist businesses to adjust to the reopening of society and to recover from the impact of the pandemic, whilst at the same time offering continued Government support for local authorities. A revised allocation of €300 million per quarter was announced with a total funding allocation increasing to €900 million.

In 2020, the total cost of the commercial rates waiver for the nine month period was €729 million. As this was lower than the funding allocation of €900 million the remaining funding was allocated to additional COVID-19 supports within local authorities.

Exhibit 3: Breakdown of the potential Rates Income and Business categories impacted in 2020 as estimated in April 2020		
Business Category	9 months Rates Income impacted	% of the category
Retail (Shops)	206,514,442	82
Industrial Uses	175,817,753	54
Office	158,301,091	80
Hospitality	103,454,825	99
Miscellaneous	33,429,806	70
Retail (Warehouse)	28,282,547	94
Leisure	25,211,945	100
Utility	20,208,774	29
Health	13,376,426	63
Fuel/Depot	11,369,688	60
Minerals	5,911,630	75
Total amount estimated for 9 month Rates Waiver Scheme	781,878,927	63%
Total Rates Waiver Scheme actually paid in 2020 net of refunds	728,996,713	

Source: AFM Report No 32: Analysis of Rated properties impacted by COVID-19 Final - Dated 10th May 2020

The above exhibit sets out an analysis, carried out in April 2020 by local authorities, of the estimated value of impacted rates income in the effected business categories for the 9 months to end of December 2020.

A 100% waiver was applied to all ratepayers automatically (excluding categories in 2.3 below), and an application process was not required. This tranche of the scheme supported 121,331 ratepayers. A full breakdown of the actual amount paid and the

number of rates accounts impacted in each local authority is set out in Appendix 2. Local authorities received an initial proportional allocation and were then required to submit claim forms to the Department for the remainder of the allocation.

Refunds were made by some local authorities to the Department (see Appendix 2) as some ratepayers returned the rates waiver to local authorities or, where following an end of year status review of the business, the rates waiver should not have been applied.

2.2 Accounting for the Rates Waiver Scheme in 2020

In the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for 2020, the cost of credits in lieu for eligible businesses under the Rates Waiver Scheme were disclosed in Appendix 1 under 'Payment of Subsidies and Grants' as part of the Operational expenses heading.

The income received by local authorities under the scheme was disclosed in Appendix 3 'Grants and Subsidies income' as part of the COVID-19 grant under 'Miscellaneous'. The full rates warrant accrued income for 2020 appeared in the Income and Expenditure account as normal. A note was included in the AFS in relation to this treatment.

As a result of the Rates Waiver Scheme applied in 2020, the methodology for calculating rates income collection differed in 2020 compared to prior years. The amounts waived were shown in the 'Waived/Credits' column in Appendix 7 of local authorities AFS for 2020. This has resulted in a corresponding reduction in the total for collection, which also has the effect of reducing the collection yield.

For prior year comparison purposes, if the income waived was included in the collected column rather than the Waived/Credits column, the collection yield would be higher and in some cases nearly 20% higher and this has been highlighted in a footnote to Appendix 7 in the AFS.

In a follow up to the rates waiver customers received in 2020, under 'Circular Fin 02/2021', it was noted that a number of rates customers, who were entitled to and received a rates waiver, continued to pay their rates in 2020. Due to timing issues, these rate payments were not all refunded to customers and this has led to substantial credits on local authority customer rates accounts which was having a material impact both on the closing debtor balance and the rates collection percentage at year end.

The Department agreed, following consultation with the sector, that on a once off basis given the materiality of the amounts involved, any customer who had a credit balance as a result of the rates waiver should have this credit treated as deferred income in 2020 for offset against the rates 2021 demand.

2.3 Excluded Businesses under the Rates Waiver Scheme

The following business categories were excluded from the scheme and were not eligible for the automatic waiver:

1. Public Service
2. Global Utility Networks on the Central Valuation List
3. Individual Office Premises with an annual rates bill of €100k or greater in 2020
4. Individual Industrial Premises with an annual rates bill of €100k or greater in 2020
5. Supermarkets greater than 500m² (Categories Supermarket 2 and Supermarket 3)
6. Data Centres
7. Incinerators
8. Landfill Sites
9. Network (Cable)/Network (Storm Water)/Network (Water)
10. Windfarms
11. Generating Stations
12. Banks/Building Societies
13. Pharmaceutical Manufacturing
14. Computer/Technology/Electronic manufacturing
15. Premises contracted to provide services related to the COVID-19 pandemic to/on behalf of the State, where the State is already compensating for rates as part of the contract between the occupier or service provider and the State.

However, given that some businesses within these categories may have been severely impacted they were able to engage with local authorities on a case by case basis to seek eligibility.

3. Support provided in 2021

3.1 Introduction

The Government introduced a new, more targeted commercial Rates Waiver Scheme for 2021. This new Rates Waiver Scheme modified the criteria and was a separate standalone waiver scheme from that which previously applied in 2020.

The scheme was initially for the first quarter of 2021 and later extended to the end of September 2021, with a funding allocation of €160 million per quarter. Over 70,000 businesses continued to receive support under the extended scheme. The total estimated cost of the Q1-Q3 Rates Waiver Scheme was originally calculated at €480 million, however the actual amount paid out under the scheme was €424 million.

The waiver was intended to continue supporting eligible businesses as they adjusted to the reopening of the economy and recovered from the impact of the pandemic. The waiver took the form of a credit in lieu of rates and the value was the equivalent of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2021 per quarter. Businesses did not have to apply for the waiver. Local authorities were required to apply a credit in lieu of rates to eligible classes and categories of occupied rateable properties.

3.2 Accounting for Rates Waiver Scheme for 2021

The accounting treatment of the Rates Waiver Scheme in 2021 was in line with 2020 as outlined in Section 2 (2.2) of this report.

3.3 Eligible Businesses under the Rates Waiver Scheme

The 2021 commercial Rates Waiver Scheme had narrower eligibility criteria compared to the previous scheme and applied to business categories most seriously affected by public health restrictions. The Rates Waiver Scheme for the first nine months of 2021 is detailed in 'Circulars Fin 01/2021, 05/2021 and 14/2021'.

Automatic eligibility applied to hospitality including hotels, pubs and restaurants, leisure and entertainment, personal services such as hairdressers and barbers, and various other sectors.

The credit in lieu of rates for the first nine months of 2021 applied to the following broad categories of businesses:

- Hospitality
- Leisure
- Miscellaneous Entertainment
- Non Essential Retail (Shops and Warehouse)
- Airports
- Essential Retail (excluding Large Supermarkets greater than 500m²)

- Health
- Service Stations
- Personal Care and
- Childcare.

Similar to 2020 ratepayers not automatically included in these categories could engage with local authorities on a case by case basis to demonstrate severe impact. This waiver ended on 30 September 2021 and was followed by a targeted waiver scheme for the final quarter, focussed on certain sectors that may have needed further support. This targeted scheme is set out below under section 3.4.

3.4 Targeted Rates Waiver Scheme for Quarter 4 of 2021

On 12 October a targeted commercial rates waiver to support certain sectors was agreed by Government, for the final quarter of 2021. This scheme differed to the scheme in place for the first three quarters of 2021. The Q4 waiver had a narrower focus and targeted certain sectors still impacted by restrictions on opening hours, capacity, or requirements to provide COVID-19 certificates etc. The extended waiver also took the form of a credit in lieu of rates. The terms and conditions relating to eligibility and administration of the extended waiver were those outlined in 'Circular Fin 20/2021 - Targeted Commercial Rates Waiver Final Quarter 2021'.

This separate Q4 waiver scheme was supported by an allocation of €62.3 million announced as part of Budget 2022. The broad categories of businesses the credit in lieu of rates applied to were as follows:

- Hospitality, including restaurants and cafes
- Leisure
- Miscellaneous entertainment
- Certain tourism related categories; and
- Airports.

There was no provision in the Q4 2021 targeted rates waiver scheme for appeals, or to demonstrate financial impact of COVID-19 or related restrictions. The support required for over 20,000 ratepayers was estimated to be €62.3 million, however, the actual amount paid for the period was €61.5 million. See breakdown by local authority in Appendix 3.

3.5 Targeted Rates Waiver Scheme for 2022

As COVID-19 restrictions continued for some business sectors in the first three months of 2022, the Government announced a further extension of the Q4 2021 waiver into the first quarter of 2022. This was set out in 'Circular Fin 24/2021' and was a continuation of the scheme outlined in 'Circular Fin 20/2021'. From 1 April 2022, commercial rates are payable to local authorities as usual.

A 100% waiver applied to eligible properties from 1 January to 31 March 2022. The value of the waiver was the equivalent value of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2022 and was estimated to be €62 million.

The payment to local authorities is yet to be finalised. Local authorities automatically applied this credit in lieu of commercial rates for the three month period to eligible businesses.

There was no provision in the Q1 2022 targeted rates waiver scheme for appeals, or to demonstrate financial impact of COVID-19 or related restrictions.

There was no overlap between the targeted Q4 2021 and Q1 2022 Rates Waiver Scheme and the nine month Rates Waiver Scheme detailed in 'Circulars Fin 01/2021, 05/2021 and 14/2021'.

3.6 Potential Ongoing Impact of COVID-19 on Commercial Rates

The rates waiver provided much needed support to ratepayers during the COVID-19 restrictions. Local authorities were also supported through the waiver as it enabled them to continue to provide key services to the locality. As the rates waiver ceased at the end of Q1 2022, local authorities have expressed concerns about potential long term impact of the pandemic on businesses and in turn the collection of commercial rates by the local authorities. The Acute Financial Matters (AFM) Sub Group of the CMMA Finance Committee have prepared a report (AFM Report No.40) to identify potential areas of concern in relation to the collection of commercial rates income for 2021. It highlights that two business categories (Industrial Units and Offices) were demonstrating a deterioration in collection levels. The report also notes that the supports provided (which were necessary) and deferred credits applied may in fact be masking the true impact of the pandemic on ratepayers and that only when these have fully exhausted will the true picture emerge.

4. Summary

The rates waiver was one of the largest business supports delivered through local authorities during the pandemic. It provided support to both commercial businesses and the local government sector as it allowed for businesses to reduce their operating costs while also enabling services to be maintained by local authorities.

The waiver was automatically applied to rate accounts (based on predetermined criteria) and did not require an application process. The total amount paid to local authorities for the schemes to the end of 2020 was €729 million, €485 million for the year ended 2021 and the estimate for Q1 2022 was €62 million. Therefore, the total cost of the commercial rate waiver schemes is almost €1.3 billion.

The final Rates Waiver Scheme finished at the end of Q1 2022. Local authorities have been monitoring the impact of the pandemic on the 2021 rates collection as set out in AFM 40. The long term impact post COVID-19 on the rates collection profile will need to continue to be monitored to ensure the local government sector can continue to achieve key service delivery requirements in the medium and long term.

Acknowledgement

In order to complete this overview of the Rates Waiver Schemes in Local Authorities, the LGAS Value for Money Unit appreciated the co-operation, support and advice from the following sections and personnel during the course of this review;

- Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, Local Government Finance Unit and personnel consulted
- The Local Government Management Association
- CCMA / Heads of Finance working group
- The local authorities - Finance sections
- Local Government Audit staff.

References

Sources

Department Circulars

Circulars 2022

- Circular Fin 03/2022: “Accounting Treatment in relation to Rates Revaluation”
- Circular Fin 02/2022: “Accounting Treatment in relation to Rates Collection 2021”

Circulars 2021

- Circular Fin 24/2021: “Targeted Commercial Rates Waiver First Quarter 2022”
- Circular Fin 20/2021: “Targeted Commercial Rates Waiver Final Quarter 2021”
- Circular Fin 14/2021: “Extension of Commercial Rates Waiver to Third Quarter 2021”
- Circular Fin 05/2021: “Extension of Commercial Rates Waiver to Second Quarter 2021”
- Circular Fin 03/2021: “Preparation and Submission of Annual Financial Statement (AFS) 2020 and Other Accounting Matters”
- Circular Fin 02/2021: “Accounting Treatment in relation to Rates Collection 2020”
- Circular Fin 01/2021: “Commercial Rates Waiver for First Quarter 2021”

Circulars 2020

- Circular Fin 16/2020: “Three Month Extension of Waiver of Commercial Rates”
- Circular Fin 13/2020: “Accounting Treatment in relation to the Six Month Waiver of Commercial Rates (Circular Fin 11/2020)”
- Circular Fin 11/2020: “Six Month Waiver of Commercial Rates”
- Circular Fin 06/2020: “Commercial rates alleviation measures relating to COVID-19 restrictions”
- Circular Fin 04/2020: “Arrangements relating to commercial rates and COVID-19”

CCMA Working Groups - Acute Financial Matters Group

COVID-19 related reports including Rates Waiver Scheme

- AFM Report No.31: Indicative figures calculating the impact of COVID-19 on 2020 Commercial Rates
- AFM Report No.31A: Indicative figures calculating the impact of COVID-19 on 2020 Commercial Rates – Update Report No. 1
- AFM Report No.32: Analysis of Rated Properties Impacted by COVID-19
- AFM Report No.36: Analysis of 2020 Commercial Rates Related to Hospitality Industries Estimated Cost of COVID-19 Rates Waiver by Local Authority
- AFM Report No.37: Commercial Rates Valuations – New Listings/Lost Income 2020 Update
- AFM Report No.38: Analysis of Local Government Goods & Services Income & Expenditure impacted by COVID-19 – December Update
- AFM Report No.39: Local Government Expenditure and Goods & Services Income and impacted by COVID-19 in 2021
- AFM Report No.40: Monitoring & Assessment of Potential Ongoing Impact of COVID-19 on 2021 Commercial Rates

Appendices

- Appendix 1 COVID-19 Timeline for 2020 and 2021 and to date
- Appendix 2 Rates Waiver Scheme payments for 2020
- Appendix 3 Rates Waiver Scheme payments for 2021

Appendix 1

COVID-19 Timeline for 2020, 2021 and to date

Timeline	Key COVID-19 events or public health measures 2020 and 2021
29 February 2020	First case of COVID-19 in Ireland announced.
15 March 2020	All pubs were asked to close until 29 March.
20 March 2020	Government announced an agreement with local authorities for ratepayers to defer rate payments for a three month period.
2 May 2020	Roadmap for reopening society and business was launched. Under this roadmap, Government announced a three month commercial rates waiver, back dated to 27 March at a cost of €260 million.
May - July 2020	The publication of local authority plans to support local businesses and stimulate economic growth.
23 July 2020	As part of the Stimulus Plan, Government announced an extension of the commercial rates waiver for a further three months, with extended eligibility criteria, at a cost of €300 million per quarter.
July - September 2020	Under the Government's July Stimulus Fund, local authorities received extra funding to aid economic recovery, targeted at those most impacted by COVID-19.
15 September 2020	The Government published its framework for restrictive measures, 'Resilience and Recovery 2020–2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19'. The strategy was to be reviewed in six to nine months.
13 October 2020	In Budget 2021, the Government extended the commercial rates waiver for a further three months meaning the waiver would now apply for nine months from 27 March 2020, with a total funding allocation of €900 million.
21 October 2020	Ireland placed under Level 5 restrictions for six weeks.
1 December 2020	The country was moved to Level 3 restrictions with modifications.

Timeline	Key COVID-19 events or public health measures 2020 and 2021
24 December 2020	Level 5 restrictions were reintroduced nationally until 31 January 2021 at the earliest.
23 February 2021	The Government published its new revised 'Plan for Living with COVID-19', which included the phased reopening of schools and childcare and the extension of the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme.
29 April 2021	The Government announced a reopening plan on a three week phased basis over May and June.
28 May 2021	The Government announced further easing of restrictions for June, July and August with the planned reopening of indoor dining and drinking in restaurants and pubs on 5 July.
29 June 2021	Due to the rapidly increasing incidence of the Delta variant, the Government announced that the planned reopening of indoor dining and drinking in restaurants and pubs on 5 July would be delayed until at least 19 July when a system to verify vaccination or immunity would be implemented, while 50 guests would be permitted to attend wedding celebrations as an exception from July.
19 July 2021	With the introduction of the EU Digital COVID Certificate, travel restrictions to the EU were lifted for all vaccinated passengers and this included the UK under the Common Travel Area (CTA).
26 July 2021	Despite the increasing cases, the Government agreed that indoor dining in pubs and restaurants could resume on Monday 26 July for fully vaccinated and COVID-19 recovered people. The 'Health and Criminal Justice (Covid-19) (Amendment) (No 2) Act 2021' was enacted underpinning new guidelines into law extending the powers under previous legislation until March 2022.
31 August 2021	The Government published its plan for easing of restrictions under 'Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting' plan. This included a

Timeline	Key COVID-19 events or public health measures 2020 and 2021
	plan for phased easing of restrictions during September and October.
22 October 2021	<p>The Government announced that Ireland could proceed with a further easing of restrictions, but with mask-wearing and social distancing still in place. This allowed nightclubs to reopen, but only with “protective measures” in place. This included COVID-19 certificates, contact tracing, and facemask wearing except when eating, drinking and dancing. COVID-19 certificates would still be required for indoor hospitality and indoor events. Table service only would continue in pubs and restaurants, as would the use of contact tracing data. Under the rules, there must be a maximum of 10 adults permitted per table and a maximum of 15 including children.</p>

Source: www.gov.ie and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)

Appendix 2 Rates Waiver Scheme Payments for 2020

City and County Councils	No. of Rates Accounts impacted	Actual Amount Paid under the Rates Waiver Scheme	Refunds made under the 2020 Rates Waiver Scheme	Rates Waiver Scheme paid net of refunds	Overall % of Rates Warrant Impacted by COVID-19
	No.	€	€	€	%
Carlow County Council	1,945	7,666,442	46,221	7,620,221	65
Cavan County Council	1,661	5,968,335		5,968,335	52
Clare County Council	3,321	13,779,572		13,779,572	77
Cork City Council	8,166	54,540,035		54,540,035	77
Cork County Council	9,094	34,727,285		34,727,285	74
Donegal County Council	4,155	14,987,401	15,218	14,972,183	56
Dublin City Council	18,775	160,435,140	1,095,036	159,340,104	72
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	4,914	44,574,282	10,196	44,564,086	75
Fingal County Council	5,894	81,035,615		81,035,615	61
Galway City Council	3,478	21,149,487		21,149,487	80
Galway County Council	3,508	10,491,034	218,344	10,272,690	53
Kerry County Council	4,231	18,469,939	231,422	18,238,517	60
Kildare County Council	4,001	22,282,065	263,971	22,018,094	55
Kilkenny County Council	2,268	8,641,953		8,641,953	58
Laois County Council	1,394	5,987,788	109,173	5,878,615	53
Leitrim County Council	591	2,176,750	443,149	1,733,601	46
Limerick City & County Council	4,518	25,016,190	132,185	24,884,005	58
Longford County Council	945	4,003,797		4,003,797	55
Louth County Council	3,237	19,432,674		19,432,674	69
Mayo County Council	3,330	13,090,158		13,090,158	56
Meath County Council	3,562	18,629,990	6,918	18,623,072	57
Monaghan County Council	1,934	6,137,862		6,137,862	60
Offaly County Council	1,674	4,668,816		4,668,816	50
Roscommon County Council	1,421	4,014,759		4,014,759	46
Sligo County Council	1,503	5,469,375		5,469,375	61
South Dublin County Council	6,740	59,229,298		59,229,298	60
Tipperary County Council	2,547	12,746,687	253,592	12,493,095	49
Waterford City & County Council	3,563	14,920,084		14,920,084	53
Westmeath County Council	2,007	8,221,948		8,221,948	70
Wexford County Council	3,434	15,997,679		15,997,679	53
Wicklow County Council	3,520	13,329,698		13,329,698	57
Total	121,331	731,822,138	2,825,425	728,996,713	63

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)

Appendix 3 Rates Waiver Scheme Payments for 2021

City and County Councils	No. of Rates Accounts impacted Jan to Sept 2021	No of Rates Accounts impacted Oct to Dec 2021	Actual Amount Paid to end Sept 2021	Actual Amount Paid to end Dec 2021	Additional Subsequent Amount Paid for 2021 Waiver	Subsequent Refund Received for 2021 Waiver	Total Amount Paid in 2021
	No.	No.	€	€	€	€	€
Carlow County Council	961	279	4,312,905	487,808			4,800,713
Cavan County Council	1,197	328	3,494,233	520,323			4,014,556
Clare County Council	2,055	773	9,333,501	2,152,174		3,682	11,481,993
Cork City Council	4,082	1,139	31,153,992	4,416,593			35,570,585
Cork County Council	5,123	1,640	16,753,043	2,332,473	17,579		19,103,095
Donegal County Council	2,898	998	10,353,870	1,616,217		1,654	11,968,433
Dublin City Council	9,169	2,579	86,996,105	13,412,184	38,114		100,446,403
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	2,598	476	27,102,821	2,472,696	199,915		29,775,432
Fingal County Council	2,576	666	53,083,048	10,445,641			63,528,689
Galway City Council	2,059	573	15,086,014	2,276,731			17,362,745
Galway County Council	2,381	671	6,335,362	926,288			7,261,650
Kerry County Council	3,003	1,163	14,214,960	2,571,822		108,504	16,678,278
Kildare County Council	2,455	609	13,668,718	1,435,945			15,104,663
Kilkenny County Council	1,307	430	5,265,448	749,973			6,015,421
Laois County Council	990	264	3,345,838	435,201			3,781,039
Leitrim County Council	517	196	1,135,997	191,952		1,505	1,326,444
Limerick City & County Council	3,023	1,112	14,377,150	1,680,546		56,374	16,001,322
Longford County Council	626	158	2,616,526	464,418			3,080,944
Louth County Council	2,065	442	9,311,473	1,158,093	46,867		10,516,433
Mayo County Council	2,391	711	8,805,298	1,225,756			10,031,054
Meath County Council	2,101	601	8,847,027	1,195,419			10,042,446
Monaghan County Council	963	249	3,331,203	365,812			3,697,015
Offaly County Council	1,060	271	2,838,832	308,836			3,147,668
Roscommon County Council	928	271	2,716,034	306,752			3,022,786
Sligo County Council	990	329	3,755,262	559,733			4,314,995
South Dublin County Council	2,263	435	25,095,010	2,662,534		70,148	27,687,396
Tipperary County Council	2,608	699	6,833,881	835,251			7,669,132
Waterford City & County Council	2,027	567	9,244,583	1,005,702			10,250,285
Westmeath County Council	1,649	413	6,040,627	572,396			6,613,023
Wexford County Council	2,389	633	10,826,895	1,540,470			12,367,365
Wicklow County Council	1,856	463	7,523,564	1,101,362	10,647		8,635,573
Total	70,310	20,138	423,799,220	61,427,101	313,122	241,867	485,297,576

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)

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