

## **DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF – COMMUNITIES & CULTURE PROPOSED CRITERIA**

**In order to qualify for Discretionary Rate Relief your organisation must meet all of the following criteria.**

**The total budget available for Discretionary Rate Relief is cash limited. If the total relief assessed exceeds the available budget, all payments will be reduced proportionately.**

1. Your organisation must be working in one of the following areas:
  - Sport and Active Leisure
  - Arts and Culture
  - Community Centres / Halls (i.e. facilities primarily used as a meeting place by members of a community for social, cultural, or recreational purposes)
  - Museums
  - Public parks & open spaces (including allotments)
  - Children's play and young people's leisure
  - Events and festivals
  
2. Your organisation must be:
  - non-profit making
  - based in and delivering services in York
  - non-governmental
  - for the social good
  - non party political
  - and must reinvest any financial surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives that bring a significant community benefit to York

**If your organisation is a sports club it must be either a registered charity or a registered Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC).**

3. Your organisation must be undertaking activities that contribute to the outcomes under our Council Plan objective of "Building Stronger Communities":

- Community Engagement – more residents engaged in planning and problem solving in their communities.
  - Stronger voluntary sector –a strong volunteering infrastructure with increased levels of volunteering in the city and opportunities for not for profit organisations to deliver services.
  - Safer inclusive communities –safe, resilient and cohesive communities where no person or community feels left behind or disadvantaged.
  - Improved community infrastructure –an appropriate infrastructure including housing, leisure, schools.
  - Healthy sustainable communities –healthy and sustainable living options in communities
  - Communities where young people flourish – we will consult with young people to build communities that reflect their needs.
4. Specifically, your organisation’s activities must actively increase participation amongst one or more of those groups identified by the One City Plan as being most at risk of disadvantage and exclusion:
- Specific neighbourhoods, who feel more excluded due to issues such as low income.
  - Young people who are not in education, employment or training or who face other challenges such as homelessness.
  - Older people who require support to live independently.
  - Black and Minority Ethnic people and migrant workers.
  - Gypsies and Travellers.
  - Carers.
  - Disabled people and people with mental illness.
5. The level of your organisation’s revenue reserves must not be in excess of:
- 10 times the amount of the rates payable (after any mandatory relief is deducted), or
  - £10,000
- (whichever is the higher).

In assessing the level of reserves for this purpose, the assessment will be restricted to “free“ reserves which are available in reasonably liquid form (e.g. not tied up in facilities) and are not required to meet legal requirements.

Higher reserves may be allowed if:

- your organisation can demonstrate that they are being kept for a specific, acceptable, development project, or
  - you have charitable status and your organisation's reserve policy meets the requirement of the Charity Commission or
  - it will be unable to pay the rates without putting its financial viability at risk.
6. Your organisation must have a formally adopted Equality and Diversity policy covering age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation. Furthermore, you must be able to demonstrate that you are implementing your policy through carrying out equality impact assessments. Membership must be open to all sections of the community. Organisations that require new members to be nominated by existing members will not be eligible for DRR.
7. Any fees charged by your organisation must be consistent with promoting participation and equality of opportunity. Fees must be affordable. ("Affordable" will be interpreted as not being so expensive as to inhibit participation by the wider community). Where, of necessity, a high level of fees is charged, for example in the form of an annual membership subscription, DRR will only be awarded if the organisation can demonstrate that it has taken measures to address affordability through:
- appropriate remissions for target groups, and
  - payment schemes that allow fees to be paid over the course of the year, and
  - schemes to encourage potential participants to try the activity at a modest cost before having to commit to the full fees
8. Your organisation must be primarily for the benefit of people who live or work in York, (i.e. at least 80% of users fall in this category). Theatres and Museums whose services are aimed at a wider audience and who do not meet this 80% threshold will be given assistance on a sliding scale based on the percentage of York users over the last 12 months.

Organisations who do not meet the 80% threshold may be given up to 100% relief if they provide discounts for *YorkCard* holders in respect of their core services (as a minimum in line with the level of discount that the Council itself applies). This provision will not

apply to any organisation that already receives grant funding from the Council which assists the organisation in providing *YorkCard* discounts.