

Appendix A

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Policy for the Award of 'Top-up' Discretionary Rate Relief to Charitable Organisations

Overview

This policy has been agreed by the South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure all ratepayers making applications for this rate relief are treated in a fair, consistent and equal manner.

This policy;

- Sets criteria for the factors that should be considered when making a decision to award or refuse relief
- Sets out the delegated authority to award relief in appropriate circumstances
- Establishes an appeals procedure for organisations that are dissatisfied with the Council's decision.
- Seeks to safeguard the interest of local taxpayers by ensuring that funds allocated for the award of discretionary rate relief are used in the most effective and economic way and in a manner that contributes to the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Scope of the Policy

1. This policy shall apply in respect of applications for discretionary rate relief from charitable organisations qualifying for mandatory charitable rate relief.
2. This policy shall only apply in those cases where the maximum potential cost to the Council in awarding this relief to the organisation exceeds £1,000 per financial year. (i.e. where the cost of awarding rate relief, at the rate of 20%, to all eligible properties in the District for which the organisation is liable for Non-Domestic rates, exceeds £1,000).
3. The maximum amount of relief awarded under this policy to any ratepayer shall be limited to a cost to the Council of £5,000 per year.
4. Organisations applying for relief shall be required to complete the Council's Application Form and supply sufficient evidence, to the Council's satisfaction, to support their application.
5. Applications will only be considered where signed by the ratepayer, or, where an organisation is the ratepayer, an appropriately authorised representative of the organisation.
6. Ratepayers aggrieved with an initial decision made in respect of an application have a right of appeal. Appeals must be made in writing and will only be considered if received within six weeks of the Council notifying the ratepayer of the decision.
7. Decisions on appeals shall be made by the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing whose decision shall be final.
8. Awards shall be limited to the period ending at 31st March of the year in respect of which the application is made. New applications may be submitted each financial year.

Criteria to be used in decisions on the award of 'Top-up' Discretionary Rate Relief to Charitable Organisations

These criteria apply in respect of applications from all ratepayers where the maximum potential cost to the Council in awarding relief to the organisation exceeds £1,000 per financial year. (i.e. where the cost of awarding rate relief, at the rate of 20% of the full rates bill, to all eligible properties in the District for which the organisation is liable for Non-Domestic rates, exceeds £1,000).

	Criteria		
1	Does the organisation contribute to the Council's corporate objectives or statutory responsibilities?	Yes Go to question 2	No No relief awarded
2	Is relief requested for a property that is a local facility? (e.g. a meeting room, drop in centre)	Yes Go to question 3	No Go to question 5
3	Is the facility used solely by South Cambridgeshire residents?	Yes Award full 20% relief up to a maximum cost to the Council of £5,000 per ratepayer.	No Go to question 4
4	What proportion of the usage is by South Cambridgeshire residents?	Award relief according to the following proportions: >75% usage by SC residents = 100% Relief 50-75% usage by SC residents = 75% relief 25-50% usage by SC residents = 50% relief 1-25% usage by SC residents = 25% relief % of rate relief to be calculated as a % of the lower of; a) 20% of the organisation's rate liability for the year, or b) £6,666.66.	
5	Do local residents benefit from the organisation's charitable work?	Yes Go to question 6	No No relief awarded
6	What proportion of the organisation's charitable expenditure is to the direct and sole benefit of South Cambridgeshire residents?	Award relief according to the following proportions: >75% expenditure = 100% Relief 50-75% expenditure = 50% relief <50% expenditure = no relief % to be calculated as set out in item 4 above.	

