

Appendix 8 (a)

Notice of	EXECUTIVE
Decision Number:	EX1/2018
Relevant Officer:	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mrs Christine Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing
Date of Meeting:	15 January 2018

EVALUATION OF SELECTIVE LICENSING IN THE SOUTH BEACH AREA

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 This report updates the Executive on the Selective Licensing scheme in the South Beach area which ran from March 2012 - March 2017. It sets out a review of the impact of selective licensing in South Beach, and looks at what the scheme has achieved for the area.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the review of the operation of the South Beach Selective Licensing Scheme.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Selective Licensing is a key component of the Council's approach to address issues commonly occurring as a result of poor quality privately rented accommodation; it can improve management, reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour arising from privately rented homes and help improve the quality of life for local residents. An evaluation ensures that future policy is based on evidence and best practice.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None, evaluation of the scheme is essential to ensure the Council's future actions are in line with best practice.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

“Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 A Selective Licensing scheme ran in the South Beach area from March 2012 - March 2017. The scheme was adopted because in 2012 the area had high levels of anti-social behavior associated with private rented property in the area and it was believed that the introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme along with other measures would improve management of privately rented properties and thereby lead to an improvement in the social conditions in the area. Selective Licensing requires that private landlords obtain a licence and comply with licence conditions for each property that they let within the designated area.

5.2 Selective Licensing was intended to be one of part of a wider series of measures to promote improvements in the management of private rented properties, increasing standards across the sector. This approach included supporting existing residents and establishing a stronger community, and a better residential offer for the area.

5.3 Full findings from the South Beach scheme are detailed in this report at Appendix 2a.

5.4 Key Findings

5.5 Selective Licensing powers have enabled local authority enforcement officers to gain access to nearly all of the private rented properties in the area through a comprehensive inspection programme to check compliance with licensing conditions. Without licensing, local authorities can only require landlords to provide access to their properties where there is reason to believe that the property standards are in breach of Housing Health and Safety Rating System requirements, usually following complaints.

5.6 The inspection programme has led to thousands of property condition issues being identified and addressed. In South Beach 85 enforcement notices and 737 schedules of work were issued during the licensing programme period. The large majority of these would not have been picked up and addressed without licensing.

5.7 The statutory ground for introducing the scheme in South Beach was high levels of

anti-social behaviour linked to privately rented properties. The dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Officer has worked with landlords and residents to help resolve complaints of anti-social behaviour in the licensing area. This officer has encouraged safe reporting of anti-social behaviour, encouraging tenants and landlords to acknowledge their responsibilities and make a real difference in improving the South Beach community. From the introduction of licensing in South Beach to the end of the programme, anti-social behaviour levels have fluctuated, but there has been an overall trend of a small rise in anti-social behaviour reports linked to private rented properties from the start of the programme in 2012/13 before a reduction by the end of the 5 year period.

5.8 As well as enabling compliance with licence conditions to be checked, support has been offered to vulnerable tenants through the Transience Programme, and the Police and Fire Service have also been able to identify and respond to issues that would not otherwise have been identified. Across the area nearly half of all the residents met through the multi-agency inspection programme have received some form of intervention, including access to a GP or a dentist, support for improved mental or physical health, social isolation, or employment or volunteering opportunities.

5.9 Next Steps

5.10 Additional funding from the Transience Programme has secured the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer to remain based in the South Beach area until September 2018, when that funding programme runs out. This resource continues to respond to residents and landlords in resolving incidents of anti-social behaviour.

5.11 The need for a further licensing scheme in South Beach has been kept under review in anticipation of an extension of the scope of HMO Mandatory Licensing by Central Government following consultation in December 2016. The Department for Communities and Local Government published their response to consultation in late December 2017, confirming a small extension to the scope of the scheme. Work will now be carried out to understand what this means for South Beach, and then ascertain what further action and resource is still required in this area to ensure that progress is maintained and that residents feel safe, secure and supported in their communities.

5.13 Is the Corporate Delivery Unit aware of this report? Yes

The Corporate Delivery Unit has been central in the evaluation of the Selective Licensing scheme. The Unit assisted in the delivery of the evaluation.

5.14 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.15 List of Appendices:

Appendix 8 (b): Selective Licensing Evaluation for South Beach

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 There is a continued presence in South Beach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Officer and a dedicated Housing Enforcement Officer.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed on the original proposal to meet the requirements of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The assessment found that the selective licensing proposal would not adversely affect people with any of the key protected characteristics.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 Funding for the continuing dedicated roles in South Beach will end in September 2018.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The principal risk is that progress made in South Beach will be lost over time if property conditions deteriorate or there is a resurgence in anti-social behaviour linked to poor property management. Conditions in the area will continue to be monitored and the need for further licensing reviewed.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

14.0 Key decision information:

- 14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes
- 14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 3/2017
- 14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

- 15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No
- 15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 5 January 2018 Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1 None.

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1 The Executive agreed the recommendation as outlined above namely:

To note the review of the operation of the South Beach Selective Licensing Scheme.

18.2 Date of Decision:

15 January 2018

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

Selective Licensing is a key component of the Council's approach to address issues commonly occurring as a result of poor quality privately rented accommodation; it can improve management, reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour arising from privately rented homes and help improve the quality of life for local residents. An evaluation ensures that future policy is based on evidence and best practice.

19.1 Date Decision published:

16 January 2018

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1 Councillor Blackburn, in the Chair

Councillors Benson, Campbell, Cross, Jackson, Kirkland, Smith, I Taylor and Mrs Wright

(Apologies were received from Councillor Cain who elsewhere on official Council business.)

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1 The following non-Executive member was in attendance: Councillor L Taylor.