

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting12th July 2018

1. Title of Item/Report

Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation.

Approval had been granted to implement an area based, targeted intervention approach which would provide a visible, neighbourhood management presence to some of the more vulnerable local communities, specifically those areas which tend to experience high levels of low value private rented accommodation (the central Stockton area and the Victoria area in Thornaby). As part of this proposal Cabinet granted approval (November 2017) to explore Selective Licensing as a tool to address low housing demand and tackle irresponsible landlords.

Following a detailed assessment of selective licensing, approval was sought to undertake formal consultation on the proposed implementation of a Selective Licensing designation. Selective Licensing would provide an additional 'tool' which would work alongside other existing activities undertaken by the Council to provide a period of 'intensive care' for areas of the Borough (specifically 'Central Stockton' and 'North Thornaby'). It was proposed that Selective Licensing was required within each of the two proposed locations on the basis that the areas were, or are likely to become areas of low housing demand, had high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and were experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The proposal was further underpinned by evidence that these areas also experience significant and persistent anti-social behaviour and levels of crime. The Council would charge a fee to cover the cost of operating a Selective Licensing scheme, this would be a ring-fenced account solely in connection with the scheme. As the Council sought to support responsible landlords, it was proposed to offer a £100 per property discount for landlords who were members of the Council's Voluntary Accreditation Scheme and/or those who were members of nationally recognised landlords associations.

With regard to the next steps, should Cabinet support 'in principle' the Selective Licensing proposal then a period of detailed consultation would commence and following this a further report would be presented back to Cabinet. Members were asked to note that running in parallel with the 10-week selective licensing consultation, work would also be ongoing on the wider Targeted Action Area project which was aimed at supporting the broader central Stockton and Victoria area in Thornaby.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The evidence base to support the introduction of Selective Licensing designation of private rented accommodation within two distinct areas of the Borough, Central Stockton and North Thornaby be noted (as detailed in the attached Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal and supporting appendices and paragraphs 11-12 of the report).
2. Approval 'in principle' be granted to pursue a scheme of Selective Licensing in both Central Stockton and North Thornaby as detailed within the attached Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal Report.
3. Subject to the above, Officers commence a detailed programme of public consultation to ensure that the Council takes "reasonable steps to consult with persons who are likely to be affected by the designation" as required Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 Section 80 (9) and in accordance with relevant Government guidance.
4. A further report be presented back to Cabinet following the conclusion of the above public consultation exercise. The report will inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation and allow Cabinet to decide whether to make a Selective Licensing designation (covering Central Stockton and North Thornaby).

3. Reasons for the Decision

The Council will actively use selective licensing as a tool (working alongside a range of existing other measures) to address low housing demand with the aim of achieving a more balanced housing market in areas of Central Stockton (which crosses the Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield and Oxbridge wards) and North Thornaby (in the Mandale and Victoria ward).

The proposed Selective Licensing designation has been determined following a comprehensive evidence based assessment (undertaken in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government

guidance). Following the conclusion of this assessment Officers are satisfied that the relevant statutory tests have been met and that the selective licensing of private rented housing within the proposed designation areas would be an appropriate tool to address the problems identified.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/a

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 20 July 2018.

Proper Officer
16 July 2018