

<u>AGENDA ITEM 6D</u>	
REPORT TO:	Hyndburn 3 Tier Forum
DATE:	26 November 2014
REPORT AUTHOR:	Fiona Goodfellow, Housing Strategy & Policy Manager Mark Hoyle, Head of Regeneration & Housing
TITLE OF REPORT:	Selective Licensing & Private Landlords

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Hyndburn 3 Tier Forum with a report on the Selective Licensing Scheme and to advise whether the Scheme has led to an improvement in housing within the designation area.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Hyndburn 3 Tier Forum note and comment on the contents of the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

Selective Licensing

- 3.1 On 1 December 2014 Hyndburn's Selective Licensing Scheme will have been operating for 2 years with another 3 years to run to 2017. The Scheme was introduced as part of a number of measures to address low housing demand in parts of West and East Accrington. The designated area is illustrated at Appendix 1
- 3.2 Activity – by the end of October 2014 73% of licence applications received had been issued with a licence (911 out of 1252). A further 248 are being processed, 40 are at the 'consultation' stage and 53 have been cancelled primarily as a result of the property being sold. Most of the outstanding applications are delayed while landlords bring their houses up to the required standard. Since the scheme was introduced almost 2 years ago, many of the 911 privately rented dwellings had to be improved to the required standard before licences could be issued.
- 3.3 Residential Property Tribunal (RPT) – an RPT Hearing took place earlier in the year as a result of representations from Hyndburn Landlords to some of the conditions attached to the licence. The Council is now appealing the RPT decision to remove / amend a couple of the conditions in respect of the 'carbon monoxide detector' and the 'electrical installation condition report'. We are currently awaiting a date for the hearing in the Upper Tribunal.

- 3.4 Inspections – To date, the majority of work has focussed on desk top assessments and registration. However, an inspection regime is now in place. Kellian Shaw, Environmental Health Officer has undertaken 47 house visits/ inspections of properties within the SL area in the last 6 months initially focusing on the Woodnook area to complement other activity taking place in the area. The visits include checking the SL conditions as well as the condition of the property. Of the 47 visits, 18 have resulted in a full HHSRS Inspection (Housing, Health and Safety Rating System) with the majority of these properties having a category 1 hazard present. In the main we have worked ‘informally’ with the landlords to remove the hazards which has proved successful with only 2 properties requiring the serving of an Improvement Notice. Both these Notices have been complied with.
- 3.5 Anti-Social Behaviour - In addition to Inspection work we have been working with the Police and Licence Holders on a couple of cases involving Anti -Social behaviour and tenants. The Police are implementing ABC’s (Anti-Social Behaviour Conditions) a set of rules tenants agree to in an attempt to control their behaviour. We have also been working with a Landlord in the Woodnook area and issues with his tenants and drinking/anti-social behaviour –as this is a condition attached to the licence.
- 3.6 Prosecutions and legal activity – to date the Council has one prosecution pending against a landlord for failing to apply for licences for his rented properties. This is currently with the Council’s Legal Team.
- 3.6 Non applying landlords – we estimate that there are approximately 300 to 350 properties in the SL area that require a licence for which a licence application has yet to be received by the Council. We are currently gathering evidence via housing benefit and council tax records, Land Registry information and local knowledge etc to target the owners and landlords. Ultimately we will commence legal action if applications are not received.
- 3.7 2 year review – the original Designation Report for the introduction of selective licensing in the Borough mentioned that the “designation will be reviewed every 2 years”. The 2 year anniversary will be reached on 1 December 2014. On the 1st year anniversary we gathered information and evidence on the impact and progress of the scheme and presented this to CMT and Cabinet in the form of an ‘Annual Monitoring Report’. This will be repeated on the 2nd anniversary but will also include a more in depth analysis / review of the designation to date. The findings are likely to be available early in 2015 and will be published. This will give a detailed and comprehensive review on the progress of the scheme.

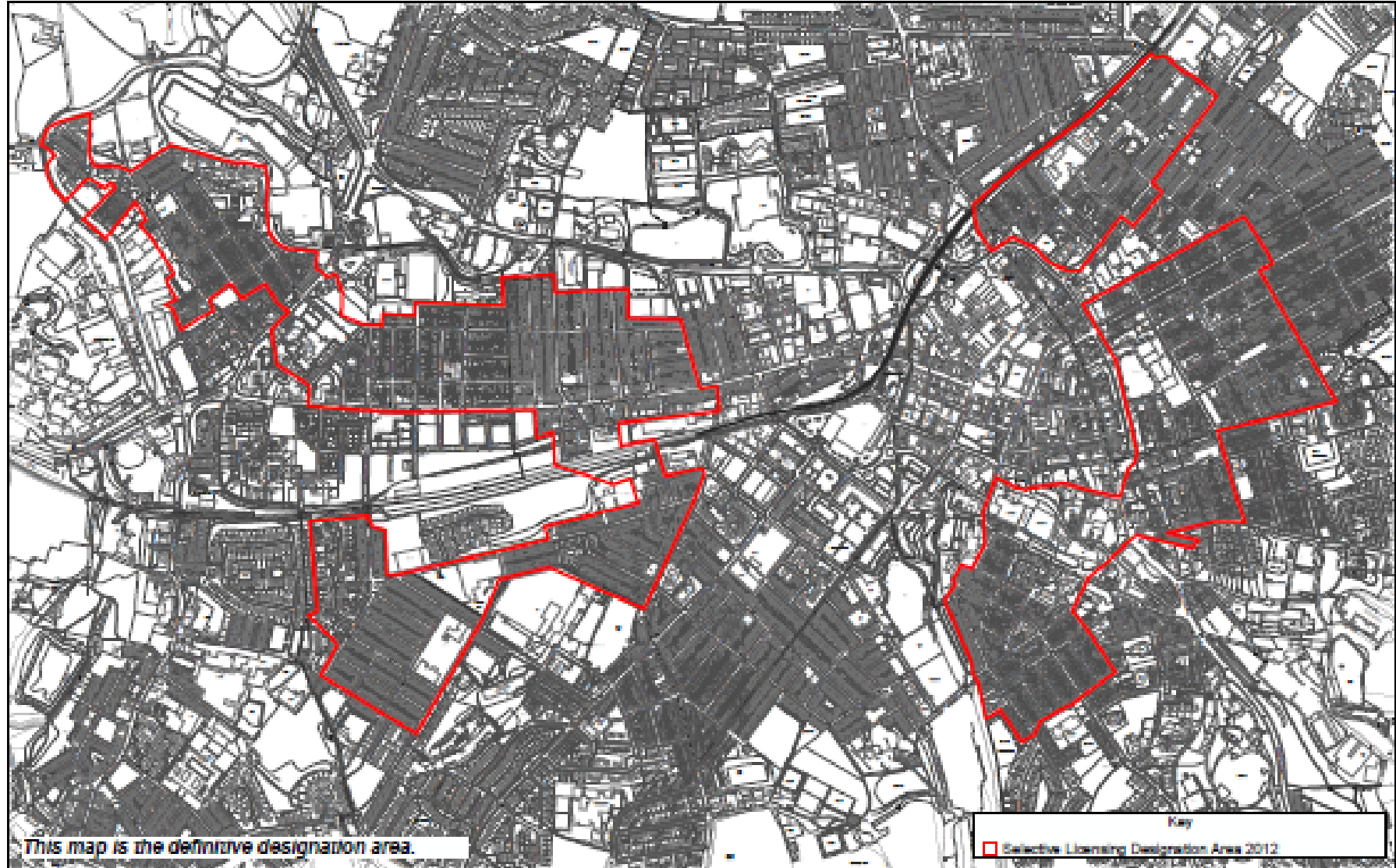
Private Landlord Liaison

- 3.8 Private Landlord Forum – in partnership with the National Landlords Association (NLA) we will be holding a private landlord forum on the evening of Thursday 27th November 2014. There is a wide ranging and varied agenda including presentations from the Fire Service, Warm Homes Hyndburn partners on energy efficiency, the DWP and Hyndburn’s Benefit Service talking about universal credit role out in Hyndburn and information on Hyndburn’s Empty Properties Programme.

- 3.9 Private Landlord Liaison Group – for the last couple of years the Council has facilitated this group to complement the private landlord forum. The purpose of the group is to foster and improve engagement and liaison between the Council, statutory, community and voluntary sector partners and private landlords in Hyndburn in recognition of the significant role the private sector plays in the borough's housing market and to assist in developing policies for private rented housing. Meetings are held on a 4 monthly basis and over the last year we have been looking at ways in which the private sector can assist the Council in meeting its housing needs and help in preventing homelessness.
- 3.10 Membership is drawn from local lettings and estate agents, representatives from Hyndburn landlords, residents' association representatives, Maundy Relief, Shelter, Police, Fire Service and borough council officer and Member representation.

TITLE: The Borough of Hyndburn Designation of an Area for Selective Licensing No. 1 2012

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