

Single Member Cabinet Decision

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference

E3343

Rule 4 and Rule 16 - COVID-19 Business Support Grants: Additional Restrictions Grant Policy (January 2022)

Decision maker/s	Cllr Samuel, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources
The Issue	<p>In December 2021 the Government announced the funding for two further grants. The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant was mandated with strict eligibility criteria, and a top up to the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). Guidance was published for both grants on the 30th December 2021.</p> <p>Local authorities were asked to further develop local discretionary criteria for the payment of the ARG</p> <p>This report requests approval of a revised ARG Policy and criteria for local businesses eligibility and grant payment levels</p>
Decision Date	On or after 24th January 2022
The decision	<p>The Cabinet Member agrees that</p> <p>Approval is given for the Additional Restrictions Grant revised policy as set out in Annex 1</p> <p>To delegate the application of the grant fund to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, the CX, and the Monitoring Officer to ensure the grant is distributed within the £366k ARG funding allocation, with fair distribution across the eligible business groups</p> <p><i>This decision is to be made under part 4C Rule 4 and Part 4B Rule 16 of the council's constitution as an urgent decision. This matter is urgent because the council needs to implement the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme at pace to allow the grant application process to be opened as soon as possible. This will allow support to businesses impacted by the rise in case numbers of the Omicron Covid 19 variant to be provided as quickly as possible.</i></p>
Rationale for decision	The increase in case numbers of the Omicron variant the Government introduced Plan B. In order to help businesses, the government also announced on the 21 st December two new grants

	<p>were to be awarded to eligible business: -</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Additional Restrictions Grant (top up)</p> <p>Local Authorities have again been asked to administer and pay the grants. The guidance for these grants was published on the 30th December with strict eligibility criteria for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant. Local authorities have again been asked to develop their own ARG policies and have discretion on who and how much to pay.</p> <p>The Council has been given £3.06m for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant and £366k for the ARG to distribute to local businesses.</p> <p>All grants must be applied for by the 28th February 2022 and the last payment made by 31st March 2022.</p> <p>Previously the West of England unitary authorities (Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council) and North Somerset Council developed a regional policy in the first round of the ARG to provide some consistency in the additional support available to businesses across the wider region</p> <p>The council proposes to revise this ARG joint policy, albeit with reduced rates payable due to the level of funding made available to Local Government. The policy indicates a maximum value “up to” for each grant but the actual amount of each grant cannot be determined until the number of eligible applications received is matched against the funding available</p>
<p>Financial and budget implications</p>	<p>The Council’s confirmed ARG top up allocation is £366k. There is also an unallocated balance of £199k from the previous round of ARG bringing the total funding available to £565k.</p> <p>This funding must be administered, and all payments made by the local authority by 31st March 2022. All funding must be accounted for, monitored and financial returns completed to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)</p>
<p>Issues considered</p>	<p>Customer Focus; Sustainability; Property; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations</p>
<p>Consultation undertaken</p>	<p>Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer</p>
<p>How consultation was carried out</p>	<p>By email</p>
<p>Other options considered</p>	<p>Various policy options and grant levels were considered across the eligible businesses, a limit on individual grants of up to £2,000 is proposed to enable the Council to support as many businesses as possible within the funding available.</p>

Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision:	
Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	

Name and Signature of Decision Maker/s	Councillor Richard Samuel
Date of Signature	24 th January 2022

This decision is not subject to Call in