

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PLANNING, REGULATORY AND GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE (STATUTORY LICENSING MATTERS) – 8TH FEBRUARY, 2021

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D. HANCOCK (CHAIR)

Councillor W. Hodgins (Vice-Chair)

D. Bevan

J. Hill

C. Meredith

K. Pritchard

T. Smith

B. Willis

L. Winnett

D. Wilkshire

**WITH: Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing
Senior Licensing Officer
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Solicitor**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> An apology for absence was received from Councillor K. Rowson.	

<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>STATUTORY LICENCE FEES 2021/22</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing.</p> <p>The Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing outlined the report and informed Members of the options for gambling licence fees for 2021/22. The Team Manager advised that these fees fall under the remit of the Statutory Licencing Committee for consideration.</p> <p>The Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing noted the pressures placed upon businesses during the pandemic and due to these difficult and challenging times for both businesses and the wider public, it was proposed that fees remain unchanged in order to provide much needed support. The preferred option would see fees from 2020/2021 as outlined in Appendix 1 be taken forward for 2021/2022. Although it was normal practice for a consultation period to be undertaken on fee increases, the Team Manager advised that it was not necessary to consult if there were no changes to the fees.</p> <p>The Team Manager informed Members that due to fee increases not being agreed in previous years although income budgets increased in line with the Fees and Charges Register there was currently a cost pressure on the Licensing Committee’s Income of £33,000 for 2020/21. Although the Income Budget has not been inflated for 2021/22, the cost pressure would remain in place if not addressed, with the possibility of increases if the number of licences required were to decrease.</p> <p>The Team Manager also added that the preferred option could receive criticism as that fee levels are not fully recovering costs of the service. However, it was stated that this needed to be balanced against the unprecedented pressures on the businesses and the wider public during the global pandemic.</p>	

The Team Manager – Trading Standards and Licensing further provided a detailed explanation of the fees as outlined in the Appendix to the report.

A Member referred to the cost pressure and asked if there would be any detrimental consequences for the Licensing Services if the fees remained unchanged. The Team Manager advised that it would be difficult to identify any implications the decision would make on the Licensing Team, however the Resources Team and Corporate Director are aware of the cost pressure. In response to further concerns around staff reduction within the Team, it was advised that there was no proposal to reduce staff at this point in time.

Following further discussions, it was felt that the Committee could not increase the Statutory Licensing fees following the approval to maintain the General Licensing fees and it was paramount that the Local Authority support businesses during this difficult times. It was therefore unanimously

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Members supported the proposal to retain 2020/21 levels of fees in 2021/22.