

Title of Report:	Entertainment Licence Renewal Fees 2022-23 Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Environmental Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	12th April 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Local Economy
Outcome	Compliance with Legislation
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	24009 4211
Staffing Costs	Included in current Budget

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the determination by the Department for Communities (DfC) regarding fees for Entertainment Licences for the duration of the 2022/2023 financial year.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Under Article 3 and Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, as amended by Article 52 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, certain specified entertainment shall not be provided at places, except, and in accordance with, the terms, conditions and restrictions that are included in entertainment licences granted by district councils. The legislation also requires that any application for the grant, renewal, transfer or variation of an entertainment shall be accompanied by fee as the DfC may from time to time determine.
- 2.2 With effect from 6 April 2021 the Minister for Communities introduced a nominal fee of £1 for renewal applications for all categories of entertainment licences to alleviate the hardship being experienced by the hospitality industry as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. This reduction remained in place for the duration of the 2021/2022.
- 2.3 In January 2022 DfC sought councils' views on whether or not there was a need to extend this easement beyond the end of 2021/2022 and this was brought before members in committee report ES220208 and CM220301. At that time there was no confirmation that funding would be available to Councils to offset the financial losses if the reduced fees continued into 2022/23. Council was of the view that Entertainment licence fees should revert to their pre-April 2021 levels and a response was issued to DfC with Council's preferred option.

3.0 Outcome

- 3.1 DfC has written to Councils to advise of their determination on entertainment license fees during 2022/23. A copy of the letter dated 23rd March 2022 is attached as appendix 1.
- 3.2 DfC stated that views received from Councils was mixed with the majority favouring extending the fee reduction on condition that the Department provided additional funding to cover the resulting loss of income.
- 3.3 The Minister, having considered the councils' views and the only very recent lifting of all remaining COVID-19 restrictions on hospitality venues 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.

- 3.4 The continuation of this easement will result in further loss of income for councils. However on 23rd March 2022 the Minister for Communities announced additional funding of £17m from the Executive is to be allocated to Councils for losses incurred as a result of the pandemic which includes losses due to the reduction in entertainment licence fee renewals during 2022/23.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Council notes the renewal fee as determined by DfC.



Chief Executive of District Council

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23 March 2022

Dear Chief Executive

REVIEW OF REDUCED FEES FOR ENTERTAINMENTS LICENCES

As you know with effect from 6 April 2021 the Minister for Communities introduced a nominal fee of £1 for renewal applications only, for all categories of entertainments licence to alleviate the hardship being experienced by the hospitality industry as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the reduction to remain in place for the duration of the 2021/2022 financial year.

In January this year we sought councils' views on whether or not there was a need to extend this easement beyond the end of the 2021/2022 financial year. 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.

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 continuation of this measure will result in further loss of income for councils during the year to come. However, 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 this Department as announced by the Minister today. 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.

Yours sincerely

Liam Quinn
Assistant Director of Local Government and Housing Regulation