

Bolsover District Council

Executive

Monday 31st January 2021

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Cllr Liz Smyth – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development

Contact Officer: Natalie Etches – Business Growth Manager

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To consider criteria for allocation of funding from a further allocation of Additional Restrictions Grant monies.
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REPORT DETAILS

1 Background *(reasons for bringing the report)*

- 1.1 The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) is a discretionary funding scheme which aims to support businesses severely impacted by Coronavirus and its variants. The ARG scheme was first launched in 2020-21 financial year, with further rounds of funding being 'topped-up' in January 2021 and 1 April 2021.
- 1.2 Bolsover District Council received a payment of £1,611,240, equating to £20 per head when the Tier 3 / national lockdown restrictions were imposed in October 2020. In January 2021, a further allocation of £715,636, based on the same per head calculation, was allocated to the local authority. On 3 March 2021, the Government allocated a further £421,257.
- 1.3 The ARG scheme has been administered through the Economic Development Team and the Partnerships Team and to date, 302 grants have been awarded to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) across the district.
- 1.4 On 21 December 2021, the Chancellor announced, in response to the rise of the Omicron variant, a £102 million top-up has been awarded to business rate billing authorities in England for allocating out to businesses. £97,718.41 has been allocated to Bolsover District Council for this award.
- 1.5 Reports have been brought to Executive setting out how the scheme has been administered through the rounds, including the award criterion and grant

conditions. This report sets out the requirements for administering this latest ARG award.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 Government have issued the local authority with the latest top-up of funding (97,718.41), in-line with the Guidance Note published on 30 December 2021, which also details the criteria for awarding this latest allocation of money.
- 2.2 Officers have been working through the guidance and in response to the latest variant – Omicron – local authorities are encouraged to support businesses from all sectors that may have been impacted, including but not limited to: hospitality; accommodation; leisure; personal care; the travel and tourism sector (group travel, travel agents, tour operators); wedding industries, and other businesses that may not have received other grant funding. This scheme will be extended to include businesses both in and outside of the business rates system.
- 2.3 Administration and allocation of the ARG will include:
 - 2.3.1 An online application form, which all businesses will be required to complete, regardless of whether they have been awarded a grant through a previous scheme or not;
 - 2.3.2 The grant award criteria being points based with a higher number of points awarded to businesses who fall in to the priority sectors as identified in paragraph 2.2 above, and those businesses who have not received any previous COVID recovery grant funding;
 - 2.3.3 A maximum grant award of £5,000 for a single business with discretion to award a grant of £1,500 / £2,500 / £5,000 based on an officer assessment using the evaluation criteria.
- 2.4 Businesses who apply for, or who are awarded an ARG, will also be registered with either the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) or Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire (MPDD) for a 12-month membership. This is at no cost to the business, and is a further support tool we are able to offer to businesses as part of our COVID recovery support. It could include: legal help and advice; debt recovery; cyber protection; access to funding; marketing and new market opportunities; and, targeted sector-specific business support for growth.

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report sets out the proposals for administering this latest round of ARG funding, to the value of £97,718.41
- 3.2 The grant is a much needed financial injection in to businesses who are facing continued financial pressures as a result of COVID and its variants.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The option to 'do nothing' with Additional Restrictions Grant self-evidently cannot be countenanced by the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That members note the details of the forthcoming Additional Restrictions Grant and endorse the following proposals:
 - (i) a new scheme is open, inviting businesses from across the district to apply through a new application process;
 - (ii) Businesses who have been, and continue to be, affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, specifically the Omicron variant, are prioritised for the Additional Restrictions Grant, including;
 - Businesses from all sectors that may have been impacted, including but not limited to: hospitality; accommodation; leisure; personal care; the travel and tourism sector (group travel, travel agents, tour operators); wedding industries;
 - Businesses who hold a business rates account;
 - Businesses who do not hold a business rates account;
 - and, Businesses who have not received any previous ARG funding.
 - (iii) the following criteria is used to assess the level of grant funding to be awarded from the ARG scheme:
 - level of fixed costs faced by the business
 - no. of FTE employees within the applicant business
 - the impact of the Omicron variant on their business trading;
 - and, the value of previous grant/s award through ARG or other discretionary grant schemes.
 - (iv) the level of any award will be set at a maximum of £5,000 for a single business with discretion to award a grant of £1,500 / £2,500 / £5,000 based on an officer assessment using the above criteria set out in 1(ii) and 1(iii).

Approved by the Portfolio Holder - Cllr Liz Smyth, Executive Member for Economic Development

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

The grant will need to be carefully managed to ensure that the awards granted and any other expenditure associated with a discretionary grant scheme does not exceed the funding received from Government for that purpose.

The scheme will need to be administered with appropriate safeguards to detect fraudulent applications and prevent grant funding being misappropriated.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): **Yes** **No**

Details:

The Council's GDPR and data protection policies will be applied to any grant application handled through this scheme.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: **Yes** **No**

Details:

There are no staffing issues.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	District wide
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet / Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SAMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	No Details:

Links to Council Ambition (BDC)/Council Plan (NED) priorities or Policy Framework including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.

The council's Ambition priorities for business growth.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	Scoring Matrix
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	

APPENDIX 1 – SCORING MATRIX

Score	Grant
24 and under	up to £1,500
25 - 39	up to £2,500
40+	up to £5,000

Impacts	Question	Answer	Score	Weighting
a) Number of employees	Business size – number of employees (headcount) based in Bolsover District (excluding owner/proprietor)	0 -2	1	1
		3-10	3	
		11-49	5	
b) Level of on-going fixed costs	Annual business premises costs	Less than £5,000	1	3
		£5,001- £15,000	3	
		More than £15,000	5	
c) Trading status	Impact of Covid-19 on business trading	Open throughout / full trading online	1	1
		Partial trading / recently opened or trading online	3	
		Closed throughout / no trading online	5	
d) Financial impacts	Impact of Covid-19 on business turnover	Up to 30% down	1	2
		31-49% down	3	
		50% or more down	5	

e) Other income	Eligible business sole or primary income	Sole	5	1
		Primary - more than 50%	3	
		49 - 33%	1	
		Less than 33%	0	
f) Other funding	What Covid-19 related funding has your business received?	None	5	2
		Any	0	
g) Is business in identified priority sector		Yes	5	1
		No	0	