

(i) Staffordshire South West CAB, 48 Allport Road, Cannock and 7 Brook Square, Rugeley

(A) That 80% Mandatory Rate Relief be granted in respect of the above premises for one year with effect from 1 April, 2013.

(B) That the request for Discretionary Rate Relief be deferred to enable Officers to request further information from the applicant as to whether the service being offered complies with the Service Level Agreement.

(ii) Krizevac Project, The Winding House, Walkers Rise, Hednesford, Cannock

That 80% Mandatory Rate Relief and 5% Discretionary Rate Relief be granted in respect of the above premises for the period 1 June, 2013 to 31 March, 2014.

(iii) Starfish Services Ltd., 11 Queen Street, Cannock

That 80% Mandatory Rate Relief and 5% Discretionary Rate Relief be granted in respect of the above premises for the period 14 June, 2013 to 31 March, 2014.

(iv) Cannock Winter Sports Community Foundation

(A) That 80% Mandatory Rate Relief be granted in respect of the above premises for the period 1 April, 2012 to 10 December, 2013.

(B) That, having regard to the limited budget available and the information provided in support of the application, the Committee was of the view that the award of Discretionary Relief would not serve the best interest of the local Council Tax payers and therefore the request be refused.

(The Committee raised concern regarding the limited financial information that was available. The Local Taxation & Benefits Manager explained that the organisation had not been trading long enough to have a detailed set of accounts; however, further detailed financial information regarding the organisation had been provided).

(v) Staffordshire Winter Sports Club

(A) That 80% Mandatory Rate Relief be granted in respect of the above premises for the period 11 December, 2012 to 31 March, 2013 and for one year with effect from 1 April, 2013.

(B) That, having regard to the limited budget available and the information provided in support of the application, the Committee was of the view that the award of Discretionary Relief would not serve the best interest of the local Council Tax payers and therefore the request be refused.

(The Committee raised concern regarding the limited financial information that

was available. The Local Taxation & Benefits Manager explained that the organisation had not been trading long enough to have a detailed set of accounts; however, further detailed financial information regarding the organisation had been provided).

(B) Application for Hardship Rate Relief under Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 for the Financial year 2012/13 and 2013/14 – Mr. P. Vecchio, T/a Caffè Del Nino, 4 High Green Court, Cannock

That the application for hardship rate relief in respect of above premises be refused as, having regard to the detail provided in the application and the interests of the Council Tax payers, Members did not consider it was appropriate to support the application.

10. Mandatory and Discretionary Rate Relief Policy from 2014

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item No. 5.1 – 5.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Local Taxation and Benefits Manager led Members through the report outlining the key issues and background to the draft Policy. He clarified that the draft policy incorporated the outcome of the discussion by Members at the meeting held on 17 June, 2013. He also confirmed that the budget in respect of Discretionary Reliefs was to be retained at £15,720. However, this figure could be increased by Cabinet in the future.

With regard to charity shops Councillor Alcott asked how it was proposed to establish that the sale of donated goods represented at least 50% of the sales. The Local Taxation and Benefits Manager explained that there would be questions on the application form asking for confirmation of the proportion of donated goods. Additionally, he confirmed that charity shops had to submit their accounts to the Charity Commission for audit purposes.

With regard to large organisations the Local Taxation and Benefits Manager asked the Committee to confirm that they were content for the level of Relief being granted to a single organisation being capped at £3,000 per year, meaning that the Council's contribution would not exceed £1,200 per organisation. Members confirmed they were in agreement with this and that a cap of less than £3,000 could be applied in individual cases, as appropriate.

Furthermore, Members agreed to adjust the draft framework so as to remove the line in Section 12 which referred specifically to the Birth Defects Foundation, as below:

“Birth Defects Foundation 80% 0% 0% 80%”.

The Committee noted that a policy was being drafted to cover the implications of the Localism Act and the effect on Charitable Rate Relief.

Members then discussed Community facilities, such as village halls, being block

booked by profit making organisations (i.e. Nurseries). It was confirmed that when determining a relief application, regard would be given to the main use of a property and relief would be declined if the private (non-qualifying) usage exceeded the availability for the community (qualifying) usage.

The Local Taxation and Benefits Manager advised that an additional paragraph would be inserted into the Policy in Section 10 to require an organisation in receipt of Business Rate Relief to have a duty to notify the Council if their circumstances were to change.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (B) That Cabinet be requested to approve the Mandatory and Discretionary Rate Relief Policy given at Appendix A to the report subject to
 - (i) an additional paragraph being included to require an organisation in receipt of Business Rate Relief to have a duty to notify the Council if their circumstances were to change;
 - (ii) the removal of the line in Section 12 which referred specifically to the Birth Defects Foundation.

CHAIRMAN

(The meeting closed at 4.55pm)