

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 18 September 2023

**Report Title**

New Applications for Business Rates Discretionary Relief

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

To consider the applications for the award of Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Labre's Hope Community Interest Company, Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd, Miramar Judo Academy Ltd and Unity Boxing Centre CIC. This is in accordance with the Council's Discretionary Business Rates Relief Policy (approved by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016).

**Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the applications for Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Labre's Hope Community Interest Company, Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd, Miramar Judo Academy Ltd and Unity Boxing Centre CIC in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 to this report for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Initial Equality Screening Document  
Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

Discretionary Rate Relief Policy - Approved by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **New Applications for Business Rates Discretionary Relief**

### **1. Background**

1.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1988 conveys power on local authorities to allow discretionary relief that would be additional to the mandatory relief. This is given when the property is used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes by a charity or other non-profit body whose main objects are charitable or benevolent, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the arts.

1.2 The Council can grant discretionary relief to:-

- Registered Charitable Organisations, including Community Amateur Sports Clubs. The relief granted is up to 20% of the rate liability as these organisations are eligible for 80% mandatory rate relief.
- Other organisations or institutions that are not established or conducted for profit and whose aims are charitable or otherwise, philanthropic, religious, concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or fine arts. Relief can be granted up to 100% of the business rates liability.
- Properties occupied by not for profit sports or social clubs, societies or other organisations for the purposes of recreation. Relief can be granted up to 100% of the business rates liability.
- Rate relief to ratepayers – Section 47 of the LGFA 1988 as amended by Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011. This amendment gives the Council the discretion to grant relief to any other body, organisation or ratepayer, having due regard to its Council Tax

1.2.1 The Council has operated a system of awarding relief through the application of a policy that was approved by Cabinet on 12th December 2016.

1.2.2 Central Government and councils share every £1 of rates due as follows:

Central Government	50%
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority	1%
Rotherham MBC	49%

### **1.3 Application 1**

**Labre's Hope Community Interest Company, Labre's House, Coleman Street, Parkgate, Rotherham S62 6EL and FusionMagna, Magna Way, Rotherham S60 1FE**

1.3.1 Labre's Hope Community Interest Company is an organisation which seeks to end homelessness by offering employment and bespoke job coaching and developing life skills.

1.3.2 Individuals experiencing homelessness are employed to hand-produce plant-based, biodegradable, luxury vegan soap products, while receiving a living

wage. Service users regain stability via routine, income, and purpose through a creative career which is also a relaxing activity.

- 1.3.3 The organisation delivers one to one employment support via employment coaches. Classroom based well-being sessions ranging from mindfulness to therapeutic crafts are offered as a means of fostering healthy habits to promote good physical and mental wellbeing.
- 1.3.4 Individuals experiencing homelessness are identified via the organisation's partners, Crisis Skylight Rotherham, and South Yorkshire Housing Association. Both these organisations facilitate various activities within the project with a view to filling any gaps in beneficiaries' skillsets which are inhibiting them from progressing in life. The activities and support on offer help beneficiaries build the tools and skills needed to better manage future issues while increasing their chances of progressing careers into a job that is well-aligned with their personal profile and interests.
- 1.3.5 The organisation was previously selected by the Mayoral Combined Authority to receive a grant from the Government's Community Renewal fund. This funding was for a specified period and has now ended.
- 1.3.6 Labre's Hope Community Interest Company's application is considered to be in line with the Council's qualifying criteria as set out in its policy. The organisation provides access to facilities for vulnerable adults experiencing homelessness with a view to supporting them, developing their skills and easing them back into employment.
- 1.3.7 The organisation is applying for discretionary relief with regards to their 2022/23 and 2023/24 rates liability having moved from the original premises in Parkgate in December 2022 to their new premises at Fusion@Magna. The financial implication of awarding the relief is set out in Section 6 of the report.

#### 1.4 **Application 2** **Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd, Suite 1 at Unit 1, Phoenix Riverside, Sheffield Road, Rotherham S60 1FL**

- 1.4.1 Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd is a registered charity which aims to help and support families and carers. The charity offers a free service to anyone providing care for the elderly or caring for a person with addiction, mental health issues, disabilities or dementia. The organisation also works to raise awareness and educate the wider community on related issues.
- 1.4.2 The property is used for 1 to 1 support sessions, telephone support, monthly coffee mornings, meetings with other organisations and weekly drop-in sessions. Carers can refer themselves or they can be referred by other organisations.
- 1.4.3 The organisation now works in Rotherham and Barnsley but they do receive some referrals from further afield. Although the charity's work is not currently commissioned by RMBC, work has taken place with Public Health

commissioning team to link the organisation to other local services and a future review of the services they provide and any additional support they may require has been agreed. Work is ongoing to ensure that Rotherham communities know the service is available having only secured their Rotherham premises earlier this year.

- 1.4.4 Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd's application for the award of discretionary relief is considered to be in line with the Council's qualifying criteria as set out in its policy. The organisation is open to any carer in need of support. There are no charges for the service although donations are welcome. All income goes back into the organisation to further its work within the community.
- 1.4.5 The organisation is applying for discretionary relief with regards to their 2022/23 and 2023/24 rates liability. The financial implication of awarding the relief is set out in Section 6 of the report.

### 1.5 **Application 3**

#### **Miramar Judo Academy Ltd, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Terrapin Aldwarke Developments, Aldwarke Lane, Parkgate, Rotherham S65 3SR**

- 1.5.1 Miramar Judo Academy Ltd is a not for profit organisation which was set up in July 2012 and affiliated to the British Judo Association from its inception. The organisation initially offered classes in a Rotherham church hall and since then have trained out of various premises in Rotherham and Sheffield. When the pandemic struck all equipment had to be moved and put into storage.
- 1.5.2 The organisation moved to its current location in February 2022 and started to offer classes again from March 2022. Players range in age from 5 years old to 62 years old bridging generational, cultural and ethnicity gaps. Every person who helps with the club does so purely as a volunteer.
- 1.5.3 The organisation currently has a membership of 61 and is aiming to increase that to 100 members by next year. Some members compete at international level and several players are on the England and Great Britain development programs. The organisation is seeking support with the business rates in order to allow it to continue to offer classes to all.
- 1.5.4 Miramar Judo Academy Ltd's application for the award of discretionary relief is considered to be in line with the Council's qualifying criteria as set out in its policy. It is open to anyone who wants to practice judo. There are no restrictions. The organisation actively encourages membership from disadvantaged groups and amongst their regular club members they have players with behavioural, learning and motor difficulties as well as visual impairment. Costs are kept low at £5 per session and a family discount is also available.
- 1.5.5 The organisation is applying for discretionary relief with regards to their 2022/23 and 2023/24 rates liability. The financial implication of awarding the relief is set out in Section 6 of the report.

## **1.6 Application 4**

### **Unity Boxing Centre CIC, Ground Floor Terrapin, Aldwarke Developments, Aldwarke Lane, Parkgate, Rotherham S65 3SR**

- 1.6.1 Unity Boxing Centre CIC is a not for profit organisation which registered as a CIC on 19 December 2022. Prior to that it was a constituted group known as Unity Boxing Centre (Unity Boxing and Fitness). The organisation took over the existing premises on 1 December 2021.
- 1.6.2 The organisation began offering classes in March 2022 and is registered with England Boxing which is the governing body for the sport of boxing in England. Sessions are offered throughout the week and include those for children and young people, women and girls, men's mental health and 1 to 1's.
- 1.6.3 The building is used in line with CIC objectives as not for profit and benefiting local communities.
- 1.6.4 The organisation uses the vehicle of boxing to engage communities, positively supporting families, children and young people in health and wellbeing. Boxing sessions encourage good mental health, accountability, respect, inclusion and positive health for all. The organisation is seeking support with the business rates to allow it to continue to offer classes to all.
- 1.6.5 Unity Boxing Centre CIC's application for the award of discretionary relief is considered to be in line with the Council's qualifying criteria as set out in its policy. It is open to anyone over the age of six who wants to practice boxing. There are no restrictions. The organisation actively encourages membership from disadvantaged groups including the Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic communities and anyone living with a disability.
- 1.6.6 Unity Boxing Centre CIC were this year awarded two grants of £1,350.00 towards gym equipment from Rotherham East and the Boston Castle capital ward funding.
- 1.6.7 The organisation is applying for discretionary relief with regards to their 2022/23 and 2023/24 rates liability. The financial implication of awarding the relief is set out in Section 6 of the report.

## **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 To consider the applications for the organisations listed in Section 1 of the report requesting an award of discretionary rate relief.

## **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Given the discretionary nature of the relief requested, the Council can determine either to award or not award relief.
- 3.2 In helping Members make such a decision, the Council has put in place a specific Policy framework to consider individual applications. In accordance

with that Policy, applications (including supporting documentation) for relief have been considered in line with the qualifying criteria and other considerations set out in that Policy.

3.3 In line with the Council's Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy, having regard to the financial cost of the proposed relief, the charitable use of the premises and the contribution that these organisations make to the local community, it is recommended that an award for discretionary relief be granted to the organisations listed in Section 1 of the report.

3.4 The alternative option was to decline to award relief. This has been rejected as the applications meet the Council's Policy.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The recommendation in the report is based on the application of an existing policy. There has been no specific consultation carried out in relation to any individual organisations referred to within this report.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The applicants will be advised by letter of the outcome of their applications for relief within 10 working days of the Cabinet decision.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 The applicants have completed a full application for the proposed relief to ensure compliance with the Council's discretionary scheme criteria.

6.2 The total value of the relief for the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24 is £27,136.56 and £27,558.94 respectively. The cost to the Council is £13,296.92 (2022/23) and £13,503.88 (2023/24) based on the Council's 49% share. Paragraph 6.3 below shows the value of the relief for each applicant alongside the specific cost to the Council.

6.3 **Year** **Total Amount of Relief** **Cost to RMBC**

##### **Labre's Hope Community Interest Company**

2022/23	£7,450.82	£3,650.90
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2023/24	£4,453.59	£2,182.26
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##### **Beacon South Yorkshire Ltd**

2022/23	£99.99	£49.00
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2023/24	£581.73	£285.05
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## **Miramar Judo Academy Ltd**

2022/23	£9,730.50	£4,767.95
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2023/24	£11,190.08	£5,483.14
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## **Unity Boxing Centre CIC**

2022/23	£9,855.25	£4,829.07
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2023/24	£11,333.54	£5,553.43
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6.4 As indicated in paragraph 1.2.2. 49% of the cost of the relief is met by the Council with 50% falling on Central Government and 1% on the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

6.5 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 The statutory framework for discretionary relief is set out in the body of the report.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 The organisations provide services to young people and vulnerable adults throughout the borough which aim to make a difference to the lives of people within the local community.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 The recommendation in the report is to grant discretionary relief which will positively impact the organisations ensuring continuity of service provision which helps tackle inequality. This recommendation is based on the Council's Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme under which other businesses are able to make an application.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 It is anticipated that an award of relief would not change the organisations' current operational activities and therefore will not impact CO2 emissions.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 As stated in 1.2.2, 1% of the cost of any relief granted is met by the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. In this case this cost is minimal.

### 13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The Government has issued guidance notes to advise authorities what criteria should be used in considering applications for Discretionary Rate Relief. Authorities have been strongly advised to treat each individual case on its own merits and to not adopt a policy or rule which allows them to not consider each case without proper consideration. In cognisance of these guidance notes, the Council has formally adopted a Policy framework for considering individual discretionary business rates relief applications with the decision to award reserved for Cabinet.

### 14. Accountable Officers

Rob Mahon, Assistant Director, Financial Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	01/09/23
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	29/08/23
Head of Legal Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	29/08/23

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