

## **COVID Grants - Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio**

### **1. General Grant - £2,494k**

During 2020/21, the Government provided 4 tranches of emergency funding to support local authorities through Covid-19, with the Council receiving £22,877k. An additional amount of £7,795k was also allocated for 2021/22 to further address ongoing financial pressures, resulting in a total amount received of £30,672k.

This grant is not ringfenced and local authorities have discretion as to how this grant is allocated to address Covid-19 pressures that they identify in their boroughs. In 2020/21, a total of £16,371k was applied across all portfolio where the financial impacts of Covid were not met from other ringfenced Covid grants.

A total amount of £2,494k of this was allocated to this Portfolio in 2020/21. This was mostly to cover the increased cost temporary accommodation as well as losses of income that were not eligible to be funded from the Income Loss Compensation grant.

The allocation to this Portfolio's services for 2021/22 has yet to be determined but is likely to be a significantly reduced amount.

### **2. Income Loss Compensation Grant - £176k**

In addition to the general grant, the Government provided for a grant scheme designed to compensate for irrecoverable losses of qualifying transactional income from sales, fees and charges. The schemes provided for the whole of 2020/21 but only first quarter of 2021/22. The amount of grant does not meet eligible income losses in full, and local authorities have been required to meet the first 5% of budgeted losses, with grant then paid at 75% of the resultant net loss.

Based on this formula, grant of £176k was received in 2020/21 by this Portfolio for eligible income losses in respect of Building Control and Local Land Charges.

The grant scheme is also operating for the first quarter of 2021/22 only, but the allocations have yet to be confirmed by the Government.

### **3. Contain Outbreak Management Fund - £200k**

The Contain Outbreak Management Fund is another unringfenced grant intended to provide support in relation to the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19.

In 2020/21, £200k was agreed under delegated authority to be allocated to services in this Portfolio in respect of various pressures arising as a result of the pandemic.

#### **4. National Leisure Recovery Fund - £761k**

The main aim of the National Leisure Recovery Fund was to support public sector leisure centres to reopen to the public, giving the sport and physical activity sector the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term. The Council, in partnership with the operator of the Borough's leisure facilities MyTime Active, successfully applied and received funding of £761k.

As approved by the Executive on 2 March 2021, this has been paid in full to MyTime to support them in reopening facilities following easing of Covid restrictions.

#### **5. Next Steps Accommodation Programme (Rough Sleepers) - £391k**

The ringfenced Next Steps Accommodation Programme grant gave local authorities the opportunity to bid for financial resources in order to ensure that, of those individuals picked up during the pandemic, as few as possible returned to the streets once their emergency accommodation ceased to be available. It included separate funds for: (1) shorter-term and interim accommodation, reconnections and immediate support into sustainable move-on options such as the private rented sector; and (2) longer-term move on accommodation, including capital for acquisitions, refurbishments and new build, and an attached long-term revenue stream to ensure people are supported in their new tenancies.

The Council was allocated total funding of £391k which was approved by the Leader for Executive in October 2020 to be allocated as set out in the table below:

|   | <b>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------|
| Temporary Accommodation costs             | 146          |
| PRS incentives for 55 individuals         | 110          |
| 1 x PRS Officer for 12 months             | 50           |
| 2 x Floating Support officers for 6 month | 35           |
| Supported Housing - 12 placements         | 36           |
| Winter Fund for spot placements           | 14           |
|   | <b>391</b>   |

#### **6. Rough Sleeper Initiative - £418k**

In addition to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme above, the Council successfully bid upon and received ringfenced Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to support the establishment or enhancement of coordinated services, for rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough in the local area in order to engage and support rough sleepers. Whilst some of the work had begun the main body of services were due to mobilise in March and April 2020. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the funds had to be re-profiled in order to meet the changes to service needs particularly as the Everyone In initiative accelerated engagement with this cohort, which was discussed and revised in agreement with the MHCLG.

The Council was allocated initial funding of £104k which was approved by the Leader for Executive in July 2020 to be allocated as set out in the table below:

|   | £'000      |
|---|------------|
| 1 x Complex Needs Navigator   | 34         |
| Personalisation budget: provision of essential items / ID / bedding / travel warrants etc | 5          |
| First Stage Accommodation response  | 35         |
| PRS access and incentives   | 30         |
|   | <b>104</b> |

A further £315k was allocated for 2021/22 which was approved by Executive in July 2021 to bring the total allocation to £418k. £68k was carried forward from the first tranche of funding to give an allocation for 2021/22 as set out below:

|  | £'000      |
|--|------------|
| Emergency accommodation, support and move on costs | 130        |
| Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator (1 x FTE)              | 48         |
| Complex Needs Navigator (1 x FTE)                  | 41         |
| Floating Support Officer (1 x FTE)                 | 42         |
| PRS Incentives Fund                                | 52         |
| Personalisation Budget                             | 25         |
| Flexible Surge Budget (Temporary Accommodation)    | 46         |
|  | <b>384</b> |

## 7. Welcome Back to the High Street Fund - £295k

This fund is designed to allow local authorities to put in place additional measures to create and promote a safe environment for local trade, particularly in high streets as their economies reopen. This fund builds on the Reopening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) received in 2020/21.

The Council are eligible for a total grant of £295k and the following spending allocations were agreed:

- £155k to boost the look and feel of the High Streets through greening, planting and additional outdoor seating
- £12k to continue to provide business advice and communications regarding reopening safely
- £48k to support and trial new projects that address the impact of COVID-19 on High Streets in the borough
- £30k to create a new post that will be responsible for responding to the impact COVID-19 has had on our local economy
- £50k to extend the contract for a post that is helping manage the various business grant schemes

To date a total of £91,954 has been spent on the following:

- Artificial Grass Installation in Bromley Town Centre
- Advice for businesses on reopening safely
- Pop Up Parklets in Orpington, Beckenham and Penge Town Centres

- Developing strategic recovery plans in response to the pandemic

## **8. Support to BIDS - £62k**

Specific grant funding was received from the Government and paid to the Business Improvement Districts in the Borough in 2020/21 to compensate for loss of income resulting from the pandemic. Payments have been made as follows:

- Bromley £32,165
- Orpington £9,797
- Beckenham £12,456
- Penge £7,434

## **9. Discretionary Business Support Grants (subsequent schemes) - £13,094k**

Alongside the mandatory business support grant schemes, the Council also received several funding allocations from the Government designed to further support businesses during the pandemic.

The Government provided funding to enable the Council to provide discretionary grants to businesses and in determining local criteria that would apply. The detailed schemes relating to the utilising of the funding are set out in the various reports to the Executive, (13th January 2021; 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021; 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021; 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021) and subsequently approved.

Further details on individual elements of the various schemes are as follows.

### **i. April 2020 discretionary fund**

In summary, 178 businesses received a grant with a total of £2.275m paid to businesses. Of this, 145 businesses received a grant of £10k (£1,450,000), and 33 businesses received a grant of £25k (£825,000).

### **ii. Hardship Fund**

A total of £3,510,000 has been distributed to a total of 372 local businesses under this scheme.

A grant of up to £10k was given to all businesses based in Bromley impacted by Covid 19; had an annual turnover of over £50k; employed 25% of Bromley residents, and could demonstrate a 50% or greater reduction in a 3-month period.

This popular scheme enabled the Council to reach businesses that had fallen through the gaps of the Government mandatory schemes. Non-rateable businesses were able to apply that were previously excluded, some examples included a Cooking School, driving instructors, suppliers to the events industry and travel companies. Other beneficiaries that were excluded from the mandatory schemes were also successful for example dry cleaners.

Report HPR2021/048 went to Executive on 22/9/21 where it was agreed that payments could be made to eligible businesses that had applied before the deadline, but where the initial discretionary funds had been spent. Therefore a further 50 businesses were paid from the ARG top up fund.

### **iii. Independent Public House Scheme**

This grant was made available to independent public houses, bars, and social clubs. The grant sum was dependent on the business rate threshold. In total £469,500k was allocated to 67 businesses.

Report HPR2021/55 went to Executive on 13/1/21 to approve this scheme. This scheme helped a variety of venues from a small bowls club to high street venues and local pubs. These venues were undoubtedly the hardest hit by COVID restrictions and this scheme was distributed in recognition of this.

### **iv. Innovation Grant**

A grant of up to £10k was made available to support Bromley businesses pivot or innovate/grow. Report HPR2021/55 went to Executive on 13/1/21 to approve this scheme.

£900,619 was distributed to 95 successful businesses who submitted business plans to help with future recovery and growth. Innovation examples included acquiring more state-of-the-art machinery to increase production for a musical case company, custom designing a vehicle to allow a café to 'go-mobile' and updating PC equipment to support large, streamed events for a media company.

### **v. Enterprise Hub**

Tender awarded to SOS Creativity after they successfully bid for this service. Report HPR2021/55 went to Executive on 13/1/21 to approve this scheme. In total £107,380 was spent to develop and maintain the new business Enterprise Hub.

### **vi. Tier 4 Discretionary Top Up Payments**

Report HPR2021/55 went to Executive on 13/1/21 to approve this scheme and in total £2,187,235 has been distributed to 2,390 businesses.

This top-up to the mandatory Tier 4 scheme gave an additional boost to many businesses. Although the amounts were relatively small, compared to the other schemes, this funding was able to focus on businesses hardest hit by the restrictions in hospitality, non-essential retail, leisure and personal care and provide an additional income lifeline during lockdown.

### **vii. Support for Business Improvement Districts**

Report HPR2021/007 went to Executive on 10/2/21 to approve this scheme with £699,621 distributed to the four BIDs for the provision of a BID Booster scheme. Businesses within the four BID areas were able to apply for this funding if they met certain criteria.

### **viii. Business Lounges in Bromley and Orpington**

Report HPR2021/007 went to Executive on 10/2/21 to approve this scheme. In total £218,738 was awarded to GLL to set up business lounges in Bromley Central and Orpington Libraries and are available to book via the Start Up Bromley scheme.

#### **ix. Reopening of Independent Public House, Bars, Social Clubs grant**

To direct award a grant to all those businesses successfully awarded an independent public house scheme grant with the costs of reopening safely. This was in recognition that these businesses, even when reopen, will have to maintain some restrictions when they are in fact designed to be busier places effecting their financial model. The grant also supported those opening with outdoor seating/heating costs. The amount awarded was dependent on rateable value.

Report HPR2021/015 taken remotely as an urgent item on the 15/3/21 to approve this scheme and £302,500 was distributed to 67 venues. The Council were able to pay a 'top-up' amount to the venues already awarded a grant under the original scheme. This was in recognition of the continued restrictions put in place and also with a view to helping these venues re-open and be COVID secure.

#### **x. Grant for One Person, Home-Based businesses (Self Employed or Sole Directors**

This grant provided a one-off payment of £2k for individual and home-based businesses in the Borough, that could evidence an impact of Covid and fixed costs.

Report HPR2021/015 taken remotely as an urgent item on the 15/3/21 to approve this scheme. In total £270,000 distributed to 135 businesses.

This one-off grant enabled the Council to reach a wider variety of businesses. Businesses that benefitted included a yoga teacher, a creative design company and travel companies. Report HPR2021/048 went to Executive on 22/9/21 where it was agreed that payments could be made to eligible businesses that had applied before the deadline, but where funds had been utilised. Therefore a further 12 businesses were paid from the ARG top up.

#### **xi. Special Treatment License Holders**

A grant of £1k to those businesses holding a special treatment licence intending to reopen within the Government roadmap timetable to be Covid secure. Report HPR2021/015 taken remotely as an urgent item on the 15/3/21 to approve this scheme with £42,000 distributed to 42 businesses. High street and home beauty businesses were able to apply for this scheme.

#### **xii. Pavement License Grant**

This grant is to support businesses that hold a Pavement License to boost trade outside. The grant is to support businesses to ensure highways and public spaces are maintained and kept clean and tidy.

Report HPR2021/015 taken remotely as an urgent item on the 15/3/21 to approve this scheme with £34,000 distributed to 34 businesses. This scheme covered a variety of businesses including a deli, brewery and a high street café.

#### **xiii. Community Swimming Grant**

£50k was granted to Mytime Active to ensure community swimming facilities are opened safely.

#### **xiv. Cultural Recovery**

Report HPR2021/015 taken remotely as an urgent item on the 15/3/21 to approve this scheme with £72,300 distributed to 7 venues. These payments to our well-known cultural venues enabled them to prepare for re-opening and gave them vital income while being forced to stay shut.

#### **xv. Hardship Top-Up Scheme**

To direct award a grant to all those businesses successfully awarded a grant via the original hardship scheme. Original recipients were offered to apply for this grant on a first come, first served basis until funding for this scheme was utilised. This award was for a fixed amount of £3,000 and was in recognition that these businesses have been impacted by the continued COVID restrictions.

£735,000 was distributed to 245 businesses. As restrictions continued, this payment gave an additional boost to businesses that had already received a grant via the original scheme. It was positive to see that so many local businesses had survived, were trading again and therefore eligible to apply for this top-up scheme after the restrictions had started to lift.

#### **xvi. Additional Restrictions Grant Top-Up Fund**

The Council successfully distributed 100% of their original ARG allocation by the deadline date of the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021. Therefore a £2.61million top-up was received in late August 2021. Payments have already been made from this funding, including payments to eligible businesses that applied to the Hardship and Home-Based business scheme prior to the deadline, but didn't receive payment as funding had been utilised. An additional £40k has been awarded to GLL for the Biggin Hill business lounge.

Report HPR2021/048 was taken to Executive on 22/9/21 setting out the proposals for the next phase of funding for the ARG. Subsequently four further streams of funding have been agreed of which three are now open for applications:

- Cultural Programming Grant
- Business Growth Grant
- Grant for occupying a vacant unit

The final processes for the Start up during COVID grant are being undertaken and the stream will be live shortly.

### **10. Household Support Fund - £1,868k**

In October 2021 the Government announced the ringfenced Household Support Fund to support those most in need this winter. At least 50% of the total funding must be spent on families with children. The expectation is that the funding should primarily be used to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.

The Council's allocation is £1,868k. This scheme is due to launch on the 8th November and is aimed at helping vulnerable households with the pressures they may face this winter, particularly in light of rising utility costs and household costs. Vulnerable residents of Bromley will be able to apply for assistance with food, utilities, white goods, bedding, boiler repairs/servicing, and similar. Self-referrals as well as referrals from agencies, advocates, etc. will be accepted. In addition, Education Services will be providing vouchers for children in receipt of free school meals to cover the holiday periods.