



ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT POLICY

October 2021.

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Introduction

Under the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme, the Council received an initial sum of £2,015,240 being the equivalent to £20 per head of population as national restrictions were imposed on 5 November 2020. This was subsequently topped up by the Government with an additional £895,074 allocated to the Council.

Mandatory grants were withdrawn by the Government from 30 June 2021 with final payments being made no later than 31 July 2021. At the same time a further allocation of ARG was made available to Councils that had utilised all previous allocations. For this Council the additional funding is £634,571 which must be spent by 31 March 2022.

This policy describes how the Council will utilise the additional ARG funding between 19 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. Applicants are encouraged to read this policy before applying online.

Please note all support provided is only permissible to those businesses that have been and continue to be adversely affected by Covid – 19 and can demonstrate this as part of the application process.

Skills and Training Support

Support to enhance the current business support offer to Covid 19 affected businesses includes support for skills and training initiatives. Support is provided in partnership with Staffordshire County Council and funded accordingly. An amount of £302,000 is allocated to this element of support for trading businesses. (Allocated from original ARG Fund). As of 15 October 2021 the allocation has been fully committed and applications are therefore no longer being invited.

Support for businesses in our town centres is directly aimed at helping businesses (especially small independents and hospitality businesses) to bounce back after Covid 19. Encouraging footfall and shoppers back into our town centres is seen as a key way of supporting those businesses most adversely impacted upon by Covid 19.

Car Park Fee Re-imbursement Scheme.

The scheme operated for a three-month period that commenced on 21 June 2021 and offered shoppers the ability to receive a refund of £2 on the cost of their parking ticket if they spent £10 or more in participating independent shops and hospitality businesses in a single transaction.

Funding is now being allocated to extend the initiative from 1 November 2021 up to 30 January 2022 – this extension will utilise additional ARG monies received by the Council.

Any extension of the initiative will incorporate the following changes:

- o Reduction in the value of the transaction (from £10 to £5) that a customer needs to make to qualify for a refund i.e. £2 refund based on a £5 transaction

- o Reduction in the amount of grant funding to be made available to participating businesses from £500 to £250

Any participating Cannock or Rugeley Town Centre business (Hednesford already operates free car parking) must have been and is still being affected by COVID 19.

Provisional Fund Allocation £30,000

Participating businesses will need to adhere to the following Terms and Conditions.

<https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/visitors/parking/new-car-parking-discount-initiative>

The Council reserves the right to exclude any business they believe is not adversely affected by Covid 19. To be part of the extension, participants will need to have demonstrated an active promotion of the scheme and have administered a minimum of 3 refunds during the pilot programme.

Support to those businesses who continue to be affected by Covid 19 and are struggling to bounce back are of particular importance to the Council.

COVID Recovery Grant

Recovery grants are available to small businesses (less than 50 employees) who continue to be adversely affected by Covid 19 in the Cannock Chase District and can prove a minimum of a 30% loss in income when comparing September 2019 against September 2021 figures. Grants will be paid based on the Rateable Value of the occupied commercial premises. Businesses operating from domestic premises or shared commercial premises also qualify for support. This fund will apply to existing Cannock Chase businesses on the Business Rates listing as of 1 October 2021.

Eligibility

- Business must be able to demonstrate they have been and continue to be adversely affected by Covid-19.
- Businesses must have been trading in the Cannock Chase District as of 1 October 2021
- Business must be a Small Enterprise (up to 50 employees) and sign a declaration to this effect
- Government Subsidy Limitation rules apply and a signed declaration is required (maximum of support must not exceed £335K in 3 years)

Evidence

Evidence required for this grant is:

- Business must be able to demonstrate they have been and continue to be adversely affected by Covid-19.
- Bank statements evidencing a minimum of a 30% loss of income. Income for September 2021 must be at least 30% less than income received in September 2019. Only income paid into a bank account will be accepted and must be evidenced on Bank Statements submitted.

- Unique taxpayer reference number (Copy of UTPR document or screenshot from HMRC website)
- Evidence of trading (Business Accounts, Business Bank Account, Website, Business Card, Business Literature)
- Copy of lease agreement where applicant is applying under shared space to evidence their tenancy.

Please complete the online application form found on the Council's Business Rates webpage <https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/business/business-rates>

Please note there is an **inactivity time limit of 20 minutes** built into the application form process and applicants are encouraged to gather the required supporting evidence before starting to complete the form.

After submitting your application online via the website you must email separately **ALL** your supporting evidence as listed above to businessgrant@cannockchasedc.gov.uk quoting your name, business name and national insurance number.

Only when all evidence is received and considered along with your website application will it be validated and processed by the Economic Development Team.

Applications will be assessed and processed in the order in which they are deemed as complete. You will be notified via email on the outcome of your application in due course.

We anticipate a high volume of applications to be processed and your patience would be appreciated during the assessment period.

Applications from the Events Industry are particularly welcomed by the Council.

A one-off payment will be made to businesses that satisfy the qualifying criteria and were trading on 1 October 2021, as follows

- a. Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 or under on 1 October 2021 will receive a payment of £5,000.
- b. Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000 on 1 October 2021 will receive a payment of £10,000.
- c. Businesses occupying hereditaments appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £51,000 or over on 1 October 2021 will receive a payment of £15,000.
- d. Businesses operating from domestic premises or shared commercial premises on 1 October 2021 will receive a payment of £2,500.

Should businesses be paid a grant to which they are not entitled, the Council will seek recovery of the amount and may take further action if false or misleading information has been provided.

Fund Allocation £604,571

Other Businesses.

The Council retains discretion to award grants, in exceptional circumstances, to businesses not meeting the above criteria but can demonstrate they have been and continue to be adversely affected by Covid-19. Such awards will need the approval of the Economic Development Manager or Head of Economic Prosperity. The factors used to determine the grants will include but not be restricted to:

- Severe financial hardship.
- Disproportionate impact of trading restrictions.
- Eligibility for other grants or external funding streams.
- Any benefit to the local community of services provided by the business.
- Detriment to the local community of the business being forced to close.

If you are considering applying for this discretionary grant, you are required to submit your enquiry, in the first instance by email to econdev@cannockchasedc.gov.uk for further information regarding the application process.

Considerations

Funding allocations identified are purely indicative and can be moved between various strands of funding, depending on demand. Grant funding will be on a first come first served basis. Applications and supporting evidence must be received electronically via the Council. (If applicants require additional support in completing the application process, this needs to be clearly indicated by emailing econdev@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

Appeals Process

Additional Restrictions Grants are paid at the discretion of the Council, with awards being determined within the Economic Development Department. No formal right of appeal exists, but an applicant who is dissatisfied with a grant determination may request that it be reviewed by a more senior officer.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, having regard for the trading restrictions and available funds at that time.

Please note the primary tool for communicating any updates regarding this Policy will be published on the Councils website. Potential applicants are responsible for their own monitoring of the website, as key information including closing dates will be displayed on this site