



**RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED
AUTHORITY
(Not a Key Decision)**

Date of Decision: 23 October 2020

**Executive Decision or 'Other Decision' to be
published?:**

Yes

**TITLE: West Lancashire Borough Council – Local Restrictions
BusinessSupport Grant Scheme**

DECISION:

**That authority to administer applications and payments under the Government's
Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (Mandatory Awards) be given to the
Corporate Director of Transformation and Resources**

AUTHORITY:

Constitution 4.2: Proper Officer Provisions and Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers
Issue Date 04.11.19

4.21 To take any action on behalf of the Council, following consultation with the
Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder or the Chairman of the appropriate
committee, in cases of urgency requiring immediate decisions, and where it
would be unreasonable or impractical to convene a meeting.

REASONS FOR DECISION

As set out below

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19, the government
announced the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) on 9th September 2020
to support businesses that are required to close during localised restrictions.

1.2 Localised restrictions are legally binding restrictions imposed on specific Local
Authority areas or multiple Local Authority areas, where the Secretary of State for
Health and Social Care requires the closure of businesses in a local area under
regulations made using powers in Part 2A of the Public Health (Control of
Disease) Act 1984 in response to the threat posed by coronavirus and commonly
as part of a wider set of measures.

1.3 West Lancashire moved into local COVID alert level very high on Saturday 17
October and became subject to increased localised restrictions. This meant all

pubs and bars within the borough had to close from that date, unless they are serving substantial meals. In addition, from Monday 19 October the adult gaming industry, casinos, bingo halls, bookmakers, betting shops, and soft play areas had to close and car boot sales are not permitted.

- 1.4 These localised restrictions will be reviewed every 14 days but it is likely these measures will continue for at least 28 days.
- 1.5 It is understood that the Council will receive two funding elements through the LRSG scheme:
 - a) Funding to meet the cost of payments to businesses that are required to close and are within the business rates system based on an assessment of the number of eligible business hereditaments (Mandatory Grant).
 - b) An additional 5% to be used as discretionary grant funding to support businesses which are closed but are not in the business rating system as well as businesses that may not be required to close but which are severely impacted, for example as a result of closure of their suppliers or the customers they supply to (Discretionary Grant).
- 1.6 Eligible businesses in West Lancashire will receive a Mandatory Grant of up to £1,500 for each eligible hereditament and for each two-week period that the restrictions are imposed as a result of the localised restrictions.
- 1.7 It is understood a Discretionary Grant of up to £1,500 may be awarded to eligible businesses at the discretion of the Council. This is subject to further guidance and confirmation of the amount of funding available from Government.

2.0 CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Government guidance dated 24 September 2020 sets out the criteria which the Government advises the Council should consider in administering the LRSG. This is expected to be updated following changes to the scheme announced on 9 October and detailed in paragraph 2.2.
- 2.2 Under the Mandatory Grant scheme eligible businesses with a property that has a rateable value of £15,000 or under, will receive grants of £667 per two weeks of closure (£1,334 per month). An eligible business with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000, will receive grants of £1,000 per two weeks of closure (£2,000 per month). Eligible businesses with a property that has a rateable value of £51,000 or over, will receive grants of £1,500 per two weeks of closure (£3,000 per month). These amounts may be subject to change.
- 2.3 Mandatory Grants will be issued for each two-week period that a business is closed following the implementation of statutory localised restrictions and business closures.
- 2.4 An indicative timeline for the Mandatory Grant scheme is:

- No later than Friday 23 October – The application process opens.
- From Monday 2 November – Payments begin to be made to eligible applicants.
- From 16th November - Payments will continue on a two week schedule to eligible businesses until the localised restrictions are removed.

2.5 The Business Grants team have started to consider the scope and criteria with regard to Discretionary Grant funding. It is predicted that demand will be high but funding for this element of the scheme will be limited. Further details are awaited from Government with regard to the scope of the discretionary scheme and the available funding and a further record of decision will be prepared. Funding may also be available from the settlement reached with Government when Local authorities in Lancashire agreed to enter Tier 3 restrictions.

2.6 The next scheduled meeting of Cabinet is 10 November. The Council wishes to support eligible businesses as a matter of urgency. It is not reasonable to delay the introduction of the Mandatory LRSG scheme until then and is not reasonable or practicable to convene a special Cabinet meeting. In any event, this decision has been taken in consultation with the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder as referred to below.

3.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED (IF ANY):

3.1 None

4.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out in its guidance, reimburse the Council for the grants it pays to eligible businesses that are affected by the local lockdown and required to close (with normal reconciliation between grant allocation and actual eligible costs). Central government will fully reimburse the Council, in line with their guidance and the grant offer letter sent to Local Authorities, for the cost of the grant (using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).

4.2 Local Authorities will be responsible for delivering the funding to eligible businesses. Officers are being temporarily redeployed from other roles within the Council to assist with the administration of the scheme. However, officer resources will be regularly reviewed and additional external resource may be required.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this decision.

6.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 This decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public,

employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

7.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS (For executive decisions and 'Other Decisions that require publishing)

7.1 The following background documents (as defined in the 2012 and 2014 Regulations) have been relied on to a material extent in making this Decision:

None

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

9.0 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

**Contact Officer: Legal and Democratic Services Manager - Matt Jones
Directorate & Service: Transformation and Resources – Corporate Services –
Legal and Democratic Services
Telephone No: 01695 585025**

DATE OF DECISION:

23 October 2020

Decision Taker: Corporate Director of Transformation and Resources – Chris Twomey

Signature: confirmed via e-mail

In Consultation with:

James Pierce – Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Property

Signature: confirmed via e-mail

Council Leader - Councillor Ian Moran

Signature: confirmed via e-mail

Portfolio Holder for Resources & Transformation – Councillor Adam Yates

Signature: confirmed via e-mail

NOTES

(Executive Decisions)

1. ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Only required where decisions taken in consultation with):

(Executive Decisions)

2. IF CONFLICT OF INTEREST EXISTS, DETAILS OF DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE:

(‘Other Decisions’)

3. THE NAMES OF ANY COUNCILLOR WHO HAS DECLARED A CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO THE DECISION