

## **Appendix 1**

### **Council Concessionary Rents Policy**

#### **1. Purpose and Scope**

This policy outlines Pendle Borough Council's ("the Council's") approach to providing concessionary rents to eligible community, voluntary, and charitable organisations that occupy Council-owned properties. The aim is to support these organisations in delivering services that benefit the local community, while ensuring the effective and sustainable use of Council assets.

#### **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the concessionary rents policy are to:

- Support organisations that provide significant social, economic, or environmental benefits to the community.
- Promote the effective use of Council-owned properties.
- Ensure transparency, fairness, and consistency in the allocation of concessionary rents.
- Align concessionary rents with the Council's strategic priorities and community needs.

#### **3. Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for concessionary rent, an organisation must meet the following criteria:

##### **3.1 Type of Organisation**

- Be a registered charity, voluntary organisation, community group, social enterprise, or other not-for-profit entity.
- Operate on a not-for-profit basis, with any surplus reinvested into the organisation's objectives.

##### **3.2 Community Benefit**

- Provide services or activities that deliver clear and measurable benefits to the residents of Pendle.
- Align with the Council's strategic priorities, such as reducing inequalities, enhancing public health, fostering community cohesion, or promoting environmental sustainability.

##### **3.3 Financial Need**

- Demonstrate financial need, including an inability to pay market rent without compromising the organisation's ability to deliver services.
- Provide evidence of efforts to secure alternative funding or income streams.

#### **4. Assessment and Approval Process**

The assessment and approval process for concessionary rents involves the following steps:

##### **4.1 Application**

- Eligible organisations must submit a formal application, including details of their activities, community benefits, and financial situation.
- Applications should include a business plan or strategic plan outlining the organisation's objectives, target outcomes, and how the concessionary rent will support these goals.

##### **4.2 Assessment Criteria**

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Community Impact:** The extent and significance of the benefits provided to the Pendle community.
- **Financial Viability:** The organisation's financial health, sustainability, and ability to manage the property effectively.
- **Property Use:** The appropriateness of the property for the organisation's activities, including considerations of maintenance and potential alternative uses. Any community food projects must demonstrate food hygiene standards in order to be considered eligible for rent relief.

##### **4.3 Approval**

- Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of Council officers. The panel will make recommendations for approval or rejection based on the assessment criteria.

Final approval will be granted by the Resource Director in conjunction with Resources portfolio holder

- Final decisions will be communicated to applicants, along with feedback for unsuccessful applications.

##### **4.4 Terms and Conditions**

- Approved organisations will receive a concessionary rent agreement, outlining the terms and conditions of the arrangement. Approval by the organisation will progress to the documentation for occupation.
- Concessionary rents will typically be granted for a fixed term, and dependant on the length of the agreement may be subject to periodic review/s.
- The agreement will include provisions for monitoring and reporting on the organisation's activities and community benefits.

## **5. Rent Levels and Discounts**

- Concessionary rents may be offered as a percentage discount on the market rent, depending on the organisation's financial need and the assessed community benefit.
- The level of discount will be determined on a case-by-case basis, (typically 50% if Assessment Criteria is fulfilled) with consideration given to the organisation's ability to pay and the extent of the community benefit provided. There will be 4 tiers of consideration (see Appendix 1) which will help determine the level of rent offered.
- In exceptional cases, a nominal rent may be charged where the organisation's activities are deemed to be of significant strategic importance to the Council.

## **6. Monitoring and Review**

- Organisations benefiting from concessionary rents will be required to submit regular reports to the Council, detailing their activities, outcomes, and financial status.
- The Council will conduct periodic reviews of concessionary rent agreements to ensure that the terms continue to be met and that the organisation is delivering the expected community benefits.

## **7. Renewal and Termination**

Concessionary rent agreements will be reviewed every 2 years, subject to a re-assessment of eligibility and community benefit.

## **8. Governance and Accountability**

- The policy will be overseen by the Director of Resources.
- Decisions regarding concessionary rents will be subject to internal audit and review to ensure compliance with this policy and broader Council objectives.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

- The Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity in its concessionary rents policy. Applications will be assessed fairly, without discrimination, and in accordance with the Council's equality policies.

## **10. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with the Council's strategic priorities and community needs.

## **Appendix One**

### **Proposal for Voluntary & Community Sector Rent Relief Grant**

All applications for rent relief will be considered by the Director of Resources in conjunction with the Resource Portfolio holder.

Profit making organisations (other than co-operatives and social enterprises), faith groups using premises mainly for religious purposes, and organisations providing services to a restrictive membership group will be excluded from receiving rent subsidy.

An assessment process will be utilised to score and prioritise applicants for rent subsidy.

Priority will be given to organisations that:

- Make greater use of the premises This will encourage organisations to make valuable community assets available throughout the week, offering more services and support to local communities.
- Share premises with other VCS organisations. This will also increase availability of valuable community assets. However, where it is agreed that organisations cannot share premises, they will not be disadvantaged.
- Deliver services in areas of the greatest deprivation
- Are critical for achieving priority outcomes

### **Scoring assessment**

We propose to have four tiers of grant for determining the amount of rent payable by the Voluntary & Community Sector organisations/ groups.

Tier One- 20% reduction for all CVS groups/ organisations, to be determined by the following criteria:

- Registered charity
- Community Interest Company
- Social Enterprise
- Locally recognised community organisation

Tier Two- Additional 20% reduction. All the above plus all of the following:

- The organisation is providing a service that is addressing the needs of the local community and
- Employs staff or has volunteers or a mix of both to deliver their service and
- In receipt of grant funding to deliver services

Tier Three- Additional 10% reduction. All the above plus all of the following:

- Clearly supports delivery of Pendle Borough Council's Corporate Plan
- Does not receive any funding in respect of the rent on their building via external grant funding (all fundings in relation to rents must be declared)
- Is capable of, or does, maintain the building to the required standard
- Has a long term plan (3 years) for delivery of their service in Pendle

Tier Four- Additional 50%. All the above plus all of the following:

- Is delivering a Council commissioned service/ project
- Has undertaken a procurement exercise to successfully secure a Pendle Council contract to deliver a specific service