

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING MEETING

EXECUTIVE MEMBER - THE MAYOR

RECORD OF DECISION

An Individual Executive Decision Making meeting was held on 3 June 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors Mayor A Preston (Chair)

OFFICIALS: S Blood, J Bromiley, S Bonner, C Lunn, K Parkes, P Shout, J Savage and N Younis

19/4 **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS FUND POLICY**

The Strategic Director for Finance, Governance and Support submitted a report to seek approval for the Discretionary Grants Fund Policy.

The report needed approval as the introduction of a discretionary policy to administer the discretionary grants solution required member approval.

The report outlined that on 1 May 2020, Central Government announced that funds would be made available to

the Council to support small businesses which have not received any support under Central Government COVID-19 initiatives and these funds would be allocated in line with local Discretionary Grant Fund policies.

Following the announcement on 1 May 2020, it was anticipated that Middlesbrough Council would be allocated £1.1m which was to be used to support the discretionary grant fund payments in respect of 2020-2021.

Central Government had provided local authorities with guidance outlining the type of business that they considered to be a priority in terms of allocating grant payments and these were:-

- Small businesses in shared offices/flexible workspaces
- Regular market traders with fixed building costs
- Bed and Breakfasts paying Council Tax
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief who would otherwise have been eligible for small business rates relief

Each of the businesses that applied would need to demonstrate that they had relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs and had suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis. The intention was that such businesses would occupy a property or part of a property with a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000.

The local authority was able to exercise local knowledge to determine which cases fall within the criteria outlined at point 5 of the report. From information gathered so far it was anticipated that approx. 150 businesses could fall within the priority group however, this could be more or less. As some of the business were not held within the rating system it was difficult to determine eligibility therefore the scheme would operate in line with the policy on a 'first come first served basis' due to the limited funding available.

It was anticipated that most if not all of the £1.1m would be spent against this priority group.

Should that not be the case, an amendment to the discretionary policy - 'Phase Two' would be necessary to extend the funding to 'other' businesses, which Middlesbrough would wish to support/consider.

The Discretionary Grant Fund Policy was attached to this report for consideration.

Options

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

Central Government had provided funding to all Councils with an expectation that this funding would be distributed in line with government guidelines and on that basis, no other decisions had been considered.

ORDERED

That the Mayor approves the Discretionary Grants Fund Policy in response to the announcement by Central Government on 1 May 2020 of additional funding for small businesses as a consequence of COVID-19 which were not previously eligible for a business grant.

REASON

Central Government was providing funding and guidance with an expectation that Local Authorities would provide financial support to local businesses. This would mean some businesses which did not qualify for a business grant may now do so now under the discretionary scheme.

19/5 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The resolution to exclude the press and the public was agreed.

19/6 **CONFIDENTIAL - TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

The Executive Director of Growth and Place submitted a report for approval in respect to Town Centre Development.

ORDERED

That the report be approved.

The decision (agenda item 1) will come into force with immediate effect and is not subject to scrutiny call-in procedures. The decision (agenda item 3) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.