

Contact: Mandy Reed

Tel No: 0191 433 2956

Date: 9th January 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Housing Act 2004 –Selective Licensing of Private Landlords Swalwell
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 Swalwell in 2013 .

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.

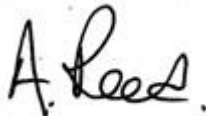
A number of consultation events have been held and questionnaires were distributed to all households and local businesses in the designated area and neighbouring properties, as well as to landlords and agents with an interest in properties in the area. The questionnaire was also available to complete 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, have been 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 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 2013.

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



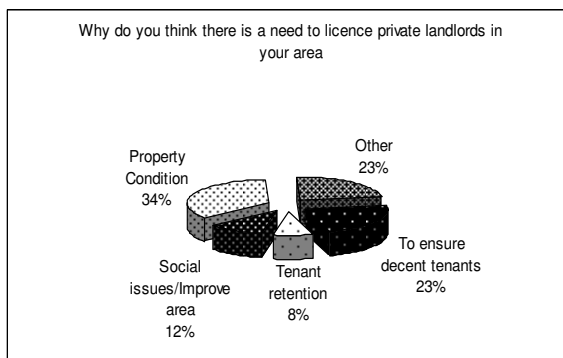
Mrs A Reed
Senior Environmental Health Officer
Private Sector Housing

KEY FINDINGS OF CONSULTATION

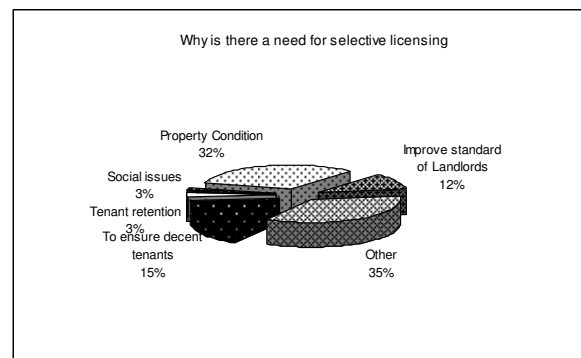
Over 500 questionnaires were delivered to households and local businesses in the proposed designation area and neighbouring properties, and a further 213 were sent to landlords and agents with an interest in properties in the area. In total 96 responses were received, 43 from landlords or agents, 53 from local residents, including 14 from private tenants, 25 from owner occupiers, 5 from Gateshead Housing company tenants and 8 from Housing Association tenants.

The majority of people (58%) who completed the questionnaire agreed there was a need for landlord licensing in the area (66% of residents and 49% of landlords).

Residents



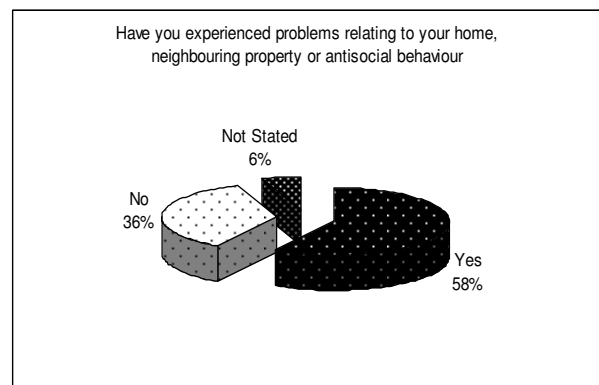
Landlords

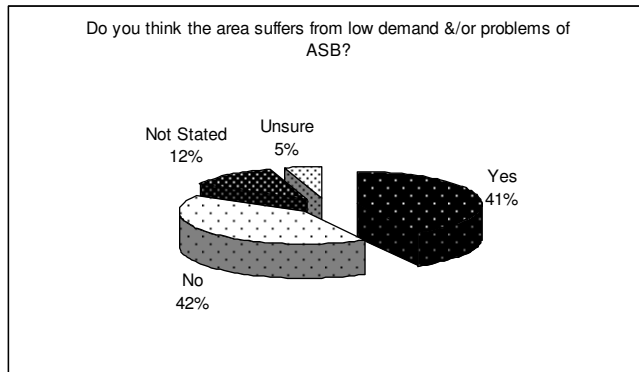


Of those who responded to “why there is a need for selective licensing in the area”, a variety of reasons were given. The main reasons given by both residents and landlords were to improve property conditions and to ensure decent tenants.

A significant majority of **residents** (58%) 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 noise followed by problems related to anti social behaviour.





When questioned whether the area suffers from low housing demand and/or significant problems with anti social behaviour, 41% of **landlords** indicated that it did.

Of the **landlords** who have been personally affected by problems. The biggest issues related to anti social behaviour 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 19% 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. 81% of residents and 77% of landlords who responded to this question agreed that it would be reasonable to exclude owners or agents if the proposed criteria was not met.

Some of the comments made included:

- *The SLL scheme should partly help to address all of the many problems that exist.*
- *I believe there is a need for some kind of SLL. If this means it will control the aesthetic fabric of Swalwell. If this can eliminate the detrimental social issues too, then so much the better.*
- *Because too many landlords are letting their flats or houses to anybody.*
- *I am very pleased that Gateshead council are acting upon what is a very real problem in this area.... I hope that this proposal for selective licensing of landlords does happen that it will give a direction and solution for homeowners that have problem tenants amongst them.*
- *Not all landlords are rogues and not all tenants are angels. Do you propose introducing a scheme whereby landlords get help with choosing responsible tenants who will take reasonable care of the property.*
- *My landlord is great but a lot just want their rent and aren't bothered about living conditions*
- *I haven't been affected but the houses in my street are constantly being up for let, people move in and out so quick.*
- Do you anticipate any problems?
 - *No. All landlords should be responsible for keeping properties well maintained and habitable.*
 - *Don't feel that I need qualification or training. I Also have a full time jobs and family commitments.*
 - *No. But I would not welcome the prospect....I do not think it is fair to have to provide additional personal information and expense, when there has never been any issues or complaints about me as a landlord.*
 - *No. As long as it doesn't demand too much time as someone like myself might decide to sell rather than rent if it came bureaucratic.*

- *Unless minimum standards are enforced rather than "information provided" nothing will change.*
- *Do you think there is a need to introduce licensing?*
 - *NO - It is going to cost us a lot of money, time and work. Council should be using existing powers to improve area*
 - *YES-It will benefit both parties; the landlord hopefully will see a better quality tenant and the tenant will have greater reassurance both in quality of home and support given.*
 - *NO. With very little tenant movement in the flats I own/manage I see no reason to change the system.*
 - *YES-Licensing may lead to an agreement in which landlords will have to maintain their properties to a particular standard and fix problems within a limited time frame*
 - *NO. If these are problem landlords they should be dealt with individually. Landlords who look after properties and tenants should not have additional charges to be licensed or good landlords will move out of the area.*
 - *YES - As a professional landlord I feel it important that certain standards are met with regards to renting out of properties.*
 - *YES. The benefits outlined seem worth while.*
 - *YES-I have heard from my tenant that some of the landlords in the area are reluctant to do repairs or improve their property. This in turn creates a run-down or neglected environment where no-one wants to live.*
 - *Yes. So any poor landlords can be identified and dealt with for everyone's benefit. The whole area will be more attractive place to live.*
 - *Yes. Would appear to benefit both parties and achieve the main aim of the scheme, Mainly increase stability through a reduction of turnover of tenants and landlords.*