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## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### ECONOMY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

**Thursday 21st January 2021**

Present: Councillor Harpreet Uppal (Chair)  
Councillor Martyn Bolt  
Councillor John Taylor  
Councillor Richard Eastwood  
Councillor Yusra Hussain  
Councillor Gwen Lowe

Co-optees Chris Friend

In attendance: Councillor Peter McBride  
Councillor Carole Pattison

Chris Duffill, Head of Service, Business and Skills  
Will Acornley, Head of Operational Services  
Jill Greenfield, Service Director - Customer and  
Communities

Observers: Fay McIntosh

Apologies: Eilidh Ogden (Co-Optee)  
Andrew Bird (Co-Optee)

**1 Membership of the Committee/ Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Bird and Eilidh Ogden.

**2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings of the Panel held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

**3 Interests**

No interests were declared.

**4 Admission of the Public**

All items were considered in public session.

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### **5 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

### **6 Public Question Time**

No questions were received from the public

### **7 Additional Restrictions Grants**

The Panel considered a report giving an update on the roll out of Government Covid-19 business grants being administered by the council and to seek the panel's views on the future priorities for the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme, which was presented by Chris Duffill, Head of Service, Business and Skills.

Chris Duffill highlighted the following key areas: -

- Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) (Closed) – this applied to all businesses mandated to close by Government and who are registered to pay business rates and has been in operation during the November lockdown;
- LRSG (Sector) – this grant scheme was specifically to cover nightclubs and sexual entertainment venues that Government required to close in March and had not re-opened;
- LRSG (Open) this scheme provided grants to hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses who were significantly impacted by local and then Tier 2 restrictions in place from 5<sup>th</sup> August – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and subsequently for businesses that were impacted but remained open during the period Kirklees was in tier 3;
- Christmas support payment for wet-led pubs – this was a one-off payment for pubs that predominantly serve alcohol rather than provide food and were severely impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, with eligible businesses receiving a grant of £1,000;
- Additional Restrictions Grant (ASG) – this was a discretionary grant scheme that was approved by Cabinet in November 2020 and aims to address gaps in the above schemes, including non-rate paying businesses required to close, businesses forming part of the retail, hospitality and leisure supply chains that are severely impacted by the virus and self-employed residents or other home-based businesses that have not been able to secure Government financial support.

In response to a question from the Panel regarding fairground workers, Chris Duffill advised that they were supported in the last lockdown from the discretionary grant scheme and would be able to receive support again under the discretionary grant scheme.

In response to a question from the Panel regarding Demolition Contractors with business rates over the threshold, Chris Duffill advised that there was an upper rate threshold which had been put into place during the first lockdown in March 2020, but this was not in place for the January 2021 lockdown.

In response to a question from the Panel regarding companies with changes in their company status, Chris Duffill advised that it was dependent on who the liable party

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was and confirmed that his team was working to ensure that businesses could apply for the grant and secure funding.

During discussion of the grants the Panel noted that the complexity of the various forms caused concern and more difficult applications took longer to deal with. The Panel also noted that there was a backlog of claims and that the team were currently working to a three-week turnaround.

Chris Duffill advised that one report for all claims was in the process of being prepared and that there were Facts and Questions available to view on the council's website to support claimants.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. The Panel noted the update on Additional Restriction Grants and thanked Chris Duffill for his contributions.
2. The Panel agreed that a focus was required for the self-employed creative industry.
3. That engagement with businesses to provide an understanding on who could apply was required.
4. That communication with applicants throughout the claim process should be improved.

## **8 Fly Tipping - Update**

The Panel considered a report on the Greenspace Action Team and the new approach on clearing Fly tipping which was presented by Will Acornley, Head of Operational Services.

Will Acornley highlighted the following key points: -

- Greenspace Action Team - The team had been restructured to deal with fly tipping across the borough which includes a Greenspace Action Team Manager, Fly tipping Team Supervisor, Ward Rangers Supervisor and Enforcement Supervisor. The new team is to focus on clearing fly tipping and collecting evidence;
- Fly tipping – Unwanted items that are dumped on land that is not theirs or on the streets. The top fly tipping items are household waste and black bags, construction waste and white goods;
- Enforcement – Investigates waste complaints on all land within Kirklees, serves notice forcing landowners to clear waste, takes statements to prosecute anyone that has been seen dumping waste, deals with dog issues, abandoned vehicles and other waste issues, issues fixed penalty tickets and prosecutes offenders;
- Ward Rangers – deals with removal of fly tipping, graffiti removal, vegetation cut back, street furniture and cleaning/painting, a small scale of highways repairs, Area deep cleans, grubbing out of weeds and clean signs and litter bins;
- CCTV- A trial has been put in place to support fly tipping trials, the types of CCTV are mobile and static which are attached to lampposts;

During discussion it was noted that fly tipping was still a big issue in Kirklees and in June and July the percentage of fly tipping was twice as high as in previous years

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Will Acornley advised that the increase in June and July was due to lockdown and home improvements.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. The Panel noted the report on Fly Tipping and thanked Will Acornley for his contributions.
2. The Panel noted the good work the team had made which had impacted all wards.
3. Further work is required in rural areas as well as built up areas.

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### **Community Champions Grant Scheme Update**

The Panel considered a report on the Community Champions Scheme presented by Jill Greenfield, Service Director, Customer and Communities. Public Health England released a review of disparities in risks and outcomes in June 2020 and the Government had focused on taking action to improve the support and protection for those communities and groups who had shown to be most at risk from Covid 19.

The review highlighted the following key points;-

- Some communities were disproportionately impacted by Covid 19, both in transmission rates and in mortality – most notably Pakistani and other South Asian communities, wider Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and people with disabilities;
- Morbidity and mortality rates will relate to wider social and economic factors including occupation/employment, multigenerational households, residential overcrowding and deprivation;
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, the Minister for Equalities announced that the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government would provide up to £24m of funding to support those communities who have suffered disproportionately from Covid 19;
- Kirklees was one of the areas identified to apply for the funding as the area has very diverse communities with a range of complex and individual needs.
- It was proposed that Kirklees will need to develop a Community Champion grant scheme that will need to follow a key principle of enabling our partners to be innovative, flexible and supporting local grassroot activity.

During the discussion the Panel noted that people with disabilities/learning disabilities were not being overlooked and communication with the BAME communities on the vaccine rollout was a very positive approach.

Jill Greenfield advised that funding had not yet been approved for Community Champions grant scheme and that Kirklees would be working closely with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and Public Health to support local grassroot activity.

### **RESOLVED –**

- 1 The Panel acknowledged the report and requested further updates once funding had been secured.

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### **Work Programme 2020/21**

The Panel agreed to add the following topics to the agenda for the next Panel:-

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- Major transport scheme;
- Digital update.

The Panel agreed to add the following topics to the 2020/21 work programme:-

- Winter maintenance linked to planning;
- Smaller Town Initiatives;
- Dewsbury Town Deal.