



Subject:	Continuation of reduced fees for entertainments licences
Date:	13 April 2022
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager, Ext: 2435
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To inform the Committee of the decision by the Department for Communities (DfC) to continue the reduced fee of £1 for applications for the renewal of entertainments licences for the 2022/23 financial year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the decision of the Minister for Communities (DfC) that the nominal fee of £1 for renewal applications only, for all categories of entertainments licence, will remain for the 2022/2023 financial year, subject to a further review later this year.

3.0	Background
3.1	In February 2021 the DfC determined that a reduced fee of £1 would apply to applications for the renewal of all categories of entertainments licence, both indoor and outdoor, received on or after 6 April 2021.
3.2	This reduction applied for the duration of the 2021/2022 financial year and was introduced to alleviate hardship being experienced by the hospitality industry because of COVID-19 restrictions.
3.3	In January 2022 the DfC asked for the Council's views on whether there was a need to extend this measure beyond the 2021/2022 financial year, or if the fees should revert to their pre-April 2021 levels with effect from April 2022.
3.4	Members will recall that, at their meeting of 16 February 2022, the Committee agreed to recommend to the DfC that the reduced fee of £1 for applications for the renewal of Entertainments Licences should continue for the 2022/23 financial year.
4.0	Key issues
4.1	<p>On 23 March 2022 the Council received a letter from the DfC, informing the Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views received were mixed, but the majority of councils favoured extending the reduction on condition that the Department provided additional funding to cover the resulting loss of income. • That having considered the Councils' views and given that the Health Minister has only very recently lifted all remaining COVID-19 restrictions on hospitality venues, meaning businesses have still some way to go to get back to normal operation, the Minister has decided to continue with this easement for a further year. • The nominal fee of £1 for renewal applications only, for all categories of entertainments licence will therefore remain as set out in Local Government Circular 4/2021 for the 2022/2023 financial year, subject to a further review later this year. • The DfC recognised that the continuation of this measure will result in further loss of income for councils during the year to come. • Additional funding of some £17m provided by the Executive for council losses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is to be allocated to local councils by the DfC. This funding includes provision to cover any loss of income resulting from the reduction in fees for the renewal of entertainment licences for 2022/23.
4.2	The letter from the DfC is appended to this report at Appendix 1.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
5.1	Planned income for 2022/23 is based on our pre-covid estimate for entertainments licensing income of £195,940.
5.2	Given the uncertainty around the sustainability of many hospitality venues due to the impact of Covid it is very difficult to predict renewal fees income for 2022/2023.

5.3	However, if we make the assumption that all the applications we have received or are due to receive this year are renewed again next year and are subject to the £1 renewal fee it is estimated the Council will lose income in the region of £180,000.
5.4	The Council have secured funding from the Department for Communities to cover Covid recovery costs for 2022/23 which can be used to make up for any loss of income that extending the concessionary fee for a further year would create.
6.1	<p data-bbox="277 430 1200 461"><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p data-bbox="277 492 357 524">None.</p>
7.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<ul data-bbox="277 667 692 698" style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1: Letter from DfC