

 COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE DECISION-MAKING MEETING – 22 APRIL 2021
Report Number	ITEM I
Subject	ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANTS (RESTART) POLICY
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Every – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Tel: 01285 623000 Email: mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer Author	Jon Dearing – Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01993 861232 Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	The purpose of this report is to formally agree the eligibility criteria, timescales, application approach, authorisation protocols and delegations and to confirm the process of the Additional Restrictions Grants (Restart) Policy
Annexes	Annex A: Additional Restrictions Grant (Restart) Policy
Recommendation/s	It is recommended that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Approve the eligibility criteria, as set out in Annex A;</i> b) <i>Approve the business-type priorities, as set out in Annex A;</i> c) <i>Approve the allocation of grant funding as set out in paragraph(s) 2.5 and 3.3</i> d) <i>Adopt the process and application window proposals, as set out in paragraph 2.9 and,</i> e) <i>Delegate the detailed consideration of individual grant awards to the Group Manager for Resident Services in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance</i>
Corporate priorities	Delivering our services to the highest standards Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing.
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance. Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Group Manager for Resident Services

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. On 3 March 2021, Government announced the introduction of additional grant support for non-essential retail, hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal car and gym businesses in England.
- 1.2. This support will take the form of a one-off grant funding scheme in the financial year 2021/2022. This scheme is called the Restart Grant (RG) and is administered by business rate billing authorities in England. The primary principle of the RG scheme is to support businesses that have a business rate assessment and that offer in-person services to reopen their businesses.
- 1.3. For those businesses that are not eligible for the Government's RG the Council will administer a discretionary scheme.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has given Local Authorities discretion to determine which businesses to support and how much funding to provide.
- 2.2. The ARG is therefore aimed at businesses that are not necessarily liable for Business Rates; similar to the Discretionary (Covid) Business Grants scheme Local Authorities administered during the first national lockdown period in June 2020.
- 2.3. The Policy set out in Annex A sets out the eligibility criteria as follows:
 - 1) Businesses must have been trading on 1 April 2021;
 - 2) Businesses do not have their own business rate assessment; and
 - 3) Businesses must have high fixed businesses costs and/or be severely impacted by the restrictions.
- 2.4. In addition the Council will prioritise the following types of businesses:
 - a) Regular market traders,
 - b) Bed and Breakfast establishments which pay Council Tax rather than Business Rates,
 - c) Charity properties that do not have their own Business Rate assessment,
 - d) Tenant Publicans (where the public house owner pays the business rates and is therefore eligible for a RG – but the tenant landlord is responsible for other business related costs)
 - e) Businesses that supply goods or services to the retail, hospitality, leisure and events sectors, that do not have their own Business Rate assessment
 - f) Travel companies or those transport providers,
 - g) Small businesses in shared office or other flexible workspaces who do not have their own Business Rate assessment,
 - h) Those working from home who are not eligible for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), or Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and have high fixed business costs such as rent, lease, hire purchase costs or franchise payments,
 - i) Mobile self-employed persons in receipt of SEISS, such as hairdressers and taxi drivers who have identifiable fixed costs whether related to property, vehicle or business,

- j) Businesses within the events sector, which have a business rate assessment but are not eligible for a RG.

2.5. Where possible, grant allocations will be in-line with grant payments made under Strand One of the RG. However, due to the limited funding available to the Council, a financial modelling process will be undertaken on all eligible grant applications once the application window has closed. Grant levels may need to be reduced so that the total cost of all grants awarded is within the funding providing by the Government. It is therefore proposed that ,subject to sufficient, funding the following grant allocations are applied:

- Businesses whose annual rent or other fixed costs (e.g. rent, mortgage, council tax, equipment lease, insurance) is exactly £15,000 or below will receive £2,667;
- Businesses whose annual rent or other fixed costs (e.g. rent, mortgage, council tax, equipment lease, insurance) is between £15,001 to £50,999 will receive a payment of £4,000;
- Businesses whose annual rent or other fixed costs (e.g. rent, mortgage, council tax, equipment lease, insurance) is exactly £51,000 or above will receive £6,000

2.6. Businesses that have previously received a payment through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) will not be required to complete an application. Emails will be sent to those previously eligible asking that they confirm if their details remain the same, since their previous application was submitted.

2.7. For those businesses that have not previously received an ARG, new applications, along with supporting documentation, will be accepted electronically through the Council's website.

2.8. There will be a two week application window. This is to ensure that a financial modelling process can be implemented to maximise Government funding.

2.9. The proposed timetable is therefore:

- 1) Week commencing 12 April 2021 consult with Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance on draft Policy and prepare new application process and draft emails to send to businesses identified as potentially eligible for the ARG (Restart) grant;
- 2) By 26 April 2021 approve Policy;
- 3) Send emails 4 May 2021
- 4) 18 May 2021 application window closes
- 5) 19 May 2021 to 2 June 2021 applications verified and pre-payment checks carried out;
- 6) 3 – 4 June 2021 carry out financial modelling on all applications and draft report;
- 7) Week commencing 7 June 2021, Decision Making Meeting. Once approved payment file to be sent for processing through BAC's payments.

2.10. In order for grant award decisions to be taken in a timely manner, it is proposed that delegated authority is granted to the Group Manager for Resident Services in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. BEIS will be allocating a top-up to the ARG. The allocation for Cotswold District Council is £1,062,734; however this funding is to support any future restrictions during 2021/22
- 3.2. To ensure that the allocation is not exceeded a financial modelling exercise will be undertaken on applications received when the application window has closed.
- 3.3. Any surplus funding will be applied during 2021/2022 to support economic recovery from Covid-19; or to fund grants made to businesses under the Government Covid-19 Business Grants Schemes, where the value of grants awarded exceeds the Government funding provided.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no specific legal implications associated with these recommendations.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. There is a risk of fraud within the scheme. However, Internal Audit and the Corporate Fraud Unit officers are involved in the process design and we will be utilising Government software to assist in fraud detection.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on the protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act that have been identified.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. There is discretion within the scheme, so the Cabinet Member could decide to assist businesses not referred to within this draft Policy.
- 8.2. Once the application window has closed, all applications and emails have been verified and pre-payment checks have been completed, financial modelling will be carried out to determine the cost of awarding grants in line with the criteria set out at 2.5. There may be an opportunity to review the level of grant awarded. The Group Manager for Resident Services will consult with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance on options as part of the grant award decision-making process.

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