



## **RECORD OF CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION**

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

<b>Decision Ref. No.</b>	PH032
<b>Decision made by</b>	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity
<b>Decision Title</b>	Economic Recovery Support Programme
<b>Key decision?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expenditure/savings/income over £50K and/or</li><li>• significant impact 2 or more wards</li></ul>	Yes
<b>Date of decision (same as date form signed)</b>	6 April 2021
<b>Name and job title of Officer requesting the decision</b>	Lee Byrne – Regeneration Manager
<b>Officer contact details</b>	01664 502589 <a href="mailto:lbyrne@melton.gov.uk">lbyrne@melton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To approve utilisation of the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant funding to deliver a Comprehensive Economic Recovery Package as outlined in the report.</li><li>2. To delegate authority to the Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to vary the amounts allocated to the each of the grant schemes, subject to confirmation of the final amount allocated in July 2021 and in response to any further updated guidance from BEIS regarding utilisation of ARG funding.</li></ol>
<b>Background</b>	<p>Melton Borough Council had been working over the last 3 months to develop a comprehensive economic recovery package that would support businesses out of the lockdown period and over the next year. This is with the expectation that the full allocation of Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) Funding at the Council's disposal would be available to be utilised through to the end of March 2022 as per original Government guidance.</p> <p>Following Government announcements in March 2021 it was identified that a further allocation of ARG funding would be made available to LA's. However in order to be able to draw</p>

	<p>down the further Additional Restrictions Grant funding the existing (original) allocation would have to be spent by the end of June 2021 at the latest. Whilst the amount of additional funding likely to be allocated has not been announced yet it is proposed that the Council should re-profile its planned expenditure to meet the new requirements so as to ensure it will be able to draw down this additional amount when available.</p>
<p><b>Reason for Decision/Main Considerations</b></p>	<p>As identified above, the Council, through consultation with other local authority areas has had to quickly re-profile its expenditure and the projects it planned to deliver as a result of the recent Government announcements in relation to the further allocation of ARG funding due from July 2021. Due to this it is proposed that the previously developed comprehensive spending package to support recovery will be consolidated in order to make it simpler for businesses to access, whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to either expand the schemes or reduce them depending on the actual allocation received in July 2021.</p> <p>This re-profiling exercise has been used to inform this altered approach to the comprehensive support package and the financial allocations required to deliver it. This is set out in more detail below.</p> <p>Since November 2020 the Council has received £1,479,072 in Additional Restrictions Grant to allocate via discretionary grants. Of this amount, as of 31 March 2021, £1,060,000 has been distributed through discretionary grants to local businesses in Melton.</p> <p>This has left £419,072 available to distribute over the next 3 months. It is proposed that this should be used to support the re-profiled and updated Comprehensive economic recovery package set out below.</p> <p>Firstly, the Council is proposing to establish a Discretionary Re-Start scheme. This will largely be aimed at businesses who have start-up costs associated with their business re-opening, but who are not eligible for the national scheme; either as a result of not being in the correct sector or not having a rateable value attached to the property. A total of £330,000 will be allocated to this scheme with the application process taking place from April 2021 to early June 2021 to ensure it has been distributed by the end of June deadline imposed nationally.</p> <p>This leaves £89,072 which will be utilised to fund the first 3 months of three additional grant schemes which will be targeted towards 3 priority areas which based on feedback from partners and local intelligence gathered from the business community throughout the pandemic period, the Council would propose to support over the next year. The remaining 9 months of expenditure required to support these schemes will be resourced through the further Additional Restrictions Grant</p>

funding the council will be expecting to draw down in July 2021.

The three projects and priority areas are:

- 1) **Business start-up programme** – a county wide initiative to support start-up businesses or businesses who started during or just before the pandemic started. This programme will look to provide wrap-around business support with the potential to access grants to assist them on their business start-up journey. MBC expects to commit £100,000 to this initiative over the course of the next year with £25k coming from the existing pot of ARG funding
- 2) **Rural Diversification grant** – for businesses in rural areas that are looking to diversify their business into more areas to either bring in additional income to make their business more resilient, provide additional employment opportunities or provide an additional service to visitors or residents of that area. This will be for capital projects only and will support individual applicants up to a maximum of £10k or 50% of project costs (whatever is the lesser amount). The council is expecting to commit £100k to this project over the course of the year until the end of March 2022 and therefore will commit £25k from its current ARG allocation.
- 3) **Town Centre Recovery Package** – a support package aimed at supporting businesses in the town centre through key areas;
  - a. Developing online platforms – to enable businesses to expand or improve their online product to enable sales or orders to be made through online capacity.
  - b. Supporting the evening economy – for those in the evening economy (or those that support it) that require additional support over the next year to enable the night-time economy to thrive.
  - c. Relocation or shop improvement grants – to support businesses looking to start up or relocate into the town centre area by providing a contribution to their costs in relation to this.

The council will look to commit £100k to this project over the course of the next year with £25k coming from the existing ARG allocation.

These three projects will cost £75k over the next three months with the remaining £14,072 held back to provide additional support either through the restart grant programme or over subscription to any of the other schemes highlighted above.

In regards to the criteria for each of the 4 projects being delivered through the ARG programme a policy document will be produced and published on our website once applications are open. This will enable businesses to determine whether

	<p>they may be eligible or not and will be published in accordance with the Council’s own commitment to transparency.</p> <p>If expenditure for these programmes is higher than anticipated the Council has been informed it will be able to draw down the further ARG funding in advance of July 2021. At this point the schemes that make up the economic recovery package mentioned above will be assessed to see if the amount of funding allocated to them needs to be adjusted based on take up from the business community.</p> <p>Should the further ARG allocation enable additional targeted support to be provided above what is outlined in this document the council will consider developing further support programmes. These will be developed in accordance with the criteria attached to the further ARG funding and internal governance procedures.</p>
<p><b>Alternative options rejected</b></p>	<p>Do Nothing – This was not considered to be a preferred option as whilst it would mean we could deliver our economic recovery package as originally planned we would miss out on the additional payment from Government which could be used to support our businesses further. Due to this it was felt most appropriate to re-profile our support packages to ensure this further ARG funding could be drawn down.</p>
<p><b>Legal implications</b></p> <p><b>Officer/Date provided:</b>  <b>Natasha Taylor – Deputy Monitoring Officer/ 01.04.21</b></p>	<p>The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably.</p> <p>The Council will need to ensure the eligibility criteria is formulated, applied and met consistently to all grants in line with Government Guidance on the Additional Restrictions Grant.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to collect information and keep records to enable appropriate checks to take place through third parties such as the National Fraud Initiative and BEIS as part of the pre and post assurance payment and reconciliation processes. An appropriate disclaimer will be put on the grant application form to inform applicants of this and approval must be given before applications can be submitted.</p>
<p><b>Financial implications</b></p> <p><b>Officer/Date provided:</b></p>	<p>These schemes will be developed and funded via the Additional Restrictions Grant. This is grant funding provided by government and administered by the Local Authority. There are likely to be some indirect financial implications associated with the administration of these schemes. However these costs are able to be picked up through the new burdens provided to</p>

	the Council for instances like these. the value of new burdens funding has yet to be determined and received			
<b>Other implications</b>	N/A			
<b>Background papers considered</b>	<a href="#">Additional Restrictions Grant: Guidance for Local Authorities</a>			
<b>List consultees (Where applicable)</b>		<b>Name</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Ward Councillors			
	Human Resources			
	Equalities			
	Communications			
<b>Confidential Decision?</b> (The decision will be published in its entirety unless it contains exempt information as described in Section 1.4 of the <a href="#">Council's Access to Information Rules</a> )	No			
<b>Call In Waived by Scrutiny Committee Chair? (Under urgency Procedures)</b> Where urgency procedures used please provide approved urgency notice	N/A			
<b>Has this been discussed by Cabinet Members?</b>	Yes			
<b>Cabinet Portfolio Holder Signature</b>	Email approval Councillor Leigh Higgins Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity  6 April 2021			
<b>Declarations/conflict of interest?</b>	No			

**ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.**

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Form Received	6 April 2021	
Date published to all Councillors	6 April 2021	
Call In Deadline	9 April 2021	