



URGENT DELEGATED DECISION

Date: 16 November 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 being taken.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic we have also committed to consult with the Leader of the Opposition on such decisions.*

** The Leader of the Opposition was unavailable for the meeting, but was provided with all relevant documentation*

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, a requirement to spend all funding before March 2022 and in recognition of where additional support should be targeted to ensure the continued support for those business still being effected by the Pandemic.

Call-in does not apply.

Background

The background to this decision is as detailed in the report titled “**Additional Restrictions Grant Proposal – November 2021** ” which is appended to this decision.

Reason for Urgency and Rationale for use of urgent Delegated Decision

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic and the impact on business due to national lockdowns the Discretionary/Additional Restrictions Grant funding was awarded from the government to support businesses severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions when most needed. Funding was first made available in Financial Year 2020/2021 and was permitted for use across Financial Years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

The report outlined the grants received to date and the initiatives and projects the money had been used to support.

There was a requirement to spend all grant monies by 31 March 2022. The Business Revival Grant launched in April 2021, had proved popular and there were a high number of businesses still remaining on the reserve list.

A further urgent decision was required to seek approval to allocate remaining ARG funds to The Business Revival Grant in order to support as many additional businesses as soon as possible, ensuring all monies were spent prior to the deadline.

It was proposed any ARG remaining following that be allocated to Visitor Economy Digital Support Campaign, as opposed to it being returned to Government.

The full rationale for the decision, the number of business supported to-date, and the number of potential businesses impacted are contained within the report which is appended.

Financial Detail and Implications

Financial : DD/11/22/JA

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

Remaining unallocated ARG grant currently stands at £76,069 and must be spent before the end of March 2022, otherwise will have to be repaid.

Notes of Consultation Relevant to the Decision

Members were re-appraised of the Visitor Economy Digital Support Campaign, which had been approved by urgent delegated decision on 20 March 2021.

It was not anticipated significant levels of ARG funding would remain if approval was given to increase the funding allocated to the Business Grant Revival Scheme as proposed, given the number of business on the reserve list and the remaining funding available being at under £80k.

It was not anticipated the remaining funding would satisfy the current interest registered for the Scheme.

Members sought assurance that Officers were confident as many eligible business as possible had been made aware of the grants available, and in response were provided with the details of the various outlets and mediums by which the information had been promoted.


The awarding of grants and the work of the specialist engaged had seen West Lindsey's business intelligence increase and business engagement was considerably greater than pre pandemic.

It was also suggested that this intelligence should be used to promote the raft and variety of businesses across the District to tourists and visitors. It may be opportune to also refresh the "think local campaign".

All Members present indicated their support for allocating the remaining funding as proposed.

Decision

- 1) That the majority of the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant fund, minus a small contingency be allocated to the Business Revival Grant Scheme.
- 2) any remaining Additional Restrictions Grant Fund at the end of March 2022 be added to the Visitor Digital Support Scheme.


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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

Date all Members were notified of the decision: 24 November



**Head of Paid Service
Urgent Delegated Decision**

11/11/21

Subject: Additional Restrictions Grant Proposal – November 21

Report by:

Sally Grindrod-Smith
Assistant Director Planning and Regeneration

Contact Officer:

Wendy Osgodby
Senior Economic Growth Officer
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Purpose / Summary:

To seek approval to use the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant allocation for the Business Revival Grant Scheme.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the majority of the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant fund be allocated to the Business Revival Grant Scheme.
2. That any remaining Additional Restrictions Grant Fund at the end of March 2022 be added to the Visitor Digital Support Scheme.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of grants to eligible businesses. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides all local authorities with the discretion to make these payments.

(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO

Financial : DD/11/22/JA

Remaining unallocated ARG grant currently stands at £76,069 and must be spent before the end of March 2022, otherwise will have to be repaid.

Report proposing to utilise this remaining grant allocation towards the ongoing Business Revival scheme with any remaining monies unspent in March 2022 to be paid towards the Visitor Digital Support Scheme.

Staffing : (N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref **New Burdens funding has been utilised to fund a Finance and Monitoring Officer to support the delivery of business grants and the ongoing monitoring. This funding comes to an end in August and we are working to understand any opportunities to extend this role to support the continued monitoring requirements.**

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Data Protection Implications: The management of sensitive data through this process has been considered through the application process. Data will not be used for purposes other than the delivery of this grant and the application form addresses our data protection policy.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None

Health Implications:

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

Restart Guidance for Local Authorities March 2021
Business Support Package for January 2021 Lockdown
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Guidance for Local Authorities (November 2020)
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum FAQ's
Additional Restrictions Grant FAQ's
Guidance documents can be found at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities>

Risk Assessment :

There is a risk that fraudulent claims are submitted.
Mitigations are in place through due diligence of claims processing, submission of relevant documentation, processing all company and charities through the Governments Spotlight system and post payment assurance of bank account details.
There is a risk that the wrong grant and or amounts are issued. This is mitigated by a 2 stage determination process and a 2 stage process and authorisation procedure.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Background

1.1 Since March 2020, West Lindsey District Council has been awarded £4,344,399 in discretionary grants.

Discretionary Grant (March 2020)	£927,490
ARG 2nd November – 31st March	£1,913,340
ARG Business Top up -	£849,815
ARG Business Top up -	£653,754

1.2 The Discretionary/Additional Restrictions Grant funding was awarded from the government to support businesses severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions when most needed. Funding was first made available in Financial Year 2020/2021 and can be used across Financial Years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

To date we have supported the following initiatives:

Name of Grant	Amount Allocated	Grant Awards	Total Paid
Discretionary Grant (March 2020)	£927,490	109	£927,490
ARG 2nd November – 31st March	£1,913,340	580	£534,743
ARG Business TOP UP	£849,815	51	£137,000
ARG Open and impacted - 2 nd Nov - 31 st March		473	£372,194
ARG Hospitality top up		233	£751,500
ARG Animal Boarding Grant		25	£183,840
ARG Restart		55	£104,577
ARG Restart Sector 1 TOPUP		211	£273,051
ARG Impact – Pubs and Event	£653,754	86	£67,935
ARG Revival (budget £700,000) inc Admin costs		144	£648,520
ARG Specialist Retail Support Oct-March 2022			£60,000
ARG Visit Lincoln			£6,000
Total	£4,344,399	1,967	£4,066,850

The following projects have been approved and are in progress:

Name of Grant	ARG funding available	Amount allocated
Market Traders Grant	£277,549	£50,000
Visitor Economy Digital Campaign		£100,000
Completion of Business Revival Grant		£51,480
Total	£277,549	£201,480
Remaining unallocated budget to date		£76,069

2. Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that we allocate the remaining budget minus a small contingency pot to the Business Revival Grant Scheme.

2.2 The Business Revival Grant was launched on Monday 26th April 2021; by lunch time around 100 businesses had registered an interest. The scheme remained

open for the rest of the day to ensure we had a healthy pipeline of reserve applicants for which we now have approx. 250 registrations.

Currently we have supported 144 businesses with a total of £619,185, with several applications pending. Businesses have been supported in a wide range of recovery / growth initiatives including:



Waltham Herbs Willow Vale Nursery, Caistor

This local nursery has used the money from the Revival Grant to purchase bees and beehives, and enable 8 acres of their business to remain a green space for pollination.

Collecting the honey and looking after the bees and beehives provides many health and wellbeing benefits, both to those working on the site and customers who choose to by it.



BoardGame ParaDice, Gainsborough

This small independent business has created two 'green areas' at the front and rear of the shop. The front is now an oasis of planting, with the double benefit of being a bee/insect haven, along with the mental wellbeing benefits when a person encounters even a small haven of beauty. The rear has now been converted into a covered decking area, which provides space for a small sustainable food source, and an area for customers to peacefully reflect away from the busy main road.

The outside lighting at the rear of the property has been converted to low energy lighting, reducing the carbon footprint of the building. The landmark clock at the front of the building has been restored to working order, with the internal lighting again converted to carbon reducing low energy lighting. The hope is that the funding, along with hard work, will benefit the local area, and may even encourage other people to bring one of the main roads in Gainsborough into a safe and attractive area.



Glentham Grange, Glentham

This caravan site has created a sheltered outdoor space to encourage guests to have a more outdoor approach to their stay.

The space is large enough to satisfy guests requirements and affords the ability to social distance where appropriate. It is effectively an all weather all season viewing area, overlooking the newly created lake and the Lincolnshire Wolds. This will encourage guests to leave the confines of their touring caravans, televisions, laptops etc. in favour of fresh air and the opportunity to socialise.

They have also incorporated a barn owl flight within the enclosed roof space which is already providing hunting roosts for the resident barn owls.



Gainsborough Forge, Marton

This rural micro business specialises in the design and manufacturing of bespoke hand crafted metal products and furniture.

The business used the Revival Grant to take full advantage of digital tools and applications that would enhance both the business visibility online as well as the customer experience.

Part of the grant helped with the development of a brand new website, with an online shop facility and showroom displaying existing products and previous designs. The funding also supported the purchase of new IT equipment and specialist design software that would allow the business to create and share orders' ideas with the customer in a more professional way.

2.3 Due to the success of the current scheme and the high number of businesses still remaining on the reserve list we would like to use the remaining ARG to support as many additional businesses as possible.

2.4 Should any residual amounts of ARG remain at the end of March 2022, it is proposed this is added to the Visitor Economy Digital Support Campaign to allow for as much funding to be spent as possible, as any remaining funding must be returned to the government.

3. Recommendations:

1. That the majority of the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant fund be allocated to the Business Revival Grant Scheme.
2. That any remaining Additional Restrictions Grant Fund at the end of March 2022 be added to the Visitor Digital Support Scheme.