FEE REVIEW OPTIONS

We currently have 118 ongoing Public Entertainment Licences. Some of these are discounted, and some will not be renewed. On the assumption, however, that approximately 20 of these applications will be renewed and have capacity of 200-500 people, this would bring in an additional £2,100 in income for the year. Assuming that 2 of these applications will be renewed with a venue capacity of over 1,500, this would bring in additional income of £1,060, as per the above table.

1.1 Option A: Substantially no change to overall fee levels.

- Public Entertainment Licences will be banded according to venue capacity
- Sex Shops will retain their current fee level.
- No change to all other fees

This would not cover the cost of the proposed new Licensing and Immigration Assistant post which is deemed to be necessary in order to
carry out the additional work required as a result of the statutory requirements outlined in paragraph 4.5 above. With the additional cost of this Post and with the increase proposed in Public entertainment Licences, there would be a deficit of £6,468.

1.2  Option B:
- Public Entertainment Licences will be banded according to venue capacity
- Sex Shops will retain their current fee level.
- Increase Civic fees (excluding taxis) by approximately 5%, rounded to the nearest £5

Assuming costs stay static, this would not be sufficient to cover the cost of the Licensing and Immigration Assistant post. (Income as per 16/7 on projected increase of 5% (retaining sex shops at their current fees and with the Public Entertainment Licence Increase) is £94,658. Costs would be £97,069 (to include new post) This leaves a deficit of £2,411.

1.3  Option C:
- Public Entertainment Licences will be banded according to venue capacity
- Sex Shops will be reduced by approximately 20%.
- Increase Civic fees (excluding taxis) by approximately 10%, rounded to the nearest £5

This would remove the deficit in the Civic licensing regime and allow the post of the Licensing and Immigration Assistant to be covered. Income as per 16/17 on projected increase of 10% is £97,455 and costs would be £97,069 (to include new post) leaving a surplus of £386.

1.4  Proposal C will remove the deficit in the administration of Civic Licensing and will allow the Licensing Service to move towards meeting its costs and its statutory responsibilities under the relevant legislation. It will also allow for the Licensing Team to have full staff capacity, with the costs of the necessary post of the (1FTE) Licensing and Immigration Assistant being covered.

Sex Shop Licences

1.5 The cost of an application to Licence a Sex Shop is currently set at £5,250 for a 1 year grant and £3,150 for a 1 year renewal. It is proposed that in Option C these fees be reduced by 20%, in order to more accurately reflect the overall requirement that the total costs of the licensing system are met by the total amount of fees receivable.
Public Entertainment Licences

1.6 It is proposed that a fee scale should be introduced for public entertainment licences to reflect the volume of work associated with applications for different sizes of events.

- For events where there are less than 200 people attending, a 5% increase in fees is proposed.
- Where the capacity is from 200 to 1500, it is proposed to increase the fee by approximately 20%; and
- Where the capacity is above 1500, the fee proposed has been increased by approximately 100%.

Given the small number of venues in Aberdeen City that possess a capacity above 1500, it is expected that there will be a small number of such applications. Though the discounted fee for such applications has been calculated here for completeness, it is anticipated that the vast majority events of 200+ capacity are likely to be commercial in nature and ineligible for that discount. The committee previously decided that any non-commercial events would be charged a discounted fee for a public entertainment licence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Proposed No. of attendees &lt;200</th>
<th>Proposed No. of attendees 200-1500</th>
<th>Proposed No. of attendees 1500+</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted Grant</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted renewal</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation</td>
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<td>273</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted Variation</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
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<td>324</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted Temporary</td>
<td>6 wks</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.7 It is recognised that venue capacity is not always an accurate indicator of the work and time that will be required by an application for a Public Entertainment Licence. However such a sliding scale is felt to offer a reasonable compromise between fairness, accuracy and accessibility. For benchmarking purposes the public entertainment licensing fees charged by City of Edinburgh, City of Glasgow, Perth & Kinross and South Ayrshire detailed in Appendices C to F of the report were compared with the proposed fees and all the local authorities fees in the appendices attached have a fee scale for public entertainment licenses based on the number of attendees at the event. Adding this proposal would be in line with these other local authorities.
1.8 As with all types of licence applications, it is inevitable that more straightforward applications will cost less to administer than more complex ones. It is not required, nor is it the aim of the Licensing structure to match costs and expenditure penny for penny. Such a system would require costs to be charged back to the applicant after the licence had been granted and would be based on a level of time recording that would prove extremely onerous, especially given the fact that such work is split across several officers in multiple Council Services. It would also create a level of uncertainty for the applicant in terms of potential licensing costs which is likely to be challenged.

1.9 This proposed change will therefore allow the fee structure to accurately represent the broad costs of licensing and enforcing a range of public events without negatively impacting smaller community and charity functions that will still require such licences and will also be eligible for the discounted rate. The proposed fees have been compared to those charged by Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils and are generally lower across all comparable categories.

1.10 Exemption warrants for scrap metal dealers will no longer be granted, due to changes brought about by the provisions of the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015.

**Taxi Licence**

1.11 The fee for a variation of a taxi licence or change of registration plate shall be reduced from £60 to £50, in order to lessen the discrepancy with the fee for a substitution (currently £35.) For a variation of a change in zone to include a new plate, this will remain at the current fee of £60.

1.12 It is proposed to add an expiry date onto taxi and private hire car drivers ID badges. This will allow the police and enforcement officers to know when the licence expires, and be a further reminder to the licence holders themselves. This will require the driver to renew their ID badge each year when they renew their licence. It is therefore proposed to increase the application fee by £10 (in addition to any other increase approved) to incorporate the ID badge charge into the application fee.

1.13 As mentioned in 5.5 Changes to the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 brought in by the Air Weapons and Licensing Act 2015 have resulted in the Licensing Authority administering a knowledge test for all private hire car drivers since December 2016, in addition to all taxi driver applicants. At present, all applicants have three opportunities to pass the test, covered by the application fee, within six months of making their application. It is proposed that this be changed going forward, and that there be a charge of £20 for each test. This would help cover the cost of implementing the test, and would also reflect the position in other local authorities. As a benchmark, Glasgow City Council charge £23 for each sitting of the knowledge test. It would also save significant time, as it would be necessary for each applicant
to have passed the test before their application can be processed. This would avoid any issues with timescales, as the applicant could sit the test as many times as they required. This fee has been added into Appendix 2, for the purpose of updating the fees altogether, however this proposal will be dealt with by full report at the Licensing committee in February 2018.