

Committee: General Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: 16th January 2023

Report Subject: Non-Statutory Licence Fees 2023/24

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
13.12.22	15.12.22							16.1.23

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform members of the proposed licence fees for 2023/24 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.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Members will be acutely aware of the pressures placed upon businesses in recent years. 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 propose that the fees outlined in this report remain unchanged at this time. This option will see fee levels for 2023/24 remaining at the level agreed for 2022/23 and 2021/22, as shown in **Appendix 1** (Scrap Metal, Street Trading and Sex Establishments) and **Appendix 2** (Taxi Licensing).

2.2 The following table shows the current number of licences affected by this fee review:

Licence Type	Current number of licences due for renewal or annual fee in 2023/24	Current fee and proposed fee £
Taxi driver - renewal	5	251
HC - renewal	79	239
PHV - renewal	2	239
Scrap Metal collector - renewal	1	349.36
Street Trading – renewal	8	600.78

- 2.3 CLT reviewed detailed cost-recovery calculations carried out in Autumn 2022 and having regard to all of the circumstances, consider it appropriate to make no changes to these fees at this time.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Members will note that fee levels in respect of these licences have been frozen since the COVID pandemic. The costings for the Licenses are prepared at a point in time and a further review of all fees will commence again in Autumn 2023 for the 2024/25 financial year, to keep this in line with budget setting cycle for next year.
- 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. Any negative financial implications arising from this will be monitored during the financial year and funded from within existing resources where possible. Where a surplus arises, this will need to be factored into 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 £54,634 (made up of Hackney Carriages - £41,299, Private Hire Vehicles - £3,336, Scrap Metal - £3,101, and Street Trading – 6,898). This average income level will remain unchanged as a result of this report. Updated from budget statement 22-23 Quarter 2.

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 £2,300 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.

5.5 Reputational risk – Members will be mindful of the balance to be struck between cost recovery of fees against the unprecedented pressures on the trade and the Authority - post global pandemic and during the 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 – Recovering costs in fee setting is an important principle to help resource the service. As stated above, this has become more challenging during the global pandemic and during the cost of living crisis with a balance needing to be struck in order to ensure that vibrant and efficient licensed services are maintained for the businesses concerned and the wider public and stakeholders.

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>

APPENDIX 1

Scrap Metal, Street Trading and Sex Establishments Fees 2023/24

APPENDIX 2

Taxi Fees 2023/24