



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S DECISION RECORD

Date of Decision:

Department: Resources and Development

Division: Finance

Officer Making Decision: Managing Director, in consultation with the Leader (or in his absence the Deputy Leader), Chair of the relevant Committee (or in his absence Vice Chair) and Monitoring Officer/سكسكس.

Subject / Description & Reason for Decision: Following a grant award from Government, the Council introduced its discretionary ARG scheme in November. The initial scheme had three strands and this was expanded to eight schemes in January 2021.

The scheme was closed on the 3 March 2021 whilst a backlog of applications was assessed. This has proven more time-consuming than expected, mainly as a result of increased business cost / trading evidence requirement from non-rate paying businesses. Ultimately whilst application numbers were high, eligible businesses were lower than anticipated.

The following strands of the scheme have now been re-opened (23 April) to give those businesses that missed the initial deadline, the opportunity to apply:

Strand 1 – Non rate paying in person businesses required to close during national lockdown.

Strand 2 – Rate paying businesses that supply retail, hospitality, accommodation and leisure sectors.

Strand 5 – support for small essential retail that remained open during national lockdown but were impacted by reduced footfall.

Strand 8 – impacted home based businesses not in receipt of any other Local or National Government support.

These strands will remain open for a short time period – two weeks until the 6th May.

Terms and Conditions will apply to all grant strands and these will be set out as part of the application process.

However, it is proposed to make the following amendments to the existing scheme:

Strand 3 – larger supply companies (+100 employees)

Two companies successfully applied under this strand, both of whom are part of the supply chain for hospitality. The approved payment schedule under this strand explicitly ran until the end of February, but the businesses remain impacted by Covid. It is therefore proposed to make a further and final tranche of payment (£25,000 per company) for the two month period March and April. This will be the final payment.

Anticipated Cost £50,000

Strand 6 – support for Taxi Drivers.

Hartlepool was one of the first Local Authorities in the region to recognise the need to support the Taxi trade. The scheme to date has paid out £500 per vehicle licence and £250 per driver licence for licenced hackney carriages and private hire vehicles licenced by the Council. Most Local Authorities in the region have now provided similar or increased support.

It is proposed to make a further payment of £500 per taxi driver licence held at 1 April 2021. This will take payment to £750 per driver licence holder and £1,250 for those holding both a driver and vehicle licence.

These payments reflect business costs incurred by this sector including licence payments (Driver licence £130, Vehicle licence £340 per year), vehicle hire and maintenance costs, insurance costs, and additional PPE requirement. This sector has also suffered from significantly reduced trade volumes and this is likely to continue into the summer and potentially beyond.

Anticipated Cost £200,000

Strand 8 – Impacted Home Based Businesses

For consistency it is proposed to bring these payments into line with essential retail i.e. £2,000 one-off payment.

Anticipated Cost £50,000

By re-opening the scheme and implementing the above measures, an underspend against tranche 1 and 2 of the grant is still anticipated. Following a recent government change in grant conditions, the Council is required to spend this grant in full by 30 June 2021 in order to access a further tranche 3 payment of £439,673. As such a further proposal will be brought forward in order to both utilise the remaining funds, including tranche 3 in the anticipation that we will meet the 30 June deadline.

Type of Decision:

In accordance with Article 12 – 12.3 - the decision is not defined as a Key decision for the following reason:-
The Expenditure is inevitable as a result of the Government providing a Section 31 grant ('New Burden' Funding) to help fund the impact of specific legislative commitments where there is no in year cost, or future commitment for the General Fund. Details of any Section 31 grants and the commitments which need to be funded will be reported to the Finance and Policy Committee and the relevant Policy Committee as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter.

Nature of Delegation Being Exercised:

Constitution Reference – CE15 – urgent decisions normally reserved to a Committee. The Managing Director (or in his/her absence the Director of Resources and Development) may take a decision normally reserved to Full Council or a Committee where:

- (a) Failure to take the decision quickly would, or would be likely to, harm the interests of the Council and the public.
- (b) The decision is so urgent that it cannot wait until the next meeting of the Committee at which the decision would normally be taken

Alternative Options Considered & Rejected:

A number of options were considered to support Hartlepool Businesses. The final expansion proposals were considered to give the best overall mix to reach as many businesses and sectors as possible.

Any Declared Register of Interest

No (delete as appropriate)
If Yes, specify:

Signatures for retained copy only

Managing Director – Denise McGuckin

Decision made in consultation with:

Leader of the Council - Cllr Shane Moore

Chair of Regeneration Services Committee –
Cllr Christopher Akers-Belcher

Chief Solicitor and Monitoring Officer – Hayley Martin

SISI Officer: