

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING MEETING
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

RECORD OF DECISION

An Individual Executive Decision Making meeting was held on 10 December 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors C Hobson (Chair)

OFFICIALS: S Blood , C Lunn, J McNally and J Savage

20/7 **ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which sought approval for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Discretionary Scheme as part of the overall Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSRG) Funds.

The introduction of a discretionary policy (designed around the framework provided by Central Government recommended guidelines) required Member approval.

The report outlined that funding had been provided by Central Government and Middlesbrough would receive a one off payment of circa £2.8m.

The scheme was expected to cover financial years 20/21 and 20/22 and was subject to fund availability.

The scheme is designed initially to provide support for businesses covering the lockdown period that were not covered by the Open and Closed schemes and yet were severely impacted.

The Council realises that businesses are relying on the Christmas trade and as such the position for a number of businesses may change, on that basis this scheme will be reviewed in the New Year to understand where additional support is required and consider wider support to help recovery.

Available funding during the lifetime of the scheme has been provisionally allocated on an equal split between direct grant support and aiding longer-term recovery

The following will be prioritised:

- Retail hospitality and leisure businesses in shared spaces where they are not the liable party for rates (e.g. beauty business renting space in a salon)
- Retail hospitality and leisure businesses that could open, however are unable due to main operating venue closure (e.g. café in a museum or sports centre)
- concessionary stall holders in retail centres
- market traders with regular pitches in Middlesbrough
- businesses that supply retail, hospitality and leisure sectors
- Sole traders/self employed without a business rates liability but with fixed costs, specific quantifiable business only related overheads.

The report outlined that funding was limited and as such it is expected that businesses will have taken full advantage of other existing national support measures prior to applying for this support.

Grants will be in line with previous LRSRG guidelines. Central Government has provided Local Authorities with guidance outlining the type of business that they could consider to be a priority in terms of allocating grant payments.

Evidence of a significant fall in income to support any application will be required. Businesses must be established and trading prior to local restrictions were put in place

The scheme will be reviewed after the New Year to identify spend and suitability of the scheme and to determine that it is reaching those businesses that are in most need.

An online application process will be made available on the Council website to invite applications from eligible businesses. The grant will be promoted as appropriate through a range of relevant platforms including the Council's social media channels, website, press and business networks.

Options

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

Central Government are providing funding to all Councils with an expectation that this funding will be distributed in line with government guidance and on that basis no other options have been considered.

ORDERED

1. **That the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Discretionary Scheme in response to the business support announcement by Central Government on 22 October be approved. The scheme provides essential financial support to businesses who have not been able to access support from the Local Restrictions Support Grant.**
2. **That the Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to approve any future modifications to the scheme/policy.**

REASON

The report is being supported by the following reason:

Local Authorities are being requested to provide financial support to local businesses.

The decision will come into force with immediate effect and is not subject to scrutiny call-in procedures.