

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

OFFICER DECISION REPORT

Report Title	Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) 6 – Discretionary Business Grant Scheme			
Purpose of Report	To record the decision made with regards to adopting the scheme			
Decision(s)	A decision has been made to a. Adopt the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) 6 – Discretionary Business Grant Scheme b. Section 151 officer is authorised to make technical scheme amendments			
Consultation and Feedback	Group Leaders of all four parties have been consulted together with the Chief Executive and Section 151 officer			
Report Author	Simon Killen Revenue and Benefits Manager Email: simon.killen@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	None			
Background Papers	Government Guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities			
Appendices	Appendix A - Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) 5 – Discretionary Business Grant Scheme			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

1. **Background to the Additional Restrictions Grant**

- 1.1 The ARG is the discretionary business support fund introduced by Central Government for local authorities. It was first awarded to SDC in the second national lockdown period and a policy was put in place to distribute.
- 1.2 The ARG has continued throughout the local and national restrictions and now Omicron variant. This is the 6th scheme to be introduced to coincide with the lifting of restrictions.
- 1.3 The allocations awarded to SDC to date are in the table below.

	Allocation
“Lockdown 2”	£2,399,280
December Tiers	£1,065,646
Top Up June 2021	£1,034,343
Top Up December 2021	£249,277
Total	£4,747,919

- 1.3 The full allocation of funding from Lockdown 2 and December Tiers has been awarded from ARG 1 2 & 3 which unlocked a further top up allocation of funding of £1,034,343 with a further £249,277 as a result of the Omicron Variant,
- 1.4 The ARG is discretionary in nature and is intended to support businesses through this time of severe economic stress. Local Authorities have the freedom to decide their own policies and determine how the money is spent.
- 1.5 The council has £356,609 left of the ARG funding, which is being made available to support those businesses impacted by coronavirus retractions and rise in Omicron variant.

2. Eligibility Criteria

- 2.1 For the purpose of this scheme the Council has decided that the following eligibility criteria must be met in order to receive an Additional Restriction Grant.
- 2.2 Support will be provided to those that may have been severely impacted by the current restrictions and uncertainty caused by the Omicron variant including those from outside on the business rates system.
- 2.3 Businesses must fall into one of the following sectors:
 - Hospitality, Accommodation and Leisure for businesses outside of the business rates system only
 - personal care
 - travel and tourism including group travel, travel agents and tour operators, coach operators
 - wedding industries
 - nightclubs
 - theatres
 - events industries
 - wholesalers
 - English language schools
 - Breweries
 - Freelance and mobile businesses including caterers, events, hair, beauty and wedding related businesses
 - gyms
 - other businesses that may not have received other grants funding

3. Award Levels

- 3.1 The Council has decided that grant awards will be based on the following:
 - A business that is run from a domestic property or does not pay rent for a business premises will receive a one-off payment.

- A business that does not operate from a business rated premises but pays rent for a property used for business purposes will receive one grant per business.
- A business that operates from a business rated property will receive a grant payment based on the rateable value at 30 December 2021
 - £15,000 or under
 - £15,001 to £50,999
 - £51,000 or over

3.2 Payments will be made once the application has been checked and assessed.

3.3 The grant awards will be based on the number of successful applications.

3.3 The Council has complete discretion to determine and change the amount of grant award to businesses and there will be no right of appeal against the amount.

4. Excluded businesses

The following businesses will not be eligible for an award:

- a) Businesses that have already received grant payments that equal the maximum permitted levels of subsidy.
- b) Businesses that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking off notice has been made.
- c) The business is entitled to receive a grant under the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure grant.
- d) The council reserves the right to withhold payment and has discretion to determine which businesses to support

5. Recommendation

The scheme is adopted and implemented by Stroud District Council with immediate effect.

6. Financial Implications

The scheme is fully funded by central government

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7. Legal Implications

This is a discretionary scheme to apply funding provided by Central Government and the discretionary element is covered by a policy which has been drafted by officers based on government guidance. Officers will need to apply the policy when administering grants, but a discretionary policy should not be treated as a rigid or strict rule and every case will be assessed on its particular circumstances.

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8. Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

9. Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category