

**Committee: Planning & General Licensing Committee**

Date of meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Report Subject: Non-Statutory Licence Fees 2021/22

Portfolio Holder: General Licensing Committee

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

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
26.1.21								8.2.2021

**1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To inform members of the proposed licence fees for 2021/22 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 during the global pandemic. In these difficult and challenging times for both businesses and the wider public, it is proposed that fees are unchanged in order to support business at this time. This option would see fees from 2020/21 as shown in **Appendix 1** (Scrap Metal, Street Trading and Sex Establishments) and **Appendix 2** (Taxi Licensing), carried forward into 2021/22.

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.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 Members are asked to :

- 1 Support the proposal to retain 2020/21 levels of fees in 2021/22 (preferred option), or
- 2 Consider an alternative fee structure which will require formal consultation with the trade.

### **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 proposed fees were set in March 2020 and were calculated based upon principles of cost recovery at that time. 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 Due to fee increases not being agreed in previous years, but the income budgets subject to inflationary increases (in line with the Fees and Charges Register), the Authority's Accountants report that there is 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 will remain if it is not addressed and could potentially worsen if the number of licences required were to decrease.

- 5.4 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 during this global pandemic.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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. During this period, it is recommended that fees are not amended until these pressures are more settled.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

- 6.1 Supporting evidence to justify 2020/21 fee levels were considered when this fee was set at March 2020. 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>