

| Report of | Meeting | Date |
|--|---------------------------|-------------|
| Director (Commercial) (Introduced by the Executive Member (Resource)) | Executive Member Decision | 17 Dec 2020 |

COVID CHRISTMAS SUPPORT PAYMENTS (WET-LED PUBS)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To seek member approval to launch the Covid Christmas Support Payments for Wet-Led pubs.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- Members are requested to approve the launch of the scheme as outlined in this report / attached guidance.
- The Chief Executive waives the call-in period in order to be able to launch the scheme prior to the Christmas Closedown.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- On 1 December 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support over the festive period for wet-led pubs in areas under Tier 2 or 3 restrictions.
- Qualifying businesses would be entitled to a one-off grant of £1,000.
- This report seeks approval to launch an application process alongside the existing “Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)” process in order to expedite payments to the Wet Led Pub sector.

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| Confidential report Please bold as appropriate | Yes | No |
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| Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate | Yes | No |
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To expedite support payments to the sector.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None considered – the Council is simply administering a Government led initiative.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

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| Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all | | A strong local economy | X |
| Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities | | An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area | |

BACKGROUND

10. On 1 December 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support over the festive period for wet-led pubs in areas under Tier 2 or 3 restrictions. Guidance is outlined in the attached link;



christmas-support-
payment-la-guidanc

11. This support will take the form of a grant funding scheme in Financial Year 2020-2021. The scheme is called the Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs (CSP) and is administered by business rate billing authorities in England.
12. Funding amounts to a one-off payment of £1,000 per wet-led pub in each eligible Local Authority where Tier 2 or Tier 3 restrictions apply.
13. Local Authorities will receive 80% of the estimated grant funding based on an initial Government estimate. When this threshold of funding has been spent, Government will top up funding to Local Authorities if required.
14. The cash allocation was only received on 16th December 2020. Chorley received an allocation of £64,000; suggesting 80 businesses are eligible.

Eligibility

15. As part of the application process for the scheme, all pubs will be required to self-certify that they meet all eligibility criteria, these being;
- based in Chorley
 - derive less than 50% of their sales from food
 - are in an area subject to Tier 2 or Tier 3 local restrictions since 2 December 2020
 - were established in the pub before 1 December 2020
16. There is no definitive description of a traditional pub or public house in law that could be readily used by Local Authorities to determine eligibility. However, for the purposes of this grant, pubs should under normal circumstances (without local or national restrictions) be described as:
- open to the general public,
 - allow free entry other than when occasional entertainment is provided,
 - allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed and
 - permit drinks to be purchased at a bar.

17. For these purposes, the definition of a pub should exclude: restaurants, cafes, nightclubs, hotels, snack bars, guesthouses, boarding houses, sporting venues, music venues, festival sites, theatres, museums, exhibition halls, cinemas, concert halls and casinos.

Businesses excluded from the fund

18. Businesses cannot get funding if;
- They have exceeded the permitted state aid threshold
 - are in administration, insolvent or have been struck off the Companies House register

Application Process

19. The application is to run in parallel with the second phase of the LRSG (Closed) scheme; this will minimise the administrative burden for businesses and the Council and facilitate faster payments.
20. The scheme will operate along the lines of self-certification, with business confirming that they meet the criteria above.
21. Similarly, businesses must consent that they will cooperate with any request to provide copies of accounts / bank statements if requested to do so by the Council, and failure to comply may require repayment of the Grant.

Validation / Post Payment Assurance

22. Officers will undertake post-payment assurance checks in line with the published guidance, and in agreement with the Council’s Internal Auditors.

Reporting

23. Reports will be submitted to the Government summarising payments to date in accordance with Government deadlines.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

24. The purpose of this report is to expedite payments to the wet led pub sector; failure to act quickly will place further strain on the sector.
25. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

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| Finance | X | Customer Services | |
| Human Resources | | Equality and Diversity | |
| Legal | | Integrated Impact Assessment required? | |
| No significant implications in this area | | Policy and Communications | |

COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

26. I certify this decision requires immediate implementation. The council is administering and is responsible for making payments under the scheme.

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

27. This scheme will be administered in accordance with Government guidance, with particular regard to post-assurance payment checks.
28. Initial funding equates to 80% of the Government's estimate of qualifying businesses, however if actual payments exceed this level, the Government has given an assurance that further funding will be provided.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

29. The grant awards proposed are in line with the requirements of the scheme.

MARK LESTER
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL

| Report Author | Ext | Date |
|---------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Steve Kenyon | Steve.Kenyon@chorley.gov.uk | 17.12.20 |

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Dated 21/12/2020

Councillor Peter Wilson
Executive Member (Resource)