

APPENDIX 2

**REVIEW OF SELECTIVE LICENSING
WITHIN CENTRAL GATESHEAD-PHASE 1**

2012-2017

ABBREVIATIONS

ASB Anti-Social Behaviour
BRE Building Research Establishment
HHSRS Housing Health and Safety Rating System
HMOs Houses of Multiple Occupation
HMR Housing Market Renewal
PRS Private Rented Sector
PSH Private Sector Housing
RSL Registered Social Landlord
SLL Selective Landlord Licensing
TGHC The Gateshead Housing Company

INTRODUCTION

In 2012, parts of Central Gateshead (see Fig 1) were designated an area subject to Selective Landlord Licensing as set out in the Housing Act 2004. This was following extensive research and consultation, and following approval by Cabinet in February 2012. The Scheme was subsequently introduced on 18th May 2012 and was the third licensing scheme to be introduced in the Borough.

The Housing Act 2004 stipulates that the duration of a scheme must be no more than five years, which resulted in the scheme ending on 17th May 2017

This report reviews the Scheme, providing details of its performance against intended outcomes as well as feedback from recent consultation undertaken in February 2017 with stakeholders. The review will help us to determine whether the intervention of landlord licensing continues to be required beyond May 2017.

At the time of designation in 2012, data collection confirmed that the area was experiencing a wide range of issues associated with low housing demand, property values, anti-social behaviour and poor property conditions. It was considered that the schemes implementation would contribute towards the wider regeneration of the area, as well as improved property management standards. The aim was to raise standards within the private rented sector with a view to improving the overall social and economic conditions in the area to create a stable, strong, healthy and vibrant neighbourhood.

The private rented sector in Gateshead plays an important role in the provision of housing within the borough. It is a diverse and flexible sector which can offer a wide choice of affordable accommodation to suit a range of households including professionals, students, families and single people. There are currently 14,617 private rented properties in Gateshead, representing almost 16% of our housing stock, owned by an estimated 5500 landlords. The sector has increased from 8-16% of all stock in the last decade and we expect to see this increase continue.

The majority of landlords in Gateshead do operate within the law and offer a significant amount of high quality accommodation, managed effectively at an affordable price. Within the borough there are concentrations of private rented accommodation, traditionally in areas of deprivation, where the private rented sector is commonly below standard in terms of property condition and tenancy management. These properties tend to house vulnerable tenants and are statistically more likely to be in fuel poverty, are subject to the effects of crime and antisocial behaviour and house families on low incomes. A wide proportion of tenants are in receipt of housing benefit and their financial circumstances mean they have a limited choice on the quality of accommodation they are able to access. For many tenants there is the perception that there is little control over living conditions and they subsequently are less likely to complain to the landlord or Local Authority.

The Central Bensham Phase 1 licensing area is historically one of these areas. Licensing has given us the ability to concentrate our resources to regulate and improve the private rented sector in the area, along with enforcement action where appropriate.

GATESHEAD STRATEGIC CONTEXT

It is recognised nationally that the private rented sector offers a flexible form of tenure and meets a wide range of needs. With a significant and ongoing growth in the sector, it is increasingly important that resources are allocated to support landlords, tenants and those affected by the impact of private rented accommodation, and that with limited resources available, that those resources are targeted towards those areas in most need of support.

Selective licensing schemes are required to be implemented in line with the Local Authorities overall housing strategy to ensure that powers are consistent with wider policies.

The use of selective landlord licensing in specific neighbourhoods, supports Gateshead's long-term Sustainable Community Strategy: **Vision 2030** and the Corporate Plan.

The promotion of sustainable neighbourhoods to provide quality areas to live and work is a key priority within the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead (2010-2030). Policy CS9 Existing Communities aims to ensure that communities will be sustainable places of quality and choice and within this strategy, Selective Licensing is recognised as tool to improve homes within the private rented sector to manage and secure improvements in areas in low demand and related social problems.

Housing Strategy

The use of licensing also aligns with two objectives within the Housing Strategy 2013-18 to support delivery of the Corporate Plan. The Housing Strategy 2013-18 provides a single reference document for all of the Council's housing-related activity and provides a programme of actions that will maximise the contribution of housing to wider economic growth, personal health and wellbeing.

Key objectives contained within the strategy, which are consistent with the implementation of Selective Licensing include:

- **Support** – to help residents access and sustain a home which promotes their wellbeing.
- **Standards** – to improve quality, condition and management of housing in the private rented sector so that all residents benefit from safe, healthy and well managed homes.
- **Supply** - To ensure use of existing stock and supply of new housing best meets current and future needs and aspirations.

Together these 3 objectives will promote sustainable communities and support the delivery of the Council Plan 2015-20 and Gateshead Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan.

Property licensing facilitates greater interaction with private sector landlords and leads to an improved understanding of the current PRS market. Licence conditions and the support that is provided to landlords and tenants helps to ensure properties are effectively managed and prevent long term problems associated with antisocial behaviour caused by private tenants. The associated inspection of property standards will ensure that poor property conditions and inadequate energy efficiency are identified and acted upon, which will serve to improve living standards for tenants.

An area that has previously benefitted from Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder and BridgingNewcastleGestehad funding, landlord licensing was introduced to underpin this initiative and contribute towards sustaining its legacy, by continuing to work with partners to improve neighbourhoods and to provide a good quality of life and place.

The introduction of SLL into this area of also complimented the objectives of the Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Action Plan. By ensuring that Selective Licensing is implemented alongside other initiatives and is aligned with key Council priorities, this significantly assists in tackling the Councils key priorities.

The implementation of licensing in two previous areas within the Borough has also already demonstrated that a balance can be struck between providing support and advice, and using regulation to enforce improvements within a neighbourhood.

THE CENTRAL AREA – PHASE 1 – AREA PROFILE

Location

(Figure 1) Map of SLL Area – Central Bensham Phase 1



The area covers parts of both the Saltwell and Lobley Hill & Bensham Wards. It is also within the Bensham and Saltwell Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) which formed part of the wider Bridging Newcastle Gateshead Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder funding approved in 2004. The Bensham and Saltwell NAP has benefited from substantial investment since Pathfinder status was awarded and the introduction of a licensing scheme was to be used in conjunction in order to complement the regeneration initiative. The licensing area is defined by Bensham Road to the North, the main Newcastle to London railway line to the West, playing fields to the North and Trevethick, Hyde Park and Westminister Streets to the south.

The area consists of 826 dwellings with 529 of these being privately rented. The levels of private rented property in the area is 64%, which substantially exceeds the Borough average of 16% and the UK average of 19%. Geographically the area is relatively small (0.023% of Gateshead borough) yet covers nearly 4% of the Borough's total private rented housing.

A further landlord licensing scheme is also in place in the Inner West area of Gateshead – Swalwell running until April 2018.

PROPERTY TYPE

The Area is almost completely residential consisting of approximately 900 properties with some commercial properties situated along Saltwell Road. There has been no significant change in the housing stock in the last five years; predominantly terraced Tyneside flats, dating from the late 19th and early 20th Century however the area borders an area of demolition and regeneration that has been undertaken via the BNG Pathfinder funding. Since 2012, a large number of Tyneside flats have been demolished in the surrounding neighbourhood. A programme of new build properties of both owner occupation and social/affordable rents is now under development to the South of Saltwell Road over three phases. There is also a pocket of social housing built in the 1960s situated off Saltwell Road and another built in the 1980s off Bensham Road.

TENURE

The tenure in the area is a mix of predominantly privately rented , owner occupied and social rented housing. The current tenure profile can be broken down as follows:

Table 1 – Tenure Data (2017)

Tenure	Total	Percentage
Privately Rented	529	58.8%
Empty Properties	67	7.4%
Owner Occupied	213	23.7%
Gateshead Housing Company and Registered Social Landlords	20 & 46	2.2% & 5.1%
Commercial Premises	22	2.44%
Community Facilities	3	0.33%
	900	100%

The total number of privately rented properties within the area has increased since the initial projection in 2012 from 55.5% to almost 59%, which is considerably higher than the borough (15.7) and national average (19). This may mean an initial underestimation at the onset, however may also indicate an increase in investment by private landlords during the licensing scheme. A proportion of these were also previously empty properties which have subsequently been purchased and rented out.

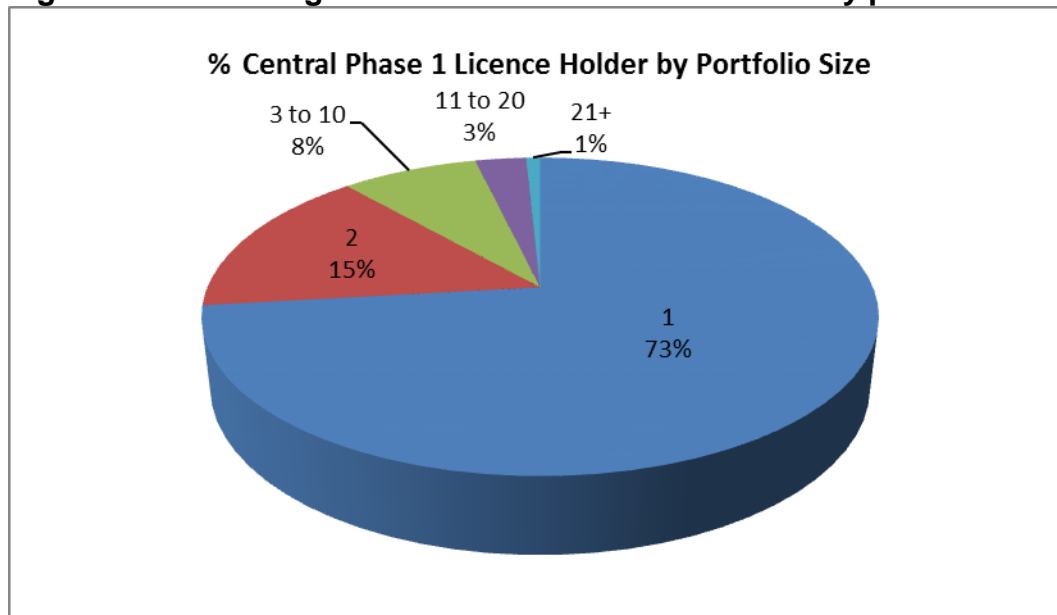
The number of properties controlled by residential social landlords, the Gateshead Housing Company, as well as commercial/community units have remained stable, and there has been a small decrease in owner occupation. We are aware of a number of owners who continue to own their property but have chosen to rent it out for reasons ranging from negative property equity, moving in with a partner and working/relocating out of the area. There is no direct evidence to suggest that owner occupiers and private landlords are put off from investing in the area when licensing is in place.

For private rented properties, all tenancy agreements are assessed at the time of licence application. All licensed properties are let on assured shorthold tenancies and have been subject to licensing requirements under the scheme. A small number of privately rented properties have been exempted from the requirement of a licence as they house regulated sitting tenants who tenancies have been in place since before January 1989 or are rented to a direct member of the landlords family.

LANDLORD PROFILE

There are 242 landlords/agents managing properties in the Central Phase 1 Licensing area. The majority of these landlords/agents have small portfolios of properties and manage them on a part time basis. 73% of landlords manage only one property and 15% with two properties. The largest portfolio of any one landlord/agent in the area is 32 properties.

Figure 2 – Percentage Central Phase 1 licence holder by portfolio size.



SELECTIVE LICENSING 2012 - TO DATE

It was considered at the time of designation in 2012 that the licensing area was experiencing low housing demand. The Council were satisfied that by making a designation, when combined with other measures taken by the Council, or by the Council in conjunction with others, licensing will contribute to an improvement in the social and economic conditions in the area.

Prior to designation the PSH team and other partners were actively engaging with landlords, managing agents, tenants and other property owners to tackle problems associated with the private housing sector. Support, advice and guidance was available on any environmental, health, safety and housing related matters, and formal enforcement action was also taken where necessary where both landlords and tenants had failed to improve conditions.

INTERVENTIONS PRE LICENSING

Interventions in place in 2012 within Gateshead, including the licensing area were:

Clearance and New Housing Development

To the South of the area – a programme of property acquisition and demolition, where old and often poorly maintained terraced Tyneside flats, houses and commercial properties, are to be and have been replaced with high quality family housing.

The Private Rented Property Accreditation Scheme

To encourage landlords to improve properties above and beyond the legal minimum standard. Financial assistance to achieve the standard was made available to landlords up until 2010.

Landlord Liaison with the Gateshead Private Landlords Association (GPLA)

A partnership with the GPLA and Gateshead Council with dedicated staff to provide advice, support and training to landlords to improve management practices. Members sign up to a code of conduct and in return the Council provided a range of services such as tenant vetting, property advertising and production of tenancy agreements.

Dedicated team to investigate complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Dedicated officers to investigate and resolve complaints of ASB using a graded response. Liaison with tenants, residents and landlords to ensure that all appropriate measures and powers are used to secure improvements.

Enforcement Action

Use of enforcement powers when landlords or tenants have failed to respond or engage in order to resolve issues ranging from refuse in yards, noise and poor housing conditions.

Mandatory HMO Licensing

Licensing of large style shared accommodation with increased risk of fire and often housing more vulnerable residents. There were no licensable HMO's in the licensing area in 2012. At the time of writing there are now three licensed HMO's within the area – two on Saltwell Road and one on Newton Street. There are also ten smaller HMO's who do not legally require a HMO licence and subsequently have been issued with a landlord licence. Several of these smaller HMO's have been purchased, converted and refurbished to a high standard by a national provider.

Since 2012 there has been an increase in the number of HMO's and shared accommodation in the UK and also within Gateshead. This increase is mainly as a result of changes to the welfare reform and affordability. For owners, HMO's are also often seen as securing a higher return/yield than a typical family rental.

Dedicated Empty Property Officer

A dedicated empty property officer was in employment in May 2012 and continues to be so. A range of tools has continued to be used to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use. Since designation the Private Sector Housing Team in partnership with the Gateshead Housing Company have also introduced the Empty Property Private Leasing Scheme. For properties that have been empty for longer than six months, Gateshead Council would lease the property from the owner for five years and undertake any necessary works and improvements to bring it up to a decent rentable standard. The property would then be managed by the Council and let at an affordable rent (80% of Market rent) to people in housing need. Any costs to improve the property would be retrieved through the rental income over the five year period.

Tenant vetting service for private landlords

A service provided by the PSH Team to enable landlords to make a more informed decision in relation to the suitability of potential tenants. The team processed an average of 500 vettings per year, with more than a quarter of these resulting in an unsatisfactory outcome. This can be due to number of factors including; unsatisfactory previous tenancies, anti-social behaviour, criminal activity or excessive previous rent arrears. The Team also helped those tenants who obtained an unsatisfactory outcome by offering advice and support to enable them to work towards a satisfactory outcome. It is difficult for landlords to sometimes determine whether a potential tenant is likely to be suitable for a property, however the vetting process enables them to make an informed decision.

A vetting service across the Borough and within the licensing area was provided to members of the GPLA by the team up until May 2016. In May 2016 the GPLA began to operate independently from Gateshead Council and so the vetting service was stopped. Across the longevity of the service from 2007 more than 5000 tenants were vetted by the PSH Team – 26% of these resulted in an unsatisfactory outcome.

Rent bond scheme

A scheme available to potential tenants who are vulnerable and are looking for a home within Gateshead. This scheme ran from 2007 to 2016 and was disbanded due to a lack of funding. Over the 9 years, 152 individuals secured a home as a result of being able to access the bond scheme, 20 of these bonds were within licensing areas, and 7 were within the Central Phase 1 scheme.

Financial assistance for property improvements

Up until the year of designation, 2012, the PSH Team were able to target resources as a result of a wider regeneration package through BridgingNewcastleGateshead (BNG) programme. Properties in the area benefited from Area Renewal Assistance via The Block Improvement Scheme (BIS) Programme. The aim of the BIS programme was to improve housing market confidence through improvements to the visual appearance of terraces. In total £10.85 million of funding was used across thirteen phases and included:

- New boundary walls with railings
- Front step replacement to remedy cracking and unevenness
- New handrails to steps to match railings
- Garden treatments, introduction of increased greenery
- Neutral painting of front elevation stonework
- Renewal of front doors, replacement of windows and rainwater pipes.

435 properties within the Central licensing area participated in the programme, with 259 (59.5%) of these being privately rented. Participants were required to make a 20% contribution to the works and costs and participating landlords were requested to ensure their properties reached and maintained the accreditation standard. In relation to accreditation financial assistance, this was limited to 50% of eligible works up to a maximum of £500 within the BNG area and in former licensing areas and the Central Phase 1 area.

Prior to licensing designation and in the year 09/10, £75,000 was awarded in relation to 165 properties in the area which were brought up to the accreditation standard. The total cost of works in relation to those properties was in excess of £423,000, demonstrating that owners sent on average £2112 per property.

High profile police presence

Gateshead Area Command had five Neighbourhood Policing Teams who worked in partnership with Council Officers to deploy various methods to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime. The Central Neighbourhood Management Area of Gateshead has a dedicated Neighbourhood Team including a Neighbourhood Beat Manager and a Community Support Officer who responded to the needs of the Community.

At the time of writing, The Gateshead Police Neighbourhood Teams have restructured to six teams. From a policing perspective Gateshead is now split into three sectors, with two policing teams aligned to each:

- Central
- East
- West

A number of specific Police led operations have also been carried out prior to and since licensing was introduced, in partnership with Council Officers. Notably an 'Operation WAYS(We Ask You Say)' has been undertaken with neighbourhood policing teams and the Gateshead Housing Company to find out views about the areas and any concerns/needs that may assist future work to address community safety and resident issues.

Officers have also worked closely with Northumbria Police on a number of specific operations in relation to sexual exploitation and organised crime. Close working relationships have also been established with the neighbourhood policing team in relation to problems of anti-social behaviour

and neighbourhood disputes with joint visits to problem addresses being undertaken and sharing of relevant information to assist investigations.

Multi agency tasking and Safer Neighbourhood groups.

Regular multi agency tasking and safer neighbourhood groups operated within the five Neighbourhood management Areas, with representatives from key stakeholders such as the Police, social housing representatives and The PSH Team, contributing towards resolving issues jointly within the local community.

At the time of writing the above arrangements remain in place via a monthly Gateshead wide tasking meeting. At meetings urgent emerging trends and offenders operating/within neighbourhoods are discussed, Action plans via swift partnership working are agreed to try and tackle any problems. Information is shared to enable early intervention by enforcement agencies. It is recognised that ASB cannot be tackled by one agency alone and the close partnership working between agencies has secured positive results in tackling ASB in the licensing area, leading in turn to improved relationships and increased confidence in our abilities to tackle issues in the area.

LICENSING AIMS AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

The main aim of the 2012-2017 Scheme was to reduce low housing demand by raising standards within the private rented sector and improving the overall social and economic conditions in the area to create a strong, healthy and vibrant neighbourhood. It was also considered that designation would assist in the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the area.

In order to secure neighbourhood improvements, a number of objectives were identified in the original report:

1. To reduce the turnover of occupants to create stable communities
2. To reduce the number of empty properties and the length of time they remain unoccupied
3. To reduce levels of anti-social behaviour
4. To increase the number of properties which meet the decent home standard, as well as meeting the accreditation standard
5. To improve the management of properties in the area
6. To increase the value of residential premises
7. To increase the number of landlords who are fit and proper and manage their properties well.
8. To increase the number of tenants who manage their tenancy well.
9. To support the private rented sector in its provision of well-managed properties and tenancies and assist those seeking to live and currently living in private rented accommodation.

At the time of designation these objectives responded to the issues faced within the proposed designated area.

It was also considered that the implementation of the Scheme would have an overall positive long-term impact on the area, as the introduction of a selective licensing scheme would ensure:

- Landlords will be more accountable for the management of their property.
- Clear explicit standards for landlords and tenants in a properly regulated sector.
- Landlords operating in the area are fit and proper and have the ability to manage property.
- More effective control of monitoring properties
- The provision of a framework for support, education and guidance services for landlords and tenants.
- Landlords will be more accountable for the tenants who reside in their property.
- Landlords will become more visible.
- Tenants will become more aware of their responsibilities for maintaining their tenancy
- Tenants will become more aware that they must act in a responsible manner and not be associated with anti-social behaviour.

- Tenants will be made aware that failure to conform to standards will lead to eviction.
- Tenants are reference checked prior to occupation of property in the area.
- A positive impact on tenants' behaviour, following an awareness of the difficulty in acquiring further accommodation coupled with improved standards of accommodation.
- Tenants will benefit from a guarantee of safe, healthy and well-managed housing.
- Landlords will benefit from a properly regulated sector, good public image and confidence in housing management.
- Bad landlords will be forced to improve or will be forced out of the area.
- Exclusion of a licensee where there is evidence of harassment and illegal eviction.
- The profile and public image of the area and the sector is raised encouraging tenants into the market and reputable investment.
- The Authority will have more options to tackle problems within the area.
- Residents will have an additional means of reporting a problem or issues associated with a private rented property.
- The interests of owners who live in the same area are protected.

The initial application process was designed to contribute towards several of the objectives with applications being approved subject to the applicant passing the 'fit and proper person' assessment, demonstrating they had suitable management arrangements in place and the condition of the property also had to meet the required licensing standard via the provision of relevant safety certificates. Property inspection were subsequently undertaken via the agreement for the property to become accredited or via the licensed property inspection programme.

Comprehensive guidance notes were also produced to help landlords and agents through the application process, setting out the information required and the standards to be met. It was recognised that applicants were likely to require support during the application process and this was provided by Officers either one to one, office/home visits or over the telephone. It was also recognised that some landlords and agents were unlikely to meet the licensing conditions and that support would also be required. A full list of the licence conditions can be found in Appendix 2. Licensing Officers also provided advice and support to applicants on ways in which to improve their management practices and procedures to achieve the required standard e.g. How to effectively deal with complaints of anti-social behaviour or property disrepair, provision of smoke alarms and testing etc.

Bespoke training for licence holders was also established and delivered twice a year by Officers to assist in the compliance with the conditions of a landlord licence and to provide updates on the scheme and its performance and outcomes.

Up until October 2015 funding was also available through the Tyne and Wear Fire Authority for the installation of smoke alarms (a condition of the licence), up until the provision of alarms became a national legal requirement.

SELECTIVE LICENSING ASSESSMENT

Comprehensive information and data relating to performance against the initial objectives has been collated

Based upon the analysis of this relevant comparison data, and taking into account feedback from consultation carried out, it is concluded that the Scheme has been effective in meeting the key aims and objectives of the original designation.

The key outcomes have been:

- *Multiple turnover rates within the area have more than halved (residents are moving between properties less and staying for longer periods of time). Turnover rates remain more than double the borough average.*
- *There are less long term empty properties in the area and there are fewer complaints about empty properties being made to the Council.*
- *Overall the ASB rates reported to the Police within the Licensing area have reduced in the last five years with increased levels of reported crime.*
- *The number of properties which meet the decent home standard has increased during the course of the scheme, through the implementation of accreditation, enforcement of licensing conditions, and an ongoing programmed inspection schedule.*
- *Improvement in property management practice in the Area is evident, in the improved conditions of the private rented properties and the increase in landlords demand for support and advice from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team. The number of landlords who have demonstrated they are fit and proper and manage their properties well has increased during the five year period.*
- *The number of housing related complaints to the Team has more than halved.*
- *Evidence gathered in relation to anti-social behaviour and feedback from consultation would indicate that the number of tenants who manage their tenancy well has increased*
- *The private rented sector in the Area has been well supported during the duration of the Scheme to promote well managed properties and tenancies.*
- *The value of residential properties in the area has stabilised during the five year licensing period with an increase in average price in 2016. Prices remain lower than the national and local average.*
- *The rental value of private rented properties has increased.*

DATA ANALYSIS

FEBRUARY 2017 - END OF SCHEME CONSULTATION

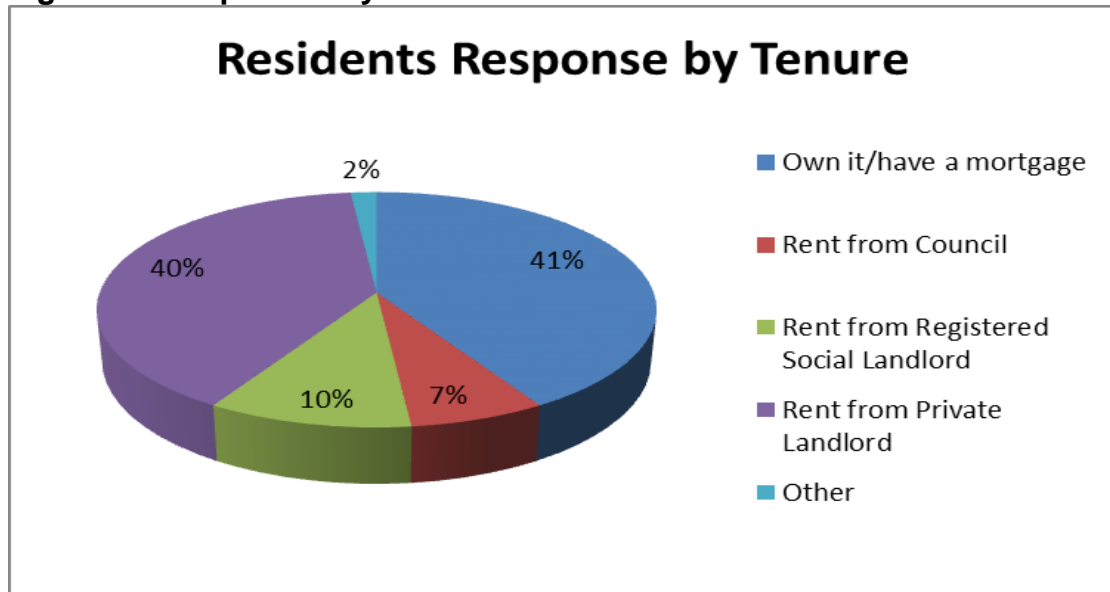
Throughout the licensing period the PSH Team have engaged with landlords and residents discussing any relevant concerns and issues. This has included email updates to licence holders, the midterm consultation exercise in 2015, landlord training sessions, police meetings and other community events.

The final evaluation of the Central Phase 1 scheme began with a consultation questionnaire being sent out to all stakeholders in February 2017. Over 900 questionnaires were delivered to every property in the licensing area and all 242 licence holders and relevant stakeholders were invited to provide their views and feedback. The questionnaire was accompanied with a pre-paid envelope to aid return and the offer of a prize draw of £25 of vouchers to local shopping facilities. The questionnaire was also available to complete on the Gateshead Council website. A desk top analysis of the wider indicators of low demand and anti-social behaviour has also been undertaken running alongside this to confirm the current situation with that of pre licensing and forms the basis of this report.

The findings and information from this end of scheme evaluation have also been fed into the wider consultation for the current proposal for the redesignation for parts of the Central Phase 1 licensing area which ran from 20th March until 18th June 2017. In total, 45 landlords provided a response to the February 2017 survey and 59 residents.

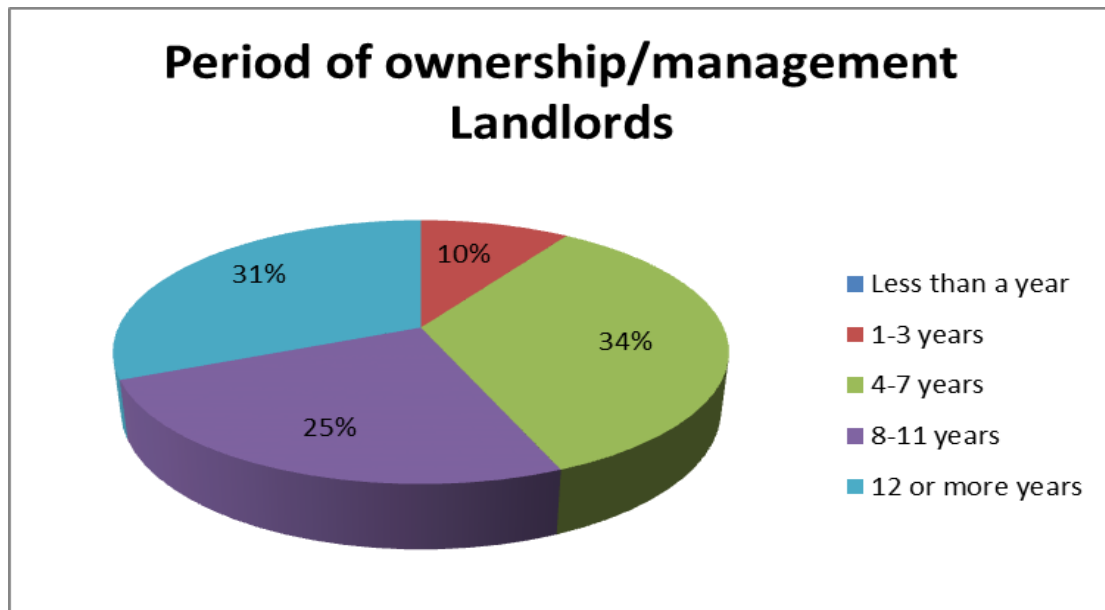
FEBRUARY 2017 SURVEY RESULTS

Figure 3 - Responses by Tenure



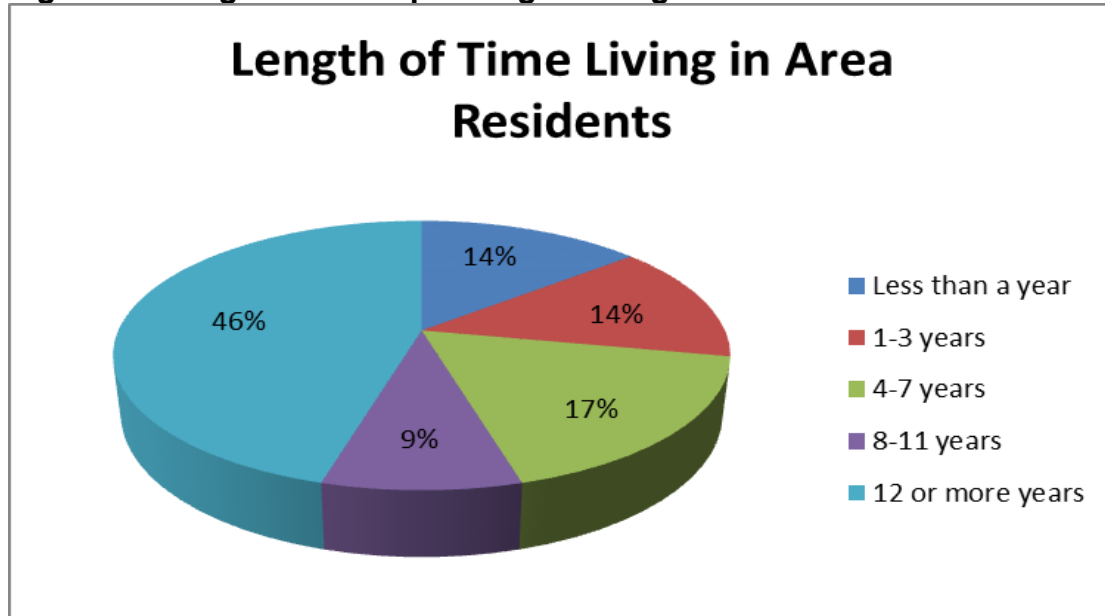
Of the residents who responded to the consultation, the majority either owned or privately rented their properties.

Figure 4 - Length of time operating or living in the area-Landlords



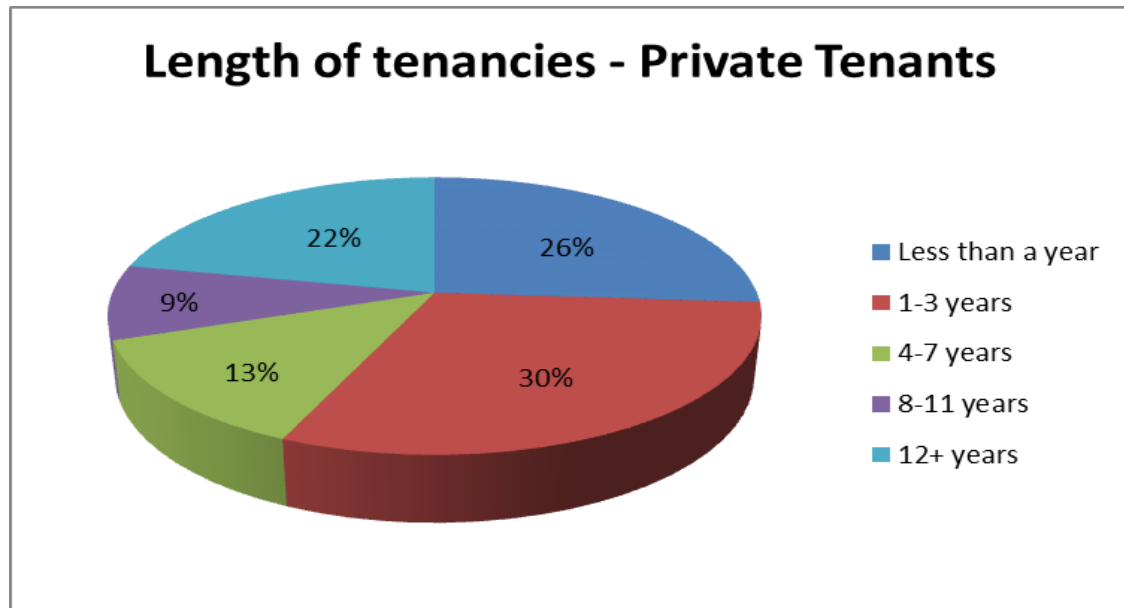
Licence holders were asked about the length of time they had owned or managed property within the licensing area. The majority of respondents (90%) had owned or been operating in the area for four or more years with 56% at 8 years plus. 10% of licence holders were new to the area and had invested as a private landlord during the period of licensing.

Figure 5 - Length of time operating or living in the area - Residents



72% of responding residents told us that they had lived in the area for four years or more, with 46% of these being long term residents of 12 years or more. 28% of respondents had lived in the area for a shorter period of time and had located to the area during the licensing period. 14% had lived in the area for less than one year.

Figure 6 - Length of tenancies - Private Tenants



56% of responding private tenants had lived in the area for less than three years with 26% for less than one year. 44% of private tenants had lived in the area for four or more years, with 22% having rented for 12 years or more, indicating a similar combination of both short and longer term tenancies within the licensing area. This is compared to 100% of owner occupiers who had lived in the area for four or more years, of which 74% have lived in the area for 12 or more years.

Residents were also asked if they were aware they lived within a landlord licensing area. 82% of responding residents advised they were aware they lived within a landlord licensing area, with 18% unaware.

Figure 7 – Landlord Licensing Awareness

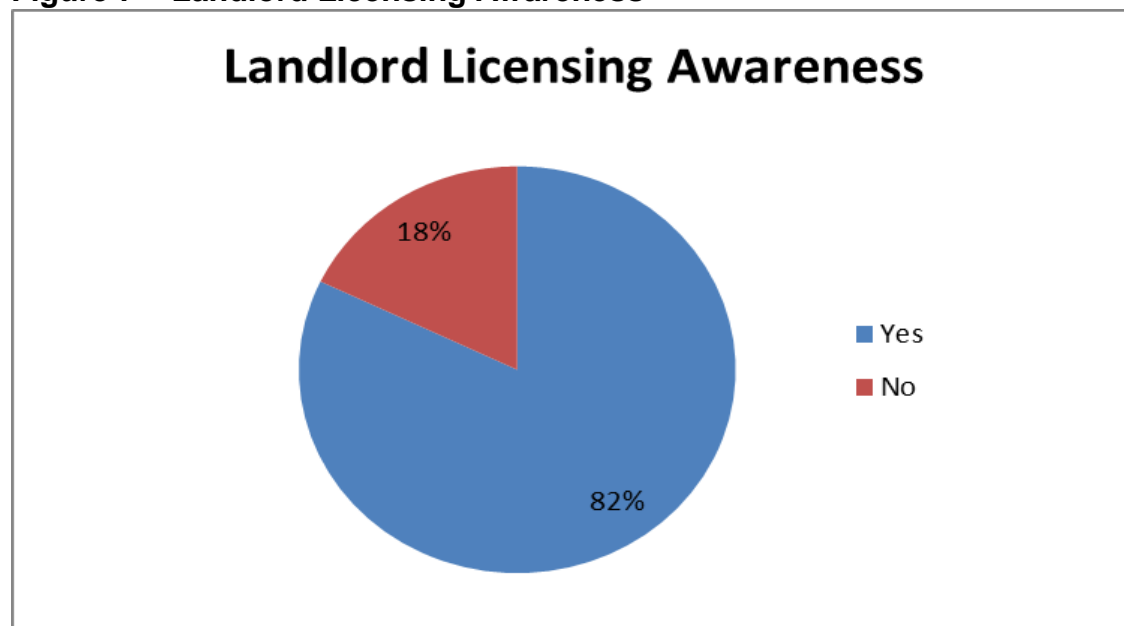
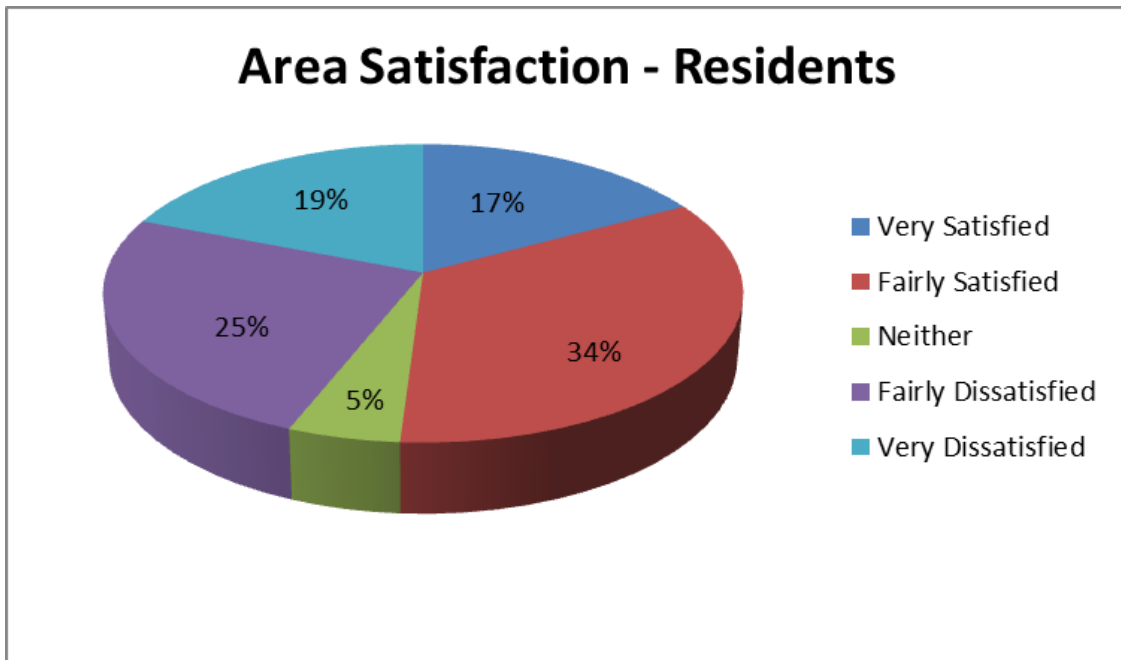
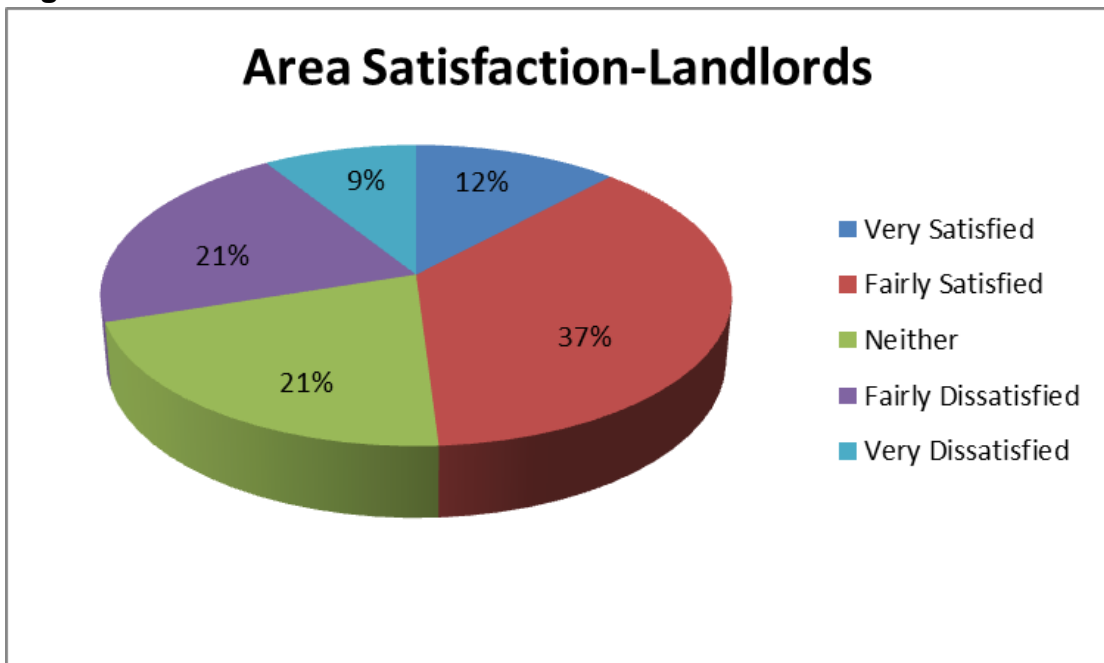


Figure 8 – Area Satisfaction-Residents



When asked about satisfaction in relation to the local area 51% of responding residents were either very or fairly satisfied, with 44% being either fairly or very dissatisfied. There are a larger proportion of resident respondents dissatisfied with the area now than back in 2011 (29%).

Figure 9 – Area Satisfaction - Landlords

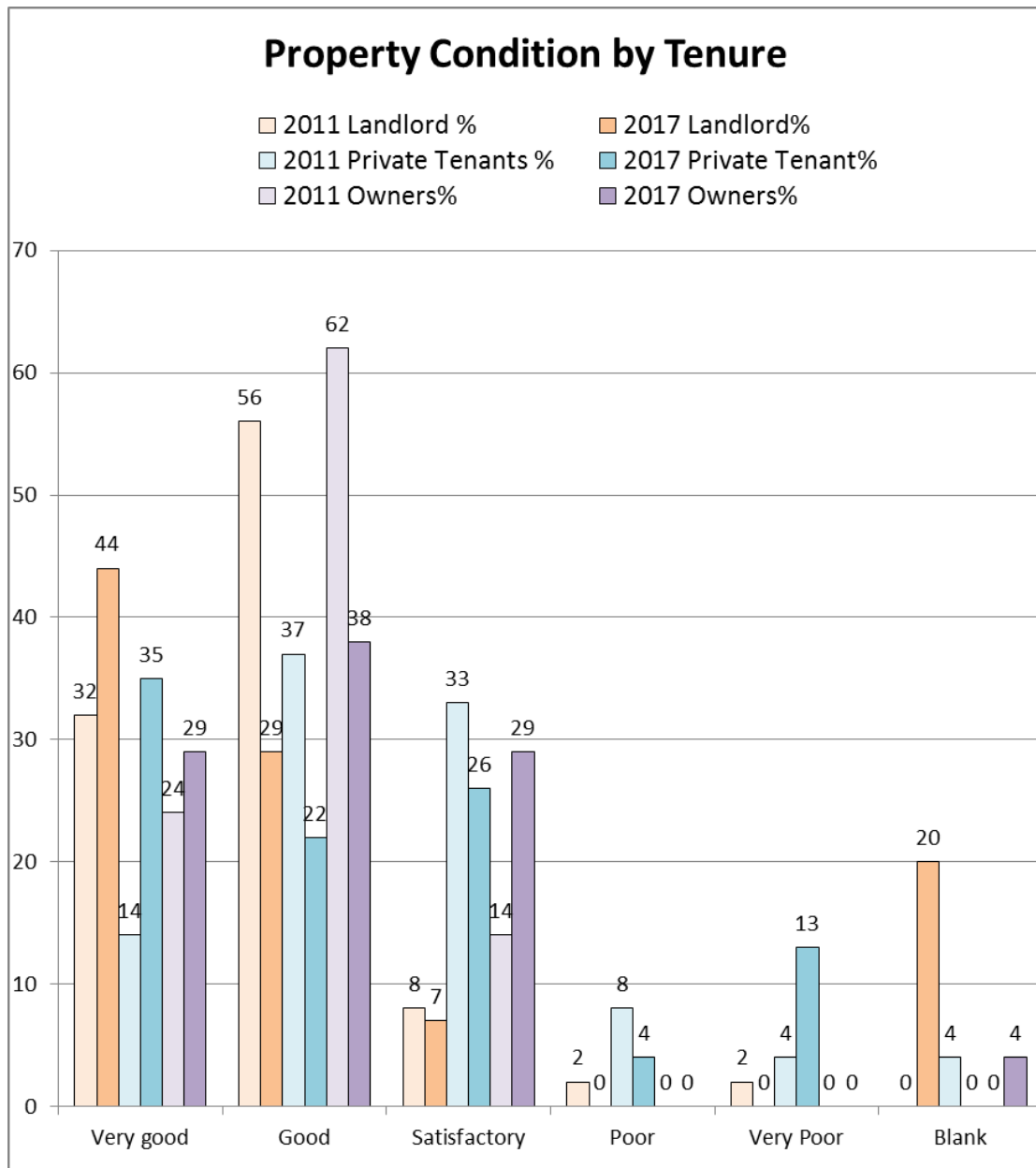


49% of responding landlords indicated that they were fairly or very satisfied with the area, compared to 64% in 2011. 30% were dissatisfied with the area which is an increase from 11% in 2011.

Property Condition

Residents were asked to provide information about the condition of their home. There has been an increase in the number of respondents reporting that their homes are in very good condition from 2011 across all groups, landlords, tenants and owners. In particular the number of responding private tenants advising that their rented homes are in a very good condition has risen from 14 to 35%. There are also a lower percentage of responding tenants advising that their rented homes are in a poor condition – from 8-4%. However, there is also an increase in the number reporting very poor property conditions from 4 to 13%. 20% of responding landlords did not answer this question.

Figure 10 – Property Condition by Tenure



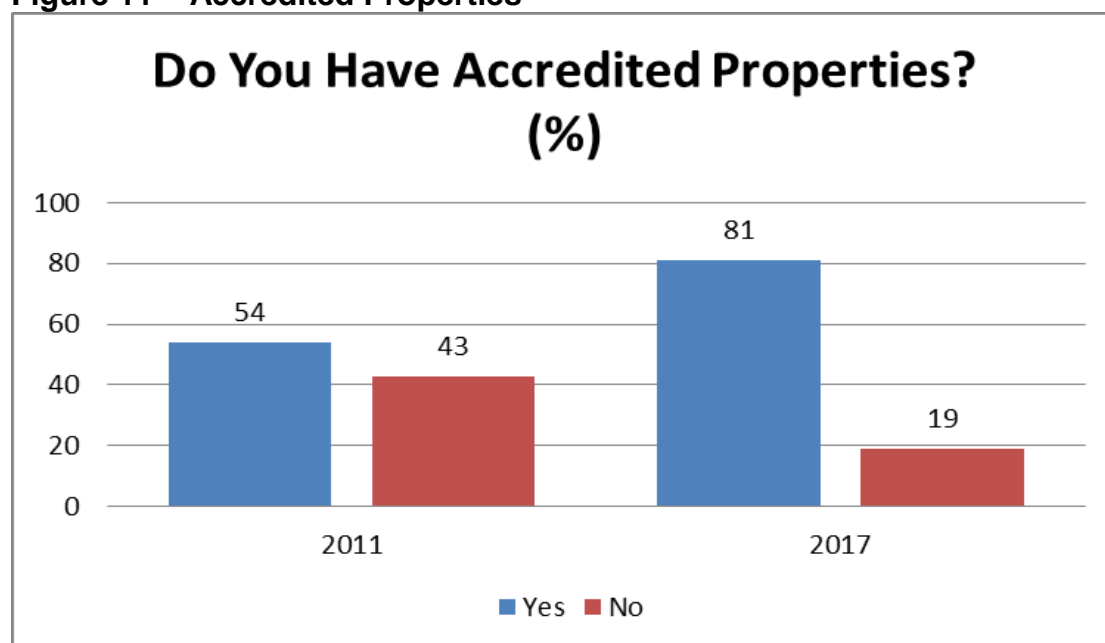
Property Accreditation

Landlords were encouraged to improve their properties to the accredited standard during the licence application process. By doing so a discount from the licence fee was awarded.

A large proportion of private rented properties were already accredited pre licensing via the requirement to do so to participate in the Block Improvement scheme (further details on the impact of accreditation and how property conditions have been improved via licensing can be found on page 42-46).

In the two years leading up to licensing 165 properties within the licensing area also benefited from a £500 maximum council grant to help towards the cost of accreditation. In 2009/10 six properties within the area also benefited from Council grants in relation to energy efficiency improvements such as new A rated boilers and insulation.

Figure 11 – Accredited Properties



81% of landlords confirmed that they have all or some of their properties situated within the licensing area accredited and this compares to 54% prior to landlord licensing in 2011. 19% of landlords advised they have none of their properties accredited which is far fewer than the 43% that who did not in 2011.

Landlords were also asked to provide information as to the nature of any improvements carried out at their properties during the licensing period. Common improvements included upgrades to meet the accredited standard such as:

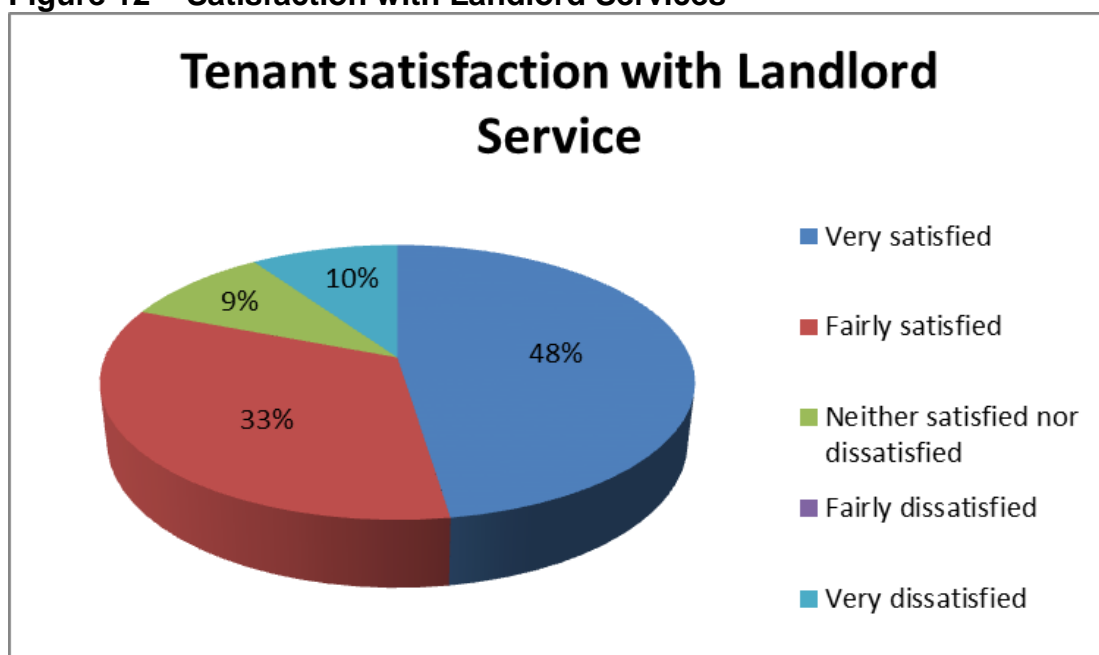
- New A rated boilers, window safety catches, new carpets and flooring and the installation of handrails and guarding to steps and stairs.
- Other works included double glazing, new kitchens and bathrooms, roof repairs and general maintenance and DIY.

76% of private tenants also advised that their landlord had undertaken repairs and improvements on their home throughout the course of the licensing period.

Landlord & Tenant Relationship

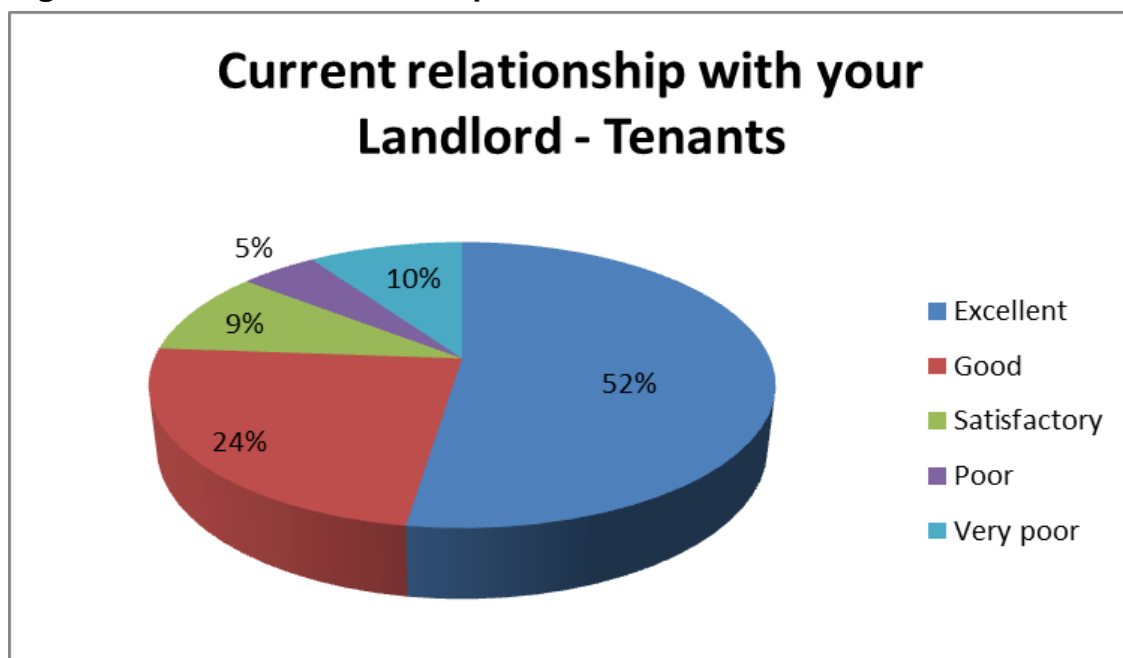
Private tenants were asked about satisfaction levels with the service provided by their landlord. 81% (increase of 3% from 2011) of tenants responded that they were satisfied (either very or fairly) with the service provided by their landlord, with 10% (reduction of 4% from 2011) reporting they were very dissatisfied.

Figure 12 – Satisfaction with Landlord Services



Tenants were also asked to describe the current relationship with their landlord. 15% of respondents advised that their relationship with their landlord was very poor or poor, with 76% reporting it was either good or excellent.

Figure 13 – Current relationship with Landlord

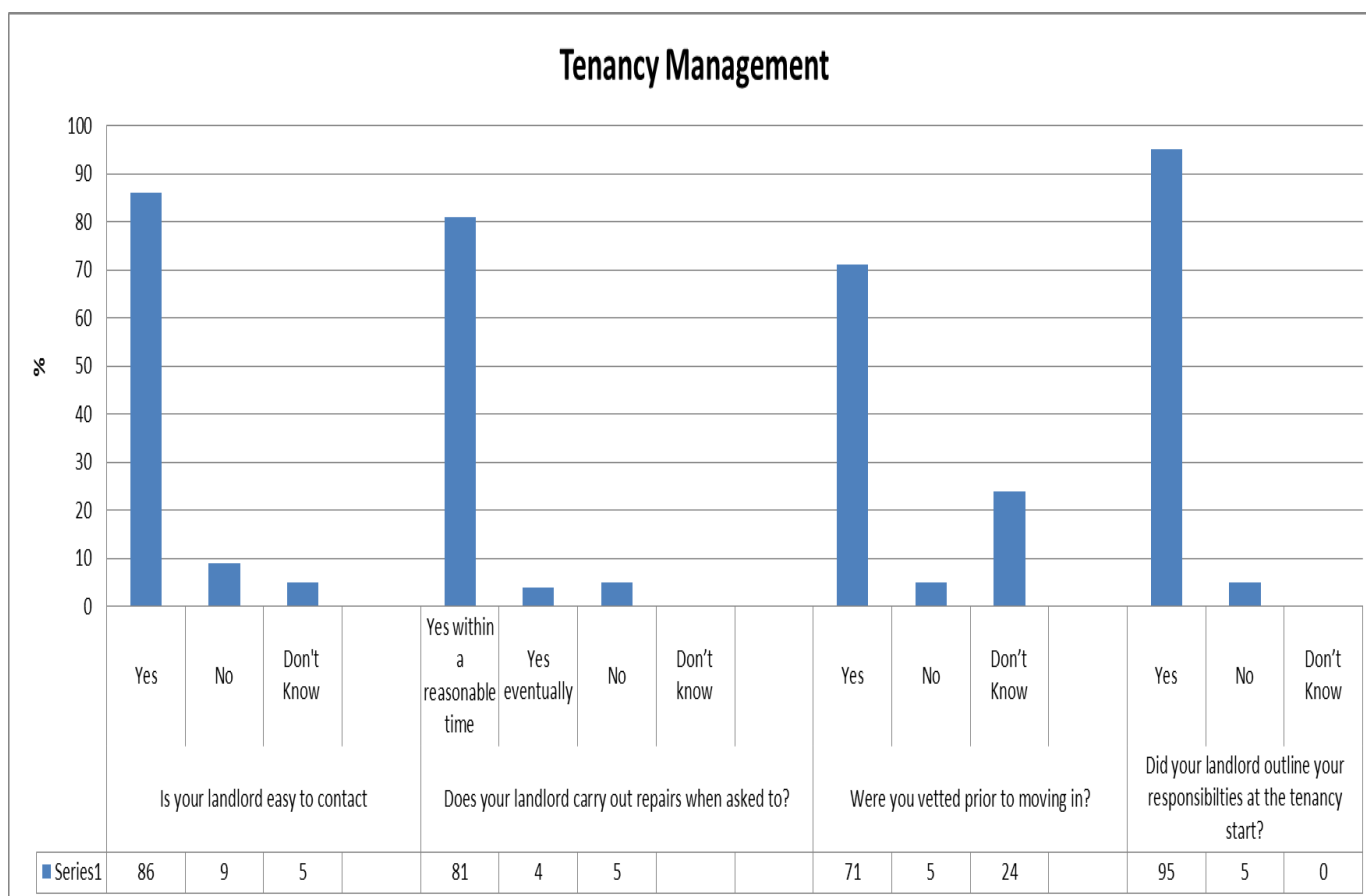


The requirements of the licensing scheme will have assisted in improving the satisfaction levels and services provided by landlords within the designated area for the following reasons:

- The licence condition framework has provide clear standards to landlords to facilitate improvement in property and tenancy management, as well as responding to any problems that may arise.
- Landlords are more visible and accountable
- Property conditions have improved via accreditation and property inspections resulting in tenants occupying safer, healthy and well managed homes.

Tenants were also asked for information in relation to the management of their tenancies when problems arise by their landlord and if they had been required to be vetted/referenced prior to being offered a tenancy in the licensing area.

Figure 14 – Tenancy Management



86% of tenants reported that their landlord was easy to contact and 9% responded difficulties in contacting their landlord. 81% of responding tenants also advised that their landlord carries out repairs in a reasonable time with 4% reporting eventually and 5% advising their landlord does not carry out repairs when asked to. 71% of responding tenants confirmed they had been reference checked/vetted prior to being offered a tenancy with 24% not knowing, and 5% advising they had not. The majority of responding tenants,

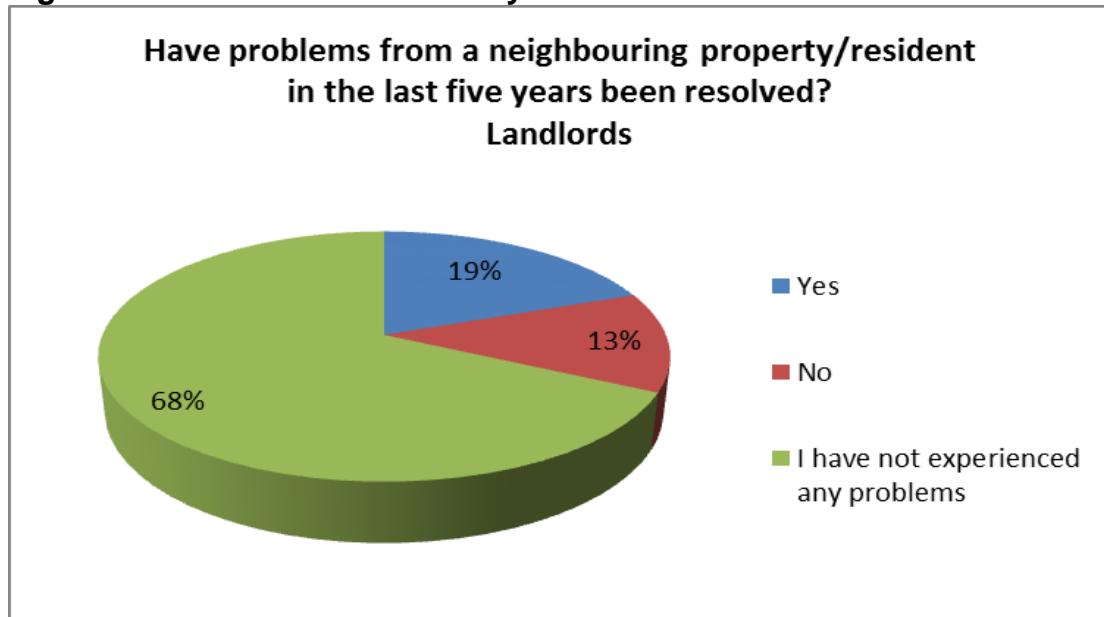
95% advised that their landlord had outlined their responsibilities within the tenancy to them at the start of the agreement.

Low Demand and Anti-social behaviour

All stakeholders were asked if they had experienced problems related to a neighbouring property or residents over the last five years and if so, had these problems been resolved.

Landlords

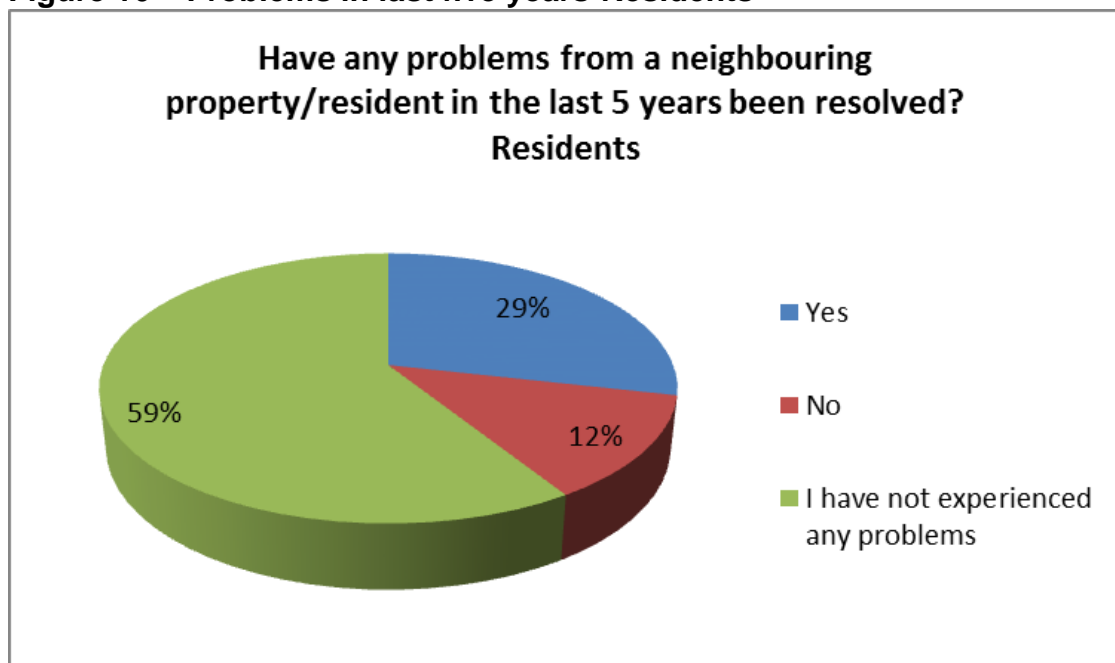
Figure 15 – Problems in last five years-Landlords



68% of responding landlords advised they had not experienced any issues over the licensing period, 19% of any problems had been resolved and 13% were unresolved or ongoing, Landlords responded that common problems related to refuse, drug use and tenants moving from property to property without any vetting.

Residents

Figure 16 – Problems in last five years-Residents



A large proportion (59%) of residents told us that they had not experienced any problems over the last five years. This is a noticeable difference from pre licensing in 2011 when 39% had not experienced any problems. 29% of residents who had experienced problem advised this had been resolved with 12% reporting problems were ongoing.

Residents who reported problems advised that substance misuse, noise from shouting and fighting in the streets and rubbish accumulations/fly tipping were common causes.

Further data and analysis in relation to ASB can be found on pages 32-41

A summary of the February 2017 evaluation consultation responses can be found in Appendix 3.

DATA ANALYSIS – SCHEME OBJECTIVES

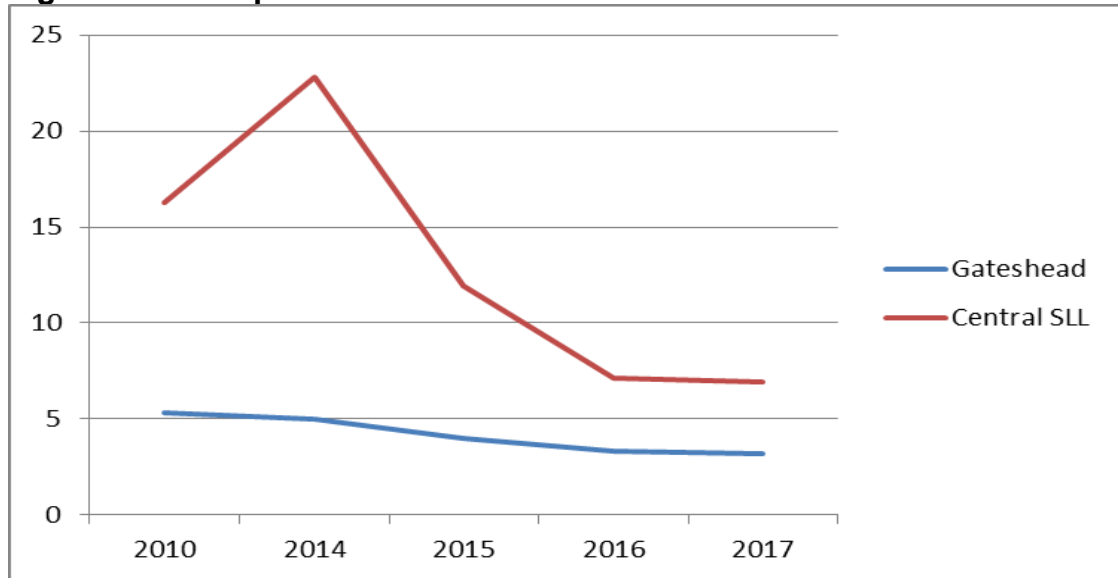
Objective 1 To reduce the turnover of occupants to create stable communities

The turnover of residents in the Licensing area has more than halved over the five year period.

In the years leading up to designation (09/10), liability changeover rate in the area reflected the instability in the Housing market when compared with the rest of the Borough. At the time multiple changes of liability in council tax (2 or more) was 16.3% (based on number of dwellings in the area) compared with 5.3% across the Borough.

Throughout the scheme period, the rate has fluctuated with the rate in February 2014 increasing to 22.8% (we believe the introduction of the bedroom tax for social tenants may have contributed to this increase), and since this time it has decreased year on year.

Figure 17 - Multiple Turnover Rates Central SLL 2012-17



More recent figures (Jan 2017) report a reduction in turnover in the licensing area to 6.9% which is more than half the initial 2009/10 rate (a 56% reduction).

Multiple turnover rates remain higher than the Borough average of 3.2%, however the difference between the two is now substantially less. Slightly higher rates of turnover are expected as almost 60% of the private properties are rented compared to the borough average of 16%.

The Borough rate has also followed a similar decreasing trend from 5.3% in 09/10 to 3.2, which is a much slower rate than that within the licensing area (39% reduction overall). There have also been significant changes in the

benefits system and national housing market since 2012 which may have negatively influenced turnover rates.

From February 2016 to January 2017 the postcode with the highest single turnover rate relative to the number of properties within that location was NE8 4QY – Saltwell Place and NE8 4XP – Trevethick Street.

During the same period the postcode with the highest multiple turnover relative to the number of properties within that location was NE8 4TH (17-109 Saltwell Rd), where 16.7% of properties in that postcode had more than two changes reported to council tax liability. Followed by NE8 4QB (1-64 Hyde Park Street) at 13.3%.

Further analysis of the turnover affecting 17-109 Saltwell Road has been undertaken to understand if the turnover rate was high from the presence of a number of Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) properties within that postcode. TGHC have confirmed that during the same period (Feb 16-Jan 17) only four tenants moved out of properties/terminated their tenancy within the postcode for the following reasons:

- Youth disorder – this was a complaint against a neighbour who was letting friends in who were causing noise
- Property too small
- Move closer to work
- One tenant was evicted for rent arrears.

There were also a number of postcode areas where no changes in council tax liability were made, these being NE8 1YN – Liddell Terrace, 4PY – 169-193 Brighton Road, 4RR – 148-178 Rectory Road and 4XF – 1-15 Lobley Hill Road.

A consultation survey in February 2017 asked residents and landlords how effective they considered licensing had been in reducing turnover of tenancies:

Table 2 – Consultation Response - Reducing turnover

How effective has licensing been in reducing turnover of tenancies?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	38%	46%	16%
Landlord responses	7%	57%	36%

The data which confirms a 56% reduction in multiple turnover during the five year period has been recognised by more residents than landlords.

Interestingly 72% of those responding landlords in the February 2017 consultation responded that they have had an average change of only 0,1 or 2 tenants throughout the entire five years and only 28% have had more than two changes of tenants in whole five years.

What does this data tell us?

Overall multiple turnover rates have reduced by 56% over the course of the licensing period. Reductions indicate that the housing market is more stable than back in 2010 prior to redesignation.

Despite this reduction the designated area continues to have a turnover rate more than double the borough average, however the difference between the two is now much closer. Slightly higher than average rates are to be expected due to the proportion of privately rented homes. A reduction in turnover confirms that fewer households are moving on overall and when they do it's after a longer period of time, indicating a possible increase in area and community satisfaction and this ties in with the increased satisfaction with property and its condition and the services provided by their landlord if the property is rented reported by residents and tenants.

There are certain locations within the licensing area that are experiencing noticeably higher turnover than others. In particular streets where turnover is higher are also streets where levels of complaints in relation to ASB and refuse and demand on Council services are also prominent. In these areas the ongoing intervention of landlord licensing may assist to ensure the extension of effective tenancy and property management to ensure the continuation of the downward trend in turnover.

Objective 2 To reduce the number of empty properties and the length of time they remain unoccupied

Overall the percentage of empty properties in the area has remained stable/constant at 7.5%. There are less long term empty properties in the area and there are fewer complaints about empty properties being made to the Council.

Data provided by Council Tax prior to licensing confirmed the overall property void rate for the designated area was 7.5%, which was considerably higher than the Borough rate of 4.5%. The current rates as of January 2017 remain at 7.5%, whereas the Borough rate has decreased to 3.6%.

Data from January 2017 confirmed there to be 67 vacant properties with 35 of these being short term vacants for less than six months and 32 being vacant for longer than six months. There are currently less long term empty properties in the area than in 2012 (Figure 18)

Figure 18 – Long Term Void Properties-January 2017

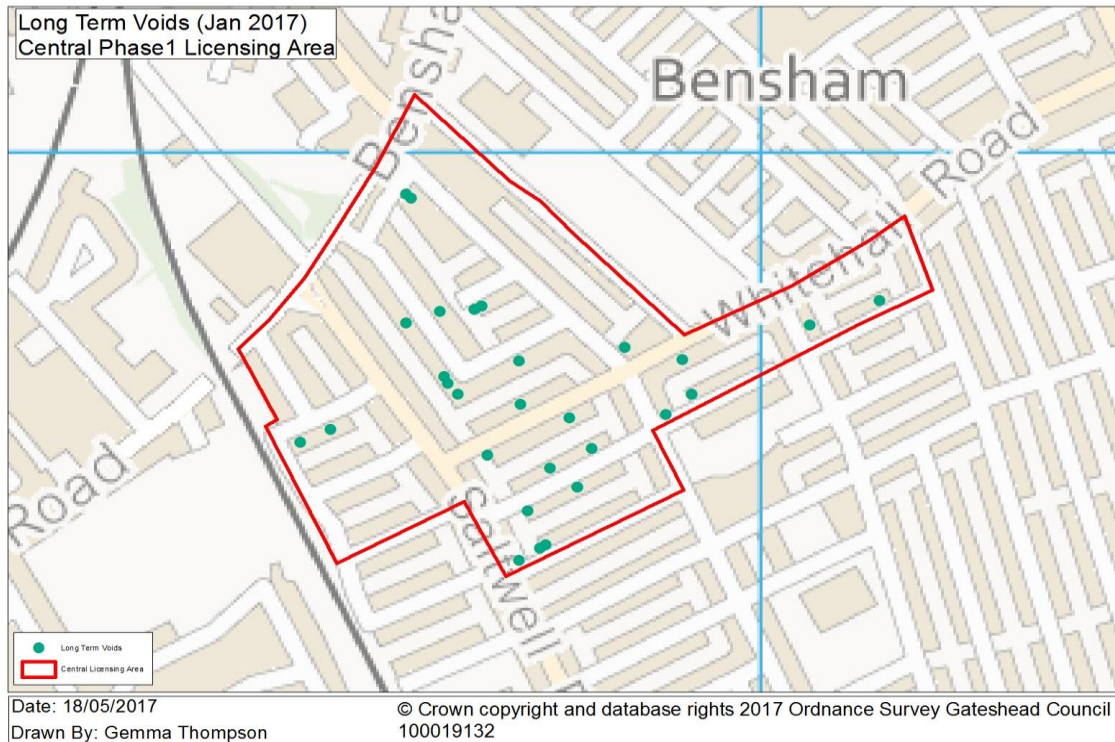


Figure 19 – Long Term Void Properties-January 2011

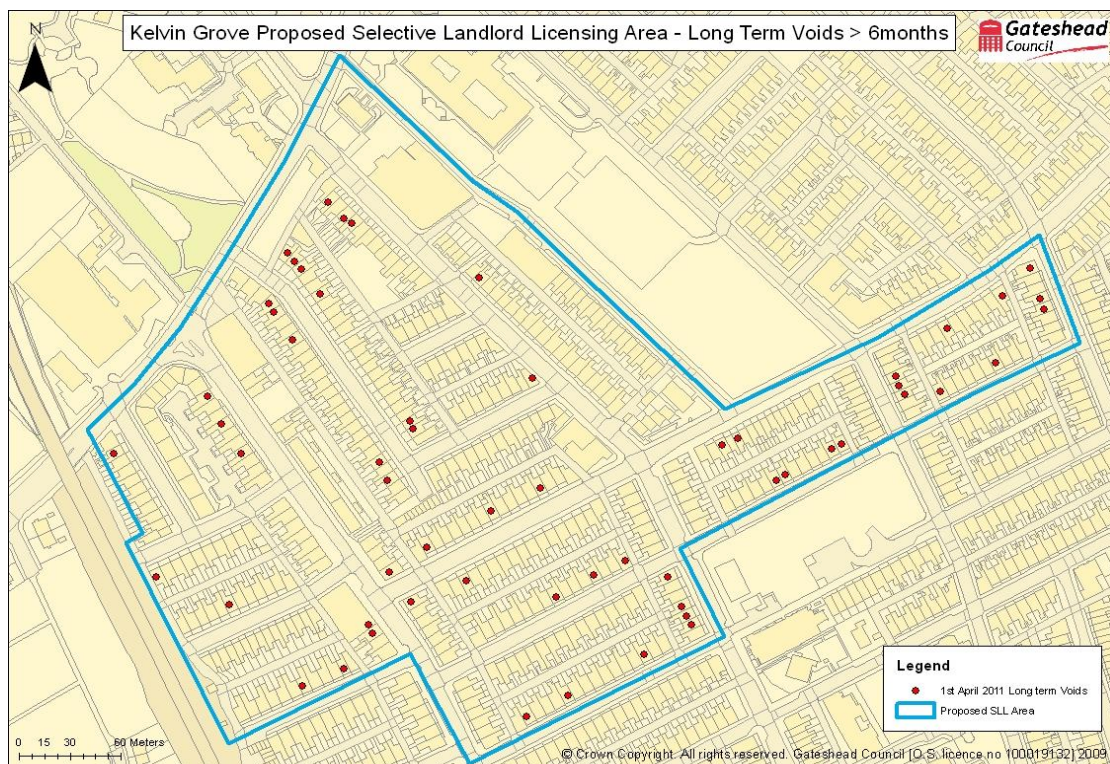


Figure 18 shows (January 2017) numbers and placement of long term empty properties in the licensing area. Figure 19 shows the same information for 2011, prior to licensing. The maps confirm the presence of fewer long term empty homes compared to 2011. The map also confirms that the majority of properties that are currently empty are not the same properties as in 2011, as

many of these have now been brought back into use. Existing long term empty properties are also concentrated within the mid location of the licensing area.

Although total numbers of empty properties have remained stable, since the *introduction of the scheme there have been 75 empty properties brought back* into use through direct action from the Council. 40 of these properties were long term empties (+6 months) and 35 shorter term voids.

It is normally considered that 4% of the stock being empty is a healthy sign within the housing market to allow for a changing population and demand. Of the 32 long term vacants, several have been vacant for the full duration of the scheme, despite intensive communications with the owners to bring them back into use. Of the 67 short term vacants as of January 2017, the majority of these have been empty for less than two months with many being in the process of sourcing new tenants.

How has licensing helped?

The Council has a dedicated Empty Property Officer who works closely with owners and housing providers to bring empty properties back into use. Officers within the licensing team have been able to identify problematic empty properties and refer them to the EPO for action. In addition licensing officers and the EPO have been able to instigate communications between owners and potential purchasers/developers as well as signposting to possible financial assistance available. Advice and support, as well as property inspections have been provided to owners to increase understanding of causes of vacancy and improving conditions to achieve a lettable standard,

Empty Property Leasing Scheme

The Council have also offered financial assistance to bring back into use, those properties that have been vacant for longer than 6 months. Through this scheme Gateshead Council would lease a property for a minimum of five years. The property would be managed by The Gateshead Housing Company, and let at an “affordable” rent (80% of Market rent) to people with a housing need. If the property requires initial improvement, the Council would carry out works, up to an agreed amount, and the costs will be recovered through the rent once the property has been let. Once the refurbishment costs have been recovered, the owner receives rent from the property. The Council will continue to charge reasonable property management and maintenance charges until the end of the lease period. The owner remains the same but they have minimal management responsibilities during the five year lease period. At the end of the lease the owner can either rent the property out themselves, sell it or renew the lease with the Council,

The scheme presents a very viable option to those owners who do not have the financial capability to bring their long term vacant properties back into use and up to a lettable standard.

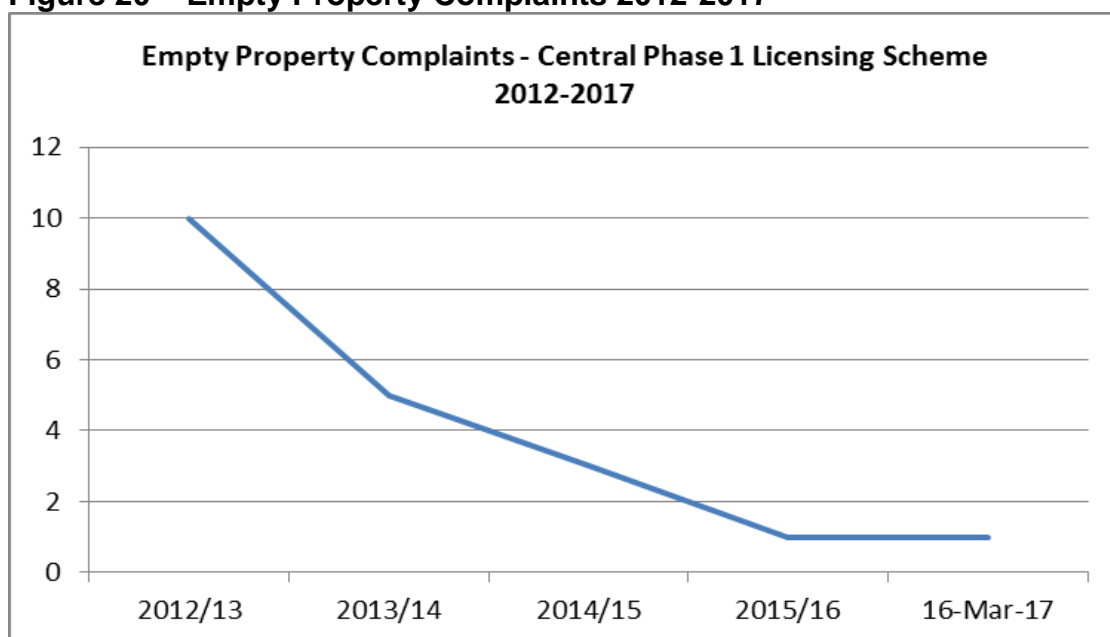
All owners of long term vacant properties in the existing licensing area have been contact on multiple occasions to encourage participation within the

scheme. Three long term vacant properties have now been leased and improved and are subsequently managed by Gateshead Council. In relation to these properties £30,236.12 has been spent improving the properties to a let able standard.

Empty property complaints

The number of complaints received by the Council in respect of problematic voids has decreased during the licensing period – indicating that the properties themselves are not causing concern to residents. Where properties are empty they are being maintained and managed more effectively and this has helped to improve the visual appearance of the area.

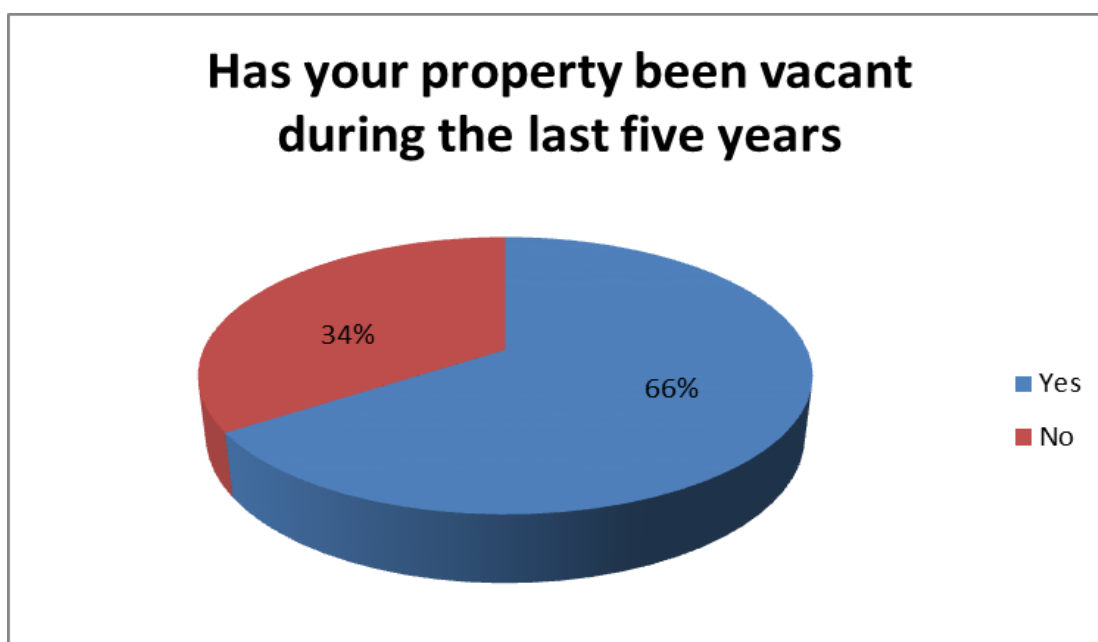
Figure 20 – Empty Property Complaints 2012-2017



Recent consultation

Licence holders were asked a number of questions in relation to any periods of vacancy in their portfolio during the licensing period, the causes for these periods of vacancy and the length of time of vacancy.

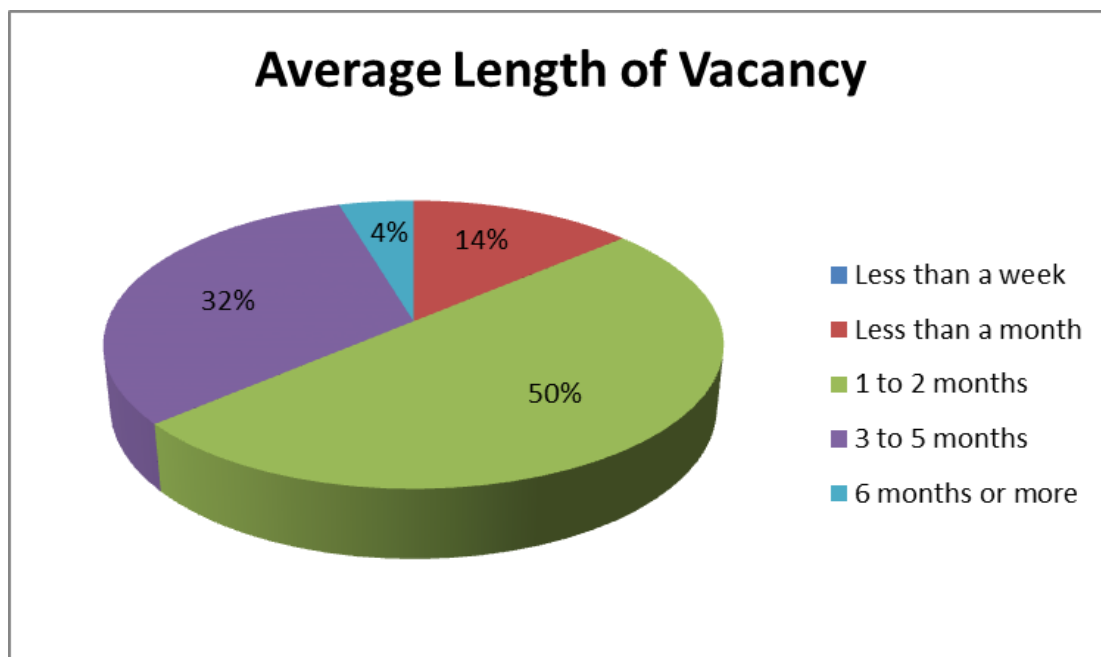
Figure 21 – Periods of vacancy in last five years?



66% of responding licence holders advised that they had experienced a period of vacancy in their portfolio within the licensing areas over the last five years. 34% of landlords responded that they had experienced no periods of vacancy during the five year licensing period.

The average periods of vacancy however were relatively short with 14% of properties being empty for less than a month, 50% were empty for only 1-2 months, 32% were empty for on average between 3-5 months and only 4% were vacant for six months or more.

Figure 22 – Average length of property vacancy in last five years



Common reasons for a property being vacant for longer than a month were:

- Property improvements/repairs (sometimes due to damage from previous tenant)
- Difficulties in reletting due to number of available properties to let in the area
- Time taken to find suitable tenants
- Anti-social neighbours.

When questioned about the impact of licensing on reducing empty properties 30 responses were received by landlords and 52 from residents.

Table 3 – Consultation Response - Reducing empty properties

How effective has licensing been in reducing empty properties?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	41%	44%	15%
Landlord responses	20%	47%	33%

Even though 64% of respondents voids during the licensing period had been vacant for less than 2 months a third of landlords felt that licensing had been unsuccessful in reducing empty properties. Those living in the area itself felt that licensing has been more successful in reducing empty properties.

Ongoing challenges

Although a number of properties have been brought back into use through formal/informal approaches within the team, the ongoing presence of long term empty properties continues to be a challenge affecting the sustainability of the area. Properties that are left empty for long periods of time can have a number of negative effects:

- They are a waste resource both financially and in terms of potential housing or community use
- They attract crime and ASB including vandalism, litter and sometimes arson
- Market values are often reduced as neighbours move away and confidence is reduced
- The reduced spending power on the local area impacts local businesses and the general economic stability of the area
- There are potential implications for public services such as schools and leisure activities if the population in a particular area is reduced.

Objective 3 To reduce levels of anti-social behaviour

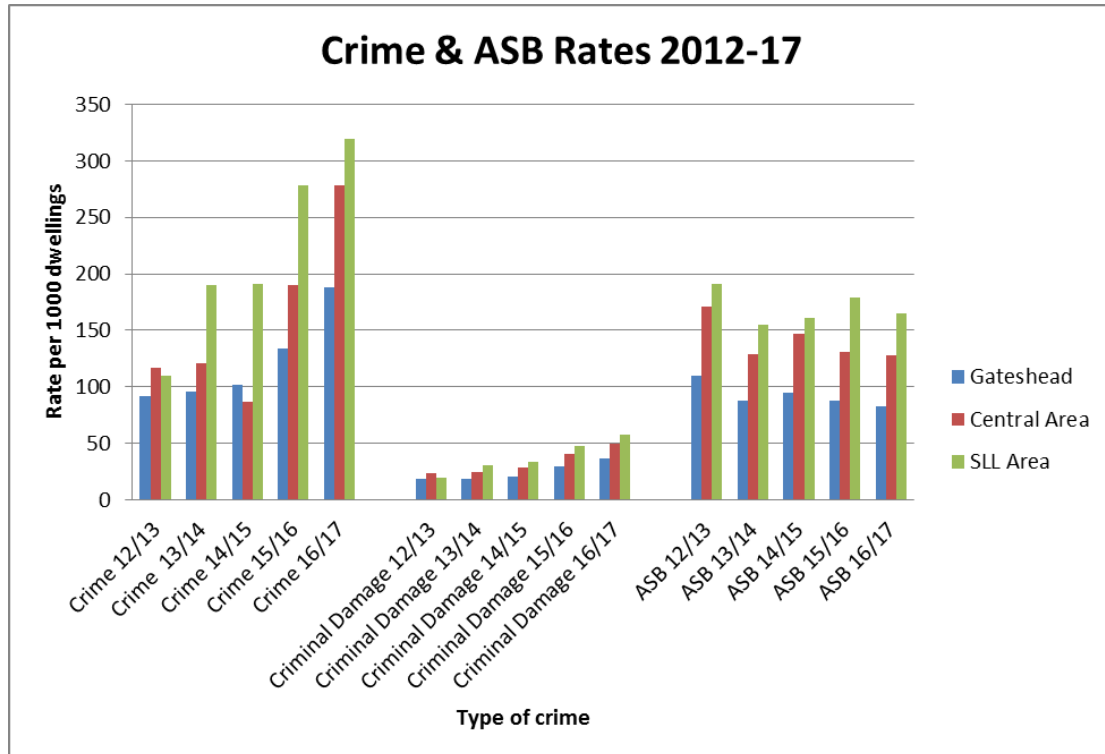
Overall the ASB rates reported to the Police within the Licensing area have reduced in the last five years with increased levels of reported crime.

Incidents reported to Northumbria Police

Figure 23 below shows that there has been a varying but downward trend in relation to ASB rates for the whole Borough, the Central Area and the licensing area. Reported ASB in the designated area fell to its lowest in 13/14, increased in 15/16 and decreased again in 16/17. The SLL area ASB data has been further examined and is related to a large number of reported neighbour disputes. ASB rates however remain higher in the licensing area than the Borough rate and Central Area rate. .

Figure 23 – Crime & ASB Rates 2012-17-Northumbria Police

Source: Northumbria Police



Areas in Gateshead with higher ASB and crime rates than the Central area include the Town Centre and Metro Centre where the levels of privately rented properties are far less.

The Police have advised that in the last three years the vast majority of incidents responded to in the licensing area were linked to adults; only a small proportion of incidents (6%) are classed as youth-related disorder. Alcohol was deemed to be a factor in one in 10 incidents. In the last three years, more than eight in 10 incidents were classed as neighbour-related disputes or rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour.

Recorded crime incidents have increased year on year Borough wide and in the central and licensing area. Violence against the person accounts for the highest proportion of recorded crime in the licensing area; three in 10 offences are linked to violence against the person. In 2013/14, a fifth of offences were classed as violence against the person and by 2015/16 this increased to almost four in 10 offences. However, in the last 12 months, Gateshead as a whole has experienced a rise in the number of crimes recorded by Northumbria Police. These increases are directly attributed to national changes in the way in which crime is now recorded by Police Forces; similarly, increased confidence in victims to come forward has resulted in an upturn in certain crime categories; while, greater emphasis to address vulnerability has resulted in changes to the way in which Community Safety partners operate.

Criminal damage also features highly, and accounts for 18% of all crimes reported in this locality in the last three years. More than half of the criminal damage offences reported are classed as damage to dwelling, with the other

offences a mixture of threats to damage and damage to other property (eg vehicles).

Northumbria Police Incidents linked to private rented homes

Incidents reported to Northumbria Police resulting in Officer attendance from May 2016 - May 2017 have been analysed. 72% of the incidents reported to Northumbria Police were in relation to activity at, or involving individuals at private rented homes. 15% were in relation to Gateshead Housing Company properties and the remaining 13% were owner occupied, empty properties or other housing providers. This would confirm that ASB and crime in relation to private sector homes and tenants remains to be an issue affecting the area.

REQUESTS FOR HELP/INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE PSH TEAM

ASB Complaints

The PSH Team have responded to and investigated complaints from residents in relation to noise and ASB throughout the five year licensing period. Complaints have ranged from noisy neighbours (music, parties, congregating, shouting/screaming, banging, stomping), barking dogs, youth ASB and immoral/illegal use of properties.

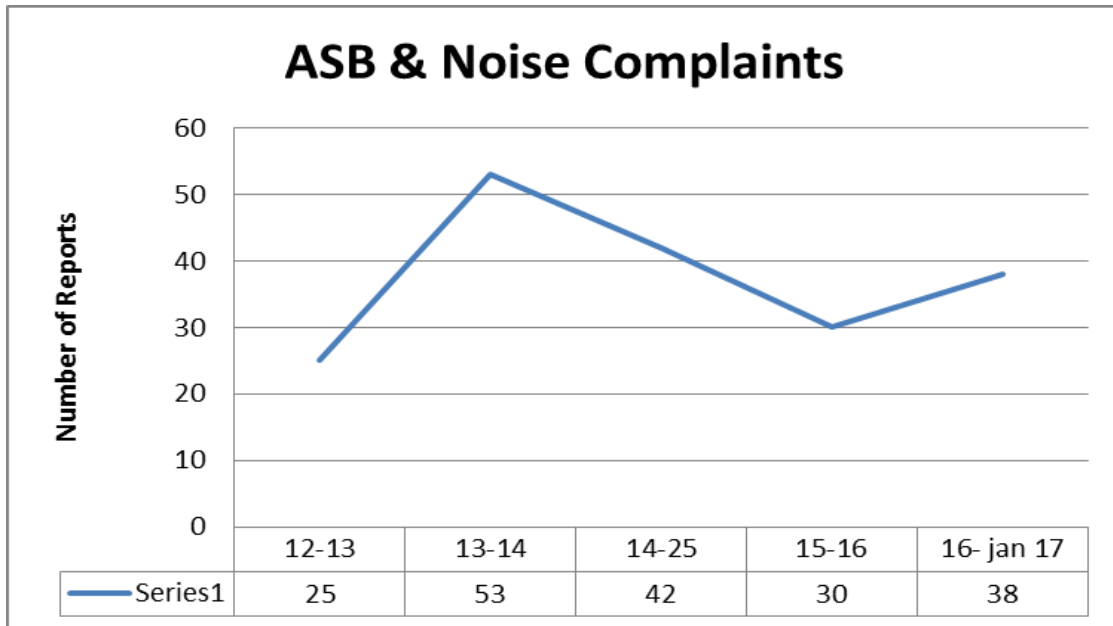
Table 4 – PSH Team Noise and ASB Complaints 2008-11, 2013-16

	Gateshead 08-11	Gateshead 13-16	Licensing Area 08-11	Licensing Area 13-16
ASB	679	449	29	40
% of households	1%	0.5%	3%	4.8%
Noise	1943	2032	73	78
% of households	2%	2.2%	9%	9.4%

The number of complaints of noise and ASB made to the PSH Team over an equivalent three year reporting period has increased. In the period 08-11 complaints of ASB from the Central licensing area amounted to 3% of complaints received borough wide. In 2013-16 this has increased to 4.8%. For noise this has also increased slightly to 9.4% from 9% with both levels being substantially higher than the borough average.

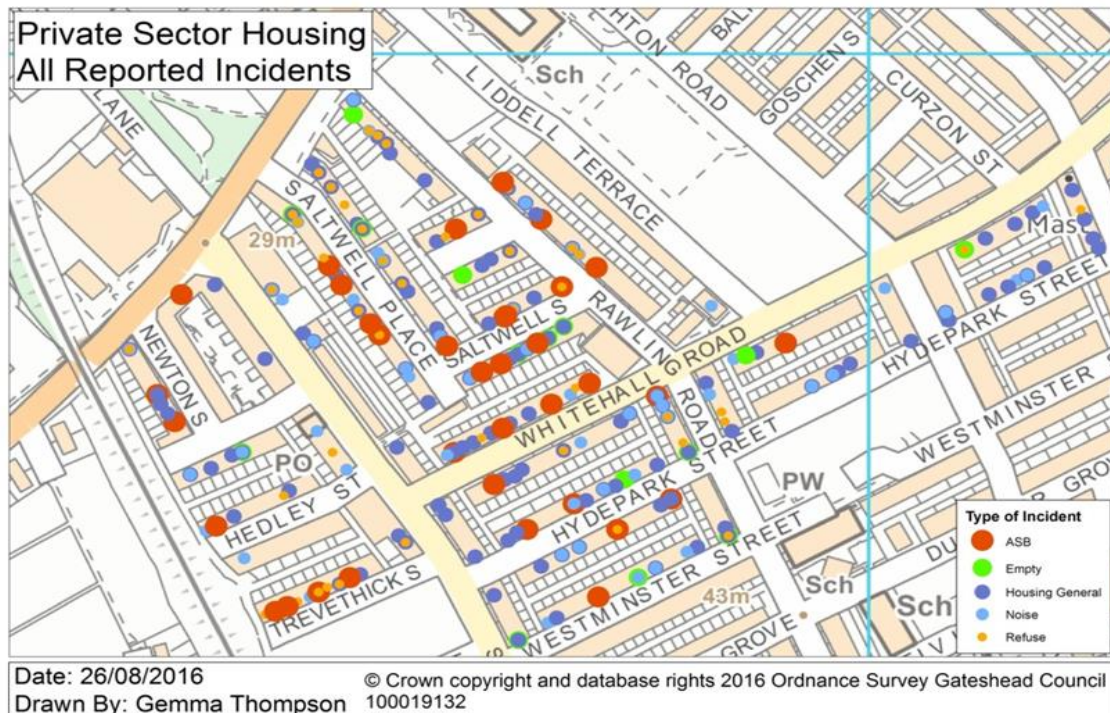
Whilst there may have been an increase in the number of incidents, it can also be considered that there may be Increased reporting from residents due to presence of landlord licensing and an awareness that licensing team can quickly identify landlords and contact them when ASB issues are reported to ensure a resolution.

Figure 24 – ASB & Noise Complaints – PSH Team- 2012-2017



Of the noise and ASB complaints received in the licensing area across the whole licensing period, May 2012 to May 2017, 84% were in relation to issues concerning private rented accommodation. 52% of complaints were received from occupiers of private rented properties, confirming that private tenants are also affected as well as being perpetrators. Requests for service to the PSH Team were also received from Northumbria Police, occupiers of non-licensed properties (owner occupiers, tenants of RSL's etc.)

Figure 25 – PSH Team Reported Incidents- 2014-2017



The map above demonstrates the requests for service received by the PSH Team within the licensing area over the last three years of the scheme, 2014-2017, of which noise and ASB cases are included. The map shows a concentration of ASB and noise incidents across the central area of the overall scheme e.g. Saltwell Place, Saltwell Street, Whitehall Road and Trevethick Street.

A recent consultation exercise on the impact of the scheme on the area carried asked residents and landlords how effective they considered licensing had been in reducing anti-social behaviour:

Table 5 – PSH Team Noise and ASB Complaints 2008-11, 2013-16

How effective has licensing been in reducing anti-social behaviour?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	40%	25%	35%
Landlord responses	16%	47%	37%

A much larger number of residents who live in the area itself believe SLL has positively impacted the prevalence of ASB, compared to landlords. This ties in with the responses provided by residents also in the consultation survey where 59% of residents told us that they had not experienced any problems over the last five years. This is a noticeable difference from pre licensing in 2011 when 39% had not experienced any problems. 29% of residents who had experienced problem advised this had been resolved with 12% reporting problems were ongoing.

Despite reductions in ASB rates and complaints to both the Council and Northumbria Police, the feedback received during consultation and regular contact with residents and stakeholders confirms that ASB and crime are ongoing challenges in the licensing area, with specific streets experiencing recurring issues. As landlord licensing has been shown to be effective in dealing with ASB when working with partnership with other agencies, continued targeted work in hotspot streets with those landlords and tenants is required to be considered.

How has licensing helped?

ASB Prevention

Licensing has resulted in increased cooperation from landlords to take responsibility for the prevention of ASB. The mandatory referencing of tenants prior to occupation has prevented residents with an adverse housing history moving into the area or has deterred particular residents securing accommodation in the area at all as they are aware they will be required to be vetted.

In recent consultation with private rented tenants living in the area, of those who responded 71% advised they had been vetted prior to being offered a tenancy in the area. 24% did not know if they had been vetted and 5% advised they had not been vetted at all.

The team undertook vettings on behalf of licence holders who were members of Gateshead private Landlords Association up until June 2016. From May 2012- May 2016 332 individuals were vetted who were looking to secure accommodation in the Central Phase 1 licensing area – of those 332, 32% of these were unsatisfactory outcomes (due to previous adverse housing history for ASB, property maintenance, rent arrears, leaving without notice etc.). In the majority of cases those with an unsatisfactory outcome for adverse housing history in relation to behaviour were declined a tenancy in the area. For those who were unsatisfactory for matters that would not affect the community such as arrears, referrals were made to debt advice and support to encourage payment of outstanding rent with previous or current housing providers.

Reacting to ASB Complaints

When ASB has been attributable to private rented homes Officers from within the Team have engaged licence holders as soon as possible and provided advice and support to help to resolve any issues and manage any breaches of tenancy. This has ranged from verbal warnings, written warnings to, and in the most severe or persistent cases, eviction. Working with licence holders has also allowed the PSH Team to signpost into a range of support services (drug/alcohol misuse, employment etc.), to assist offending tenants to change their behaviour and take responsibility for it in the hope that they can sustain their tenancy and remain in their home, thus stabilising turnover, .

With the changes to national reporting resulting in an increase in reportable incidents, it is difficult to quantify the true impact of licensing on ASB. The Private Sector Housing Team take a proactive approach to dealing with ASB reports and where necessary, partnership working with the Police has led to action being taken through the “graded response” approach to anti-social behaviour. In all cases investigated, private landlords have cooperated and worked with relevant Officers to resolve issues associated with their properties and tenants. Unfortunately on one occasion formal action was required to be taken against a licence holder for failing to vet their tenants and respond appropriately to ASB issues involving them resulting in a substantial fine and criminal conviction at the Magistrates Court. This form of action would not have been possible in an area not designated for landlord licensing.

In some cases the threat of a landlord having their licence revoked, or consideration of formal action for breach of licence conditions has resulted in greater cooperation in dealing with specific cases of ASB

Licence holders have also been encouraged to contact the Team when their tenants report to them that they are the victim of ASB. Where the alleged perpetrator is not living in private rented accommodation, the team will refer these cases to the most appropriate agency.

Specific Actions Undertaken to Resolve ASB issues

Acceptable Behaviour Agreements – an early intervention technique used within the graded response to ASB issues. The agreement is an informal contract drawn up between an individual who is perceived to be engaging in

ASB and the appropriate agency e.g. The Council or Northumbria Police. The agreement details respectively what behaviour the perpetrator will cease to partake in and at activities if any they must pursue to change their behaviour. ABA's are not legally binding but can be used as evidence to support applications for future formal sanctions such as an Injunction, Criminal Behaviour Order or Community Protection Order

During the five year licensing period there have been four ABA's used successfully to resolve ASB issues in their early stages, Three were issued to private tenants on Saltwell Street to resolve late night gathering and noise to the front of properties. A fourth was issued to a tenant on Hyde Park Street who was hosting regular noisy parties and allowing local youths to use the property as a base,

Service of Legal Notice - 59 legal formal notices have been served on both residents and landlords to resolve issues in relation to:

- The Building Act 1984 (defective drainage and guttering) 3
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (accumulations, dog faeces, nuisances, smells and pests – one case in relation to noncompliance from a resident in relation to being a responsible dog owner and cleaning up after their dog on a daily basis is currently at the Magistrates Court for a pending prosecution) 6
- Housing Act 2004 – (poor housing conditions) – Hazard Awareness Notice 3, Improvement Notices (Cat 1 and Cat 2 hazards) 6
- Public Health Act 1936 – (noxious refuse and premises found to be filthy and/or verminous) 6
- The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 – (accumulations likely to provide harbourage or a food source for pests) – 35.

In cases here licence holders have been served with a legal notice due to a failure to respond effectively, this has been regarded as a breach of licence conditions and may affect future applications for a landlord licence.

Over 150 licence holders have been provided with support and advice on how to effectively deal with ASB from their tenants, deal with issues in relation to rent arrears and ending a tenancy legally under these circumstances. Licence holders have also been provided with free training in relation to preventing and responding to ASB issues involving their tenants and their properties.

PROACTIVE CAMPAIGNS UNDERTAKEN IN RELATION TO ASB/NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES

The PSH Team have worked to maximise the benefits of SLL to ensure that the whole process of licensing is not just a paper exercise and so improvements to the area are evident through time. The resource made available through landlord licensing has made it possible for *specifically tailored proactive campaigns* in response to issues regularly raised by stakeholders to be undertaken. The PSH Team have listened to feedback

received from stakeholders and the community during the licensing period, and coupled with their own knowledge of community/neighbourhood issues, have developed and delivered a number of campaigns to raise awareness, improve knowledge and deal with specific problems.

Refuse Campaign – May 2016

Refuse and fly tipping are an ongoing and historical problem affecting areas within Central Gateshead, including the licensing area.

The refuse campaign which took place in May 2016 was developed to try and establish the root cause of identified accumulations by speaking face to face with residents, providing advice and education concerning recycling and correct waste disposal and generally making it as easy as possible for residents to access refuse/disposal services themselves. The campaign aimed to instil responsibility in residents to resolve any problems identified, provide them with the tools they need to do the right thing in the future to try and to try and reduce future refuse problems in the area overall.

The campaign was held over two days with 14 Officers from differing teams, including Local Environmental Services, with further independent work carried out in between. During the 2 days all team members were present in the area to:

- Identify accumulations of waste in rear yards and front gardens, fly-tipping and littering
- Investigate the source of the waste
- Engage with residents, owners and agents either face to face or by telephone whilst at the property
- Identify the cause of the problem by talking to residents about who waste belonged to, why waste was building up, why bins were not being presented, and what their difficulties were.
- Help those responsible to access any necessary services (services include a 'special' or bulky waste collection service, a replacement bin, assisted bin collection, recycling advice, or resolution of landlord/tenant refuse disputes). This included arranging providing prices for collection services, taking fees and arranging collections, taking fees and delivering bins, providing recycling advice and help for residents to understand why their bin had not been emptied, and contacting landlords to challenge poor management practices.
- Ensure wherever possible that those responsible that failed to remedy the problem were advised about the enforcement action that would be taken.

Follow up work was then undertaken for several weeks to make those responsible for the waste take responsibility for disposal of it.

87 accumulations of waste were identified during the campaign. 64 cases were resolved informally and 23 of those cases proceeded to formal action with the remainder taking responsibility for the waste themselves or utilising

council services. Over 200 residents were provided with advice and support to try and reduce future problems.

There were a wide variety of issues and challenges uncovered as a result of the campaign (bin hoarding, bin theft, reluctance to access services due to cost, bin contamination) and a summary of the findings with recommendations were passed to the Senior Management team, resulting in an onsite visit with Service Directors to the area. The campaign is an example of how licensing can be used to try and tackle/improve community issues as well as looking to impact and guide local policy and procedure.

Before and After – Central Refuse Campaign May 2016





Overgrown Gardens – Summer 2014 and 2016

Consultation and communication with residents confirmed the condition and appearance of gardens within the licensing area to be an ongoing cause of neighbourhood dissatisfaction. Throughout the licensing scheme Officers have surveyed the whole area in relation to this on a regular basis and made contact with both occupiers and licence holders to try and resolve. Occupiers have been encouraged to attend to overgrown and untidy gardens, and tenants have also been requested to take responsibility should the maintenance of the gardens be a clause within their contracts. In some cases, licence holders have been requested to provide a more permanent and low maintenance solution to garden areas that regularly and quickly become overgrown.

Garden Campaign Summer 2016 – Before and After





Objective 4 To increase the number of properties which meet the decent home standard, as well as meeting the Accreditation Standard

The number of properties which meet the decent home standard has increased during the course of the scheme, through the implementation of accreditation, enforcement of licensing conditions, and a programmed inspection schedule.

Property Accreditation

In Gateshead landlords are encouraged to bring private rented properties up to the Accreditation standard. This standard ensures that properties are free from Category 1 hazards, as defined by the Housing Act 2004, and also meet the decent homes standard.

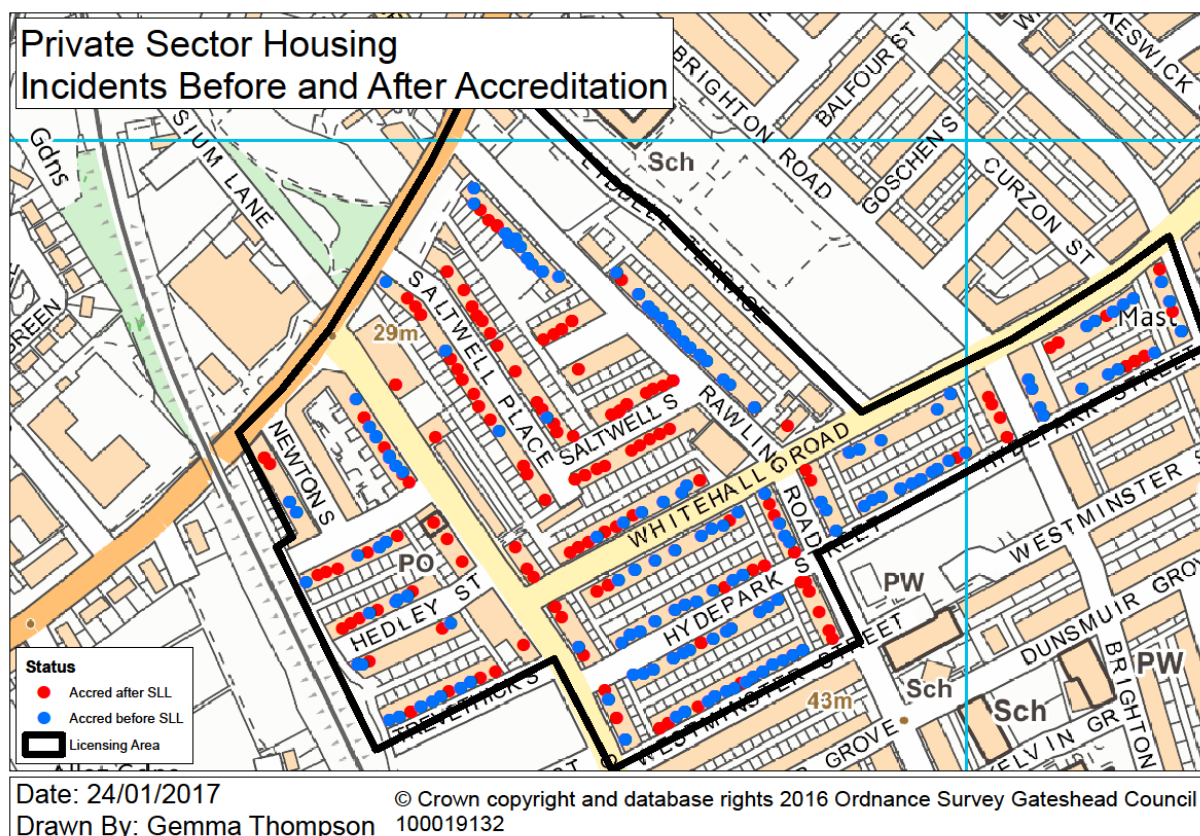
Landlords were rewarded for achieving the accreditation standard via a £150 discount being applied to their licence for each accredited property. Landlords agreed to maintain the accreditation standard for the full duration of the licensing scheme (five years) and this obligation was included as a condition of the landlord licence.

Prior to the implementation of the scheme there were a large number of private rented homes that had previously been improved to meet the accreditation standard. To benefit from funding to improve the external conditions of their property through BNG (BridgingNewcastleGateshead) funding, private landlords were required to ensure their properties reached the accreditation standard. As several of the terraces within the designated area had benefited from block improvement works, many were accredited at the time of licence application and these licence holders (150+) subsequently benefited from the discount from their licence fee.

For those landlords who had not participated in the block improvement scheme, property accreditation was again encouraged by Officers. This would involve a full inspection of the property and the production of a schedule of works provided to the landlord. Landlords were given a three month timescale in which to undertake all requested works and ensure the property met the accredited standard upon re inspection. The £150 discount was applied and the maintenance of the accredited standard for the full duration of the licensing scheme included as a licence condition. The majority of landlords achieved the required standard within the requested three month period. There were a number of cases where accreditation took an unacceptable amount of time to achieve, with subsequent revisits uncovering further required works.

Figure 26 below shows the spread of accredited properties before and after the implementation of licensing. Prior to May 2012 217 properties had been improved to the accredited standard. A further 201 (over 500 inspections in total by Officers) properties have since been accredited via landlord licensing, 418 properties in total which represents 79% of all privately rented property within the area.

Figure 26– Property Accreditation Pre and Post Landlord Licensing



Category 1 hazards have been identified on **132** occasions within the Scheme area through accreditation inspections and other inspections of private rented stock, with the most common hazards relating to falls on stairs and excess cold. Most of these have been remedied following accreditation of the properties, however on a small number of cases legal action was required to

be served which will affect a licence holders suitability for any future licence applications.

Within the area there were 491 licences issued in relation to privately rented properties. Conditions of every licence require every property to have: a valid gas safety certificate; a satisfactory electrical safety certificate; and smoke detection, ensuring that even if a property does not meet the Accreditation/Decent Homes Standard, improved housing conditions are in place.

Reaccreditation of Private Rented Homes

As over 200 properties were accredited prior to landlord licensing commencing, the accreditation status of these properties and those accredited early on in the licensing period were required to be re inspected to ensure the standard was being maintained. Licensing officers reinspected all 200+ properties. For the majority of properties the standard had been maintained, with a few recommendations for basic upkeep and maintenance being made. In some cases, properties were found to fail the standard and licence holders were requested to undertake additional works to ensure that the standard was maintained.

Programmed property inspections

Where landlords have chosen not to accredit their properties, work of the Council's Private Sector Housing Team has resulted in every property being inspected to ensure compliance with the minimum housing standard. As a result 58 additional properties have been inspected internally and Landlords requested to undertake repairs and improvements where necessary. Category 1 hazards were identified at a number of these property inspections and in some cases formal action via the service of legal Improvement Notices were required to secure improvements.

Programmed property inspections before and after



CAMAPIGNS UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE PROPERTY CONDITION

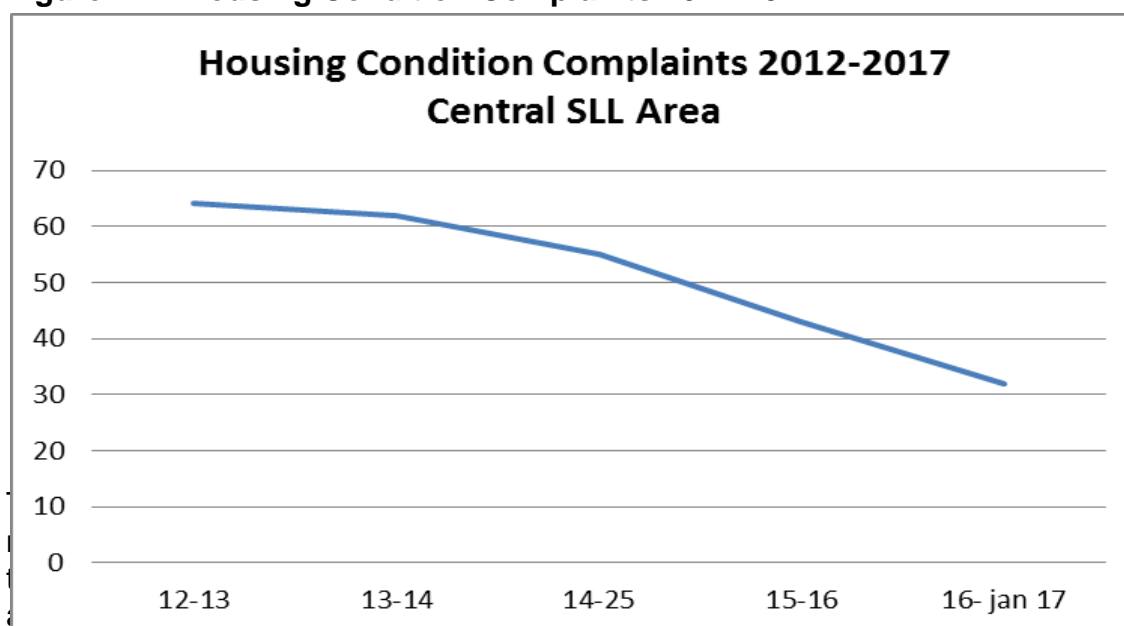
Proactive Property Condition Campaign

To further improve the external appearance of properties within the area the PSH Team undertook a proactive campaign where all properties were inspected and any defects or required improvements were noted e.g. overgrown gardens, defective gates and boundary walls, defective guttering, windows, and brickwork. This campaign was aimed at all tenures and all properties. Following initial inspections 292 schedules of recommended property improvements were sent to landlords and owners, resulting in improvements to over one hundred properties.

REQUESTS FOR HELP IN RELATION TO PROPERTY CONDITION

The PSH Team respond to and investigate any request from a resident in relation to problems with the condition of their own home if rented or of there are problems affecting them from a neighbouring property e.g. penetrating dampness. There has been a significant reduction in the number of requests for help made to the Team concerning the condition of private sector housing within the licensing scheme during the five year period.

Figure 27 – Housing Condition Complaints 2012-2017



Consultation in February 2017 asked residents and landlords how effective they considered licensing had been in improving property conditions:

Table 6 – Consultation Feedback-Improving Internal Property Conditions

How effective has licensing been in improving internal conditions?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	46%	33%	21%
Landlord responses	32%	41%	27%

Table 7 – Consultation Feedback-Improving Internal Property Conditions

How effective has licensing been in improving external conditions?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	42%	31%	27%
Landlord responses	45%	29%	26%

When also asked if their landlord had undertaken repairs at their rented home in the last five years, 76% of responding private tenants told us that

improvements had been undertaken throughout the duration of the licensing scheme.

Objective 5 To improve the management of properties in the area

and

Objective 7 To increase the number of landlords who are fit and proper and manage their properties well.

Improvement in property management practice in the Area is evident, in the improved conditions of the private rented properties.

The number of landlords who have demonstrated they are fit and proper and manage their properties well has increased during the five year period.

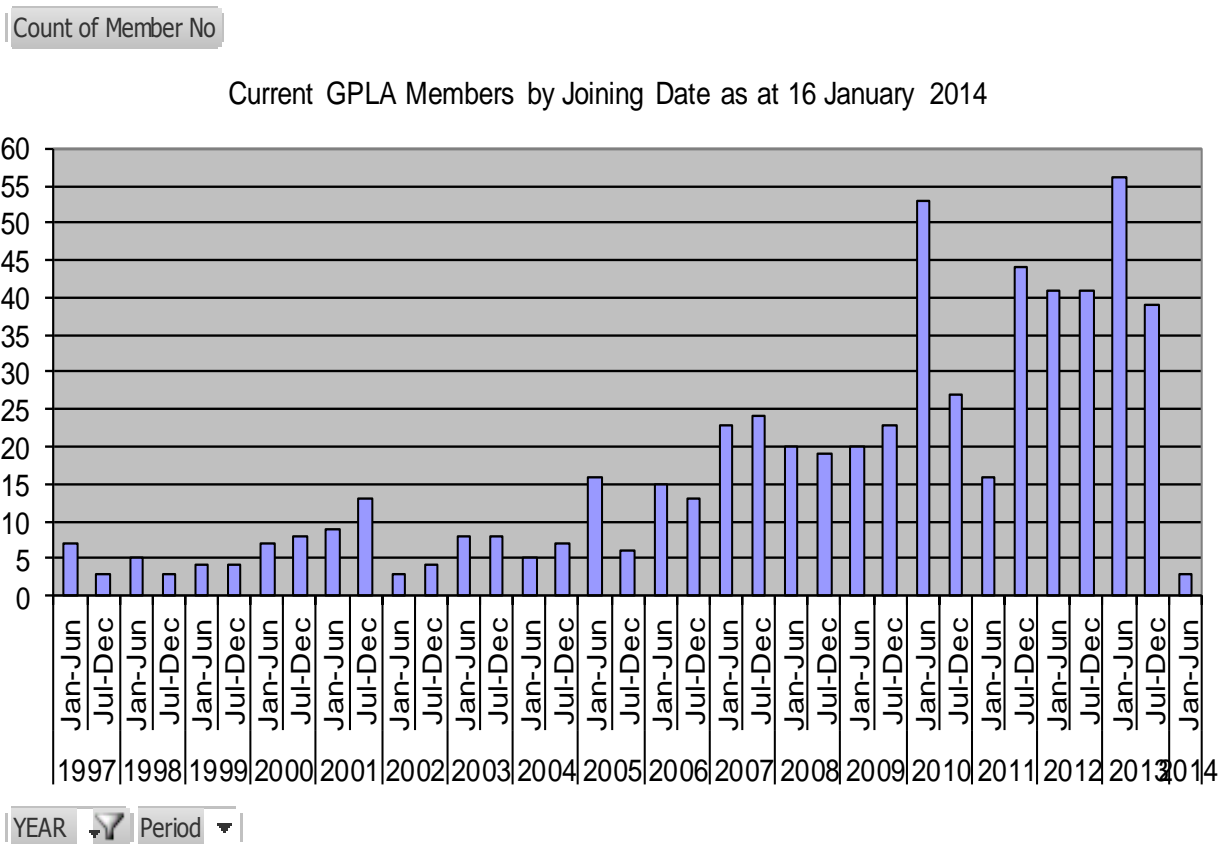
Landlord Association Membership

Landlords and agents who have properties within the licensing Area have been encouraged to become a member of a landlord association, to enable them to improve their knowledge of the sector, keep up to date and help them manage their properties effectively. The Council facilitated the Gateshead Private Landlords Association (GPLA) up until June 2016, where landlord's signed up to the Code of Good conduct and a number of services were provided to benefit both the landlord and tenant, including: tenant vetting, property advertising, tenancy agreement provision, advice and guidance. Several of the services provided assisted a landlord in the compliance with landlord licence conditions.

The level of membership of the GPLA increased during the time when licensing was introduced into an area. Figure 28 below shows an increase in membership when licensing was introduced into Sunderland Road in 2007, Chopwell in 2010, then again in 2010/11 when the Central scheme commenced and then finally in 2013 when the Swalwell licensing scheme commenced. The Block Improvement Schemes also required landlords to become members for a specified time and many licence holders were already members of an association at the point of application.

Licence holders benefitted from a £75 discount from the licence fee if they were a member of a nationally or locally recognised landlord association. Other associations where membership resulted in a fee discount included the National Landlords Association (NLA), the Residential Landlords Association (RLA) and for agents the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA).

Figure 28 – GPLA Membership by Joining Date 1997-2015



Of those landlords who responded to the recent February 2017 consultation, 86% advised they were current members of a landlords association. 27% of those landlords were not members of an association prior to landlord licensing.

Licensing placed an obligation upon licence holders to remain a member of a landlords association for the full duration of the licensing scheme. Unfortunately this condition has been abused by some licence holders and has resulted in a great deal of chasing and encouragement to secure compliance. Those who have not provided membership to an association when this has been a condition of their licence have been breached and this will be taken into consideration for any future potential licensing schemes. Evidence also suggests that landlord association membership reduces when landlords are no longer required to remain members after licensing schemes expire. Current GPLA membership in July 2017 stands at 322, which is a substantial reduction from 697 in 2012 when membership was at its peak to the condition to join and remain a member of the association during the licensing period. Since the former licensing schemes in Chopwell and Sunderland Road have expired, the number of new members joining the GPLA has decreased and this trend is expected to continue to decrease across all associations following the expiry of the Central Scheme in May 2017.

A total of 468 licenses (84%) issued had licence holders who were members of an association and who benefited from the landlord association discount of £75.

Improving Management

During the course of the Scheme, the *Private Sector Housing Team* have worked closely with landlords to improve the management of properties. The support given by the Team during the Scheme period has included:

- General advice in relation to creating, ending and managing a tenancy and dealing with difficulties when they arise.
- Helping licence holders ensure the property condition is acceptable and meets legislative requirements.
- Running 2-3 training courses each year for landlords to improve their management practices and assist compliance with the conditions of their licence. Sessions included guest speakers from organisations in relation to electrical safety, the National Landlords Association and Northumbria Police.
- Detailed guidance in relation to tenant vetting/referencing
- Invitation to join the free NLA Associate membership scheme.

The landlord licence process has highlighted both good and bad landlord management practices. Where poor landlord practices have been identified, Officers have worked with individuals to improve management standards. Where landlords have:

- failed to provide relevant information on applying for a licence
- failed to meet the fit and proper person criteria, or
- failed to work towards improving standards.

In some cases applicants have been dissuaded from applying for a licence, and encouraged to use an Agent or other landlord who can demonstrate their ability to manage private rented property.

Licence Monitoring

- 503 annual review of licence requests have been sent out to licence holders to verify compliance with several licence conditions, resulting in improved landlord management of the properties concerned. There have been persistent non return of requested information by some licence holders that has resulted in the request to attend a formal interview under caution (33 of them) and these landlords have either been breached or subsequently provided the requested information in advance of the interview.
- 39 letters have been sent as a result of breaches in the licence conditions, with warning of further formal action should further breaches occur. Those breaches have been placed on record should future applications for licenses be submitted.

- 33 PACE interviews under caution have been undertaken as a result of suspected offences in relation to failing to apply for a licence (30) or failing to comply with the conditions of a licence (3).
- 65 licences have been revoked as a result of change in circumstances or suitability of the licence holders.
- 46 licenses have been varied as a result of a change in circumstances.

Where legal action has been taken, licences have subsequently been revoked and applied for by other individuals considered to be “fit and proper” and able to manage properties effectively.

The application process requires applicants to sign a declaration to confirm that they are fit and proper to hold a licence, with all relevant offences listed. We are aware that other Local Authorities request a formal Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) at a cost to the applicant to ensure an applicant is fit and proper. To date in Gateshead we have requested confirmation through a signed declaration in order to keep costs to a minimum for landlords. We are aware of only one occasion where a landlord has failed to provide the correct information on their declaration. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduces additional requirements for an licence applicant to be regarded as fit and proper, with the possibility of a DBS check becoming a legal requirement for licence applications. We will continue to monitor this situation and update our procedures accordingly.

Recent consultation asked residents and landlords how effective they considered licensing had been in improving landlord management in the Area:

Table 8 – Consultation Feedback-Improving Property Management

How effective has licensing been in improving property management in the area?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	40%	35%	25%
Landlord responses	20%	48%	32%

Objective 6 To increase the value of residential premises

The value of residential properties in the area has remained stable during the five year licensing period, with an increase in average prices in 2016. .

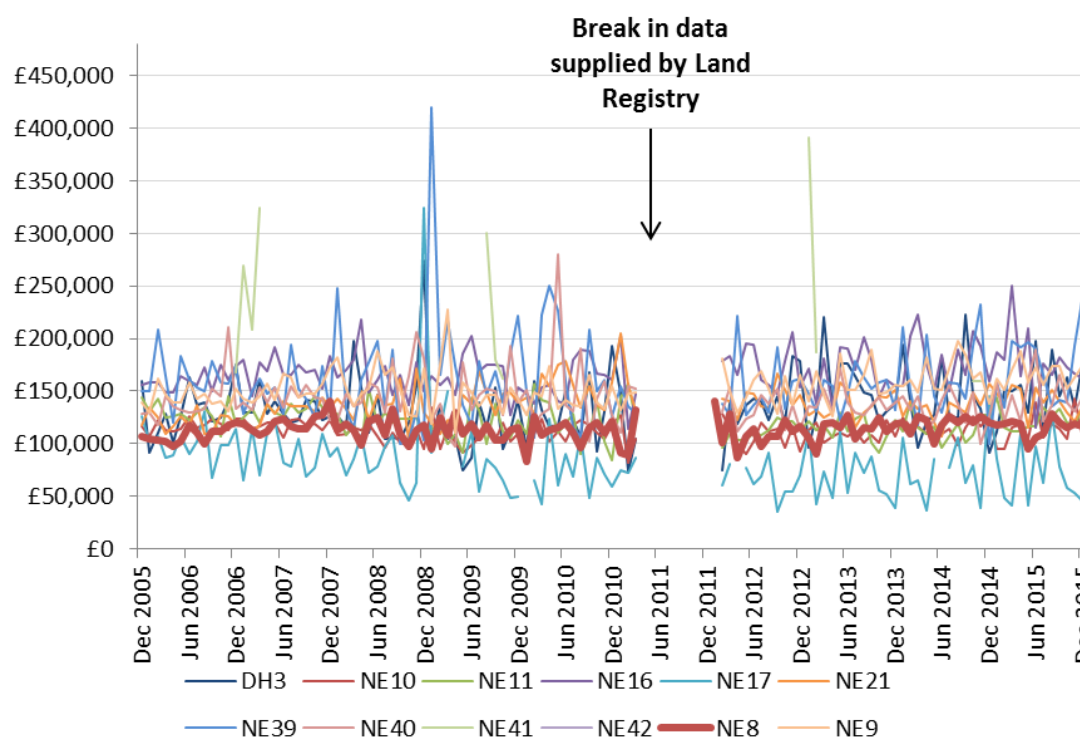
National Context

Average property price within Gateshead remain lower than the Tyne and Wear and North East region. Nationally there has been a slight increase in property value from 2013, with prices in Gateshead remaining stable.

Local Context

Figure 29 below shows a time series plot of average prices between Dec 2005 to the beginning of 2016, by postcode sector in Gateshead. Postcode NE8 (shown in red) represents many of the postal codes within the Central licensing area. The data displays consistently lower prices in NE8 than in other parts of the borough, except for NE17- Chopwell.

Figure 29 – Average Property Sale Prices 2005-15-Gateshead Postcodes



Licensing Area

During the licensing period the number of property transactions was significantly low over the period 2012/2015, with only 10 transactions taking place during 2013/14 and this makes comparison difficult. Interestingly there were only one or no sales on Miller Street and Lobley Hill Road during the whole licensing period.

Sales show that that the price of individual prices varied significantly throughout the licensing period with the average value of transactions ranging from £37,000 to £200,000.

The average house price based on completed transactions increased initially in 2013/14 to £90,775 from £71,329. From January 2014-June 2015 the average price based on the number of transactions then decreased and remained stable at £67,700.

Figure 30 – Property Sale Prices 2005-15-Central SLL Area Streets



The average house price base don't he number of transactions has increased in the last period of monitoring – December 2015 to November 2016 to £100,063. The majority of transaction prices remain lower than the Gateshead average, with the increase in transactions and prices in 2016, bring average prices closer to the borough average. The number of transactions has also more than doubled. Closer analysis of this data has confirmed that the increase in transactions and average prices is in relation to the new build development which borders the licensing scheme at Trevithick Street and Saltwell Road. 14 of the 37 transactions were in relation to properties on the new development. There has also been an increase in transactions generally across the area outside the new development phase – from 11 transactions in 14/15 to 37 transactions in 2016 – 14 of which were within the new development.

We are aware that licence holders, existing Gateshead landlords and landlords new to the area have continued to invest in the licensing area over the licensing period via property purchases. This investment will have contributed towards the increase in the percentage of private rented homes in the area over the last five years.

Evidence gathered during the Scheme has informed us that at least 5 properties within the licensing area have been repossessed. This figure is

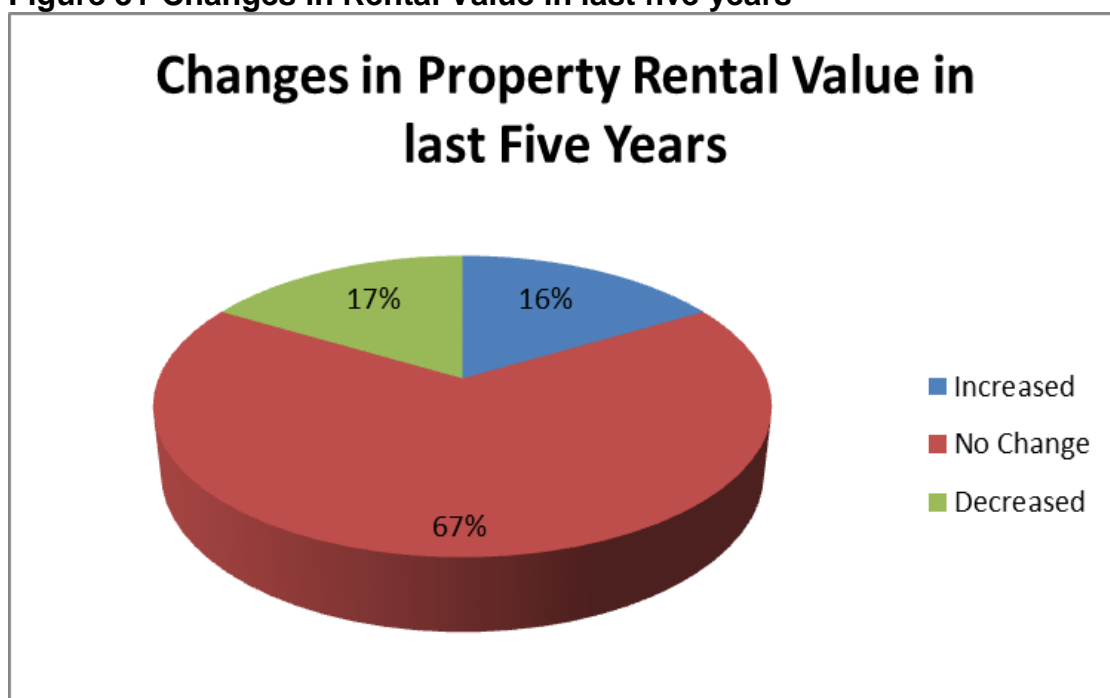
very likely to be under represented as the five are only the properties the Team have had an involvement with. These undoubtedly will have had a significant effect on the value, as often such properties do not realise their true value. In addition during this time, a number of long term empty properties have been sold in the area, it is likely that the condition of these would be poor which would reflect in the sold price.

It is difficult to confirm with any certainty the impact that licensing has on property value as prices are also influenced by wider borough and national trends,

Rental Value

In recent consultation licence holders were asked if the rental value of their property/is had changed in the last five years.

Figure 31-Changes in Rental Value in last five years



16% of responding landlords advised that rental values had increased over the last five years, with 67% advising rental values had stabilised and remained the same and 17% reporting a reduction.

Data analysis has also shown that average rental values of private rented homes have increased over the duration of the licensing scheme. This information has been collated from the tenancy agreements produced for landlords operating in the area that were produced by the PSH Team up until June 2016. Average rents have increased in these tenancies from £97.40 per week to £99.91 per week. This current average rent remains lower than the Gateshead rental average of £108.60 per week.

Objective 8 To increase the number of tenants who manage their tenancy well.

Evidence gathered in relation to anti-social behaviour and feedback from consultation would indicate that the number of tenants who manage their tenancy well has increased.

During the Licensing period, 332 vetting/reference checks have been carried out by the Council's Private Sector Housing Team, to enable landlords to make an informed decision about the suitability of a tenant. 32% of these were found to be unsatisfactory, and this will often result in landlords choosing not to offer the tenancy to the individuals concerned. Where potential tenants have an unsatisfactory outcome, they are often signposted by the Private Sector Housing Team to services who can help them improve their ability to manage a tenancy in the future.

During the Scheme period the following actions have been carried out in partnership with landlords, Northumbria Police and other relevant agencies to improve the behaviour of tenants in the Area:

- 4 "Acceptable Behaviour" Agreements have been issued to tenants. All four agreements were complied with.
- 17 Notices seeking possession have been issued by landlords (with the help of Officers within the Private Sector Housing Team); 9 of which were for rent arrears and 3 specifically relating to anti-social behaviour. Ordinarily where improvements in the tenancy have resulted, the landlord would not take further action, however in 5 of the above cases, the landlords have had no alternative but to seek possession through the courts. These tenants have subsequently been signposted to other housing providers who are able to provide increased tenancy support.
- Legal notices have been served to secure compliance when informal methods have been exhausted,
- 89 visits to tenants, sometimes with their Landlord or Northumbria Police Officers present when appropriate, to discuss their behaviour and discuss complaints received. At these visits the basis of complaints were discussed with occupiers, any underlying issues or root causes of behaviour identified and any appropriate referrals made to other agencies were then made, often resulting in additional support to a household. Expected and reasonable behaviours were also discussed with alleged perpetrators at this stage of the complaint. The above approach resulted in the majority of complaints being resolved at an early and informal stage, removing the need to consider formal action.

In the February 2017 consultation, stakeholders were asked how effective they thought that licensing had been in improving tenant behaviour. There was a noticeable difference between responding residents and landlords with 42% of residents living in the area reporting it successful, compared to 18% of landlords.

Table 9-Consultation Feedback – Improving Tenant Behaviour

How effective has licensing been in improving tenant behaviour?	Successful	No change	Unsuccessful
Resident responses	42%	31%	27%
Landlord responses	16%	45%	38%

Objective 9 To support the private rented sector in its provision of well-managed properties and tenancies and assist those seeking to live and currently living in private rented accommodation.

The private rented sector in the Area has been well supported during the duration of the Scheme to promote well managed properties and tenancies.

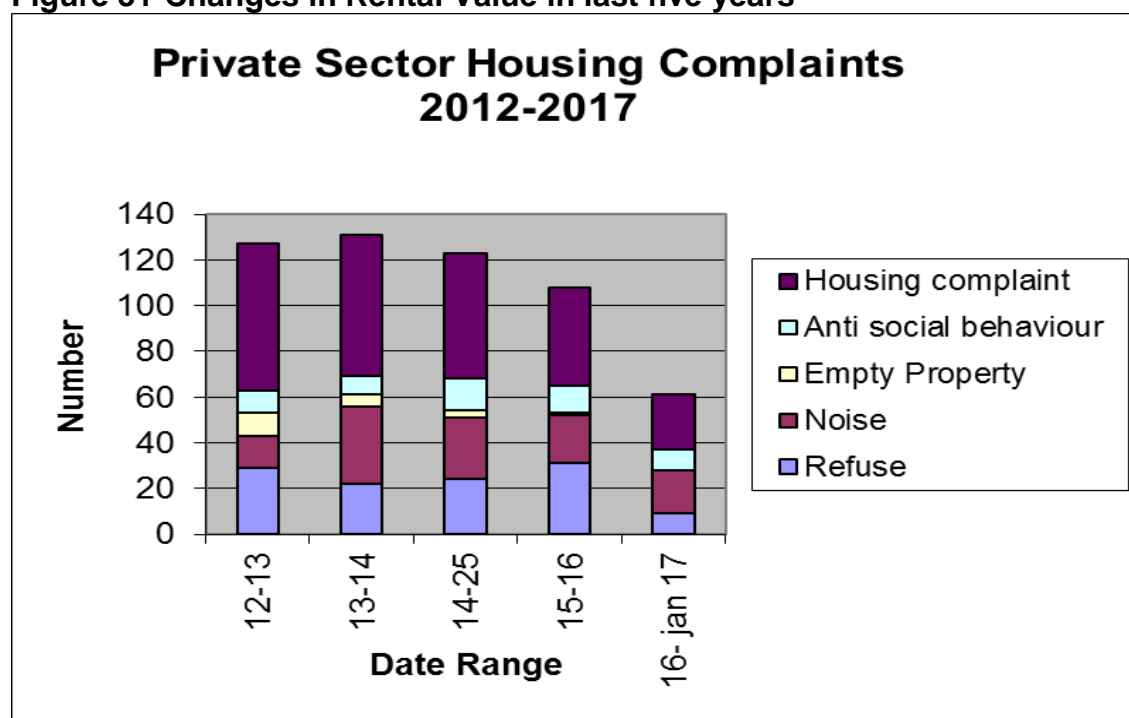
The Private Sector Housing Team provides a wide range of services for both landlords and tenants in the private rented sector, with a view to improving property condition and promoting well managed tenancies.

Many of the services provided have been detailed above including, advertising of properties to let, vetting of tenants, support in relation to advice and training. In addition to these services the Team have responded to complaints from tenants. The levels of complaints received with the licensing area are detailed below in Figure 32.

It should also be considered that the reporting of such issues may also have increased due to the introduction of the licensing scheme and an increased awareness of the services of the Team.

The total level of all complaints during the five year period have reduced, which may be reflective of improved housing and environmental conditions. N.B. PSH stopped responding to refuse complaints in Sumer 2015 due to a change in responsibility for refuse investigation.

Figure 31-Changes in Rental Value in last five years



DEPRIVATION

The IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) measures deprivation based on a number of factors including income, employment, housing, crime plus others. Gateshead is split into 126 smaller areas known as Lower Layer Super Output areas (LSOAs), each designed to be of the same population size. The licensing area falls within four LSOA's.

In 2010 before the introduction of licensing three of the four areas were in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England and one LSOA was in the top 20% most deprived in England. 2015 data confirms that there is currently one of the four areas is in the top 10% of the most deprived in England, two fall in the top 20% of the most deprived in England, and one falls in the top 30% most deprived in England. This positive change confirms that the areas within the licensing scheme have improved relative to others in the UK from 2010-2015, in relation to levels of deprivation. Despite this improvement, parts of the area do remain in the top10 and 20% most deprived areas within England.

OTHER SCHEME STATISTICS

Table 10

Action	Number
Total number of licenses issued	509
Total number of licenses varied	46
Total number of licenses revoked	65
Temporary exemptions issued	6

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The team have worked closely with landlords, tenants and residents over the five year licensing period to facilitate improvements and tackle any issues. There has been a graded approach has been to work in partnership with agents and owners by providing advice and support where required to ensure a licence application is submitted where required. In cases where there have been genuine and legal explanations for a late application, a degree of flexibility has been exercised. Unfortunately in some instances it has been necessary to proceed with formal action.

During the course of the Scheme:

- Six prosecutions have been successfully undertaken in the Central scheme representing four landlords. Five of these failed to apply for a licence resulting in criminal convictions for the landlords concerned and fines of up to £1000. One of these landlords was also fined in excess of £10,000 for failing to comply with several conditions of his licence. The convictions prohibited the landlords continuing to operate within the licensing area with two subsequently selling their properties and the third placing management into the hands of a local agent. There is

currently one further case awaiting a court hearing for failing to apply for a licence. The recovery of the fines is undertaken by the Court system

- Following a successful conviction, the team applied for Rent Repayment Orders to the Residential property Tribunal. Rent Repayment Orders ensure that any rent paid to the landlord during the time when which the property should have been licensed and was not, is paid back to the Council if housing benefit, or the tenant. This ensures that a landlord does not profit from having operated illegally. A total of three Rent Repayment Orders were secured by the Team, all in relation to housing benefit payments. Over £4,000 of rent has been repaid by the convicted landlords, in respect of the housing benefit payments received. There is a further application for a rent repayment order for a further £4500 of housing benefit to be repaid in progress for a more recent case.

Licensing has given the Council increased powers to ensure that problems such as ASB are dealt with effectively and reasonably with landlords being required to have an increased involvement when problems occur. Licensing also seeks to ensure that adequate procedures are in place by landlords for responding to housing disrepair issues.

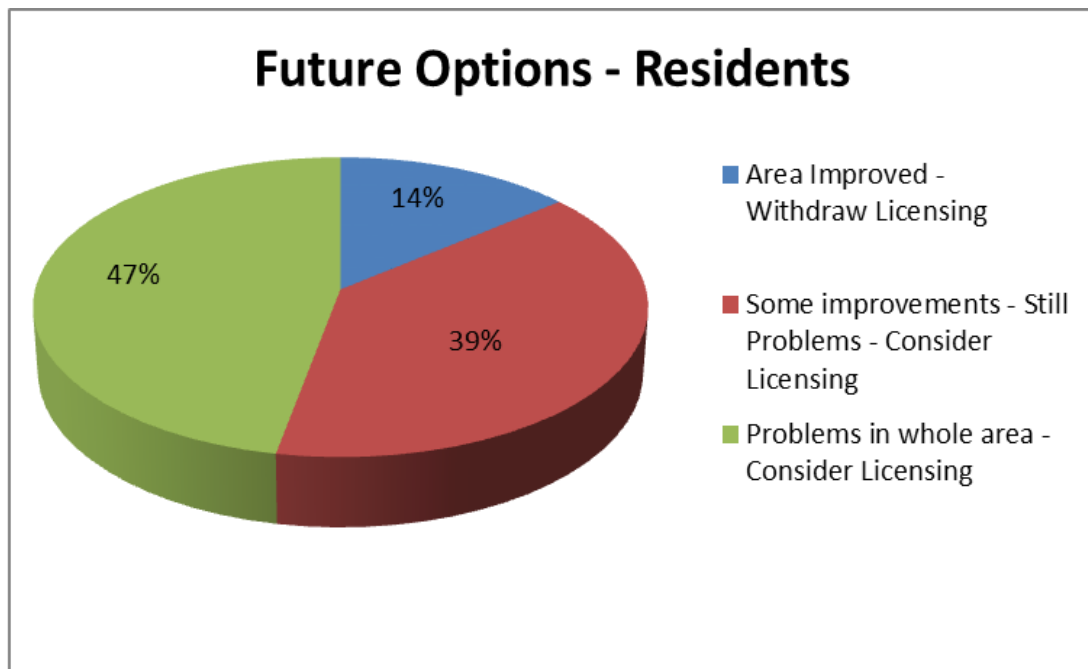
CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The 2017 consultation exercise highlighted a noticeable difference between the views of landlords and residents. Residents living in the area were far more in agreement that the properties and neighbourhood had improved and that specific problems had been targeted and improved since the introduction of licensing, compared to landlords. Despite incentives to complete and return (prize vouchers, free delivery and online completion) the questionnaire, the return of this consultation was low at 24% of licence holders responding and 8% of households.

The Future

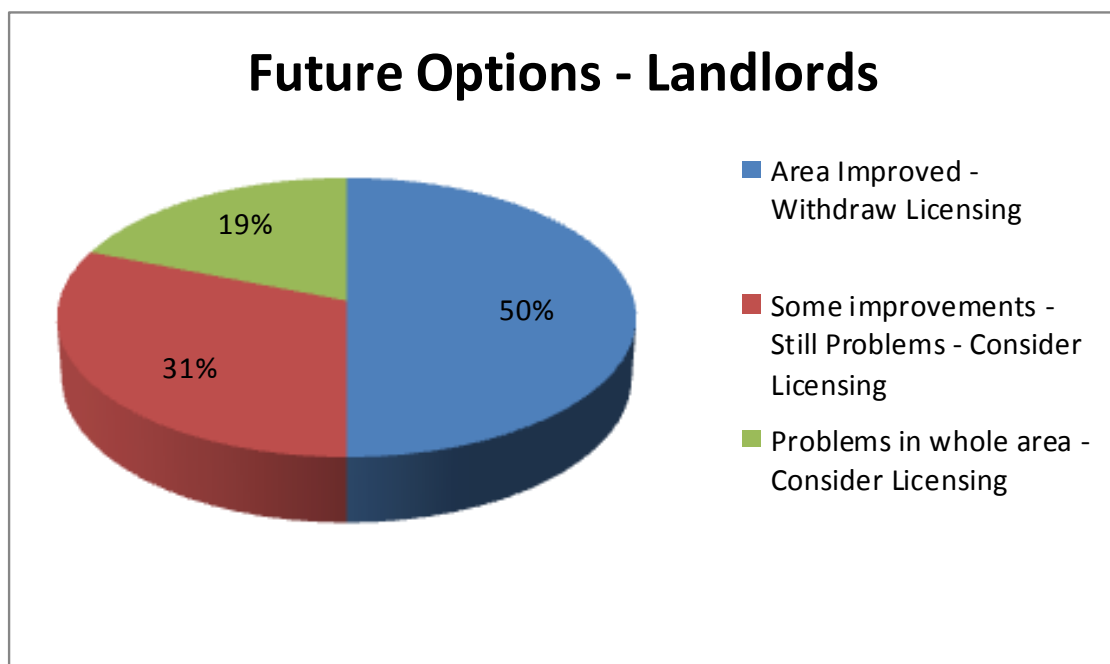
During the consultation, stakeholders were advised that the licensing scheme was within its final year. Stakeholders were asked to consider three possible proposed future options and asked to advise which option they felt best described the current position within the area. A massive 86% of responding residents told us that landlord licensing should continue either across the whole area or in parts of it.

Figure 32-Future Option-Residents



50% of responding landlords also agreed that certain problems remain in the area and that continued licensing should be considered, with 50% responding that the area has improved to the point when licensing should be withdrawn.

Figure 33-Future Option-Landlords



CONCLUSION

At the time of designation in 2012, data collection confirmed that the area was experiencing a wide range of issues associated with low housing demand, property values, anti-social behaviour and poor property conditions. It was considered that the schemes implementation would contribute towards the wider regeneration of the area, as well as improved property management standards. The aim was to raise standards within the private rented sector with a view to improving the overall social and economic conditions in the area to create a stable, strong, healthy and vibrant neighbourhood.

It was accepted, on designation, that Selective Licensing would not provide an immediate solution to all of the problems being experienced in the Area. Also, that it may take time for improved managements standards and support services to take effect, but in the long term Selective Licensing could prevent further decline and contribute towards the wider regeneration of the area. As noted in the Building and Research Establishment Paper (BRE) on The Evaluation of the Impact of HMO and Selective Licensing – that selective licensing is a long term strategy and will not provide instant solutions.

The evidence and data gathered and analysed confirms that there have been substantial and notable improvements in the area, with many of the key aims an objectives of the licensing scheme being achieved. In particular, multiple property turnover has more than halved, (residents are moving between properties less and staying for longer periods of time), there are less long term empty properties in the area and there are fewer complaints about empty properties being made to the Council. There are also notable improvements in property condition and management standards. Cumulatively the data would indicate that consideration over the continuation of a licensing scheme for the full area is not required.

Problem landlords have been excluded from operating in the area and have been deterred from purchasing further properties, and existing licence holders have been given advice, support and training to understand the expectations of good management standards. The data also indicates, in conjunction with the continuing demand on Council services, that there are certain hotspots/streets within the existing licensing area that would benefit from the ongoing intervention of licensing. As a whole the area continues to demonstrate some key indicators of low demand despite reductions in trends since licensing was introduced, and there remains some ineffective management by some landlords.

Due to in-depth analysis of the area from targeted work in the last five years it is possible to identify those streets that require ongoing intervention and those where landlords are able to manage independently. Ongoing monitoring will be carried out to ensure standards do not slip. There remains a number of landlords whose standards without ongoing regulation are likely to return to pre licensing practices, compromising the neighbourhood improvements made.

Continuation of licensing in a smaller redefined area within the existing licensing scheme in Central Gateshead (Map 1) is therefore being developed and proposed to be able to continue to work with landlords, residents and tenants where there is a strong likelihood that without the ongoing regulation of licensing, standards are likely to return to pre licensing practices.

APPENDIX 2

LICENCE CONDITIONS

1. *The licence holder must provide a valid gas safety certificate (if gas is supplied to the property), on an annual basis. A copy must be submitted to the Council on request and to the tenant within 14 days of issue.*
2. *The licence holder must provide a satisfactory periodic inspection report on the electrical installation at the property for the duration of the licence period. This must have been carried out by a 'competent person' who is a member of one of the government approved schemes i.e. NICEIC, NAPIT, ELECSA or BRE.*
3. *The licence holder must ensure that all portable electrical appliances supplied by the landlord are in a safe condition, and provide to the Council a PAT testing certificate on an annual basis to verify this. This should be submitted to the Council on request.*
4. *The licence holder must ensure that all furniture supplied by the landlord complies with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988, and that there are arrangements for the routine inspection of all items provided by the landlord to ensure they are maintained in a satisfactory & safe condition.*
5. *The licence holder must ensure that either hard wired or 10 year battery operated smoke alarms are installed in the house in suitable locations and kept in proper working order at all times.*
6. *The licence holder must supply to the occupiers of the house a written, signed statement of the terms in which they occupy it, i.e. a tenancy agreement. Information provided to the tenant must include the following:*
 - a. *The name and address of licence holder or managing agent*
 - b. *A contact address and daytime telephone number*
 - c. *An emergency telephone number*
 - d. *A copy of the landlord licence including the conditions*
 - e. *Where a bond has been taken; details of where the bond is being held.*

This should be submitted to the Council on request.

7. *The licence holder must obtain valid references in relation to a potential tenants, in order to make an informed decision regarding their occupancy of the property. References should include details of previous housing history. Evidence of these references and checks must be made available to the Council upon request.*

8. *The licence holder must take reasonable and practicable steps following advice or recommendations from the Council to prevent or reduce anti-social behaviour by persons occupying or visiting the house.*
9. *The licence holder must take reasonable and practical steps following advice and recommendations from the Council, should it be found that the property is being used for illegal or immoral use.*
10. *The licence holder must ensure the property is adequately managed and as such have satisfactory maintenance arrangements, as well as property and tenancy management procedures.*
11. *The licence holder must abide by the conditions and responsibilities contained within the tenancy agreement and carry out all landlord functions as laid down in the agreement.*
12. *On commencement of a new tenancy, a licence holder must compile a detailed inventory of all items, included within the tenancy and provide a copy to the tenant.*
13. *The licence holder must inform the Council of any change in circumstances which may affect the suitability to remain as licensee, including any change in ownership. This must be done within 5 working days of the changes taking place.*
14. *The licence holder must inform the Council within 5 working days if there is a change in managing agent, to allow the Council to carry out fit and proper person checks accordingly. A signed copy of the management agent contract must be submitted within 14 days of the instruction of a new agent.*
15. *The licence holder must ensure that within 28 working days of the property becoming vacant the Council Licensing Officer is notified. He/she must ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to ensure that the property is made secure from unauthorised entry during periods when the property is unoccupied.*
16. *The licence holder must reside in the UK.*
17. *The licence holder must keep up to date with current housing issues and regulation by regularly attending appropriate training courses to enable the effective management of the property and tenant.*

Additional Licence conditions

18. *The property must fulfil the accreditation standard for the full duration of the licensing scheme*
19. *The licence holder must remain a member of the GPLA or a nationally recognised landlords association for the full duration of the scheme.*

APPENDIX 3

Summary of February 2017 Consultation Responses.

Residents

59 respondents accessed the campaign

Step 1:1.00-1:

[Q. Do you live in any of the properties in the Central Bensham licensing area? \(View Map\)](#)

This single response question was answered by 59 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	58	98.31%
No	1	1.69%

Step 1:2.00-1:

[Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?](#)

This single response question was answered by 58 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very satisfied	10	17.24%
Fairly satisfied	20	34.48%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	5.17%
Fairly dissatisfied	14	24.14%
Very dissatisfied	11	18.97%

Step 1:3.00-1:

[Q. Thinking about your property, do you...?](#)

This single response question was answered by 58 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Own it/have a mortgage	24	41.38%
Rent from Council	4	6.90%
Rent from Registered Social Landlord	6	10.34%
Rent from Private Landlord	23	39.66%
Other	1	1.72%

Step 1:3.01-1:Please specify

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 1 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
Family	1

Step 1:4.00-1:

[Q. How long have you lived at this address?](#)

This single response question was answered by 57 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Less than a year	8	14.04%
1-3 years	8	14.04%
4-7 years	10	17.54%
8-11 years	5	8.77%
12 or more years	26	45.61%

Step 1:5.00-1:

Q. Please describe the condition of your property?

This single response question was answered by 57 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very good	22	38.60%
Good	17	29.82%
Satisfactory	14	24.56%
Poor	2	3.51%
Very poor	2	3.51%

Step 1:6.00-1:

Q. If you have experienced any problems with a neighbouring property or resident in the last five years, have the problems been resolved? If not, please explain what has happened.

This single response question was answered by 56 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	16	28.57%
No	7	12.50%
I have not experienced any problems	33	58.93%

Step 1:6.01-1:Please specify

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 7 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
Drug addicts and selling drugs in nearby property.	1
Fightin and shouting on the street	1
Fighting in the street	1
Noise from 5+ people upstairs, they go to church in the early hours in the mini bus and dont come back till late at night. But how do you explain when the landlord is living in the garage below his tenant.	1
Property is sub let to Nacro	1

Rubbish being dumped	1
They made 20/22 into 7 rooms	1

Step 2:7.00-1:

Q. Are you aware that you live in a Landlord Licensing Scheme area which gives the Council power to make private landlords accountable for the management of their properties and tenants?

This single response question was answered by 56 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	46	82.14%
No	10	17.86%

Step 2:8.00-1:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme that has been operating in the area for the last five years, how successful do you feel it has been in contributing towards the issues below?

(Very successful)

This multiple response question was answered by 15 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	5	33.33%
Reducing empty properties	7	46.67%
Improving internal property conditions	8	53.33%
Improving external property conditions	9	60%
Improving tenant behaviour	7	46.67%
Improving landlord management	7	46.67%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	7	46.67%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	6	40%

Step 2:8.00-2:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme that has been operating in the area for the last five years, how successful do you feel it has been in contributing towards the issues below?

(Fairly successful)

This multiple response question was answered by 32 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	14	43.75%
Reducing empty properties	14	43.75%
Improving internal property conditions	14	43.75%
Improving external property conditions	13	40.63%

Improving tenant behaviour	14	43.75%
Improving landlord management	13	40.63%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	13	40.63%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	8	25%

Step 2:8.00-3:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme that has been operating in the area for the last five years, how successful do you feel it has been in contributing towards the issues below?

(No change)

This multiple response question was answered by 42 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	23	54.76%
Reducing empty properties	23	54.76%
Improving internal property conditions	16	38.10%
Improving external property conditions	16	38.10%
Improving tenant behaviour	16	38.10%
Improving landlord management	18	42.86%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	13	30.95%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	18	42.86%

Step 2:8.00-4:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme that has been operating in the area for the last five years, how successful do you feel it has been in contributing towards the issues below?

(Fairly unsuccessful)

This multiple response question was answered by 23 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	5	21.74%
Reducing empty properties	4	17.39%
Improving internal property conditions	6	26.09%
Improving external property conditions	8	34.78%
Improving tenant behaviour	10	43.48%
Improving landlord management	10	43.48%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	13	56.52%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	4	17.39%

Step 2:8.00-5:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme that has been operating in the area for the last five years, how successful do you feel it has been in contributing towards the issues below?

(Very unsuccessful)

This multiple response question was answered by 19 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	3	15.79%
Reducing empty properties	4	21.05%
Improving internal property conditions	4	21.05%
Improving external property conditions	6	31.58%
Improving tenant behaviour	4	21.05%
Improving landlord management	3	15.79%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	5	26.32%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	15	78.95%

Step 2:9.00-1:

Q. The Landlord Licensing Scheme in the Central Area is now in its final year. Of the options available to the Council below, which do you feel best represents the current position?

This single response question was answered by 49 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
The area has improved	7	14.29%
Parts of the area have improved	19	38.78%
The whole area still suffers from low demand and environmental problems	23	46.94%

Step 2:10.00-1:

Q. Do you have any further comments about the Landlord Licensing Scheme?

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 27 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
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<p>1. There are empty properties in my street which have stood empty for years. (Saltwell place) 2. Constantly have to inform council of the same block i.e Saltwell Road from fish shop on corner to ladbrookes, this part of the lane is always full of rubbish, bins never taken in, a dangerous building which has stood like that for years and ready to collapse I do however highly commend the councils efforts of successfully getting landlords to evict problem tenants and have seen an improvement to the area and that is why I hope the landlord scheme continues or it will just go back to normal.</p>	1
<p>Alleys at back of houses are a disgrace, dog poo everywhere. Fines should be imposed for dog owners and litter louts</p>	1
<p>area behind the flat i live in is full of rubbish, neighbours back yard full of dog feaces.</p>	1
<p>As I have only lived in the area four months I cannot comments on any of the above questions</p>	1
<p>Bensham has deteriorated over recent years. Rubbish is a big problem, in both back lanes, streets and individual gardens. There continues to be an issue with anti social behaviour , due to the now poor street lighting the area feels unsafe after dark. More needs to be done in a faster time with problem tenants</p>	1
<p>Don't think its improved much. still problems with rubbish dumped in the street, police often called, problem with flats rented out for drug use, marijuana</p>	1
<p>Don't think its improved much. Still problems with rubbish dumped in back lane and tenants fighting in the street. Police often called,problems with flats rented for drug use, Marijuana</p>	1

Due to the cuts that our local council have had to do the area surrounded have gone down	1
First I have heard about landlord licensing scheme my landlord wont do nothing to my home. I have really bad damp kitchen. Needs done, told him many times over the years, still not helping. The kitchen is not fit for anyone!	1
Hyde park street- rubbish, not using bins,noise and domestic disturbance	1
Nice place to live	1
Parts of Bensham now a slum. Fly tipping between saltwell place and back of Whitehall road regularly. Foreign graffiti all over even on litter bins. Back of Ladbrokes Saltwell Road is a disgrace. Litter and dog dirt all over place	1
Private Landlord are only interested in receiving rent and don't care who their tenants are or their behaviour. The backlane between Whitehall and saltwell is like a third world countries standard.	1
Rubbish and untidiness everywhere	1
Rubbish,dog fouling, gardens.	1
Some friends in nearby properties live in appalling conditions! Their landlords don't care! This is my first rental property after having lost my mortgaged home after 18 year. My landlord is excellent and the property is immaculate. Some landlords should be removed from this scheme and property inspections need to be carried out by the appropriate licensing department. THEY WILL BE SHOCKED!	1
Some of the gardens are an eyesore and the litter and fly tipping in the street and back lanes have not improved.The back lanes especially are an absolute mess. Surely the time has come to prosecute the offenders.	1

<p>The area is suffering because of empty properties, this is making the back lanes absolutely filthy with fly tipping. No sense in what colour bin to put out on elected day some don't use the bints they just put the black bags out which are left.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>The wrong people are housed in the area and they are flytipping. Letting their dogs foul, we need a better class of tenants in the area.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>There are still significant problems from bad tenants and drug dealing on Rawling Road</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>There is such a quick turnover of tenants. Landlords do not care who they put into their properties as long as they get the rent. Behind Labrokes teenagers high as a kite waiting for more supplies. Someone is turning a blind eye. This is not nighttime this is 12:30pm, as young as 12yr old.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>There needs to be more policing of the back lanes - some residents are using them as their own personal tip. go to the back of Trevethik street, I dare you !</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>This scheme has not been successful, because private landlord properties are kept in terrible conditions. Resulting in a constant stream of tenants moving in and out of the same properties, causing endless amounts of furniture in the back lanes. Bensham is now on the bottom rung of the property ladder. Landlords have took all the profit Gateshead council are left to clear up</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>We don't have a blue trash!!!</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Without the scheme I would think the landlords would go back to the old ways. Rubbish is still a major problem, Everything is dumped in back lanes- no road sweepers. Whole area is a disgrace</p>	<p>1</p>

Yes ask landlords to visit their properties at least once a month. Talk to neighbours sorry about my writing I have just finished work	1
Yes Make the rent cheaper the same as council	1

Step 3:11.00-1:

Q. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your landlord?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very satisfied	10	47.62%
Fairly satisfied	7	33.33%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	9.52%
Fairly dissatisfied		
Very dissatisfied	2	9.52%

Step 3:12.00-1:

Q. How would you describe your relationship with your landlord?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Excellent	11	52.38%
Good	5	23.81%
Satisfactory	2	9.52%
Poor	1	4.76%
Very poor	2	9.52%
Other		

Step 3:13.00-1:

Q. Is your landlord easy to contact?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	18	85.71%
No	2	9.52%
Don't know	1	4.76%

Step 3:14.00-1:

Q. Does your landlord carry out repairs when asked to?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes, within a reasonable time	17	80.95%

Yes, eventually	2	9.52%
No	2	9.52%
Don't know		

Step 3:15.00-1:

Q. Has your landlord carried out any improvements to your home in the last five years?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	16	76.19%
No	3	14.29%
Don't know	2	9.52%

Step 3:16.00-1:

Q. Were you vetted/reference checked prior to moving into your home?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	15	71.43%
No	1	4.76%
Don't know	5	23.81%

Step 3:17.00-1:

Q. At the beginning of your tenancy did your landlord explain what was expected of you as a tenant e.g. when to pay the rent, how to report repairs, what your responsibilities are regarding the property and your behaviour?

This single response question was answered by 21 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	20	95.24%
No	1	4.76%
Don't know		

Step 4:18.00-1:

Q. Gender

This single response question was answered by 55 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Male	25	45.45%
Female	30	54.55%

Step 4:19.00-1:

Q. Age

This single response question was answered by 54 respondents.

Response	Number of	Percentage of
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	Respondents	Respondents
16 to 24		
25 to 34	2	3.70%
35 to 49	12	22.22%
50 to 64	17	31.48%
65 and over	23	42.59%

Step 4:20.00-1:

Q. Do you have a longstanding illness or disability?

This single response question was answered by 54 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	21	38.89%
No	33	61.11%

Step 4:21.00-1:

Q. Ethnicity

This single response question was answered by 54 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
White	51	94.44%
Mixed		
Asian	1	1.85%
Black		
Other	2	3.70%

Step 4:22.00-1:

Q. Religion

This single response question was answered by 53 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Christian	38	71.70%
Buddhist		
Muslim		
Hindu		
Jewish		
Sikh		
Other	2	3.77%
None	12	22.64%
Prefer not to say	1	1.89%

Step 4:23.00-1:

Q. Sexual orientation

This single response question was answered by 48 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Bisexual		
Gay man	1	2.08%
Gay woman or lesbian		
Heterosexual/straight	44	91.67%
Other	3	6.25%
Prefer not to say		
Step 4:24.00-1:		

**Summary of February 2017 Consultation Responses.
Licence Holders**

45 respondents accessed the campaign

Step 1:1.00-1:

[Q. Are you a landlord for any of the properties in the Central Bensham licensing area? \(View Map\)](#)

This single response question was answered by 45 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	41	91.11%
No	4	8.89%

Step 1:2.00-1:

[Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the local area?](#)

This single response question was answered by 33 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very satisfied	4	12.12%
Fairly satisfied	12	36.36%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	21.21%
Fairly dissatisfied	7	21.21%
Very dissatisfied	3	9.09%

Step 2:3.00-1:

[Q. How long have you owned property in the Central Phase 1 Landlord Licensing Scheme area?](#)

This single response question was answered by 32 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Less than a year		
1-3 years	3	9.38%
4-7 years	11	34.38%
8-11 years	8	25%
12 or more years	10	31.25%

Step 2:4.00-1:

[Q. Please describe the condition of your property \(or properties\)?](#)

This single response question was answered by 33 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very good	18	43.90%

Good	12	29.26%
Satisfactory	3	7.31%
Poor		
Very poor		
Blank	8	19.51%

Step 2:5.00-1:

Q. What improvements have you made to your property (or properties) during the course of the Landlord Licensing Scheme (the last five years)?

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 25 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
3 New Gas Boilers 3 Different Flats New Roof on one property New Carpets	1
A window restrictor catch has been fitted	1
accreditation, new windows and AA rated boiler	1
completely refurbished	1
Decorated all properties, new flooring and carpets.	1
double glazing, frequent ongoing decoration and repairs	1
Fixed the external crumbling plaster render around the front door. Replaced the front door to a modern PVC door. Added a new back door. Decorated throughout, Added a new carpet to the front living bedroom. Replaced the oven. Replaced the failing seal around the shower base, . Replaced the shower. Added a new back gate. New laminate flooring in the livingroom and hallway and back bedroom. Repainted back door.	1
fnnv	1
I took part in the scheme to uniform outsides. My properties have always been maintained to highest a creditat ion standards.	1
Internal decoration (painting, carpets) New boiler Insulation to the front and trickle vents in windows	1

Making sure the property is of current standards for the regulation set out by the council	1
Many continuous improvements	1
My property was already in good condition, and I took my responsibilities as a landlord very seriously.	1
new bathroom, new yard surface, new insulated north wall	1
New Kitchen, New bathroom	1
New roof at the back of the house, re-lined gutters	1
No major change in the flat, just redecorated every time a tenant moved out. Added large plants to the yard area.	1
none	2
Ongoing maintenance and renewal including new kitchens bathrooms etc and in addition compliance with accreditation requirements re handrails etc plus new boilers when needed. New roofs when needed	1
Redecorated	1
redorating, new carpets	1
Reroofed rear offshot,new kitchen and bathroom,solid oak floor to lounge/diner,total redecoration,new carpets.	1
roof repairs; new insulation; improved yard and stairs to yard	1
upgraded back steps railings, replaced back and front gates, replaced kitchen appliances.	1

Step 2:6.00-1:

Q. Is your property in the licensing area accredited?

This single response question was answered by 32 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes, all properties	19	59.38%
Yes, some properties	7	21.88%
No	6	18.75%

I am currently applying for accreditation on some or all of my properties

Step 2:7.00-1:

Q. If you have experienced any problems with a neighbouring property or resident in the last five years, have the problems been resolved? If not, please explain what has happened.

This single response question was answered by 31 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	6	19.35%
No	4	12.90%
I have not experienced any problems	21	67.74%

Step 2:7.01-1:Please specify

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 4 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
council dont seem to care when we have a issue only when people have issues with us	1
Ongoing issues with neighbours causing me to loose my tentant time after time. My property is empty right now again because of the anti-social behaviour of the neighbours. The yard is becoming a health hazard and nothing has really changed significantly due to the licencing scheme.	1
Still stickies dr	1

There are considerable problems with rubbish in back lanes where I had hoped that some camera surveillance would have enabled the Council to prosecute offenders. Much more needs to be done in this area because it is becoming extremely serious. There are drug related issues and anti social behaviour problems where tenants are evicted and just move to other properties in the same area where surely the Council could take action against those landlords who clearly don't carry out proper tenant checks. I gather one such landlord actually works for the Council . Newcastle still do tenant referencing for free whilst this service no longer exists in Gateshead

1

Step 2:8.00-1:

Q. Have any of your properties been vacant for a period of time during the last five years?

This single response question was answered by 32 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	21	65.63%
No	11	34.38%

Step 2:9.00-1:

**Q. If yes, for how long was the property vacant?
(for multiple properties please give an average)**

This single response question was answered by 22 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Less than a week		
Less than a month	3	13.64%
1 to 2 months	11	50%
3 to 5 months	7	31.82%
6 months or more	1	4.55%

Step 2:10.00-1:

Q. If a property was vacant for longer than a month please tell us the reasons why (e.g. repairs/improvements, damage from tenants, difficult to relet etc.)

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 16 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
A tenant absconded owing rent and leaving a lot of mess in the property and a lot of cosmetic decorative work to be done to bring it into good order to rent out again.	1
Anti-social behaviour of neighbours. Fighting in the street, drinking outside the property and threatening my tenants. This is still an ongoing issue and I have just lost another set of tenants in January because of this.	1
Damage by tenants is the main reason although a difficult neighbouring tenant can also be a significant factor	1
difficult to let in licensed area	1
Difficult to let to people who are not on housing benefit	1
difficult to relet lots of available properties in the area	1
Difficult to relet; however, this was the first time. I have been able to relet the property without a longer break for several years. I do worry about the neighbourhood at times (having seen people inhaling in the back lane and leaving bin bags with rubbish regularly), and the condition in particular of the back lane and the side alley way are very off-putting.	1
Improvements	1
improvements, damage from neighbour	1
Just some not being keen on the area, mainly where the demolition has happened	1
none that can be identified.	1
One property was empty for a short while but needed decorating before re-letting.	1
Tenant not paying rent	1
Tenants scared off by long return times for council checks	1

Took time to find suitable tenant and be ready.	1
Trying to find tenants	1

Step 3:11.00-1:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme, how successful has it been in helping to improve the issues below?

(Very successful)

This multiple response question was answered by 5 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies		
Reducing empty properties	1	20%
Improving internal property conditions	3	60%
Improving external property conditions	3	60%
Improving tenant behaviour		
Improving landlord management	1	20%
Reducing anti-social behaviour		
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	1	20%

Step 3:11.00-2:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme, how successful has it been in helping to improve the issues below?

(Fairly successful)

This multiple response question was answered by 14 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	2	14.29%
Reducing empty properties	5	35.71%
Improving internal property conditions	6	42.86%
Improving external property conditions	11	78.57%
Improving tenant behaviour	5	35.71%
Improving landlord management	5	35.71%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	5	35.71%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	3	21.43%

Step 3:11.00-3:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme, how successful has it been in helping to improve the issues below?

(No change)

This multiple response question was answered by 23 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	17	73.91%
Reducing empty properties	14	60.87%
Improving internal property conditions	12	52.17%
Improving external property conditions	9	39.13%
Improving tenant behaviour	14	60.87%
Improving landlord management	15	65.22%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	15	65.22%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	13	56.52%

Step 3:11.00-4:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme, how successful has it been in helping to improve the issues below?

(Fairly Unsuccessful)

This multiple response question was answered by 9 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	2	22.22%
Reducing empty properties	2	22.22%
Improving internal property conditions	2	22.22%
Improving external property conditions		
Improving tenant behaviour	2	22.22%
Improving landlord management		
Reducing anti-social behaviour	3	33.33%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	2	22.22%

Step 3:11.00-5:

Q. Thinking about the Landlord Licensing Scheme, how successful has it been in helping to improve the issues below?

(Very unsuccessful)

This multiple response question was answered by 11 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Reducing the turnover of tenancies	9	81.82%
Reducing empty properties	8	72.73%
Improving internal property conditions	6	54.55%
Improving external property conditions	8	72.73%
Improving tenant behaviour	10	90.91%

Improving landlord management	10	90.91%
Reducing anti-social behaviour	9	81.82%
Resolving specific problems such as refuse through proactive campaigns	9	81.82%

Step 4:12.00-1:

Q. Are you currently a member of a Landlords Association?

This single response question was answered by 30 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	26	86.67%
No	4	13.33%

Step 4:13.00-1:

Q. Were you a member of a Landlords Association prior to the introduction of the Licensing Scheme?

This single response question was answered by 30 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	22	73.33%
No	8	26.67%

Step 4:14.00-1:

Q. How would you describe your relationship with your tenants?

This single response question was answered by 30 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Excellent	16	53.33%
Good	10	33.33%
Satisfactory	2	6.67%
Poor	1	3.33%
Very poor		
Other	1	3.33%

Step 4:15.00-1:

Q. How many changes of tenant have you had during the course of the Landlord Licensing Scheme (if you have multiple properties please give an average)?

This Open response (Numeric) question was answered by 28 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
0	6
1	7
2	7
20	1

3	4
4	2
5	1

Step 4:16.00-1:

Q. How has the rental value of your property (or properties) changed in the last five years?

This single response question was answered by 30 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Increased	5	16.67%
No Change	20	66.67%
Decreased	5	16.67%

Step 4:17.00-1:

Q. The Landlord Licensing Scheme in the Central Area is now in its final year. Of the options available to the Council below, which do you feel best represents the current position?

This single response question was answered by 26 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
The area has improved	13	50%
Parts of the area have improved	8	30.77%
The whole area still suffers from low demand and environmental problems	5	19.23%

Step 4:18.00-1:

Q. Do you have any further comments about the Landlord Licensing Scheme?

This open response (Free text) question was answered by 10 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents
A worthwhile scheme that I hope continues. It took a while for improvements to become evident but I would gladly pay the money again to ensure the greater regulation of unscrupulous landlords in the surrounding community. Staff were always very helpful and supportive.	1

<p>council are abusive, disillusion and make allegations with out factual evidence Council do not seem to want to build relationships with Landlords Council dont understand difference between a landlord with 1000 properties and a landlord with one propertyy</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>great cash cow for the council</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>I feel that it is a good thing to have high expectations of landlords to provide decent homes for tenants, but I already did that and could not see why I had to pay for a licensing fee, I was more than happy to take suggestions and orders to make improvements that the council thought necessary, and the licensing fee was an additional cost that made no impact on the condition of the property. Decent landlords will do the right thing anyway and I think bad ones will find a way around things. I think it would be much fairer to only make landlords hold a licence if they have low standard housing, rather than a blanket licence.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>I think the landlord licensing scheme is a very good idea in some ways. The ability that it gives the council to find and work with landlords who are not being fair to tenants by having sub standard properties is a good thing. The scheme is too expensive for landlords however, should the scheme continue I have no doubt that landlords will pass the cost on to tenants if this hasn't already happened. Continuing the scheme at a lower cost might be a good option. I would think it was a good idea to role this scheme out to other areas, with a BIG emphasis on student areas where sub standard living conditions can be common. I would also suggest areas such as Benwell, Walker, Arthurs Hill, among others.</p>	<p>1</p>

I think the scheme has caused more vacants and should not be continued under any circumstances	1
No problems	1
<p>The cost per property bears no relationship to the number of properties let. Being a fit and proper Landlord should be a one off consideration. If licensing is meant to be a non profit making exercise why waste money on expensive consultants eg the consultant to the Transport and Cleansing Department who I gather has been in place for three days per week for one year and seems likely to be staying on for another year at huge unnecessary cost particularly accommodation costs. Why also can Team Building days be afforded ? Those of us experienced in self employment know they could not afford such luxuries. This money would be more wisely spent tackling the many known problems . There are also far too many chiefs as opposed to Indians and too many people not fully productive as I understand the situation. The Saltwell area has drug related problems of which the Police are aware and the Council has powers to deal with such anti social issues so why has no action been taken</p>	1

The scheme costs landlords money to be in it. The paperwork and keeping council updates is an extra burden. I took part in scheme for block improvement but downstairs at 102 Hyde park didn't so my property still isn't uniform. The overall property prices are lower now and the costs involved of improvements have made no impact. I always remain a good landlord scheme or no scheme. I would prefer not to have been forced into a license which wasn't there when I bought my properties. Landlord of 20+ years. My properties in other areas still flourish with no problem and in good repair.

1

The scheme has helped in certain areas such as accreditation but there seems to still be problems with rubbish/fly tipping at certain times in the back alleys and litter thrown into gardens-mainly Hyde Park St. Who should we report this too? Also bins still go missing occasionally. There is more work to do regarding anti social behaviour.

1

Step 5:19.00-1:

Q. Gender

This single response question was answered by 24 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Male	16	66.67%
Female	8	33.33%

Step 5:20.00-1:

Q. Age

This single response question was answered by 25 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
16 to 24		
25 to 34	4	16%
35 to 49	11	44%
50 to 64	7	28%
65 or over	3	12%

