

CABINET – 12 MARCH 2015

163 CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT SELECTIVE LICENSING FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

Councillor George Davies introduced a report by the Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment which set out the results of the consultation exercise on a proposal for a Selective Licensing Scheme for private landlords in four designated areas in the Borough known as :-

- Area 1 - Birkenhead South
- Area 2 - Egerton North
- Area 3 - Seacombe Library
- Area 4 - Egremont Promenade South

Councillor George Davies informed that selective licensing was intended to address the impact of poor quality private landlords and anti-social tenants. It had primarily been developed with the need to tackle problems in areas of low housing demand in mind.

The report set out the background and key issues, the statutory consultation requirements in respect of local authorities designating a licensing scheme, the consultation that the Council had actually undertaken the resulting changes to the Business Plan as well as the risks, other options considered and the financial planning and community safety and legal implications.

Appended to the report as Appendix 1 was the proposed fees structure drawn up following the consultation that had been carried out.

The Cabinet noted that Maps and Address lists could be found in the Draft Business Case which was available in the Council's web library.

Based on the feedback from the consultation undertaken and the robust evidence used for the Business Case rationale, Members were asked to approve the introduction of a Selective Licensing Scheme for all private rented properties within the four designated areas under Section 80 of the Housing Act 2004.

The Strategic Director was in attendance at the meeting and informed that some costs of the overall service would be offset by the fee income generated as part of the licence process however it was also anticipated if a Scheme was taken forward, the reduction of vacant and poorly managed properties would drive increases in Council Tax income as more people would choose to reside in the areas because of an improved quality of housing offer. Empty houses being brought back into use would generate additional Council tax.

The Strategic Director also informed the Cabinet that he was aware that draft Orders were being laid before Parliament but he did not believe that they would have an impact.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that the Selective Licensing Scheme for private landlords was one of his Administration's flag ship policies and he was very pleased that it was being rolled out now.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposal for the designation of Selective Licensing in the four areas in the Borough as set out in the Business Plan to cover all private tenancies in accordance with Section 80 of the Housing Act 2004 be approved;**
- (2) the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement be given delegated authority to take all necessary steps to implement the operational delivery of selective licensing including recruitment of staff;**
- (3) it be agreed that the selective licensing designation shall come into force on 1 April 2015 with an anticipated target commencement date of 1 July 2015;**
- (4) delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for neighbourhoods Housing and Engagement to discuss co-regulation options with the National Landlords Association and other representative organisations; and**
- (5) the report be referred to the Council meeting scheduled to be held on 16 March 2015 for its approval.**