



**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

**Tuesday 14th September
2021**

Subject: Selective Licensing July 2016 - July 2021 - Scheme Review

Report by:

Assistant Director Change Management and
Regulatory Services

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide an update on the Selective Licensing
Scheme in Gainsborough following on from its
cessation.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Members are asked to :

- a) Note the report, positive outcomes and lessons learned as part of the scheme.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The legal basis for the introduction of the selective licensing scheme can be located within the Prosperous Communities Committee report from 22nd March 2016.

The legal framework for the scheme is found in Part 3 (Sections 79 to 100) of the Housing Act 2004. Alongside this, The Selective Licensing of Houses (Additional Conditions) (England) Order 2015 sets out additional conditions for the purposes of a designation under Section 80.

Financial : FIN/67/22/TJB

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

£152k has been generated from the current scheme which has funded resourcing for administration, supporting delivery of outcomes of the scheme and to contribute to the ongoing delivery of housing standards work.

Section 3 of the report provides an overview of the financial information relating to the scheme.

Staffing :

There are no staffing implications as a result of this paper.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

The designation for the scheme has been set out in accordance with the Housing Act.

Data Protection Implications :

No implications noted.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The improvement of property conditions and subsequent outcomes of the licensing scheme have had a positive impact on energy efficiency and climate change. Further work will be undertaken as part of the overall review of the scheme to seek to quantify some of these benefits.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

The licensing scheme has a direct impact on crime and disorder and the data contained within the report shows the extent of this. Any future proposals will consider the local data related to crime and anti-social behaviour as it is one of the key criteria within any designation.

Health Implications:

A selective licensing scheme is designated to address specific issues within an area and the designation criteria demonstrates how a scheme can improve health outcomes. For example, the improvement of property conditions is well documented to have a positive impact on health and addressing areas such as crime and ASB can contribute to the improvement of broader community health along with the health of an individual.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

Prosperous Communities Committee report 22nd March 2016
Prosperous Communities Committee report 21st March 2017
Prosperous Communities Committee report 24th October 2017
Prosperous Communities Committee report 4th December 2018
Prosperous Communities Committee report 3rd December 2019
Prosperous Communities Committee report 16th March 2021

Risk Assessment :

Not applicable

Call in and Urgency:**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes**No****Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes**No**

1. Introduction

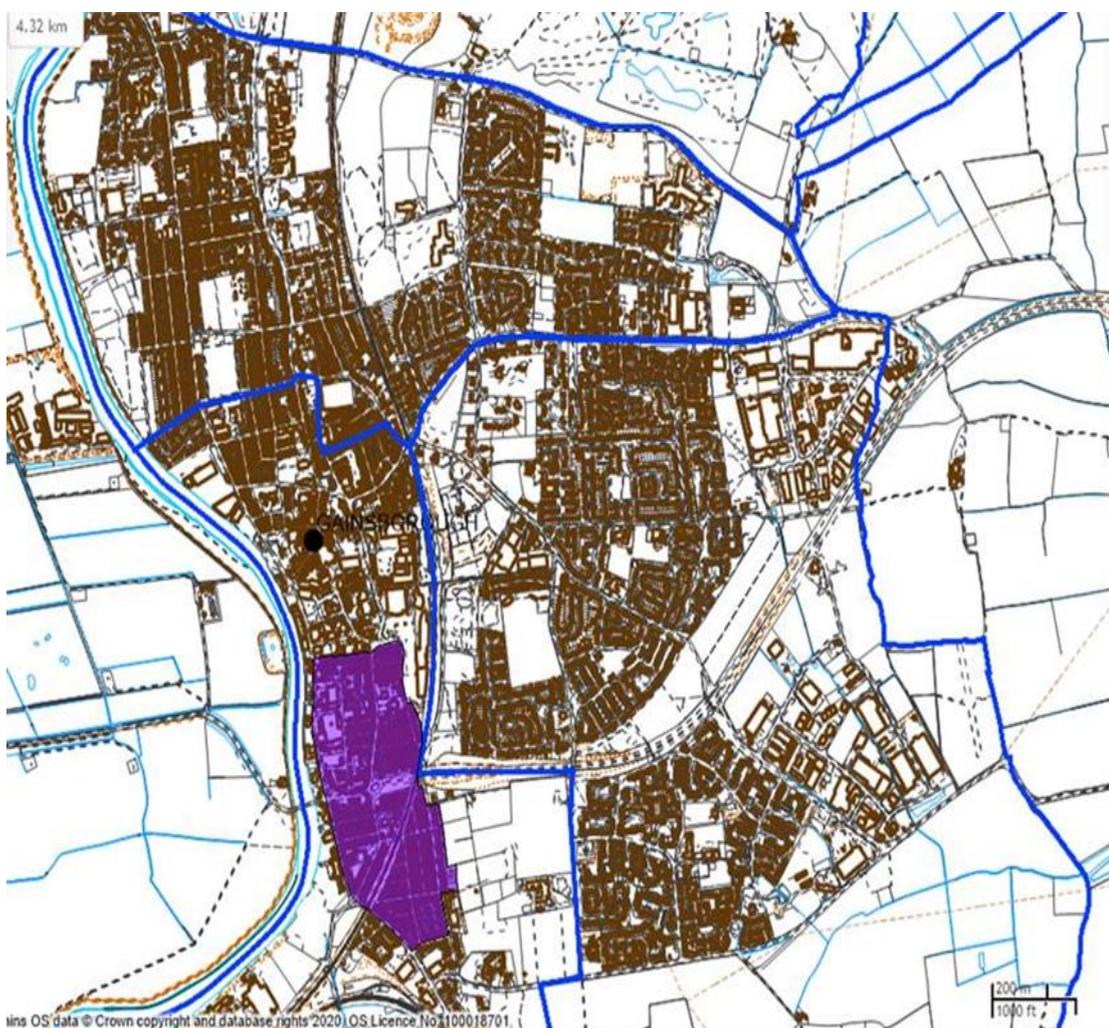
1.1. The Selective Licensing scheme for Private Rented Sector (PRS) properties in the Gainsborough South West Ward was approved at Prosperous Communities Committee on the 22nd March 2016. The scheme then came into force on the 18th of July 2016 for a five year period. The scheme has now come to a conclusion and this report sets out information relating to the scheme from over this period.

1.2. There were estimated to be around 550 private rented properties within the specific area designated and circa 800 private rented properties across the whole of the South West Ward.

1.3. The scheme was designated for the following reasons:

- Evidence that there was a significant issue with ASB and PRS within Gainsborough.
- Strong feeling that the tools available needed to be explored.
- Opportunity to enhance proactive work in relation to the PRS and understand it better.
- To provide additional capacity and resource to improve the PRS
- Lack of confidence in overall regulation of landlords

1.4. The scheme was active in the area shown in purple in the map below.



1.5. In delivering the scheme the Council also set out to do the following:

- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Take steps to tackle low housing demand
- Be proactive
- Improve standards of housing management
- Ensure accountability of landlords
- Identify rogue and criminal landlords and enforce against them
- Target the most at risk properties and identify the most vulnerable people

1.6. The future approach to Selective Licensing and the consultation process was set out and agreed by Committee in March 2021 and a further paper setting out the feasibility options for any future scheme will be presented to Committee in November 2021.

1.7. The report appendices provide information on the additional outcomes derived from the scheme, the lessons learned, case studies and the impact of Covid-19.

2. End of Scheme Position

2.1. Over the course of the scheme there were 809 licenses granted within the designated area. This amounts to 98% of the eligible properties, which exceeds the original target of 80% that the original proposals were based upon in 2016. 77 of the applications received were for properties which had previously had a licence issued.

2.2. The table below provides an overview of the scheme at its end position:

| | The Home Safe Scheme | West Lindsey District Council |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Full Licences | 584 | 225 |
| Exemptions (full) | n/a | 17 |
| Exemptions (temporary) | n/a | 12 |
| <i>*live applications, not including applications which have been cancelled or terminated</i> | | |

2.3. Information relating to the Home Safe Scheme and the role it played during the scheme is shown in appendix 5.

3. Financial Information

3.1. The Council has to date received £152,092 from licensing income. £69,540 was received in 16/17, £11,015 in 17/18, £18,534 in 18/19, £25,881 in 19/20 and £26,947 in 20/21 with an additional £355 for the short period operating in 21/22.

3.2. The income received has been used to fund the administrative roles that have supported the scheme, alongside the other officer resource used to deliver the outcomes of the schemes. It is estimated that circa 1.5 full time employees were funded over the duration of the scheme.

3.3. Income that has been derived from the serving of notices, costs from prosecutions and issuing of civil penalties is further outlined in this report and contributes to the ongoing delivery of the housing standards work area.

4. Formal Enforcement Action

4.1. The Council's approach to enforcement action is risk based. The scheme has enabled officers to focus on those properties that present this highest risk and it is clear that the poorest property conditions are being identified in unlicensed properties. This is therefore where the focus of the schemes resource was aimed.

4.2. Within the tables below, the information has been set out to highlight the impact the scheme has had in the specific area, in relation to the work of the Council that has been undertaken across the rest of West Lindsey. The tables set out how the scheme has enabled a greater amount of work to be undertaken within this small area as opposed to the rest of the District as a whole.

4.3. An overview of the formal action taken against unlicensed properties as a result of the scheme is shown below.

| Action Taken | Volume – Gainsborough South West Ward | Volume – Rest of District |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Formal Notices Served | 107 | 71 |
| Energy Efficiency Compliance Notices Served | 23 | 60 |
| Interviews Under Caution | 9 | n/a |
| Cautions | 2 | n/a |
| Prosecutions | 8 40 convictions | 1 2 convictions |
| Civil Penalties Issued | 21 | 2 |
| Civil Penalties in Progress | 9 | n/a |
| Tribunal Appeals | 8 4 Upheld 2 Settled 1 Withdrawn 1 Out of time | n/a |
| Enforcement Financial Information (Scheme area only) | | |
| Notice fees | Circa £19,000 (fee income) | |
| Prosecutions | Fines issued – £83,000* Costs awarded - £10,000 | |
| Civil Penalties issued | £115,000 total** | |
| Civil Penalties in progress | £87,000 total | |

*fines issued for prosecutions are collected by HMCTS and are not received by the Council

** Civil Penalties and associated costs are received by the Council

4.4. Where civil penalties are not paid immediately a debt recovery process is in place with legal services whereby charges are added to properties and debt plus costs can then be recovered through the sale of these properties. This secures the recovery of costs for the Council and can also force the sale of the property from the landlord.

5. Housing Conditions and Demand

5.1. The scheme has had a specific focus on improving housing conditions and on seeking to impact the issue with housing demand within the area.

5.2. There were on average 16 housing disrepair cases open with the South West Ward in 20/21, with an average of 15 across the first four months of 21/22. This number has reduced dramatically since the inception of the scheme from 64 in 17/18, 34 in 18/19 and 29 in 19/20. Whilst there will always be an open caseload for this area, the licensing scheme has helped to ensure that general property standards have improved resulting in less disrepair issues.

5.3. Over the course of the scheme, a large number of property visits have taken place by both The Home Safe Scheme and West Lindsey District Council:

| Measures | Gainsborough South West Ward | Rest of District |
|---|--|------------------|
| Number of property visits over scheme duration | 895 – WL 1,301 – HS | 384 |
| Number of Category 1 Hazards removed through action taken by West Lindsey | 88 | 77 |
| Number of private rented sector properties improved through action taken by West Lindsey | 249 | 272 |
| Property issues identified by Home Safe | High priority issues – 1,686 identified Medium priority issues – 1,707 identified Low priority issues – 446 identified | |
| Issues Resolved from final year of inspections | 1,070 | |

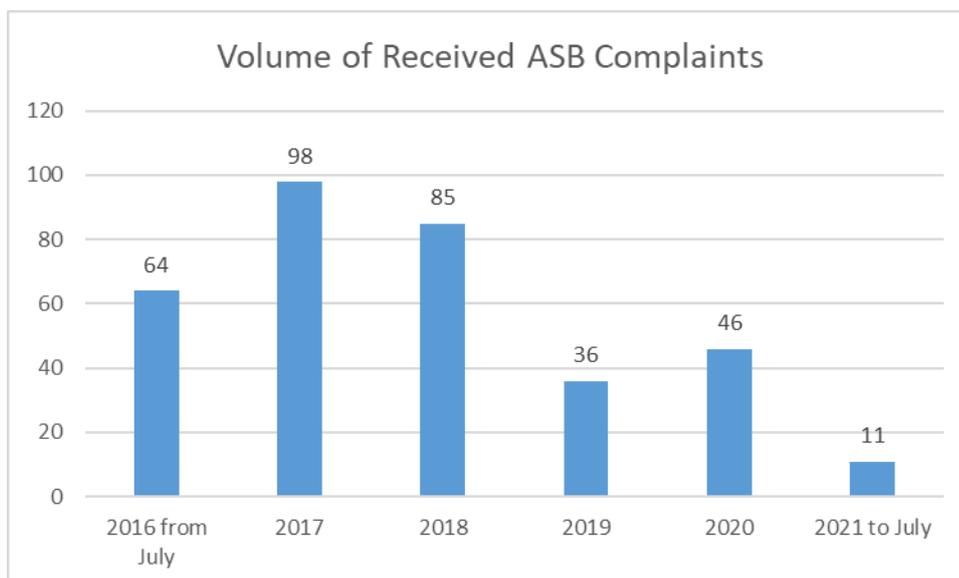
5.4. The use of grant incentives in conjunction with the scheme have also seen a significant reduction in the number of long-term empty homes in the ward over the scheme lifetime:

| Measures | Gainsborough South West Ward | Rest of district |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of long-term empty properties at commencement of scheme | 96 | 444 |
| Number of long-term empty properties at scheme end | 65 (32% decrease) | 429 (3% decrease) |

5.5. The proactive work in relation to Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) within the licensing area has seen 23 compliance notices served, which in turn has helped to ensure a compliance rate of over 95% within the area in relation to this. This ensure that private rented properties meet the minimum “E” grade standard.

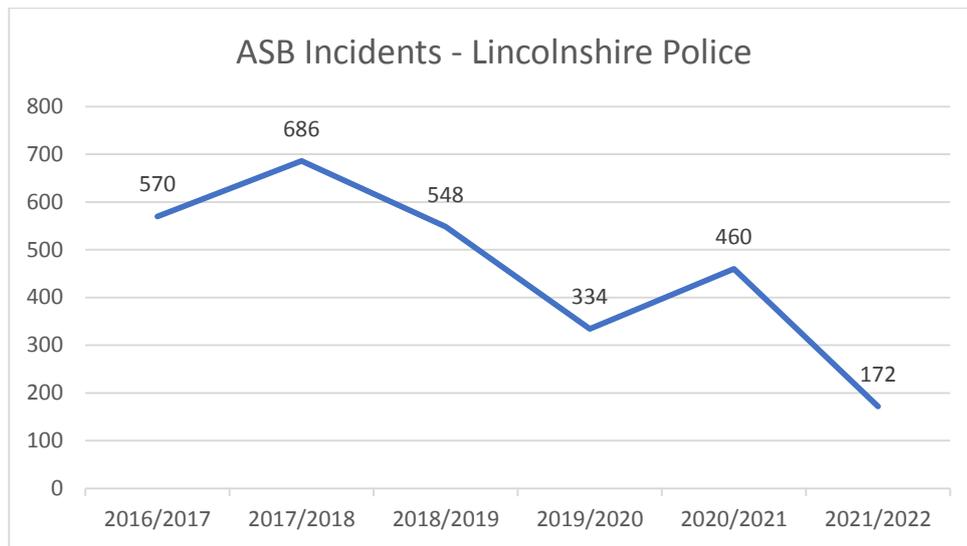
6. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

6.1. The scheme the focus remains on proactively dealing with unlicensed properties and any ASB that is caused by them. The chart below shows the trends in relation to ASB within the area since the commencement of the scheme in 2016.



6.2. During 2017, additional proactive work was undertaken to identify issues, which led to the reporting increase during that period. Since 2017 the number of reports are steadily decreasing, other than in 2020 when the number has increased slightly. This increase could be attributed to the lockdown periods that occurred during 2020 and the additional reporting that this created across a number of regulatory work areas.

6.3. The chart below sets out the number of incidents within the NC03 policing area for Gainsborough, within which the selective licensing area was included.



6.4. As per the Council's State of the District report 2020 it has the third lowest crime rate in the county. Overall, there were 5,737 recorded crimes in the 12 months to December 2019, an increase of 778 on 2018. Lincolnshire Police data shows that West Lindsey has the second lowest crime rate in the county which has an average crime rate of 79 per 1,000

6.5. Whilst it is not possible to directly attribute reductions in ASB to the scheme itself, it is evident that the scheme has enabled the Council to take quick effective action with landlords in relation ASB that originates from their properties and as a result some of these matters are being dealt with by landlords without the need for Council involvement.

7. Best Practice and Recognition

7.1. Over the duration of the scheme the Council have been involved a number of reviews of best practice undertaken by both the Government and industry bodies. This has helped to inform and develop our approach and enable improvements to the scheme to be delayed.

7.2. Officers have also been invited to participate in focus groups and industry presentations on the subject, which has helped to raise the profile of the work that has been undertaken.

7.3. An example of the review work can be found here carried out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health [a-licence-to-rent.pdf \(cieh.org\)](https://www.cieh.org/a-licence-to-rent.pdf)

8. Conclusion of the Scheme and Future Scheme Feasibility

8.1. A further report will be presented to Committee in November 2021 that will consider the feasibility of any future scheme within the District. This work is currently being undertaken and a workshop for Councillors was held on the 9th of August, to provide an overview for how the process will work and how any consultation may be undertaken.

- 8.2. The lessons learned shown within the report, alongside the comments in relation to scheme improvements that have been received during its delivery will be taken into consideration and where possible delivered as part of any new proposals.
- 8.3. A decision on whether to proceed and carry out consultation on any new scheme must be made by Committee and any consultation would be extensive and be for a minimum 10 week period, which if approved will take place towards the end of the 2021 calendar year.
- 8.4. Subject to the above, the overall determination for any future designation is estimated to be May 2022. Any decision may then be subject to Secretary of State Approval, for which there is no set timescale.
- 8.5. As per the proposals agreed at Committee in March 2021, the following enforcement approach will be taken now that the scheme has come to a conclusion:

Formal Action: any offences committed prior to the end of the scheme will be considered and a decision taken in relation to the public interest aspect of proceeding with any formal action. This will depend on the circumstances of each case. There is provision for the Council to take formal action for offences for up to 6 months after the end of the scheme.

Use of Powers: where high risk issues remain within properties, the Council will seek to use existing Housing Act powers to address these and will prioritise these based on the risk presented. The Council still has the ability to utilise all of its usual Housing Act and other regulatory powers to enable formal action to be taken as required. There will however be no ability to require additional conditions, which were placed on as part of the scheme, to be met by landlords.

END

Additional Outcomes

Clearly understood that we are an “enforcing” authority

Multi – agency enforcement approach in place

A good level of landlord compliance and engagement

Additional spend in the local economy from contractors

Over 2000 property inspections carried out

Enhanced intelligence on issues within the area

Additional investment in properties by landlords

Increase in staff knowledge and experience

Active contribution to Government and industry reviews

Increased profile for PRS work in West Lindsey

Unlicensed properties and high risk tenants easier to identify

Additional regulatory powers more visible and utilised

A small geographical pilot has helped to aid our understanding

Additional tools needed to make a broader impact (e.g. Empty Homes Grants)

Aided the development of other projects in the area (i.e. VHS)

Appendix 2 – Lessons Learned

| Lessons Learned | Additional Information |
|---|---|
| Enhanced methods needed for engaging with landlords | There has been varied engagement from landlords throughout the scheme and it is felt that an effective continuous process should be considered for any future schemes to ensure that there is an ongoing and effective relationship between parties. |
| Tenant engagement and involvement was less than expected | Whilst there has been contact from tenants about the scheme, it does not seem to be something that tenants are taking a significant interest in. Any future scheme could look at how we ensure that tenants are better informed about what licensing means to them and the difference it can make. |
| Management of problematic tenants is something that requires additional measures | Whilst the scheme provides additional tools to tackle problem tenants, it does not provide all the solutions for the more transient group of tenants that move from unlicensed property to unlicensed property. Solutions across agencies are still needed to deal with these individuals and households. |
| The developed tenant passport was not effective | The developed scheme for tenant passport, which requires tenant consent has not delivered what was intended. The consent aspect has still meant that the tenants that may need the passport and support it offers still do not apply for it. Likewise, some landlords are still using informal methods such as social media to attract tenants. |
| The resources needed to deliver the scheme were beyond the set fee | The relatively low license fee of £375 delivered resources to deal with the immediate licensing functions. The work related to ASB and enforcement on top of this was met from the existing resources available to the Council within its own services. |
| Hard within scheme constraints to have a broader impact (i.e. on general ASB levels) | The scheme conditions limit certain activities and work will be undertaken to look at how they can be maximised for any future scheme. Likewise, how the schemes resources are used to tackle other issues (such as ASB) will be considered. |
| The 5 year licensing period may not be sufficient to deal with all the related issues | Some of the issues that may be tackled via a scheme require longer term interventions, therefore the 5 years of the scheme are not sufficient to address these. Likewise, an area with multiple issues, such as the area selected may require further designation. |
| Level of support required for landlords and landlord knowledge is varied. | Some landlords required a significant amount of support in order to become licensed and continued to required support throughout the scheme. Other landlords required minimal contact. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>There was not a notable overspill or spread of issues into surrounding areas</p> | <p>Prior to scheme delivery there was an underlying fear that issues would spread out of the licensing area due to the scheme. This does not appear to be the case. The analysis work being undertaken as part of the future scheme proposals will look at this in further detail.</p> |
| <p>Criminal landlords often house the highest risk and most vulnerable tenants</p> | <p>There is a clear link between unlicensed properties and criminal landlords and in turn the most vulnerable and high risk tenants. The enforcement of the scheme has the most impact when it focusses on these properties and the highest risk issues.</p> |
| <p>The majority of landlords own 1 – 2 properties</p> | <p>There is a not a large proportion of “portfolio” landlords who own vast amounts of properties. This means that the approach has been more resource intensive as there are more landlords generally across the whole scheme.</p> |
| <p>The Private Rented Sector was bigger than estimated (and growing).</p> | <p>It was estimated that there were around 550 licensable properties initially, and overall there turned out to be about 750</p> |
| <p>The scheme has not put off investors in the area</p> | <p>There have been a number of property sales during the licensing period and ongoing application for licenses. A number of property companies have invested in the area during the period and Gainsborough generally continues to demonstrate growth and improvement in turn.</p> |
| <p>Additional tools needed to make a broader impact (e.g. Empty Homes Grants)</p> | <p>Measures such as empty homes grants have increased the impact within the area and it is imperative that any future schemes give consideration for any additional benefits via measures such as this.</p> |

Appendix 3 – Impact of Covid – 19

The delivery of the selective licensing scheme since March 2020 has been significantly impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic in the following ways. This information was provided in the update given in March 2021, however is still relevant in terms of the schemes conclusion.

Restrictions on Landlords: The Government initially issued and subsequently updated guidance for landlords during the pandemic on how to fulfil their obligations during this time. The Council have had to consider this guidance in regards to determining the circumstances in which to take enforcement action. This guidance has limited a landlord's ability to be proactive in certain circumstances.

Inspections: The inspection regime for both Homesafe and the Council was significantly delayed during the initial and subsequent lockdowns. Proactive inspections were not able to take place and the inspection regime for the final year of the scheme has had to be amended in light of this. This will only focus on high risk issues and is not being made mandatory in most circumstances.

Property Sales: The property market slowed during the initial lockdown and in turn the turnover of properties that generate additional licensing income slowed. This has recovered in some form, but has not been at the level of previous years.

Ability to take formal action: With less proactive property inspections it has reduced the scope for the Council to serve formal notice and to establish offences related to the licensing scheme. In turn, the volume of civil penalties issued has not been in line with our projections.

Local Intelligence/Presence within the area: Officers have not been as active within the licensing area for the reasons stated, therefore the ad hoc intelligence that is usually collected has not been done so on the same scale. In turn, the reduced property inspections have limited our interaction with tenants and our opportunities for dealing with some breaches of conditions that may have occurred.

ASB Figures: The level of ASB reports has increased slightly during 2020 and some of this increase relates to the lockdown periods that occurred during this time. The ability to deal with some of these matters has been limited for landlords and the Council, however the increase is not to an extent that causes great concern.

Debt Recovery Measures: Some legal processes have been restricted during this period and court proceedings are subject to significant delays. Whilst debt recovery has continued where possible, in some cases it has not proceeded due to the above. Any debt incurred during the licensing scheme can be recovered after it concludes.

Appendix 4

Gainsborough South West Ward Selective Licensing Scheme – Case Studies

Case studies below show some examples of property improvements made over the lifetime of the selective licensing scheme.

| Case Study 1 | |
|--|---|
| Before | After |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Background: Property identified as failing to have the necessary licence in place under the scheme. An improvement notice was served to address a number of hazards, and further formal action was taken by way of a civil penalty for the failure to licence.

| Case Study 2 | |
|---|--|
| Before | After |
|  |  |

Background: A complaint was made under the scheme that the property was unsightly from the exterior and in a poor state of repair. A formal notice was served on the landlord under the Building Act to address the issues with the guttering and fascia's, and these were replaced in compliance with the notice, in addition to further works being carried out to improve the external appearance.

Case Study 3

Before



After



Background: Property was visited as part of the inspection regime and found to be in poor condition, with rotten windows and doors, and no heating system. An improvement notice was served after an informal schedule was not complied with, and the landlord fitted new doors, windows and a gas central heating system.

Case Study 4

Before



After



Background: A property visit was carried out as part of the inspection regime on licensed properties and the stairs were noted to be dangerous. An informal schedule was served specifying works to be undertaken, and the licence holder carried out the necessary improvements.

Case Study 5

Before



After

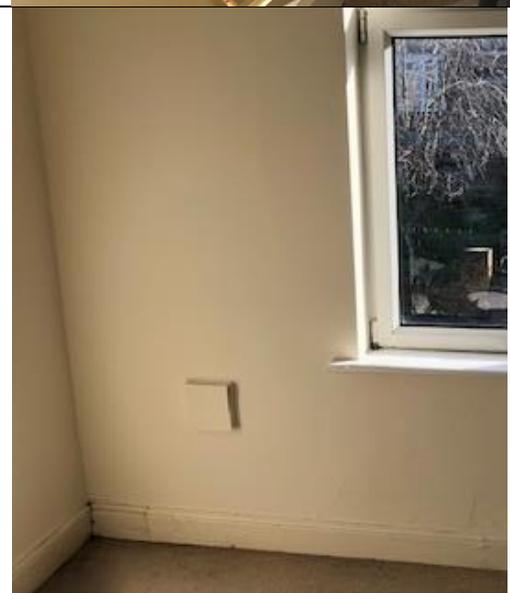
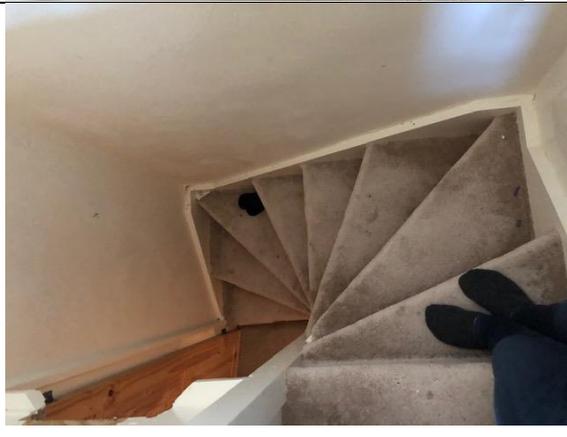


Background: An urgent disrepair referral was received with a vulnerable tenant living in an insecure property. The property was licensed, and replacement doors were fitted within 4 days of the Council receiving the case.

Case Study 6

Before

After



Background: The property was identified as being unlicensed. A number of hazards were assessed including extensive damp and mould throughout the property and a lack of handrails on staircases. An improvement notice was served to require works to be carried out.

Case Study 7

Before



After



Background: The windows to the property were found to have rotten wooden frames with single glazing, and were causing damp and mould and poor thermal efficiency. An improvement notice was served and the new windows were fitted throughout the property.

Case Study 8

Background: A landlord owned a number of properties within the selective licensing area, many of which were in an extremely poor state of repair with a number of high-scoring hazards, and were also problematic within the area with poorly maintained exteriors with large waste accumulations in the gardens. The landlord was not licensed under the selective licensing scheme.

Action: The Council undertook prosecution proceedings for the eight unlicensed offences and the two offences for failure to comply with the notices which had been served requiring improvements. Alongside a receiving an initial fine of £213,000 across the offences (reduced to over £80,000 at appeal), the Council were also successful in applying for a criminal behaviour order against the main offender, meaning that he was unable to operate or manage private rented sector properties within the district of West Lindsey.

Outcome: The offender's properties were put up for sale, and were sold. The new owners carried out the necessary renovations to bring them up to standard, ensuring the external areas were better maintained, the tenants were better managed and that they complied with the requirements to become licensed under the scheme.

Case Study 9

Background: Both the Council and Lincolnshire Police were receiving numerous Anti-Social Behaviour reports for tenants in properties on one particular street – when the details were checked, it became clear that a number of the problematic properties were owned by the same landlords.

Action: A multi-agency meeting was arranged with the Council, Lincolnshire Police and the landlords of the properties to inform them of some of the issues that were being reported on the street, and advice was given in respect of their obligations as licence holders under the scheme. The Council requested that action was taken to address the issues in line with the selective licensing scheme conditions.

Outcome: A number of the tenants identified as the anti-social behaviour perpetrators were evicted following due process. One household found an unlicensed property to move into – although the property owner was advised not to grant a tenancy prior to applying for a licence or taking proper references, the tenancy commenced without these steps taking place. The Council prosecuted the new landlord for failing to licence under the selective licensing scheme, and the tenancy was closely monitored over the remainder of the scheme. The problematic street was vastly improved with the relocation of the problematic households, and the tenants were easier to manage in their new locations as they were no longer in close proximity to each other.

Appendix 5 – Information from the Home Safe Scheme



The Home
Safe Scheme

The Home Safe Scheme Ltd
The Castle Mill
Minneymoor Hill
Conisbrough
Doncaster
DN12 3EN

Email: info@thehomesafescheme.org.uk

Telephone: **0330 6600 282**

Company No. 09371007

West Lindsey District Council – South West Ward Selective Licence Scheme

End of scheme review – conducted by The Home Safe Scheme Limited (Delivery Partner)

July 2021

West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) designated certain parts of the South West Ward for a selective licensing scheme which came into force on 18th July 2016, to run until 17th July 2021. To help deliver the scheme WLDC decided to use the services of a delivery partner, The Home Safe Scheme Ltd, and it was determined that 5 inspection programmes, covering all properties, would take place during the 5-year designation but this was later reduced to 3 inspection programmes. This report presents the results of Home Safe's 3rd and final property inspection programme along with a summary of the benefits of the scheme and lessons learnt. It is worth noting that outside of the inspection programmes Home Safe also provided general advice and support to their landlord members in the South West Ward on such issues as tenancy sustainment, evictions, legislative requirements and have been an effective liaison between scheme members and WLDC.

Applications

The following table shows the rate of applications to be licensed through Home Safe, i.e., licenses issued by WLDC once a landlord has successfully joined the Home Safe scheme (the first one received was on 12th July 2016, before the designation came into force):

| Date | Properties registered |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 18/07/2016 | 7 |
| 18/08/16 | 39 |
| 18/09/16 | 99 |
| 18/10/16 | 197 |
| 18/11/16 | 334 |
| 18/12/16 | 341 |
| 18/01/17 (1 st 6 months) | 345 |

To date we currently have 235 members with 447 properties registered.

Memberships terminated

To date 282 properties have been removed from our membership. Some of these may then have been the subject of new applications to licence following sale and new owners. The following table shows the reason for termination and the percentage of the overall total terminations:

| Termination Reason | Number of Properties (% of total) |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Property sold | 135 (47.8%) |
| Noncompliance to Home Safe T&Cs* | 61 (21.6%) |
| WLDC instruction (preferred direct application) | 21 (7.4%) |
| Application withdrawn and applied directly to WLDC | 20 (7.0%) |
| Deceased | 16 (5.6%) |
| Member requested termination | 10 (3.5%) |
| Application made in error (not in designation area) | 10 (3.5%) |
| Exemption issued by WLDC | 6 (2.1%) |
| Abuse to Home Safe employee | 2 (0.7%) |
| Property repossession | 1 (0.3%) |

* Noncompliance to Home Safe T&Cs could have been failing to provide access for a property inspection, failing to provide a Plan of Action for any remedial works, failing to provide the requested evidence or confirmation of remedial works or cancelling their Direct Debits. In any event Home Safe had a breach process in place to encourage compliance and always discussed the prospect of termination with WLDC before agreeing that was the most appropriate course of action.

Inspections

Due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, all the 3rd and final inspections were not completed by the end of scheme date. However, the following overview details the situation in regards to the 3rd and final round of inspections with comparisons to the previous rounds:

374 Inspections completed. There were 491 inspections completed in the 2nd round and 436 in the first round.

1,321 total issues found (3.5 average per property). 2,478 total issues found on the 2nd inspections (5.0 average per property).

284 inspections found at least one High Priority issue (76% - the highest single number in any one property was 9). This was from 389 on the 2nd inspections (79%).

689 total High Priority issues found (1.8 average per property). 997 High Priority issues found on the 2nd inspections (2.0 average per property).

586 resolved with the remainder managed by Home Safe in accordance with membership T&Cs and WLDCs licence conditions.

566 Medium Priority issues found (1.5 average per property). 1,101 Medium Priority issues found on the 2nd inspections (2.2 average per property).

443 resolved with the remainder managed by Home Safe in accordance with membership T&Cs and WLDCs licence conditions.

66 Low Priority issues found (0.2 average per property). 380 Low Priority issues found on the 2nd inspections (0.8 average per property).

41 resolved with the remainder managed by Home Safe in accordance with membership T&Cs and WLDCs licence conditions.

51 properties requiring 'no actions' (13.6%). There were 2 properties requiring 'no actions' on the 2nd inspections.

Top 10 failing issues by % of properties inspected

- 37% Damp and mould evident in one or more rooms.
- 31% Staircase tread less than 220mm.
- 25% Gutters not adequate or in working order.
- 25% Windows in poor working order – decayed – do not have working latches and safety catches or opening restrictors – can't be opened and latched shut – damaged glazing.
- 24% Ground floor fire detection system missing/not working.
- 24% First floor fire detection system missing/not working.
- 19% All ceiling and wall plaster is not in a sound and secure condition, capable of being decorated with no signs of leaks or possible structural damage.
- 16% Not 300mm of work-top to either side of the cooker.
- 13% A handrail either not accessible or securely fitted for the full length of the staircase.
- 13% Second floor fire detection system missing/not working.

Within the 3rd round of inspections 13 properties were de-registered after an inspection had been carried out and there were 86 (3rd) inspections that could not be completed. These 86+374 (that were completed) minus 13 properties de-registered = the 447 properties registered to date. The 86 inspections that could not be completed were due to the following reasons:

| | |
|----|--|
| 32 | Tenant did not want the inspections due to concerns over the coronavirus* |
| 4 | Landlord did not want the inspections due to concerns over the coronavirus* |
| 32 | Repeatedly advised property was empty |
| 8 | Problem tenant blocking access but landlord engaging |
| 5 | Landlord not engaging |
| 3 | Landlord claiming property sold (WLDC to confirm) |
| 1 | Landlord claiming property exempt from licensing (WLDC to confirm) |
| 1 | Landlord claiming property change of use so requiring revocation (WLDC to confirm) |

* This is despite inspections following a Covid-safe procedure agreed with WLDC which included screening questions and the wearing of PPE.

Average resolution times

Home Safe managed all the issues raised on an inspection report irrespective of priority (risk category) and don't record how long each individual issue took as resolving all the issues raised on the report was the focus.

It's important to note that the length of time that a report, following an inspection, is open on our project management system is the only way Home Safe can record 'resolution times' but there's a number of factors contributing to this figure which would increase the average resolution time quite significantly:

- where Home Safe members were claiming the property was empty
- where Home Safe eventually terminated the membership
- where Home Safe members had tenants refusing access to carry out repairs (pre-Covid)
- a refusal to carry out repairs due to Covid*
- where licences were eventually revoked (for the time it took to process and be confirmed)
- where submitting evidence was delayed but Home Safe had (written) assurances works were complete - the breach process has helped this however
- response times for guidance from WLDC

* Please note whilst it was almost impossible to challenge those claims, most of which we assumed were genuine, we did ask landlords to update their Plans of Actions rather than just assume that they couldn't do anything and challenged them to make alternative arrangements in line with government advice.

Notwithstanding the above, the average time that each report was open on our system, irrespective of risk category therein, was **56 days** (it was **78 days** following the 2nd round of inspections).

Benefits of the scheme

- Improved PRS housing conditions without WLDC involvement (in the vast majority of cases)
- Better understanding of PRS housing stock condition
- Employment opportunities for local people
- Opportunities to drive funding for energy initiatives
- Increased revenue into local B&Q stores and other local builders' merchants
- Increased work for local contractors repairing identified issues