

SEFTON COUNCIL



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Housing Licensing Performance Framework

MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Mike O'Brien
Councillor Bill Welsh

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OBJECTIVES

The Council is working toward the introduction of Private Rented Sector Housing Selective Licensing and Additional HMO Licensing schemes in parts of the borough.

The Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal was taken to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) in November 2016, for review. The proposal was overwhelmingly supported.

The Selective Licensing proposal was then taken to Cabinet for formal approval in December 2016, together with approval to undertake the statutory formal public consultation. Cabinet approved the proposal and consultation.

The Selective Licensing Proposal has since been the subject of a 12 week public consultation, April-June 2017. This included notifying all Councillors of the Selective Licensing proposal and consultation, so they had the opportunity to contribute.

The results of the consultation, together with a Final Licensing Scheme proposal were taken to Cabinet in September, and approved. The Council is now in the process of preparing the Selective Licensing scheme to go live from March 2018.

One key piece of work that needs to be done over the coming months is to set up a 'performance framework' for the Licensing schemes. This will allow the Council to test, in future, whether the Selective Licensing scheme is having an impact on improving the Licensing Neighbourhoods and private rented accommodation. The performance framework will be submitted to the Cabinet Member – Housing and Communities for approval once it is completed.

The Council approved a 'business case', which set out its justification for introducing Licensing schemes. To justify the proposed schemes for Sefton it was argued that Licensing of private rented homes would lead to the better management of these homes, which in turn would help tackle the following issues, which were used as the criteria for our schemes;

- significant anti-social behaviour.
- poor property conditions,
- a high level of deprivation or
- high levels of crime.

A Licensing scheme can only remain in operation for a maximum period of 5 years. The Council will need to monitor whether the Licensing schemes are having an impact on the issues/criteria it sought to tackle and improve.

Toward the end of the 5 year life of its schemes, the Council will need to consider whether it needs to extend the life of its schemes, and if it does, it will need to justify this through a new business case. Almost certainly, the Council would need the evidence that its schemes are having a positive impact on the issues identified. Therefore setting a suitable performance framework will be an essential tool, both to monitor the effects of licensing and to help justify any extension of the life of its schemes, should it wish to do so.

The Objective for an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group would be to help develop and review a proposed performance framework before it is completed and submitted for approval to the Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing

METHODS OF ENQUIRY

It is proposed that Members meet with officers, probably on 3 occasions to;

1. To review the business case evidence on which the licensing schemes are based.
2. To consider the most suitable sources of information which could be used to provide evidence and data over the 5 year life of the Licensing schemes, which would allow the Council to gauge the impact on each of the criteria used to justify its schemes.
3. To agree a Performance framework which includes;
 - the sources of evidence and information that will be used to measure the impacts of the Licensing schemes.
 - the frequency of collection of evidence and data
 - How monitored data and evidence will be reported in future.

TIMESCALES

Meeting 1 December 2017

Meeting 2 January 2018

Meeting 3 February 2018

OFFICER SUPPORT

Lead Officer: Neil Davies, Service Manager Housing and Investment Services

OTHERS WHO WILL BE INVOLVED

Clare Taylor; Housing Standards Team Manager

Gaynor Pemberton; Housing Licensing Development Project Officer

Alistair Malpas; Housing Strategy Officer

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPORTING TO CABINET/COUNCIL

To aim to report to Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing in March 2018.

PLANNING CHART

The Planning Chart is an example of the way reviews could/should be planned.

It is recommended that realistic time frames in which to carry out tasks should be considered including possible delays for public holidays and Council business. Effective planning suggests that more planning time be built into the chart.

Activity	MONTH				
	Dec2017	Jan2018	Feb2018	March2018	April2018
Scoping	X				
Consider Documents	X	X			
Witnesses	NA				
Site Visits	NA				
Initial Findings		X	X		
Draft Report			X		
O&S Committee approval				X	
Cabinet approval					X
Submit to Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing				X	

Ten Step Process Flow Chart

Committee agrees Working Group membership and appoints Chair / Lead Member

Working Group complete scoping document determining terms of reference & timetable.

Working Group submit scoping paperwork to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

Background research undertaken and evidence collected.

Working Group meet to determine questions they wish to ask witnesses.

Working Group make any necessary visits & additional evidence obtained.

Witness hearings take place & responses written up by support officer.

Working Group review headings for the final report.

Working Group and support officer draft final recommendations and approve final report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives final report and recommendations and how they should be taken forward.

