

# Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	17 March 2021
Title of Report:	<b>Covid-19 Grant Funding</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance)
Lead Strategic Director:	Brendan Arnold (Service Director for Finance)
Author:	Melanie Haymes
Contact Email:	Melanie.haymes@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	MH 03.03.2021
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic has had an unprecedented impact upon the country. Local government being at the forefront of the response to the pandemic, rising to the challenge and to ensure vital services have been maintained, grants allocated to local businesses and financial support provided to the most vulnerable members of our society. As part of this response the Government has provided a variety of funding streams to support this response.

This report provides details of the funding Plymouth City Council has received from Central Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and provides information on how this has been distributed.

## Recommendations and Reasons

To note the contents of the attached appendix.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A.

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Co-operative - We have worked together with our partners to serve the city and its communities by ensuring funding has reached those who are in need in a timely manner.

Fair - We have been open and transparent in how we have distributed grant funding to the businesses and residents of the City, and at all times acted in accordance with funding conditions.

Responsible - We have made every effort to distribute funding to those in need promptly, as we understand the financial pressures and implications that Covid-19 has had on the City and its residents.

**Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

As shown in the attached Appendix, the finance team are working with the relevant departments to monitor the grant receipts, spend and commitments.

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

N/A

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

N/A

**Appendices**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Covid-19 Grant Summary – February 2021							

**Background papers:**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

Fin	ba.20. 21.26 3	Leg	MS/2/ 08.03. 21	Mon Off	N/A	HR	0803 2021k ab	Asset s	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Brendan Arnold

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 08/03/2021

Cabinet Member approval: Mark Lowry approved by email

Date approved: 08/03/2021

# COVID-19 GRANT FUNDING

March 2021



## Background

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic has had an unprecedented impact upon the country. Local government is at the forefront of the response to the pandemic, rising to the challenge and ensuring vital services have been maintained, grants allocated to local businesses and financial support provided to the most vulnerable members of our society. As part of this response the Government has provided a variety of funding streams to support the economy.

The funding streams allocated to local government are varied with additional and increased grants being announced on a regular basis. The grants cover a huge spectrum of need, ranging from direct support to business by way of grant payments, payments to individuals who are suffering financial hardship, funding to support measures to control the spread of Covid-19, funding to support schools and pupils wellbeing, funding for care homes to manage infection control and many others.

## Local data

The detail of the grants received and distributed by Plymouth City Council are shown in Appendix A, which is updated on a 4 weekly cycle and published on the Plymouth City Council website. Given the nature Appendix A, this shows a snap shot in time and so the 4 weekly update helps to ensure this information as current as possible, given the fast moving nature of the funding.

The tables in Appendix A give a breakdown of all grants received, summarised into categories - providing details of the value of funding that has been distributed.

As at 08 February 2021 there had been a total of 34 different grants received into the local authority, totalling £122m. Of this £122m, £107m, or 88% has been spent, pass-ported or committed as at 8 March 2021.

Whilst the majority of the grants are for the period up to 31 March 2021, some grants conditions explicitly state that the funding has been awarded to include support for the period up to 31 March 2022 and therefore not all funding should be fully allocated.

There are many grants that have been fully distributed and this is evidenced in Appendix A. For those grants that have not been fully distributed, the reasons differ, with further detail provided below:

- Local Restrictions Support Grant is funding that is awarded to business that are forced to close through government restrictions. Appendix A shows that 68% of this funding has been paid to local businesses, with £3.4m still to be allocated. It is important to be aware that £6m of this funding was awarded on 15 January 2021 and was updated due to lockdown#3, therefore time is needed to fully allocate this funding to businesses in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the grant.
- Additional Restrictions Grant has been allocated in two tranches, the first in mid-November, with the second coming through on 15 January 2021. This funding is expected to cover the period up to 31 March 2022 and therefore local guidelines have been put in place to ensure that

this funding is distributed to local businesses over a longer period. This will ensure that financial support is made available in accordance with the Terms and Conditions. This supports the evidence in appendix A that shows that 23% had been paid out as at 5 February 2021.

- Closed Business Lockdown Payments. This funding was awarded on 15 January 2021 and is specific to lockdown#3. Applications need to be received, checked, authorised and processed in accordance with the funding Terms and Conditions. The figure of 65% allocated by 5 February 2021 in Appendix A supports this requirement.
- Initiatives to support the City's response to Covid-19 includes a range of grants including the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and the Test and Trace Support grant. Appendix A is showing that 70% of this funding has been committed but it is important to note that both of these grants are to be managed over the period up to 31 March 2022.
- Reopening High Streets Safely and Active travel. This covers 2 funding streams and Appendix A shows that 49% of the funding has been spent. Due to the continued nature of the pandemic, the opening of the high streets and subsequently, the general movement of members of the public has been delayed from original expectations of summer 2020. Therefore this funding has been extended into 2021/22 with plans in place to ensure this is fully utilised to help the high street recover over the next 12 months.

## Summary

As the pandemic progresses and the City continues its road to recovery, grants received from Government will continue to be managed and distributed to ensure they reach the businesses and residents as intended, to help support the most vulnerable members of our society, as well as providing wider support to the city's recovery to support the local economy.