

Report on	Fees for Entertainment Licences
Date of Meeting	9 th March 2021
Reporting Officer	William Wilkinson

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise Members on a Determination issued by the Department of Communities In relation to Fees for 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	Entertainment Licences are renewed on an annual basis for all relevant venues with the renewal date for licences varying throughout the year across the District.
2.3	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. This has resulted in financial loss to the licensees which has been highlighted to the Councils as well as the Department for Communities.
2.4	In September 2020, the Environment Committee agreed to permit the issue of renewal of licences up to a maximum period of 3 months beyond the expiry date of the existing licence. It had been considered that there was limited options available to the Council within the legislation in terms of being able to assist licensees.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Correspondence has been received from the “Department for Communities” (see Appendix 1) which recognises the hardship currently being experienced by the hospitality industry. As a result, the Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey MLA, has considered a number of options on this issue, and has decided that the Department will amend the licensing fees structure to introduce a nominal fee of £1 for the renewal of applications only. This will come into effect on 6 th April 2021 and will remain in place for the duration of the 2021/22 financial year.
3.2	With the introduction of a nominal £1 fee for the renewal of a Full or Occasional Licence, depending on the size and type of licence, this will result in a saving to the applicant of anything in the range from £49 for a small venue (holding not more than 100 persons) for an occasional licence to £999 for large venues (holding over 1000 persons) for a full licence.
3.3	It has been indicated that this financial arrangement will be subject to review early next year to determine whether there is a need to extend the measure beyond this period.

3.4	Any potential loss of income incurred is intended to be met from funding provided by the Executive as a means of supporting local Councils with their financial pressures in respect of lost income and exceptional costs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
3.5	To ensure that all licensees can avail of the opportunity to submit an application for the renewal of their Entertainment licence in line with the proposed reduced fee, it may be necessary to adjust/reduce the additional period of 3 months as agreed at the Environment Committee in September 2020.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: As detailed within the correspondence, it is anticipated that any potential loss of income to the Council will be met by the Executive.
	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	It is recommended that Members agree to the reduction in fees for the renewal of Entertainment Licence as detailed in the Determination issued by the Department for Communities (see Appendix 1) for the Financial Year 2021/22.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Local Government Circular re: Fees for Entertainment Licences – Determination [Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985]