

For publication

Approval of the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund Scheme

Meeting:	Leader of the Council
Date:	04 June 2020
Cabinet portfolio:	Business Transformation and Customers
Report by:	Assistant Director – Customers, Commissioning and Change

For publication

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To approve a Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme for Chesterfield Borough Council.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Chesterfield Borough Council's Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme is approved and implemented.
- 2.2 That the Assistant Director – Customers, Commissioning and Change, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers and interim Chief Finance Officer, is given delegated authority to complete regular

reviews of the scheme, ensuring Grant funds are fully utilised for the benefit of local businesses.

2.3 That it be determined whether the recommendations within this report are to be treated as urgent and exempt from call-in, in accordance with paragraphs 14.2 and 14.15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.

3.0 **Background**

3.1 On 1 May 2020, Government announced the launch of a new Covid-19 Business Support grant, known as the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund. This is an additional fund to the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) which currently provide grants of £10,000 or £25,000 to eligible businesses to help support them during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.2 The Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme is aimed at micro and small businesses who are not eligible to receive SBGF and RHLGF grants, but who have high ongoing, fixed property-related costs, and who can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3 Chesterfield Borough Council has been allocated £1,267,500 from the Government to fund this scheme and is responsible for administering the Discretionary Grant Fund scheme to eligible businesses located within its boundaries.

3.4 This report sets out the criteria under which businesses will qualify to make an application to the Chesterfield Borough Council Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund scheme, and the evidence which will be required to support an application.

3.5 Details of the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme for Chesterfield Borough Council are attached at Appendix A.

3.6 The recommendations within this report are to be considered as urgent and exempt from call-in, in accordance with paragraphs 14.2 and 14.15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution. The decision maker will determine whether the decision/s are deemed to be urgent.

4.0 Human Resources and people management implications

4.1 Responsibility for implementation of the scheme will rest with the Assistant Director – Customers, Commissioning and Change, supported by officers from the Council’s Economic Development Unit and the Business Rates team.

5.0 Financial considerations

5.1 Central Government has allocated Chesterfield Borough Council 5% of the value of grant paid through the Small Business Rates Grant and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Funds, with a minimum allocation of £1,267,500 available to support Chesterfield businesses via the Local Government Discretionary Grant Fund scheme.

5.2 It is proposed that the scheme is opened for applications on Friday 5 June 2020 and is closed to applicants on 17 June 2020. Priority access to the funding will be afforded to those businesses that the Government has determined should be given particular attention in its guidance to local authorities.

5.3 Delegated authority is sought for the Assistant Director – Customers, Commissioning and Change, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers and the interim Chief Finance Officer, to complete regular reviews of the scheme, ensuring Grant funds are fully utilised for the benefit of local businesses.

5.4 Chesterfield Borough Council will provide regular progress reports to Central Government with regards to the development and implementation of its Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme.

6.0 Legal and Data Protection implications.

6.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, provides Local Authorities with the powers to make these grant payments.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 Chesterfield Borough Council's scheme has been developed in line with Government guidance.

7.2 Whilst Chesterfield Borough Council's scheme is informed by the multiple conversations that officers have had with local businesses in recent weeks and is therefore cognisant of the needs of our local economy, officers have also engaged in collaborative dialogue with officer colleagues of other Derbyshire local authorities to achieve a consistency of approach, wherever practical, to the development of Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund schemes across the Derbyshire county geography.

8.0 Risk management

8.1 The main risks associated with the proposals are shown in the table below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
The Grant scheme is under or oversubscribed	High	High	Chesterfield Borough Council's scheme provides clarity on the first phase of eligibility for the scheme.	High	Low

			Regular review mechanisms have been built into the administration of the scheme, ensuring that as many Chesterfield businesses as possible can benefit from funding.		
Administration backlogs will delay grant payments made to Chesterfield businesses	High	High	Adequate resources have been identified to support this process, with the ability to scale the team where necessary.	High	Low
Grant payments are made to ineligible businesses	High	Medium	The scheme provides clarity on grant eligibility. The process for grant payment requires supporting evidence to be submitted. The application is clear that ineligible payments will be subject to claw back and possible fraud investigation	Medium	Low

9.0 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced in development of the scheme. The scheme ensures that levels of grant payment are awarded based on the level of property costs and trading losses experienced.

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1 That Chesterfield Borough Council's Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme is approved and implemented.
- 10.2 That the Assistant Director – Customers, Commissioning and Change, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers and interim Chief Finance Officer, is given delegated authority to complete regular reviews of the scheme, ensuring Grant funds are fully utilised for the benefit of local businesses.
- 10.3 That it be determined whether the recommendations within this report are to be treated as urgent and exempt from call-in, in accordance with paragraphs 14.2 and 14.15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.

11.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 11.1 To enable Chesterfield Borough Council to proceed with the administration of its Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund scheme, to the benefit of local businesses and the local economy.

Decision information

Key decision number	963
Wards affected	ALL

Document information

Report author	Contact number/email
Rachel O'Neil	Rachel.Oneil@chesterfield.gov.uk
Appendices to the report	

Appendix A	Chesterfield Borough Council Local Authority Discretionary Scheme
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