

## **Appendix 2: Selective Licensing Consultation: Analysis of Responses**

### **1. Background**

Nottingham City Council conducted an eleven week consultation exercise on a proposal to implement a scheme of selective licensing between 16<sup>th</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

People gave their views through: an on-line consultation survey, via written responses (paper based and by email), an e-petition and at numerous consultation events.

This report presents the findings from the consultation exercise.

The evidence used to formulate the proposed designation that was consulted on is based on the methodology as set out in Appendix 2 to the Executive Board Report 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 – Nottingham City Council Proposal for a scheme of selective licensing for Privately Rented Homes, section iv The evidence to support the proposal. A designation may be made to combat problems in an area experiencing poor property conditions, an influx of migration, a high level of deprivation or high levels of crime. The proposed designated area in the scheme is based on the Lower Super Output Areas performance against these statutory grounds criteria outlined in this guidance.

### **2. Executive summary**

The survey resulted in 1460 responses, of which 19 were paper copies and 1441 were on-line; 81 individuals or organisations submitted written responses; 208 copies of a standard electronic letter (see Appendix 1i) disagreeing with the proposals were received as well as an e-petition signed by 71 people. The majority of the signatories were from outside of the city

Overall the majority of private tenants welcome the proposed scheme, with 54% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposal to introduce a scheme of selective licensing in the city. More respondents to the survey disagreed with the proposal than agreed (68% v 27%). Of those that disagreed the majority were landlords (86%). Letting and managing agents were identified as a separate stakeholder group to landlords, and whilst they were more negative than positive about the scheme they formed a very small group, the majority of which are also located outside of the city. This group responded mainly through the consultation events and email/written submissions.

Private tenants felt that the conditions of the scheme would improve conditions in the private rented sector, with 56% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Over half the social housing tenants that responded (54%) also thought this would be the case. Whilst the majority of respondents to the survey disagreed that the proposed conditions of the scheme would improve the standards of privately rented properties in Nottingham (56% v 31%), landlords were by far the biggest stakeholder group to do so (71%).

The stakeholder groups were more split in terms of if the proposed scheme would reduce crime and ASB in privately rented properties. Private tenants agreed more than landlords that it would. Social housing tenants felt strongly that the scheme would reduce crime and ASB with 50% either strongly agreeing or agreeing. Representatives of the community or voluntary sector and homes owners were also more likely to believe that the scheme would have an impact than landlords, letting/managing agents or business owners. Just under four times as many respondents to the survey disagreed that the scheme would reduce crime and ASB for privately rented properties in Nottingham than agreed, (66% v 17%). Of the

people that disagreed the majority were landlords, with 80% of landlords responding negatively.

Almost half of private tenants also agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed Property Licensing Enforcement and Compliance Guide (49%). Social housing tenants also responded positively with 64% either strongly agreeing or agreeing. Representatives of the community or voluntary sector and homes owners were also more likely to agree with the proposed guide than landlords, letting/managing agents or business owners. Twice as many respondents to the survey disagreed with the guide than agreed (55% v 28%). Again of those that disagreed the majority were landlords, with 68% of landlords strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the question.

Private tenants were more supportive of the proposed fee of £600 per property with 27% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Again representatives of the community or voluntary sector, social housing tenants and homes owners were also more likely to agree with the proposed fees than landlords, letting/managing agents or business owners. Almost five times as many respondents to the survey disagreed with the proposed fee than agreed with it, (76% v 14%). The majority of these were landlords with 92% of landlords opposing the fee.

Private Tenants were also supportive of the reduction for accredited landlords with 43% supporting the proposed reduction. Representatives of the community or voluntary sector, social housing tenants and homes owners were also more likely to agree with the discount for accredited providers than landlords, letting/managing agents or business owners. Almost one and a half times as many respondents disagreed with the proposed reduction of £140 for accredited landlords than agreed with it (41% v 29%). The majority that strongly disagreed or disagreed were Landlords or letting/managing agents, although letting/managing agents were more in favour of the reduction than landlords.

Private tenants were more supportive of the other proposed fees with 25% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the other fees being proposed. Again representatives of the community or voluntary sector, social housing tenants and homes owners were also more likely to agree with the other proposed fees than landlords, letting/managing agents or business owners. Four times as many respondents to the survey disagreed with the other fees within the proposed scheme than agreed, (59% v 14%). The majority of these were landlords or managing/letting agents with 73% of landlords and 81% of agents opposing the other fees.

Private tenants were more supportive with the proposed designated area of the scheme with 38% agreeing or strongly agreeing. The other stakeholder groups were also more likely to respond positively with 40% of home owners, 43% of community or voluntary groups and 43% of Social Tenants supporting the proposed designated area. Two and half times as many respondents to the survey disagreed, (52% v 21%). The majority of these were landlords or managing/letting agents with 62% of landlords and 61% of agents opposing the proposed designation.

Of the survey responses and written submissions that **agreed** with the proposals, some of the biggest themes occurring were:

- The scheme would improve the condition of rental properties
- Comments regarding bad or unscrupulous landlords
- Comments regarding how good landlords were being penalised by the proposals / should have discounts
- Alternatives to the proposals or suggestions, e.g. create a database that allows tenants to compare or review landlords, widen the list of recognised accreditation bodies and support for landlords in combating ASB.

Of the survey responses and written submissions that **disagreed** with the proposals, some of the biggest 'themes' occurring were:

- How selective licensing is unnecessary or not needed,
- The proposals / evidence is flawed or incorrect, and the scope of the proposals is too large
- The proposals are nothing but a tax on landlords
- The proposals will lead to rent increases
- The proposals have a negative effect on / penalise good landlords
- The proposals will not tackle 'rogue' landlords
- The fees are too high and the discount for accredited landlords should be greater
- ASB isn't the responsibility of landlords and the proposal would not reduce incidences of ASB.

### **3. Methodology for the Consultation**

The consultation used a wide variety of communication channels and methodologies, including:

- Information leaflet distributed to all households within the city
- Information leaflet made available in NHS GP Surgeries, leisure centres, libraries, council buildings, community centres and cultural centres
- Article in the December 2016 and February 2017 edition of the Nottingham Arrow.
- Stakeholder emails to: landlords, landlord organisations, businesses, and residents groups.
- Press release in local media, i.e. Nottingham Evening Post and ITV Central news
- Dedicated web page on City Council external website and internal Intranet pages.
- Attendance at all Area Committee meetings during the period of the consultation
- Attendance at neighbourhood and Nottingham City Council consultation events.
- Attendance at local landlord meetings to discuss proposals.
- Communities and voluntary sector event – 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017
- Landlord and Managing Agent event – 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2017
- Email sent to 'communities of interest' organisations/groups.
- Email to business organisations and representatives.
- Letter to chief executives of neighbouring authorities
- Digital marketing campaign including social media, email marketing, and web advertising

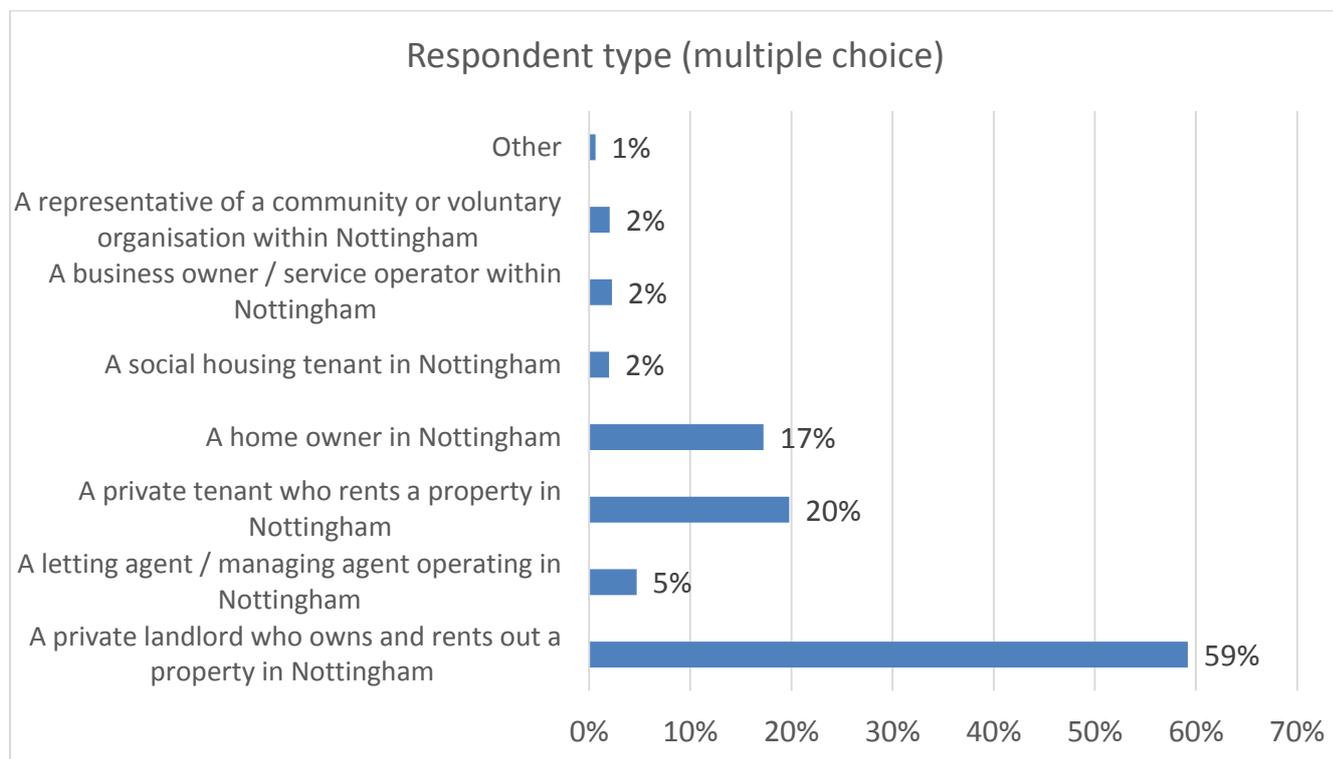
Appendix 1i and Appendix 1ii provides further details of consultation undertaken and the events held.

### **4. Summary of results**

#### **The online survey**

There were 1466 surveys completed in total (1441 online, 19 paper surveys). Amongst these the largest stakeholder group was that of private landlords who own and rent out a property in Nottingham, totalling 844 respondents. There were 282 responses from private tenants who rent a property in Nottingham; 246 from homeowners in Nottingham; 67 from letting agents/managing agents in Nottingham; 39 from respondents who selected 'other'; 32 from business owners/service operators within Nottingham; 29 from representatives of community or voluntary organisations in Nottingham; and 28 from social housing tenants in Nottingham.

There were 11 respondents who did not select any group and therefore could not be included in the analysis of stakeholder responses.



Nottingham City Council is committed to equality of opportunity, and respondents to the survey were also asked some questions about themselves in order to understand which groups of people are using its services and their needs. The questions were optional, and a number of respondents did not complete these questions. When asked about their ethnicity 19% preferred not to say. Both landlords and tenants were around 65% white (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British). More landlords than in other stakeholder groups were from an Asian Indian background with 4.4%. However 22% of landlords preferred not to say what their ethnicity was. A quite significant group of tenants was white other at 10%. 12% of tenants also said that their day to day activities limited because of health. Most tenants were in the 25 to 34 age group (43%) were as most landlords were older, with 47% falling into either the 45 to 54 or the 55 to 64 age groups. 54% of landlords and 48% of tenants were male.

In compiling the charts to show the views of 'city' and 'non-city' respondents separately, Nottingham Insight's postcode database (updated in January 2017) was consulted in order to identify whether respondents are based in or outside the City of Nottingham district. In total there were 446 respondents who didn't include a postcode so those responses were not included in these charts. Where 'non-city' landlords are referred to, the postcode of the landlord and not the rental property was used. Landlords were also asked where the property that they rented was located. The vast majority of landlords who responded owned and rented a property in Nottingham, however there were 54 out of 844 landlords that did not own and rent a property in the City and (49 of which did not live in the City either) 43 that had properties both in the City and in areas outside of Nottingham (such as Arnold, Beeston, West Bridgford, Hucknall) and 20 that did not state where their properties are.

Please note that some respondents selected more than one stakeholder group when completing the survey.

### Condition of rental properties

There was a clear divide between groups regarding whether the proposal will improve the condition of rental properties in Nottingham; the majority of private tenants, homeowners, social tenants or business-owners, and representatives of community or voluntary organisations felt the proposal would have a positive effect while the majority of landlords and letting agents/managing agents disagreed with this.

### Compliance

With the exception of landlords and letting agents/managing agents, all groups believed the scheme would encourage landlords to take greater responsibility for their properties and ensure they address issues with the properties more promptly. They felt that clear legislation applied to all landlords would help to ensure consistency between rental properties through compliance with clear regulations. For this reason they agreed with elements of the scheme such as the Property Licensing Enforcement and Compliance Guide, although some representatives of community or voluntary organisations were divided on the compliance guide itself.

Conversely, many landlords and letting agents/managing agents stated that their properties are already well-maintained and therefore there is no benefit to be gained through the scheme. They cited the fact that many landlords are already professionally accredited through voluntary registration such as Unipol and Dash and feel that this is sufficient. Many suggested that increasing voluntary accreditation through schemes such as these would be preferable to the current proposal. This was a common theme for landlords and agents throughout the survey and was related to their negative views of other aspects of the scheme, such as the Property Licensing Enforcement and Compliance Guide and the matter of paying any fees to become licensed.

The Council has promoted the use of the Nottingham Standard and voluntary accreditation schemes run by Unipol and Dash, however take up has been low and to date only 2200 properties are in these schemes.

### Existing regulations

Private tenants and homeowners, social tenants or business-owners viewed licensing as an important means of regulating landlords who are otherwise providing sub-standard accommodation, and that licensing will enable Nottingham City Council to better enforce existing regulations through increased accountability on the part of landlords. In contrast landlords and letting agents/managing agents commonly raised the idea that there are various regulations and laws pertaining to the private rented sector (PRS) already in existence. As such, they felt Nottingham City Council should enforce these.

***“The self-regulation of the private rented sector is not working and any legislation that can hold landlords to account and improve the quality of the rented sector should be welcomed by all.”(Private tenant)***

***“Putting hurdles like this in place will discourage owners from renting properties at all, instead encouraging them to sell. This won't help the rental market.” (Homeowner, social tenant or business owner)***

However it should be noted that no evidence was provided by landlords and agents that existing legislation was working to address poor property standards in the market or would work better if stronger enforcement strategies were in place to demonstrate that the proposed scheme was unnecessary.

### Fairness

A large proportion of private tenants and, separately, homeowners, social tenants or business-owners, believed the proposal as it stands would in actual fact help facilitate the targeting of irresponsible landlords and in turn improve the condition of the PRS.

The issue of fairness was prominent for landlords and letting agents/managing agents, with many seeing the proposed scheme as unjust. Reasons for this focused on the blanket nature of the scheme – it was suggested that a majority of landlords are responsible and professional and would be penalised for the shortcomings of a minority. Many viewed it as unreasonable to be asked to become licensed when they are already accredited landlords or if a letting agent manages their properties for them. Instead, it was strongly felt that so-called rogue landlords should be specifically targeted.

***“You are targeting law abiding landlords - rogue ones will avoid paying and carry on as they have done before.” (Private landlord or letting agent)***

***“I have rented in this city for seven years with grossly variable results.” (Private tenant)***

### Responsibility for anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Private tenants, landlords and agents were in considerably more agreement when discussing the issue of ASB in the PRS; both groups felt the scheme would not reduce the incidence of ASB and most agreed that this shouldn't be the responsibility of landlords but rather Nottingham City Council, in conjunction with Nottinghamshire Police. Though these two groups were largely in agreement on ASB, private tenants were more evenly divided than landlords and agents; many other private tenants believed that the scheme would encourage landlords to select tenants more carefully and to take a more active role in the maintenance of rented property. Yet more evenly split were homeowners and social housing tenants or business owners/service operators within Nottingham, who tended to feel either that it would have no effect or that it would indeed help to improve conditions which in turn could reduce ASB.

It was widely noted that landlords do not have power or legal jurisdiction to tackle ASB and that in placing this responsibility on landlords the local authority would be delegating their own duties. Both groups also stated that tenants themselves should be held accountable for their own behaviour.

Again it should be noted that no evidence was provided by landlords, and agents that existing legislation was working to address ASB or would work better if stronger enforcement strategies were in place to demonstrate that the proposed scheme was unnecessary to tackle ASB.

***“My landlord isn't responsible for my actions if I decide to turn my music on loud at night or knock over a few wheelie bins.” (Private tenant)***

***“Tenants will have an incentive to behave appropriately if there are repercussions for bad behaviour. Properties are less likely to be targeted if they are secure.” (Private tenant)***

### Cost to PRS

A common theme across all groups was concern for how the cost of the scheme would affect the PRS as a whole. Many highlighted the potential for costs to be passed on to tenants in the form of inflated rents and indeed most landlords confirmed that they intended to do this. This factor led many to worry that they or their tenants may become homeless or be forced to move due to not being able to afford rent payments. Many landlords also

suggested that they would invest outside of Nottingham and it was noted these factors together could create additional demand for social housing or housing benefits, thus placing a greater burden on the local authority.

A number of representatives of community or voluntary organisations felt the fees to be reasonable and justified. Most though were against the fees for similar reasons.

A common view amongst all respondents was that landlords should receive a discount to the fee if they're already accredited. Homeowners, social tenants or business-owners, alongside private tenants and representatives of community or voluntary organisations thought a discount would be fair and that it would incentivise landlords to agree to the scheme. Many also felt that the discount should be greater.

Many homeowners, social tenants or business-owners felt the overall fee was either too high or that it was unreasonable to ask responsible landlords to pay.

A clear theme for the vast majority of landlords was that the scheme amounts to a stealth tax being levied by Nottingham City Council. As such they felt no fees should apply at all. Of those commenting on the value of the discount itself, landlords overall felt it should be much greater, but it should be noted that many also agreed with the notion of a discount as an incentive.

***“Huge sum for one house. That's equivalent to 15% of the mortgage for one year for my property. Far too high.” (Homeowner, social tenant or business owner)***

***“Something that can incentivise landlords to have high standards would be useful.” (Private tenant)***

#### Effectiveness of proposed scheme

As described previously, a prominent theme amongst private tenants, homeowners, social tenants or business-owners, and representatives of voluntary or community organisations was that the scheme will be effective in increasing accountability of landlords, empowering tenants, and improving standards in the PRS. A portion of private tenants and homeowners, social tenants or business-owners who viewed this aspect of the proposal as appropriate and fair, feeling that all privately rented property within the remit of the city council should be subject to the same regulations. These two groups felt on the whole that the compliance guide within the scheme would serve to increase accountability of landlords and to remind them of their responsibilities.

The private tenant group was particularly concerned that certain areas of Greater Nottingham with lots of privately rented housing, such as West Bridgford and Beeston, are not included in the scheme

A theme across all groups when discussing the scope of the proposal was the area of the designation; many stated it would be more effective if it were targeted at specific areas of Nottingham known to be problematic rather than all areas under Nottingham City Council's purview. It was suggested that in addition this could make the scheme more manageable for the Council. At the same time, some representatives of community or voluntary organisations and many landlords and agents viewed landlords as unlikely to sign up to the scheme because there is no incentive for them to do so.

#### **Written responses and consultation events**

There were 81 email responses in total, representing the views of landlords, tenants, partners of Nottingham City Council, and 'others'. Five consultation events were held, at

which landlords formed the overwhelming majority of attendees. Many of the points raised were in alignment with those raised through survey responses, although the most common concern at consultations related to perceived ambiguity in how the conditions of the scheme would be implemented and what this would mean for landlords and how they manage their properties. In this regard many consultation attendees wanted more clarification of the conditions.

Written responses were received from the following individuals and organisations

- Lilian Greenwood MP
- Graham Allen MP
- Nottingham City Homes
- Strategic Improvement Group (SIG)
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- BAME network
- Nottinghamshire Police
- Nottingham Trent University
- University of Nottingham
- DASH/Unipol Student Homes LTD/ANUK (National Codes)
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- The National Approved Letting Scheme (NALS)
- National Landlord's Association (NLA)
- The Home Safe Scheme Limited
- Residential Landlords Association (RLA)
- East Midlands Property Owners (EMPO)
- FHP Living
- Walton and Allen
- CP Walker & Son – 208 responses on behalf of...
- 14 letters or emails received from individuals and landlords

*NB: CP Walker & Son sent multiple copies of their view of the proposal on behalf of different named clients (though it is not clear whether they had the authority of those clients to do so). In the following comparison of organisations' attitudes toward the proposal, those repeat responses were counted as the single view of the organisation.*

#### Effectiveness of Proposed Scheme

Also relating to the proposed conditions of the scheme was the view from the landlord and letting/managing agent groups that there are currently regulations in place for landlords that many feel could be better enforced. It was felt that if existing regulations aren't being enforced then a large scheme such as the one being proposed is unlikely to be any better enforced. Tied to this was the view that the scheme would be more manageable and resources better-allocated if the new scheme targeted landlords whose properties aren't up to standard. Again no evidence was provided by this stakeholder group to support this view.

Manageability of the scheme wasn't a concern for most of the organisations that responded although some did cite this as an issue, along with the suggestion that it should be targeted more specifically towards inadequate landlords. The same proportion of organisations also felt existing regulations could be better enforced.

There was a strong theme amongst written responses (particularly those from NCC partners and 'others') that the scheme is a good idea and will likely improve conditions in the PRS. It was felt the scheme could ensure landlords take a more active role in managing properties and thus tenants would be empowered and better-protected.

Contrary to this, one of the strongest themes from the consultation events was the view from the landlord and letting agent/managing agent groups that 'rogue' landlords won't be affected by the scheme as they will continue to evade detection. Landlords felt there was little evidence the scheme would facilitate the identification of irresponsible landlords and therefore that the scheme wasn't expected to improve standards in the PRS.

**“The university is supportive of bringing in selective licensing in Nottingham. This scheme ..... covers a range of requirements, how the property is managed, dealing with tenants, tackling anti-social behaviour and licence holder training .... Would benefit Nottingham residents, both students and non-students, in knowing that there is a requirement for all rented properties ..... to be licensed, not only those covered already by Mandatory and Additional licensing. The Mandatory and Additional licensing has helped to push up standards in the rental sector and extending the licensing scheme should enhance this.”**

Nottingham City Homes (NCH) was supportive of the proposal so that private sector tenants could benefit from the same conditions as Nottingham City Homes tenants

**“NCH strongly supports the proposed scheme and believes it will improve the standard of private rented property in Nottingham. It will provide a clear Licensing regime across the City which will be easier for all parties to understand ....., which will be an improvement on the existing situation where certain sorts of dwellings are subject to licensing and others are not. The existing situation can be confusing ..... to some landlords / property investors, who are not necessarily property professionals and thus not always experts in the differing requirements of existing arrangements.”**

The Health and Wellbeing board also welcomed the proposal saying that it was

**“ positive that the proposed scheme was bold and covered the whole City.”**

**“Nottinghamshire Police welcomed the proposal particularly in relation to supporting vulnerable individuals.”**

### Fairness

Many landlords and managing agents viewed the designated area of the scheme as unnecessary, citing scarcity of evidence for the idea that a city-wide scheme is needed. These stakeholders also commonly felt that the scheme would benefit from being piloted in certain areas and being rolled out more widely only after its efficacy had been assessed. Similarly, it was felt that landlords of new builds shouldn't be as high a priority as those who rent out older properties.

It was widely seen as unfair by landlord and letting/managing agent groups the perception amongst these groups was that landlords are to be penalised through enforced payment for licensing and as such the scheme was seen as a stealth tax on rental income. Relating to this was the notion that there should be different obligations – or exemption – for landlords whose properties are let through an agent. The scheme could be seen as a tax for landlords and therefore unfairly penalises responsible landlords. Here, again, it was suggested that those using a letting agent should benefit from a rebate or reduced obligations.

This idea was further supported by written responses – especially those from landlords but also from 'others' – who agreed that the proposal appears to penalise all landlords indiscriminately and that landlords using letting agents should be given a rebate.

***“As always it is the compliant landlord who will be affected by the scheme. They pay the high fees involved but do not need regulation of this kind.” (EMPO)***

***“It will provide a clear licensing regime across the City which will be easier for all parties to understand...which will be an improvement on the existing situation where certain sorts of dwellings are subject to licensing and others are not.” (Nottingham City Homes)***

#### Responsibility for anti-social behaviour (ASB)

The issue of who should be responsible for tenants' ASB formed a significant theme during consultation events, with many stating that the onus for tackling ASB shouldn't fall to landlords but rather the police. In this respect it was stated that the scheme would not reduce ASB. Many stated that tenants themselves must be held responsible and that landlords receive little assistance in managing difficult tenants.

Only slightly less prominent was the view, especially amongst the landlord and managing/letting agent group, that evidence provided in the proposal was insufficient to demonstrate a causal link between ASB and housing conditions in the PRS, nor did it acknowledge – as some said is the case - that areas with licensing schemes in place continue to experience ASB.

Fewer than half of the organisations cited the scheme's ASB goals as a concern, although some did query the evidence presented and echoed the view that no causal link between property standards and ASB had been demonstrated.

This was not a controversial theme in written responses and was mentioned by very few – just a small proportion of landlords and 'others' voiced concern that tackling ASB shouldn't be the responsibility of landlords and that tenants themselves should be more accountable.

***“The SIG would also endorse efforts to provide a focus for improvement on areas where there is a larger incidence of PRS accommodation and address the issues of ASB within the PRS accommodation. ASB can have a significant impact on wellbeing and the feeling of a secure home. It also has a disproportionately significant impact of vulnerable people housed within the PRS. The PRS providers of the City should accept a clear responsibility for addressing these issues and their responsibility not simply to offer a house to live in but a home to settle in.” (Members of SIG)***

***“...I think there is a problem with the private renting sector at present which needs addressing and am extremely glad the council has proposed this scheme, as I think it will benefit both tenants and residents, as well as landlords themselves..”  
(Homeowner, social tenant or business owner)***

NCC partners support the view that selective licensing could be an effective tool in tackling ASB

NCH responded:

**“Robust property management processes and procedures can help to reduce ASB. ASB from private rented properties is often a cause of concern and complaint from our own tenants”.**

**“The proposals will increase the expectation that addressing ASB is important matter for landlords and agents, and will help to ensure that the message that ASB is not acceptable is conveyed to the tenants and residents of the properties concerned. This will help strengthen the existing approach to tackling ASB in Nottingham and ensure a valuable contribution is made to the overall efforts to achieve this.”**

**“A case that illustrates this issue involved a flat with dogs that were not under adequate control, dog fouling in communal areas, tampering with electricity supply, denying access to the communal areas of the building, verbal threats to our tenants and such issues. In this case it took a disproportionate amount of time for our staff in negotiating with the letting agency responsible for the property, seeking to ensure they persuaded the landlord to take appropriate action.”**

Related to this Nottingham Trent University responded on the criteria of Crime:

**“Crime reduction for private renters is an important issue for Nottingham residents and we believe more should be done for this group of citizens. We support the idea of a selective licensing scheme across the suggested area”**

**“Recent work undertaken with colleagues at NTU ... confirms that ... private renters have significantly lower installations of .... burglary prevention devices recommended in our research and subsequent Neighbourhood Watch guidance.**

**Areas of Nottingham with higher rates of private rented households ..... should be targeted first due to increased risk outlined in our research”**

#### Cost to PRS

A strong theme throughout consultation events was that any increase in costs for landlords would be passed on to tenants in the form of increased rents. It was posited that this could in turn lead to increased pressure on social housing and diminished willingness on the part of landlords to accept tenants on housing benefit. However a show of hands at one consultation event did indicate that around half the landlords present would not increase rent due to these proposals.

This was also the strongest theme amongst organisations, who shared the view that licensing would lead to rent increases and that this could lead to greater demand for social housing.

Despite a strong consensus that costs would be passed on to tenants, there was still a prominent number of attendees at consultation events who felt standards in the PRS would actually diminish as a result of landlords having less funds available to maintain properties.

It was widely stated that responsible landlords should be distinguished from others through discounted licenses if, for example, they are already accredited through recognised bodies or if using accredited letting agents to manage their properties.

A similar proportion of attendees suggested landlords themselves should be licensed rather than licensing each property. Furthermore, it was felt that landlords with small portfolios should be exempt from the scheme entirely.

Landlords and letting and managing agents felt strongly that the scheme and its associated costs would discourage investment in the city and possibly cause landlords to sell their properties due to a lack of financial incentive to continue.

These sentiments were mirrored throughout written responses, with all groups citing concerns that the scheme will result in increased rent in the PRS and a reduction in PRS investment in the city.

**“I think the landlords should be allowed to pay the fee in a number of instalments to allow them to cope with it.” (Graham Allen, MP)**

NCH committed that proposed scheme would help them to reduce their costs:

**“The proposed scheme will bring improved clarity, speed and efficiency to finding out who local property owners are, which is often a time consuming and difficult process in the private rented sector, yet of vital importance when issues that relate to adjoining properties .... need to be resolved..... It is not unusual for tenants of properties to be unaware who owns them.**

**Repairs and related problematic management issues from adjoining properties can take considerable staff time to sort out and create increased costs for NCH despite the cause of the problems emanating from private rented properties. On some occasions the issues cause considerable problems for the homes we manage and for our tenants.”**

#### Conclusion

Whilst on the whole the written responses and feedback from the Consultation Events was along the lines of the on line survey both results were overwhelmingly from one stakeholder group. Overall the responses received from the Council's partners supported the proposal.

**“[University of Nottingham] ....are very keen to see a clear and transparent register of licensed properties which can be viewed by all who have an interest to rent. The student rental market and how students find their property is very different now, with most choosing the internet to source their new home..... It would be useful to have an easy accessible and up to date register to check.”**

Partners in areas where existing licensing schemes are in operation were supportive of the proposal

**“The existing licensing scheme for HMOs has improved behaviour. The majority of landlords have good standards, but some don't and this scheme will bring them all up to standard.”**

In addition responses were received from local MPs in support of the scheme and the benefits it would bring for their constituents

**“I have been concerned about poor standards in the city's private rented sector having received numerous complaints about housing conditions over a number of years and believe these proposals will go a long way to addressing these concerns. I understand the University of Nottingham Students' Union and Nottingham Action Group, two important community organisations based in my constituency have responded in support of this consultation and I echo their views. I wholeheartedly support these proposals in their entirety and hope they will be enacted.”**

**“We need a Private Rented Sector that provides decent, safe and secure homes at a price people can afford and I appreciate that while most landlords provide a good service for their tenants, at present there are too many bad landlords who prey on vulnerable tenants. Indeed complaints about landlords to Local Authorities are rising and the percentage of non-decent properties in the private rented sector is significantly higher than in other tenures.”**

The following response to the consultation was received from a resident who had experienced a number of problems caused by private rented sector properties:

**“... I think is a wonderful idea and that the only landlords who would oppose it are the ones who do not keep high standards. I have had issues with rental properties as a homeowner.**

**...The landlord of the house adjoining mine caused significant damage to his property .... This affected my property and significantly impacted on my ability to sell and the subsequent loss we made when we did eventually sell. .... The windows were not properly maintained, there was obvious rot and the house must have been very damp inside. It is still in a terrible state.**

**This same landlord allowed terrible tenants to stay in the hose, they often played extremely loud music and had parties all night. I did complain to the LA and police, I then faced harassment from both the tenants and the landlord.... There is an urgent need for private landlords to be regulated so the people living in the local area do not suffer as we did. As a homeowner with a vested interest in my community I faced abuse and misery because of this landlord.**

**In our new home .... the house to one side of us is privately rented. There is no noise issue but the garden and fencing is in a mess. There is a jungle of ivy coming over our fence, an overgrown conifer blocking light to the entire rear of my house. The wooden fence had not been maintained from their side and is rotting despite my attempts to paint and treat it from my side. .... We dare not mention any of it due to our awful experience in our previous home but equally, we are fed up and private landlords should both maintain their properties to a high standard and properly vet their tenants. We should not really be in a position where private landlords can allow their properties to fall apart, affecting ours.**

**As a person living next door to privately rented houses I feel I have no rights, not even the right to politely ask for things to be changed. .... It makes life miserable and this proposed licencing scheme sounds like a wonderful idea. I hope it happens and that private landlords have to behave responsibly so that others in the community can expect a level of consideration and for houses in the vicinity to be well maintained.”**

## **5. Standard letter of submission**

**Email from CP Walker Appendix 2i**

## **6. Survey questions**

**Appendix 2ii copy of survey questionnaire**

## **7. Analysis of responses to questions in the on line survey**

## **Appendix 2iii Charts showing responded to questions from the on line survey**

Figures in the charts contained in this appendix may exceed or fall below the base numbers quoted in section 4 above. This is a result of respondents selecting more than one option for survey questions (e.g. self-describing as both a homeowner and a landlord) or leaving some questions blank.

The charts show the responses from stakeholders as a percentage of stakeholder group members

## **8. Consultation and engagement activity summary**

**Appendix 2iv Consultation and Engagement Activity Summary**

**Appendix 2v Consultation and Engagement Activity Summary – Summary of Events**

## **9. Response document**

**Appendix 2vi Responses to objections to Consultation proposal**

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