



Subject:	Update on DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration & Development John Greer, Director Economic Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update to Members on a further Letter of Offer received from DfC on the 8 th December for additional capital support for Business Grants as part of the DfC Revitalisation Fund.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ note that £3.585m has been received through the DfC Covid-19 Programme to date with work packages in place to roll out the Tranche 1 & Tranche 2 work streams as per Committee approvals received to date; ▪ note that a further Letter of Offer for £454k for business grant support was received on 8th December, ▪ agree to extend the Covid-19 Business Support Grant by up to £154k to meet the demand already in the system; ▪ agree to extend the Business Cluster and Community Grants by up to £300k and to extend the grant to include business clusters within the city centre on the allocation basis as outlined below; and ▪ agree that this paper should not be subject to call-in (as indicated above) because it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests given that the formal acceptance of the funding is required by DfC by 4th January 2021
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	<p>As per agreements through the SP&R and CG&R Committees, the Council has received £3.585m to date through the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme through the Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 Letters of Offer. The detail of this Revitalisation Programme has primarily been brought via the CGR Committee.</p>
3.2	<p>On 8th December 2020, the Council received a further Letter of Offer from DfC with an offer of £454k aligned to the Councils 'Covid-19 Business Support Grant scheme, bringing the total funding of this programme to £4.039m. This letter of Offer is for capital support only based on spend by March 2021. A formal acceptance of the funding is required by DfC by the 4th January 2021. Council currently have two business support grants in place as outlined below that could utilise this additional allocation.</p>
	<u>Covid-19 Business Grant Scheme Update</u>
3.3	<p>The Covid-19 Business Support Grant, with an allocated budget of £800k and aimed at individual businesses across the city, is now closed and fully committed through mini grants up to £2.5k per application. To date £238,000 of funding has been directly delivered to businesses and officers are continuing to work on distributing the remaining funding.</p>

3.4 Following the closure of the grant scheme due to achieving the budget limit there are 7 applicants whose applications have been fully assessed as being eligible but who were not able to receive funding as the £800k commitment was exhausted. In addition, there were around 65 applications that had only made it to the first eligibility assessment but that were not assessed any further. If all of these applicants were to be assessed, it is likely that the allocation would be in the region of £154,000 (£138,000 of which is subject to initial eligibility checks).

Business Cluster and Community Grant Scheme Update

3.5 The Business Cluster & Community Grant Scheme, with an allocated budget of £330k, opened on the 4th December inviting proposals from business clusters and communities for area based environmental improvement schemes to come forward to apply for capital grant funding of between £10k & £25k in line with the objectives of the DfC Letter of Offer. The scheme, which is open to businesses outside the city centre, is due to close on the 18th January, or on the full allocation of the funding available. Within the city centre, environmental / public realm improvement schemes are being taken forward by or in conjunction with the Business Improvement Districts (BID's).

3.6 The Business Cluster & Community Grant Scheme was launched in acknowledgement of the need for general environmental improvement works to support businesses and communities on the arterial routes and areas outside the city centre. It was also acknowledged that due to the potential number of locations, varying area based needs and geographical spread that Council do not currently have the resources to deliver out these proposals in-house.

3.7 Demand for this scheme and the capacity to deliver is yet to be fully understood, although members, officers and community/trader groups have been actively promoting the scheme throughout the city. At the time of writing this report 65 application forms have been requested with no applications returned to date.

3.8 Subsequent to the opening of this grant scheme some queries have been raised regarding the omission of city centre businesses to apply. This was based on the acknowledgement that a number of city centre based interventions were committed to through the Revitalisation Programme including a number of priority interventions proposed, and been delivered, by or in conjunction with the three Business Improvement Districts.

Allocation of Additional £454k of Business Grant Support

3.9 Given the requirements for in-year capital spend within the DfC Letter of Offer it is proposed that this additional funding is aligned to the existing grant schemes already in operation. To achieve this it is proposed to;

- Extend the Covid-19 Business Support Grant by a maximum of £154k to meet the demand of applications from individual businesses already in the system. This will be subject to completion of the eligibility assessment as outlined within the conditions of the scheme.
- Extend the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme by a maximum of £300k and open the scheme up to business clusters within the city centre. It is proposed that this is on the basis of up to £150k for the city centre and up to £150k towards the business cluster grant scheme for the arterial routes. This will be subject to completion of the eligibility assessment as outlined within the conditions of the scheme.
- It is recommended however that these extensions are kept under review depending on the level of demand and capacity to deliver as the scheme progresses.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.10 All financial commitments will be met from the DfC Revitalisation Programme with no further capital or revenue implications for Council.

The grant schemes will be administered by the Place and Economy and Physical Programmes departments in conjunction with Legal and Financial Services.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

3.11 Equality Impact screening carried out for the overall programme and the grant schemes. Officers will continue to monitor this as the programme is implemented.

4.0 Documents Attached

None