

Emergency Committee

**Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 16:30
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Crompton (Chair);
Councillors Ali, Millard, Moore and Shaeen.

Officers: David Stevens (Chief Executive), Lesley Hagger (Executive Director of Children's Services), Surjit Tour (Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Sue Knowles – Head of ICT and Revenue and Benefits, Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy) and Trisha Newton (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

79/20 **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

80/20 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared at the meeting.

81/20 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.



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82/20 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

83/20 **Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) Scheme**

It was reported that the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) was announced on 22 October 2020. The grant scheme was effective from 1 August 2020 and enabled local authorities to support businesses in the hospitality, hotel, bed and breakfast and leisure industries that were still open but severely impacted by Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions.

The guidance suggested grant payments were made to eligible businesses as follows:-

- Rateable Value up to £15,000 - £934 per 28-day period
- Rateable Value £15,001 to £50,999 - £1,400 per 28-day period
- Rateable Value £51,000 and over - £2,100 per 28-day period

Local authorities had the freedom to determine the precise eligibility criteria for these grants, however, the funding should be targeted at hospitality, hotel, bed and breakfast and leisure businesses.

On 31 October 2020, a further grant scheme was announced called the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). This was a discretionary scheme aimed to support businesses whose trade had been affected by restrictions but were not eligible for the other grants. Sandwell's Additional Restrictions Grant discretionary scheme was approved by Emergency Committee on 11 November 2020. It would predominantly support:-

- businesses which had been required to close by the restrictions but were not on the rating list; such as businesses which leased part of the accommodation from another business and market traders;

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- businesses which had not been legally forced to close but had been severely impacted by the restrictions put in place; for example businesses which supplied the retail, hospitality and leisure industries;
- businesses which were important to the local economy.

As discretionary support grants would be provided through the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme, approval was sought to provide support through the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) scheme to those businesses in the hospitality, hotel, bed and breakfast and leisure industries only and makes payments in accordance with the guidance provided by BEIS.

During the period April to September 2020, the Council distributed over 5,000 grants to businesses providing over £57 million support. A further package of grants schemes was announced in October 2020 to support businesses through the on-going restrictions and national lockdown.

Agreed:-

- (1) that Sandwell operate the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and use the funding provided to only support businesses in the hospitality, hotel, bed and breakfast and leisure industries that are still open but severely impacted by Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions;
- (2) that Sandwell make grant payments in accordance with the amounts suggested in the guidance provided by Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

84/20

Covid Winter Grant Scheme

It was reported that councils would be given new funding to ensure vulnerable households did not go hungry or without essential items over the winter period.

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The Covid Winter Grant Scheme would enable local authorities to provide support to families with children, and other vulnerable households and individuals from early December 2020 covering the period until the end of March 2021. The funding allocation to Sandwell was £1,404,606.44.

Preparations for the policy framework and allocation mechanism for this funding had started, however, the official guidance would not be made available until 26 November 2020. Consideration was now given to activities to date and options for allocation, but the final detail could not be determined without full understanding of the national guidance and its implications. It was therefore recommended that the Emergency Committee authorised the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, relevant Scrutiny Chair(s)/Vice Chair(s) and relevant Director(s), to amend the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme and process as necessary to give effect to any Government guidance that was issued in relation to the Scheme and its application and operation.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that the holiday activities and food programme was separate and a further report would follow on this scheme.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme be approved;
- (2) that the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, relevant Scrutiny Chair(s)/Vice Chair(s) and relevant Director(s), to amend the Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme and process as necessary to give effect to any Government guidance that is issued in relation to the Scheme and its application and operation.

Meeting ended at 16.48

This meeting was webcast live and is available to view at the link below

[Emergency Committee 24 11 2020](#)