

**Synopsis of Pavement Café Licence Fee Consultation**

- Two groups responded online: Strandtown Traders Association and Hospitality Ulster.
- A (restaurant) in Little Victoria Street emailed the Service directly (attached at Appendix 1a))
- All other responses were submitted online.
- All of the business owners indicated that their business would be affected by the proposals.
- Of the businesses owners who responded, six operated businesses in the city centre whilst three were in east Belfast
- Three business owners agreed with some of the proposed fees - one agreed with the initial application fee but felt that the renewal should only be 50% of that with no charges for inspection.
- Two felt that no fees should be charged for processing applications just for the inspections (but with one suggesting that this be rounded down to £100)
- However, the overwhelming majority of respondents disagreed with the proposed licence fees, with the majority of those favouring a zero fee structure.
- Those respondents who did suggest an alternative fee suggested an amount significantly lower than the proposed fee.
- Generally, there appeared to be more support for the proposed annual inspection fee, with almost half of those responding either agreeing with the £110 proposed fee or suggested lower fee.
- Strandtown Traders Association and Hospitality Ulster disagreed with the proposed fees – one suggested an alternative lower fee structure whilst one suggested zero fees adding that “Inspections and admin could be carried out by existing officers during routine visits and interaction- which are frequent and often. Significant fees for what is little work.
- They commented *“There is no justification for any cost (two councils have already confirmed there will be no cost to apply), let alone fees so high”*.
- A significant number of respondents (40%) believed that the cost should be Rate borne through their Commercial Rates.
- BCCM research indicates that Belfast City Centre ground floor businesses are over 50% independently owned.
- BCCM believes that fees should be commensurate to the status of the business i.e. less for independents and more for multinationals; or:
- A payment plan should be introduced for independently-owned businesses to minimise impact on cash flow.
- In April 2007 the ban on smoking in public places was enacted. A number of responses commented that, the provision of outdoor tables and chairs became a necessity for businesses in order to facilitate smokers.

- Base the fees upon the quantities of tables/chairs. This would give businesses a degree of control over their outlay and (in general) be proportionate relative to independent and multi-nationally owned businesses

### **Period of Licence**

- The majority of respondents 60% (6) felt the licence should be for a period of 5 years or more. With most of these (4) favouring a five year period.
- A respondent commented that 5 years would be compatible with the proposed changes to entertainment licensing and also with liquor licensing.