

COUNCIL MEETING – 16TH SEPTEMBER 2020

NOTICE OF:	Reference No:	Date Received:	Date Forwarded:
White Paper	WP1	7/9/20	8/9/20

Submitted by:	Councillor Matthew Robinson
Relevant Board/Regulatory Panel:	Executive Board
Executive Member/Chair:	Executive Member (Inclusive Growth and Culture)
Relevant Director	Director of City Development

This Council welcomes the £7.8 million provided by Government to Leeds for the COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Fund but notes that as of 31st August £4 million was unspent.

Council notes that Local Authorities had significant discretion when it came to setting the eligibility criteria for their discretionary grants. Although the Government encouraged Local Authorities to focus on small businesses which faced high fixed property-related costs and which had missed out on the main business grant schemes due to the way they interacted with the business rates system, Local Authorities were able to pay grants to other kinds of businesses, according to their assessment of local economic need. Council is disappointed that no support has been offered by Leeds City Council to small businesses which operate from the owner's home, despite neighbouring Councils amending their schemes to do so.

Council also regrets that the administration has decided to reintroduce parking charges across the city, at a time when local businesses could have benefited from visitors being able to park for free.

Council calls on the ruling administration to do more to help businesses recover from the pandemic, including by:

- 1) Implementing a one-off discretionary payment scheme for businesses as a matter of urgency;
- 2) Reintroducing free parking in council car parks in the run up to Christmas to boost local trade;
- 3) Considering how it can develop a local version of the "National Time Out" proposals, so that hospitality, leisure and retail businesses are given a nine-month rent free holiday in order to stabilise their finances.

Councillor Matthew Robinson

Deadlines for submission

White Papers - 10.00 am on the day before the issue of the Summons

Questions - 10.00 am on Monday before the meeting
Amendments - 10.00 am on the day before the meeting
(including references back)

(All submissions should be made to Governance Services for receipt to be recorded and distribution made)
