

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
DECISION**



DECISION OF: SECTION 151 OFFICER

DIRECTORATE: RESOURCES

DECISION NO: 017

SUBJECT: COVID 19 BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS:
ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (ARG) – PAYMENTS UNDER
APRIL 2021 POLICY

KEY DECISION: YES

REASON: To ensure financial support to businesses, with effective controls in place to monitor the spend within the funds available.

BACKGROUND

The revised ARG policy, effective from 1 April 2021, provides for one-off grants for previous recipients of ARG funding and for new applicants.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced additional funding (indicative amount of £3.495m) on 1 April 2021 for the Council under the ARG scheme but this will only be released once the existing funds have been completely exhausted.

Existing ARG fund allocation	£13,383,742
Amount paid out to businesses	£12,634,214
Committed to outstanding applications (estimated)	£95,980
ARG balance remaining (estimated)	£653,548

New top up ARG funding to be received	£3,495,896
Funding for current cohort to Restart	£2,267,500
Fund available for new applications (estimated)	£1,881,944

DECISION

To release funds on account of £2,267,500. In order to get critical funds to businesses previously funded via prior ARG cohorts at the earliest possible opportunity an advance draw down of funds will be required.

Payments due under the revised policy to previous recipients will be issued from the residual ARG funds of £653,548 with the remainder £1,613,952 paid on account from other funds received in advance for business grant support, until the actual ARG top up fund is released by BEIS to the Council as detailed in the table below.

Payment due to current cohort under April 21 policy	£2,267,500
Available ARG funds (estimated)	£653,548
Estimated overspend until new funds received	-£1,613,952

Preparations are underway to open an application process for new applicants to which £1,881,944 will be aligned, and payments due in respect of any applications that are decided before the top up funding is released would be made on account, within the overall funding allocation.

Approve

- Restart funding of £2,267,500 to be applied to eligible businesses previously funded via prior ARG cohorts
- Utilise the the residual ARG funds of £653,548
- To undertake a temporary draw down of £1,613,952 on account from wider business support grants to be replenished once ARG top up is received from BEIS.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Business support grants of £29m value have been received in advance and payment trends indicate that short term headroom will be available in these funds to meet this request.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

Applied in line with government guidance.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

CONSULTATION

N/A

RISK MANAGEMENT

We have received our funding allocation from BEIS which will be subject to a final reconciliation of ARG spend and any risk associated to non release of these funds is considered low. Any potential reductions will be managed from within the funding earmarked for new applications.

In confirming businesses eligibility for the funds, national & local risk management guidance will be followed, including pre & post fraud assurance assessments.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes-/ No
Applied in line with government guidance.

SIGNATORIES

DECISION MAKER

S151 Officer

Name: Denise Murray
Title: **Director of Finance/s151 Officer**

Signed: 

Date: **28/5/21**

Cabinet Member

Name: Councillor Craig Cheney
Title: **Deputy Mayor Finance, Governance and Performance**

Signed: 

Date: **28/5/21**

Note: If electronic signature used email from Director confirming decision and allowing use of electronic signature must be attached