

ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY

Committee: Council

Date: 22 February 2022

Author: John Hill, Chief Executive

[W145]

1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 To note the action taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the action taken by the Chief Executive on grounds of urgency be noted.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

(a) Additional Restrictions Grant – Round 8

3.1 The Additional Restrictions Grant is a discretionary funding scheme for local authorities to support businesses in their local economies during periods of lockdown relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 On 21 December 2021, the Government announced that a further £102 million would be made available for Local Authorities, through a top-up to the Additional Restrictions to support businesses severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions and the rise of the Omicron variant, when most needed.

3.3 The eligibility criteria and priority groups are detailed in the proposed scheme, which is attached at Appendix 1 for your information.

3.4 The decision on the grounds of urgency will enable the Council to implement the scheme and benefit those eligible businesses as soon as possible. The East Cambridgeshire Additional Restrictions Grant will go live from 21 January 2022 and the Council will be required to complete weekly returns to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

(b) Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund

3.5 The COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) is a retrospective support measure aimed at business ratepayers who have been adversely affected by the pandemic and have been unable to adequately adapt to that impact. It excludes those retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses that have already been receiving reliefs and are the recipients of the latest round of business support grants.

- 3.6 The Government is providing East Cambridgeshire District Council with £1,649,932 of Section 31 Grant funding to implement a scheme of discretionary rate reliefs in accordance with Guidance issued in December 2021 to reduce chargeable amounts in respect of 2021/22.
- 3.7 The guidance and the allocation methodology provide a clear indication from the Government as to how this support should be targeted. Local Authority Guidance on CARF outlines the basis of grant allocation to billing authorities, and the allocation methodology uses the change in Gross Value Added (GVA) as a proxy for the economic impacts of COVID-19 on each business sector.

SIC Code	Definition	Average GVA Reduction
A	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	-13%
B	Mining and Quarrying	-8%
C	Manufacturing	-9%
D	Energy	-1%
E	Water and Waste Management	0%
F	Construction	-14%
G	Wholesale and Retail	-8%
I	Hospitality	-55%
J	Information and Communication	-6%
K	Financial Services	-2%
L	Real Estate Activities	-2%
M	Professional Services	-7%
N	Administrative Services	-21%
O	Public administration	1%
P	Education	-20%
Q	Health	-10%
R	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-34%
S	Other Services	-32%
X	J-N: Information, Communication, Financial Intermediation, Real Estate and Business Services	-6%
Y	Transport	-32%
Z	Storage and Distribution	-1%

Table 1: Average GVA reduction by SIC category

- 3.8 The Council will apply a reduction to eligible business rate accounts based on the figures in table 1 above, but at twice the amount of GVA reduction to make full use of the available funding.
- 3.9 Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) will administer the scheme on behalf of the Council. They will notify eligible businesses and be responsible for the application process.
- 3.10 The reliefs need to be applied to business rate accounts during the 2021/22 financial year, to ensure they are reflected in yearend reporting to Government.

The decision on the grounds of urgency will enable ARP to implement the scheme and meet this deadline.

3.11 Under the Constitution, the Chief Executive is required to consult with the Leader of the Council prior to delegated decisions being made and subsequently inform the Chairman of Council and Leaders of the other Political Groups on the Council.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 There are no additional financial implications.

4.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) not required for the purposes of this report.

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – ARG Round 8 Eligibility Criteria

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
Urgent Action Memo dated: 19 January 2022	Room 103 The Grange Ely	John Hill Chief Executive (01353) 665555 john.hill@eastcambs.gov.uk