

For publication

Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Addendum (January 2021)

Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers
Date:	26 January 2021
Cabinet portfolio:	Business Transformation and Customers
Directorate:	Digital, HR and Customer Services

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To approve the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Addendum (January 2021) for Chesterfield Borough Council.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Addendum (January 2021) for Chesterfield Borough Council is approved and implemented.
- 2.2 That the Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services, in conjunction with the Service Director – Economic Growth and the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers, is given delegated authority to complete regular reviews of the scheme, ensuring Grant funds are fully utilised for the benefit of local businesses.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To enable Chesterfield Borough Council to widen eligibility for the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme, to the benefit of local businesses and the local economy.

4.0 Report details

- 4.1 On 31 October 2020, the Government announced the introduction of a new funding scheme, known as the Additional Restrictions Grant

scheme, which enables Local Authorities to provide additional support to businesses which are under national and local restrictions.

- 4.2 In January 2021, the Government provided further funding to Local Authorities to provide extra help following implementation of the latest national lockdown restrictions.
- 4.3 Chesterfield Borough Council has been allocated a further £931,832 in addition to its earlier grant award of £2,098,000. Funds can be used across financial years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.
- 4.4 Appendix A of this report sets out the revised eligibility criteria for the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme for Chesterfield Borough and the evidence which will need to be provided by businesses in support of their applications to the scheme.

5.0 Alternative options

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to providing targeted support to specific businesses, or specific business sectors, which would enable larger levels of grant assistance to be made. However, taking this approach would mean that a significant number of small and micro businesses within the Chesterfield locality would not receive support, leaving many businesses vulnerable to the adverse economic impact created by the pandemic. This approach has therefore been disregarded.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

- 6.1 Development and delivery of the Additional Restrictions grant scheme will support our Council Plan priority to make Chesterfield a thriving borough, by providing financial support to local businesses who have been adversely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

- 7.1 Chesterfield Borough Council has been allocated £3,029,832 to support Chesterfield businesses and our local economy. The funding is available to provide support to Chesterfield businesses up to March 2022.
- 7.2 Appendix A of this report provides a breakdown of how much of this funding has been set aside to support business sectors.

- 7.3 Delegated authority is sought for the Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services, in consultation with the Service Director – Economic Growth and the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers, to complete regular reviews of the scheme, ensuring Grant funds are fully utilised for the benefit of local businesses.
- 7.4 New burdens funding will be provided by the Government to support the administration of this scheme.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

- 8.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides Local Authorities with the powers to make these grant payments.
- 8.2 Privacy notices and Data Protection impact assessments have been completed for this new process.
- 8.3 Chesterfield Borough Council will provide regular progress updates to Central Government with regards to the development and implementation of its Additional Restrictions Grant scheme.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

- 9.1 Responsibility for implementation of the scheme will rest with the Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services, supported by several officers from across the Council, who have been brought together to form a temporary business grants team.

10.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Over subscription of the grant	High	High	The Policy provides clarity on the eligibility for the scheme. Regular review mechanisms have been built into the administration	High	Low

			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 payment is made to ineligible people.	High	Medium	The policy 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 recall and possible fraud investigation	Medium	Low

11.0 Implications for consideration - community wellbeing

- 11.1 The provision of financial support to eligible businesses during this challenging period will go some way towards strengthening their ongoing viability and as a consequence, may help to limit unemployment levels within the borough. Taking this action should have a positive impact on the mental wellbeing of the men and women that make up our business community, many of which are already asking for additional support to keep their businesses afloat.

12.0 Implications for consideration - Economy and skills

- 12.1 The Additional Restrictions Grant scheme is directed at those businesses who are not eligible to receive the Local Restrictions Grant, but which have been significantly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.
- 12.2 Funding of £1,000,000 will be retained to support Chesterfield businesses in the event that further national or regional restrictions are implemented and / or to provide strategic support to invigorate the local economy as Chesterfield borough recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

13.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change

- 13.1 The Council has developed an online application form and will ensure that grant payments are credited directly to business bank accounts. This will reduce the need for paper transactions and travel between business premises and council offices.

14.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

- 14.1 The scheme has been developed to ensure that businesses excluded from the Local Restrictions Grant scheme within Chesterfield borough can receive support during the period that national and local restrictions are in place, subject to meeting the scheme's eligibility criteria.
- 14.2 The current scheme eligibility ensures that the value of grant is awarded based on the level of ongoing fixed business costs and the trading losses experienced.
- 14.3 Eligibility for the scheme will be regularly reviewed to reflect the impact of national and local restrictions.

Decision information

Key decision	Decision taken under delegated authority granted by the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers on 13 November, 2020.
Wards affected	All wards

Document information

Report author	
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Background documents These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Additional Restrictions Grant Addendum (January 2021) for Chesterfield Borough