

Committee: General Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: 12th September 2022

Report Subject: Non-Statutory Licence Fees 2022/23

Portfolio Holder: General Licensing Committee

Report Submitted by: David Thompson, Service Manager – Public Protection

Report Written by: Steve Osborne, Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	General Licensing Committee
23.8.22	1.9.22							12.9.22

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform members of the proposed licence fees for 2022/23 in respect of taxis, scrap metal, street trading and sex establishments, which are determined under the Constitution by the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services, subject to scrutiny by General Licensing Committee. As the Director's post is currently vacant, temporary arrangements have been put in place for decision making to be undertaken by the Interim Chief Executive

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Members will be acutely aware of the pressures placed upon businesses during the global pandemic. As services are struggling to recover from this, a cost of living crisis has developed, further hitting the businesses through increased energy costs and inflationary pressures. In these difficult and challenging times for both businesses and the wider public and having regard to the budget setting cycle, the Corporate Leadership Team have been consulted and proposed that the fees outlined in this report are unchanged at this time. This option would see fees levels for 2022//23 remaining at the level agreed for 2021/22 as shown in **Appendix 1** (Scrap Metal, Street Trading and

Sex Establishments) and **Appendix 2** (Taxi Licensing), carried forward into 2022/23.

2.2 Whilst it is usual for a consultation period to be undertaken on fee increases, it is not considered necessary to consult where there is no proposal to change the fees.

2.3 A review of all fees will commence again in Autumn 2022 for the 2023/24 financial year, to bring this in line with budget setting cycle for next year. The costings for the Licenses are prepared at a point in time, and we anticipate an increase in direct costs post pandemic, and we acknowledge a pay award for 2022/23.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Members are asked to :

Option 1 - Support the content of the report and make any comments as necessary for future consideration going forward.

3.2 Option 2 - Not support the report and make any comments as necessary for future consideration going forward.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Links to the Corporate Plan and the Well-being plan are covered in any reports implementing or varying any area of work delivered by the Licensing Team, and there are therefore no direct links to this report.

4.2 These fees relate to businesses, and form just a small part of the overall costs borne by those businesses. There are therefore no well-being implications.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 Budgetary implications – there is a balance to be reached between funding services in order to protect public safety, and supporting businesses and others who depend on licences for their livelihoods.

5.2 In times of increasing local authority austerity, fees are an important element of local authority income. The fees were calculated based upon principles of cost recovery at that time of being set. The financial implications will need to be supported by the budget pressures process. Where a surplus arises, this will be factored in to future fee calculations.

- 5.3 The specific fees outlined in this report relate to licenses that vary in duration covering 1, 3 and 5 years. On average, these fees generate a net income level of £52,983 (made up of Hackney Carriages - £41,481, Private Hire Vehicles - £3,628, Scrap Metal - £1,366.84, and Street Trading – 6,507.91). This average income level will remain unchanged as a result of this report.
- 5.4 It is likely that the matters outlined in this report will contribute to a small net cost pressure on the Licensing Portfolio of £3,000 based on the total current income forecasts for 2022/23. CLT has agreed that this cost pressure would be managed from within the wider Environment & Regeneration budget as far as practicable. If this is not possible, then any shortfall would be funded by a contribution from the Covid reserve at the end of the financial year.
- 5.5 Reputational risk – The preferred option could give rise to criticism that fee levels have not fully recovered costs of the service. This needs to be balanced against the unprecedented pressures on the trade and Authority post global pandemic and during a cost of living crisis.
- 5.6 Legal implications – this report refers to statutory powers and responsibilities of the authority and, providing legislative and statutory processes are followed and evidenced, there should be no significant legal impacts arising.
- 5.7 Resources – The global pandemic has placed the Authority under unprecedented pressures requiring flexibility from staff to help bolster the response to the pandemic while maintaining essential services such as taxi licensing.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 Supporting evidence to justify 2021/22 fee levels were considered when these fees were set. No new evidence is put forward at this stage as no changes are proposed in this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Any licence fees will be subject to annual review, reporting to the Licensing Committee as appropriate.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/57/section/65>