To Whom It May Concern

Further to my submission for funding for [insert business name] through [insert council]’s Additional Restrictions Grant scheme, I am writing to provide additional evidence in support of my application.

I understand that the UK Government has issued formal guidance to support Local Authorities in administering the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) for businesses that severely impacted by the restrictions put in place to control the spread of COVID-19. The guidance states: “Local Authorities are encouraged to support businesses from all sectors that may have been severely impacted by restrictions, but are not eligible for the Restart Grant scheme. This may include, but is not limited to, group travel and tour operators, other tourism businesses.”

The UK Government’s current ‘stay at home’ order for England, combined with restrictions on individuals that outline, “you can only travel internationally – or within the UK – where you first have a legally permitted reason to leave home”, have effectively closed my business operations. Leisure travel, understandably, does not fall into the list of legal exemptions from the rules. These restrictions, and the inability of our customers to travel until 17 May at the very earliest, are devastating for my business.

[ADD: financial details that show how income has been significantly affected by COVID-19.]

Certain sectors of the economy, notably hospitality, have received several targeted support mechanisms to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 policy measures, and that same rationale should apply to the travel industry. It is clear that the Government has set the current trading conditions for the travel industry – with businesses impacted at various times during the course of the last year by a combination of ‘stay at home’ orders, frequently changing travel corridors, quarantine and testing policy, and FCDO Travel Advice against all but essential travel. These restrictions have negatively impacted travel businesses in the same way that other COVID-19 restrictions such as social distancing have impacted hospitality businesses; evidence produced by ABTA – The Travel Association, highlighted that 91% of holidays scheduled for departure in the peak summer months of July and August last year were either changed or cancelled.

[Optional for non-retail travel agents: The challenges presented by the pandemic are stark for all travel companies. However, the situation is especially pressing for travel agents because we are paid commission for the services we sell, which is settled by the operator close to the departure of their clients. As a result of COVID-19, travel agents had very little income throughout 2020, and we also had to refund a significant part of our expected earnings related to 2019 bookings owing to cancellations related to the pandemic.]

The Tourism Minister recently reiterated comments that he originally made in a speech to Parliament on 27 January, where he stated that the ARG, “in my opinion, certainly should be used to provide grants to tour operators, coach operators… and similar businesses that serve as vital facilitators to the tourism industry. I therefore do encourage and expect local authorities to be sympathetic to applications from these businesses”.

I hope that this letter provides suitable evidence to demonstrate the impact of COVID-19 restrictions of my business’s ability to operate, and will result in a favourable outcome for my application to the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme.

Yours sincerely,