



Licensing and Regulatory Committee	Thursday, 18 September 2025	Matter for Information
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Report Title: **Review of Selective Licensing Scheme (2020-2025)**

Report Author(s): **Ben Clark-Monks (Selective Licensing Team Leader)**

Purpose of Report:	To provide Members with information regarding the outcomes, successes and challenges faced by the Selective Licensing Scheme (2020-2025), hereafter referenced as 'the Scheme'.
Report Summary:	The report details the outcomes, successes and challenges of the Scheme within the South Wigston Ward and provides Members with comparative evidence.
Recommendation(s):	That the content of the report be noted and recommended for final approval by Full Council.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	<p>Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer) (0116) 257 2759 colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Jon Wells (Senior Strategic Development Manager) (0116) 257 2692 jon.wells@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Ben Clark-Monks (Selective Licensing Team Leader) (0116) 257 2883 ben.clark-monks@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Strategic Objectives:	<p>Our Council (SO1)</p> <p>Our Communities (SO2)</p> <p>Our Economy (SO3)</p>
Vision and Values:	<p>"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision)</p> <p>Customer & Community Focused (V1)</p> <p>Proud of Everything We Do (V2)</p> <p>Resourceful & Resilient (V4)</p>
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out at paragraph 2.5 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	<p>Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1)</p> <p>Reputation Damage (CR4)</p> <p>Regulatory Governance (CR6)</p> <p>Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)</p>
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of an Area of Selective Licensing (2020-2025) - Public Notice • Proposed Selective Licensing Scheme (2020-2025) to Full Council (Extraordinary) on 04 February 2020
Appendices:	None.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council in the adopted Corporate Plan (2019-2024) under objective 13 under the category of Growing the Borough Economically committed to 'Introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme for all Private Sector Housing Rentals with a view to improving general house conditions across the Borough.'
- 1.2 The challenge of ensuring high quality housing in both the private and social sector has been further brought into focus by the adoption of the Council's updated vision and the establishment of the "Our Communities" strategic objective which supports further proactive action within the Borough to ensure that the Borough is a clean and safe place, improve the health and wellbeing of residents and ensure good quality housing for everyone. This vision provides greater flexibility to officers to target wider housing interventions.
- 1.3 The Council approved the revised Housing Strategy (2019-2024) on the 17 December 2019. The Strategy commits the Council to increasing choice through the continued use of Choice Based Lettings and sees choice and control for tenants and leaseholders as central to a modern and responsive Council owned and managed housing provider. The strategy also states that 'The Council will work with the private rented sector to improve the quality and where possible the quantity of affordable private rented homes'.
- 1.4 Officers from both the Council's Housing and Private Sector Housing team are currently finalising details for an updated housing strategy to further support the Council's vision that is outlined in section 1.2 of this report.
- 1.5 The legislation gives local authorities the power to introduce Selective Licensing of privately rented homes in order to tackle problems in their areas, or any part or parts of their area; those problems are where an area is experiencing poor property conditions, or where there is an influx of migration, a high level of deprivation or high levels of crime, low housing demand or significant anti-social behaviour.
- 1.6 The Scheme started on 5th May 2020 with an initial application deadline of 7th December 2020.

1.7 Upon a review of the available data (which is outlined in section 3 of this report) a designation was designed covering the entire South Wigston Ward due to the following factors:

- Low Housing Demand
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Poor Property Conditions
- Deprivation
- High Levels of Crime

1.8 The map of the designated area is provided below for reference



2. Engagement with the Scheme

2.1 At the designation of the Scheme, it was estimated that there were 885 rented properties within the area, this was established using a combination of Council Tax data and deposit Scheme data. However, upon delivery of the Scheme and engagement with potential

landlords that number decreased to 840 potential properties, some of which were exempted due to being empty or accommodating family members.

- 2.2 Engagement with the Scheme has been positive with a total number of applications being received across the term of the Scheme being 895, this is in excess of the total number of licensable properties within the designated area due to transfers of properties between landlords during the term of the Scheme as licences are not transferable.
- 2.3 There were a total of 788 active licences at the end of the Scheme with 105 applications being withdrawn across the term of the Scheme due to properties no longer being rented or transferring ownership during this period.
- 2.4 At the end of the Scheme there were 13 properties within the designated area that were potentially licensable but were exempt due to being empty and subject to major works, the private sector housing team continue to engage with these property owners and where suitable are exploring the viability of leasing properties to use as temporary accommodation by Housing Options or bringing them back into general use.
- 2.5 The Scheme has generated £669,244.01 of income across its term, with associated operating costs of £512,950.62.

3. Effectiveness of the Scheme

- 3.1 The effectiveness of the Scheme can be monitored by comparing the data provided to justify the approval of the Scheme with the same equivalent data set to evidence any trends or correlation since the introduction of the scheme.
- 3.2 **Low Housing Demand** – Due to the price difference between properties within South Wigston and other surrounding areas, low housing demand was considered as a factor to support the introduction of the scheme, as low prices and increased yields would attract private landlords to purchase in the area, the table below shows the average price for properties in the identified area in 2018/2019 and 2024/2025.

Location/Average Price	2018/2019	2024/2025	Percentage Change
South Wigston	£166,139	£227,545	Increase 36%
Wigston	£206,770	£266,006	Increase 28%
Blaby	£225,562	£280,554	Increase 24%
Oadby	£299,937	£329,277	Increase 9%
Stoneygate	£310,531	£358,985	Increase 15%
Knighton	£300,121	£328,081	Increase 9%

Sold price data for the areas selected shows a substantial increase in the cost of property within the South Wigston area when compared to surrounding areas, whilst the average cost of property within South Wigston is still the lowest out of the areas noted above, it has seen the greatest increase in house prices when comparing the two time periods.

- 3.3 **Anti-Social Behaviour** – In 2018-19 60% respondents in South Wigston to the community safety partnership survey had concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in South Wigston, whereas in 2022-23, 81% of respondents had concerns regarding anti-social behaviour within South Wigston.
- 3.4 **Poor Property Conditions** –
 - 3.4.1 Service Request Data - Borough Wide (BW) South Wigston Ward (SW) – below is the number of service requests received relating to Damp and Mould, Housing

Disrepair and Tenancy Issues for the last 8 calendar years, along with the percentage of cases recorded within the South Wigston ward.

Service Request Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (To Aug)
Damp and Mould (BW)	4	11	10	7	12	16	9	11
Damp and Mould (SW)	2	4	2	2	5	6	4	3
Percentage	50%	36%	20%	28%	41%	37%	44%	27%
Disrepair (BW)	32	39	73	27	41	40	39	14
Disrepair (SW)	10	11	28	8	12	8	7	2
Percentage	31%	28%	38%	29%	29%	20%	17%	14%
Tenancy Issue (BW)	0	3	12	10	12	8	10	11
Tenancy Issue (SW)	0	2	2	2	3	1	4	4
Percentage	0%	66%	16%	20%	25%	12%	40%	36%

Upon reviewing the data there appears to be correlation between the presence of the Scheme and a reduction in disrepair complaints within the South Wigston ward in the later years of the scheme which would correlate with proactive inspections being undertaken.

However, there doesn't appear to be any correlation between the number of damp and mould service requests and tenancy issues connected to the Scheme, which is one factor driving the team leader to explore a targeted damp and mould intervention as part of the new scheme to try and proactively target this specific concern as part of the inspection process. The Team Leader is also working closely with the Housing Options Manager to develop a Borough wide landlord harassment procedure and are working with the Housing Options team to try and salvage tenancies wherever possible, which is likely to lead to an increase in this request type as there is a greater focus placed on it.

- 3.4.2 The Scheme has been effective in ensuring compliance within South Wigston with The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 which came into effect after the inception of the Scheme in April 2021 for all existing specified tenancies, but due to effective horizon scanning this requirement was included as a condition of the Scheme before the legislation came into effect, this ensured that all licenced properties were compliant upon the issue of a licence, meaning 788 properties were confirmed to have a compliant electrical installation which is a substantial level of engagement when compared to the typical number of service requests typically received.
- 3.4.3 The Scheme has also been effective in ensuring that rental properties within the South Wigston ward are compliant with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations, which required that all rental properties have an energy performance rating of E or above or have an exemption in place. These regulations didn't come into effect until April 2020, but again officer foresight was used to ensure that this was a compliance condition of the scheme in readiness for the rollout of the regulations. The team continue to take this approach, and engagement is being undertaken with landlords to encourage them to improve properties to a C rating in preparation for anticipated updated minimum standard projected to be enacted in 2030, although a C rating will not be a compliance requirement of the new Scheme.

3.4.4 As a further proactive step, the Scheme also required landlords to provide a written fire safety risk assessment for their property (a template and advice were provided on the website to support this). Whilst not a legal requirement for single residential dwellings, the condition was added to ensure that landlords had considered the fire safety aspects within their property, to support this action the team have also been conducting fire home safety checks in the same format as Leicestershire Fire and Rescue to try and educate tenants on the risks of residential fires and how they can reduce the risk of this occurring within the property. Typically, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue only provide these checks in targeted streets or 10 properties either side of a residential incident, so a rollout of this size is significant, and further developments are being explored to make the data sharing and administrative element of this work more efficient.

3.5 **Deprivation** – There has been significant deprivation noted within the Lower layer super output areas within the South Wigston ward in both the 2015 and 2019 iteration of the department for health and social cares indices of multiple deprivation with North of Blaby Road having a rating of 31.48, which is in excess of the mean deprivation rating for England which is 21.67. It is anticipated that central government will release the updated iteration in Autumn 2025, which will provide insight to demonstrate if deprivation has decreased in South Wigton over the term of this scheme and provide an updated base line as the team progress into delivery of the new scheme.

3.6 **High Levels of Crime** – In 2018-2019 Leicestershire Police recorded 579 crimes within the South Wigston area, when compared to April 2023 – March 2024 this had increased to 922 crimes and had increased further to 1033 recorded crimes between April 2024 and March 2025.

3.7 **Enforcement** – As noted within section 2 of this report engagement from landlords has been generally positive and where issues have been identified landlords have been keen to work with us to find a resolution. There have been 5 financial penalties served against landlords all who have failed to licence under the Scheme, which total £15,000. These penalties represent the first occasion that the Council have used these powers to penalise landlords for compliance failures, therefore there have not been established practices and procedures to rely on as there are with more established enforcement methodologies. Although this concern has been highlighted by the team leader and raised by senior management and Members and effective provision has been put in place to ensure a more efficient and effective use of these powers in future as illustrated in section 4 of this report.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Challenge	Lessons Learnt/Actions Taken
COVID-19 – The pandemic and subsequent controls delayed the delivery of the Scheme and had a subsequent knock-on effect to later years of the Scheme. Following the implementation of lockdown rules in March 2020 all but emergency visits stopped, ending property inspections and investigations into reported issues. Officers liaised with tenants and landlords by telephone and email but a crucial part of the service, being out on site, was curtailed. Inevitably this has impacted on our ability deliver on the inspection regime of the Scheme.	

<p>Staffing Changes – Across the term of the Scheme there have been substantial changes in staffing that impacted the effectiveness of the Scheme through these transitional periods, throughout the term of the Scheme there have been three lead officers and a complete changeover of the operational team, with the current team not being actively operational until Q3 of 2022 with subsequent training required to ensure competence and compliance requirements had been met.</p>	<p>The Selective Licensing Team and wider private sector housing team are now settled, and officers and the team are significantly more resilient and skilled to address the variety of casework the team receive. There are also further resilience actions being put in place to ensure sufficient cover in the event of prolonged officer absence or vacant posts occurring.</p>
<p>Property Inspections – Due to the factors outlined in above and properties where tenants were not engaging with the team to provide access for an inspection the team have been unable to undertake all inspections, completing a total of 538 inspections within the licencing area, equating to 68% of properties being inspected, using a worst first methodology, meaning that properties with active complaints or factors that raised concerns with officers during the application process were inspected as a priority, therefore providing some peace of mind that those properties with underlying issues have been identified and inspected. The Council are not the only Authority to be in this position and other Council's inspection regimes have also been impacted by COVID-19 and other factors.</p>	<p>Following the appointment of the current lead officer, the inspection process and regime for Housing Health and Rating System (HHSRS) inspections has been redesigned and introduced the use of the Housing App as the sole inspection tool used for all housing inspections, the app provides a consistent inspection procedure that is reliable and reportable, the app, process and findings have been tested by internal audit and received a substantial level of assurance and proven evidential within courts and tribunals.</p>
	<p>The Team Leader has completed a comprehensive review of the inspection and case management procedures to ensure the greatest possible efficiency and making the greatest use of all technology available to maximise officer capacity and minimise administrative work.</p>
	<p>Properties that had not been inspected under the previous scheme will be prioritised if they are included within the new scheme and will also receive a further inspection within the term of the new scheme to ensure all properties within the original and new scheme are inspected twice.</p>
<p>Collection of Enforcement Income – There have been challenges faced in relation to the collection of enforcement income, these issues are not isolated to the Council and the team leader has engaged heavily with other Authorities and best practice meetings to try and redress this issue.</p>	<p>Steps have been taken such as exploring working with Justice for Tenants who have developed a financial penalty calculator to ensure penalties are consistently applied to reduce the risk of appeal and have developed a financial penalty policy which has been substantially tested and is adopted by numerous Authorities across the Country.</p>
	<p>Internal processes have also been developed to ensure an expedited transition between service and recovery, as non-payment of a financial penalty would need to be pursued through the Money Collection Online Service (MCOL).</p>
<p>Strategic Performance Indicators – Whilst the Scheme had key objectives on what to target there was a lack of measurable performance indicators put in place at the</p>	<p>This issue has been rectified within the design of the new Scheme as outlined in 4.1 to 4.7 of this report.</p>

inception of the Scheme to consistently measure comparative performance metrics. The impact of the Scheme can be evidenced in other ways as outlined in section 3 of this report, although to ensure a clear and precise reporting metrics moving into the new scheme and how these indicators will be reported and presented. Notwithstanding these quarterly updates were provided to both the Licensing and Regulatory Committee and narrative updates provided to the Service Delivery Committee throughout the Scheme.	
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4.1 There are three key aims set out within the new Scheme to address these concerns;

- Improve the standard of private rented properties within the designated area
- Increase how safe residents feel in their area
- Reduce homelessness within the designated area

4.2 **Improve the standard of private rented properties within the designated area –** This will be measured using service request data from within the designated area using the following case type codes;

- HSGDAM – Damp and Mould Reports
- HSGDIS – Reports of Housing Disrepair
- HSGTEN – Reports of tenancy disputes of landlord harassment

These service requests will be monitored by comparing the number of service requests compared to the same reporting period in the previous year to allow comparisons to be made. This will be supported by data relating to the number of compliant properties licenced by the Scheme, inspections completed, and category 1 hazards identified and mitigated. This will provide reliable data to evidence and track process or any areas of concern.

4.3 **Increase how safe residents feel in their area –** This will be monitored using the annual community safety survey conducted by the Community Safety Partnership. The Team Leader will also work closely with the Community Safety Partnership to provide intelligence or support to address concerns raised through this forum.

4.4 Officers will also be tasked with proactively patrolling the designated area and engage with the local community and businesses to seek intelligence and proactively tackle issues.

4.5 **Reduce homelessness within the designated area –** This will be measured using homelessness prevention and relief cases presenting to Housing Options from within the licensing area across the term of the Scheme.

4.6 This data will also be supplemented general performance data relating to the Scheme as Members have been provided quarterly since the Team Leader assumed the role, which would include engagement, licence status and income generated.

4.7 **Annual Review Report –** The performance indicators noted above will also be compiled into an annual review report to be presented to the Service Delivery Committee and shared with the public via the Council's private sector housing newsletter issued through the Gov Delivery platform.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 As evidenced within the report, there are areas where the scheme has been effective. These areas are generally within the area of compliance and housing standards and continued engagement with the new Scheme should help to drive further improvements and also transition these improvements into Wigston.
- 5.2 However, there are areas where the Scheme could have been more effective, and these typically relate to areas of community engagement, anti-social behaviour and crime. This has been a driving factor behind the Team Leader's drive to engage more with the Community Safety Partnership, Leicestershire Police and the community more generally within the licensing area to help drive positive change and provide key information and intelligence.
- 5.3 There will also be a drive for the Selective Licensing team to work closely with the Community Safety and Wellbeing teams to support a joined up approach to working within the Licensing area to help drive strategic and long term change within the most deprived areas of the Borough with the hope of delivering positive and lasting change in line with the Council's vision of making our Borough the place to be.