

Committee: **General Licensing Committee**

Date of meeting: **30th January 2024**

Report Subject: **Non-Statutory Licence Fees 2024/25, 25/26 and 26/27**

Portfolio Holder: **General Licensing Committee**

Report Submitted by: **Team Manager- Trading Standards & Licensing**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
9th Jan 2024	11th Jan 2024							General Licensing Cttee 30 th Jan 2024

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the proposed licence fees for 2024/25, 25/26 and 26/27, 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 aware of the pressures placed upon businesses during the global pandemic and that the Authority has provided some support for licenced trade by not increasing fees since 2019/20.
- 2.2 The following table shows the current number of licences affected by the fee review for 2024/25:

Licence Type	Current number of licences due for renewal or annual fee in 24/25	Proposed fee £
Taxi driver - renewal	52	264
HC - renewal	113	243
PHV - renewal	3	243
Street Trading – renewal	7	631

- 2.3 The Regeneration and Community Services Senior Leadership Team have been consulted and proposed that the fees outlined in this report are increased in line with Option 1 below, to move towards full-cost recovery over the next **3-year period**. This constitutes a 5% increase for 24/25 and a projected 2% increase in years 2 and 3 of this period.
- 2.4 The preferred Option would provide some certainty for the licensed trade and the Authority in respect of fees for the next 3 years and a full review would be undertaken in 2027/28. The general effect of this proposal on income for the year 24/25 is shown in **Appendix 1**, with a potential increase of £1372 based upon current licence numbers.
- 2.5 **Appendices 2 and 3** shows a comparison with neighbouring Authorities and potential indicative fees for the 3-year period for taxi fees and other non-statutory fees, respectively.
- 2.6 Officers will continue to monitor costs each year to ensure that fees do not exceed calculated costs for that licence and if this should potentially arise, the fee will be set at the calculated cost level for that year instead of the current assumptions in the MTFS. All fees are reported to Council for adoption in its Fees and Charges register each year.
- 2.7 For information, **Appendix 4** illustrates trends on respect of taxi licences since 2014.
- 2.8 If Members are in agreement that fees should increase, a consultation period will be required to be undertaken on the proposed fee increases. Should no representations be received against the proposal, it is recommended that the fees are implemented with effect from 1st April 2024. Where representations are received, these will be subject to consideration and a final decision by the Corporate Director.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Preferred Option)

To support an inflationary increase in line with MTFS assumptions or full-cost recovery calculations (whichever is the lowest) on all locally set fees covered in this report, as shown in **Appendix 1** for 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27. Responses received to the consultation with the trade will be considered by

the Corporate Director who will determine final decisions in accordance with the Constitution.

3.2 **Option 2**

To propose an alternative fee for locally set fees for consideration by the Corporate Director, as laid out in the Constitution.

4. **Evidence of how 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 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

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.

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 and where a surplus arises, this will be factored into future fee calculations.

Resources – The Licensing income budget for the current financial year is £106,330 with an estimated outcome of £92,280. The income budget for 2024/2025 has been estimated at £108,306, after applying an assumed 5% increase.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Appendix 1 illustrates the general effect of this review on licence fees if fully implemented in 24/25 and estimates income based upon current volumes at those increased fee levels. A bottom-line income increase of £1372 could result if the fees are set as per Option 1, however increases are not guaranteed as licence holders may choose not to renew.

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.

5.3 ***Legal***

This report refers to statutory powers and responsibilities of the authority and, providing legislative and statutory principles are followed and evidenced, there should be no significant legal impacts arising.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no known Human Resources implications arising from the proposal.

5.5 ***Health and Safety***

There are no known Health and Safety implications arising from the proposal.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Supporting evidence is illustrated in the Appendices to this report detailing calculated costs in respect of these licences.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The Public will expect the Authority to set fees in accordance with all relevant legislation and having regard to local circumstances as appropriate.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Consultation will be undertaken with the appropriate licence holders (eg Taxi Trade) where increases in fees are proposed. The Corporate Director will take account of consultation responses before final decisions are taken.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

This report proposes fee setting for the next 3 years to provide some certainty for the trade and the Authority over the period.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Appropriate fee setting seeks to adequately recover costs for the Authority to enable an efficient and effective licensing service.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Whilst the Licensing Team works in partnership with many regulatory partners, including Police, Trading Standards and Environmental Health, the proposal in this report is a matter for the Council as Licensing Authority, in accordance with the Constitution.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

Licensing is fully integrated within the Public Protection Service of the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate and works in partnership with other services as appropriate.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

No implications arising from this report.

6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)** *(All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment) **To note a screening template no longer needs to be completed***

IIA attached as Appendix 5.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 All licence fees will be subject to annual review by Officers, reporting to the Licensing Committee as appropriate and subject to full review by Members in 3 years as outlined above.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/57/section/70>
Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1982/30/schedule/4>
[Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

APPENDIX 1 Potential Income Differences based upon Option1

APPENDIX 2 Taxi Fees 2024/25

APPENDIX 3 Scrap Metal, Sex Establishment & Street Trading Fees 2024/25

APPENDIX 4 Taxi Licence Trends 2014-2023

APPENDIX 5 Integrated Impact Assessment