

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance
Date	12 November 2020
Present	Councillors Ayre (Executive Member for Finance and Performance) and Waller (Executive Member Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning for agenda item Lockdown and Tier 3 – Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG))

36. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Members confirmed they had no personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, nor any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, to declare in the business on the agenda.

37. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak on Agenda Item 3 - Lockdown and Tier 3 – Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) at the session under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Martin Spencer welcomed the focus of the grant on all York based businesses. He noted it was good that all businesses that have premises in York would now be eligible - as this would cover the many local traders who trade in York but do not live in York. He expressed concern that a number of businesses that did not qualify for assistance under Tier 3 restrictions and noted that many local retail and hospitality businesses have struggled severely with turnover dropping massively during Tier 2 restrictions. He stressed the importance of working together and offered support from business.

Kevin Tuohy spoke about support for traders at the Shambles market who had lost trade at a time of year when they would be making a surplus to last the rest of the year. He noted that the market could help the way forward in igniting footfall in York. He asked whether local traders on Shambles market could get financial assistance for such as rents from CYC through the equivalent of the local restrictions business grant.

38. Lockdown and Tier 3 – Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)

This item was considered in consultation with Cllr Waller (Executive Member Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning)

The Executive Members considered a report providing recommendations on how the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) discretionary fund, provided as part of the Government's COVID-19 support, could be used. This followed the report presented at the previous Decision Session on 5 November 2020 on the Local Restriction Grants (LRG) for Tier 2 Sector and Lockdown to support York businesses.

The Head of Economic Growth outlined the report detailing the businesses eligible for the grant and the support available for businesses in the supply chain. He also detailed the method by which the grants would be allocated and distributed. The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning thanked officers for preparing the report and for work undertaken to engage and support businesses. He noted that the council as well as other local authorities had been lobbying the government, and as a result, changes had been made. He noted the importance of working with partners such as York BID, Make it York and the Institute of Directors and acknowledged the comments made by those organisations. He noted that many businesses would be supported by the grant. The Executive Member for Finance and Performance welcomed the grant, adding that the allocation of a preliminary budget of £200k to fund future reopening events was vital in taking reopening forward. It was then;

Resolved:

- (i) That the Chief Operating Officer be recommended to make an emergency decision to:
 - Implement a discretionary grants scheme providing support to the businesses outlined and at the levels indicated in paragraphs 19 and 20 to run until March 2022.
 - Instruct the Head of Economic Growth to develop more detailed proposals for a business support voucher scheme for consideration at a subsequent Executive Member Decision Session
 - Allocate a preliminary budget of £200k to fund future reopening events
 - Keep the allocations under review as the pandemic progresses, bring update reports back to Executive Member Decision Sessions should the budget need to be adapted.

- (ii) That should any element of this scheme be changed by subsequent government, delegation for the decision under this scheme be given to the Chief Finance Officer (s151) in consultation with the Executive Member Finance and Performance/Executive Member Economy & Strategic Planning, with changes approved retrospectively in public at the next available Executive Member decision session.

Reason: To support to York businesses which are affected by the Lockdown and Tier 3 restrictions but not eligible for Local Restrictions Grant (Closed) funding.

Cllr N Ayre, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.32 am].