

Contact: Mrs A Reed

Tel No: 0191 433 2956

Date: 9th January 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

Housing Act 2004 –Selective Licensing of Private Landlords Central Gateshead
CONSULTATION RESULTS ON PROPOSED LANDLORD LICENSING SCHEME

You will have recently received correspondence advising you that the Council was considering ways in which to improve your area. One approach in doing this was to look at proposals to introduce a Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme within parts of Central Gateshead within the next 6 months.

The Private Sector Housing Team has been engaging and consulting with landlords, tenants, residents and appropriate stakeholders in the area to discuss any issues that may be of concern and to obtain the views of interested parties.

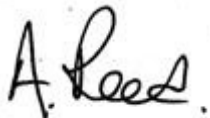
A number of consultation events have been held and questionnaires were distributed to all households and local businesses in the designated area and neighbouring properties, as well as to landlords and agents with an interest in properties in the area. The questionnaire was also available to complete on the Gateshead Council website and via a link through the Gateshead Private Landlord Association website.

The results of the consultation have been collated and the majority of people who responded are in favour of the proposals for the introduction of a Private Landlord Licensing Scheme. All representations which have been made, are being considered and some of the key findings are attached to this letter. All comments will be considered in full when the Council's Cabinet makes it's decision on the proposed designation. A full detailed report indicating the findings is available for your information on Gateshead Council website www.gateshead.gov.uk and via a link through the Gateshead Private Landlord Association website www.renting-in-gateshead.co.uk.

A full report will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet early in the New Year for consideration of the proposal for the area to be designated as a selective landlord licensing area. Should this be approved, the scheme will be publicised in advance of the commencement date, with a view to commencement in Spring 2012.

If you have any queries or would like any further information please contact Rachel Crosby tel: 0191 433 2793 or Mandy Reed tel:0191 433 2956 or at the address given below.

Yours faithfully



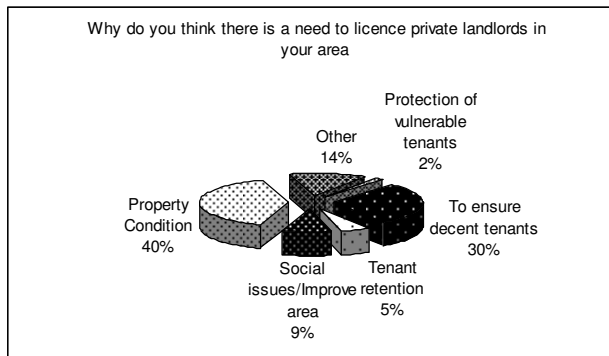
Mrs A Reed
Senior Environmental Health Officer
Private Sector Housing

KEY RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

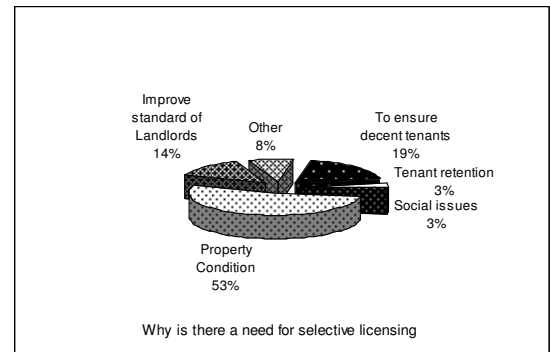
Over 900 questionnaires were delivered to households and local businesses in the proposed designation area and neighbouring properties, and a further 366 were sent to landlords and agents with an interest in properties in the area. In total 157 responses were received, 58 from landlords or agents, 99 from local residents, including 37 from private tenants, 49 from owner occupiers, 2 from Gateshead Housing Company tenants and 11 from Housing Association tenants.

The majority of people (62%) who completed the questionnaire agreed there was a need for landlord licensing in the area (64% of residents and 60% of landlords).

Residents

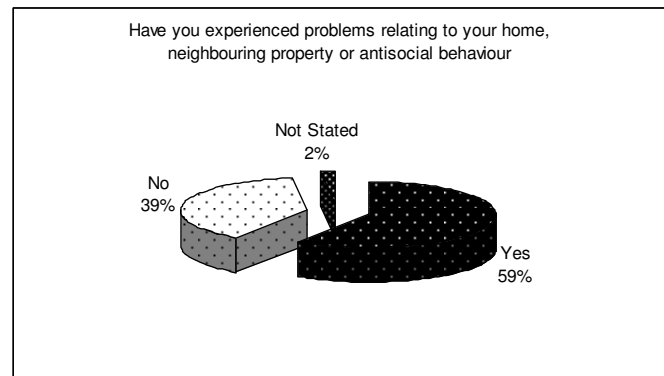


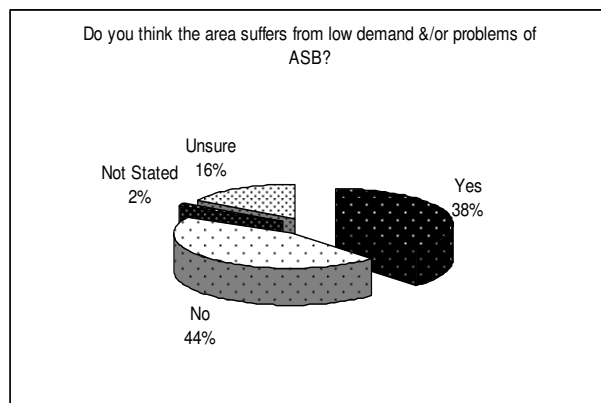
Landlords



Of those who responded to “why there is a need for selective licensing in the area”, a variety of reasons were given. The main reasons given by both residents and landlords were to improve property conditions and to ensure decent tenants.

A significant majority of **residents** (59%) indicated they had experienced problems related to their home, a neighbouring property and/or anti social behaviour. Of the **residents** who had experienced problems the main reason cited was anti social behaviour followed by problems related to drugs and alcohol.





When questioned whether the area suffers from low housing demand and/or significant problems with anti social behaviour 38% of **landlords** indicated that it did.

Of the **Landlords** who have been personally affected by problems the biggest issues related to anti social behaviour, property conditions and tenant problems with no landlord intervention.

The landlords were asked if they anticipated any problems in meeting the requirements to provide basic information to comply with the scheme. Only 14% of landlords commented that they envisaged problems in complying with this.

Respondents were asked if they thought it would be reasonable to exclude owners or agents from holding a licence where they did not meet basic minimum criteria. 88% of residents and 78% of landlords', who responded to this question, agreed that it would be reasonable to exclude owners or agents if the proposed criteria were not met.

Some of the comments made included:

- *All landlords should be licensed no one should be exempt. This would ensure they accepted their responsibility to the tenants.*
- *As I have lived in the area for a considerable time I have seen many changes, I am looking forward to all the proposed work to enhance the area being completed. I couldn't imagine living anywhere else to be honest*
- *If you cannot maintain minimum standards they should not be landlords and pass the reins onto someone who can maintain the property*
- *This area has suffered greatly due to some landlords just trying to make money and not caring about who they are housing.*
- *I think anyone renting out property should be licensed.*
- *Due to the low prices, this causes a high turnover of tenants who do not have any respect for the property/area.*
- *My main concern is only certain people whether providing good or bad properties and service, have to obtain a licence based solely on location. I do not believe it is fair for this to be imposed on only part of the rental market. This should be imposed on all rental properties in the area controlled by Gateshead council*
- *Gateshead Council has done much to improve area*
- *One assumes that the appropriate qualifications and training apply only to Agents where instructed although this is not an obstacle. GPLA's efforts over the years to educate the Landlords with Forums etc have been excellent.*
- *I don't live in the area. I applaud the work done by the Council and by GPLA. I particularly am impressed with the Improvement Schemes and support given to landlords and the co-operation which I have had from the Council*
- *As an agent (not a landlord) I agree that standards should be set. However, the authority should be realistic as to the area, type of tenant and also the obvious social issues such as poverty, unemployment and crime rates.*
- *Do you anticipate any problems?*

- *NO - whole heartedly support a scheme as long as it is not another stealth tax or another way of targeting decent landlords.*
- *NO - would welcome the criterion - provided costs were not unreasonable.*
- *No as property is managed to a good standard already, with all safety inspections carried out as standard practice.*
- *Do you think there is a need to introduce licensing?*
 - *YES - Improve area. Ensure landlords or agents maintain properties.*
 - *YES as long as you support landlords living outside the area- difficult to attend training etc. The area should improve, which will lead to a better living experience for tenants, and good returns for landlords*
 - *NO most problems from tenants, and this need to change. Any landlord would like to keep his place nice as long as tenant does the same.*