

## Report of Chief Officer Economic Development

## Report to Director of City Development

**Date:** 27 May 2020

**Subject:** COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:	
Appendix number:	

## Summary

### 1. Main issues

- Under the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF), set up by central government to support businesses through COVID-19, Leeds City Council has been successful in distributing over £134m of grant funding to over 10,900 businesses since late March.
- On 1 May, responding to feedback from Local Authorities and from business representative groups, the government announced the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund of up to £617m to provide grants to specific small businesses previously outside the scope of the SBGF and RHLGF schemes. This is an additional 5% uplift to the £12.33 billion funding previously announced for the SBGF and RHLGF schemes.
- Local Authorities received detailed guidance on the scheme on 13 May. The guidance was updated on 22 May and can be read [here](#)
- On 20 May Leeds City Council was notified that our initial allocation under the Discretionary Grant Fund would amount to a minimum amount of £7,795,000. This is a baseline to provide the fixed minimum 5% allocation for each local authority, to give certainty. The value of the 5% allocation will increase in line with the amount the council pays out from the SBGF and RHLGF as the council achieves a higher number of businesses supported and grants awarded under those schemes.
- The value of the proposed fund is relatively small compared to the business stock in the city and in relation to the requests for assistance received by the council since

11 March. Data from the Office of National Statistics Business Demography Data (2018) for Leeds indicated that the business stock in Leeds was 28,385, with 97.5% or 27,675 businesses being small or micro businesses. Analysis undertaken by Officers at Leeds City Council would suggest that around 1000 businesses and charities could be supported through the Discretionary Grant Fund.

- The Government's guidance provides that grants should be primarily and predominantly aimed at certain categories of business and charity (and that certain types of business / charity within those categories should be prioritised) but the Council does have some discretion to determine which businesses grants should be awarded to.
- In recognition of the role that small, local charities have played (and continue to play) in supporting the response to COVID-19 and supporting our communities in Leeds, it is proposed that 10% of the total fund (initially £780,000) should be set aside for charity properties which are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief. This will ensure that the overall fund is not exhausted before grants are allocated to eligible small charities. The amount set aside has been calculated based on information held by the council on our business rates database. Other charities will still be able to apply for a grant if they meet the eligibility criteria but their applications won't be prioritised.
- Having due regard to the Government's guidance, it is proposed that grants should only be awarded to businesses or charities who have ongoing fixed property related costs of £4,000 or more for the period starting on 11 March 2020 and ending on 11 September 2020. This is in line with the Government's guidance that grants should be aimed at businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs and will minimise the risk of duplicating other government support such as the job retention scheme for employees which supports staff costs or the bounce-back loans which provide general working capital to enable businesses to continue to trade. The figure of £8,000 per annum has been established based on our knowledge of the property market across the whole of Leeds and is considered a reasonable entry level for the scheme.
- It is also proposed that grants should be for no more than 50% of a business's ongoing fixed property costs for that period of time, with a minimum grant of £2,000 and a maximum of £10,000. Meaning that qualifying businesses with annual fixed property costs above £40,000 will receive a £10,000 grant. This will balance the need to provide a level of financial support for businesses which will have a positive impact as against the anticipated demand for grants. Whilst the Government's guidance allows for grants of £25,000 it is proposed that grants of this value will not be awarded by the council in order to reach more businesses. For example, if 100 grants of £25,000 were awarded that would total £2.5M or >30% of the total amount available in the fund. A maximum grant level of £10,000 will see at least 250 businesses supported for £2.5M – an additional 150 businesses.
- Notwithstanding the provisions of the guidance, it is not proposed to prioritise grants to specific types of business other than registered charities who are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but otherwise meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief for the reasons noted above. This is because market traders in Leeds with relatively high fixed ongoing fixed property costs were able to receive grants through the SBGF and RHLGF with £2.33M of grants having been awarded at 22 May. Bed and breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates exist in very small numbers in Leeds and therefore are not a major

sector in our local economy. Finally, we have proposed a single scheme design that will allow small and micro businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces to benefit whilst also allowing businesses and charities who were not able to benefit from the SBGF and RHLGF to apply. The council has evidence of a range of businesses not based in shared offices or other flexible workspaces who meet all the other criteria for the proposed scheme design, for example suppliers to the retail hospitality and leisure industry. On balance, and subject to prioritising grants to certain charities, this approach will create a level playing field for businesses to access the Discretionary Grants Fund given the limited funds available.

- It is proposed that the scheme be open for applications for a period of four weeks. The number of applications will be monitored carefully and this date may be brought forward and closed earlier if demand is significant thereby ensuring that we do not overcommit the council financially. Applications will be accepted from 1 June.
- Given the size of the economic impact of COVID-19 there will remain a high number of businesses/charities that are not able to access the SBGF and RHLGF schemes or the Discretionary Grants Fund. Evidence will be gathered of ongoing need, in order that the council can continue to make the case to Government for further support.

## **2. Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- This scheme will support the Best City Ambition to have 'A Strong Economy and a Compassionate City'. Providing support to businesses to ensure that they can bounce back from COVID-19 will help protect jobs and livelihoods and ensure that our economy has a better chance of recovery.

## **3. Resource Implications**

- On 20 May Leeds City Council was notified that our initial allocation under the Discretionary Grant Fund would amount to a minimum amount of £7,795,000. This is a baseline to provide the fixed minimum 5% allocation for each local authority, to give certainty. The value of the 5% allocation will increase in line with the amount the council pays out from the SBGF and RHLGF as the council achieves a higher number of businesses supported and grants awarded under those schemes.
- The funding to cover the Discretionary Grant Fund will initially be derived from any underspend from the initial SBGF and RHLGF allocations. An additional payment of £1,451,000 will be made to Leeds City Council on or around 1 June to meet the costs of the additional 5% Discretionary Grant Fund. This is based on the fixed minimum allocation of £7,795,000 and additional payments will be made to Leeds City Council if the allocation increases, which it is expected given our progress in the distribution of grants from the SBGF and RHLGF schemes to date.
- In recognition of the role that small, local charities have played (and continue to play) in supporting the response to COVID-19 and supporting our communities in Leeds, it is proposed that 10% of the total fund (initially £780,000) should be set aside for charity properties which are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief. This will ensure that the overall fund is not exhausted before grants are allocated to eligible small charities. The amount set aside has been calculated based on information held by the council on our business rates database. If it

becomes evident that the sum set aside is not going to be fully utilised then, at the sole discretion of the Council, the balance will be made available to support general applications from qualifying businesses.

- The costs of administering the scheme has been estimated in line with the standard management fee applied to the administration of business grants schemes by Leeds City Council of 5% and will therefore be approximately £400,000. The Government has stated that it will meet associated New Burdens costs and a calculation is currently being made to reimburse Local Authorities for the costs of administering the scheme.
- The scheme requires an application process and assessment of eligibility which makes it more resource intensive than the SBGF and RHLGF schemes. Resources will be re-deployed from Economic Development and from other departments in the City Development Directorate to support the administration process.

## **Recommendations**

The Director of City Development is recommended:

- a) To note the contents of this report and the advice contained within it.
- b) To approve the proposed Leeds COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme and to delegate the approval to award individual grants to officers with delegated authority under City Development's existing Sub delegation scheme.
- c) To agree that the decision should be exempt from call-in due to the reasons outlined in paragraph 4.5.8.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the details of the proposed Leeds City Council COVID-19 Local Authority Discretionary Scheme. Whilst the government has issued guidelines for the implementation of the scheme, it is for the Council to determine the detail of the scheme which is set out in this report for approval.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Under the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF), set up by central government to support businesses through COVID-19, Leeds City Council has been successful in distributing over £134m of grant funding to over 10,900 businesses since late March.
- 2.2 On 1 May, responding to feedback from Local Authorities and from business representative groups, the government announced the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund of up to £617m to provide grants to specific small businesses previously outside the scope of the SBGF and RHLGF schemes. This is an additional 5% uplift to the £12.33 billion funding previously announced for the SBGF and RHLGF schemes.
- 2.3 Local Authorities received detailed guidance on the scheme on 13 May. The guidance was updated on 22 May and can be read [here](#).

- 2.4 On 20 May, Leeds City Council was notified that our initial allocation under the Discretionary Grant Fund would amount to a minimum amount of £7,795,000. This is a baseline to provide the fixed minimum 5% allocation for each local authority, to give certainty. The value of the 5% allocation will increase in line with the amount we pay out from the SBGF and RHLF as we achieve a higher number of business hereditaments supported and grants awarded.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The value of the proposed fund is relatively small compared to the business stock in the city and in relation to the requests for assistance received by the council since 11 March. Data from the Office of National Statistics Business Demography Data (2018) for Leeds indicated that the business stock in Leeds was 28,385, with 97.5% or 27,675 businesses being small or micro businesses. Analysis undertaken by Officers at Leeds City Council would suggest that around 1000 businesses and charities could be supported through the Discretionary Grant Fund. In designing the schemes officers have therefore taken into account both quantitative data and qualitative data available to them and tried to balance demand for assistance with limited funds.
- 3.2 It is proposed that both businesses and charities will have the same application process. The only difference being that the evidence charities are able to supply may vary as noted in paragraph 3.10 below.
- 3.3 The design of the proposed scheme incorporates the basic principle of supporting businesses and charities who have not received other COVID-19 grant assistance and can demonstrate that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on their activities, and have relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs.
- 3.4 In line with government guidance we will publish the scope of our scheme on the Leeds City Council website, providing clear guidance on the details of the scheme. Businesses and charities will be required to make an application for a grant which they will be able to access from the website. We will endeavour to process grant applications within 20 working days, but this will depend on the levels of demand we experience and on all the information required having been submitted by the applicant.
- 3.5 The following criteria are mandatory criteria for both schemes and set nationally:
- businesses / charities which have received cash grants from any central Government COVID-19 related scheme are ineligible for funding from the Discretionary Grants Fund. Such grant schemes principally include the Small Business Grant Fund, and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund;
  - Businesses who are eligible for the Self-Employed Income support scheme (SEISS) are eligible to apply for this scheme as well.
  - businesses / charities must have been trading on the 11 March 2020.
  - Organisations which are in administration, insolvent or in respect of which a striking-off notice has been made are ineligible; and
  - businesses must be eligible to receive funding under the European Commission's State aid rules.

In addition, the national guidance states that grants should be primarily and predominantly aimed at businesses:

- which are either small or micro businesses as defined in Section 33 Part 2 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and the Companies Act 2006.
- which have relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs;
- which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis; and
- which occupy property, or part of a property, with a rateable value of below £51,000 or who have annual rent or mortgage payments below £51,000.

3.6 It is proposed that, having due regard to the government guidance, Leeds City Council should administer the scheme in the following manner:

- grants will only be awarded to businesses / charities who meet the eligibility criteria as set out above;
- grants will only be awarded in relation to ongoing fixed property-related costs of the applicant from the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020; this is in line with the government's guidance that grants should be aimed at businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs and will minimise the risk of duplicating other government support such as the job retention scheme for employees which supports staff costs or the bounce-back loans which provide general working capital to enable businesses to continue to trade;
- grants will be for up to 50% of fixed property costs from the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until 11 September 2020 with a maximum grant of £10,000 – this will balance the need to provide a level of financial support for businesses which will have a positive impact as against the anticipated demand for grants. The Council is already dealing with a significant number of requests for assistance and our analysis of potential demand is showing that at least 1,000 businesses / charities will be eligible for grants under the proposed scheme;
- grants will be for a minimum of £2,000 - applicants will need to demonstrate that they are incurring a minimum of £8,000 per annum in fixed property costs (including rent, rates, mortgage payments, service charges, and fixed utility costs). The £2,000 grant payment is designed to support fixed property costs for the period from 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020. These limits will prioritise businesses with high ongoing fixed property-related costs in line with the national guidance.
- applicants must supply documentation to evidence the above costs (e.g. a lease with property costs itemised, Business Rates Bill for 2020/21, invoices from the landlord for rent and service charges, fixed charges associated with utility bills.). The Council will use its discretion in reviewing documentation to ensure that up to six months of property costs can be supported by the proposed scheme.
- applicants must also supply documentation to evidence a minimum 25% projected or actual loss of revenue over a six month period (March to September 2020) due to COVID-19 (e.g. bank account statements, orders of work cancelled / postponed, confirmation of halted operations). Where the applicant is a charity, evidence may include documentation to demonstrate a significant increase in demand for its services due to the crisis and / or

evidence of an inability to generate income from fundraising activities The Council will exercise its discretion in asking for evidence ensuring that at this difficult time a large administrative burden is not placed on applicants and that evidence provided is appropriate for a small grants scheme making payments of up to £10,000.

- It is proposed that grants under the scheme will be limited to businesses which contribute to the visions, ambitions and priorities of the Council as set out in the Best Council Plan and the various plans and strategies referred to therein. Grants will not be provided to businesses which are operating illegally or otherwise in breach of Council policies or which are in debt to the Council.

3.7 Whilst the national guidance allows for grants of £25,000 it is proposed that Leeds City Council does not award grants at this level. Analysis of likely demand suggests that if the council were to offer grants at this level the number of businesses / charities that could be supported would be reduced significantly. For example, if 100 grants of £25,000 were awarded that would total £2.5M or >31% of the total amount available in the fund. A maximum grant level of £10,000 will see at least 250 businesses supported for £2.5M – an additional 150 businesses.

3.8 Government has asked Local Authorities to prioritise the following types of businesses for grants from within the funding pot allocated:

- small or micro businesses who occupy shared offices or other flexible workspaces whose business rate liability sits with their landlord;
- regular market traders with fixed building costs who don't have their own business rates assessment; and
- registered charities who are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but otherwise meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the guidance, it is not proposed to prioritise grants to specific types of business other than registered charities who are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but otherwise meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief for the reasons noted above:

- regular market traders in Leeds were able to receive grants through the SBGF and RHLGF with £2.33M of grants having been awarded at 22 May. Market traders who qualify for this scheme can still apply.
- bed and breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates exist in very small numbers in Leeds and therefore are not a major sector in our local economy. Bed and breakfasts who qualify for this scheme can still apply. For clarity, the following definition of a bed and breakfast will be applied when accessing eligibility for the scheme 'Accommodation in a private house offering no more than 12 guest rooms, run by the owner. Breakfast must be offered as standard'.
- the proposed scheme design will allow small and micro businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces to benefit whilst also allowing businesses/local charities who were not able to benefit from the SBGF and RHLGF to apply. The council has evidence of a range of businesses not based in shared offices or other flexible workspaces who meet all the other criteria for the proposed scheme design, for example suppliers to the retail hospitality and leisure industry. On balance, it is therefore proposed to create

a level playing field for businesses to access to the Small Business Discretionary Grant Fund rather than to differentiate based on whether they pay rates directly to the council or through their landlord.

- 3.9 Detailed guidance has been received from government relating to this scheme. The guidance available at 22 May can be read [here](#)

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the following groups:

- Business representative bodies through the Leeds City Council silver command group for Business and Economy including the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, LeedsBID, Leeds Hotels and Venues Association and Tech Nation.
- Voluntary Action Leeds.
- Through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with Business Support teams of Local Authorities (LAs) across West Yorkshire (WY) and those of LAs in York, Harrogate, Selby and Craven.

There was broad support for an approach which focused on fixed property costs. In addition, stakeholders felt that, on balance, the proposal to award grants on a first come, first served basis, would ensure that businesses / charities received the grant payments faster, assisting them with their primary challenge of lack of cash-flow. There was also an acknowledgment that this scheme could be oversubscribed.

- 4.1.2 The Leader of the Council, the Chair of the Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board and the Leaders of opposition parties represented on Executive Board have been consulted on the proposals outlined in this report.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 The information we provide on the Leeds City Council website about the scheme and the application form will be reviewed to ensure that it meets web accessibility legislation. There will be the ability for an applicant to flag that they require language support if required.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 This scheme will support the Best City Ambition to have ‘A Strong Economy and a Compassionate City’. Providing support to businesses to ensure that they can bounce back from COVID-19 will help protect jobs and livelihoods and ensure that our economy has a better chance of recovery.
- 4.3.2 Data relating to the allocation of grants will be published on Data Mill North once the scheme is complete.

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- 4.3.3 This scheme will be delivered as ‘digital by default’ removing the need for paper letters to applicants or paper record storage. Records will be stored on the City Region wide Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which will enable



this support to be tracked alongside other business support provide to the applicants.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The costs of administering this scheme have been estimated in line with the standard management fee applied to the administration of business grants schemes by Leeds City Council of 5% and therefore approximately £400,000. A new burdens calculation is currently being made by the Government to reimburse Local Authorities for the costs of administering their schemes.
- 4.4.2 The scheme requires an application process and assessment of eligibility which makes it more resource intensive than the SBGF and RHLGF schemes. Resources will be re-deployed from Economic Development and from other departments in the City Development Directorate to support the administration process.
- 4.4.3 It is proposed that the scheme be open for applications for a period of four weeks. The number of applications will be monitored carefully and this date may be brought forward if demand is significant thereby ensuring that we do not overcommit the council financially.

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 Grants will be provided pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.5.2 As set out in the Government's guidance, grants must be provided so as to be compliant with the European Commission's rules as to the provision of State aid.
- 4.5.3 State aid occurs where public resources are used in a selective manner so as to provide organisations who are engaged in economic activities with an advantage which will or is likely to distort competition between EU member states.
- 4.5.4 In the case of grants awarded pursuant to the Discretionary Grants Fund it is anticipated that they will be compliant with the State aid rules in one of three ways:
- they will not be subject to the State aid rules in that they will not or are unlikely to distort competition between EU member states;
  - they are permitted under the European Commission's de minimis regulation (this allows organisations to receive up to 200,000 euros' (circa £175,000) worth of aid every three years); or
  - they are permitted under the European Commission's temporary framework for the provision of aid to mitigate against the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (this allows organisations who have been adversely affected by the pandemic to receive up to 800,000 euros' (circa £700,000) worth of aid.
- 4.5.5 Applicants will be required to complete a declaration giving details of any other State aid they have already received pursuant to the de minimis regulation and/or the temporary framework. Grants will not be provided where the Council is not satisfied that the State aid rules will be complied with.
- 4.5.6 In administering any grant scheme, the Council must have due regard to the Government guidance and must act in a proportionate, objective, rational and reasonable manner. In addition, the Council must also act in a business-like manner

with reasonable care, skill and caution and with a due and alert regard to the interests of the council tax and business rate payers of Leeds.

- 4.5.7 The recommendations contained in this report are Key Decisions which have not been included the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions for 28 clear days before they will be made. Given that the Government has asked local authorities to make grant payments as quickly as possible to support struggling businesses, it would be impractical to defer the decisions sought until they have been included in the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions for 28 clear days. In the circumstances, and in accordance with the Council's special urgency procedure, the chair of the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board has been consulted and has agreed that the decisions are urgent and cannot be reasonably deferred.
- 4.5.8 As a consequence of the lockdown measures associated with the response to the Covid 19 pandemic, many businesses and local charities are suffering significant financial hardship. Consequently, this scheme has been brought forward at pace following the publication of the Government's guidance towards the end of last month to ensure that applications can be received from the 1st June 2020. In light of the need to progress the distribution of grants as quickly as possible, this report has been designated as exempt from call-in. The decisions sought could not have been made earlier due to the need to design a scheme in accordance with Government guidance which was issued on 13 May.

## **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 To inform scheme design, analysis of the likely demand for assistance was undertaken. Officers took into account data available from a range of sources including the council's business rates database.
- 4.6.2 In recognition of the role that small, local charities have played (and continue to play) in supporting the response to COVID-19 and supporting our communities in Leeds, it is proposed that 10% of the total fund (initially £780,000) should be set aside for charity properties which are in receipt of charitable business rates relief but would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief. This will ensure that the overall fund is not exhausted before grants are allocated to eligible small charities. The amount set aside has been calculated based on information held by the council on our business rates database. Other charities will still be able to apply for a grant if they meet the eligibility criteria but their applications won't be prioritised".
- 4.6.3 It also informed the decision not to prioritise certain types of business as set out in paragraph 3.8 above.
- 4.6.4 Officers have worked with a third party to estimate the number of small or micro businesses who occupy shared offices or other flexible workspaces whose business rate liability sits with their landlord. This data indicated that businesses in these circumstances are from a wide range of sectors and could include as many as 2000 businesses. In addition, Officers developed a number of case studies from the requests for assistance received by the council since 11 March which underlines that there is significant unmet need across the city outside of this category. On balance it was therefore felt that the scheme design should create a level playing field for all small and micro businesses.

- 4.6.5 Consideration was given to the adoption of a cohort approach, whereby all grant applications would have to be made by a certain date, to determine actual demand, with grants allocated either by need or business type, but this was ruled out as the major issue facing businesses and charities is lack of cash-flow, meaning that the priority must be to award grants as soon as possible. Instead, the scheme will be open for four weeks to all qualifying businesses and charities and grants will be paid out as we receive accurate and complete applications. If the scheme is over-subscribed we will present evidence to central government of demand and make a case for additional funding to be provided.
- 4.6.6 There are differences between the schemes established across the West Yorkshire Authorities. It was felt, on balance, that this was appropriate given the different circumstances of each Authority.
- 4.6.7 Whilst it is always possible that a legal challenge could be made that the Council's proposed scheme is unlawful, in designing it we have had due regard to both the Government's guidance and the principles of public law. For such a challenge to be successful it would have to be shown that, in adopting the proposed scheme, the Council had acted contrary to public law (i.e. that it had not acted proportionately, objectively, rationally or reasonably). For the reasons set out in this report, we do not believe that that is the case and that we would be able to rebut any such challenge that might be made.
- 4.6.8 A simple appeals process will be put in place and details will be included in the guidance for applicants on this.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The value of the proposed fund is relatively small compared to the requests for assistance received by the council since 11 March presenting a significant challenge for the council in scheme design. Officers have therefore taken into account both quantitative data and qualitative data available to them and tried to balance demand for assistance with limited funds.
- 5.2 The design of the proposed scheme incorporates the basic principle of supporting businesses and charities who have not received other COVID-19 grant assistance and can demonstrate that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on their activities, and have relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs.
- 5.3 The grant amounts will be calculated in a way that is proportionate and fair to each business / charity that qualifies.
- 5.4 The council will be in a position to make awards from 1 June, ensuring that businesses and charities receive support to address their challenges with cash-flow as soon as possible.
- 5.5 Evidence of additional demand will be captured and shared with government to inform any future business support schemes associated with addressing the impacts of COVID-19.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of City Development is recommended:

- a) To note the contents of this report and the advice contained within it.
- b) To approve the proposed Leeds COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme and to delegate the approval to award individual grants to officers with delegated authority under City Development's existing Sub delegation scheme.
- c) To agree that the decision should be exempt from call-in due to the reasons outlined in paragraph 4.5.8.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.