

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	16 December 2020
<b>Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Oliver Ryan – Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jayne Traverse Director of Growth
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>LOCAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANT (OPEN) AND ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT - DISCRETIONARY</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report sets out preferred options for the disbursement of the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) & Additional Restrictions Grant Funds.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>Recommend to Executive Cabinet to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. approve the recommended Local Restriction Support Grant (Open) and Additional Restriction Grant schemes and approve payments covering the periods before and after National Lockdown.</li> <li>2. Approve applications to be paid immediately once eligibility checks are completed and appropriate state aid declarations have been completed by the applicants.</li> <li>3. Receive a review and outcome report setting out all applications paid to be published on the Council website in April 2021.</li> <li>4. To agree the temporary re-prioritisation until February 2021 of the Growth Directorate Services as set out as 7.1 to enable the delivery of Local Restriction Support Grant Open and Additional Restrictions Grant.</li> </ol>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	The Grant Funds support delivery of the Work, Skills and Enterprise priority.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The Grant Funds will provide financial support for local businesses utilising the funding provided by Government for this purpose.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	<p>As set out in paragraph 1.1, the Council has received five funding for five different business support grants. Three of the funding streams are for mandatory grant schemes, which are fully funded and operated in accordance with prescribed terms, and these have been subject to a separate report. This report is focused on the two discretionary funding streams for business rates grants – Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) and Additional Restrictions Grant.</p> <p>The operation of these grant schemes will be complex and administratively time consuming. Government has indicated that new burdens funding will be made available to support administration but no allocations have yet been provided.</p> <p><b>Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) Open</b></p> <p>The Council has received an allocation of LRSG Open for the period 1 August to 4 November 2020 of £1,811,940. This is fixed amount and no further funding will be received for this period if the Council makes grant awards in excess of this allocation. Government has</p>

indicated that further allocations of LRSG Open will be made for future periods where local Tier 2 or Tier 3 type restrictions apply, however no formal funding allocations have yet been received.

As set out in section 4 of this report, based on the information available and the proposed scheme to be operated, it is estimated that claims for LRSG Open in Tameside will result in grant payments to the value of £1,877,370, which is in excess of the LRSG Open allocation. The report proposes using the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) to top up this scheme if required. If future allocations of LRSG Open are made on the same basis as the initial allocation, then future award periods are likely to require some top up of funding from the ARG. If future allocations result in funding at a lower amount, then the more ARG top may be required and the scheme will need to be subject to review on a regular basis as further LRSG Open allocations are received.

### **Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)**

The Council has received £4,792,000 for the period from 24 October 2020. This funding is to cover the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years and no additional allocations of funding are currently expected. The Council has full discretion in how it applies the ARG. The LRSG Open scheme is expected to require some top up of funding from the ARG pot and therefore an initial amount of £2,000,000 has been ring fenced from the ARG allocation for a discretionary grant scheme. This scheme is to operate on a first come first served basis until this ring fenced amount has been spent. It will therefore be critical that the application and processing arrangements provide a clear audit trail and accurate monitoring to ensure that grant awards do not exceed the allocated funding.

### **Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

As set out in the main body of the report recommendations sought relates to the two discretionary funding streams for business rates grants – Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) and Additional Restrictions Grant.

Members need to be satisfied that these discretionary schemes support the Council's priorities and will reach the businesses that the mandatory scheme do not support but are important to the Council to support their sustainability for the economy and the region.

Members will also have to be satisfied that the benefits derived from these two schemes outweighs the impact that service considers that the delivery of these schemes will have on the existing service provision.

It is important that the nature of applicants/businesses that will be successful is set out in this report for the reasons of transparency and similarly that the detail of successful applicants should be published on the Council's website.

Given that the proposal is that the scheme will operate on a 'first come first served' basis it is also important that the scheme and how it is to be advertised and administered is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and that there is a comprehensive communications strategy as well as having a readily accessible and understandable application process.

The Council has now managed a number of these schemes and should bring all of experienced gleaned from those to ensure that there is a robust due diligence and audit process in place to ensure that the funds are distributed appropriately. Part of that process will include obtaining State Aid declarations before a payment is made.

It is also advisable that a report is returned to Members once the schemes have been concluded in order that the impact can be assessed.

**Risk Management:**

The Grant Funds will be delivered in partnership with Internal Audit with a full pre-project risk plan in place that will be updated and inform Government assurance documents.

**Background Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting David Berry, Head of Economy, Employment and Skills



Telephone: 07854163188



e-mail: [david.berry@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:david.berry@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government announced the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funds, via the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in October 2020. There are five parts to these funds with three following mandatory guidelines (which are already open for applications in Tameside), and two allowing Local Authority discretion. This report focuses on the two parts with discretionary elements.
- LRSG (Closed) (Mandatory criteria)
  - LRSG (Closed) Addendum (Mandatory criteria)
  - LRSG (Sector) (Mandatory criteria)
  - **LRSG (Open) (Discretionary elements and mandatory criteria)**
  - **ARG (Discretionary elements and mandatory criteria)**
- 1.2 The intention of the funding is complex and was introduced in piecemeal fashion by Government as England progressed to National Lockdown 2. The aims of the funding are to support businesses impacted by renewed COVID19 impact as areas progressed into LCAL 2 (TIER 2), LCAL 3 (TIER 3) and National Lockdown measures. The intent from Government guidance is to support hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses with Rateable Values (RV), however Local Authorities have the discretion to design a scheme around Government intentions supporting companies without RVs and wider business sectors. There is a clear expectation from the public and business community that each Local Authority has discretion to choose which businesses to support and this has created high demand on limited funding. The funding allocation for LRSG (Open) has been calculated by BEIS on specific business data / numbers that is not expected to match demand, as explained in section 3.2 of this report. ARG was calculated by Government through direct negotiations with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) based on circa £20 per head of population. GMCA led negotiations on the financial support needed and has been engaged in the principles for designing local discretionary elements.
- 1.3 The LRSG (Open) is intended to help kickstart recovery for businesses that are not legally required to close but are severely impacted by the restrictions under LCAL 2 (Tier 2) and LCAL High type restrictions (defined as when no indoor household mixing was introduced), and is retrospective applying from 1 August 2020 (as per LRSG (Open) Guidance section 2). This can apply to businesses, per property (property is also known as hereditament), with or without a rateable value (RV). The options set out in this report are aimed primarily at the pre National Lockdown period with an acknowledgement that the scheme could be reviewed and revised following a return to Tier 3 or 2 restrictions. Tameside Council has been allocated £1,811,940 (84 day allocation, funding confirmed by BEIS on 6 November 2020) for the period 1 August 2020 to 4 November 2020 (as per LRSG (Open) Guidance). It is proposed that Tameside Council manages this allocation closely and utilises the ARG to top up the budget set out above should demand exceed Government funding. It is expected that all Local Authorities will be given a new 28 day allocation following re-entry into Tier 3 or 2, however this has not yet been confirmed with a funding amount in formal guidance or offer letters by Government. It is important to note that LRSG (Open) could have an ongoing liability replenished and funded by Government (no details on size of funding) whereas the ARG grant will not be replenished and would therefore not support LRSG (Open) in any top up format indefinitely.
- 1.4 The ARG is intended to allow Local Authorities to support businesses in their local economies and to provide additional support to grant funding under the Local Restrictions Support Grant from the 23 October 2020 (GM entering LCAL 3 'Tier 3'). Government envisage that this will primarily take the form of discretionary grants, but that Local Authorities could also use this funding for wider business support activities. Tameside Council has been allocated £4,792,000 (confirmed by GMCA 13 November 2020) for the period beyond 23 October and is required to spend the money in financial years 2020/21 – 2021/22. It is proposed Tameside Council does not utilise any other funding beyond that provided by Government and does not

overspend on this allocation. It is proposed that initially £2m of funding is utilised for ARG with the remaining £2.7m available for top up of LRSG Open and potential additional use for ARG. Section 22 of the Government Guidance for ARG provided on 2 November 2020 is provided below for information alongside Question 23 from the FAQ guidance on 9 November 2020. These elements of the guidance enable Tameside to have discretion on how to determine funding and also to use ARG to top up LRSG Open.

*'22. Local Authorities can determine how much funding to provide to businesses from the ARG funding provided, and exactly which businesses to target'.*

*'23. Can Local Authorities use ARG funding to provide top-up grants for businesses receiving LRSG grants?*

*Yes. Local Authorities have the freedom to use funds from the ARG to provide top-up grants to businesses that are in receipt of grants under other schemes.'*

1.5 **Appendix A and B** set out the five streams to support businesses set out in guidance by the Government on the 2 November 2020. Even though these schemes have separate funding allocations and are targeted on distinct sectors they need to be considered together with additional funding such as the Job Retention Scheme (furlough) and Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

1.6 The report includes the following Appendices:

- Appendix A and B Information on the five funding streams
- Appendix C – Evidence Tables
- Appendix D - Non-preferred options
- Appendix E – Tameside LRSG (Open) Draft Scheme based on preferred option
- Appendix F – Tameside ARG Draft Scheme based on preferred option

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 This report details the guidance from Central Government and the options for the use of the LRSG (Open) and ARG grant funds in Tameside. Local Authorities have been given the discretion to determine the payment schedule and timings for these grants however Government strongly encourage payments to be made to eligible businesses as quickly as possible in order to help businesses in need. The success measure of the Tameside schemes will be their implementation with all monies being paid to Tameside businesses.

2.2 Whilst discretion has been given to Local Authorities, Section 13 of the LRSG (Open) guidance advises that the fund 'is aimed at hospitality, hotel, bed & breakfast and leisure businesses'. This is reiterated and extended in Section 23 of the ARG guidance which refers to retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, or business in the events sector. Both funds refer to business within and outside the business rates system (RV and Non RV).

## 3. EVIDENCE

### LRSG (Open)

3.1 To determine the level of funding received by Tameside for LRSG (Open) the Government requested the data set out in **Appendix C** Table 1. There are 508 known businesses (discounting Betting Shops) that fall within the recommended categories for LRSG (Open) n.b. these are recommended but not mandatory for Tameside to adopt in our discretionary scheme. There may be additional business properties (hereditaments) which are not known to the Local Authority but which should have a rateable value. Across Greater Manchester LAs the Government intention for sectors (hospitality, accommodation, leisure) and award levels are being utilised in LRSG (Open) schemes.

3.2 We are aware that there are businesses in the borough who are operating in the above sectors with a Rateable Value (RV), but who have not been included in the above numbers as the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) have classified their premises under a different type or SCAT code. It is the responsibility of the VOA to determine the classification of premises, however these have no bearing on the business rates payable. The VOA issued the following statement: *“the VOA’s rating list property descriptions and SCAT codes relate to the valuation of the property and not the business, as this can be different. We provided data to assist government with their calculation for the initial funding allocation estimates, however we understood it wasn’t intended that VOA SCAT codes would be used as a basis by LAs for eligibility.”* Whilst we know that these discrepancies in categorisation exist, and are aware of some examples, we do not have an exhaustive list of affected businesses.

3.3 Further data from the Tameside Discretionary Grant Fund application process (**Appendix C** Table 2) provides information on a further 19 non rateable value businesses / hereditaments in hospitality, accommodation and/or leisure where an application provided enough information on which we could make an assessment for the purposes of this report. This should not be taken as all of the businesses in this category within Tameside as not all businesses, such as those who did not meet the criteria to submit an application, were recorded in this process.

#### **ARG Evidence**

3.4 Further data from the Tameside Discretionary Grant Fund application process (**Appendix C** Table 3) provides information on a further 158 non rateable value businesses / hereditaments where an application provided enough information on which we could make an estimate for the purposes of this report. This should not be taken as all of the businesses in the non-rateable value category within Tameside as not all businesses, such as those who did not meet the criteria to submit an application, were recorded in this process. The Tameside Economic Baseline 2020 provides evidence on the number of businesses in the borough by size (micro/small/medium/large).

3.5 The number of self employed residents in Tameside can be gained from Government data provided in August 2020 (see **Appendix C** Table 4) which suggests that there are 9,800 Tameside residents eligible for the SEISS, of which 7,700 had made a claim by 31/7/2020. The options set out below do not include support for self employed who have not received support due to the limitations of the Government’s national scheme. Tameside Council as part of GMCA continues to lobby the Government on modifying the national scheme.

3.6 The options below provide support for commercial properties only as Tameside’s priority for allocated funding. Domestic home based properties will not be supported and prioritised above commercial based businesses, this means businesses such as entertainers, taxi drivers and allied trades who do not operate from commercial premises will not be eligible. This is aligned and reflective of schemes across Greater Manchester.

## **4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

4.1 This section sets out options for Executive Members to review and decide on priorities for support and design of LRSG (Open) and ARG schemes.

4.2 The following points underpin the schemes:

- The LRSG (Open) and ARG schemes in total will not overspend.
- If the value of grant awarded from the LRSG (Open) scheme exceeds the allocated funding, the LRSG (Open) scheme will be topped up from ARG funding with regular reviews on spend and ongoing liability.
- The ARG scheme will operate until funding is exhausted on a first come, first serve basis.

- If the LRSG (Open) or ARG fund is undersubscribed with the applications received, the Council reserves the right to amend the grant schemes and utilise across both schemes.
- Businesses will only be able to receive funding from ARG if they have not received LRSG (Closed) / (Closed) Addendum / (Sector).
- Tameside awards will be per property (hereditament) for LRSG (Open) and per business for ARG.
- LRSG (Open) options relate to the period 1 August to 4 November 2020.
- ARG will be backdated to 23 October when Tameside entered Tier 3.
- Both the LRSG (Open) and ARG discretionary schemes may be reassessed following the end of National Lockdown Restrictions when Tameside anticipates receipt of a new allocation for LRSG (Open) from BEIS.
- We will operate on a streamlined evidence required approach - rateable value / rent costs and number of employees are confirmed by single pieces of evidence as defined in the guidance (**Appendix E & F**) and one bank statement is required to confirm account details and to demonstrate the business was open and trading in the relevant timescales. This will reduce processing time and speed up assessment, award and payment to applicants.

**LRSG (Open) Funding Options – Allocation for period 1 August to 4 November 2020  
£1,811,940 – Allocation post 3 December 2020 unknown**

- 4.3 The LRSG (Open) preferred option (set out below) is predicated on a streamlined approach to administration with RV the basis of award levels and Non RV based on property rental / mortgage costs and is aligned to other GM LA schemes. It is proposed that income levels are not used as the options are targeted on sectors that have had restrictions (e.g. mandated closing times). This will provide a more responsive process for applicants due to lower processing times. Other non preferred options are set out in **Appendix D**.
- 4.4 The payment levels are set using the suggested grant funding tiers detailed within the Government guidance:

	Rateable value of exactly £15k or under, or if Non RV annual fixed property cost (rent) exactly £15k or under	Rateable value over £15k and less than £51k or if Non RV annual fixed property cost (rent) over £15k and less than £51K	Rateable value exactly £51k or above or if Non RV annual fixed property cost (rent) exactly £51K or above
<b>28 day cycle payment</b>	£934	£1,400	£2,100
<b>1 Aug to 4 Nov 2020 or pro rata if not equivalent to 83 days</b>	£2,802	£4,200	£6,300

**Preferred Option - Option 1** – Direct funding to hospitality, accommodation and leisure with Rateable Values and Non Rateable Values on 28 day cycles (up to 96 days) approach using Government anticipated funding tiers.

RV or Non RV Fixed Property Rental / Mortgage Cost under £15K – £934 every 28 days  
 RV or Non RV Fixed Property Rental / Mortgage Cost between £15k and £51K – £1,400 every 28 days  
 RV or Non RV Fixed Property Rental / Mortgage Cost over £51K – £2,100 every 28 days

<p>The scheme will operate based on allocated funding and will be reviewed regularly until fully utilised. The initial award of grant will be for the period 1 August to 4 November 2020. Any further award of grant will be subject to additional funding being received from Government.</p> <p>Applications will be paid from 17 December 2020 with awards taking place following eligibility checks.</p> <p>The Scheme would be reviewed following Tameside moving out of National Lockdown (2 December 2020 once the Government have confirmed any potential new allocation of funding and considering any new guidance from Government) with no guarantee to fund applicants on an ongoing basis but with applications considered for the period before and after National Lockdown. It is not expected that Tameside would receive any refreshed confirmed funding allocation until w/c 7 December 2020.</p>	
<b>Eligible</b>	Tameside trading hospitality, leisure, accommodation with Rateable Value and Non Rateable Value in commercial premises.
<b>Estimated Cost Pre National Lockdown</b>	£1,877,370 (RV £1,805,952 , <b>Appendix C</b> Table 5, plus known non RV £71,418 <b>Appendix C</b> Table 6 ) The RV is based on the VOA SCAT codes and actual applications could be higher as there is shared concern across GM that the codes used are inaccurate and liability may be higher. The non RV figure is using the partial data available from Discretionary Grant Fund application data and is an estimation, liability may be higher.
<b>Estimated Cost Post Lockdown per 28 day period</b>	£625,790 (RV £601,984 <b>Appendix C</b> Table 7 plus known non RV £23,806 <b>Appendix C</b> Table 8) The RV is based on the VOA SCAT codes and actual applications could be higher as there is shared concern across GM that the codes used are inaccurate and liability may be higher. The non RV figure is using the partial data available from Discretionary Grant Fund application data and is an estimation, liability may be higher.
<b>Evidence Required (above self declarations)</b>	RV details or rent/business mortgage agreement and proof of ongoing payment. Confirmation of business trading within hospitality, leisure or accommodation sectors. Bank statement to show trading dates and confirm bank account.
<b>Positives</b>	Targets all funding on businesses from the from the hospitality, accommodation, leisure sector. Consistency with schemes across GMCA. Enables greater control of spend by focusing on narrow sectors.
<b>Negatives</b>	Potential for oversubscription to the Government allocated fund of £1.8m that will be topped up by ARG funding requiring regular review.
<b>Overall summary</b>	Preferred option, consistent with other GM LAs and follows intent of Government guidance.

#### **ARG Funding Options – Allocation for period 23 October to 31 March 2022 - £4,792,000**

4.5 Authorities in Greater Manchester are working towards the following collective principles in the design of an ARG scheme:

- a) Businesses which are badly affected by the restrictions but who are not receiving other grant support
- b) Other businesses which are important for each LAs economy



- 4.6 The ARG fund must be spent by the end of 2021/22 (31/03/2022). It is likely that the funding will be fully utilised during the national lockdown period and following months due to need and demand.
- 4.7 The preferred option for ARG is set out below. Other non-preferred options are set in **Appendix D**.

<p><b>Option A – Tameside trading businesses who are not receiving LRSG (Closed) / (Closed) Addendum / (Sector) grant will receive one off payments based on employee numbers.</b></p> <p>This option is open to RV and Non RV but not domestic (home based) businesses including self employed in domestic premises.</p> <p>One off payments based on Tameside employee numbers per business (<b>Appendix C</b> Table 9 for detailed calculation). The levels below are based on all 5,788 eligible businesses applying and qualifying for a grant.</p> <p>0-9 = £1,000 (5,455 businesses, estimated 5,224 eligible)  10-49 = £2,500 (580 businesses, estimated 486 eligible)  50-249 = £10,000 (90 businesses, estimated 60 eligible)  250+ = £20,000 (15 businesses, estimated 8 eligible)</p> <p>The scheme will operate on a first come, first serve basis with an initial pot of £2,000,000 until all funding fully utilised and exhausted.</p> <p>Applications will be paid from 17 December 2020 with awards taking place following eligibility checks.</p>	
<b>Sectors Covered</b>	Tameside trading businesses without a rateable value who are not eligible for LRSG (Closed) / (Closed) Addendum / (Sector) support and businesses with a rateable value in commercial premises that have been affected by COVID19.
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Capped at £2,000,000 on a first come first serve basis. If all estimated eligible applied total value of applications would be £6,659,816.
<b>Evidence Required (above self declarations)</b>	Tameside employee payroll aggregate data (personal details redacted) RV details if applicable. Evidence to confirm the business was trading from a commercial premises on 22 October 2020.
<b>Positives</b>	Consistent with key GM principle of supporting those not receiving LRSG (Open) or (Closed) / (Closed) Addendum / (Sector). Simple to understand. Supports employment. Wide criteria provides opportunity for more businesses. All business sectors are supported. Lower processing time due to evidence requirements.
<b>Negatives</b>	High level of applications to process, potentially 5,778 in total although if demand was high this number would be reduced due to funding cap coming into effect and the application window closing. Higher demand than funding allocated would result in some businesses not receiving funding.
<b>Overall summary</b>	Preferred option, meets key GM criteria, provides a simple scheme that enables any Tameside commercial based business to access financial support.

## **5.0 TIMESCALES FOR DELIVERY**

- 5.1 The Schemes will be delivered against the following proposed milestones and timescales.
- Early December 2020 - Review implications for LRSG (Open) Scheme (for period post Lockdown) following scheduled end of National Lockdown on receipt of new allocation should Tameside enter LCAL 2 or LCAL 3.
  - 10 December 2020 – application form (online and non-online option) for LRSG Open and ARG made live
  - 16 December 2020 – Cabinet Decision on Schemes to enable payments
  - 17 December 2020 onwards – Assessment, processing, award of payments following eligibility checks without requirement for Key Decision.

## **6.0 DESIGN AND DELIVERY**

- 6.1 Officers from Employment, Economy and Skills, Exchequer, Finance, Internal Audit and Policy and Communications formed a working group to progress all the grants and the design of the discretionary elements. Finance will continue to monitor spend throughout the delivery period, Internal Audit will support to ensure fraud is limited due to controls in place. Post payment checks will also be made.

## **7.0 IMPACT ON EXISTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

- 7.1 In order to prioritise delivery of the LRSG Open and ARG grant schemes the temporary changes to service provision have been set out below because of the need to second staff into this project. The workload of the Directorate will continue to be monitored, with Members updated with wider impacts if required.
- Temporarily reduced input to adults with disability employment support work until February 2021
  - Suspend any new Tameside Employment Fund placements until February 2021
  - Inclusive Growth Strategy consultation extended with consideration by Cabinet in March 2021
  - In Work Progression Pilot with Department for Work and Pensions start date deferred until July 2021
  - Pennine Care Early Intervention Service mental health employment coach deferred until February 2021
  - Reduced business engagement work until February 2021

## **8.0 RISKS**

- 8.1 The table below sets out risks and mitigations.

#	Risk	Impact	Rating	Mitigation
1.	Council overspends on funding allocated by Government	Council would be liable for amount above Government funding.	Low	The Council cannot overspend due to the following mechanism; The ARG scheme operates on a first come, first serve basis until all funding fully utilised and exhausted. The LRSG (Open) scheme is funded by Government allocation expected to be refreshed every 28 days when re-entering TIER 2 or 3 with a top up from ARG pot which will be regularly reviewed.

2.	The Government allocation amount for LRSG (Open) is lower than demand.	Overspend cannot occur however Tameside Council would need to communicate effectively to applicants that the Government had not provided the required level of funding compared to their Guidance and communications.	High	The preferred option has been modelled on data from the Business Rates system which may be inaccurate to actual applications received. The mitigation available is to operate the LRSG (Open) scheme with a top up from ARG to be regularly reviewed. All GM authorities have recognised this risk.
3.	Fraudulent applications	Public money is not used as intended.	High	The Council's Internal Audit Team will provide a review of controls to provide pre and post payment measures to combat fraud. Some level of fraud is expected within any scheme, the application and assessment process is designed to identify and reduce occurrences including verification of bank details to assess trading status, Spotlight checks, review of business rates data or fixed property costs (rent) evidence and aggregated payroll data evidence as applicable. The proposed schemes do have streamlined evidence requirements to ensure faster application, assessment and award processes when compared to Discretionary Grant Fund
4.	Capacity to implement and deliver scheme.	Slow payments to businesses.	High	The Discretionary Grant Fund was delivered in the Summer months by Growth when a team could be assembled from Adult Community Education (closed at the time, now back in day job). Currently the identified team is under capacity and the application and assessment period will take place during Christmas closure where annual leave request are higher across all services (including support services needed for a project like this e.g. IT/Audit/Creditors). The Council will aim to supplement the core team with resources from across the Council.
5.	Impact of delivery of the scheme on economy, employment and skills provision.	Temporary changes to service provision	High	Section 7 sets out the temporary reduction or suspension of some programmes of work, to be regularly monitored and reviewed.
6.	Financial impact on businesses and reputational damage to Council due to Schemes going live on	The Tameside business community is currently requesting the	High	The Council is required to take a Key Decision through Executive Cabinet on 16 December 2020 to launch these discretionary schemes. Communications will be regular to

	10 December 2020 for applications with payments from December 2020 and into January 2021	Council launches a scheme immediately to ease financial pressures with negative perspective on the Council's ability to deliver the grants compared to neighbouring LAs.		ensure businesses are aware when applications are open. The preferred options have been designed to streamline processing and application requirements to enable payments from 17 December 2020 as soon as application eligibility verified without need for further approval on award.
7.	Risk of systems failure due to Economy, Employment and Skills operating excel spreadsheet as database should 2,000+ applications be received	Applications received are processed ineffectively or data is lost due to excel database not being fit for purpose as a database tool for processing large volumes of payments. During DGF the 350 files were held within a shared excel database which proved a challenge due to the software slowing down and not having a function to record over writing of data.	High	The Economy, Employment and Skills (ESS) service are working with IT to identify solutions or improve existing systems. Review has included systems such as Annite (info@work) and Capita. EES service would need to be fully trained on all process requirements for any new system although these systems are not currently thought to be solutions. Over the Christmas period an operational plan would need to be enacted to ensure support services (e.g. IT) could resource any issues that arose with email or database system.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The two schemes set out for approval will provide up to £6,603,940 of financial support to Tameside businesses.

## 10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 As set out on the front of the report.