

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	5 July 2021
Report of the	-	Chief Executive
Subject	-	Decisions taken as a matter of urgency at Cabinet Meetings

The Council is asked to receive the report of Cabinet, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and 17(a) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, on a decision taken as a matter of urgency at its meeting held on 28 June 2021. (Council to note that there were no urgent decisions taken at the Cabinet meeting held on 24 May 2021).

CABINET – 28 June 021

CB21/23. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT – DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RESTART GRANT SCHEME

Following the delay to the lifting of all COVID-19 pandemic restrictions until 19 July 2021 that would impact the hospitality sector, it was proposed that these businesses received an additional grant from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) discretionary funds the Council held, to cover the extra four-week period. The amount of grant would be based on a proportion of the latest national business restart grant that they had received and based on initial calculations, in excess of 170 local businesses would benefit from this extra help; the eligible businesses would not need to apply as the Council would make direct contact.

It was noted that in taking this action, the Council was likely to spend all the original £2.75m of funding by the deadline which would enable the Council to qualify for the additional top up funding the Government announced earlier in the year. It was anticipated that of the £425m announced, the extra funding for Rother would be in the region of £700,000 and would enable the ARG discretionary grant scheme to continue to support businesses.

It was proposed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to finalise the amounts of grants and detailed criteria. An additional delegation was also agreed to amend the criteria to enable the swift award of grant to other business sectors that officers and Members became aware of that had also been severely curtailed due to the continued COVID restrictions and had fixed/additional business costs. In this regard, Members were encouraged to contact the Assistant Director of Resources / Revenues and Benefits Manager in the first instance if they knew of any other business that might require assistance.

Members were proud and paid tribute to the work undertaken by the Revenue and Benefits Team in supporting the local business community

during the pandemic, by making sure funding support was paid in a timely manner.

RESOLVED: That the:

- 1) Additional Restrictions Grant - Discretionary Business Restart Grant Scheme be expanded to provide additional support to hospitality businesses that are public houses, restaurants and cafes;
- 2) Chief Executive be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to finalise the amounts of grants and detailed criteria; and
- 3) Chief Executive be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to amend the criteria to award similar grants to any other businesses who have been severely impacted by the extension of restrictions as detailed in the report.

The Chairman of Council had agreed that, subject to the approval of Cabinet, this decision could be taken as an urgent decision to allow the Council to maximise the use of the available funding to support local businesses.

(Cabinet Agenda Item 17)

Malcolm Johnston
Chief Executive