

EAST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL EXECUTIVE DECISION NOTICE

1. Decision to be taken:
 - a) That the Leader of the Council formally approves the East Lindsey District Council Guidance to Business on the Award of Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund;
 - b) That the Executive Director, Growth be delegated the power to determine applications for grants under the Fund, and to authorise other officers of the Council to do the same.

Note: This form should not be used for Key Decisions

3. The following is the decision making body or person:

Councillor Craig Leyland in his capacity as Leader of the Council
 4. Financial implications from this decision have been communicated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Leader? Yes
 5. The decision was taken on: 28th May 2020
- Due to the urgency of the matter the Chief Executive in the exercise of his urgency powers has waived the right to call-in the decision.
6. Contact Officer and details: Tim Leader tim.leader@e-lindsey.gov.uk
 7. List of documents submitted for consideration in relation to the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made :
 - a) East Lindsey District Council Guidance to Business on the Award of Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund;
 - b) Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Guidance on the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

8. Where the documents are held and where they can be obtained from (except exempt items) when they become available: - Attached
9. The reason for the decision and other alternative options considered and rejected: -

On 13 May 2020 the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy issued his guidance on the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. It has since been modified in minor respects. The key point is, however, that this new fund is focused on supporting small and micro businesses, especially those with high fixed costs, which occupy modest accommodation (especially shared accommodation) and which have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID19 crisis. The Fund is intended to help businesses which might not have

benefited from other forms of COVID19 related Government assistance. This category includes regular market traders, bed and breakfast establishments which pay council tax instead of business rates and certain charity properties. The amount available for distribution in East Lindsey is £2,742,250.

The Council may also exercise a degree of local discretion in respect of those that are awarded grant. This reflects the fact there are likely to be more applications for assistance than there is money to go around. The way this discretion will be exercised must be set out in local guidance. The guidance the Council has prepared is attached to this decision notice.

In essence, the Council's guidance adopts the Government's mandatory criteria that control eligibility for the scheme. It also adopts the priorities specified by the Government. The Council's guidance then gives extra weight to businesses associated with the retail, leisure and tourism sector (i.e. the supply chain for that sector), and to town centre retailers, which the evidence indicates has been especially hard hit by the crisis, and which will play an important role in the District's recovery. We have also added in criteria which require an applicant to prove the hardship they have experienced by providing evidence of the fall in income they experienced between 1 February 2020 and 1 May 2020 compared with the same period in 2019. In addition, we have focused on the numbers of people they employ, so that we may give weight to those businesses that support employment in the local economy.

The criteria we have chosen for the purposes of exercising our discretion have the merit that they are simple, easily evidenced and verified, and capable of being assessed quite quickly. This is important bearing in mind the vital importance of making quick decisions so as to get the money that is available to those that need it without undue delay. The number of criteria could be increased or elaborated. Or they could be made more qualitative. However, in each case that would inhibit quick, relatively objective assessments, would be more resource intensive and liable to cause significant delay in paying over grant.

Finally, it should be noted the Council has worked closely with other Lincolnshire council's to formulate proposals that broadly align with its neighbours. Lincolnshire Council's aim to open up the fund for applications on 1 June. The fund needs to be publicised in advance. Therefore, an urgent decision is required to allow the guidance to be published as an essential pre-requisite to opening up the fund to local business.

10. Declaration of any conflicts of interest of the decision making body or the individual: N/A
11. Provide a note of any subsequent dispensations granted by the Head of Paid service: N/A

12. Financial Implications of this Decision:-

Estimated cost:-

£2,742,250.

Funded from:-

The cost of implementation will be fully funded by central government in response to COVID-19.

N.B. Please enter names below, signatures will be retained as a hard copy and will not be published therefore should be provided on page 3 of this form:

13. This decision has been signed off by:

Head of Paid Service/S151 Officer or person presiding

Alison Penn, Deputy Chief Executive

Leader/Officer:

Tim Leader, Executive Director, Growth

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Craig Leyland