

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Leader

**Date:** 17 December 2020

**Subject:** Overview and Scrutiny Rule 53 (Special Urgency)

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor C Whitbread (Leader of Council)

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### **Additional Restrictions Grant Policy**

#### **Recommending:**

**That Chairman of Council agreed that the following decision be treated as a matter of urgency and not be subject to the call-in provision in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Rule (Call-in and Urgency):**

**(1) That the Additional Restrictions Grant policy be approved; and**

**(2) That the Chairman of Council be requested to waive the call-in requirements for this decision due to it being considered urgent and any delay caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the public interest.**

1. The Government has made available a range of grants for businesses during the Covid period. One of the grants relates to those businesses that can remain open during the latest Covid lockdown but are severely affected by its impact, as an example there will be businesses that supply the hospitality business and remain open yet their income has been severely affected. The grant is referred to as the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and it is for each local authority to determine their own policy in relation to this in accordance with Government guidelines. The Government has allocated EFDC £2.6m to fund this scheme.

2. The policy for EFDC as attached to the Leader's report targeted those businesses covered under Government guidelines and attempted to pick up businesses that have thus far not received any Government support. Revenues officers have been working with the Economic Development team to pull the policy together to maximise its impact.

3. The normal method for agreeing such a discretionary report would be a Cabinet report followed by a decision at Full Council. Due to the urgent need to get the grant payments out to struggling businesses it was recommended that a Portfolio Holder decision from the Leader accompanied with approval from the Chairman of the Council would facilitate the process in a timely manner.

4. In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Rule 53 (Special Urgency) of the Constitution, the Chairman of Council, Councillor H Kane was satisfied that this decision of the Cabinet should be treated as a matter of urgency. The Chairman of Council was satisfied that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the public's interest, as it would substantially lessen the time to get grant payments to struggling businesses.