

**APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF – SOLO LIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PREMISES AT 38 WALNUT CLOSE, 84 MAPLE WALK AND SOLO AT WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE STREETS BROOK ROAD**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 SOLO are a registered national charity and are therefore entitled to 80% Mandatory Charity Relief. SOLO were previously awarded discretionary relief until 31 March 2019 at Walnut Close and until 22 July 2019 at the Fire Service. Their last application in September 2019 was declined.
- 1.2 From 6 July 2020 they also now have premises at 84 Maple Walk.
- 1.3 SOLO work with disabled people including those with the most complex health issues and challenging behaviours.
- 1.4 SOLO's objectives are to help empower children, young people and adults with learning disabilities to achieve their full potential and to encourage their integration in society and improve conditions of life.
- 1.5 In the last 12 months SOLO have seen 1,060 clients who were Solihull residents. Through SOLO over 560 children with a learning disability in Solihull had access to 14 term time projects either after school, evenings or weekends and 6 holiday projects.
- 1.6 Over 700 adults with a learning disability had access to 9 different social or leisure groups during the year which were geared towards increasing members' friendship base, build skills and increase independence.
- 1.7 SOLO have two contracts with the Council for children's short breaks and support planning. The contract values total £324,000.
- 1.8 SOLO employ 210 paid staff and 100 volunteers.
- 1.9 The scorecard overleaf recommends an award of 0%.

**2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 Details of the Business Rates and Relief applied for are set out as below:

	Maple Walk	Walnut Close	Fire Service	2020/21
20% Discretionary Relief applied for	£3,157.85	£2,892.80	£2,688.00	£ 8,738.65
Cost of 20% Discretionary Relief to the Council (99%)	£3,126.27	£2,863.87	£2,661.12	£ 8,651.26

0% Discretionary Relief Recommended	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<u>Cost to the Council of Recommendation</u>	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

2.2 SOLO Life Opportunities have provided their final accounts for the period ending 31st March 2019.

2.3 In the year to 31st March 2019 SOLO received total income for the year of £1.931 million with total expenditure being £1.902 million giving a net surplus of £0.029 million. This compares to a net surplus in 2017/18 of £0.122 million. Total funds brought forward from 2017/18 were £0.616 million resulting in total funds carried forward at 31st March 2019 of £0.645 million.

2.4 Of the £0.645 million funds carried forward, £0.077 million is held within restricted funds – all of which relates to expenditure on fixed assets and equals the Net Book Value of these assets.

2.5 The remaining unrestricted funds of £0.568 million have been held as reserves / general funds by the trustees to fund shortfalls in income when it does not reach expected levels, unexpected expenditure and working capital. There is a small amount of £43k designated for expenditure on fixed assets.

2.6 The trustees have indicated a required level of between approximately £0.400 million and £0.600 million reserve be maintained (to equal between 4 and 6 months of future expenditure, excluding depreciation).

2.7 Therefore the balance in reserves is not at the level judged to be prudent by the Trustees, however the statements provided generally show a stable financial position and it is not considered that an award of rate relief would have a significant impact on the finances of SOLO Life Opportunities.

**Discretionary Rate Relief****SOLO Life Opportunities**

	<b>Section A - Affordability</b>	<b>Yes or No</b>
1	<p>The financial assessment considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• level of surplus of deficit in recent years</li> <li>• level of reserves held in view of the organisation's reserves policy</li> <li>• proportionality of the relief applied for in relation to the size of the organisation's operating costs</li> <li>• relationships with parent organisations where relevant</li> <li>• affordability to the Council</li> </ul> <p><b>Yes - complete Sections B and C</b> <b>No - the rate of relief is nil</b></p>	<b>No</b>

	<b>Section B – Clients Supported</b>	<b>Potential Score</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
1	Over 90% of the organisation's clients are Solihull residents	3	
2	Between 50% and 89% of the organisation's clients are Solihull residents	2	
3	Less than 50% of the organisation's clients are Solihull residents	1	

	<b>Section C – Other Factors</b>	<b>Potential Score</b>	<b>Actual Score</b>
1	The ratepayer has evidenced that they meet one or more of the Council's priorities	1	
2	The service has been recognised as important to the Council through a contract or SLA with the Council.	1	
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>B+C</b>	

**Award of Discretionary Rate Relief**

	<b>Discount for Charities – up to 20%</b>	<b>Discount for Not for profit organisations – up to 100%</b>
<b>Score of 4 or more</b>	20%	100%
Score of 3	15%	75%
Score of 2	10%	50%
Score of 0 or 1	No relief	No relief