

Selective Licensing of Private Landlords - Customer First Analysis

1. Purpose

- What are you trying to achieve with the policy / service / function?

Improve management standards across the Private Rented Sector and thus contribute towards reducing low housing demand.

- Who defines and manages it?

Low demand housing is defined within the Housing Act 2004 and guidance produced by Communities and Local Government 'Approval steps for additional and selective licensing designations in England'. The Council will manage the designation and ensure that licence conditions are adhered to.

- Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?

Tenants, Landlords and the wider community will all benefit from improved management standards in the Private Rented Sector. Tenants will have a better quality of accommodation and will be sure their landlord has good management standards. Landlords will gain an improved reputation, have the potential for higher returns, improved access to finance, increased demand and lower turnover of tenancies. There will be an increase in housing choice for everyone not just the most vulnerable and the community as a whole will benefit from improved standards in the sector.

- What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?

If approved this would become a legislative requirement, insufficient resources could result in an ineffective scheme and therefore it is important that resources are sufficiently planned for.

- How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?

Extensive consultation has taken place regarding the draft designation proposal. Everyone likely to be affected by the proposals was consulted with for a minimum of 10 weeks; this included residents and business in and around the proposed designation, all know landlords operating within the Borough and wider stakeholders. All representation made during this time has been fully considered and an amended proposal brought before Cabinet.

The legislation has a built in requirement to monitor and review any designation, this will be reported to stakeholders and the wider community. The legislation also requires the Council to issue Statutory Notices leading up to implementation of an approved Selective Licensing Designation. A designation will come into force a minimum of 3 months after it has been made but the Council must publish Statutory Notices of the Designation within 7 days of the decision to make the Designation.

2. Evidence

- How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?

A framework will be established to monitor set measures including impacts on empty dwellings, house values, community satisfaction, etc. This will be reported on annually, and a formal review will take place every two years.

- How satisfied are your customers and how do you know?

This is a proposed new service however if approved, with time, levels of complaints about/from tenanted properties in the area should decrease as standards improve. The legislation required the Council to consult with all persons likely to be affected before making any designation. The consultation identified wide ranging views. Whilst almost 80% of residents were in support of selective licensing, 67% of landlords were against it. The findings from the consultation have been analysed and all stakeholders' views have been considered before revising the new proposals.

- What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?

This is a proposed new service. However, we have comprehensive data on:-

- *Housing market and empty dwellings*
- *Tenant complaints about private landlords*
- *Complaints about private tenants*
- *Consultation findings from a wide range of stakeholders*

- What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?

None, the policy is under pinned by a comprehensive proposal document.

- Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?

We will attempt to capture this information from landlords at time of application.

- Are you using partners, stakeholders, and councillors to get information and feedback?

- The newly formed Private Landlord Liaison Group encompasses partners and stakeholders and will be used to get feedback on the effectiveness of any selective licensing designation.

- In time we will get feedback through the monitoring framework.

3. Impact

- Are some people benefiting more – or less - than others? If so, why might this be?

The community in and around the designation area will benefit more than others however there is strict legislative criteria restricting the use of selective licensing as a tool to improve management standards within the Private Rented Sector.

4. Actions

- If the evidence suggests that the policy / service / function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?

Landlords with properties in the area may feel disadvantaged over landlords not included in the designation, however the legislation is clear this is an areas based approach and the

comprehensive proposal document outlines the reasons for introducing this policy in this area only.

- Is it discriminatory in any way?

No, all landlords within the designation area will be treated equally with standard procedures that can be adapted depending on an individuals needs so as not to discriminate. Monitoring of the scheme will quickly identify any concerns regarding equality and fairness and we will investigate accordingly.

- Is there a possible impact in relationships or perceptions between different parts of the community?

Yes, the designation will only cover certain parts of the Borough as outlined in the proposal document and this could lead to a perceived difference in areas with and without selective licensing.

- What measures can you put in place to reduce disadvantages?

This can be seen as an advantage rather than disadvantage as landlords within the designated area improve their standards of management and loose their negative image.

- Do you need to consult further?

No, the legal requirement is to consult with all people likely to be affected by the designation for a minimum of 10 weeks. The Council fulfilled this legal requirement and consulted with all people likely to be affected by the designation for over 12 weeks.

- Have you identified any potential improvements to customer service?

Not as such but all representation made during the statutory consultation period has been full considered and taken into account in a revised designation proposal.

- Who should you tell about the outcomes of this analysis?

Everyone who responded to the consultation has received a summary of the consultation findings which refers to a full consultation report which has been published on the Council's website and is available in hard copy from the Private Rented Team at the Council's Cannon Street Office.

- Have you built the actions into your Business Plan with a clear timescale?

Yes

- When will this assessment need to be repeated?

Following any periodic review of the Designation. i.e. after 2 years

Name: _____ **Signed:** _____

Service Area: _____ **Dated:** _____

If applicable, please attach copy of – or website link to - the cabinet report for reference.

Don't forget to return your written record to HR.