

London Borough of Barnet Selective Licensing – Phase 2

Licensing Scheme Objectives, Targets, and Reporting Timetable

Introduction

It is the intention of Barnet Council that the use of Selective Licensing will bring about an improvement to property conditions and management in the private rented sector (PRS).

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 scheme.

Besides monitoring, a critical element to achieving our objectives and targets, is to ensure that the scheme is 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

Having carried out a review of housing conditions under section 3(1) of the 2004 Act, the council considers it would be appropriate for a significant number of privately rented properties in the ten wards of Childs Hill, Cricklewood, Edgware, Edgwarebury, Finchley Church End, Golders Green, Hendon, Mill Hill, West Finchley, West Hendon to be inspected, with a view to determining whether any category 1 or category 2 hazards exist on the premises.

The council intends to carry out such inspections, with a view to carrying out any necessary enforcement action.

Combined with other measures taken in the area by the council or partners together with the council, including application of licence conditions imposed under section 90 of the 2004 Act, this scheme will contribute to an improvement in general housing conditions in the area.

It is intended that the introduction of selective licensing will:

- Improve private rented sector housing conditions
- Contribute to an improvement in the health outcomes of residents in the 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)
- Contribute to tackling anti-social behaviour and crime 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 scheme. 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 and the subsequent Census 2021 released data.

The Census 2021 tenure data estimated there were approximately 25,250 properties in Barnet, whilst the private sector analysis conducted for the consultation identified a potential 22,295 privately rented properties within the scope of selective licensing in the proposed wards.

1. Monitor licensing compliance against the predicted number of licensable properties:
 - a) To investigate all 22,295 properties identified 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 properties are licenced, or appropriate investigations or enforcement action is being taken, at the conclusion of the five-year scheme. (Based upon the baseline data, this is estimated to be 21,180 properties).
 - c) 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 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* to ensure that all conditions are being met and the property is free from category 1 hazards under the Housing Act 2004.
 - b) To monitor lower risk premises annually on a 25% sampling basis and ensure compliance with licence conditions involving the submission of documentation and safety certification in.

**Assessment of high risk is based upon licence application information, complaints or other intelligence.*

3. Ensure improvement of property conditions and management standards:

Appendix G

- a). Carry out an HHSRS inspection of 70% of licensed premises during the lifetime of the licence.
- b). Take appropriate enforcement action to reduce category 1 hazards in licensed premises as defined by the Housing Act 2004, through a combination of informal and formal actions, in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
- c). Take appropriate enforcement action to reduce overcrowding where a category 1 hazard is found through a combination of informal and formal actions in accordance with the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy in place at the time.
4. Improve the professionalism of landlords by providing appropriate support, information and training:
 - a). Arrange 1 landlord event per annum and ensure they are appropriately promoted
 - b). Produce an annual newsletter for landlords, managing agents 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 the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme to landlords.

Service Standards

General Service Standards

5. Deal with phone calls immediately or, where this is not possible call you back within one working day or at an agreed time.
6. Acknowledge your letter/email within three working days and a full response within ten working days
7. Staff will carry identity badges at all times and produce them on request
8. All staff will be trained in relation to Diversity and Inclusion

Selective Licensing Processing

9. Contact licence applicants within 28 working days where applications are incomplete
10. Respond within 20 working days of any representations submitted following the issuing of the Notice of Intention to issue a licence
11. Issue the licence within 10 working days of the expiry of the Notice of Intention to issue a licence where no comments are received
12. Licences will be issued or refused within 90 days of a complete application subject to payment of the second fee.

Reporting

13. The above targets shall be monitored regularly as part of the departmental performance monitoring processes.
14. Performance against the above targets shall be reported to the relevant committee (currently Cabinet) annually.
15. Targets to be first reviewed after 6 months and annually to ensure that they remain realistic and appropriate given the objectives and operation of the scheme.
16. The fees will be reviewed annually (commencing in October for introduction in the following January/April in line with the Council's agreed finance policy) and submitted to the relevant committees for approval, to ensure that the fees cover the necessary costs for scheme implementation.
17. 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.