

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 10 March 2016
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Community & Resources
SUBJECT: Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief
PORTFOLIO: Resources
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider two applications from charities for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

1) Discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentages indicated, for the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2019;

Halton Haven Hospice	15%
Mark Gorry Foundation	15%

2) Discretionary rate relief is backdated to the commencement of liability in respect of the following organisations, at the percentage indicated, for the period up to 31st March 2016;

Halton Haven Hospice	20%
Mark Gorry Foundation	20%

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council is able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been available to organisations that were a charity, a community amateur sports club or a not-for-profit organisation. A summary of the applications is presented below and the associated financial implications are shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 Since 1st April 2013 the Council has been responsible for funding 49% of any award of mandatory or discretionary rate relief granted, with the

Government meeting the remaining 51%. Previously, the Government fully funded all mandatory relief awards.

- 3.3 On 26th February 2015, the Board approved providing 15% discretionary relief from 2016/17 onwards, where applications were approved from registered charities or community amateur sports clubs.

Halton Haven Hospice
Barnfield Avenue, Runcorn

- 3.4 Halton Haven Hospice is an independent hospice providing palliative care for 15 in-patients and day care for another 50 patients. The organisation provides extensive care for the terminally ill and also offers respite facilities to the community. This premises have recently been entered on the Rating List by the Valuation Office Agency, effective from 1st April 2015 (this replaces an earlier assessment for Council Tax purposes).
- 3.5 The application is in respect of the Hospice, which is used to provide palliative care for patients suffering from life limiting illnesses. The premises are used to offer such services to the residents of Halton and the adjacent areas, although other affected parties will not be excluded.
- 3.6 As they are a registered charity, 80% mandatory rate relief has already been awarded at a cost of £11,015.59 but their application also includes a request for 20% discretionary rate relief. The hospice is currently awarded such relief for 57-61 Widnes Road, Widnes, 25 High Street and Unit 21, Expressway Industrial Estate, Runcorn.

Annual Cost to Taxpayer (49%)	£2,753.90
-------------------------------	-----------

- 3.7 It is recommended that the discretionary rate relief for the current financial year is provided at 20% rather than 15%, as this was the policy in operation during that period.

The Mark Gorry Foundation
Unit 10 Expressway Industrial Estate, Pimilco Road, Runcorn

- 3.8 The Mark Gorry Foundation is a Halton based registered charity, which organises events to raise funds for cancer causes needing additional support and also to fund awareness and education campaigns. The organisation is particularly active in promoting the awareness of the issues relating to testicular cancer.
- 3.9 The property is used as an administrative base for the organisation, in order to provide support to sufferers of cancer and also their families and carers. The premises are also used for storage purposes

- 3.10 The Foundation has been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief, with the annual cost to the Authority for the award of this relief calculated as £821.34. However, the application also includes a request for discretionary rate relief and the additional costs are outlined below.

Cost to Taxpayer (49%) 2015/16 £205.34

- 3.11 It is recommended that the backdated element of discretionary rate relief is provided at 20% rather than 15%, as this was the policy in operation during that period.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Board is required by the regulations to consider each application on its own merit. Any recommendations provided are given for guidance only, are consistent with Council policy and, wherever possible, previous decisions.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It should be noted that 49% of any discretionary rate relief granted to organisations receiving mandatory rate relief must be met by the Council Taxpayer. Any awards of mandatory rate relief will also have to be funded at the same percentage (49%) by the Council. Appendix 1 identifies the cost to the Council Taxpayer for each application.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None specifically applicable.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None specifically applicable.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Both organisations offer services which are intended to assist with the health and well-being of Halton residents

6.4 A Safer Halton

None specifically applicable.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None specifically applicable.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 There are no key risks associated with the proposed action.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The applicants offer their services to all sections of the community, without any prejudice.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1	Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
	Application forms and supporting evidence	Kingsway House, Caldwell Road, Widnes	Phil Murphy, Business Rates Manager

APPENDIX 1

Ratepayer	Address	Annual Rates 2015/16	Actual Rates Liability 2015/16	Mandatory Rate Relief Awarded	Annual Cost of Mandatory Rate Relief to HBC	Actual Rates Payable 2015/16	Disc. Rate Relief	Annual Cost of Disc. Rate Relief to HBC	Actual Cost of Disc. Rate Relief to HBC 2015/16
		£	£	%	£	£	%	£	£
Halton Haven Hospice	Barnfield Avenue, Runcorn.	28,101.00	28,101.00	80%	11,015.59	5,620.20	20%	2,753.90	2,753.90
The Mark Gorry Foundation	Unit 10, Expressway Industrial Estate, Pimlico Road, Runcorn	2,095.25	2,095.25	80%	821.34	419.05	20%	205.34	205.34