

Leicester Discretionary Licensing Scheme

5 + 1 Thursday 8 December 2022

Tony Cawthorne – Team Manager Selective Licensing

Background

- The Council had a “soft launch” in 2018 to determine “should we bring in discretionary licensing?” Along with several other questions!
- What have we done?
- What do we need to prove?
- Does our data stack up?

What we needed to do

- What had we done so far?
- Get a House Condition Survey
- Gather all the council data on why we need discretionary licensing
- What criteria do we have to determine a discretionary licensing scheme?
 - I. Low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area)
 - II. A significant and persistent problem caused by Anti-Social Behaviour
 - III. Poor property conditions
 - IV. High levels of migration
 - V. High levels of deprivation
 - VI. High levels of crime
- Build a robust business case

What have we done first

Mandatory Licensing

- Proactively identifying and ensuring that unlicensed HMOs are licenced (310 properties have been identified and licences obtained since August 2020).
- 56 Civil penalties issued for non-licenced properties and breaches of conditions

Rogue Landlord Enforcement

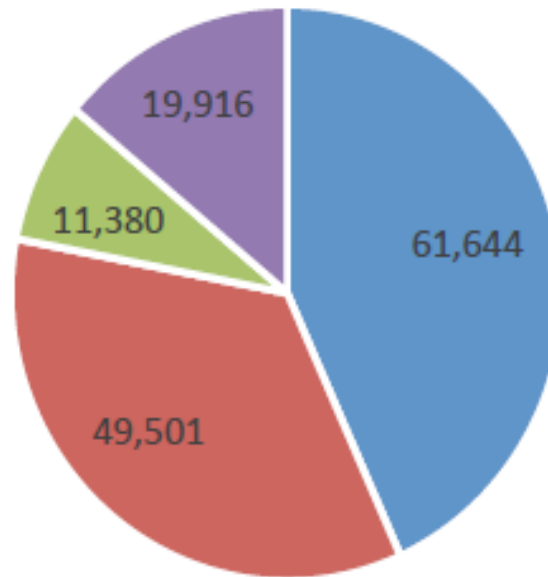
- Since January 2021, legal action taken –
85 Emergency Prohibition Notices have been served and 104 electrical safety issues identified. Pursuing 6 Breaches of Prohibition orders

Overcrowding Assessments

- 361 overcrowding assessments have been carried out since January 2020

Consultation

Leicester City PRS Breakdown of Stock by Tenure



**BRE Housing Stock
Model Data**

■ Owner Occupier ■ Private Rented ■ Housing Association ■ Leicester City Council Housing ■

What we consulted on

Option A: Selective Licensing within parts of the Wards of Westcotes, Fosse, Saffron, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields and Stoneygate. (Covering less than 20% of Leicester's geographical area and less than 20% of privately rented homes in the local authority area).

**14500 properties in the designated areas – 8800 Privately rented
63% of properties**

Option B: Additional Licensing that covers the entire City (citywide),

Option C: Additional Licensing within parts of the Wards of Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields and Stoneygate.

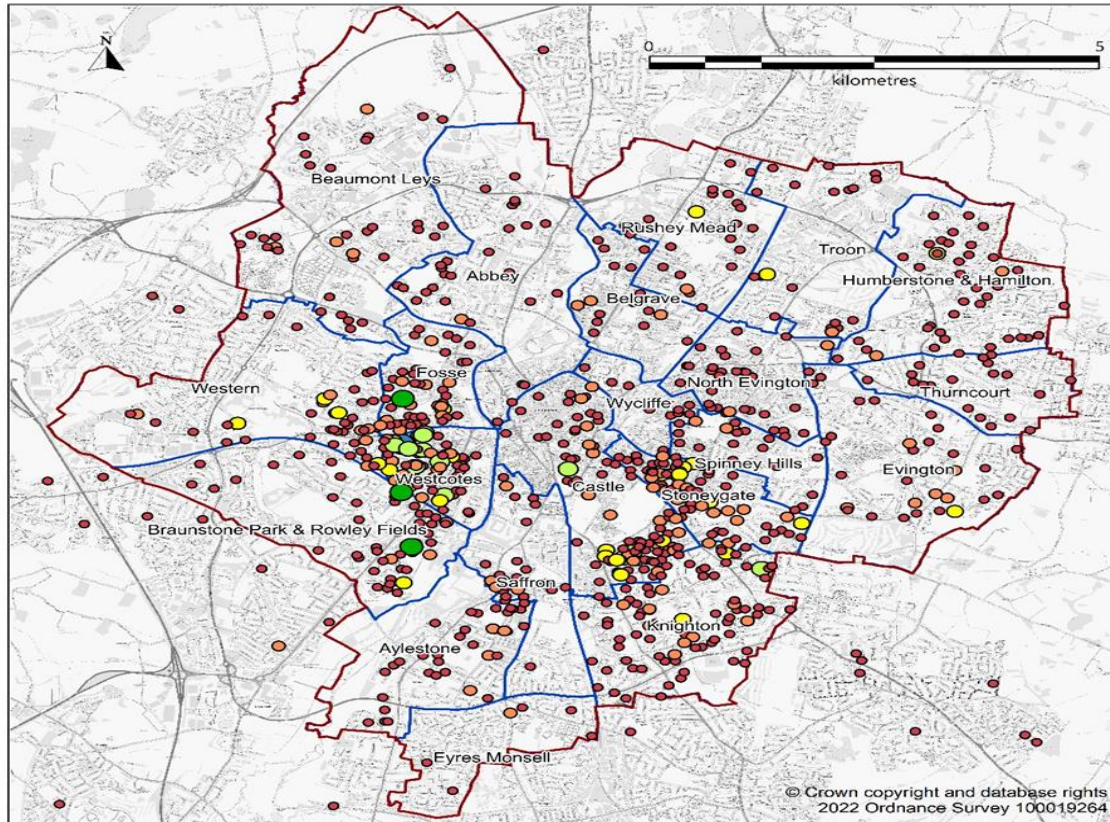
The consultation ran from the 30th November 2021 to the 22nd February 2022 – 12 weeks

Consultation

- Letters to all residential properties in Leicestershire - 110725
- Emails to All business owners – 3654
- Email to All Faith Groups – 204 including a translation of the Councils letter into Gujarati and distributed to 1600 members of gurdwara
- Email to Landlord Associations – 9
- Email to DASH
- Email to Letting, Estate and Managing agents – 123
- Landmark advertised consultation on their local website and East Midlands website
- Email to District Council Chief Executives – 8
- Email to All Councillors + City Mayor – 54
- Article in FACE notifying all LCC staff
- Email to all Universities
- Email all student accommodation providers – 17
- Email all student Unions
- Email all schools - 1130
- A4 posters delivered to LCC libraries and community centres across the city
- Press releases and updates two local papers + Leicester Mercury
- Information to LCC Customer Services on handling enquiries
- Email to Police
- Email to LFRS
- Email to RICS, Chartered Institute of Housing and National Homes Federation
- Email to Citizen Advice Bureau placed consultation details on their website – 7,000 hits
- The web-based survey received 1120 responses.
- Response to consultation in addition to the online statistical questionnaire resulted in 162 emails, 50 Letters and 20 Phone calls.
- Landlord, estates and managing agent virtual presentations with [Q&A's](#) were undertaken on the 26 and 27 January and 2 February.2022
- The programme manager attended the Fosse ward meeting by Zoom on 2 February
- The programme manager attended the Homelessness Charter Management Group by TEAMS on the 10 February 2022
- Three Q&A drop-in sessions were publicised and held on the 15, 17 & 18 February 2022

Who responded

Discretionary Licensing Consultation



Number of Responses Grouped by Postcode (Occurrences Count)



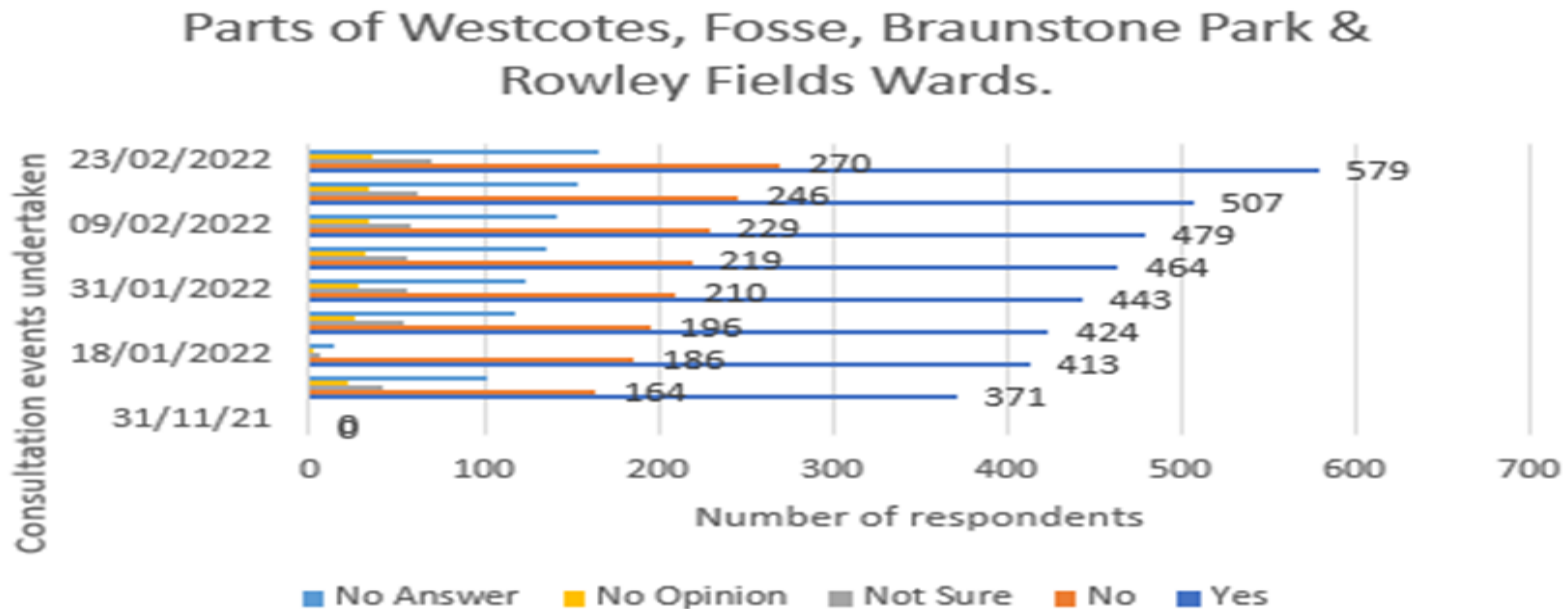
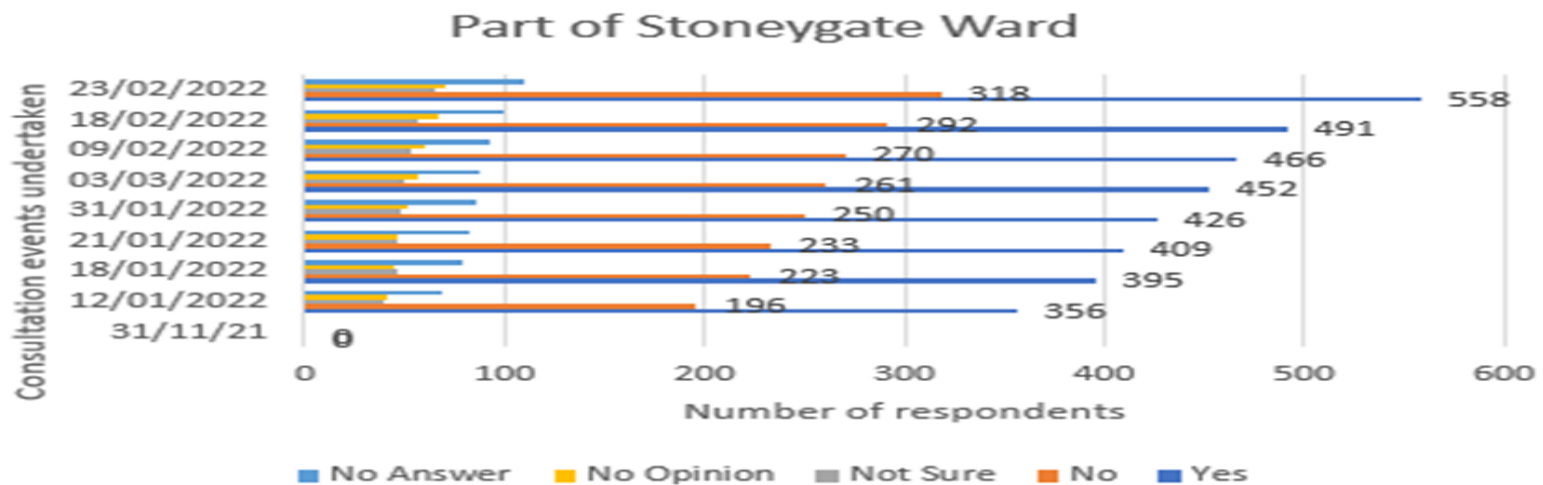
Leicester City Boundary Ward Boundary



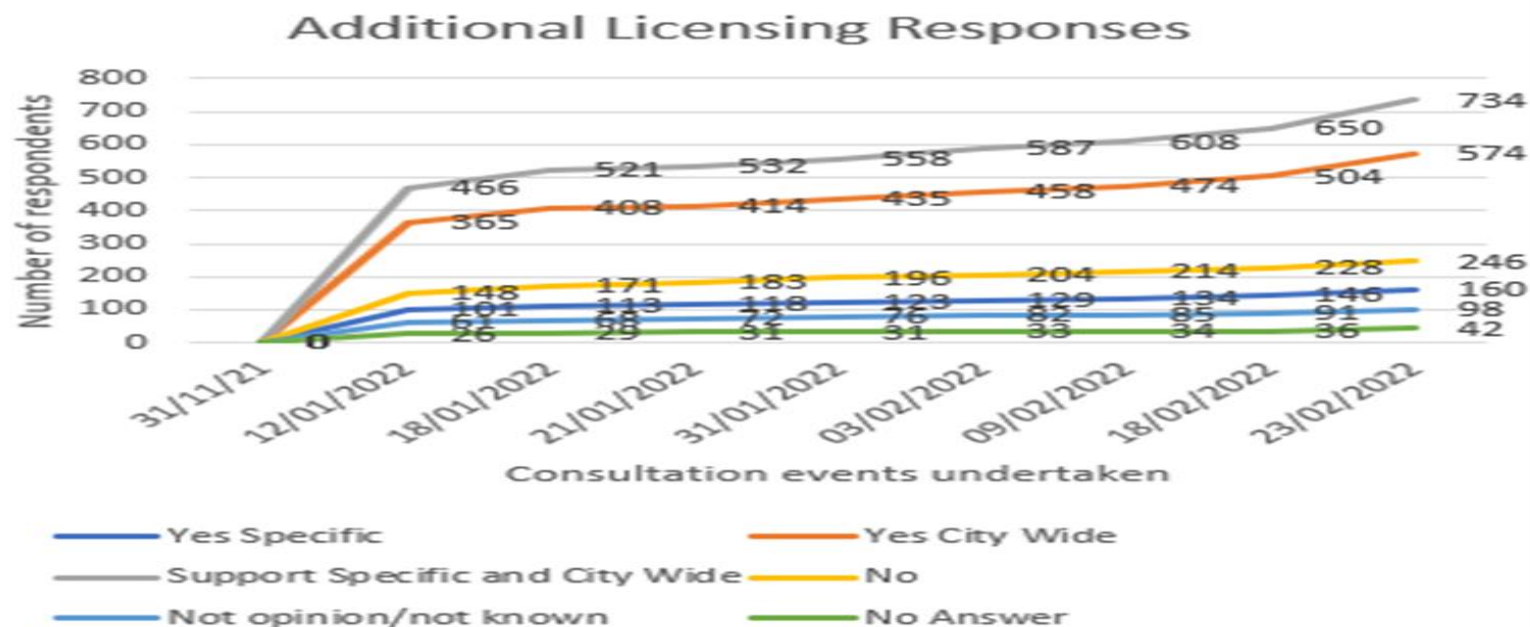
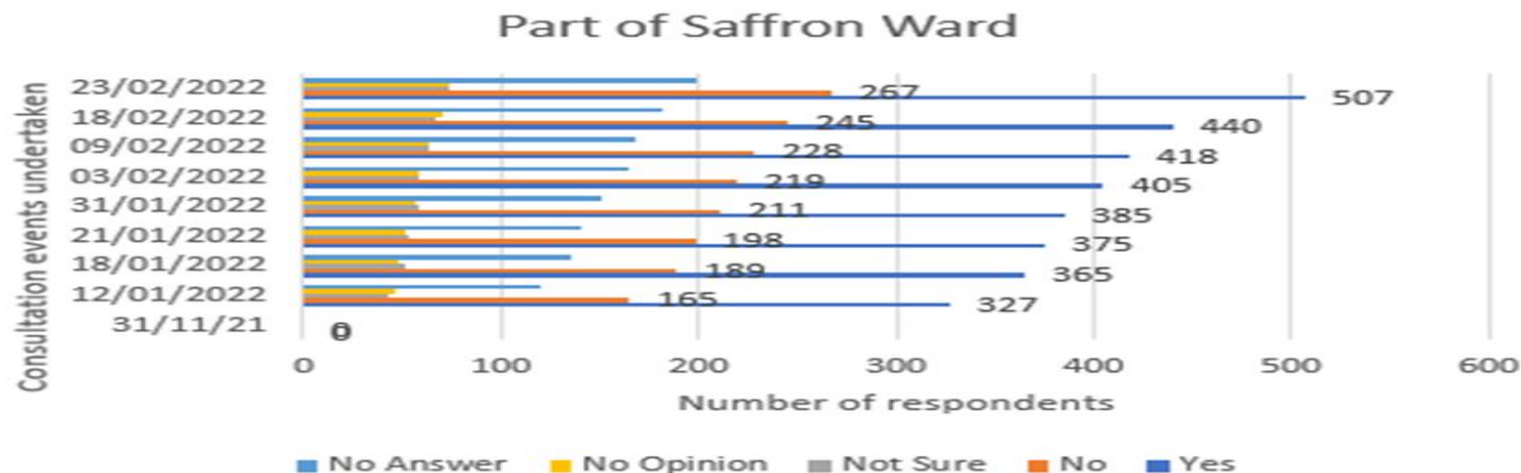
Geographical Information & Plans
Processing Team, February 2022

Tenure	Number	%
Private Tenant	215	19.2
Leicester Resident	565	50.5
Landlord	270	24.1
Letting/Managing Agent	8	0.7
Local Business	6	0.5
Charitable Organisation	2	0.2
Not Identified (other)	54	4.8

What the consultation found



What the consultation Found



The decision what to do?

- Following the consultation the councillors decided to go for selective licensing in the designated areas. **Option A** and Delay Additional Licensing as the Council is bringing in Article 4 for Additional HMO's
- The scheme was approved by full Council on the 7 July 2022
- The scheme went live at 8:00am on the 10 October 2022.
- The selective team commenced with:
 - Team manager
 - 1 Admin Manager
 - 1 Senior Regulatory Officer
 - 3.5 Housing Inspectors
 - 7 Admin support officers
- We currently have received 256 licence applications
- The inspection team have carried out 71 inspection. 127 inspections are booked in and 16 licences have been issued. 42 are still being processed by the Admin Team
- A brand new computer system is fully operational and is the central database for the team (Tascomi Idox)

Scheme Headlines

- The Licensing Team is now up to full strength with 20 inspectors and 7 Admin Officers
- Landlords fill an online application which populates the back office Tascomi icloud system, thereby freeing up admin time to check documentation and payment details.
- Licence fee is £1090 was (£943 without discounts) can be reduced to £763 with a 30% discount

Application process

- Landlords are directed to the SL webpage on the main LCC site
- Landlords can check if a property is within the selective licensing areas
- Applications must be made through the Councils website www.leicester.gov.uk/selectivelicensing
- The team operate a telephone line for support
- Applications are checked to ensure they are complete with all documentation and the correct fees has been paid
- Once a duly made application has been made the application is passed to the inspectors.

Inspection Process

- Officers contact the landlord to organise an inspection
- Minor issues of concern can be added to the licence and will be required to be attended to within 3 months. A further inspection will be undertaken
- If the issues raised are a category 1 hazard the licence cannot be issued until rectified
- A draft licence is issued following the inspection and any remedial works have been attended to.
- There is a statutory consultation from the draft licence of 14 days for errors to be rectified or observations by the applicant.
- The 7 week target to process an application from duly made to draft licence is being met.
- The team aim to undertake three inspections in total of all properties within the 5 years to ensure standards are maintained

Examples of Issues Identified



Hazard - Falls between levels
– No restrictor on window

Hazard – damaged electric pull cord to Shower





Category - falls on stairs - No Handrail

Category - Structural Collapse
and falling elements

Self-seeding Buddleia causing
wall to fall





Category - falls on stairs

Tread 16cm Riser 21cm

The stairs have been adapted and the bottom three steps which wound in to the room have been removed and this new staircase made.



Category 1 issue

Falls between
levels



Resolution to category 1 hazard

Window low threshold fully openable window



Remedial action taken to add restrictor



Selective Licensing

- Declared under Anti Social Behaviour and Enviro-Crime. Community warden provided from Selective licensing fee to patrol designated areas in addition to city wardens
- Housing inspectors also inspect the areas and report fly tipping and other enviro crime.
- Actions already notified through to other departments and action taken - Littered alley ways, Fly tipping, Street Cleaning, Planning breaches, Pest Control, Building Control.

Link to City Wardens



Untidy garden in adjacent property to licenced property – referred to City Warden Team and CPN served to remedy

Link to Building Control



Wall single brick neighbour has dug out footings to lay block paved yard and wall now very insecure, bowed and in danger of falling over

What is still happening?

Leicester City Council produced a Private Sector Housing Strategy which came into existence September 2021

Leicestershire Landlord Action Group? 300 landlords attempting to end selective licensing in Leicester. Cost of living and increase in mortgage payments cited as reasons to terminate scheme

Number of category 1 hazard identified by inspectors is running at approx 62 % of inspections.

Landlords using the council to inspect one property before submitting other properties

Landlords undertaking works to properties before submitting applications

Delays in applications as offer of early bird scheme discount lasts 6 months

Contact: Selectivelicensing@leicester.gov.uk