



**Dorset Council**  
**Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) Scheme**  
**Phase 5**  
**Dorset Growth & Resilience Fund**

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## Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

**'Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)'** means the additional funding provided by Government. Funding will be made available to eligible Local Authorities at the point that national restrictions are imposed or at the point the Local Authority first entered local restrictions;

**'COVID-19' (coronavirus);** means the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus;

**'Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)';** means the Government department responsible for the scheme and guidance;

**'Subsidies';** means the Government's replacement scheme for the previous state aid framework; and

**'State Aid Framework';** means the Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak published on 19 March 2020; and

**'Temporary Framework for State aid';** means the same as the **'State Aid Framework'**.

## **1.0 Purpose of the Scheme and background.**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under Phase 5 of the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme (ARG). The Council, as the Business Rates Billing Authority is responsible for payment of these grants.
- 1.2 This discretionary grant scheme has been developed by the Council in response to an announcement made by the Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy which sets out the basic circumstances whereby an additional restriction grant payment may be made by the Council to a business which has been severely affected due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- 1.3 Whilst the awarding of grants will largely be at the Council's discretion, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has set down criteria which **must** be met by each business making an application.
- 1.4 Grant funding under this scheme will be available for the 2021/22 financial years only.
- 1.5 Phase 5 –The Dorset Growth and Resilience Fund will look for proposals from businesses and business organisations. These proposals will need to demonstrate how the funding will support growth, innovation and business resilience within their business, the business sector and the local economy.
- 1.6 The fund will be a competitive round with proposals being accepted by the Council. With limited ARG funding available from BEIS, only the highest scoring applications will receive funding.
- 1.7 This grant scheme has been created taking into account Government guidance. Further guidance relating to the ARG at any time depending upon the overall impact of COVID-19. Dorset Council will respect any such guidance and reserves the right to amend this policy as and when appropriate aligned to Government advice.

## **2.0 Funding**

- 2.1 Under the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme (ARG) provisions, Local Authorities have received a fixed amount of funding
- 2.2 Once the Council has exhausted this funding, no further grants will be awarded.

## **3.0 Eligibility criteria and awards**

- 3.1 The Council is able to use this funding for business support activities and Government envisage that this will primarily take the form of discretionary grants although it can be used for wider business support activities.

## Awards

3.2 The Council has decided that, under Phase 5, grant awards can be awarded for any amount from £5,000 to £50,000. Each award will be determined based on the application for funding, the ability of the applicant to deliver the proposal and the evaluation criteria detailed below.

## Eligibility Criteria

3.3 The Council has decided that all proposals will need to be made in respect of one of the following three categories:

- **Category C.1. Creating and maintaining high quality jobs. Increasing productivity and innovation;** or
- **Category C.2. Business resilience for those still suffering from the longer-term impact of closures and allowing them to move forward and grow the business;** or
- **Category C.3. Business support packages and helping the local economy.**

3.4 Within each application, all businesses must prove their capability to deliver their proposal.

3.5 Applicants will be required to submit fully detailed proposals on how the awards will be used and proposals will need to prove their capability to deliver their proposed budget and identify the risks that could affect delivery.

3.6 In addition, applicants will need to provide a full budgeted breakdown of how the funding will be spent, including a cashflow forecast. Whilst match funding isn't essential, it will be beneficial to all applications.

## Evaluation Criteria

3.7 Each application will be evaluated taking into account the following key criteria for each category.

### **Category C.1. Creating and maintaining high quality jobs. Increasing productivity and innovation.**

3.8 Any proposal received will have to detail:

- (a) How the proposed project will maintain or create high quality jobs, including apprenticeships;
- (b) Where the proposal includes training or development of staff, full employee training programmes;
- (c) What any expected productivity will result from the proposal and how that will be measured; and
- (d) How the proposal is innovative.

### **Category C.2. Business resilience for those still suffering from the longer-term impact of closures and allowing them to move forward and grow the business**

- 3.9 For proposals made for awards under Category C.2, details will be required to demonstrate how:
- (a) It will assist businesses to recover from the overall impact of the COVID-19 crisis on business closures and reduced trading; and
  - (b) How the proposal will allow businesses to grow.

### **Category C.3. Business support packages and helping the local economy**

- 3.10 Applications made under Category C.3 will need to demonstrate:
- (a) The number of businesses supported by proposal;
  - (b) The quality of the business support package (if applicable);
  - (c) The expected impact on the local economy;
  - (d) The ability to replicate the proposal over other businesses or business sectors; and
  - (e) How the proposal is both innovative and different to existing or planned activities.

### **Additional Evaluation Criteria**

- 3.11 For any of the categories (above) the following additional criteria will need to be considered:
- Adaptability to new ways of working post COVID-19 crisis;
  - The low carbon impact of the proposal and how it meets the need for sustainability;
  - The proposals deliverability;
  - Identifiable risks; and
  - Any match funding available.

### **Who will evaluate the proposals?**

- 3.12 Applications will initially be assessed by an external partner, recommendations for approval will be reviewed by a panel of members and officers from Dorset Council. The Council will make the final decision on any award.

### **Excluded businesses – both local and national restrictions**

- 3.13 The following businesses will **not** be eligible for an award if:
- (a) They have already received a Restart Grant from the Council;
  - (b) They are based outside of the Dorset Council area;
  - (c) They have already exceeded the permitted subsidy control threshold;
  - (d) They are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking off notice has been made;  
or
  - (e) They were not trading as of 1 April 2021.

## Ineligible spending

- 3.14 Any amount of award granted **cannot** be used for the following:
- In retrospect to cover costs already incurred prior to any award;
  - For the purchase and/or lease of motor vehicles;
  - For the purchase and/or lease of property or premises; or
  - To clear debts.

## 4.0 How will grants be provided to Businesses?

- 4.1 The Council is fully aware of the importance of these grants to assist businesses and support the local community and economy. The Council's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme will offer a lifeline to businesses who are struggling to survive during to the COVID-19 crisis.
- 4.2 Details of how to obtain grants are available on the Council's website:  
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/emergencies-severe-weather/emergencies/coronavirus/business-and-employers/business-grants/additional-restrictions-grant>
- 4.3 Applications will be accepted during a 2-week window starting in November 2021. Any applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

## Who can receive the grant?

- 4.4 The Council will grant awards to the applicant and will require the applicant to enter into an agreement. This will ensure that all awards are spent in accordance with the proposal.
- 4.5 Where any applicant or individual misrepresents information or contrives to take advantage of the scheme, the Council will look to recover any grant paid and take appropriate legal action.
- 4.6 In all cases, applicants will be required to confirm that they are eligible to receive the grants.
- 4.7 The Council reserves the right request any supplementary information from businesses, and they should look to provide this, where requested, as soon as possible.
- 4.8 An application for an Additional Restriction Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.
- 4.9 Awards will be made within 30 days of applicants receiving the approval email from the Council.
- 4.10 Dorset Council will monitor how the funding is spent. A monitoring report will be required from **every** applicant in April 2022.

- 4.11 The Council reserve the right to monitor applicants for up to 2 years after the application has been approved.
- 4.12 **All grant funding received by applicants needs to be spent by 31 March 2022.**
- 4.13 All successful applicants and projects approved for the Dorset Growth and Resilience Fund must acknowledge the fund in any publications and / or public relations.

## **5.0 Subsidies and EU State Aid**

- 5.1 The EU State aid rules no longer apply to subsidies granted in the UK following the end of the transition period.
- 5.2 The United Kingdom remains bound by its international commitments, including subsidy obligations set out in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) with the EU.
- 5.3 This scheme is covered by 3 subsidy allowances:
- Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance – the business is allowed up to £335,000 (subject to exchange rates) over any period of 3 years;
  - COVID-19 Business Grant Allowance – the business is you're allowed up to £1,600,000;
  - COVID-19 Business Grant Special Allowance - if you have reached your limits under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance and COVID-19 Business Grant Allowance, you may be able to access a further allowance of funding under these scheme rules of up to £9,000,000, provided certain conditions are met.
- 5.4 Grants under these 3 allowances can be combined for a potential total allowance of up to £10,935,000 (subject to exchange rates).

## **6.0 Scheme of Delegation**

- 6.1 The Council has approved this scheme.
- 6.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the Section 151 Officer is authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Government guidance.

## **7.0 Notification of Decisions**

- 7.1 Applications will be considered on behalf of the Council by the Economic Growth & Regeneration and Revenues & Benefits Services.
- 7.2 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant either in writing or by email. A decision shall be made as soon as practicable after an application is received.

## **8.0 Reviews of Decisions**

- 8.1 The Council will operate an internal review process and will accept an applicant's request for a review of its decision.
- 8.2 All such requests must be made in writing to the Council within 14 days of the Council's decision and should state the reasons why the applicant is aggrieved with the decision of the Council. New information may be submitted at this stage to support the applicant's appeal.
- 8.3 The application will be reconsidered by a senior officer, as soon as practicable and the applicant informed in writing or by email of the decision.

## **9.0 Complaints**

- 9.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## **10.0 Taxation and the provision of information to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC)**

- 10.1 The Council has been informed by Government that all payments under the scheme are taxable.
- 10.2 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to an applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.
- 10.3 All applicants should note that the Council is required to inform Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) of all payments made to businesses.

## **11.0 Managing the risk of fraud**

- 11.1 Neither the Council, nor Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the schemes or fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them.
- 11.2 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.

## **12.0 Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid**

- 12.1 If it is established that **any** award has been made incorrectly due to error, misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

## **13.0 Data Protection and use of data**

- 13.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.