



URGENT DELEGATED DECISION

Date: 30 March 2021

Request to the Head of Paid Service to exercise delegated authority as per Responsibility of Functions in Part IV, page 28 of the Constitution.

“to determine any matter within the referred or delegated powers and duties of a committee / sub committee / board / working group which is so urgent that a decision must be made before the next meeting of that committee / sub-committee / board / working group is due to be held.”

Limits on delegation: -

- Before making a decision using this delegated power, the Head of Paid Service shall consult with and take cognisance of the views of the Chairman (or in his absence the VC) of the relevant Committee / Sub-Committee etc; and
- Any decision taken by the Head of Paid Service under this delegated power shall be reported to Members within five working days of the decision taken.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic we have also committed to consult with the Leader of the Opposition on such decisions

Usual Decision Maker: -

This decision would have been taken by Prosperous Communities Committee / Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

This decision needs to be made and implementation commence, before these Committees are due to meet.

The decision is in response to changing Governance guidance and announcements relating to the third national lockdown and continued economic support for those businesses affected.

Call-in does not apply.

Background

The background to this decision is as detailed in the report titled **“Business Support Grant Update March 2021”** which is appended to this decision.

Reason for Urgency and Rationale for use of urgent Delegated Decision

In light of the current COVID 19 situation, and in response to changing Governance announcements and packages to support businesses affected by the second COVID-19 Lockdown measures.

Following the Government's announcement on 31st October 2020 introducing new national restrictions from 5th November to 2nd December 2020, certain businesses and venues were required to close or restrict how they provide goods and services for this period.

Government has provided West Lindsey District Council with two funding allocations to deliver support to businesses affected by the national restrictions.

Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) allocation of £1,329,516 - calculated by Government based on an assessment of the number of eligible hereditaments taken from the business rates system, of those businesses forced to close by the national restrictions. Once this amount is spent a further 10% will be available should it be required.

Additional Restrictions Grant - single allocation based on £20 per head of population (ONS 2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates). The allocation for West Lindsey was £1,913,340. This fund must be utilised by Local Authorities to run a discretionary grant scheme and must cover the period 20/21 and 21/22 for support through any future lockdown events.

As the additional restrictions grant is a discretionary scheme Local Authorities must develop a policy for utilising this grant fund.

Decisions have previously been taken allowing the Launch of the Closed Business Support Grant on 12 November and the Open and Impacted Business Grant Scheme on 26 November 2020.

Further uses from the Additional Restrictions Grant, namely the introduction of Lockdown Payment Grant, payable to closed non-rated businesses and a Hospitality/Tourism Top Up Grant Scheme were approved in January 2021.

Of the £2,763,155 Additional Restrictions Grant awarded, to date we have spent £1,747,678.

A further urgent decision is required to seek to establish further business support programmes by utilising the remaining AGR Fund to deliver: -

- Support to non-rated business with a Restart Grant – matching the mandatory provisions for business in the rating system (as we have done with each previous round of grants). Estimated cost £200,000.
- Business Revival Grant Scheme – based on the successful ERDF Kickstart Fund, this is a flexible 100% funded intervention to a maximum of £5,000 per business to support business revival and growth. Proposed allocation £500,000.
- Market Traders Grant Scheme – A priority group in the ARG guidance. Estimated cost £50,000.

- Business Advisor contract extension – Successful first 6 months engaging with over 185 businesses. Contract extension to 31st March 22 at cost of £42,000.
- Visitor Economy Digital Campaign - development of a Visitor Economy (including retail) Digital Scheme to support this priority sector whilst they are reopening and beyond. Estimated cost £100,000.
- Top up to non-essential retail businesses who have been forced to close and will continue to face challenging circumstances with ongoing covid-19 regulations and safety measures. Estimated cost £100,000.

The full rationale for the decision, and the criteria for each stream of funding is contained within the report which is appended.

Financial Detail and Implications

FIN/DD/16/21

Full financial details and implications are contained within the appended report.

Notes of Consultation Relevant to the Decision

Members were supportive of all the additional funding proposals and welcomed how ARG funding was being applied to ensure that those business “missed” by Mandatory support or offered less mandatory support by the Government were effected to as less a degree as possible.

There was some discussion around the claim dates for Market Trader Grants and concern how those trading at Christmas only may get an unfair advantage.

The process proposed was considered the fairest and most simple and whilst acknowledging concerns, Members were excepting of the reasoning.

Management Team would continue receive weekly progress reports on the delivery of the fund.

Decision

- 1) The use of the Additional Restrictions Grant to pay eligible non-rated businesses a Restart Grant be approved.
- 2) The use of the Additional Restrictions Grant to fund:
 - Business Revival Grant Scheme.
 - Market Traders Grant Scheme
 - Business Advisor contract extension
 - Visitor Economy Digital Campaign
 - Top up to non-essential retail businesses; be approved.

3) Members to receive progress reports on the delivery of the fund through the weekly newsletter.



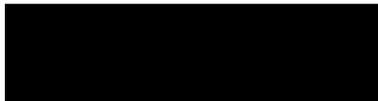
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Ian Knowles
Head of Paid Service

As the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee I have been fully consulted on this matter



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Anne Welburn
Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources

As the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee and Leader of the Council I have been fully consulted on this matter



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Owen Bierley
Leader of the Council / Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee

As the Leader of the Opposition I have been fully consulted on this matter



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Trevor Young
Leader of the Opposition.

Date all Members were notified of the decision: 12 April 2021