



CABINET

Thursday, 10 December 2020
10.00 a.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Cabinet Members:-

Leader of the Council
Deputy Leader of the Council,
Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working Portfolio
Adult Social Care and Health Portfolio
Cleaner, Greener Communities
Corporate Services and Finance Portfolio
Housing Portfolio
Jobs and the Local Economy Portfolio
Waste, Roads and Community Safety Portfolio

Councillor Chris Read
Councillor Gordon Watson

Councillor David Roche
Councillor Sarah Allen
Councillor Saghir Alam
Councillor Dominic Beck
Councillor Denise Lelliott
Councillor Emma Hoddinott

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council 

CABINET

Venue: Virtual Meeting - viewable through
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv>

Date and Time: Thursday, 10th December, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Agenda Contact Governance Unit – governance@rotherham.gov.uk

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view via the [Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies from any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests they may have in any matter which is to be considered at this meeting, to confirm the nature of those interests and whether they intend to leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

3. Questions from Members of the Public

To receive questions from members of the public who wish to ask a general question in respect of matters within the Council's area of responsibility or influence.

Subject to the Chair's discretion, members of the public may ask one question and one supplementary question, which should relate to the original question and answered received.

Councillors may also ask questions under this agenda item.

4. Exclusion of the Press and Public

There are no agenda items which require the exclusion of the press or public.

CORPORATE SERVICES AND FINANCE

5. Covid Winter Grant Scheme (Pages 5 - 20)

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

Recommendations:-

1. That Cabinet agrees provisional allocations of the grant subject to final adjustments for the purposes of:-
 - a) Holiday Programme and Food - £492,395.16
 - b) Struggling with utility costs/debt - £285,000
 - c) Christmas food - £30,000
 - d) Help with school uniforms - £200,000

6. Business Support Grants funded via Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) (Pages 21 - 35)

Report of the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Recommendations:-


1. That Cabinet note the progress to date on the administration of the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG's).
2. That Cabinet note the progress to date on utilising the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).
3. That Cabinet approve the Councils proposed discretionary business support grant, total funding of £664k.
4. That Cabinet delegate to the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, the application of any surplus grant to top up the grant values paid to eligible small businesses.

7. Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

To receive a report detailing the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in respect of the above items that were subject to pre-decision scrutiny on Wednesday, 2nd December, 2020.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cabinet will be held on Monday, 21st December, 2020 commencing at 10.00 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Kemp." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 10 December 2020

Report Title

COVID Winter Grant

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Jackie Mould,
Head of Policy Performance & Improvement
Chief Executive's
Jackie.mould@rotherham.gov.uk

Steve Eling
Policy and Equalities Manager
Chief Executive's
Steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide or Name of Ward
Name of Ward

Report Summary

As part of a range of interventions to support people impacted by the COVID emergency the Government has announced a £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Rotherham has been granted £1,007,395.16.

The funding is for use from December 2020 to the end of March 2021. It is designed to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food and utility bills (heating, cooking, lighting) and water for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, sewerage and sanitary purposes), or other related essentials.

This report provides details of the grant and makes recommendations on its allocation and use.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet agrees provisional allocations of the grant subject to final adjustments for the purposes of:
 - a) Holiday Programme & Food - £492,395.16
 - b) Struggling with utility costs / debt - £285,000
 - c) Christmas food - £30,000
 - d) Help with school uniforms - £200,000

List of Appendices Included

Equality Analysis - Appendix 1

Background Papers

COVID Winter Grant Scheme – Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities (DWP)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Insert report title here COVID Winter Grant

1.	Background
1.1	As part of a range of interventions to support people impacted by the COVID emergency the Government has announced a £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
1.2	The funding is for use from December 2020 to the end of March 2021. It is designed to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food and utility bills (heating, cooking, lighting) and water for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, sewerage and sanitary purposes), or other related essentials.
1.3	Part of the Government's aim is to give vulnerable households peace of mind in the run up to Christmas and over the Winter months during the pandemic by helping those who need it to have food on the table and other essentials, so every child will be warm and well-fed this winter.
1.4	Rotherham has been granted £1,007,395.16. The grant is paid under S. 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 (c. 26) as Local Welfare Provision (LWP) but is subject to conditions of use and reporting requirements to DWP.
1.5	The Council should develop a 'local eligibility framework and approach' to enable distribution of the grant funding in a way that best supports vulnerable families and individuals. This should be approved in time to commence of use of the grant in December.
1.6	This report sets out the councils proposed use of the grant in Rotherham including the provision of vouchers in lieu of free school meals (FSMs) for the Christmas / New Year and February half term holidays. It is expected that the holiday food vouchers will use up to 50% of the grant, leaving the remainder for use in the provision of other eligible support.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	The COVID Winter Grant has been provided for use in the current financial year to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable.
2.2	In Rotherham, its use will sit alongside other COVID related responses including tackling hardship, working across the Council and VCS partners. It will complement the support being provided through the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies, additional Local Council Tax Support for families of working age, other Government funding to support vulnerable people and ongoing regular support to residents provided through Crisis Support and Advice Services service level agreements (SLAs) between the Council and VCS organisations.

	<p>If agreed, the recommendations in this paper will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All eligible children in the borough will receive vouchers to the value of free school meals for the Christmas and February half term holidays • Additional support for the Rotherham Food in Crisis Partnership Christmas appeal, which is expected to provide food for 300 families requiring support this Christmas • Extending eligibility for support with the purchase of school uniforms to more families facing financial difficulties • £250,000 is committed to support households in financial need who are facing unexpected or unaffordable bills, to prevent them from falling into financial crisis, subject to engagement and support from the Council's Advocacy and Appeals service or partners.
2.3	<u>Grant conditions</u>
	The grant is being provided under S. 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 (c. 26) as Local Welfare Provision (LWP) but is subject to conditions of use and reporting requirements to DWP.
2.4	<p>The use of the grant is subject to establishing frameworks applying the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other households experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, poverty during the pandemic. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits. • At least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, and sanitary purposes) and sewerage, or other essentials. Within this condition there is flexibility about the proportion of support allocated to food and to bills. • Up to 20% of the total funding can be used to provide support with other essentials clearly linked to the scheme conditions (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets; boiler service/repair; purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access food, energy and water. • The scheme is not intended to cover payment of rent or other housing costs because these are not directly related to food or utility bills and other benefits and support is available to cover these costs. Nor is it intended to be used for the provision of general advice on managing debt and/or financial hardship. • It is important that Authorities develop overall policies appropriate for their areas, and proportionate procedures, for the allocation of the grant monies by reference to the above criteria.
2.5	Proposals have developed as extensions to existing provision where possible, avoiding set-up costs and time lag. They also align to crisis support provision and other hardship support as part of the response to the COVID

	emergency. The nature of the proposed support means that the bulk would go to families with children within the 80 / 20 provisions of the grant conditions along with eligible costs including food.
2.6	Most of the proposals work on the basis of indicative allocations at this stage as some detail will still need to be established, as set out below. This is particularly the case in relation to holiday programme & food provision and supporting families struggling with debt and utility costs. The holiday food costs will be known when the February half term uptake is known. Support for utility costs will be dependent on levels of demand and levels of support to be provided. To address these variables, active management of the grant will ensure review and final allocations being made in February 2021.
2.7	<u>Holiday Programme & Food (Inc Meals for Free School Meals pupils)</u>
2.8	This proposal builds on the support provided by the Council during the Autumn half term to provide vouchers to families where children receive free school meals during term time. The proposal provides vouchers to the value of £15 per week for each eligible child for the Christmas / New Year and February 2021 half term holidays.
2.9	It is proposed to adopt the process used for the October half term holiday and distribute funding for vouchers to schools and academies through staff in Contact Centre/Children and Young People Services, with a small number of proposed enhancements. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to be passported to schools to purchase vouchers directly and this can be used at a variety of supermarkets and provide flexibility to schools to meet the needs of their cohorts. • Potentially distribute to Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) rather than individual schools in the MAT. • Providing funding for vouchers through schools in the earliest possible timescale offers the best route to making sure we get maximum coverage from the voucher scheme, any data idiosyncrasies can be reconciled in order that we provide support to all eligible families across the Christmas period. Schools can utilise embedded systems from previous voucher schemes providing access to the right type of supermarket vouchers which are accessible for their families.
2.10	£492,395.16 will be provisionally allocated for this element of the scheme, to be finalised upon out-turn figures that will only be available once final figures are known for the volume for February 2021 holidays can be determined.
2.11	<u>Struggling with utility costs / debt</u>
2.12	Utility costs and debt are a major factor for many families, especially through the Winter period. Existing debt management advice both within the Council through the Advocacy & Appeals Services (A & A) and in the VCS through Citizens Advice (CARD) have noted an increase in utility related debt and hardship problems since the beginning of the COVID emergency. The grant could be used to pay off debt and make contributions to utility costs over the

	<p>winter period. Access to the support would be part of a proper debt support package, provided to people accessing normal debt advice provision through A & A or CARD. Access to for the Community to debt and other financial hardship support provided by A & A is facilitated through the Rotherham Community Hub. Details for access to the HUB, in turn is published including on the Council's website. In each case, the debt advisor would refer into additional utility debt support and advice hosted by A & A. Support would then be provided by direct payment by the Council into the residents' utility account. This would help for people with arrears as well as those struggling to pay through pre-payment token meters with the risk of gas and electricity supplies being cut off. It is not proposed to make any allocation in relation to water bills as there are existing arrangements with Yorkshire Water to help vulnerable families / people with water utility debt. Assistance with purchase of necessary white goods, such as fridges, is already funded through the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies, but should it be required it will be possible to top this up through the COVID Winter Grant at the discretion of officers.</p>
2.13	<p>The proposal will be taken forward using caseload information from A & A over September and October of this year, and then allowing for similar levels from CARD. It is recommended that a provisional allocation of £250,000 would address utility debt and poverty in the coming Winter and contribute to an overall improvement in well-being.</p>
2.14	<p>The final figure will be dependent on establishing a number of factors including caseload together with maximum levels of support to each family awarded. The grant will need to be managed on a first come, first served basis due to the grant being finite and time limited.</p>
2.15	<p>This support is also dependant on being able to make secure payments to utility providers to assist with families' utility payments</p>
2.16	<p>Whilst final detail is to be established, proposed operation and eligibility criteria would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to families will only be provided as part of a debt support / advice package being provided by A & A or CARD. • There would be no direct applications for utility support. • Utility support will provide for payments against utility arrears or a contribution to utility bills where the family is struggling to pay because of multiple debt. • There will be a maximum level of utility support available to eligible families that will be determined as part of the final scheme details. • Support will be available up to the end of March 2021.
2.17	<p>There would be the need to deploy additional staff into A & A until March 2021. This would be specifically to work on the utility debt and poverty as general debt advice is not eligible for the use of this grant. It is estimated that two members of staff would be required for this period at a cost of circa £35,000. Staff secondment may be the most appropriate means of filling these temporary posts. This would make a total allocation for "Struggling with</p>

	utility costs / debt” of £285,000.
2.18	<u>Christmas food</u>
2.19	For a number of families, struggling through the impacts of the COVID pandemic, means that having what might be regarded as a normal Christmas is going to be difficult for many vulnerable and low-income families.
2.20	Each year, the Rotherham Food in Crisis Partnership runs a Christmas appeal supported by Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR), working with VCS foodbanks. This year, VAR are looking for cash donations because usual means of collecting support is limited by COVID restrictions. It is proposed that £30,000 is allocated from the Winter Grant to part support the programme of Christmas food for vulnerable families this year. Other contributions are being sought from the likes of the Chamber of Commerce and individuals. This would include purchasing of food and additional organisational staffing aligned to the broader Food for People in Crisis/Crisis Support Services work but with specified activity relating to the Christmas holiday period. The work would engage with partners including FareShare, overall levering additional resources to the allocation from the grant. Arrangements can be entered into quickly to ensure that the provision is in place in time for Christmas by using a supplementary schedule to the existing SLA for Crisis Provision. This is the same process used for allocation of the DEFRA Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies.
2.21	The use of the grant is on the basis of support to circa 300 families provided by fifteen participating VCS organisations. The grant would be used to purchase, parcel up and distribute food alongside provision supported through charitable donations.
2.22	The provision of funding to VCS organisations for Christmas food will be through agreement with Voluntary Action Rotherham. This will be through a supplementary schedule to the existing Crisis Support service level agreement. All conditions of the SLA will apply to the supplementary schedule in accordance with Council policy.
2.23	<u>Help with school uniforms</u>
2.24	<p>Help with school uniforms is provided by Children and Young People’s Services using Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies. This has included arrangements with local suppliers to provide the uniforms to families.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria used has been based on three targeted groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in transition to year 7 in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). • Children in transition to Reception eligible for Pupil Premium. • Children of asylum-seeking families. <p>There is some discretion for officers to include children within the wider</p>

	<p>families.</p> <p>There are two local suppliers, Pinders and Jonny D's, who have both been engaged as suppliers through procurement.</p> <p>There has been no application process as eligible families have been identified through the Council's database. Eligible families have been written to with details about how to access the uniforms and from which provider, with a voucher to present. There is no payment of cash and vouchers can only be redeemed at the named provider.</p>
2.25	Support has been provided at £25 each for reception children and £35 each for year seven pupils.
2.26	<p>It is proposed that school uniform support is extended to pupils of all ages who qualify either for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium using the Winter Grant. This is based on the same eligibility criteria and using the same processes as for the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies. This will have the benefit of using a tried and tested approach that can be implemented quickly and give clothing support to families. The Council will write to eligible families to make them aware that this support is available.</p> <p>It is also proposed that the Advocacy and Appeals service is able to make the same vouchers towards school uniforms available to other families on a discretionary basis based on similar criteria as support towards utility bills as set out at 2.16 above.</p>
2.27	An initial estimate, using the same costs criteria suggests that circa £200,000 would be required for this.
3.	Options considered and recommended proposal
3.1	<p>The recommendations have been produced on assessed options to meet the Winter Grant criteria that can be mobilised quickly without the need for significant additional administration. The options recommended for allocations are:</p> <p>Holiday Programme & Food. Struggling with utility costs / debt. Christmas food. Help with school uniforms.</p>
3.2	The recommended options align to other key provision around crisis support and COVID response services.
4.	Consultation on proposal
4.1	Officers in relevant Council services along with VCS partners have been engaged in producing the recommended options

5.	Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision														
5.1	The supplementary schedule to the Crisis Support SLA will be completed to be ready for the Christmas food support. Arrangements will also be in place to provide vouchers for holiday food for the Christmas / New Year school holidays														
5.2	Support for utility costs will commence as soon as all details of the scheme have been completed and staff are available to implement.														
5.3	School uniform support is already operational. Arrangements will be put in place to extend.														
6.	Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)														
6.1	<p>The Grant of 1,007,395.16 has been provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for specific purposes as set out in the grant conditions. The proposed spend is in accordance with the conditions. An overview of projected spend if all options are taken forward is set out in the table:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Proposal</th> <th>£</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Utility costs / Debt</td> <td>285,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christmas food</td> <td>30,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Help with school uniforms</td> <td>200,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holiday vouchers</td> <td>492,395.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>1,007,395.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Covid Winter Grant</td> <td>1,007,395.16</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Proposal	£	Utility costs / Debt	285,000.00	Christmas food	30,000.00	Help with school uniforms	200,000.00	Holiday vouchers	492,395.16	Total	1,007,395.16	Covid Winter Grant	1,007,395.16
Proposal	£														
Utility costs / Debt	285,000.00														
Christmas food	30,000.00														
Help with school uniforms	200,000.00														
Holiday vouchers	492,395.16														
Total	1,007,395.16														
Covid Winter Grant	1,007,395.16														
6.2	Allocations will be reviewed as part of management of the grant with final allocations being determined once the final cost of holiday food vouchers is confirmed. and demand against other allocations. This will ensure that the grant is fully spent, though, each scheme will need to be monitored closely to ensure expenditure is maintained within budget.														
6.3	Procurement of suppliers of school uniforms has been conducted in accordance with the Council's Finance and Procurement Rules.														
7.	Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)														
7.1	The use of the Winter Grant can be treated as "Local Welfare Provision" (LWP). The Council can support LWP under the "Local authority's general power of competence", as set out in S.1 of the Localism Act 2011 (c. 20).														
7.2	The grant is provided pursuant to section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. This section states that grants can be provided subject to conditions.														

	The conditions of the grant are set out at paragraph 2.4. One of the Conditions of the grant is that the authority develop policies appropriate to the area and procedures for allocation of the grant monies and this report sets out how that condition is complied with. Further the other proposed allocations are in accordance with the grant conditions as set out at paragraph 2.4
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8.	Human Resources Advice and Implications
8.1	There are no Human Resources implications associated with this report.
9.	Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults
9.1	At least 80% of the use of the Winter Grant must be ring-fenced to support households with children. The proposed uses of the grant will achieve that.
10.	Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications
10.1	The objectives of the use of the grant and targeting towards vulnerable families with children will contribute to addressing economic and social inequalities. It will have a positive equalities impact.
11.	Implications for Ward Priorities
11.1	The proposals are not Ward specific but will have a beneficial impact for the Council's policies seeking "Thriving Neighbourhoods".
12.	Implications for Partners
12.1	Partner VCS organisations are actively engaged in providing Christmas food. VCS advice services will also be engaged in referring people receiving debt support and advice for support with utility costs.
13.	Risks and Mitigation
13.1.	Risk is primarily centred around achieving, whilst not exceeding spend of the grant.
13.2	The proposals for a framework of support allows for provisional allocations that can be monitored and reviewed as part of an active management of the grant mitigate the risk. This approach allows for early implementation of the proposals once detailed management arrangements have been set up. The framework also allows for "up to" allocations to be provided in the first instance. These can be revisited when the final costs of school holiday time vouchers are known in February, and final allocations of the grant firmed up to ensure full spend of the grant by the end of March 2021.
13.3	The Council is required to guard against fraud. This will be achieved through the processes to access the support, including using existing data and not having open application processes. Cash will not be provided with direct

	payment to suppliers used where possible and vouchers for holiday food.
14.	Accountable Officers
	Jackie Mould, Head of Policy Performance & Improvement Chief Executive's Jackie.mould@rotherham.gov.uk
	Steve Eling Policy and Equalities Manager Chief Executive's Steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	30/11/20
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	30/11/20

Report Author: Steve Eling
Policy and Equalities Manager
Chief Executive's
Steve.eling@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: COVID Winter Grant	
Directorate: ACX	Service area: PPI
Lead person: Steve Eling	Contact number: 54419
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
This is a screening of the use of grant provided by DWP for Winter Support, especially for families with children.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity
All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or

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the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		

The use of the grant is to benefit service users and families and is expected to have a positive impact through prioritisation of vulnerable families including those impacted by inequalities.

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

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<p>If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.</p> <p>Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.</p> <p>Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you considered equality and diversity? <p>The use of the grant targets vulnerable families. It also aligns with crisis support provision and other COVID related support provision. It provides for Vouchers in lieu of free school meals through school holidays over Christmas / New Year and February 2021. It also extends support for school uniforms and families struggling with debt and utility bills. It also works with VCS organisations to support vulnerable families over Christmas / New Year. From a specific protected characteristic perspective, this has a beneficial impact on the "children" age group.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings <p>Owing to the short timescale available between the award of the grant to the Council and the time for making decisions for allocation, the usual assessments have not been possible. This includes producing a Part B Equality Analysis. However, data held by shows that interventions to tackle disadvantage has a positive impact on equalities.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions <p>Equalities data will be collected as part of monitoring of the use of the grant. Where the grant is being awarded to VCS organisations, the terms of the standard VCS SLA apply in relation to equalities.</p>	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	30 th November 2020
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	30 th November 2020
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Steve Eling Policy and Equalities Manager ACX Department

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Steve Eling	Policy and Equalities Manager ACX Department	30 th November 2020

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6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	30 th November 2020
Report title and date	COVID Winter Grant
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	OSMB – 2 nd December 2020 Cabinet – 6 th December 2020
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	30 th November 2020

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 10 December 2020

Report Title

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) – Rotherham MBC Discretionary Business Support Scheme

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Author(s)

Rob Mahon – Head of Corporate Finance
Rob.mahon@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Government have provided a further package of support grants for businesses that were impacted by the Tier 2 and 3 restrictions or forced to close as part of the Tier 3 restrictions and national lockdown. These Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG's) are targeted at businesses registered for business rates, with grant payments up to £3k per 4-week period. They are to be administered by local authorities but following governments guidance.

On 24th October South Yorkshire entered into the Tier 3 (very high risk) level as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and rising case numbers in the area. As part of the agreement with government to enter Tier 3, the Sheffield City Region (SCR) negotiated a business support package of £30m, known as the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). This is a discretionary fund that SCR can use to create a package of support for businesses that are unable to access governments LRSG's either as they are not registered for business rates or not within one of the business sectors that are able to access the grants.

This report outlines the progress made on delivering governments LRSG's and how the ARG discretionary fund is being used to complement those grants and support wider businesses in Rotherham. It also seeks approval for the Councils proposed use of the discretionary business support fund, for which Rotherham has been allocated £664k and for the proposed eligibility criteria.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the progress to date on the administration of the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG's).
2. That Cabinet note the progress to date on utilising the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).
3. That Cabinet approve the Councils proposed discretionary business support grant, total funding of £664k.
4. That Cabinet delegate to the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, the application of any surplus grant to top up the grant values paid to eligible small businesses.

List of Appendices Included

Equality Analysis – Appendix 1

Background Papers

Local Restrictions Support Grant - guidance

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) – Rotherham MBC Discretionary Business Support Scheme

1.	Background
1.1	Government have provided a further package of support grants for businesses that were impacted by the Tier 2 and 3 restrictions or forced to close as part of the Tier 3 restrictions and national lockdown. These Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG's) are targeted at businesses registered for business rates, with grant payments up to £3k per 4-week period. They are to be administered by local authorities but following governments guidance.
1.2	<p>Government confirmed that the LRSG's prior to entrance into the second national lockdown would be paid on a pro-rata basis, on the number of days any authority was within a particular tier. Rotherham entered the tiered restrictions on the following dates;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 2: 14th October to 23rd October – 10 days • Tier 3: 24th October to 4th November – 12 days • National Lockdown: 5th November to 1 December – 27 days
1.3	Following receipt of governments guidance, the first of these schemes Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) was launched on the Councils website on 28 October allowing those businesses forced to close as part of tier 3 restrictions to apply. Since then the Council has added details of all the LRSG's to the Councils business support webpage. To date 1,229 businesses have received a business grant through the schemes, with total grants paid of £2.145m.
1.4	<p>The current live LRSG's, targeted at businesses registered for business rates, with grant payments based on rateable value, are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Lockdown Restrictions Grant (Open) – targets businesses in the Hospitality, Accommodation and Leisure sector that were able to open in Tier 2 and 3 with restrictions. £508k available. • Local Lockdown Restrictions Grant (Closed) – targets businesses forced to close in Tier 3, such as pubs not serving meals. £130k available. • Local Lockdown Restrictions Grant (Sector) – targets businesses forced to close since March 23, such as Nightclubs. • Local Lockdown Restrictions Grant (Closed National Lockdown) – targets businesses forced to close due to the 2nd national lockdown. £3.4m available for Closed national lockdown and the sector scheme.
1.5	On 24th October South Yorkshire entered into the Tier 3 (very high risk) level as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and rising case numbers in the area. As part of the agreement with government to enter Tier 3, the Sheffield City Region (SCR) negotiated a business support

	<p>package of £30m, known as the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). This is a discretionary fund that SCR can use to create a package of support for businesses that are unable to access governments LRSG's, either as they are not registered for business rates or not within one of the business sectors that are able to access government grants.</p>
2.	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Following agreement with government on the £30m discretionary Additional Resources Grant (ARG) for the Sheffield City Region, officers at Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley and Sheffield Councils began working up proposals, as to how this discretionary fund could be utilised. A technical team was established to set out proposed phases of business grant support, these proposals were subsequently presented to the Directors of Finance, Chief Executive Officers and Leaders of each authority for consideration. It was a clear intention of the group and the SCR authorities that consistency should be maintained wherever possible in the schemes that were to be approved, so that a business in Rotherham can access the same support as a business in Sheffield. As a result of this development and consultation process the following schemes have been agreed and implemented from the ARG.</p>
2.2	<p>The first phase of grant schemes approved to be funded from ARG have been set up to mirror the governments LRSG's but targeted instead at businesses that are not registered for businesses rates and still have significant fixed premises costs. These schemes are live with applicants able to apply via the Councils website, via a single application form. The schemes are outlined below;</p> <p>£1.75m allocated across SCR from ARG for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Restrictions Grant (Open) – targets businesses in the Hospitality, Accommodation and Leisure sector that were able to open in Tier 2 and 3 with restrictions. <p>£3.00m allocated across SCR from ARG for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Restrictions Grant (Closed) – targets businesses forced to close in Tier 3, such as pubs not serving meals. • Additional Restrictions Grant (Sector) – targets businesses forced to close since March 23, such as Nightclubs. £1.75m allocated across SCR from ARG. • Additional Restrictions Grant (Closed National Lockdown) – targets businesses forced to close due to the 2nd national lockdown. £1.75m allocated across SCR from ARG. <p>The businesses applying for these grants are not registered for business rates, so there is no data set available to accurately divide the SCR allocations across each local authority. As such, each Council will run their grant scheme and submit weekly claim forms to the SCR indicating</p>

	progress, claim volumes and values.
2.3	<p>The second phase of grant schemes approved to be funded from ARG have been focussed on starting to target businesses that are unable to access the existing government grants or the mirroring of those grants through ARG. The following schemes are live with applicants able to apply via the Councils website. Phase 2 schemes are outlined below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for licensed taxi drivers within South Yorkshire: a fixed one-off payment of £500 for all Rotherham taxi drivers, this approach is mirrored across the SCR. Rotherham has an allocation of £546k from ARG for this scheme. <p>£6.00m allocated across SCR from ARG for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Supply Chain: businesses within the supply chain of those forced to close due to the national lockdown or those within the Hospitality, Accommodation and Leisure sectors that were restricted in Tier 2 and 3, can access a support grant. The scheme is targeted at businesses with a fixed premise, who are in the supply chain of those impacted by the restrictions and trade on a business to business basis.
2.4	<p>The third phase of business grant support allocates a further £4m of the ARG to local authorities to carry out a discretionary business support grant. This is to allow each local authority to design a scheme that supports those business sectors in their area that have been significantly impacted by Covid-19 restrictions but so far unable to access any of the support grants. Rotherham MBC's allocation is £664k.</p> <p>To ensure broad consistency where possible, the following principles have been agreed across the SCR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fund is completely discretionary - LAs can support businesses as they see fit. • All LAs will consider how they could support businesses in "hardship" that have not received support through other schemes. • The fund does not have to be used to support businesses directly. It can be used for wider business support (high street campaigns, car parking incentives etc). • Where the fund is used to provide business grants, LAs can support any sectors they choose. • This fund can be used to support the self-employed and freelancers who may fall outside the eligibility of existing national and local schemes.
2.5	<p>The fund available to the Council is limited to £664k and as such the Council's scheme has been designed to have a mix of targeting the business areas that allows the Council to provide support to as many businesses as possible, whilst providing a payment value that is sufficient</p>

	to support businesses in these challenging times.
2.6	<p><u>Discretionary Scheme Criteria</u></p> <p>The scheme is available to businesses suffering from a loss of trade and that have been unable to access any of the existing business grant schemes. These are expected to be primarily small and microenterprises, including businesses registered too recently to qualify for central government support. Successful applicants must meet the core criteria and fall into one of the targeted areas below. Grant payments are anticipated to most commonly be £500 but rising to up to £1,000 where a greater need is demonstrated and subject to availability of funds. Any amounts over £500 will be applied as a top up following assessment of all claims.</p> <p>Core criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses must be able to demonstrate financial hardship which is believed to relate to Covid-19 and / or the resulting government-imposed restrictions on economic activity, either directly or indirectly. • Has to be micro/small businesses (employees less than 49). • Able to evidence significant ongoing business costs. • State aid rules apply. • Businesses that are able to access existing government business support schemes will usually be excluded. <p>Targeted areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local, regional or independent businesses that were not forced to close during the lockdown or which fall outside the current national and local schemes. • Businesses run from home with significant ongoing costs that are of a business nature – i.e. a separate building, solely for business use. • Mobile microbusinesses that do not operate from fixed premises • This fund can be used to support the self-employed and freelancers who may fall outside the eligibility of existing national and local schemes. <p>In exceptional circumstances but solely at the discretion of the Council, an application may also be considered from a business not fully meeting the criteria set out above. For example, a business that has seen a loss in trade due to Covid-19 but does not have any ongoing business costs. However, this will not cover self-employed people able to access governments self-employment support scheme.</p>
2.7	<p><u>Discretionary Scheme Exclusions</u></p> <p>Businesses able to access existing government business grant schemes or government's self-employment support scheme; businesses in manufacturing, construction and office based are excluded.</p>

2.8	Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce have been consulted on the discretionary scheme criteria and have offered the Council support in promoting the scheme and potentially offering an advisory service to businesses prior to applying for the grant. The aim of this would be to allow them to ensure businesses that clearly meet the criteria are encouraged to apply for the scheme.
2.9	The scheme will be promoted on the Councils website, via social media and press releases inviting businesses to submit an application via Councils business support application form. The application form has been designed so that business only need to submit one application form for consideration across any of the business support grants. It is proposed that applications will be accepted until the 31 January 2021 but clearly with a finite resource, applications will be processed on a first come first served basis until the fund is exhausted. Should there be resources available at the end of this period it is proposed that the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, has delegated authority to process top up payments in order to utilise the resource.
3.	Options considered and recommended proposal
3.1	Cabinet are asked to approve the implementation of the Discretionary Grant Fund scheme as set out in Section 2.6.
3.2	There are other options that the Council can consider in that it can effectively tailor the scheme. However, it is felt that the proposed approach that has been outlined has the best fit to maximise support for a large number of local businesses whilst mitigating against the risk of overcommitting the Council.
4.	Consultation on proposal
4.1	Officers have consulted key internal teams that hold information on the impact businesses have seen as a result of Covid-19, to ensure that the proposals Cabinet are asked to approve are robust and appropriate for the needs of Rotherham businesses.
5.	Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision
5.1	The scheme will go live on the 10 th December with regular progress updates provided to the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.
6.	Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1	The Sheffield City Region has been allocated £30m Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) as part of the agreement for entering Tier 3. From this allocation, the Council has been allocated £664k to use for its discretionary grant fund scheme. The scheme has been scoped out with a view to mitigating the risk that the Council could over commit to grant payments, should more businesses come forward for the grant than the Council anticipates. The scheme will be promoted on a first come, first served basis to manage the finite amount of grant, though it should be recognised due to the time taken to process grants there may be a small number of cases that cause a potential risk of overspend. Should there be any surplus due to low application number, then this will then be used to top up grant payments to those businesses already approved or to expand the scheme.
6.2	The Council will not be provided with additional grant should the number of applicants coming forward exceed the Councils projections. Therefore, if that happens and the Council pays out the grant as initially indicated it will have to cover any costs over and above its grant allocation.
6.3	There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.
7.	Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)
7.1	<p>Officers may consider whether grant conditions are necessary in relation to this scheme. Such conditions ought to be fairly light touch, given the small amounts of the grants. Legal services can prepare necessary grant conditions should this be required.</p> <p>Regarding state aid,</p> <p>Under the European Commission’s COVID-19 Framework, each business may receive up to €800,000 in grants or other aid without being in breach of state aid rules.</p> <p>It seems from this report that the grants from the Council itself to each recipient will be comfortably below in this limit.</p> <p>However, for each grant recipient, the Council’s grant must be aggregated to any other public sector support (e.g. other grants) which the grant recipient is receiving from all other public bodies (e.g. from central government, other local authorities if operating there).</p> <p>It seems from the report that the businesses eligible for this grant are too small to have significant grants from other public bodies.</p> <p>However, the Council should comply with the requirements indicated in the BEIS guidance regarding state aid declarations.</p>
8.	Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1	No direct implications.
9.	Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults
9.1	The proposed scheme aims to support private nurseries who will have suffered financially due to the COVID-19 lockdown.
10.	Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications
10.1	The discretionary scheme will support some businesses that are run by people with protected characteristics, that were inadvertently prohibited from applying for governments original business support grant scheme.
11.	Implications for Ward Priorities
11.1	No direct implications.
12.	Implications for Partners
12.1	No direct implications.
13.	Risks and Mitigation
13.1.	<p>There are three significant risks that the Council will face with the implementation of the discretionary grant fund;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicants exceeding the grant available 2. Fraudulent applications 3. Complaints from businesses that are rejected <p>The Council can mitigate against these risks in the following ways;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set a scheme that allows lower grant to be paid out initially with top ups should applicant numbers allow. 2. Ensure that banking details are independently verified ahead of payments being made. 3. The Council is clear at the outset the businesses that it intends to support along with the information it will require as evidence of Covid-19 impact.
14.	Accountable Officers
	Rob Mahon, Head of Corporate Finance

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Judith Badger	01/12/20

(S.151 Officer)		
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	01/12/20

*Report Author: Rob Mahon, Head of Corporate Finance
Rob.mahon@rotherham.gov.uk*

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A)

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an equality analysis.

Directorate: Finance and Customer Services	Service area: Finance
Lead person: Rob Mahon	Contact number: 01709 254518

1. Title:

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

Discretionary Scheme Criteria

The scheme is available to businesses who have remained open but are suffering from a loss of trade and have been unable to access any of the existing business grant schemes. Successful applicants must meet the core criteria and fall into one of the targeted areas below. Grant payments will be up to £1,000. The judgement against this criteria will be down to officer discretion.

Core criteria:

- Businesses must be able to demonstrate financial hardship.
- Has to be micro/small businesses (employees less than 49).
- Able to evidence significant fixed business costs.

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- State aid rules apply.
- Businesses that are able to access existing government business support schemes are excluded.

Targeted areas:

- Only local, regional or independent businesses that are not forced to close during the lockdown will be considered;
- Mobile businesses with significant fixed business costs (personal costs are excluded – for example a car would not be included unless it is substantially for business use – insurance documents to evidence)
- Businesses run from home with significant fixed costs that are of a business nature – i.e. a separate building, solely for business use.
- This fund can be used to support the self-employed and freelancers who may fall outside the eligibility of existing national and local schemes.

In exceptional circumstances but solely at the discretion of the Council, an application may also be considered from a business not fully meeting the criteria set out above.

Discretionary Scheme Exclusions

- Businesses able to access existing government business grant schemes or government’s self-employment support scheme.

Businesses in manufacturing, construction & office based are excluded;

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council’s strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		x
Could the proposal affect service users?		x
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?		x

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Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council’s services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect the Council’s workforce or employment practices?		X

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals prior to carrying out an **Equality Analysis**.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual’s needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below and use the prompts for guidance.

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**
n/a

- **Key findings**
n/a

- **Actions**
n/a

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Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	n/a

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Judith Badger	Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services	30 November 2020

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	30 November 2020
If relates to a Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, Council or a Significant Operational Decision – report date and date sent for	

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publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	

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