

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bradley,
R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Carson,
M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, McAteer,
McCann, McDowell, McKay, McKeown and Smyth.

In attendance: Mrs. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. K. Bloomfield, NI Housing in Multiple Occupation
(NIHMO) Manager;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mr. S. Hipkins, Building Control Manager; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th March 2026, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Non-Delegated Matters

Quarter 4 (2025-26) statistics on the public level of engagement with the HMO website

The NIHMO Manager highlighted the recent publicity campaign, from 26th January to 6th February, 2026, which had coincided with the commencement of the letting season for students for the 2026/27 academic year. The campaign had encouraged students and other prospective tenants to check that their next shared rental was licensed as a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). The Council had boosted social media adverts, website pop-ups, banners, a press release and an article on Interlink to promote the campaign.

He also provided the Committee with statistics on the public level of engagement with the HMO section on the Council's website.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

The Members were advised that, between 1st January and 31st March, 2026, the HMO section of the Council's website had received the following level of engagement:

Webpage	Views
NIHMO	4,233
<u>Know your rights: A guide for HMO tenants</u>	144

During the campaign period, the web page had received 338 views, representing a 55.8% increase compared to the previous two-week period.

The Committee noted the update which had been provided.

NIHMO Service Activity Update 2025/26

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The report is intended to give members an update on the activity of the NIHMO service during the financial year 2025/26.

1.2 Belfast City Council's NIHMO service, on behalf of each of the 11 Northern Ireland Councils is responsible for managing the HMO Licensing Scheme application process, which includes processing all licence requests, validating the requests, checks and inspections of HMO properties, issuing enforcement notices and dealing with breaches of licensing conditions.

1.3 The granting, refusal, variation or revocation of an HMO licence rests with the individual Council.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the activity of the NIHMO service during the financial year 2025/26.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

HMO Licensing

3.1 Table 1 provides a summary of the number of HMO's licensed on 31 March 2026

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

Table 1

Row Labels	Count by Council Area	Permitted Occupancy
Antrim and Newtownabbey	15	70
Ards and North Down	13	80
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	59	331
Belfast	2996	12981
Causeway Coast and Glens	214	927
Derry City and Strabane	250	1202
Fermanagh and Omagh	5	20
Lisburn and Castlereagh	9	46
Mid and East Antrim	12	76
Mid Ulster	18	120
Newry Mourne and Down	18	97
Grand Total	3609	15950

3.2 Table 2 provides a summary of the number of licenses granted and renewed during the financial year 2025/26.

Table 2

Row Labels	New Applications	Renewal Application	Total by Council Area
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0	0	0
Ards and North Down	0	1	1
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	12	5	17
Belfast	150	578	728
Causeway Coast and Glens	16	44	60
Derry City and Strabane	44	33	77
Fermanagh and Omagh	0	1	1
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	0	0
Mid and East Antrim	4	0	4
Mid Ulster	2	0	2
Newry Mourne and Down	0	1	1
Grand Total	228	663	891

Note: New applications include those properties which had a license in the name of a different licensee and were subsequently sold / transferred.

3.3 Table 3 provides a summary of the number of HMO licence applications that have not been successful (by reason) during the financial year 2025/26

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

Table 3

Council	Not received from owner	Breach of planning control	Documentation	Notice of Publication	Overprovision Fee not Paid	Fit & proper person	Grand total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Ards and North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast	0	4	10	3	0	5	22
Causeway Coast and Glens	1	0	0	2	2	0	5
Derry City and Strabane	0	0	1	3	1	0	5
Fermanagh and Omagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid and East Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Ulster	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry Mourne and Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	1	4	11	8	3	5	34

HMO Inspections

3.4 **Table 4 provides a summary of the number of inspections (by type) undertaken during the financial year 2025/26**

Table 4

Council	No Access	Licensing Inspections	Interim (WIP)	Final	Enforcement	Grand Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2	3	0	1	22	28
Ards and North Down	0	6	1	2	6	15
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	1	13	1	5	32	52

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

Belfast	37	869	12	262	235	1415
Causeway Coast and Glens	0	71	0	24	6	101
Derry City and Strabane	13	95	3	48	16	175
Fermanagh and Omagh	1	1	0	0	4	6
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	2	0	1	7	10
Mid and East Antrim	1	6	1	1	23	32
Mid Ulster	0	5	0	1	8	14
Newry Mourne and Down	3	17	0	2	11	33
Grand Total	58	1088	18	347	370	1881

HMO Enforcement

3.5 Table 5 provides a summary of enforcement action taken in Belfast by ward.

Table 5

	Section 30(1)	Section 30(2)	Section 31(1)	Section 33(1)	Section 33(2)	Section 5(2)	Section 5(5)	Section 71	Section 72	Section 73	Section 78	Grand Total
Row Labels												
BALLYGOMARTIN	1											1
BEECHMOUNT						1			1			2
BLACKSTAFF						1	1		1		1	4
BLOOMFIELD						1						1
CENTRAL	2			1	1	1		5	15	4	4	33
CHICHESTER PARK	1			1						2		4
CLIFTONVILLE						1			1			2
CONNSWATER				1		1	1	4	4			11
DUNCAIRN						1		4	4			9
FALLS PARK								4	4	7		15
FINAGHY						1			1			2
INNISFAYLE						1	1		1		1	4
MALONE								1	1			2
ORMEAU	1	1										2
ROSETTA									2			2
STRANMILLIS	1			1	1							3
SYDENHAM	1					1	1		1		1	5
WATER WORKS	1											1
WINDSOR	5	2	1					4	8			20
Grand Total	13	3	1	4	2	10	4	22	44	13	7	123

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

Key

Section 30(1) – Non licensed HMO (owner) - £5000 fixed penalty notice
Section 30(2) – Non licensed HMO (agent) - £5000 fixed penalty notice
Section 31(1) – Exceeding permitted occupancy - £5000 fixed penalty notice
Section 33(1) – Breach of licensing conditions - £2500 fixed penalty notice
Section 33(2) – Agent not named on the licence - £2500 fixed penalty notice
Section 5(2) – Evidence of household notice
Section 5(5) – Household notice
Section 71 – Power to obtain information from persons connected to the premises - £200 fixed penalty notice
Section 72 – Power to require persons connected to the premises to produce documents
Section 73 – Additional supporting documents
Section 78 – Powers of entry without warrant

3.6 During the financial year 2025/26 a total of £175,600 was paid following the issue of fixed penalties notices across all Northern Ireland Councils of which £120,200 relates to fixed penalty notices served in Belfast.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 None. The cost of assessing HMO application and officer inspections is provided for within existing budgets.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”

In response to a Member’s question, regarding the consequences for a landlord who had had enforcement action taken against them, the NIHMO Manager explained that officers had regard to any enforcement action when considering whether a landlord was a “fit and proper person”. He outlined that the Council had approved an HMO Enforcement Policy in 2019. The Members were advised that if a Fixed Penalty notice had been served on a landlord and a second offence was committed, the next stage would be to prosecute through the courts. He highlighted that, if a landlord committed more than one offence, the information would be brought before the Committee for its consideration. The Members were advised further that, if a landlord was deemed not to be a fit and proper person for one property, they would lose their licences for any HMO properties which they held. The HMO Manager clarified that offences within the last five years were taken into consideration, as outlined within the Enforcement Policy.

A further Member requested that, in future service updates, the HMO figures for previous years be included, in order that the Committee would be able to compare the numbers of applications, refusals and enforcement cases.

In response to further questions regarding the time taken from a reported breach to enforcement action, the NIHMO Manager advised the Committee that they had a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to carry out an enforcement visit within 10 days in 80% of cases.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

He stated that they were currently slightly under performing on that target but that they were currently short staffed and that would hopefully be rectified shortly.

The Director of Planning and Building Control outlined the Planning Enforcement Strategy. She advised the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure had monitored a KPI target of commencing legal action within 39 weeks in 70% of cases.

A number of Members stated that the time taken to prepare cases for court action was clearly time consuming for officers and that it was important that the Council had sufficient resources to meet statutory timeframes without placing an unnecessary burden on staff.

A further Member reiterated that the meeting with the three key Departments needed to take place urgently, to discuss the issue of short term lets and the impact it was having on communities.

The Committee noted the activity of the NIHMO service during the financial year 2025/26.

Delegated Matters

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN
PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER
STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted the applications that had been issued under the Scheme of Delegation during March.

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications for licences which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for a New Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 167 Dunluce
Avenue**

The NIHMO Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application.

He outlined that the property had had the benefit of an HMO licence issued by the Council with an expiry date of 1st August, 2023. The ownership of the property had transferred to Mr. M. Baskin in May 2023. The Council had not been made aware of the change of ownership at the time.

In accordance with Section 28 "Change of ownership: effect on licence" of the 2016 Act, the licence in the name of the previous owner ceased to have effect on the date of transfer.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

An inspection of the property had taken place on 4th December, 2025, at which time it was established that the property was being occupied as an unlicensed HMO.

An application for a new HMO licence was received from Mr Baskin on 4th December, 2025.

A Temporary Exemption Notice was granted on 20th January, 2026, with an expiry date of 20th April, 2026.

The NIHMO Manager outlined that, pursuant to the 2016 Act, the Council could only grant a licence if it was satisfied that:

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, were fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements were satisfactory;
- d) the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;
- e) the living accommodation was fit for human habitation and—
 - i. was suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
 - ii. could be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

The Planning Service had confirmed that a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development (CLEUD) was granted on 15th March, 2022.

It was reported that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit in relation to daytime noise; the Public Health and Housing Unit in relation to rubbish accumulation/filthy premises; and the Enforcement Unit in relation to litter and waste and all had confirmed that there had been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of any of the issues in the HMO in the last 5 years.

The NIHMO Manager drew the Committee's attention to the action taken in relation to the occupation of the accommodation as an unlicensed HMO.

For the purpose of Section 12(2) of the 2016 Act, the Council had determined the locality of the accommodation as being Housing Management Area (HMA) "2/21 Ulsterville" as defined in the document Council's Local Development Plan Strategy, which was formally adopted in May, 2023. It was reported that Legal Services had advised that there was a clear requirement in section 8 of the 2016 Act upon the Council to be satisfied that the granting of a licence would not result in overprovision.

The officers had had regard to:

- a) the number and capacity of licensed HMOs in the locality; and
- b) the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation was required to meet that need.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

To inform the Council in its consideration of the above provisions, the Council had taken account of the 2023 Strategy given that “Nurturing sustainable and balanced communities was a fundamental aim of the LDP’s housing policies.” In particular, the Council had considered Policy HOU10, which stated:

“Within designated HMAs, planning permission will only be granted for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and/or flats/apartments where the total number of HMOs and flats/apartments combined would not as a result exceed 20% of all dwelling units within an HMA.”

The Committee was advised that, on the date of assessment, 30th March, 2026, 67% of all dwelling units in policy area HMA 2/21 were made up of HMOs and flats/apartments, which in turn exceeded the 20% development limit as set out in Policy HOU10. There were 250 (22%) licensed HMOs with a capacity of 1074 persons in that HMA.

It was outlined that there were a total of 1160 dwelling units in HMA 2/21. The Members were advised that, on 30th March, out of 214 premises available for rent within the BT9 area, there were 93 licensed HMOs which represented 392 bed spaces.

The Committee was advised that the fact that the use of the property as an HMO was permitted for planning purposes was a relevant consideration in determining whether the granting of the licence would result in overprovision.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager reminded the Committee that there was a need for intensive forms of housing and, to meet that demand, HMOs were an important component of the housing provision. HMOs, alongside other accommodation options within the private rented sector, played an important role in meeting the housing needs of people who were single, who had temporary employment, students, low-income households and, more recently, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

He explained that, in assessing the number and capacity of licensed HMOs, as well as the need for HMO accommodation in the locality, officers could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation for the purpose of section 8(2)(d) of the 2016 Act.

The Committee was advised that no objections had been received in relation to the application. It was also reported that the accommodation had been inspected by the NIHMO service, on 22nd January, 2026, at which time it complied with the physical standards for an HMO for five persons.

On 30th March, 2026, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, officers had issued a Notice of Proposed Decision to the applicant, stating that it proposed to refuse the licence on the grounds of over provision.

The applicant had responded, on 13th April, stating that:

1. At no stage was he made aware that the Council considered there to be an overprovision of HMO properties within the BT9 area, nor that it would be a determining factor in refusal;

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

2. The property supported individuals on modest incomes who faced structural barriers in the private rental market;
3. It provided secure, well-maintained accommodation where alternatives were limited; and
4. The rental offering was priced at an accessible level in the context of the current cost-of-living pressures.

The HMO Manager outlined the officers' response to the points raised by the applicant, namely, that:

1. The notes linked to the application form which the applicant confirmed that he had read and understood set out the factors which the Council were required to have regard of when determining an application, including overprovision;
2. The 2016 Act did not allow the Council to have regard to the profile of the current tenants;
3. While the accommodation met the physical standards for usage as an HMO, officers cannot be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality; and
4. The 2016 Act did not allow the Council to have regard to the rent being charged.

The Committee was advised that the applicant was unable to attend the Committee meeting. A copy of his written submission had been circulated to the Members for their information.

A Member highlighted that the property had been operating as an unlicensed HMO for two and a half years.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Abernethy and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to refuse the application as, in accordance with Section 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, it could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation, as determined under section 8(2)(d) of the Act.

**Consideration of Street Trading
Designation for Glen Road**

The Director of Planning and Building Control presented the following report to the Committee:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 Committee will recall that, at your meeting of 17 September 2025, you gave approval to initiate the statutory public notice consultation process for the designation of a site outside 44e Glen Road, for the sale of hot and cold food and non-alcoholic drinks.

1.2 This site had been identified as a result of an application received requesting designation to allow trade from this location. A location map is attached as appendix 1.

1.3 The statutory designation process involved seeking comments from the relevant statutory bodies and from the public through a public notice placed in two newspapers, with a statutory 28 day period for representations to be made to the Council.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to now consider the designation proposal in conjunction with the representations received and to make a decision on whether or not to pass the designation resolution and designate the proposed site.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the representations received as a result of the public notice consultation process and reconsider the proposal. On the basis of the objections received and consultation responses from PSNI and DfI (Roads) it is recommended that the committee:

- Determine not to pass a designation resolution.**

2.2 However, should members be minded to pass a Designating Resolution it is recommended that:

- Only the part of the street, specifically the proposed site should be designated so the Council may allocate a street trading pitch;**
- An operational date of 1 June 2026 is agreed for the resolution to take effect (This must be not less than one month from the date of passing the resolution);**

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

- Members consider and confirm that they wish to include only hot and cold food and non-alcoholic drinks as the designated commodities; and
- Members consider any other reasonable conditions that should be applied to any subsequent stationary street trading licence issued for the designated site, such as days and hours of trade or duration of licence.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 Under the provisions of the Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 a district council has powers to designate and rescind the designation of specific streets or parts of streets as being suitable for street trading. The Act also allows a council to include the commodities or services to be supplied in the designation resolution, and to vary a previous designating resolution in relation to these.
- 3.2 If a street has not been designated under the Act the Council cannot issue a licence for street trading from a stationary position in that street.
- 3.3 The process of considering and reviewing the designation of streets is therefore an essential part of the legal framework within which the Council is enabled to regulate street trading in the City.

Key Issues

- 3.4 The Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 sets out the designation public notice consultation process.
- 3.5 The Council must consult with the PSNI and with the Department for Infrastructure (Roads). and may also consult such other persons as it considers appropriate. Such consultees may include local residents, business and commercial premises in the street or in vicinity of the proposed designated site.
- 3.6 Comments from the public must be sought through a public notice placed in two newspapers, with a statutory 28 day period for representations to be made to the Council.
- 3.7 A synopsis of the comments received as a result of this consultation process is provided below.

PSNI Response

- 3.8 The PSNI did not object but request that the application is further considered by Belfast City Council to ensure there are no public safety issues if the layby is restricted as many shops and business in the immediate area will be operating as usual. See Appendix 2.

DfI (Roads) Response

- 3.9 DfI (Roads) have no objection to the proposal but commented that any vehicle/stall must not be positioned in such a way as to compromise road safety or traffic progression.

Published 28 day Notice and Resident Letter Drop

- 3.10 As a result of the public notice and residential letter drop 14 responses were received all of which were opposing the creation of a trading pitch. The predominant concerns were road / pedestrian safety and increased traffic congestion.

- 3.11 Issues raised were:

- Increased road traffic risks entering onto Glen Road
- Increased traffic
- Noise / Litter
- Impact on Aesthetic
- Obstructing the pavement
- Reduced available parking for existing business
- Damage being caused to residential parked vehicles by congested vehicle movements.

- 3.12 Copies of the responses are attached as Appendix 4.

- 3.13 Members are reminded that the designation process is about the principle of a street trading pitch being at the location. Matters regarding the suitability of a particular person, the stall and the ability to manage the site are considered as part of the subsequent street trading licensing process.

- 3.14 The person requesting a site to be designated, is merely a 'trigger' for the process and they may not be the person who is ultimately granted the street trading licence to operate at the site. Members are reminded that on occasions the Committee has considered multiple competing licence applications for a single designated street trading site.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

3.15 If Members pass a Designation resolution, a public notice to that effect must be published for two consecutive weeks in two or more newspapers circulating in the district, the first of which must be published at least 28 days before the date when the resolution is to take effect.

3.16 A copy of the notice must also be sent to any person who made representations relating to the proposed resolution.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

None.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no issues associated with this report.”

In response to a Member’s query, the Director of Planning and Building Control outlined that a trader who had been trading at the location had removed their stall when approached by the Council.

After discussion it was

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Abernethy and

Resolved – that the Committee, having considered the representations received as a result of the public notice consultation process and on the basis of the objections received and consultation responses from PSNI and DfI (Roads), agrees not to pass a designation resolution.

Review of Street Trading Licensing Fees - Result of consultation exercise

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 At the Committee meeting of the 16 April 2025 it was agreed that consultation on revised street trading fees should be undertaken on the basis of a fee increase that was a calculated mid way increase between an inflationary increase and an increase to reflect cost recovery of processing street trading applications. Minutes of 16 April 2025 Licensing Committee meeting are included as Appendix 1.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

1.2 At your meeting of the 18 March 2026, the Committee considered representations on the proposed fees for street trading licences, which had been received in response to the consultation process as set out in the Street Trading Act N.I. 2001.

1.3 At that meeting, Members agreed to defer a decision on the report and asked that offices bring forward revised proposals for an initial inflationary increase with staged further increases.

1.4 This report once again details the consultation and representations received for further consideration and provides the requested amended fee proposals for Members to consider.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the contents of the report and recommended to:

- 1.** Agree to the initial inflationary uplift in year 1 as set out in paragraph 3.19 for Street Trading Licences, effective from the 1 June 2026, and
- 2.** Agree that in April 2027 and April 2028 an inflationary uplift will be added as well as a further 10% increase in fees.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 Members are reminded that the Street Trading Act N.I. 2001 gives the Council powers that it may charge such fees as may be sufficient to cover any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection administering the Street Trading Licence Scheme.

3.2 Below is a summary of the current fees and the fees the Committee agreed should be consulted on, following consideration of three fee options, at your meeting of 16 April 2025.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

STATIONARY LICENCE	Current fee	fee consulted on
Application Fee - Non refundable	150	£290
Licensed for Monday to Friday	800	£1,225
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	1000	£1,390
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1250	£1,640
Licensed for Saturday	520	£1,010
Licensed for Sunday	580	£1,080
MOBILE LICENCE		
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310
Licensed for Monday to Friday	550	£955
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	800	£1,175
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1100	£1,450
Licensed for Saturday	300	£795
Licensed for Sunday	380	£875
TEMPORARY LICENCE		
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310
Licensed for Monday to Friday, per day	40	£91
Licensed for Saturday	50	£132
Licensed for Sunday or Public holiday	70	£175
Variation of Licence Particulars	100	£250

Consultation/Public Notice

- 3.3 Consultation on the proposed fees was for the statutory public notice 28 day period, as required by the Act. The public notice period closed on 18 February 2026.**
- 3.4 Notice of the consultation was published in the two newspapers as required by the Act, specifically the Belfast Telegraph and the Irish News.**

- 3.5 We also published the proposed fees on the Council's website to coincide with the newspaper public notice period, explaining how representations could be made and that a statement outlining how the proposed fees were prepared was available on request.
- 3.6 trader or have recently held or applied for a street trading licence, notifying them of the proposed fees and the closing date of the consultation period and seeking their views.

Responses

- 3.7 As a result of the consultation a total of five responses were received. A copy of the written responses received is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.8 Four responses were received from mobile street trading licence holders (ice cream vans). This was four responses from a total 12 mobile street trading licences.
- 3.9 The other response received was from a stationary street trading licence holder, who holds licences in two locations. Therefore, this could be considered two out of 26 current stationary street trading licences.
- 3.10 Summary of points raised in responses
- Understand need for increase – but proposals not fair or appropriate
 - Would adversely affect the service provided to residents, which is of value to communities
 - Austerity and rising living costs already downtown as people make cutbacks on luxury/treat items like ice cream
 - Increased Operating Costs – Fuel, staffing, product.
 - Weather Dependency & Seasonal Trading especially for ice cream trade–restricted revenue opportunities
 - Increased Competition – concession units operating within parks and tourist locations
 - Increased costs of product together with applicable rates cannot be passed onto consumer
 - Would be a barrier to people joining the industry
 - Wouldn't be able to apply for temporary licence as if weather bad couldn't cover cost
 - Fees in other Council areas are significantly less
- 3.11 As the comparison with fees in other council areas was made within responses, a list of these fees alongside the existing and proposed Belfast fees for comparison is given in Appendix 3.

Revised proposals

- 3.12 At the meeting in March 2026, The Committee agreed to defer a decision on an uplift in fees for one month and requested that officers submit a report outlining a short-term inflationary rise of the current Street Trading fees, with proposed future staged increases, for the Committee to consider at its next meeting.
- 3.13 In order to calculate a short term inflationary rise as requested by the Committee, the Inflation figures were updated using the Bank of England inflation calculator, based on the latest available Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation data from Office for National Statistics.
- 3.14 The inflation figure from 2017 (when fees last set) to Feb 2026 has therefore been calculated at 35.4%
- 3.15 To calculate future staged increases and to start moving towards cost-recovery, annual ten percent increases over a further two year period were considered a reasonable approach. Therefore, it is proposed that in years two and three the CPI percentage increase is added to the proposed 10 percent annual increase.
- 3.16 The percentage CPI inflation figures for 12 months up to September 2025 was 3.8% and the latest available figure for percentage CPI inflation is for the 12 months up to February 2026 which is 3%. In the example fee calculations provided CPI for years 2 and 3 has been taken at 3%, whilst obviously this could be higher.
- 3.17 It would be the Building Control Service's intention to bring a further review of the street trading fees to Committee before the end of the third year, comparing the then current fees to a calculated cost recovery level for the work involved in street trading licensing applications and on-site monitoring, with the overall aim of moving closer towards cost-recovery.
- 3.18 It should also be noted that the application fee is paid on first grant and every 3 years on renewal, while the licence fee is paid annually. However, the annual licence fee is set at the time of the licence being issued. Therefore, for many street traders there will be a delay before they must pay an increased fee of either type.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

3.19 Fee Uplift Proposal:

STATIONARY LICENCE	Current fee	fee consulted on	Year 1 = Inflation 2017-Feb 2026 = 35.4%	year 2 = +10% + CPI (eg 3%)	year 3 = + 10% + CPI (eg 3%)
Application Fee - Non refundable	150	£290	203.10	229.50	259.34
Licensed for Monday to Friday	800	£1,225	1083.20	1224.02	1383.14
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395	406.20	459.01	518.68
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	1000	£1,390	1354.00	1530.02	1728.92
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1250	£1,640	1692.50	1912.53	2161.15
Licensed for Saturday	520	£1,010	704.08	795.61	899.04
Licensed for Sunday	580	£1,080	785.32	887.41	1002.78
MOBILE LICENCE					
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310	243.72	275.40	311.21
Licensed for Monday to Friday	550	£955	744.70	841.51	950.91
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395	406.20	459.01	518.68
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	800	£1,175	1083.20	1224.02	1383.14
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1100	£1,450	1489.40	1683.02	1901.81
Licensed for Saturday	300	£795	406.20	459.01	518.68
Licensed for Sunday	380	£875	514.52	581.41	656.99
TEMPORARY LICENCE					
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310	243.72	275.40	311.21
Licensed for Monday to Friday, per day	40	£91	54.16	61.20	69.16
Licensed for Saturday	50	£132	67.70	76.50	86.45
Licensed for Sunday or Public holiday	70	£175	94.78	107.10	121.02

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

Variation of Licence Particulars	100	£250	135.40	153.00	172.89
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3.20 The legislation does not require a new consultation exercise to be carried out if the Committee decides to set fees different to those that were previously consulted on. However, if the Committee decides to set fees set out in paragraph 3.19 the legislation requires that notice of the decision is published in two newspapers along with the implementation date and that all current street trading licence holders also be notified.

4.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

4.1 There are significant financial and resource implications associated with this report.

4.2 The proposed Street Trading Licence fees will ensure the cost of the operational and administration processes are proportionate to the licensing scheme. Details outlining the costings associated with administering street trading licences are attached as Appendix 4.

5.0 **Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

There are no issues associated with this report.”

During discussion, a Member stated that, given the ongoing cost of living crisis, he did not feel it was fair on the traders to implement such significant increased prices.

A further Member highlighted that there were some costs which were non-negotiable under the Street Trading Act, such as the fees to advertise twice in the newspapers.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor McCann and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees:

1. to the initial inflationary uplift in fees for year 1, as set out below, effective from the 1st June 2026, comprising an inflationary uplift from 2017- Feb 2026 of 35.4%;

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

STATIONARY LICENCE	Current fee	fee consulted on	Year 1 = Inflation 2017-Feb 2026 = 35.4%
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**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026**

2. with a report to be submitted to the February 2027 meeting for the consideration of any future increases in Street Trading Licensing fees.

Chairperson