

SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATE LANDLORDS

Background

Selective licensing is a scheme which aims to improve the standards of property management in the private rental sector. Under the Housing Act 2004, Part 3 (Selective Licensing of other Residential Accommodation), all private landlords operating within the designated area are required to obtain a license from the council for each property which is rented out.

The Housing Act 2004 gave local authorities the power to designate areas of selective licensing to help tackle concerns over anti-social behaviour and low housing demand. In 2015, the conditions for designation were expanded to include poor property conditions, high crime, high levels of deprivation and high migration.

Opinion Research Services was commissioned by The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to conduct a review of selective licensing and conducted in-depth research and consultations with stakeholders from across the sector.

The report finds that selective licensing is an effective tool when implemented properly and identifies a range of areas where the operation or implementation of selective licensing schemes could be improved. The full report can be read by clicking on the link that follows below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833217/Selective_Licensing_Review_2019.pdf

In a report in April 2020, by Which, they shared information from a Freedom of Information Request of Local Authorities (Nov 2019-Feb 2020). They published that of the 200 responses received, 55 councils confirmed they were operating additional or selective schemes or are in the process of launching one. Schemes were most prevalent in London.

More locally, Newcastle, Gateshead, Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough, County Durham and Hartlepool all operate a Selective Licensing Landlord Scheme.

Proposal

To agree to write to Northumberland County Council Head of Housing and Local Protection, Philip Soderquest, copied to Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Cllr Colin Horncastle, and Leader Cllr Glen Sanderson, to request that Northumberland County Council introduce a scheme of selective licensing of private landlords, as provided for in sections 79, 80 and 81 of the Housing Act 2004.

To include those areas of Ashington where it could have a positive impact by raising standards within the private rented sector leading to improvements in the overall social and economic conditions in the area to create a strong, healthy, and vibrant neighbourhood, in keeping with Northumberland County Council's Corporate Objectives:

'Living' "We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for"

'Enjoying' "We want you to love where you live."

It is also considered that the schemes will assist in the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the designated areas.