

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RATING ADVISORY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2014 AT 10 AM, CITY HALL, VICTORIA STREET, SW1

Membership of the Panel:

Councillor Jonathan Glanz (Chairman)
Councillor Anthony Devenish
Councilor Patricia McAllister

Apologies
Councilor Judith Warner

There were no changes to the membership.

Declarations of Interest

Councilor Glanz declared in relation to the Cyprus Turkish Association that the organization was located in the West End ward which he represents.

List of Recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Customer Services

The Panel met and heard representations on the following applications and made recommendations in each case to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Customer Services.

1. Lokkanta Ltd

The Panel had before them an application for Hardship in respect of 31 Westbourne Grove, W2 4UA, for the period from 14 July 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Determination of the application was deferred until the 9 December meeting as the applicant was unable to attend the meeting to present their case and answer questions from the panel.

2. Premae Skincare Ltd

The Panel had before them application for Hardship relief in respect of Unit 27 Whiteleys, Queensway, W2 4SB for the period from 24 July 2014 to 31 March 2015.

The applicant Ms Clare Eluka presented the application. She explained that the business was suffering hardship as when she had applied for the lease of unit 27 at Whiteleys the property was in very poor condition and had been vacant for two years and eight months and required refurbishment including plastering, electrics, paintwork and new signage which she paid for. The other issues were that Whiteleys generally

suffers from a low footfall and that the unit is located in a blind spot. As a consequence she advised that she had to spend money on advertising such as leafleting to attract customers. Ms Eluka explained that she had had leased the only available ground floor space in Whiteleys despite it being in a secluded position and the shopping centre being subject to redevelopment because several reputable businesses surrounded the area and she hoped that her business would gain custom from people shopping in those stores. In response to questions from the Panel regarding the staffing arrangements, she advised that she was paying herself a basic wage. She also explained that the business was providing training to 4 apprentices from Westminster Academy.

Recommendation: That hardship relief of 20% be awarded for the period from 24/7/14 to 31/3/15 on the grounds that a strong link was demonstrated to the borough in that the business provides opportunities to young people in Westminster in the form of apprenticeships.

3. Papparoti UK Ltd

The Panel had before them an application for a Hardship Relief respect of 80 Queensway, W2 3RL for the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2015.

Determination of the application was deferred until the 9 December meeting as the applicant was unable to attend the meeting to present their case and answer questions from the panel.

4. Maslaha

The Panel had before them an application for Discretionary Relief in respect of Rooms F3/4, Somerset House New Wing, Strand, WC2R 1LA for the period from 1 April 2014 onwards.

Mr Raheel Mohammed presented the application and answered questions from the Panel.

Recommendation: That Discretionary Relief be refused. The Panel considered the application in detail and took into consideration the additional information that Mr Mohammed provided in favour of Maslaha's case. This included the practical resources developed by the organisation to assist in combating diabetes and depression affecting Muslim communities within Westminster etc. However the Panel considered that there were insufficient connections between Maslaha and the local community to merit the award of discretionary relief, 30% of which would be borne by the Westminster taxpayer. It was noted that the organization did not undertake any work with Westminster schools and had a global outreach based in a number of countries. The

Panel also took into account that the company was in receipt of grants and commissions which should enable it to cover the business rates while the organisation's staff costs were due to rise considerably in the coming year. It was further noted that the organisation had only moved to its current premises from Bethnal Green in March 2014 and it was considered that there was no particular reason given the organization's widespread work to be based in Westminster.

5. Cyprus Turkish Association

The Panel had before them an application for a Discretionary Relief in respect of 34-35 D'Arblay Street, W1F 8EY for the period commencing 1 April 2014 onwards.

The Panel heard from Mr M Gencsoy, Association Secretary, who was supported by Mr Imal, a volunteer at the Association.

Recommendation: That 50% Discretionary relief be granted for the period from 1/4/14 to 31/5/15 as although only 30 percent of the people assisted by the association are Westminster residents the Association has had a long standing history with Westminster. The award of discretionary relief for one year only is intended to give the organization time to resolve the issue of obtaining charitable status.

6. UK & European Disabled Hajj Mission

The Panel had before them an application for Discretionary Relief in respect of 96 Bourne Terrace, W2 5TH, for the period from 1 April 2014 onwards.

Dr Omar Adel, Chair of Trustees, addressed the panel in support of the application and answered questions from the panel.

Recommendation: That Discretionary Relief of 20% be granted for the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 in recognition of the fact that UK & European Hajj Mission was considered to have strong links of supporting local residents and was providing a service to the community.