

Delegated Decision Notice

This form is the written record of a key, significant operational or administrative decision taken by an officer.

Decision type	<input type="checkbox"/> Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant Operational Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Decision
Approximate value	<input type="checkbox"/> Below £500,000 <input type="checkbox"/> £500,000 to £1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> over £1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/> below £25,000 <input type="checkbox"/> £25,000 to £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> £100,000 to £500,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Over £500,000 Sits under previous key decision	<input type="checkbox"/> below £25,000 <input type="checkbox"/> £25,000 to £100,000
Director¹	Director of City Development		
Contact person:	Andrew White, Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Manager		Telephone number: 0113 378 1562
Subject²:	COVID-19 Additional Restrictions Grant – Funding of free three year driver licences to existing private hire and hackney carriage drivers and access to grants		
Decision details³:	<p>What decision has been taken? (Set out all necessary decisions to be taken by the decision taker including decisions in relation to exempt information, exemption from call in etc.)</p> <p>The Director of City Development has approved the allocation of £2.5m of Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) monies to fund free three year driver licences to existing private hire and hackney carriage drivers (which numbered 6191 in January 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All current private hire and hackney carriage drivers will be eligible, whether their business is based in Leeds or not, unlike our Covid-19 Discretionary Grant Schemes. • The renewal application must be submitted as normal and the licence holder must meet current licensing standards and conditions (a “fit and proper” person test). • The grant will be allocated on receipt of a signed completed application for 		

¹ Give title of Director with delegated responsibility for function to which decision relates.

² If the decision is key and has appeared on the list of forthcoming key decisions, the title of the decision should be the same as that used in the list

³ Simply refer to supporting report where used as these matters have been set out in detail.

	<p>a three year private hire or hackney carriage driver licence, from 1 March 2021 until 31 March 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council reserves the right to issue a shorter licence when there is a reason to do so <p>Drivers will not be eligible if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were not licensed with Leeds City Council before the date of this DDN. • They do not apply for a three year licence. <p>A three year licence is worth between £390 (cost of a three year licence) and £450 (cost of three one year licences). As most drivers renew on an annual basis the value to most drivers will be £450. In addition, drivers will save time relating to their annual renewal in future years.</p> <p>Drivers will still be able to apply to Covid-19 Discretionary Grant Schemes where they are eligible, and receive business grants.</p> <p>The ARG budget will be kept separate from the council's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing budget, and the council will report on the number of three year licences issued from this ARG budget in line with the requirements set by central government.</p> <p>The Covid-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme Two for those with low fixed costs will be opened up to drivers with their business address in Leeds in future rounds regardless of whether they have accessed Self Employment Income Support, allowing drivers to access a £500 grant provided they meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>A brief statement of the reasons for the decision (Include any significant financial, procurement, legal or equalities implications, having consulted with Finance, PACS, Legal, HR and Equality colleagues as appropriate)</p> <p>A Key decision was taken on Thursday 19 November 2020: <i>COVID-19 Local Restrictions Support Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant Schemes including Discretionary Grant Funds</i></p>
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	<p>Related significant operational decisions were taken on 27 November 2020, 17 December 2020 and 21 January 2021: <i>COVID-19 Additional Restrictions Grant Schemes - Discretionary Grant Fund Scheme Two</i>, <i>COVID-19 Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs</i>, <i>COVID-19 Grant Support for Business Improvement Districts</i> and <i>COVID-19 Business Support Package January Lockdown</i>.</p> <p>The Key decision set the principles that: <i>'Support should be provided for home based businesses / those run from non-domestic premises with annual property costs below £4,000 per annum severely impacted by COVID-19'</i> and that <i>'Additional business support should be put in place for micro businesses focused particularly on those in retail, hospitality and leisure who have been severely impacted by the pandemic. This will be funded through the ARG'</i>. This decision is in line with these principles and sets out details as to how ARG will be allocated to support private hire and hackney carriage drivers following representations made to the council. Further, similar decisions will be necessary as the government sets out plans for the evolution of Covid-19 business grants.</p> <p>Since those decisions were taken further consideration has been given to the particular circumstances of the taxi and private hire trade which fulfils an important transport function in Leeds. We know that people with a disability or mobility need are three times more likely to travel by taxi or private hire. Vulnerable people, particularly children and older people are also likely to travel to and from school, health appointment by taxi or private hire. Many people will be taking taxis and private hire to get their Covid vaccinations this year.</p> <p>In a normal year, we estimate more than 30 million journeys are made by taxis and private hire vehicles in Leeds. We want these services to continue, safely during the Covid pandemic, and to be available to all of us when the restrictions end. The lockdown has significantly reduced demand for taxis and private hire, notably in travel to and from places of work, railway stations, daytime shopping, and the night time economy. This has affected the earnings of taxi and private hire drivers and operators.</p> <p>The government has offered help to self-employed people through the Self-Employment Income Support (SEIS) Scheme, and we understand around two thirds of all taxi and private hire drivers have accessed that scheme, with a</p>
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	<p>further 10% claiming universal credit. In addition, Leeds City Council has also supported taxi and private hire drivers with a business address in Leeds through the Covid-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme Two for those with low fixed costs. Grants of £500 being available to those who have not accessed SEIS in order to cover fixed costs. The discretionary scheme is currently under review given recent government announcements regarding the lifting of restrictions made on 22 February 2021 and will be opened up to drivers with their business address in Leeds in future rounds regardless of whether they have accessed SEIS provided they meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The council is aware of the potential hardship remaining in the taxi and private hire trade despite this support being in place. The vast majority of taxi and private hire drivers do not have employment contracts or guarantees of hours and earnings reduce significantly when demand for journeys is lower. The council is currently conducting a survey of licence holders to seek feedback on ways in which the pandemic has affected working, earnings, and the ability to undertake diversification. The early findings and formal representation to the council, and to other councils indicates that there are significant areas of hardship in the taxi and private hire trade.</p> <p>Given the potential links between hardship and both driver and passenger safety, there are concerns that without further support, drivers may not seek Covid tests, may not report a positive test, and may not isolate following a positive test. Longer term, the hardship caused by the pandemic may also weaken the ability of the taxi and private hire trade to sustain and invest, adversely affecting passenger safety in the future. It is extremely positive, therefore that the council can provide long term support by allocating Additional Restrictions Grants monies to provide free three year licences to all current drivers.</p> <p>The total allocation made to Leeds City Council for the Additional Restrictions Grant stands at £22,908,275. It is estimated that providing this support with cost £2.5m, representing almost 11% of the total allocation. This represents a significant commitment to the taxi and private hire trade.</p> <p>Brief details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the decision maker at the time of making the decision</p>
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	<p>Consideration was given as to whether cash grants alone should be given to drivers. This was discounted as the Covid-19 Discretionary Grant Scheme Two for those with low fixed costs awards grants at a value of £500 for a sole trader and £1000 for a business with two or more employees. If drivers were to be awarded a grant of £1000 to align with other Local Authorities they would be receiving a more generous grant than other comparable businesses through our Discretionary Scheme (e.g. driving instructors and mobile hairdressers). Scheme Two is also only open to those with a registered business address in Leeds which would leave approximately 50% of drivers licensed with Leeds City Council unsupported.</p> <p>Consideration was given to offering a free one or two year licence to the taxi and private hire trade. This was discounted as a one year licence incurs a £150 charge which, when added to the cash grant that will be available through the Discretionary Grant Scheme for drivers with a Leeds business address, would only amount to £650 or £800 which would make Leeds City Council less generous than other Local Authorities.</p> <p>Consideration was given as to whether only those drivers with a business address in Leeds should be able to access a free three year licence. This was discounted in that drivers may only have a licence in Leeds and not in other Local Authority areas and may otherwise slip through the net.</p>
Affected wards:	Businesses across all wards will be impacted by this decision.
Details of consultation undertaken⁴:	<p>Executive Member Leader, Leeds City Council, Councillor James Lewis Executive Member for Economy and Culture, Leeds City Council, Councillor Mary Harland.</p> <p>Councillor Billy Flynn and Councillor Matthew Robinson were consulted in their capacity as contacts for Covid-19 business grants in the conservative group.</p> <p>Councillor Judith Blake was also consulted as this policy position was developed prior to her stepping down as Leader and Executive Member for Economy and Culture.</p>


⁴ Include details of any interest disclosed by an elected Member on consultation and the date of any relevant dispensation given.

	Ward Councillors Cabinet		
	Others Chair of Licensing Committee, Councillor Ben Garner Andrew White, Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Manager Economic Officers from West Yorkshire Authorities		
Implementation	<p>Officer accountable, and proposed timescales for implementation</p> <p>Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer Culture and Economy oversees the Covid-19 Business Support Programmes.</p> <p>Andrew White, Taxi & Private Hire Licensing manager will be accountable for the delivery of the free three year driver licences to existing private hire and hackney carriage drivers.</p>		
List of Forthcoming Key Decisions⁵	Date Added to List:-		
	<p>If Special Urgency or General Exception a brief statement of the reason why it is impracticable to delay the decision</p> <p>N/A</p>		
	<p>If Special Urgency Relevant Scrutiny Chair(s) approval</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____</p>		
Publication of report⁶	<p>If not published for 5 clear working days prior to decision being taken the reason why not possible:</p>		
	<p>If published late relevant Executive member's approval</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____</p>		
Call In	Is the decision available ⁷ for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

⁵ See Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 2.4 - 2.6. Complete this section for key decisions only

⁶ See Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 3.1. Complete this section for key decisions only

⁷ See Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 5.1. Significant operational decisions taken by officers are never available for call in. Key decisions are always available for call in unless they have been exempted from call in under rule 5.1.3.

	<p>If exempt from call-in, the reason why call-in would prejudice the interests of the council or the public:</p> <p>It is vital to ensure that Covid-19 business grants monies can be issued to Leeds businesses as quickly as possible.</p>	
Approval of Decision	<p>Authorised decision maker⁸</p> <p>Director of City Development, Martin Farrington</p>	
	<p>Signature</p> 	<p>Date</p> <p>1 March 2021</p>

⁸ Give the post title and name of the officer with appropriate delegated authority to take the decision.