

Report on	Process for Entertainment Licensing Applications during Covid-19
Date of Meeting	8 th September 2020
Reporting Officer	William Wilkinson

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise Members on a request for credit in relation to fees paid in connection with applications for the renewal of Entertainment Licences.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council is empowered to process and issue Entertainment Licences in accordance with the "Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1985 – Schedule 1".
2.2	Following a licensee receiving correspondence from the Council in relation to the renewal of their entertainment licence, correspondence has subsequently been received requesting some form of credit for the fee paid for the 19/20 licence.
2.3	Entertainment Licences are renewed on an annual basis for all venues with the renewal date for licences varying throughout the year across the District.
2.4	Due to the current Covid-19 Pandemic many venues have been unable to open or in certain cases have limited activity in line with Government Guidance. At present, it is envisaged that there will be at least a 6 month period where entertainment licensed venues have not been able to effectively operate.
2.5	The Schedule of Fees applicable for an application for an Entertainment Licence is attached – see Appendix 1, where the applicable fee varies from £50 for occasional licences and voluntary groups/charity to £1000 for large venues including hotels and nightclubs.
2.6	In many cases, Entertainment Licences are granted for one year as the legislation specifically states that a Licence should remain in force for one year or for such shorter period specified in the Licence as the Council may think fit.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The fees as detailed in Appendix 1, are not set at the discretion of the Council but are issued by the Department for Communities.
3.2	Within the legislation, paragraph 5(2)(c) states "Every application will be accompanied by such fee as the Department may from time to time determine".

3.3	It is therefore currently considered that the Council would not have the ability to adjust or reduce the fees applicable for the renewal of an Entertainment Licence.
3.4	In terms of the duration of the Licence, as previously indicated, an entertainment licence can be issued for one year or less where deemed appropriate.
3.5	There may be an opportunity to renew an entertainment licence with the date of commencement from the date of issue for a 1 year period.
3.6	In most cases, the licence application for the renewal of an entertainment licence will be received before the date of expiry of the current licence. In this case the existing licence then remains in force until a decision has been taken on the application for the renewal.
3.7	Following the successful inspection of the venue and all supporting certification being in place, the new licence will be issued with the commencement date being aligned with date of expiry of the existing licence.
3.8	There is therefore the possibility of dating the new licence on the actual date of issue which in many cases can be a number of weeks beyond the date of expiry of the outgoing licence. Although a maximum period of 3 months would be a reasonable period to permit this arrangement to operate.
3.9	This may be considered as a means of assisting premises during the current Covid-19 Pandemic.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Any form of refund etc. will effectively reduce the budget detailed for Entertainment Licensing in 2020/21 within the Building Control Departmental Budget.
	Human: Within current resources
	Risk Management: None
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>That Members consider the options as noted below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain the current process in terms of fees and duration of Entertainment Licence. <p>Or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Date of commencement of the entertainment licence aligned with date of issue of licence.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Schedule of Fees for an Entertainment Licence Application