

Cabinet Decision:

Thursday 16 May 2024

Title of Item/Report

Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation

Record of the Decision

1. Title of Item/Report

Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation

2. Record of the Decision

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

A report was presented to Cabinet in October 2023, which sought approval to commence consultation on the proposed implementation of Selective Licensing in 3 areas of the borough Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. This decision was informed by an evidence based assessment (Appendix 1 of the report 'Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal' and Appendix 2 of the report the 'Supporting Evidence Base') informed by relevant Government Guidance (DLUHC Selective Licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities' updated June 2023). At this meeting, Cabinet granted approval 'in principle' to pursue a Selective Licensing scheme in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown and for a programme of public consultation to be undertaken.

This report detailed the consultation process undertaken, the responses received, and the considerations given to the views/representations received.

With regard to consultation in total 231 completed questionnaires were received, 12 email responses and 3 written replies from organisations representing landlord groups (the P LuSS, National Residential Landlords Association and safeagent). Appendix 3 of the report 'Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report' provided a detailed breakdown of responses on a question-by-question basis (broken down by respondent group). The open questionnaire responses, the 12 email responses and the NRLA, P LuSS and safeagent replies were also analysed and were reported separately as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report, which also details the Council's considerations and response/s to the comments received.

With regard to the next steps, should Cabinet agree to proceed with Selective Licensing this would trigger a formal notification by way of a designation notice, which

must be followed by a period of at least 3 months before any scheme can come into effect. Following the issue of the designation notice Cabinet were asked to delegate authority to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration to set a date for license applications to be invited and processed. Once effective, the scheme would be in place for a period of 5 years, subject to periodic reviews.

To deliver Selective Licensing it was important that appropriate and suitably qualified staff were appointed. Phased recruitment would commence once a final Cabinet decision had been made, phased recruitment would allow the team to 'flex' depending on the number of Selective Licensing applications received.

Large detailed maps of the designated areas were available to view by Members at the meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

1. It be noted that the consultation programme undertaken with the aim of ensuring that the Council took "reasonable steps to consult with person who are likely to be affected by the designation" as required by Section 80(9) of the Housing Act 2004, and in accordance with Government guidance. The consultation process undertaken is detailed in the 'Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report' Appendix 3 chapter 2 of the report).
2. It be noted that the outcome of the consultation process as detailed in Appendix 3 'Consultation Findings Report' and the Council's considerations of these representations Appendix 4 of the report 'Summary of representations made to the consultation and the Council's considerations and responses'.
3. The Selective Licensing Proposal Paper (Appendix 1 of the report) and the Supporting Evidence Base (Appendix 2 of the report) met the legal requirements for introducing Selective Licensing designations (as detailed in paragraphs 4 to 6 of the report).
4. Subject to approval of recommendations 1, 2 and 3 the designation of Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown be authorised, as delineated in the attached red line maps (Appendix 5a, 5b and 5c of the report, with supporting street listings), for Selective Licensing to last for 5 years from the date of the designations coming into force.

5. It be noted that there are no changes proposed to the Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown areas as previously considered by Cabinet on the 12 October 2023 (red line maps Appendix 5a, 5b, 5c of the report).

6. It be noted that changes are proposed to the License Conditions previously considered by Cabinet (12 October 2023) and the proposed License Conditions attached at Appendix 6 of the report be approved.

7. The final fee structure and discounts as detailed in paragraph 16 - 19 of the report be approved.

8. Authority to issue the required statutory notifications in relation to Selective Licensing Designation be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration.

9. It be noted that upon approval the scheme will be publicised via an agreed communications plan and in accordance with the Regulations before the designations come into force.

10. Subject to the issue of statutory notifications, the Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration be authorised to decide the date from which the Council will begin to accept applications for Selective Licensing.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The private rented sector has seen rapid growth over recent years and as per the 2011 census now accounts for 17% of the borough's housing stock and is a significant tenure in the 3 areas proposed for Selective Licensing (50% in Central Stockton, 41% in North Thornaby and 45% in Newtown). Whilst the Council recognises that private rented housing provides a valuable housing offer in terms of meeting housing need and providing choice it can also bring a challenge. Some of these properties are poorly managed and in areas of low housing demand and/or higher-than average levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Selective Licensing is an additional tool which the Council will use, working alongside a range of other existing measures to improve property condition standards and the management of private rented housing in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. As noted above the proposed Selective Licensing designated areas have been identified following a evidence-based assessment,

which was carefully undertaken in accordance with Government Guidance.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

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

Midnight Friday 24 May 2024

Proper Officer

Reasons for the Decision See Above

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected None

Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest None

Details of any Dispensations None

Date and Time by which Call In must be executed Midnight on Friday 24 May 2024

Date of Publication: Monday 20 May 2024