

<b>Record of Executive Member Decision Taken Under the Scheme of Delegation</b>	<b>On</b>
	<b>16<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b>

Title	Report of
<b>Government Restart Grant Scheme</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Strategy and Reform)

Is this report confidential?	No
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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to seek approval to roll out, assess and award grant payments under the Government's Restart Grant Scheme.

### **Recommendations**

2. That the Chief Executive and S151 officer of South Ribble Council be given delegated authority to approve payment of the Restart Grants in line with Government guidance and the criteria in this decision.
3. That approval is given to lower the threshold for approval for LRSG Open Grants to 10% loss of income to make it in line with the ARG Grant.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

4. The scheme is in accordance with government requirements to administer Restart Grants to business affected by COVID19. In order to ensure as many businesses as possible are supported it is necessary to adjust the local criteria for the Local Restrictions Support Grants (open Businesses).

### **Other options considered and rejected**

5. The Government has asked local authorities to deliver these grants so the only other option is to not deliver them which would mean our businesses would not receive the required level of support.

### **Corporate outcomes**

6. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (tick all those applicable):

An exemplary council	✓	Thriving communities	
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A fair local economy that works for everyone	✓	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places	
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## Background to the report

7. The Restart Grant was announced in the 2021 Budget. It is a one-off business grant available to non-essential retail businesses (Strand One), and hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym or sport business premises (Strand Two). Guidance was subsequently issued by Government in the middle of March 2021.
8. This support will take the form of a one-off grant funding scheme in Financial Year 2021-2022. The scheme is called the Restart Grant (RG) and is administered by business rate billing authorities in England.
9. Grants of up to £6,000 will be paid to non-essential retail business premises, to help them reopen safely. Grants of up to £18,000 will be allocated to hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business premises, which may open later under plans set out in the roadmap and will be more impacted by restrictions when they do reopen. The Restart Grant scheme supports businesses that are predominantly reliant on delivering in-person services for the general public in the aforementioned sectors.

## The Restart Grant Scheme

10. The Restart Grant will support non-essential retail premises with one-off grants of up to £6,000 in Strand One of the Restart Grant. The following thresholds apply for these businesses:
  - a) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 or under on 1 April 2021 will receive a payment of £2,667
  - b) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000 on 1 April 2021 will receive a payment of £4,000
  - c) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £51,000 or over on 1 April 2021 will receive a payment of £6,000
11. The Restart Grant will also support hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business premises with one-off grants of up to £18,000 in Strand Two of the Restart Grant. The following thresholds apply for these businesses:
  - a) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 or under on 1 April 2021 will receive a payment of £8,000
  - b) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000 on 1 April 2021 will receive a payment of £12,000
  - c) Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £51,000 or over on 1 April 2021 will receive a payment of £18,000.

12. A process for the processing of the grants has been prepared using experience from the previous grants schemes and it is ready to be launched as soon as this decision is made.

### **Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) – Revised Qualifying Threshold**

13. Members will recall that the qualifying income loss threshold for Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) was lowered from 40% to 10% in order to ensure maximum coverage of the grant.
14. Approval is sought to adopt the same approach in respect of LRSG (Open) – ie lowering the qualifying threshold to 10%. This will ensure:
- Increased number of beneficiaries
  - Consistency with the approach adopted in respect of ARG
  - Compliance with guidance – as an income loss of between 10% and 40% is still considered significant
  - Maximising use of grant funding, and reducing the impact of potential claw back of unused funds
15. All existing application checks will continue to be applied to minimise the risk of fraud or error.

### **Risk**

16. The process for the awarding of the grants has been worked up with the assistance of internal audit and mechanisms established through other grants are in place to minimise risk of fraud.

### **Equality and diversity**

17. The scheme is open to all eligible businesses.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

18. The Council has received funding for **Restart Grants** totalling **£4,878,180**; this represents 90% of the estimated grant funding based on an initial Government estimate. When this threshold of funding has been spent, Government will top up funding to Local Authorities if required. There is therefore no budgetary risk to the Council.
19. Guidance has also been provided to Local Authorities outlining a requirement for enhanced anti-fraud checks (using the Spotlight Tool). This has been incorporated into the Grant assessment process – in consultation with Internal Audit.
20. The proposals in respect of **LRSG (Open)** will enable the Council to support more businesses through this grant funding scheme (total allocation **£227,481**). The application window closed on 31<sup>st</sup> March in line with Government guidance, however the new criteria will be applied to applications already received by this date. Payments have to be made by the end of April to comply with Government guidance.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

21. There are no issues of concern from a Monitoring Officer perspective. Clearly it is imperative that we have proper internal processes in place to ensure that fraud does not take place. Internal Audit have been involved in devising appropriate processes.


**Background documents** (or There are no background papers to this report)

List any background documents which are relevant, including policy documents or previous Cabinet reports. Remember for a public report all background documents referred to are open to public inspection on request. Use links to any web based documents.

**None**

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Development)	jonathan.noad@southribble.gov.uk	01772 625206	14 <sup>th</sup> April 2021

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained within this report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.

Signed:	
	<i>Leader of the Council</i>
Date:	16 April 2021
Publication Date (DSO use only):	19 April 2021

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.