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What evidence base exists for the scale of the problem in the area?

Following on from the successes of Nottingham City Councils CLG funded Rogue Landlord Campaign the Safer Housing Team continues to work closely in partnership under Community Protection which is a partnership between Nottingham City Council Enforcement, and Community Cohesion Teams, and Nottinghamshire Police. Nottingham has a high transient community with some 60,000 students with a settling transient migrant population focused on the inner city wards. Many of these residents have very low incomes and are suffering from deprivation whilst living in some of the least desirable properties in the private rented sector, either as a family unit or as individuals and families in shared housing (HMO's). Through intelligence sharing, experience and working with the community it is known that in parts of the city there are some broader issues associated to the private rented sector including aspects of safeguarding, exploitation and potential links to the wider criminal activities such as cannabis and illicit tobacco. The project will deal also encounter and deal with some particular problems on an area that has been shown by the Indices of multiple deprivation to be the worst in Nottingham.

Nottingham City Council is currently working through its additional licencing scheme which was first implemented January 2014. Information provided from council tax and housing benefit teams showing possibly upwards of 2,000 properties that may fall within the additional definition that have yet still to apply for a licence under this scheme, potentially therefore acting against the law and as a Rogue. NCC continues to work on the delivery of the licence applications and this is why our statistics below are so high, for example through the service of LG(MP)Act section 16 notices, as we work to identify these properties and persons by using first stage intervention/enforcement and disruption.

The Safer Housing Team has received 2,308 requests for service by the citizens of Nottingham this financial year mainly relating to standards in the private rented sector of properties within a market of nearly 28,000 privately rented properties.

The statistics below show a heavily driven reactive response to citizen needs whilst the team is still programming work streams to proactively deal with the rogue element within Nottingham.

What, if any, rogue landlord activity is already being undertaken in 2015/2016;

The Safer Housing Team throughout the year has already delivered on;

Properties Improved - 517

LG(MA)Act section 16 notices served	-	1,282
Initial letters chasing licence applications	-	816
2 nd reminder letters	-	585
3 rd reminder letters	-	282
Cat 1's removed	-	89
Cat 2's reduced	-	81
Improvement Notices Served	-	55
Prohibitions	-	23
Emergency Prohibitions	-	24
Emergency Remedial Actions	-	14
Raids/Warrants	-	11
Prosecutions	-	4
By passed electrics	-	6

There is a proposed partnership in a pilot area where through shared intelligence with Nottinghamshire Police, other partners and community consultation has identified rogue landlords and poor housing as a key issue. 66 addresses have been identified of places of interest. The properties identified have already been RAG rated (Red Amber Green) and are placed within a tasking framework for a response. This area has specifically focused on flats, in HMO's above commercial premises which are known to be of a poorer standard.

Two addresses from the list of 66 have already been inspected resulting in both properties being closed under Emergency Prohibition Orders culminating in safeguarding issues via Nottingham City Council Social Care Team and rehousing through Nottingham City Council Housing Aid Team for the displaced families.

Case Study 1 – Following a Food Safety inspection, dangerous conditions were found in the basement of a commercial premises caused by a dangerous electrical installation and a quantity of stored petrol. The commercial element was trading late into the night on the ground and first floor with living accommodation on the second floor. The accommodation had been altered removing all roof purling ties in an attempt to create a conversion leaving to roof structure imminently dangerous for collapse, had no form of fire separation, no fire detection system, a dangerous means of escape through the commercial element and contained a family of three, one of which was a seven year old boy. The Food Safety Team carried out emergency prohibition of the basement. The Safer Housing Team carried out emergency prohibition of the accommodation as a dwelling and served notices on the fire escape and conditions found. This was supported by colleagues from the Fire Authority, Dangerous Structures, Police, Social Care and Housing Aid. This landlord is being treated as a 'rogue'.

Case Study 2 – Following concerns raised by a Community Protection Officer, officers from the Safer Housing Team visited a flat above a vacant commercial unit to discover unsuitable fire separation, no working fire alarm system, dangerous means of escape through a high risk room, bypassed electrics and a family that could not speak any English who had young children age 10 months and nearly 2 years. The Safer Housing Team served an Emergency Prohibition Order and closed the premises. Colleagues involved were Community Protection Officers, translation services, Social Care Teams, Housing Aid, Western Power and Nottinghamshire Police. Western Power officers noted that the bypassed electric had been returned to the correct connection before they had arrived without being able to isolate the circuits sited in the vacant shop below placing themselves and the family at a massive risk of injury and fire. The Safer Housing Team are investigating this landlord as a 'rogue'.

If you were successful what additional activity would be undertaken?

It is intended to conduct inspections of the remaining 64 addresses. The inspections will be a multi service approach with a focus on housing and rogue landlords but also looking at the premises as a whole and any commercial element below. The Safer Housing Team will include as necessary Trading Standards, Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue, Nottinghamshire Police and the Food Safety Team as well as tenant support and Community Cohesion. Where appropriate wider agencies such as HMRC, Border Agency and the Gang Masters Licensing authority will be involved

The inspections of the identified properties (residential accommodation) will be to assess as believed to require a HMO license (mandatory or additional) and also to carry out a HHSRS assessment to the conditions found taking appropriate action dependant to the findings. This will undoubtedly lead to further enforcement actions in relation to improvements required, failure to licence and breaches under the management regulations. It is also believed that common associations will build on the intelligence gathered for portfolio landlords involved, by association, to other properties and business interests. This will build on the sustainable service delivery for the teams after the funding has been spent as part of this application.

The inspection will involve a full property assessment with the focus on housing but considering all aspects of activity in the accommodation and provide a support package for all of the occupants. The number of inspections maybe higher or lower dependant on the problems and conditions found. Our previous involvement within the area indicates that an interpreter may be required to communicate fully with the tenants. Information suggests that there are 58 different languages spoken within that focus area.

It is expected from the 64 properties to be inspected at least a third will require emergency closure and therefore provision will be required for emergency accommodation for those individuals who do not fulfil the criteria for rehousing as being in priority need. This final figure will be dependent on the quality of the housing discovered and the problems found at that time.

Where further work is deemed necessary action will be taken by either officers from the Safer Housing Team and/or other authorised persons from the agencies involved.

Should any offences be suspected or found at the properties, evidence will be collected in accordance to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which will include taking statements from tenants, landlords, business operators and known associates.

The communications strategy for the campaign would be to increase the literature available for tenants within the area on their rights and responsibilities, and deliver this information at the point of inspection and to place within Community Centres within the immediate area. Due to the level of multiagency work being completed by the Safer Housing Team we would also produce a handbook/sign posting for partner organisations to increase the efficiency of referral systems that will be sustainable and maintained for service delivery following the end of the propose campaign.

Funding has also been requested for the purchase of an unmarked, unidentifiable vehicle to deliver multiple functions and to allow for the sustainability of the project and ensure the safety of officers travelling throughout the city, to monitor local activities and carry out service delivery. The absence of appropriate transport has hampered previous operations.

The funding will allow for the provision of and commitment of staff for 3 months being;

1x Principal EHO	£10,750
2x EHO	£18,750

1x EO	£8,000
3x Support Officer	£15,000
1x Social Care Officer	£10,750
1x Housing Aid Officer	£9,375
1x Fire Officer	£7,204
1x Trading Standards Officer	£10,750
1x Intelligence Officer	£12,500

Additional funding would be required for

Training for Landlords and Partners	£10,000
Unmarked Ford Transit Custom Twin Cab Van	£18,000
Translation services	£3,000
Communications & Marketing	£5,000
Emergency Accommodation (4 persons £75 each x 2 nights x 20 closures)	£12,000
	£151,079

This commitment will be match funded in kind by utilisation from existing resources within the service area teams both during the three months of the project and the ongoing work that will result beyond the life time of the project. Also the commitment in partnership that will provide support of uniformed police officers to conduct any side by side criminal and safeguarding investigations reinforced with a robust back office intelligence function. This will provide support to EHOs on enforcement days to minimise any risk of harm whilst maximising safety for all officers, minimise risk of harm to tenants, landlords and public to minimise the risk of crime and disorder at the identified properties and outlying areas.

Number of inspections;

The 64 planned inspections will provide further intelligence which will be programmed back into the mainstream of work that the team currently delivers. The inspections will build on current intelligence to other associated properties/persons and/or businesses that will need further investigations and intelligence mapping.

Number of Notices under housing and planning legislation;

From the statistics above we can only estimate the number of interventions that will be required from all 64 of the properties being rated under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) leading to interventions ranging from the service of Improvement Notices to multiple notice for Emergency Remedial Actions, Prohibition Orders (PO), Emergency Prohibition Orders (EPO).

Therefore;

64 HHSRS inspections	
Estimated 25% closure – either PO or EPO	16
50% requiring improvement notices to multiple responsible persons	32 Properties, 64 Notices
50% requiring Other Agency formal Interventions	32 Properties
14 Properties with no action required	

Number of Raids;

Our initial lists of 64 properties have now been RAG rated to show 20 properties being rated as red. Further information is being gathered to identify additional properties of interest. Nottingham City Council estimates this number rising to around 30 properties which may require multi agency action by the method of a raid.

Number of Enforcement Actions/Prosecutions;

We estimate that multiple properties will require enforcement actions which will involve partner agencies in at least 50% of the premises. In total an estimated 75% will require formal interventions for conditions and breaches of legislation for licensing and management regulations, therefore 48 properties will receive multiple enforcement actions of which it is expected that 10 will result in prosecution.

These figures will vary dependent on the conditions found as the teams conduct the inspections. It can also be expected that the performance figures stated will rise in line with conditions previously found within the area bearing in mind the two properties already inspected were both closed under the emergency powers (100%).

Number of streets surveyed;

The initial proposed properties are all on one street. As previously stated we will uncover connections/associations by persons and properties that will lead to identify high risk locations that will be surveyed on other streets. This work and the legacy build around rogue landlords will continue after the project as dealing with Rogue Landlords is a commitment embedded within the Council Plan. As you can see from the figures provided the Safer Housing Team is dealing with thousands of properties covering multiple street and areas throughout the city.

Number of Sheds Demolished;

This has not been found to be prevalent within the boundaries of Nottingham City Council.

Other;

Nottingham City Council and its partners including Nottinghamshire Police have undertaken extensive activity through its Community Protection Directorate to address the problem of rogue landlords.

The investigation of rogue landlords through inter-disciplinary working has led to an increasing understanding both of the harms caused by malpractice itself as well as some of the underlying drivers of the issue.

Current lines of investigation and enforcement have revealed that there are often complex interdependencies between the practice of rogue landlords and other business interests in the city. There is an increasing understanding that some of the drivers of poor landlord practice can include organised illicit activity such as the importation and sale of illicit tobacco.

The infrastructure which facilitates poor and criminal practice in other areas of regulation such as off-licenses and food establishments may also be used improperly as housing. There is some information indicating this housing in turn appears to be offered to new and emerging communities of people who are vulnerable to this and other kinds of exploitation.

This complex interrelationship of issues requires a fuller picture of both the perpetrators of criminal activity be understood as well as the needs and potential vulnerability of their clients be mapped and responded to.

To deliver the most appropriate interventions to the highest priority need while also understanding and addressing the drivers of the rogue landlord issue, Nottingham Community Protection is developing a tasking and intelligence function based on the police National Intelligence Model (NIM).

Intelligence Function & Enforcement Requirement- Community Protection's development of an intelligence function to support all its many areas of business represents a considerable investment on behalf of Nottingham City Council. This commitment to understanding complex issues is well reflected in the priority it places on tackling rogue landlords and their associated offending.

To enable this work to progress at pace and to build a model of working on this issue which can be learnt from and sustained for the future funding is sought from the DCLG Rogue Landlord fund to allow a dedicated focus on this work stream.

Contribution - Funding is sought to allow the secondment of officer time from a housing enforcement specialist to join the nascent intelligence unit to build a comprehensive intelligence picture of priority rogue landlords as well as their victims.

Outputs by March 2016: Comprehensive intelligence picture of rogue landlords in Nottingham. A victim profile of tenants, mapping their needs and demographics. A mechanism for on-going intelligence collection and on-going tasking. A prioritised register of high risk properties and potential rogue landlords.

Number of buildings prohibited;

It is estimated that 25% of the properties will require prohibition (16).

Again, these figures will vary dependant to the conditions found as the teams conduct the inspections. It can also be expected that the figures stated will rise in line with conditions previously found within the area bearing in mind the two properties already inspected were both closed under the emergency powers (100%).

What outcomes would be achieved if awarded £100,000 in 2015/2016? An example of a positive outcome may be the general improvement of the area. Please note that this figure is for illustrative purposes;

Should the authority be successful we will be able to proactively target and carry out multiple interventions to all the planned 64 properties as detailed above. This will challenge rogue landlord behaviour and reduce the number of 'rogue' properties and increase the actions taken against rogue landlords. The intelligence gathered will improve the quality and quantity of local data on poor/rogue landlords allowing officers to proactively response to whole portfolios through intelligence led investigations and to provide further information easily to citizens and partners. The work will make landlords and tenants aware of the consequences of actions and remove the rogue landlord's activity from the market. The success of the campaign will mean that we will have dealt with multiple rogue landlords and rogue properties as well as communicating outputs through established social media and local media outlets to other landlords and tenants, therefore reducing the issue overall. This will assist us to manage the issue of rogue and poor landlord behaviour in an ongoing sustainable way.

How much money is being sought;

£141,079

Will the funding be spent by 31st March 2016;

Yes

Will the local authority or other agencies match fund?

This commitment will be match funded in kind, by utilisation of existing resources within the service areas concerned both during the three months of the project and the ongoing work that will result beyond the life time of the project as it is difficult for the authority to find uncommitted in-year funding. There is also a commitment already in place from Nottinghamshire Police that will provide the support of uniformed police officers to conduct any side by side criminal and safeguarding investigations reinforced with a robust intelligence function. This will provide support to EHOs on enforcement days to minimise any risk from harm whilst maximising safety for all officers, minimise risk of harm to tenants, landlords and public minimise the risk of crime and disorder at the identified properties and outlying areas. Nottingham City Council will provide further funding in respect of support from the Food Safety Team, Health & Safety Team, and Community Cohesion Teams where it is identified that there are connections between rogue landlords and other operations connected to the properties, for example commercial business, food enterprises and night time economy. Links are also provided into HMRC, UK Borders Agency and The Gang Master Licensing Authority.

What are the risks to delivery and what mitigating action will be taken;

An overwhelming public response providing information about rogue and poor landlord behaviour could mean that officers are not able to record and respond to reports in a timely manner. This would need to be managed by prioritising action and where possible drawing in support from current teams, and the consideration of the provision of additional resource. The discovery of complex problems found may also affect the achievable inspection number. Any community affect including equally impact. The displacement of tenants and the need to identifying alternative accommodation. There is provision within the bid for this as it is essential that the project takes an end-to end approach to the issue which doesn't merely result in the displacement of tenants and one which offers some kind of support to those who, although not covered by the statutory homelessness arrangements are nonetheless highly vulnerable to exploitation. Generally preplanning will be a priority with an equally impact assessment and risk assessment approach ensuring that a framework of response and support is present to enable risks to be addressed. This bid is fully supported by the Portfolio holders responsible for Community Services and Planning and Housing. It fully supports objectives within the recently published Council Plan, namely: To enable Nottingham residents to have access to a high standard of accommodation, whether renting or buying, to work with the Police and other partners to continue to drive down crime and anti-social behaviour.