

Report to Emergency Committee

12 January 2021

Subject:	Additional Restrictions Grant
Director:	Chief Executive- David Stevens
Contact Officer:	Tammy Stokes

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That approval be given to the amendments to the Additional Restrictions Grant Policy as set out in Appendix A.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The proposed amendments to the policy will ensure those businesses not eligible for the prescribed grant schemes which have been severely impacted by the national lockdown can receive a similar additional one-off support grant payment.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

3.1 Providing this crucial support will help our businesses survive the pandemic and will therefore help to ensure we have a strong and inclusive economy.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 On 11 November 2020 the Emergency Committee approved the council's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) policy 2020/21. The policy aims to provide support to those businesses affected by Covid-19 local restrictions who are not entitled to support through the prescribed Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes.

4.2 At the beginning of January 2021, following the commencement of a national lockdown, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced an additional business support grant scheme. The new scheme will provide businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure industries with one-off grants of £4,000, £6,000 or £9,000 dependent on the rateable value of the business.



This one-off grant will be paid in addition to the Local Restrictions Support Grant payments. At the time of writing this report detailed guidance on the new grant scheme had not been received.

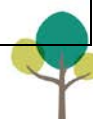
- 4.3 At the same time BEIS announced that further top-up funding would be made available for the ARG. The additional funding is intended to provide extra support for businesses through the lockdown period. At the time of writing this report the amount of top-up funding has not been confirmed but BEIS advise that it will be an amount per head population.
- 4.4 This report seeks Emergency Committee’s approval for amendments to the ARG policy to ensure businesses impacted by the national lockdown that are not eligible for the prescribed one-off support grants can receive similar support through the council’s ARG policy.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Do nothing – the Council could decide not to amend the ARG policy but this would disadvantage local businesses and the local economy in this time of need.

6 Implications

Resources:	The top-up funding for ARG is a one-off payment and once the funding is exhausted no further funding will be provided in relation to discretionary business grants. Due diligence will be undertaken to ensure as far as practically possible grants are not claimed fraudulently.
Legal and Governance:	BEIS requires councils to publish their ARG scheme on its web-site. Any update to the policy will be communicated via the council's website.
Risk:	The application and assessment process helps to eliminate fraud by questioning, verification checks and evidence requirements.
Equality:	An equality impact assessment is not required.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no direct implications on health and wellbeing arising from the decisions being sought.



Social Value	Helping businesses to survive these difficult times will have a positive impact on the economy and labour market.
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7. **Appendices**

ARG Policy January 2021

8. **Background Papers**

None

