

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	IEDN - Additional Restrictions Grant for Lockdown 1	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Director	Claire Nye, Director of Finance	
Originating service	Revenues and Benefits & City Economy	
Accountable employee	Author name	Tracey Richards, Head of Revenues and Benefits
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Report to be/has been considered by		

Summary

To agree to amend the assessment of the distribution of discretionary business grants through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), in accordance with government guidance.

On 25 January 2021, a Special Urgent Decision delegated authority to agree the distribution of discretionary business grants to the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cabinet Member for City Economy in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Regeneration, in line with Government guidance.

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

That the Cabinet Member for City Economy and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Director of Regeneration:

1. Approve use of the Additional Restrictions Grant to support, where needed, the mandatory Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant.

Signature
Claire Nye
Director of Finance

Date:

Signature
Richard Lawrence
Director of Regeneration

Date:

Signature
Councillor I Brookfield

Date:

Signature
Councillor S Simkins

Date:

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following the Government announcement of several measures to support businesses that are required to close, or are trading but severely impacted, officers sought members approval on 9 November 2020, through a Special Urgency Decision to establish the Additional Restriction Budget totalling £7.6 million for the business grant schemes.
- 1.2 On 25 January a Special Urgency Decision delegated authority to agree the distribution of discretionary business grants, for the latest restrictions of Lockdown 3 to the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cabinet Member for City Economy in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Regeneration in line with Government guidance.
- 1.3 The Additional Restriction Budget for the business grants schemes is listed in the table below:

Grant	Amount £
Additional Restrictions Grant	5,267,140
Additional Restrictions Grant – further funds announced 5.1.2021	2,339,414
Additional Restrictions Grant – further funds announced 25.3.2021	1,383,473
Total	8,990,027

2.0 Overview

2.1 Additional Scheme – Top up Lockdown 1 Scheme

- 2.2 There is a business who applied to be considered for the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Business Grant scheme, but who was deemed ineligible at the time due to not being eligible to Expanded Retail Relief in their Business Rate liability. Ongoing discussions have been taking place with the Revenues and Benefits service to obtain appropriate evidence of eligibility to Expanded Retail Relief.
- 2.3 Sufficient evidence has now been provided to enable an award of expanded retail relief in their business rate liability.
- 2.4 The business would have received a business grant to the value of £25,000 if the determination could have been made at the appropriate time. The delay in being able to make the decision was partially due to the increased volumes of work being undertaken by the Revenues and Benefits service during the time. A discretionary business grant to the value of £5,000 was awarded during this period.
- 2.5 It is therefore proposed that an award of £20,000 is made available from the Additional Restrictions Grant to fund this payment.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

3.1 It could be decided that this business who was initially determined as not eligible to the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant is not supported further. However, considering the complexity and difficulties being experienced at the time, this could be a disproportionate approach.

4.0 Reasons for decision

4.1 The Council has legal and moral duties in relation to several aspects arising from Covid-19. This decision gives the authority to provide grant support to a business which is fully funded by additional grant from Government against a set criteria.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 The Additional Restrictions Grant allocated by Government currently totals just under £9 million as detailed in the table below:

Grant	Amount £
Additional Restrictions Grant	5,267,140
Additional Restrictions Grant – further funds announced 5.1.2021	2,339,414
Additional Restrictions Grant – further funds announced 25.3.2021	1,383,473
Total	8,990,027

The proposed support of the mandatory Retail, Leisure and Hospitality grant scheme, where needed, will be funded from this.

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6.0 Legal implications

6.1 The approach taken by the Council is in line with the guidance issued by Government. The Council will take steps to ensure that the rules governing public sector subsidy are adhered to, as set out in the Government Guidance document.

6.2 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951799/business-support-package-january-2021-lockdown-la-guidance.pdf

6.3 The approach taken is one that can be objectively justified, and it is considered to be a lawful approach.

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7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

8.0 All other Implications

8.1 The approach set out above seeks to address the Covid-19 impact on businesses affected by recent public health measures.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

9.1 Urgent decisions relating to January lockdown and budget decisions related to Council actions as a result of Covid-19

<https://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5571>

10.0 Appendice(s)

10.1 None