

London Borough of Barnet

Additional and Selective Licensing

Licensing Scheme Objectives, Targets, Reporting and Resources

Introduction

It is the intention of Barnet Council that the use of Additional and Selective Licensing schemes will bring about an improvement to property conditions and management in the private rented sector (PRS). In addition, these schemes are intended to help to reduce anti-social behaviour and where specifically designated for selective licensing to contribute to the reduction in deprivation in the area.

In order to achieve this, we believe it is important that at the outset, we set out clear objectives and targets that the schemes will be intended to achieve. We also wish to monitor our performance against these objectives and targets and be clear and transparent in reporting our performance regularly and if and where we fall short, to set out the steps we will take to correct our path to the final outcomes at the end of the five-year schemes.

Besides monitoring, a critical element to achieving our objectives and targets, is to ensure that the schemes are adequately resourced, enabling us to do what we say we will and ultimately to ensure that the schemes are successful in protecting some of our most vulnerable residents.

Objectives

It is intended that the introduction of additional and selective licensing will:

- Improve private rented sector housing conditions
- Contribute to an improvement in the health outcomes of residents in the most deprived areas and highest risk properties by improving property conditions
- Seek to reduce deprivation and inequalities, in conjunction with other key council strategies (including the Barnet Plan, housing strategy, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, local plan and community safety strategy)
- Help to tackle anti-social behaviour linked with the private rented sector alongside these other strategies

Targets

In order to monitor our performance in reaching these objectives, we have determined a set of targets by which we will monitor the progress of the schemes. The targets will be reviewed on an ongoing basis (first formal review after 12 months) as it is acknowledged based upon previous experience that there may be some natural change in the tenure of properties over time that may affect the profile from that at the time of the consultation.

Additional licensing

The analysis of various available data sources for the full consultation business case estimated there were 2,546 additional HMOs that were unlicensed. In addition, at the end of the previous scheme there was a total of 555 additional licences in force. The baseline number of HMOs expected to require either licensing for the first time or to re-licence, is 3101

1. Monitor licensing compliance against the predicted number of licensable HMOs:
 - a). To investigate all 3,101 properties identified as likely HMOs in the baseline and any further properties subsequently identified over the five-year period of the scheme.
 - b). To ensure that at least 95% of identified licensable HMOs are licenced at the conclusion of the five-year scheme.
 - d). To take appropriate enforcement action in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time in at least 95% of cases, in relation to properties that have been formally identified as a licensable HMO and fail to apply for an additional licence within 3 months of first contact.
2. Monitor and ensure compliance with licence conditions:
 - a). To inspect 100% of HMOs prior to determining a licence application (subject to covid or other public health restrictions).
 - b). To carry out works compliance checks of 95% of licenced HMOs (where access is provided) by email or by physical inspection if risk is considered high, within three months of expiry of any major conditions.
3. Monitor improvement of property conditions and management standards in HMOs:
 - a). Take appropriate enforcement action to reduce category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing Act 2004 by at least 95% through a combination of informal and formal actions, in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
 - b). Take appropriate enforcement action to reduce overcrowding in at least 95% of HMOs identified as being overcrowded, through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.

- c). To ensure that at least 70% of major conditions are complied with following compliance checks, or through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.

The analysis of anti-social behaviour (ASB) for the full consultation business case estimated 15.3% or 574 HMOs have had ASB related incidents directly associated with the property, with a total of 1,921 cases of ASB recorded at, or in the close vicinity around 51% of HMOs in the last 5 years.

4. Monitor and take appropriate action to reduce the incidence of ASB in licensed HMOs:

- a). To take appropriate action to reduce repeat ASB incidents in licenced HMOs by at least 70% over the life of the scheme through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
- b). To reduce the number of cases of ASB directly associated with licenced HMOs or in the close vicinity around HMOs from the baseline by x% over the five-years of the scheme.

Selective licensing

The analysis of various available data sources for the full consultation business case estimated there were approximately 5,050 properties within the scope of selective licensing in the proposed wards. (Although some will fall within the regeneration areas excluded from the scheme).

1. Monitor licensing compliance against the predicted number of licensable properties:
 - a) To investigate all 5,050 properties identified in the baseline and any further properties subsequently identified over the five-year period of the scheme.
 - b) Covid or other public health issue permitting, 100% of properties determined to be high risk to be inspected prior to issuing the Selective Licence.
 - c) To ensure that at least 95% of identified properties are licenced or appropriate enforcement action has been taken, at the conclusion of the five-year scheme. (Based upon the baseline data, this is estimated to be 5,050 properties).
 - d) To take appropriate enforcement action in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time, in at least 95% of cases, in relation to properties that have been formally identified as a licensable and fail to apply for a licence within 3 months of first contact.
2. Monitor and ensure compliance with licence conditions:

- a) To inspect 100% of premises issued with a selective licence where they are risk assessed as high risk, based upon licence application information, complaints or other intelligence.
 - b) To carry out works compliance check of 95% of licenced premises (where access is provided) by email or by physical inspection if risk is considered high, within six months of expiry of any major conditions.
7. Monitor improvement of property conditions and management standards in SFOs:
- a) Take appropriate enforcement action to reduce category 1 hazards in licensed premises as defined by the Housing Act 2004 by at least 95% through a combination of informal and formal actions, in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
 - b). Take appropriate enforcement action to reduce overcrowding in at least 90% of properties identified as being overcrowded, through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
 - c). To ensure that at least 70% of major conditions are complied with following compliance checks, or through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
 - d). Improve the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating to E or above in 95% of licenced SFOs through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time, including action under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) by the end of the five-year period of the scheme.

The analysis of anti-social behaviour (ASB) for the full consultation business case provides an estimate that in the approximate area of the nine wards proposed for selective licensing, 6,568 or 15.5% of SFOs have had ASB related incidents directly associated with the property, in the last 5 years.

8. Monitor and reduce the incidence of ASB in or associated with SFOs:

- a) To take enforcement action to reduce repeat ASB incidents in licenced SFOs by at least 70% over the life of the scheme in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
- b) To reduce the number of cases of ASB directly associated with SFOs or in the close vicinity around SFOs from the baseline by x% over the five-years of the scheme.

9. Contribute to the reduction in the deprivation in the wards of Burnt Oak, Colindale North and Colindale South:

- a) To achieve a reduction in the overall rank in the Index of Multiple Deprivation as published closest to the end of the five-year scheme.

Selective and Additional Licensing

10. Improve the professionalism of landlords by providing appropriate support, information and training:
 - a) Arrange 1 landlords forum per annum and ensure they are appropriately promoted
 - b) Produce an annual newsletter for landlords, managing and letting agents
 - c) Provide ongoing support to landlords to assist them in understanding and complying with the property licensing schemes.
 - d) To promote membership of Atlas to landlords (the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme)
 - e) Provide a weekly drop in for landlords to review their application or discuss any other relevant issues.

Service Standards

General Service Standards

1. Deal with phone calls immediately or, where this is not possible call you back within one working day or at a agreed time.
2. Acknowledge your letter/email within three working days and a full response within xx wording days
3. Staff will carry identity badges at all times.
4. All staff will be trained in relation to Diversity and Inclusion

Additional Licensing

1. Contact licence applicants within 15 working days where applications are incomplete
2. Respond within 10 working days of any representations submitted following the issuing of the Notice of Intention to issue a licence
2. Licences will be issued or refused within 90 days of a complete application

Selective Licensing

Reporting

1. The above targets shall be monitored regularly as part of the departmental performance monitoring processes
2. Performance against the above targets shall be reported to the relevant committee (currently the Housing & Growth Committee) annually.

3. The fees will be reviewed annually (commencing in October for introduction in the following April) and submitted to the relevant committees for approval, to ensure that the fees cover the necessary costs for scheme implementation.
4. Any corrective actions required to address underachievement of targets that may require additional resources will be factored into the review of licence fees to ensure that the schemes remain cost neutral to the council.

Resources

Need Belinda's input