

## For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 16 August 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Phase 4: Additional Restrictions Grant (Discretionary)</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Sarah Hayward, Interim Executive Director of Place</b> <b>Stephen Tate, Director of Growth, Employment and Regeneration</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Shahul-Hameed, Cabinet Member for Community Safety &amp; Business Support</b> <b>Councillor Callton Young, Cabinet Member for Resources &amp; Financial Governance</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2020-2024</b> <p>The coronavirus crisis has had an unprecedented economic impact, and this has not been experienced equally, with some businesses hit particularly hard (including those, such as non-essential retail, being forced to close) and others more able to adapt to survive.</p> <p>The council's approach to the distribution of the latest round of Additional Restrictions Grant funding will support the following priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough. We will follow the evidence to tackle the underlying causes of inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice.</li></ul>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> <p>In November 2020 the Government confirmed that Croydon would receive an Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) of £7,734,200. Following the 3rd lockdown this amount was increased by £3,435,165 bringing the total of the Additional Restrictions Grant Funding to £11,169,365, to be spent by March 2022.</p> <p>An indicative ARG top up grant of £2,674,867 was also confirmed by Government but only if the current allocation of £11,169,365 had been spent or had a commitment to spend by 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Croydon was successful in distributing all additional restrictions funding and this report now looks at the allocation of the ARG top up grant of £2,674,867.</p> <p>This is one of 13 business grant schemes that have been announced since October 2020 (see Appendix 1).</p>	

This grant will support local businesses to restart and recover as Croydon emerges from lockdown, reducing the reliance of such businesses on other support provided by the Council, and preventing business closures and subsequent unemployment, which would place a future burden on Council services.

**FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: 4021CAB**

The notice of the decision will specify that the decision may not be implemented until after 13.00 hours on the 6th working day following the day on which the decision was taken unless referred to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended to

- 1.1 Approve the proposed criteria and implementation of phase four of the Additional Restrictions Grant funding allocation, as detailed in this report.
- 1.2 Note the outputs that have been created by the previous phases of the Additional Restrictions Grant funding to date.
- 1.3 Note that due to the Council's successful allocation of the £11,169,365 of Additional Restrictions Grant funding a further £2,674,867 top up grant will be secured to support businesses in the borough.
- 1.4 Delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Place the power to make decisions regarding the operation of the allocation of the £2,674,867 Additional Restrictions Grant, in accordance with the funding guidance established by Government.

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Croydon is facing one of the most challenging periods in its economic history. Despite Croydon's many strengths, the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has created an economic crisis that needs an ongoing coordinated response in order to reduce the impact on Croydon businesses.
- 2.2. The consensus is that the impact of COVID-19 on the business community and the wider economy has been and will continue to be seismic, and that recovery will take some years to play out, with many business practices unlikely to ever return to established pre-pandemic patterns.
- 2.3. The Council has worked with key stakeholders and business networks in the borough to support local businesses through the coronavirus crisis, and distribute targeted financial assistance. Although the pandemic continues, the easing of restrictions and the local success of the coronavirus vaccination

programme means that the Council can now start to work towards a plan for local economic recovery.

- 2.4 There is an opportunity to 'build back better and greener'. The Council has the ability to kickstart economic recovery in Croydon by targeting discretionary grant funding to safeguard good businesses, drive high street renewal, boost trade and enterprise, support skills development and encourage business diversification.
- 2.5 This report seeks approval of the proposals for the implementation of the fourth phase of distribution of Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) – £2.64 million of discretionary funding which is due to be provided by central government to support economic recovery in Croydon.

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 The impact of the pandemic has been significant on employees and businesses across the borough.
- 3.2 At its peak, in June 2020, the take up of the Job Retention Scheme (furlough) was 37% of employees in Croydon. Whilst this rate has now reduced to 9% (as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021), in line with the London (11%) and England (9%) averages, it does not account for how many employees never returned to work following the June 2020 peak; perhaps reflected by the fact that the rate of Croydon's working age population now claiming Universal Credit increased from 5.1% in March 2020 to 10.6% now - significantly above the London (9.6%) or UK (7.4%) rates.
- 3.3 In the week beginning 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021, Croydon's high street footfall was 25.1% up on the same week last year but according to the OBR economic and fiscal outlook, (March 2021), for Q1 2021, consumption is still expected to be 12% lower than its pre-pandemic peak in London.
- 3.4 A report commissioned by the South London Partnership (SLP) on 'The future of the South London economy post Covid-19' (Oxford Economics, 2021), found that the economic consequences are being felt by some groups of the South London population more than others. Younger, self-employed, part-time, and less well-qualified workers have been disproportionately exposed to the economic impacts of the crisis—as well as ethnic minorities—resulting in relatively deprived communities being more affected.
- 3.5 Oxford Economics estimated that the Croydon workforce shed 3,000 jobs in 2020, a 1.3% contraction, and expect a further 4,800 jobs to be lost in 2021.
- 3.6 Croydon's hospitality sectors are the most exposed to the crisis. Accommodation & food in particular will see GVA almost halve in 2020 alone, and will account for around a third of jobs lost in Croydon through 2020 and 2021. Arts, entertainment & recreation and other services will similarly see a sharp fall in output. Oxford Economics also expects Croydon to shed jobs in wholesale & retail trade, professional and administration & support services.

- 3.7 Croydon's prospects for growth are also weaker than its South London counterparts, with less exposure to the types of sectors that will drive the recovery across the sub-region, region and country. Croydon is forecast to be the SLP's weakest performing borough over the period 2019 to 2030.
- 3.8 Linked to the local digital/tech sector, Oxford Economics forecast information & communication to be Croydon's fastest growing sector in GVA terms, averaging 2.0% per year. Other business services, such as professional and administrative & support services, will similarly be among Croydon's faster growing sectors.
- 3.9. In November 2020 Croydon Council received £8,214,767 of discretionary funding from central government, of which £7,734,200 was Additional Restrictions Grant. A further ARG allocation for Croydon of £3,435,165 was announced by Government on the 15th January 2021. This brought the total ARG allocation for Croydon to £11,169,365. Despite the internal and external challenges faced by Croydon Council, all £11,169,365 of funding has been distributed to businesses. Croydon Council will now focus on ensuring that the additional top up grant announced by government of £2,674,867 is now distributed to support business recovery, continuing to save businesses and secure employment across the borough.
- 3.10 This grant funding is in addition to a number of other mandatory grants that have also been provided by central government for distribution by local authorities. More detail on the broader programme of business grant funding and support which has been implemented is provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.11 Since the beginning of the pandemic, to date, alongside distribution of grant funding direct to businesses, the Council's Economic Development team have signposted over 4,500 businesses to additional business support, funding, advice and guidance and supported businesses in a series of 10 business grant workshops.
- 3.12 The Council has established a key stakeholder group focused specifically on the safe re-opening and management of the borough's high streets, and have rolled out local targeted communications and marketing, alongside installation of hand sanitiser stations and social distancing signage.
- 3.13 The Council has updated our online guidance and signposting, and we issue a regular e-newsletter to all businesses signed up to the Council's network (7,000 business contacts). We are working closely with local business organisations, through our Croydon Business Network and Croydon Business Taskforce, whose members include London Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Trades and Business Improvement Districts, to help businesses manage the impacts of coronavirus, navigate the return to more normal practice as we emerge from lockdown, and begin to plan for future economic recovery and renewal.
- 3.14 This report sets out how, at a strategic level, the Council intends to use £2,674,874m of ARG funding to target support for key areas of the borough's economy, focusing on businesses that have been hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic and sectors which will engender inclusive recovery in the borough.

Decisions regarding the precise allocation of funding will be taken in accordance with clear governance structures and processes to be established by the council's Economic Development team and approved by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance, and the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Skills.

- 3.15 This report also details the successful delivery of the initial £11,169,365 Additional Restriction Grant Allocation.

#### **4. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT – ALLOCATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION TO DATE**

- 4.1 Government did not specify the types of businesses councils should support through ARG funding, but suggested that consideration could be given to businesses forced to close during the periods of coronavirus restrictions that are not ratepayers, businesses not forced to close but severely impacted by the restrictions and businesses that supply the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The Council modelled our outreach and support for businesses in the three phases of allocation and distribution of ARG following consultation with local business networks and representative organisations. This was to ensure that the fund was agile enough to deliver the best impact for businesses in the borough.

- 4.2 **Emergency Phase One** - The first phase of ARG funding, allocated by Croydon Council from December last year, was prioritised towards businesses in the following sectors:

- Non-essential Retail
- Hospitality and Leisure.
- Arts & Entertainment
- Work Space Providers

- 4.3 This ARG first phase funding was targeted at applicants whose substantive part of their business had been required to close by law due to the national restrictions in place from 5th November to 2nd December, and who did **not** hold a rating liability for National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates). Funding was also prioritised to businesses in the supply chain for sectors or activities required to close by law or who were in the events sector; who could demonstrate that the national restrictions had had a direct negative impact on the substantial part of their business leading to a loss of income.

- 4.4 **Phase Two:** The second phase of ARG funding was broken down into four more specific funding pots, available from February this year. This was:

- £250,000 Growth and Innovation Grant fund to help businesses purchase equipment or software that would help them innovate and develop their businesses.
- A continuation of direct emergency grants to businesses from phase one
- £1,000,000 grant funding targeted at businesses forming part of the evening and night-time economy

- £150,000 contingency fund to support businesses not able to access funding from the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.

4.5 **Phase Three** - the total funding allocated for the third phase of Croydon's ARG distribution was £5 million. Government then committed a further £425 million to the Additional Restrictions Grant, but it was made clear that local authorities would have needed to have spent or committed to spend their existing allocations by the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021 before any further funding would be made available. It has been widely recognised across the UK that this was a challenge for local authorities. Phase Three was distributed as follows:

- An extension to the existing Growth & Innovation Grant Fund which was increased to £500,000 and was made available to help businesses purchase equipment or software that would help them innovate and develop their businesses, increasing business resilience, and assisting in the recovery of the borough (providing grants of up to £20,000).
- An extension to the existing Evening & Night Time Economy Grant Fund, increasing it by £500,000 providing a further 50 £10,000 grants to assist an additional 50 businesses.
- ARG – Croydon Recovery Grants available to businesses who received support through phase two of the emergency Additional Restrictions Grants and mandatory grants (grant value up to £2000)
- Business Fund – that supported the delivery of grants from the initial lockdown £1,511,812.

<b>Grant Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Number of Grants awarded</b>
Emergency Phase One	£ 650,000.00	215
ARG - Emergency Response - Phase Two	£ 1,909,000.00	669
Evening & Night Time Economy	£ 1,500,000.00	150
Croydon Recovery Grant (G19 & G20)	£ 4,826,000.00	3483
Discretionary Fund (First Lockdown)	£ 152,500.00	13
Discretionary Fund (First Lockdown) – Phase Two	£ 1,511,812.00	171
Business Recovery & Innovation Grant	£ 500,053.00	33
Business Support Grant	£ 120,000.00	4
	<b>£ 11,169,365.00</b>	<b>4738</b>

## 5. RECOVERY PLANNING

5.1 Following the government's announcement of opening the economy and removal of all constraints on business opening and legal limits on social contact from 19 July 2021, there is a pressing need to provide support, advice and funding to help businesses recover and repair the economy. We must recognise that the economic impact of the coronavirus period will continue for a

long time. The government's furlough scheme, despite being extended to September, may not offer enough finance to support jobs longer term, which will impact on unemployment figures in Croydon.

- 5.2 It is anticipated that a significant growth in local unemployment will occur following the end of the furlough scheme, with struggling businesses closing or reducing staffing substantially in the subsequent months. Rising unemployment is likely to occur alongside growing in-work poverty, with increasing numbers of households relying on in-work benefits, and generally a higher reliance on public sector support and Council services across the board. The Council must work to target support for businesses that are struggling in the current climate but are otherwise viable, particularly those in key growth sectors that will help to drive the borough's sustainable and inclusive recovery.
- 5.3 The Council will work with community, business, research and education partners to ensure that the allocation of this phase of ARG will support the borough's skills development and build community wealth. We are proposing to focus the Council's support and ARG funding towards a number of key business sectors and economic themes – set out below. Analysis of recent economic data and local trends shows clearly that hospitality and creative sectors require specific support. This accords with the council's Economic Growth strategy and reflects qualitative information from business networks and representatives.

- Town Centre Recovery
- Supporting Creative & Cultural Business Recovery
- Creating a Culture of Enterprise
- Driving a Green Recovery
- Supporting Enterprise
- Supporting Small Businesses
- Supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Businesses
- Digital Recovery
- Creating Community Wealth
- Encouraging more businesses into the borough (Inward Investment)

## **6. IMPLEMENTING ARG PHASE 4**

- 6.1 Guidance from the department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) regarding the use of ARG funding is not particularly onerous. It states that 'Local Authorities should allocate funding through direct business support grants or through wider business support measures.' Businesses who have already received other government grants during the coronavirus period can still be eligible for ARG funding, but this is subject to an overall subsidy cap. Businesses have to be actively trading to be eligible for ARG funding – this can include new businesses or start ups where the council is confident that these have been established legitimately. Any ARG funds remaining with the Council (i.e. not distributed to partners or businesses) at the end of March 2022 will be subject to recovery by BEIS. The Council undertake weekly reporting on ARG distribution to BEIS and daily monitoring through internal processes.

- 6.2 We have established a project board by expanding the Croydon Business Network. This includes the Council’s Economic Development officers, representatives from the borough’s business networks, anchor institutions, education bodies and civil society. Working with these partners we are gathering and responding to economic and business intelligence for the borough.
- 6.3 The Council will use ARG funding to kickstart activity, and where possible, match funding from other bodies/providers/partners, to prompt action towards economic recovery. The grant cannot be used to cover Council officer time or salary costs. All funding allocated will be monitored and evaluated against key outcomes agreed at the point of issuing the grants for business recovery initiatives.
- 6.4 It is unlikely that the road to recovery will be entirely linear following the lifting of social and business restrictions this summer. In planning and distributing the ARG we are aware of the need to prepare for further economic shocks over the coming year. With this in mind, the council’s Economic Development team will work with partners and stakeholders to continually review the phase 4 programme and allow for suitable flexibility within contracts and funding agreements to respond to changes in external circumstances, whilst maintaining oversight to ensure a suitable audit trail, procurement assurance and reporting to BEIS. We will ensure that support, guidance and funding issued by central government, the Greater London Authority and the London Economic Action Partnership are also fully utilised and complement the ARG scheme to build resilience in Croydon’s economy.
- 6.5 The Programme will deliver a £2,674,867 million programme that includes:

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Detail/Examples</b>
<b>1</b>	Business innovation and recovery events	Events to promote Croydon businesses and support SME’s to innovate and recovery after the Covid Pandemic	£100,000	Events that helps SME’s to innovate and recover following the COVID lockdowns  Also sets out the reasons why businesses should invest in Croydon
<b>2</b>	Innovation and growth	Grants of up to £10k delivered through ‘pay it forward’ platform	£200,000	If a business applies for a £10k grant, they need to match this sum either through crowd funding or themselves. Data from ‘pay it forward’ shows that for every £1 invested £3 is raised. This is the best way to maximise Croydon’s funding
<b>3</b>	District Centre Business Support	London Road Traders Crystal Palace Purley BID New Addington BID Croydon Division (South East Chambers)  New Area Partnerships (FSB)	£50,000 £50,000 £20,000 £10,000 £30,000  £50,000	Funding provided to established business networks and BIDs in the district centre (see Town Centre Recovery below for Croydon BID)  Paid membership for 357 businesses targeted outside areas covered by business groups/BIDs



		Croydon Business Fund	£40,000	
4	Town Centre Recovery	Croydon BID businesses	£40,000	Town Centre Business Support
		Croydon Welcome Back Fund	£210,000	Used to support new business and existing businesses specifically for town centre recovery
		Anchor Business support	£750,000	To support anchor organisations that have a significant economic impact in Croydon (this may also be used outside the growth zone if appropriate).
5	Work space	Work space Support	£250,000	Funding provided to recognised work space providers to support current businesses and to attract new.
6	Creative Business Fund	Supports creative industries growth sector	£750,000	Previous growth sector, hit hard by covid with greatest potential in borough. 50 grants at £10k each and £5k at 50 each. Required to ensure borough of cultures is a success from an economic stand point (include creative digital, tech, venues, R&D)
7	New Enterprise Programme	Supports new business start ups	£50,000	Targeted support at new business entrepreneurs.
8	Data and discretionary	Data partnership	£20,000	Economic Data
		Contingency Pot	£54,867	Contingency for businesses who have not received grants but applied in phase 1, 2 or 3.

Details of the above grants and eligibility are attached in Appendix 2

6.6 Grants and outcomes will be distributed and procured in line with Council policy and governance. They will be evaluated through full governance of the steering group and with oversight and input from the Croydon Business Taskforce, and the Council's Silver and Gold groups as part of the emergency Covid recovery response to ensure maximum impact for Croydon businesses and the Croydon economy.

## 7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The proposals in this report have been informed and influenced by engagement with key external public sector stakeholders, notably London Councils, the GLA, the South London Partnership and other local authorities. This scheme was also informed by significant engagement from the local business community which included consultation with the Croydon Business Taskforce (a representative steering group of business membership groups that include the

Federation of Small Businesses and the London Chamber of Commerce) and the Croydon Business Network (a working group of business support organisations and business membership groups that deliver support businesses in Croydon to start, develop and grow).

## **8 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

- 8.1 An update of the Additional Restrictions Grant programme was presented at an informal meeting of the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The committee have been invited to scrutinise the current programme.

## **9 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The top up additional restrictions grants fund that has been agreed by Government (£2,674,867) plus the ARG grants that were distributed in phase one, two and three (£11,169,365) will support the recovery of our local businesses and maintain employment for residents which will have a positive impact on the Council's finances in the longer term.

- 9.2 This will complement the mandatory business grant funding has been agreed by Government and will support businesses who have been impacted by the Covid 19 lockdown.

- 9.3 The resource cost of the delivery of the grants has been scoped in-house, the new burdens funding will be used to fund the cost of staffing.

- 9.4 Strong, robust monitoring to ensure that grant applications awarded do not exceed grant funding will be in operation.

- 9.5 Weekly and monthly reporting will be completed and returned to government and HMRC.

### **9.6 The effect of the decision**

Croydon businesses, including sole traders, will receive business support that supports them to survive and lessens the impact of COVID-19 on their fixed costs. This will sustain businesses and employment within the borough.

### **9.7 Risks**

Spending against funding will be monitored daily to ensure grant funding is not exceeded. Local authorities will also be required to report weekly on the BEIS fund and a future audit will be implemented (internally), BEIS will audit councils on an adhoc basis.

There is a reputational risk that despite Croydon Council's best intentions this fund does not create the economic impact needed for Croydon's business community.

There is a risk that these grants can attract fraudulent applications and therefore a full fraud risk management plan must be implemented, as with the previous phases of grant distribution.

## 9.8 Options

Alternative options were considered which included a sector specific approach. This was rejected as COVID 19 has impacted all sectors.

## 9.9 Future savings/efficiencies

The implementation of this grant will help to sustain Croydon's businesses which will in turn will sustain employment in the borough. This will help to support future savings and finances for the Council.

Approved by: Matthew Davis, Deputy Section 151 Officer, Finance Department

## 10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 The Head of Commercial and Property Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that in response to the Coronavirus, COVID-19, the government has put in place additional support for businesses that had been impacted by social distancing and business closures restrictions arising out of the pandemic (using a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).

10.2 The Government has issued guidance for local authorities in administering the Fund which sets out eligibility criteria and the governments recommended prioritisation of categories of business. This guidance should be followed when administering the funds.

10.3 Local authorities are responsible for delivering grants to eligible businesses and whilst there is no specific statutory power to make these payments, guidance indicates that Councils are able to rely on the General Power of Competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to undertake these payments.

10.4 The United Kingdom left the EU on 31 January 2020, and the State Aid regime has been replaced by a similar regime known as 'Subsidy Control'. Under this regime, a subsidy is a measure which is

- given by a public authority and
- makes a financial or in kind contribution to an enterprise which is not available on market terms, and
- affects international trade

10.5 The Government's guidance on this new regime acknowledges that subsidies (or in this case grants) to very local companies are unlikely to be caught as this is unlikely to affect international trade. It is therefore considered that the proposals in this report will be compliant with the new Subsidy Control regime and the proposed scheme follows government guidance. Nevertheless, the Council is required to keep a record of any and all public subsidy which it gives

to businesses, in the implementation of the proposals in this report such a record will be maintained. The Subsidy Control regime is new and developing and any further relevant guidance on this will be shared with officers responsible for administering the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme.

Approved by: Nigel Channer- Interim Head of Commercial & Property Law on behalf of Interim Doutimi Aseh, Director of Law & Governance & Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 11.1 Delivery of the fund will require additional staffing redeployed to the Economic Development team. The Economic Development team's inbox will additionally experience high volumes of enquiries once the scheme is live and will require increased provision.
- 11.2 Additional staffing for this team will be employed via the Council's Recruitment Policy or the Council's internal redeployment policies.
- 11.3 Any other HR impact issues that may arise will be managed under the Council's policies and procedures.

Approved by: Jennifer Sankar, Head of HR Place and Housing, for and on behalf of Sue Moorman, HR Director

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 12.1 Phase 4 of the Additional Restrictions Grant has used specific equalities data that has been collected in phase 3 of the programme to support the shaping of the programme. The consultation that has been undertaken has also included significant qualitative data that was collected across a broad spectrum of Croydon's SME business community including the local Black Asian Minority Ethnic business community and the Work & Health Programme. The ARG Phase 4 programme aims to provide support to all businesses with extra support for those residents and businesses further away from work place opportunities. This will be achieved by working closely with the Croydon Division of South East Chambers, BME Forum, Asian Resource Centre and London Road Traders Association, DWP and Reed in Partnership.
- 12.2 The impact of the virus is far reaching. The combined and unprecedented impact on the local economy, both on businesses and the workforce, will exacerbate inequalities, where some parts of our communities are disproportionately impacted for the short, medium and long term. The Council has been acutely aware of the disproportionate impact that the virus and lockdown has had on particular demographics, such as older residents, those with pre-existing health conditions and Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities.
- 12.3 Prior to the Covid lockdown ONS 2011 census data has already shown us that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents were already disadvantaged in

employment opportunities, an example of this can be seen by employment data which showed 66% of Asian residents and 69% of black residents of working age were employed in London, compared to 83% white British and other. The covid emergency is expected to exacerbate the disparity.

- 12.4 The Additional Restrictions programme also looks at supporting growth sectors impacted by Covid to mitigate employment loss and also ensure entrepreneurial opportunities are available for all residents. Identified growth sectors include the creative and cultural industries. Data from Centre for Cities shows that in 2016 only 23 per cent of the sector were from a BAME background compared to 36 per cent of the total London workforce. The programme will provide an intergrated approach working with stakeholders in the community to ensure that grants are distributed and available to all Croydon businesses and residents within the specified criteria.
- 12.5 Supporting businesses and sustaining jobs will assist in reducing inequality across the borough. The grants scheme will be promoted widely through all the mediums available to the council, including social media and our dedicated business newsletter. Additionally, we will run regular workshops targeted at smaller, independent businesses who may not access information in traditional ways or where English may not be their first language. We will also work through our established business networks and recognised business representatives to ensure all businesses are aware of the grants and wider support available to them through the Council.

Approved by: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnerships

### **13. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 13.1 There are no direct environmental considerations arising from this report.

### **14. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 14.1 The Croydon Additional Restrictions Programme will support businesses and sustain jobs preventing future issues through key principles of economic development.

### **15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 15.1 The aim of the programme is to deliver resilience and innovation to the recovery of Croydon's businesses protecting employment and jobs. It combines direct financial support with additional support for businesses helping them to find news ways of work, increasing their markets and making our economy resilient and attractive place to live and work.
- 15.2 The criteria of this fund was developed to support the recovery of as many businesses as possible impacted by COVID 19 and secure jobs for Croydon residents.

## **16. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 16.1 Alternative options considered include a scheme with a sector specific approach.
- 16.2 Alternative options have been extensively considered. Regular consultation has been undertaken with key partners, notably London Councils, the South London Partnership and other local authorities.

## **17. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

### **17.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

No, it will be business data that is processed however this will include sensitive financial evidence and banking details and therefore a process that conforms to GDPR and the processing of sensitive data has been implemented.

### **17.2 HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

A DPIA was completed for the last discretionary fund, all handling of data remains the same.

Approved by: Stephen Tate, Director: Growth, Employment & Regeneration

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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Carol Squires, Head of Economic Development, Growth, Employment & Regeneration
<b>APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:</b>	Appendix 1 – Grants Appendix 2 – Phase 4 distribution
<b>BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:</b>	None