

2021 Private Rented Sector Property Licensing Proposals

Engagement and Consultation Plan

Version 2

Date 07 01 2020

Author: *Emma Trott – Regulatory Services - Environment*

Officer	Position	Version	Distribution date
Emma Trott	Private Sector Housing Enforcement & Licensing Unit Manager	2	
	Lead Officer		
Cllr Victoria Mills	Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Brexit		
	Ward Cllrs		
Jonathan Hamston	Community Engagement		

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What can be influenced by the public / what is fixed?
3. Engagement and consultation plan
4. Activity plan
5. Contact information

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this engagement?

There are two parts to the engagement

The first is to ask for details of any experiences regarding the condition of the private rented sector in Southwark and its effect on deprivation, crime and antisocial behaviour.

The second is to provide stakeholders such as landlords, managing agents and tenants with the opportunity to provide their opinions on the Council's draft proposals to renew the additional licensing scheme, and to renew and extend the selective licensing scheme.

The result of this consultation, together with evidence obtained from various other sources will help the council devise a final set of proposals for licensing from 2021-2026 and ensure any proposals meet the needs of, and address appropriate issues, in the borough and the private rented sector.

1.2 What do we want to achieve?

The proposals for both schemes can be found in their entirety in Appendix 1; however, the overall aim of licensing is to help us to work with landlords to drive up the conditions and management standards of the private rented sector by:

- Facilitating the identification of all privately rented properties within the borough
- Establishing a more complete register of landlords operating in Southwark
- Enabling us to provide an improved strategic approach to managing the sector by redefining how the service operates by shifting the emphasis from a reactive to a proactive service
- Giving us the opportunity to inspect licensable properties to assess living conditions and to ensure that conditions of the licence are being adhered to
- Helping us to ensure that a proper standard of management of privately rented property is maintained and that properties do not become overcrowded
- Strengthening enforcement action to tackle of rogue landlords in the sector

1.3 How do we plan to achieve our objectives?

The council proposes an initial consultation to obtain feedback and views on the current licensing schemes and issues connected to the private rented sector. The results of this consultation will help the council form proposals for two new discretionary licensing schemes for 2021 to 2026. The proposals for discretionary licensing will then be put forward for public consultation at the beginning of 2020. Following this full consultation the council will make decisions on the final proposals for discretionary licensing and a) implement an additional licensing scheme and b) apply to the Secretary of State (SoS) for approval of its proposals for a selective licensing scheme for the borough. Once SoS approval has been sought the council will implement the selective licensing scheme.

2. What can be influenced by the public and what is fixed?

Fixed:

- Mandatory licence conditions for both selective and additional schemes

Can be influenced by the public:

- Whether we bring in an additional scheme
- Where we bring in an additional scheme
- Whether we bring in a selective licensing scheme
- Where we bring in a selective licensing scheme
- The fees and discounts applicable to the proposed schemes

- The discretionary licence conditions for both proposed schemes.

3. Engagement and Consultation Plan

3.1 Who are we engaging?

General target group	Examples of Individuals/organisations
Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords operating and/or living in Southwark
Landlord groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Landlords association • London Landlord Accreditation Scheme
Managing and letting agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include large chain managing and letting agents with local branches operating in Southwark
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants who have privately rented within the last 5 years • Residents who have indirect experience of the private rented sector (i.e. neighbours of PRS properties) • Other organisations that represent tenants in the PRS
Organisations that represent tenants in the PRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) • Representatives of Tenant and resident Organisations (TROs)
Professional bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chartered Institute of Housing • Chartered Institute of Environmental Health • The Building and Social Housing Foundation • Local Government Association • Local Government Information Unit • IPPR
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Southbank University • London College of Communication, University of the Arts • LeSoCo • LSE Students' Union • University of the Arts Students' Union • London South Bank Students' Union

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of London Students' Union • National Union of Students
Neighbouring local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham • Lambeth • Croydon • Bromley • Tower Hamlets • City of London
Charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lambeth and Southwark Mind • Shelter • Crisis • St Mungos • National Housing Federation • Centrepont • The Children's Society • Barnardo's • Action For Children • Women's Aid • SOLACE • Refuge • Joseph Rowntree Foundation • Praxis • Healthwatch England • The Tenants Voice • Actionplus Foundation (UK)
Advice groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Elderly Group Southwark • Blackfriars Settlement • Dulwich Helpline • Blackfriars Advice Centre • Citizens Advice Bureau • Southwark Law Centre • Cambridge House Legal Centre • Multi-Lingual Community Rights Shop • Victim Support Southwark • Southwark Mediation Centre • Southwark Disablement Association • Bengali Community Development Project • Aaina Women's Group • Latin American Women's Rights Services • Millwall Community Scheme • Southwark Churches Care • Southwark Legal and Advisory Network • Southwark Pensioners Centre • Southwark Somali Advisory Forum

3.2 When and how are we engaging?

When: The consultation period for selective and additional licensing proposals required by DCLG is 10 weeks. In order to reach as many consultees as possible, it has been decided that this consultation will be extended to 12 weeks, commencing on 5th February 2020 concluding on 29th April 2020. To support this and making use of the additional time, a number of different engagement activities have been planned for the licensing proposals.

Online consultation questionnaire

The primary way in which people will be able provide their feedback on the schemes and give details of their experiences will be via the online consultation questionnaire. This is to ensure as much as possible that the responses received are focused on the questions that we need answered and to facilitate the collation, comparison and tracking of responses.

The questionnaire will be relevant for all interested parties as it will ask targeted questions dependant on who you are i.e. whether you are a tenant, landlord or managing agent etc. The questionnaire will be hosted on a dedicated and easily accessible page on the Council's website that will provide the respondent with all the information necessary about the proposal to allow them to make an informed response. The on-line questionnaire will be accessible via all digital platforms – mobile, tablet, laptop/computer. Residents without digital access will be able to request a paper copy or can be supported to complete the questionnaire digitally at one of our engagement sessions or during an appointment with an officer.

Meetings/workshops/forums/engagement sessions

During the course of the consultation we will be running a number of events to encourage engagement with stakeholders. We will be attending multiple landlord's forums and homeless forums to inform them about the consultation and engage in Q & A sessions. Attendees will be invited to our consultation workshops and/or encouraged to fill out our online consultation questionnaire on the tablets we will have available at the sessions.

We will be holding a total of six workshops, three for landlords and agents and three for residents. These workshops will allow each group the opportunity for an in-depth interactive session to discuss their thoughts on our proposals and their experiences regarding the private rented sector in Southwark and its effect on deprivation, crime and anti-social behaviour. Attendees will be encouraged to complete our online questionnaire on the tables we will have available at the sessions.

Face to face with residents

Officers will be handing out flyers advertising our online consultation questionnaire to residents of the private sector during all housing inspections undertaken during the consultation period. All officers undertaking inspections will be equipped with a tablet so that the residents without digital access will be able to complete the questionnaire should they wish to.

Housing Solutions run weekly tenancy workshops to equip those who are actively looking for private rented accommodation with the skills and knowledge to help find a tenancy in the private rented sector. We will be attending a number of these workshops to inform attendees of the consultation and ask for their views; tablets will be available for those that wish to complete the questionnaire.

In writing/email

Contact details will also be advertised as part of the consultation so that representations can also be made via e-mail or in writing. There will be a dedicated email address for responses.

The consultation will take note of any formal petitions and will also take note of any activity on social media, although this will not equate to a formal representation.

3.3 What are the questions we will ask?

The example questions used here are samples taken from our online consultation questionnaire and should not be considered exhaustive. There will be an extensive evidence pack with all of the background information to allow respondents to understand what they are being asked and give a considered response.

1. In the last 5 years, have you received complaints from neighbours or tenants regarding antisocial behaviour in one of your properties or by your tenants?
2. What type of antisocial behaviour did these complaints relate to?
 - Nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours
 - Vandalism or graffiti
 - Alcohol or drug related activity
 - Environmental damage including littering, dumping of rubbish and abandonment of cars
 - Prostitution related activity
 - Begging or vagrancy
 - Fireworks misuse
 - Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicle
 - Other
3. In the last 5 years, have you experienced:
 - Antisocial behaviour from other private tenants within the property you were occupying
 - Antisocial behaviour from a neighbouring property that was occupied by private tenants
 - Neither
4. Do you agree with the council's proposal to introduce a renewed additional licensing scheme in 2021-2026?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
5. Do you think any of the proposed conditions should be removed?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
6. Do you think any of the proposed conditions are unclear?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
7. Are there any further conditions that we should add?
8. Do you agree with the council's proposal to introduce a renewed and expanded selective licensing scheme in 2021-2026?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
9. Do you agree with the wards that we have proposed to include in the selective licensing scheme?
10. Do you agree that these fees are reasonable?
11. If you are a landlord, would you be interested in signing up to the Gold Standard Charter?
 - Yes
 - No

- Not sure
- I am not a landlord

12. Would the proposed 50% discount on licensing fees be an incentive for you?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

13. As a tenant, would you be more likely to move into a property with a landlord or managing agent who has signed up to the Gold Standard Charter than one without?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- I am not a tenant

14. Are there any criteria for the Gold Standard Charter that you think should NOT be included, and why?

15. Are there any criteria for the Gold Standard Charter that you would like to see ADDED, and why?

3.4 How will we promote the engagement opportunity?

The Council will conduct necessary communications activity to promote the consultation and ensure a true reflection of the views of the affected groups relation to this consultation is achieved. The key to successful consultation is to ensure that stakeholders who could be affected are informed and aware of the proposals and understand how they can provide feedback. Communications will take place throughout the duration of the consultation and will include:

- Advertising on electronic media such as The Source, Southwark Council website
- An eform linked to the main consultation webpage
- Advertising on Social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook
- Straplines linked to the main consultation page to be added to all Officer email signatures
- Flyers to be handed out at a variety of events
- Posters/Advertising on buses and bus shelters
- Direct emailing of landlords and managing/letting agents or properties licensed within the last 5 years
- Engagement sessions with managing/letting agents.
- Direct mail and email to local communities
- Press releases in local publications such as Southwark Life, South London Press, Peckham Peculiar
- Posters erected in libraries and public buildings referring people to the consultation.
- Flyers to be sent to addresses that are indicated by Council data as occupied by residents with a profile that matched those in the PRS.
- Flyers to be handed out to tenants and landlords during all Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Licensing team visits/inspections.
- Flyers for students to be distributed at local higher education establishments
- Community meetings and events in Southwark, including area housing forums, street consultation events and focus groups for the representatives of some minority groups
- Landlord representative events, including a landlords forum, landlords focus group and Southwark Homeowners Forum for leaseholders
- Publicity on a landlord information website
- Meetings with representatives of charities such as Shelter, Crisis, St Mungos etc.
- Emails to a wide range of national, regional and local stakeholders
- Posters/Advertising on In-Block Management Boards
- Posters/Advertising on Resident Association community boards
- A dedicated email address for responses
- Banners for events.

- Powerpoint presentations for events.
- Direct emailing of landlords who are members of the landlord forum
- Direct emailing to Landlord forums or other professional landlord groups.
- Direct emailing of accreditation schemes.
- Direct emailing of Resident Associations, TMOs and TROs.
- Officers interviewing tenants and landlords/managing agents whilst on inspections
- Direct contact with landlords and managing agents and bodies representing landlords and agents
- Invitation of various stakeholders to workshops
- Presentations at forums
- Advertised internally on staff intranet
- Direct email to the equivalent team in neighbouring local authorities

3.5 What is our plan for letting people know the outcome of the consultation?

Throughout the consultation process a record of each consultation event or period that has been undertaken and the feedback obtained will be formally logged. The record will detail the date of the consultation, what form of consultation took place, who was consulted and what feedback was given. Once the consultation has concluded and all responses are in, all feedback will be analysed and summarised in the consultation report.

Southwark council are committed to ensuring all comments received are recorded and there is a clear audit trail of all decisions made and how consultation responses were taken into consideration and balanced with any evidence and specific information gathered. The consultation report will be published and placed on the website. The outcomes of the consultation and response to the consultation, plus any recommendations for a selective and additional licencing scheme will be made to the Council's Cabinet. The response to the Consultation and what actions and/or changes have been made to the scheme as a result will form part of the submission to government.

4. Activity plan

NO.	WHAT	WHO	PURPOSE	WHERE	WHEN	LEAD
Meetings						
	Landlords Forum	80+	Introduce the plan to hold a consultation and ask for volunteers to attend our licensing consultation workshops	Tooley St	September	Jerome Duffy
	Landlords Forum	80+	Introduce the plan to hold a consultation and ask for volunteers to attend our licensing consultation workshops	Tooley St	March	Jerome Duffy
	Homeless forum	40+	Introduce the plan to hold a consultation and ask for volunteers to attend our licensing consultation workshops	Anthony Gold Solicitors, Tooley St	January	John Morteo
	Landlords Workshop	10+	Discussion workshop to establish private sector landlords' opinions on the proposals with brief Q&A session.	Tooley St	March	Emma Trott
	Tenants Workshop	10+	Discussion workshop to establish private sector tenants' opinions on the proposals with brief Q&A session.	Tooley St	March	Emma Trott
	Landlords Workshop	10+	Discussion workshop to establish private sector landlords' opinions on the proposals with brief Q&A session.	Tooley St	April	Emma Trott
	Tenants Workshop	10+	Discussion workshop to establish private sector tenants' opinions on the proposals with brief Q&A session.	Tooley St	April	Emma Trott
	Landlords Workshop	10+	Discussion workshop to establish private sector landlords' opinions on the proposals with brief Q&A session.	Tooley St –	May	Emma Trott
	Tenants Workshop	10+	Discussion workshop to establish private sector tenants' opinions on the proposals with brief Q&A session.	Tooley St –	May	Emma Trott
	Attend Community Council Meetings		Introduce the plan to hold a consultation and ask for volunteers to attend our licensing consultation workshops			Emma Trott
Press Releases						
	News Story for press	General public	Fly on wall bad landlord story with lead into licensing consultation	EHN, Southwark Life, South London Press, Southwark News, Peckham Peculiar, Lambeth & Southwark News	First week of consultation	Jane Evans (press officer)
	Adverts in press	General	Advertise licensing consultation	EHN, Southwark Life,	Week one of	Jane

		public		South London Press, Southwark News, Peckham Peculiar, Lambeth & Southwark News	consultation and week 6 of consultation	Evans
	Landlords Bulletin	300+	Advertise licensing consultation	Mail list	February	Jerome Duffy
	London Landlord accreditation scheme newsletter	All member of the LLAS	Advertise licensing consultation	Members list		Camden Council
Additional Advertising						
	Strap lines on emails	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	Housing enforcement (19 officers) Housing Options/tenancy relations teams	Duration of consultation	Emma Trott
	Social media campaign	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Yammer	Once a week for the duration of consultation	Baljit Sangha
	Advertising on electronic media	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	The Source, Southwark Council website	Duration of consultation	Baljit Sangha
	Southwark Life Housing e-news newsletter	Mailing list	Advertise licensing consultation	Mail list		Baljit Sangha
	Email/Mail shot to stakeholders	Mailing list	Advertise licensing consultation		March	Xenia Baldiviezo
	Email invitations	Mailing list	Invite landlords, tenants and agents to our discussion workshops on our licensing proposals	Email	February	Xenia Baldiviezo
	Posters	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	To be displayed in: libraries, leisure centres, Churches, community halls, communal areas in council blocks, cinemas, telephone boxes	Duration of consultation	Laura Wilkinson
	Adshels	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	Roadside in high traffic areas, bus stops and busy pedestrian areas	Duration of consultation	Laura Wilkinson
	Digital marketing boards	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	Busy pedestrian areas	Duration of consultation	Laura Wilkinson
	Banners	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	Railings outside public owned buildings	Duration of consultation	Laura Wilkinson
	Flyers	General public	Advertise licensing consultation	Handed out by officers during all private sector housing inspections	Duration of consultation	Laura Wilkinson

Events						
	Information stall set up	General public	To advertise the consultation and offer the public the chance to approach us informally and ask questions they have regarding the scheme.	Universities, Tooley St. atrium, Peckham pulse, East Dulwich leisure centre, libraries, community centres, East street market	Multiple events throughout the consultation	Laura Wilkinson

5. Contact information

Stakeholders are able to contact officers if they would like to know more about the engagement plan or activities:

(Enter a generic/officer email address)

Telephone: (Enter telephone number)

In writing to:

(Enter your address)

Version 2

Date 07 01 2020

Author: *Emma Trott – Regulatory Services - Environment*

Officer	Position	Version	Distribution date
Emma Trott	Private Sector Housing Enforcement & Licensing Unit Manager	1	
	Lead Officer		
Cllr Victoria Mills	Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Brexit		
	Ward Cllrs		
Jonathan Hamston	Community Engagement		

