

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DECISION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SECTION A

DATE OF DECISION:

26 March 2020

PORTFOLIO AREA:

Corporate Portfolio

SUBJECT TITLE: *Delegation of Authority to Head of Revenues to administer the Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Funds*

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

SECTION B – IDENTITY OF THE “DECISION-MAKER”

Name of Officer:

Roger Tetstall

Title:

Chief Executive

Pursuant to Delegated Powers as set out in paragraph (2) of “Delegations to Chief Executive” in Part 3 of the Constitution, namely

“To do anything, in consultation with the Leader, which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of the Council’s functions subject to:

- (i) the matter being regarded as an emergency or urgent situation; and
- (ii) a report back to the Council, Cabinet or Committee concerned. “

SECTION C – SUMMARY

Background

The Chancellor has announced a package of measures to assist business affected by the Coronavirus. These include

- a 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality, leisure and nursery businesses in England
- small business grant funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
- grant funding for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value of up to £51,000 (£10,000 for rateable values up to £15,000, £25,000 for rateable values up to £51,000)

The two grant schemes announced will be administered by billing authorities including the Borough Council, and will be fully funded by the Government.

The 12 month business rates holiday will be administered by the Head of Revenues, in accordance with existing authority under the Council’s Scheme of Delegation to Officers. This decision notice proposes extending the existing authority to include administering the new grant schemes.

The Government has set out in guidance the eligibility of businesses for these grants. Properties occupied for personal use, businesses with rateable values over £51,000, and businesses in liquidation will not be eligible.

It is understood that funding will be provided by the Government in early April, and eligible businesses will be expecting to receive their grants with the minimum of delay thereafter.

Officers administering the two grant funds will need to verify eligibility, and collect relevant data for submission to Government at a later stage.

As the schemes are being fully funded by the Government, there is no direct impact on the Council’s budgets. The Government has also indicated it is committed to meeting the delivery costs incurred by local authorities, which will be dealt with by a New Burdens Assessment.

Given that the grant schemes will entail a technical check of eligibility rather than the exercise of discretion, it is considered that a delegation to the Head of Revenues alone is appropriate.

SECTION D – THE DECISION

"That authority is given to the Head of Revenues to administer grants to eligible businesses under the Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund."

SECTION E – REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The decision-maker's reasons for making the decision recorded in Section D:

The two grant funds are not within the scope of existing delegated authority to officers. Both Government and businesses will expect grants to be paid out as soon as funds are provided by the Government, and therefore appropriate authority is required to meet these expectations and pay the grants to eligible businesses.

SECTION F – DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The options are:

1. to give delegated authority to the Head of Revenues; or
2. to refer applications (or the issue of giving delegated authority) to Cabinet.

Given the difficulties with arranging Council meetings due to current restrictions, option 2 would result in delays and economic harm to businesses, as well as damage to the Council's reputation.

SECTION G – OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None

SECTION H – BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were taken into consideration when making the decision:

1. Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund Guidance issued March 2020 by the Department for Business Energy and Industry Strategy.

SECTION I – Any Conflict of Interest Declared and Dispensation Granted

None applicable.

We certify that the decision this document records was made Pursuant to Delegated Powers as set out in paragraph (2) of "Delegations to Chief Executive" in Part 3 of the Constitution and is a true and accurate record or minute of that decision.

Chief Executive: _____ Dated: _____

The Leader of the Council _____ Dated: _____
