

Report of:	<i>Director of Finance – Ian Wright Executive Member for Finance & Governance – Councillor Chris Hobson</i>
-------------------	---

Submitted to:	<i>Individual Executive Meeting on 10 December 2020</i>
----------------------	---

Subject:	<i>Additional Restrictions Grant</i>
-----------------	--------------------------------------

Summary

Proposed decision(s)
<p>The Executive Member for Finance & Governance approves the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Discretionary Scheme in response to the business support announcement by Central Government on 22 October. The scheme provides essential financial support to businesses who have not been able to access support from the Local Restrictions Support Grant. • That the Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to approve any future modifications required to the scheme/policy.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
<i>Decision</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
<i>Supporting businesses and sole traders in response to recent Central Government COVID-19 initiatives.</i>	<i>Support to Middlesbrough's local economy</i>	<i>It is important to ensure businesses in Middlesbrough receive the support intended by Central Government through COVID-19 initiatives.</i>

Ward(s) affected
<i>All wards are potentially affected</i>

What is the purpose of this report?

1. This report seeks approval for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Discretionary Scheme as part of the overall Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSRG) Funds

Why does this report require a Member decision?

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

Report Background

3. Funding has been provided by Central Government. Middlesbrough will receive a one off payment of circa £2.8m.
4. The scheme is expected to cover financial years 20/21 and 20/22 and is subject to fund availability.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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
8. 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
9. Funding is 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.
10. Grants will be in line with previous LRSRG guidelines.
11. 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

12. Evidence of a significant fall in income to support any application will be required.
13. Businesses must be established and trading prior to local restrictions were put in place
14. 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.
15. 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.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

The Executive Member for Finance & Governance approves the following:-

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

Why is this being recommended?

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

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

19. 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.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

20. There are no legal implications regarding this report.

Financial

21. The cost of the scheme has been provided for by funding made available from Central Government. Claims can only be paid against the funding allocation. Once the funds have been committed/spent, there will be no further support provided.

Policy Framework

22. N/A

Equality and Diversity

23. N/A

Risk

24. There is no financial risk to the Council as all discretionary payments will be funded by support provided by Central Government.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

25. That the Executive for Finance and Governance agrees the Additional Restrictions Grant Discretionary Scheme.

Appendices

Middlesbrough Council Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Policy

Background papers

N/A

Contact: **Janette Savage, Head of Revenues and Benefits.**

Email: Janette_savage@middlesbrough.gov.uk.