

To: Housing and Homelessness panel
Date: 07 March 2024
Report of: Head of Planning & Regulatory Services
Title of Report: Selective Licensing Implementation

| Summary and recommendations | |
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| Purpose of report: | To provide a report on the year 1 actions of the Selective Licensing scheme |
| Key decision: | No |
| Cabinet Member with responsibility: | Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing |
| Corporate Priority: | Deliver More Affordable Housing |
| Policy Framework: | Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 -2028 |
| Recommendation(s): That the Panel resolves to: | |
| 1. Note and comment on the report and agree any recommendations. | |

| Appendices | |
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| Appendix 1 | Year 1 Review Report |

Introduction and background

1. The city-wide Selective Licensing scheme was introduced on 01 September 2022. The scheme required Central Government approval which the Council received in April 2022. The scheme means that all privately rented homes in the city require a licence to operate; this is in addition to the HMO licensing scheme which continues to operate.
2. The scheme was introduced to tackle poor conditions in the non-HMO stock, and for the first time a proactive inspection programme of such properties can be developed.
3. A review of year 1 of the scheme is attached in Appendix 1; this outlines in more detail the outcomes to date.

Implementation of the scheme

4. The Council had a short amount of time to implement the scheme, during this time the following had to be undertaken:
 - a. Statutory publication in local newspapers over a 3-month period at specified intervals and on Council noticeboards
 - b. Procurement and implementation of an application system, to be operational on the start date
 - c. Recruitment of Application Officers and formation of a new team
 - d. Recruitment of Enforcement Officers
 - e. Provision of information to landlords
 - f. Training of applications officers to receive applications from the start of the scheme.
5. A Project Board was introduced which monitored the progress of the implementation and the 1st year of the scheme. This involved relevant services within the Council who worked together to ensure the tight deadlines of implementation were met.

Financial implications

6. The scheme is self-funding, with any income received from licensing fees funding the operation and enforcement of the scheme.
7. The initial business case, which was developed following an extensive consultation exercise, estimated that there would be 7,200 applications within the first year of the scheme. There were 10,896.
8. However, as processing has progressed those applications receiving an early bird discount was 44.4% in year 1 compared to a predicted 35%; those applications receiving an accredited discount was 43.4% as opposed to a predicted 40%; and those applications not receiving discounts was 10.4% compared to a predicted 25%. This resulted in the Fees being reviewed and increased in year 2.

Legal issues

9. The scheme had to be confirmed by the Government before it was implemented in the City and therefore all legal issues relating to Selective Licensing were outlined in the previous Cabinet reports of [March 2021](#) and [September 2020](#). However, Law and Governance continue to support the work by providing advice when required on issues arising.

Level of risk

10. The original Risk Register for the Cabinet report identified a number of risks concerning the introduction of the scheme including the risk of a judicial review and the inability to introduce the scheme due to the submission being rejected. The Selective Licensing Board identified the risk of being unable to recruit qualified and experienced officers to be able to carry out the inspections and enforcement work. The teams continue to work with the People Team to mitigate this risk.

Equalities impact

11. The introduction of Selective Licensing was introduced to improve the private rented sector in the City and was considered a benefit to occupiers of private rented homes and other residents. This report does not raise any further equalities issues.

Conclusion

12. Further review reports outlining progress and outcomes will be produced as the scheme progresses. These reports will be published on the Council's website.

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Background Papers: None

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