

DECISION NO: 19/036. For Member Services use only

Concurrence No: 066288

Action under delegated authority of Chief Executive	
Action under delegated authority of Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Finance	X
Action taken by Chief Executive in consultation with Cabinet Member(s)	

Subject: Discretionary business rates relief for the Laura Trott Leisure Centre

Signature and designation of officer(s) taking action: /

Chief Executive _____ Date pp Director of Finance _____ Date 26/02/19

Head of Finance _____ Date

Name of Cabinet Member(s) Consulted:

I have been consulted and concur with the proposals set out below:

Councillor K Ayling

Cabinet Member for Finance and Chairman of the Grant's Panel

Signature: /

Date: 28/2/19

Signature:

Date:

Name of any member who has declared a conflict of interest in relation to this decision: _____

THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

The report overleaf sets out the decision to be taken, the reasons for the decision, and the details of alternative options, if any, considered and rejected.

Officer decisions are available for public inspection, both at the Borough Offices and on the Council's website, for a period of six years after the decision is made. Background papers are available for four years.

RECOMMENDED that: 20% discretionary business rates relief be award to the Laura Trott Leisure Centre

Purpose

To grant 20% discretionary business rates relief to the Laura Trott Leisure Centre.

The Background

The Laura Trott Leisure Centre is owned by the Council but the freehold land that it occupies was placed into a trust many years ago. This was done in order to protect the playing field by placing a covenant on the land to ensure it is maintained for leisure purposes for the enjoyment of all members of the public. The trust is known as Grundy Park (King George's Field) Cheshunt.

As a trust, the centre is automatically entitled to 80% mandatory business rates relief. However, it is also entitled to apply for 20% discretionary rate relief known as top up relief. The grants panel has awarded 20% top up relief to the leisure centre since trust status was secured in April 2009. Until 2015/16 this award was made on an annual basis, but in 2015/16 it was agreed that the Laura Trott Leisure Centre 20% top up relief be awarded for as long as the premises remains in the ownership of the Council.

In February 2019, the Grants Panel were presented with a report which included details of this on-going award of business rates relief and at their meeting Members resolved that the continuing level of business rates support for the Laura Trott Leisure Centre be determined by the Director of Finance in consultation with the Chairman of the Panel.

Financial, Legal and Risk Management Implications

If the 20% business rate relief were not granted, the Council would pay approximately £30,000 in business rates for this site into the collection fund. This fund is used to account for all the business rates the Council collects. The total amount collected into this fund is then shared between central Government, the County Council and Broxbourne. Broxbourne currently receive around £2.6m from the fund which collects approximately £40m in business rates in total. The Council therefore receives approximately 6.5% of all business rates collected. So if the Council were to pay £30,000 in business rates it would receive back approximately £1,950. The overall effect of paying business rates would therefore be a cost of approximately £28k (£30k-£2k).

However, if the Council grants discretionary relief of £30,000, it will not need to pay any business rates for the site, saving £30,000. Although it should be noted that it would not receive the £1,950 from the Collection Fund. Therefore there is an overall net benefit of £28k by not having to make the £30k payment into the general fund.

This relief would not be funded from the budget allocated to the Grants Panel. Therefore there is no impact on other charities who have applied for discretionary business rates relief.

The Council has the power to grant discretionary relief to charities under the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Therefore there are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.

There are no risk implications arising from the recommendation.

Contribution to the Council's Objectives

This recommendation supports the Council objective to Achieve Self Sufficiency by 2020. Objective 14.2 - Manage the Council's assets efficiently to maximise returns and contribute to Council priorities.

Conclusion

Since the Grant Panel met, its Members have been provided with the financial information provided within this concurrence and the majority of the Panel (4 out of the 5 Members present for this item) have agreed that the 20% discretionary relief should be granted. The one remaining Member who was in attendance, is not a Member of the Panel and one Member was unable to attend for this item.

It is therefore proposed that 20% discretionary rate relief be awarded to the Laura Trott Leisure Centre.

Contact Officer: Sandra Beck

Ext: 5547

Date 21/02/2019

Action reported to the Cabinet on:
