

Additional Restrictions (Discretionary) Grant Issue 5

Payment Process:

1. Background:

Commencing with the national restrictions in November 2020, New Forest District Council (NFDC) was allocated £5,201,433 under the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). This funding was designed to support businesses impacted by further government Coronavirus restrictions that were not eligible for the support for businesses in certain types of rateable premises.

The ARG schemes are administered by the Economic Development team, with support from the Revenue and Benefits team and the budget responsible Officer Ryan Stevens, Service Manager, Revenue and Benefits.

As NFDC allocated all of its initial ARG budget by the Government deadline of 31 July 2021, it was eligible for further ARG funding of £1,402,655. This has now been received and the allocation of the majority of this budget via direct business support grants is the subject of this briefing paper.

In accordance with Government guidance, the bulk of ARG funds are allocated as direct grants to New Forest businesses that were impacted by the Covid restrictions.

There have now been 4 distinct ARG grant schemes: ARG 1,2 & 3 which supported a wide range of businesses not eligible for the rates based support, including businesses based at home, limited companies and others. ARG 4 was specifically for medium sized businesses and there was also a specific scheme for the New Forest's licenced taxi drivers.

The broad purpose of the ARG Issue 5 grant scheme is to continue to support:

- Businesses required to close by law, which were not responsible for the business rates on the premises (and were therefore not eligible for the rates based 'Business Support Grants' or 'Restart Grants')
- Businesses not required to close by law because they were classified by Government as 'essential businesses' but were impacted by the restrictions.
- Businesses in the hospitality, events and leisure sectors
- Businesses in the wider supply and service chain for the above sectors
- Businesses in the manufacturing and engineering sectors and their supply and service chains
- Businesses registered with Ofsted that provide childcare

2. Delivery to date:

To date 750 unique businesses have been awarded grants totalling £4,667,281. In addition, £458,000 was allocated to 458 New Forest licenced taxi drivers through the Taxi Driver Grant.

3. Proposal for allocating ARG 5 grants:

The main ARG scheme grants to date reflected the impact of national restrictions until 31 March 2021. ARG 5 will address the impact of the restrictions which continued after 31 March 2021 until largely lifted by Government on 19 July 2021.

The successful delivery of ARG 1, 2 and 3, has determined the delivery mechanism for ARG 5 as follows:

ARG 5 will consist of one-off grants paid to businesses in receipt of ARG 3 (which covered the period 16 February – 31 March 2021) of:

ARG 5 Grant Rates	
For a business based in a domestic dwelling	£1,050.00
if the business has a property with a rateable or commercial rent or boat mooring value of £15,000 or less	£2,500.00
if the business has a property with a rateable or commercial rent or boat mooring value over £15,000 and less than £51,000	£4,000.00
if the business has a property with a rateable or commercial rent or boat mooring value of £51,000 or above	£5,500.00

As such, the proposed payments under ARG 5 will total:

Potential number of recipient businesses:	Potential ARG Budget Spend
749	£1,341,150.00

4. Application process:

Where businesses have already provided high levels of detail and been assessed for grants paid to date, the application for further payment is designed to be a quick and simple process. This will enable funding to be distributed to businesses quickly.

Pre and post payment checks will be undertaken in accordance with Government anti-fraud guidance.

Businesses that received funding under ARG 3 will be contacted individually and invited to apply for their additional ARG 5 funding via an online application form. Businesses will be required to confirm that they remain trading and wish to accept the additional grant.

Applications for ARG 5 will open in November 2021 and will remain open for a period of 3 weeks.

Reminder emails will be sent to businesses that had not already applied for ARG 5.

Due to the constraints of the budget, it is not proposed at this time to open ARG 5 to new applicants, but this will be reviewed if resources permit.

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