

APPENDIX 1



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**Consultation on selective and
additional (HMO) housing
licensing in Sefton**

Sefton Council

August 2022



Project details and acknowledgements	3
Executive summary	4
Introduction.....	8
Public consultation.....	9
Survey results	12
Stakeholder views on licensing schemes proposal	34
Feedback from online focus groups	37
Written response feedback	39
Appendices	42

Project details and acknowledgements

Title	Consultation on selective and additional (HMO) housing licensing in Sefton
Client	Sefton Council
Project number	22041
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M·E·L Research would like to thank the Council for their support with the consultation. We would also like to thank residents, tenants, landlords and agents in the borough and neighbouring boroughs for taking part in the consultation. Thanks also go to the stakeholders that contributed their views for the consultation.

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Executive summary

This Executive Summary provides the main findings from the consultation undertaken in Sefton on the proposals to re-designate Selective Licensing in the Bootle area and Additional (HMO) Licensing in parts of Seaforth and Waterloo, Brighton-le-Sands and central Southport. In total 787 respondents took part in the survey, along with verbal feedback provided via other forums. The consultation period spanned 12-weeks, from the 9th May 2022 – 31st July 2022. Opportunities to participate in the consultation were provided as follows:

- Online survey (219 respondents)
- Face to face residents survey across the whole of Sefton (545 respondents)
- Three online focus groups (approx. 17 attendees)
- Two stakeholders' interviews (3 respondents)

Key Headlines

Proposal for Selective Licensing in Bootle

Table 1: Responses on Selective Licensing in Bootle proposal (by respondent group)

	Overall	Sefton resident	Private tenant in Sefton	Private landlord / agent
Agree with re-designation of SL	77%	86%	90%	42%
Disagree with re-designation of SL	18%	10%	6%	51%
<i>Don't know</i>	4%	4%	4%	7%
Positive impact	36%	40%	62%	26%
Negative impact	45%	49%	22%	31%
No impact	14%	7%	8%	38%
Fees for SL reasonable	62%	70%	66%	29%
Fees for SL unreasonable	31%	22%	25%	65%
<i>Don't know</i>	8%	9%	9%	5%

Proposal for Additional (HMO) Licensing in parts of the borough

Table 2: Responses on Additional (HMO) Licensing proposal in parts of the borough (by respondent group)

	Overall	Sefton resident	Private tenant in Sefton	Private landlord / agent
Agree with re-designation of AL	80%	86%	88%	50%
Disagree with re-designation of AL	13%	10%	7%	31%
<i>Don't know</i>	7%	5%	6%	19%
Positive impact	34%	36%	55%	26%
Negative impact	51%	53%	35%	42%
No impact	7%	4%	4%	15%
Fees for AL reasonable	62%	68%	70%	34%
Fees for AL unreasonable	27%	21%	18%	50%
<i>Don't know</i>	11%	10%	12%	16%

The quantitative results shown below are derived from two key methods of consultation— a residents’ survey (face-to-face survey with a representative sample of 545 respondents across the borough) and an online consultation (219 respondents). Qualitative feedback was recorded online, via verbal and written responses given from interested parties.

The findings in this report have also taken into account views of other stakeholder in the form of qualitative telephone depth interviews. This includes Wirral Council and Living Well UK.

The results include support for and the likely impact on respondents for a proposal that the council is considering, which is the re-designation of the licensing schemes introduced in 2018 to help improve the local private rented sector:

- Re-designate the Selective licensing scheme in Bootle
- Re-designate the Additional (HMO) licensing scheme in Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and central Southport.

Key findings

Introduce Selective Licensing in Bootle

- **77% agree with the proposal to re-designate Selective Licensing in Bootle, whilst 18% disagree (4% don’t know).**
 - Levels of agreement are significantly higher in the face-to-face survey compared to the online survey (90% compared to 47%).
 - Sefton residents (86%) and Privates tenants (90%) are significantly more likely compared to private landlords to agree with the proposals (42%).
 - Respondents from Bootle are significantly more likely to disagree with the proposals compared to the total average (35% compared to 18%).
- **36% feel Selective Licensing will have a positive impact on them, whilst 14% feel it will be negative (45% it will have no impact).**
 - Those who completed the online survey are significantly more likely to feel that the proposals will have a negative impact on them compared to the face-to-face survey (38% compared to 4%).
 - Private landlords are significantly less likely to feel the proposals will have a positive impact on them (26%), compared to Sefton residents (40%) and private tenants (62%).
 - Those in the Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and central Southport areas are significantly more likely to feel the proposals will have a positive impact on them compared to those in Bootle (50% compared to 35%).

Introduce Additional (HMO) Licensing in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-le-Sands/Seaforth and central Southport

- **80% of respondents agree with the proposals to re-designate the Additional (HMO) licensing schemes, with 13% disagreeing and 7% stating they don't know**
 - Levels of agreement are significantly higher in the face-to-face survey compared to the online survey (88% compared to 58%).
 - Sefton residents (86%) and Privates tenants (88%) are significantly more likely compared to private landlords to agree with the proposals for the additional licensing scheme (50%).
- **Around a third of respondents (34%) feel Additional Licensing will have a positive impact on them, whilst 7% feel it will be negative (51% feel it will have no impact)**
 - Those who completed the online survey are significantly more likely to feel the proposals will have a negative impact on them compared to the face-to-face survey (19% compared to 2%).
 - Private landlords are significantly less likely to feel the proposals will have a positive impact on them (26%), compared to Sefton residents (36%) and private tenants (55%).
 - Those in the Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and central Southport areas are significantly more likely to feel the proposals will have a positive impact on them compared to those in Bootle (54% compared to 35%).

Perceptions of the licence scheme fees

- **62% of respondents feel the proposed Selective licensing fee is reasonable, whilst 31% feel it is unreasonable (8% don't know)**
 - Those who completed the face-to-face survey are significantly more likely to agree that the selective licence scheme fees are reasonable compared to those completing the online survey (72% compared to 35%).
 - Private landlords are significantly less likely than all other respondent types to disagree that the proposed fees are reasonable (29%).
- **62% of respondents agree with the proposed Additional licensing fees, whilst 27% disagreed (11% don't know)**
 - Those who completed the face-to-face survey are significantly more likely to agree that the additional licence scheme fees are reasonable compared to those completing the online survey (70% compared to 41%).
 - Similarly, the fees of the selective licensing, private landlords are significantly less likely than all other respondent types to disagree that the proposed fees are reasonable (34%).

Stakeholder views on licensing proposals

The main findings that came out of the stakeholder interviews are as follows:

- Issues with living conditions and mobility issues often come up a lot when speaking with Sefton tenants about their homes
- There is agreement that there is a lack of choice in housing options which allows private landlords to potentially not fulfil all their requirements in housing standards.
- Potential costs were discussed around being pushed onto the tenants themselves which could cause concerns on the additional fees the selective licensing induces.

- Additional aid to landlords such as instalments schemes to help especially those with large portfolios to spread out the licence fees were suggested as a way of supporting landlords.
- Some stakeholders expressed a concern over how the private landlords are governed when on the licence scheme, and to what extent the additional fees actually benefit the properties and tenants.
- There was discussion around the fact that the licensing scheme does potentially offer more security to private tenants when looking for accommodation in the area, as scheme regulations means the home, they are potentially moving into is of a higher standard.
- Some feel that awareness of the licence scheme is pretty low at this point.
- Another part of the licensing scheme is that it helps landlords to raise their management practices.

Views from the online focus groups

The main findings and queries that came out of the online focus groups (mainly landlord issues and concerns) and other feedback provided via the consultation are as follows:

- Not all landlords should be pushed together, there should be incentives for being a good landlord.
- Other ways to simplify the documentation process of complying with the scheme, such as an online portal to cut down on certification.
- Improved communication from the council to landlords to get them more onboard with working together to identify rogue landlords.
- Agreement that a lot of the licensing scheme fees will be passed onto the tenant via rent increases.
- There is a perceived lack of inspections currently taking place amongst landlords which makes them feel that the licensing scheme isn't working as intended, as many rogue landlords are still not being found.
- Further clarity on what the licence scheme fees are going towards, and some respondents perceive the scheme as a bit of a money maker for the council.

Introduction

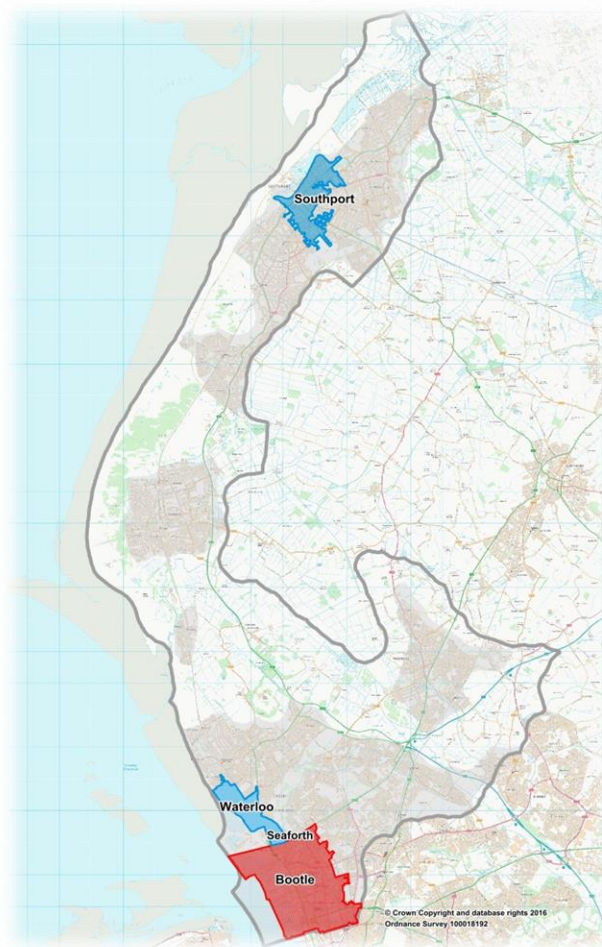
Since March 2018, Sefton Council has had a Selective Licensing scheme for private landlords in the Bootle area. There is also another licensing scheme which is called 'Additional (HMO) Licensing which is only for houses of multiple occupancy (rented to at least three people, who are not part of the same family) for privately rented property situated in parts of Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and central Southport. With the current schemes due to end on 28th February 2023, Sefton Council carried out a 12-week consultation on its proposal to extend them until February 2028.

Introducing the current licencing schemes has enabled Sefton Council to work with private landlords in the areas covered to improve their standards of management. This has resulted in improved living conditions for their tenants as well as improvements for the wider areas, such as reduced anti-social behaviour.

Sefton Council believes that a well-managed PRS plays an important role in meeting housing need. However, there is concern around ASB issues and poor property condition, with the 2013 Sefton house condition survey finding that 24% of privately rented property failed to meet the decent homes standard, compared to 16% of all private housing in the borough.

Sefton Council is proposing to re-designate both Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing schemes for privately rented properties across selected areas of the Borough. The council believes that licensing will continue to improve the management and property conditions across the designated areas, and members of Sefton's Housing Standards Team will be available to offer advice and support to both landlord and tenant.

As part of the licensing considerations, Sefton Borough Council commissioned M·E·L Research, as an independent research organisation, to carry out a consultation on the proposal to re-designate the Selective Licensing and Additional Licensing schemes in identified parts of the borough.



Public consultation

The public consultation took place over a 12-week period: 9th May 2022 – 31st July 2022. A range of methods were used to consult with local residents, tenants, landlords, agents, businesses and organisation in Sefton, local stakeholders and neighbouring local authority areas. Wide-ranging communications and publicity were also used by Sefton Council itself.

Proposals

The consultation focused on the degree to which respondents support the proposal being considered to re-designate the licence schemes, along with the likely impact they are to have on respondents around:

- Re-designating the Selective Licensing scheme in Bootle
- Re-designating the Additional (HMO) Licensing scheme in parts of parts of Seaforth and Waterloo, Brighton-le-Sands and central Southport.

The consultation also considered views on the proposed licensing costs, perceptions of the private rented sector in Sefton, privately renting tenants' experiences of living in the Borough of Sefton and landlords' experiences of renting out property in Sefton.

Consultation methods and profile of respondents

Five main methods were used to gather responses for the consultation. These are detailed below, along with the response rates received by survey method.

1. Face-to-face survey across Sefton

A door-to-door, face-to-face survey was undertaken with 545 residents from across the borough and results are broadly representative by gender and age. Based on a total estimated population (Census 2021) of 279,300 in the borough, the results provide a margin of error of +/-4.19% . A breakdown by age and gender is provided in the table below.

Table 3: Breakdown of respondents to the residents survey by age, gender and respondent type

	Total	Sefton resident	Private tenant in Sefton	Private landlord / agent	Other
18 to 29	51	51	10	5	10
30 to 39	77	77	21	10	27
40 to 49	49	49	9	3	15
50 to 59	74	74	16	4	19
60 or over	159	159	10	14	23
Prefer not to say	2	2	0	0	0
Did not respond	133	133	12	29	16
Total	545	545	78	65	110

Male	206	206	32	15	44
Female	206	206	34	21	50
Did not respond	133	133	12	29	16
Total	545	545	78	65	110

2. Online survey

The online consultation was widely promoted by the council (see Appendix 2 for full details of all activities undertaken to promote the consultation) and encouraged landlords, agents, tenants, residents and other interested parties to participate. In total, 219 responses were received to the online consultation. A breakdown of responses by respondent type is provided in the table below. A higher proportion of private landlords and letting or managing agents responded to the online survey, accounting for over half (58%) of respondents.

Table 4: Respondent profile to the online survey

Total	Sefton resident	Private tenant in Sefton	Private landlord / agent	Other
125	67	9	63	19

It should be noted that due to the relatively small number of respondents participating in the online survey and the fact that the survey was self-selection (i.e. biases can arise because individuals select to take part), the results are not representative of the borough as a whole. In the report, we show results from each of the two surveys separated but also combined.

3. Stakeholder consultations

A number of stakeholders were invited to take part in an interview undertaken by M·E·L Research staff as part of the consultation. The council provided a list of potential stakeholders and although attempts were made to contact all organisations, only two organisations took part in the consultation: a neighbouring local authority and a landlord's association.

4. Written responses

In addition, the National Residents Landlords Association (NRLA) submitted a written response to the consultation. Two further written responses were provided to the M·E·L Research Sefton email address. All written responses are included in the Appendices.

5. Online focus groups

We ran three online focus groups, listed below, to gain views about the proposed re-designation of the licensing schemes. No Council officers were present so that honest and independent feedback could be gathered as part of the process. We recruited to these from willing respondents to the two surveys. There

was a larger share of landlords in these groups, although they also included tenants, other residents and agents.

Table 5: Focus group attendees

Date/time	Number of participants
4 th July 2022	7
5 th July 2022	5
5 th July 2022	5
TOTAL	17

Reporting conventions

We have used the term 'landlord' in this report to collectively refer to landlord, letting or managing agents. Owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed visually on graphs or charts in the report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared with the text. The figures provided in the text should always be used. For some questions, respondents could give more than one response (multi choice). For these questions, the percentage for each response is calculated as a percentage of the total number of respondents and therefore percentages do not add up to 100%.

The consultation findings have been analysed overall, combining results by the different methods of consultation (face-to-face and online consultation), by method of consultation and by type of respondent (landlord/agent or tenant/resident).

Survey results

This section of the report presents the results from the surveys. Results are shown for both surveys combined, then split by survey type, respondent type and geographical split where possible. A full breakdown of the respondent profile is in Appendix 4.

Re-designation of Selective Licensing in Bootle

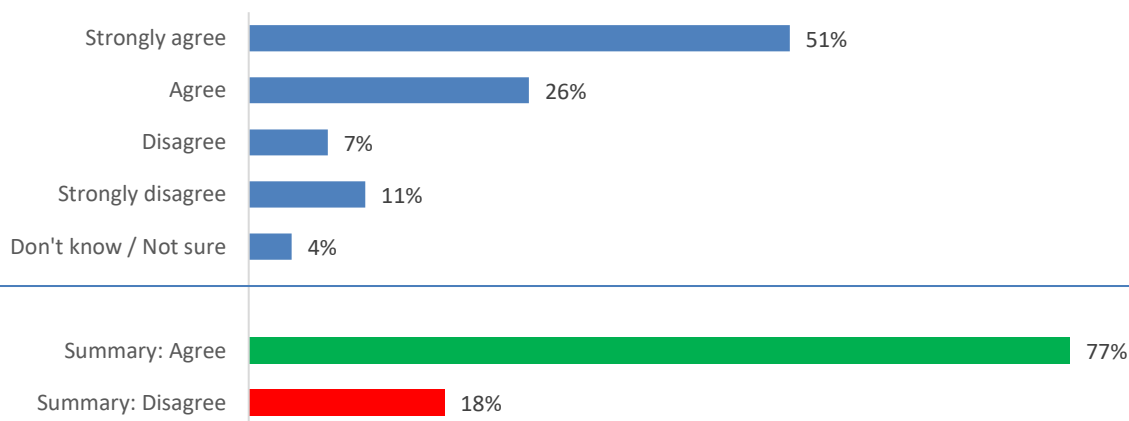
Figure 1 shows that just over three quarters of respondents agree with the proposals to re-designate selective licensing scheme in Bootle, with around half (51%) strongly agreeing. 18% disagree with the proposals, with one in ten (11%) strongly disagreeing.

Figure 2 shows the differing levels of support or lack of support for the proposal by the different methodology adopted for the consultation. These show that agreement is highest amongst those who took part in the face-to-face survey for Bootle (90% in support) and lowest amongst those who took part in the online survey (47% in agreement).

Residents in Sefton are very positive, with 86% in support of the proposals, and nine in ten (90%) of privately renting tenants are also in agreement. Just 42% of private landlords agree with the proposals to re-designate the selective licensing scheme in Bootle.

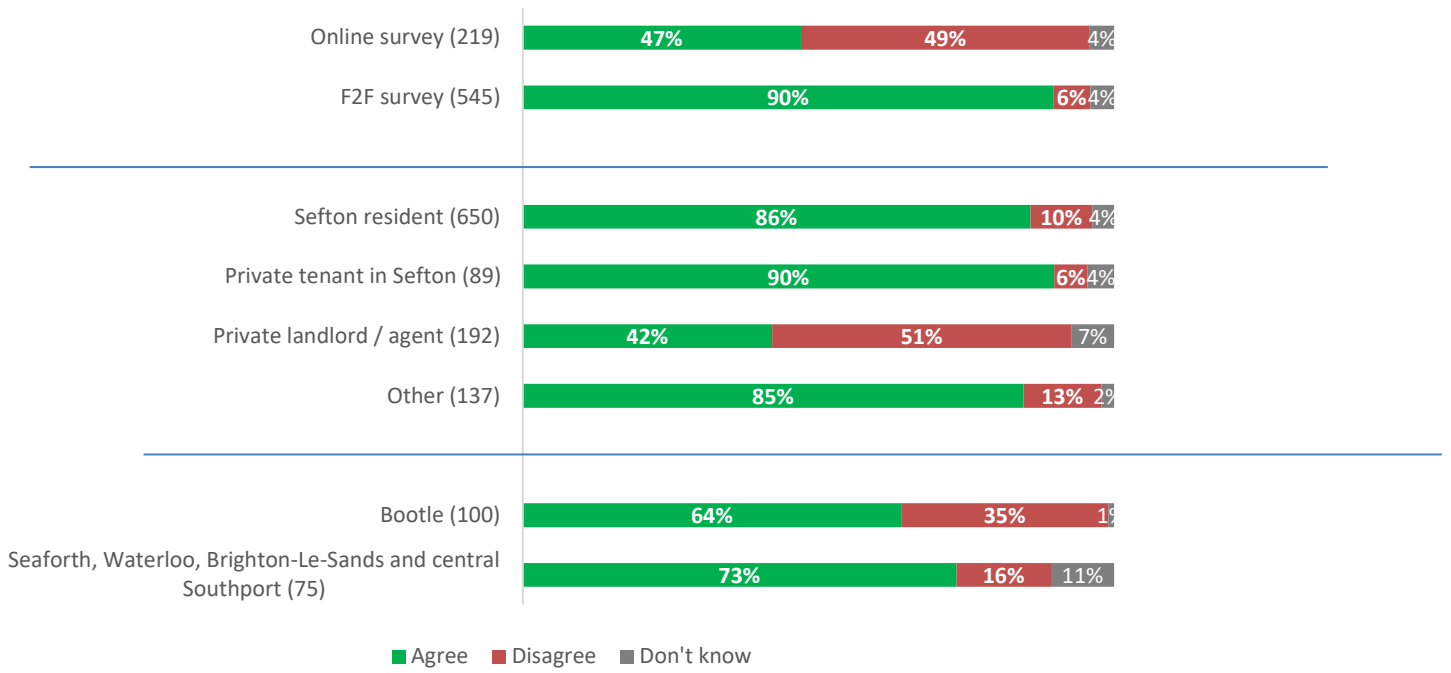
Those living in Bootle (63%) are less likely to agree with the redesignation compared to those living in the Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and Southport area (73%).

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designation a Selective licensing scheme in Bootle?



Sample base: 764

**Figure 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designation a Selective licensing scheme in Bootle?
– By subgroup**



Sample base in brackets

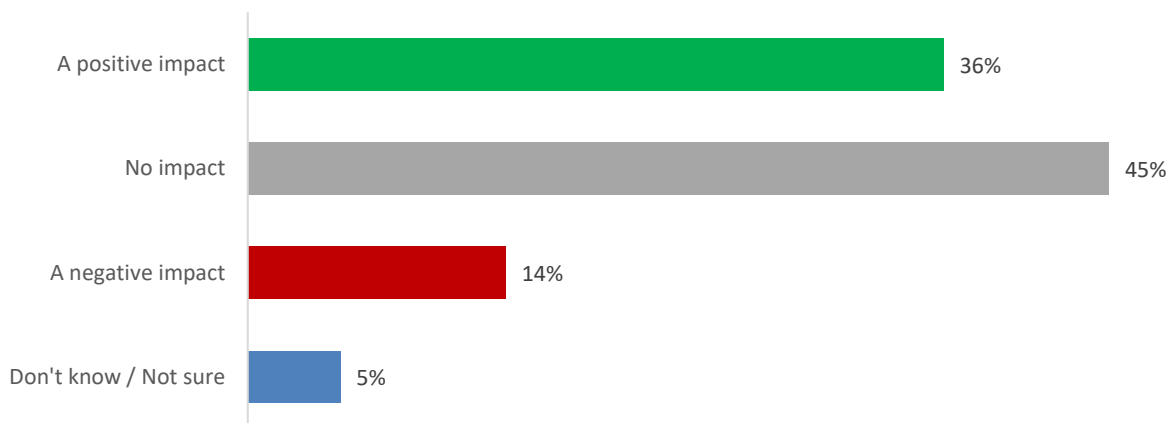
Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were then asked what impact, if any, introducing a selective licensing scheme would have on them. Figure 3 shows that overall, around a third (36%) feel it will have a positive impact and 14% feel it will have a negative impact. The majority feel that it will have no impact on them (45%), whilst 5% do not know what impact it will have on them.

Those responding to the online survey, however, are more likely to feel it will have a negative impact on them compared to those completing the face-to-face survey as shown in Figure 4 (38% compared to 4%). Private tenants in Sefton are most likely to feel the licensing scheme will have a positive impact on them (62%), whilst private landlords are significantly more likely than both Sefton residents (7%) and private tenants (8%) feel it will have a negative impact on them (38%).

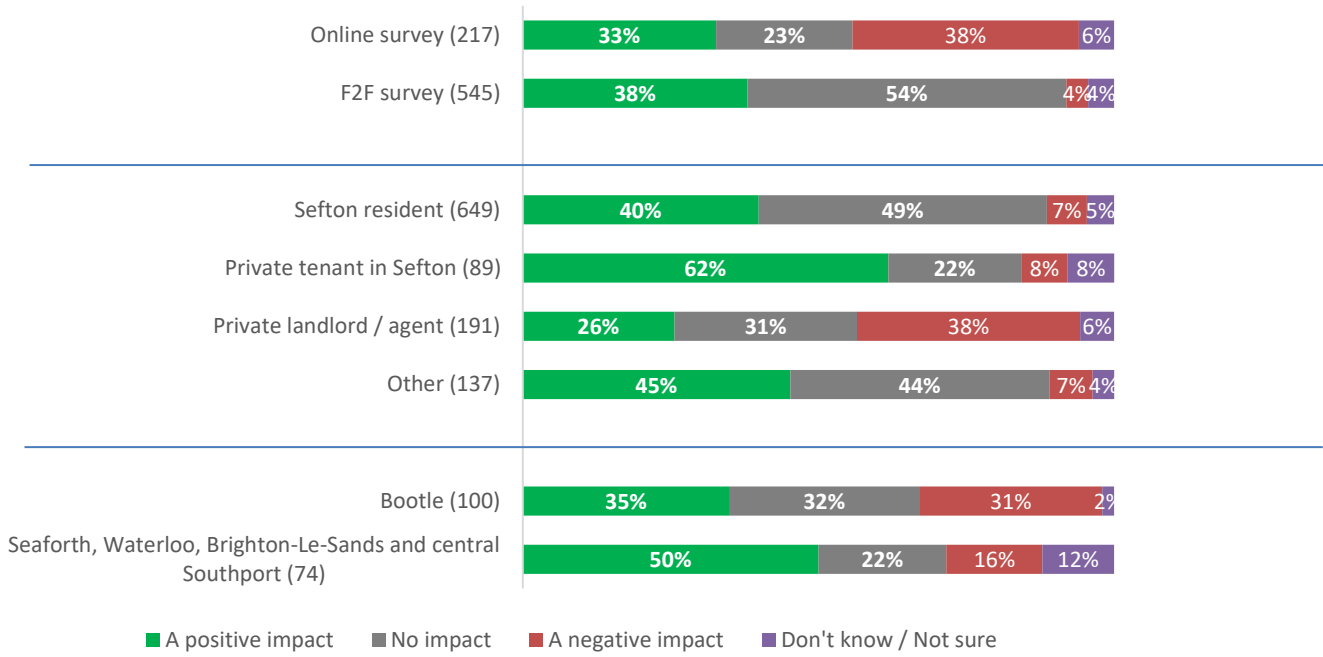
Those living in Bootle (35%) are less likely to feel positive towards the implementation of the selective licensing scheme compared to those living in the Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and Southport area (50%).

Figure 3: What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a Selective licensing scheme would have on you if it were introduced?



Sample base: 762

**Figure 4: What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a Selective licensing scheme would have on you if it were introduced?
– By subgroup**



Sample base in brackets

Re-designation of Additional (HMO) licensing scheme

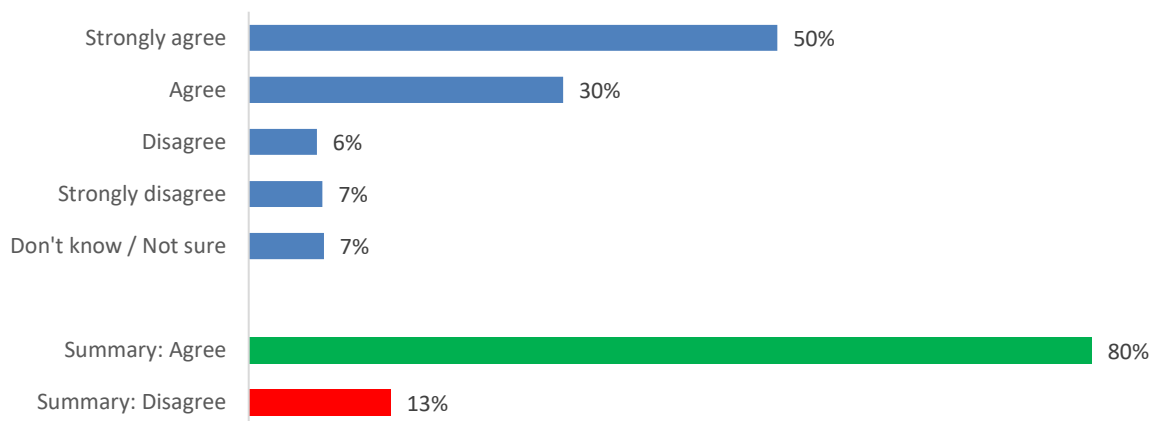
The re-designation of an additional (HMO) licensing scheme is supported by the majority of those who took part in the surveys, with 80% in agreement and 13% disagreeing.

As seen in the figure 5 below, support is high amongst those who took part in the face-to-face survey (88%). Although lower amongst those who took part in the online survey, a majority are still in favour (58% in support and 31% do not support).

Residents in Sefton (86%) and private Sefton tenants (88%) are significantly more likely to agree with the re-designation of additional (HMO) licensing compared to landlords, who are least positive towards the re-designation (50%).

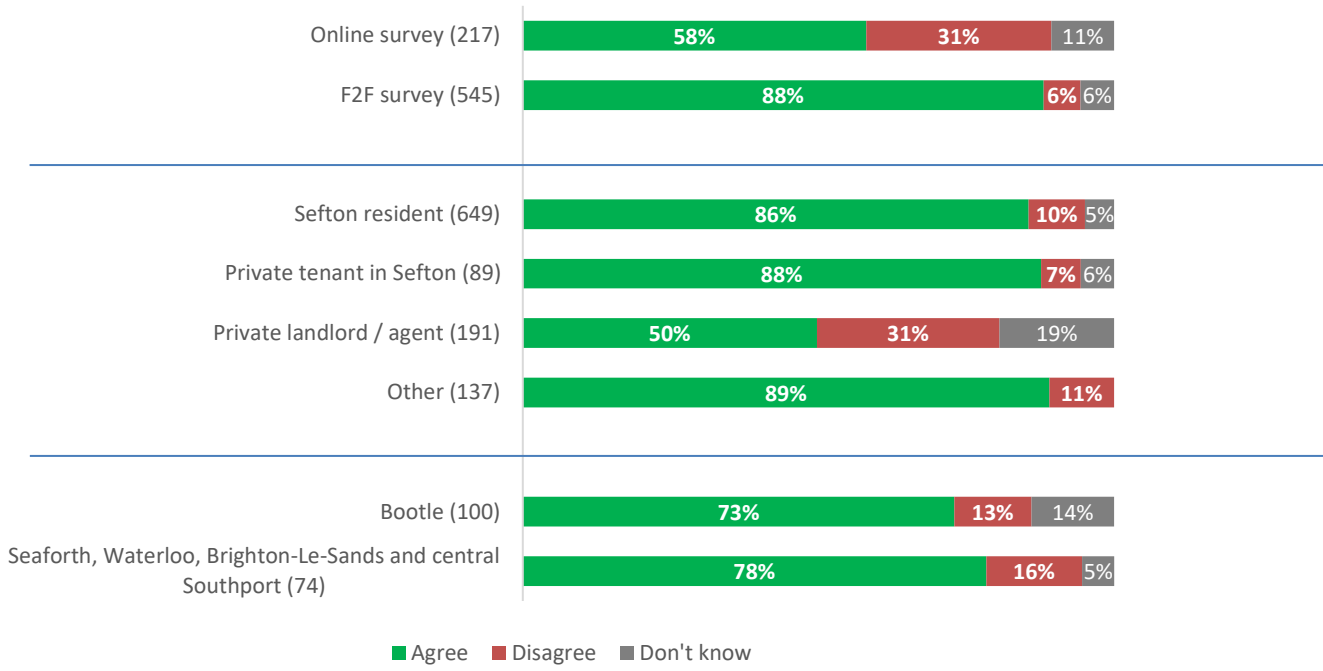
Those living in Bootle (73%) are less likely to agree with the redesignation of an additional (HMO) licensing scheme compared to those living in the Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and Southport area (78%).

Figure 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designate an Additional (HMO) licensing scheme?



Sample base: 762

**Figure 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designate an Additional (HMO) licensing scheme?–
By subgroup**



Sample base in brackets

Likely impact on respondents

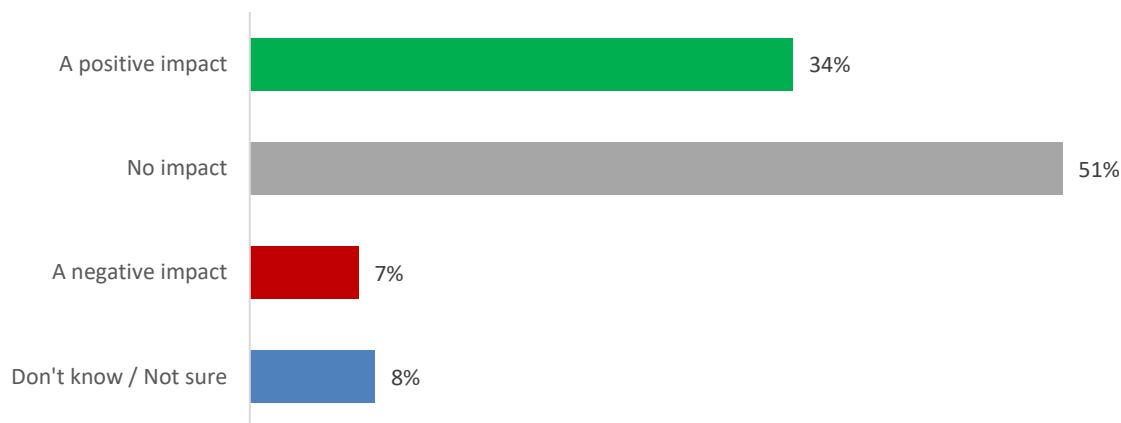
Overall, around a third of respondents (34%) feel that the re-designation of additional (HMO) licensing will have a positive impact on them, whilst only 7% feel it will have a negative impact. Similarly with the re-designation of the selective licensing scheme, the majority of respondents feel it will have no impact on them (51%). Fewer than one in ten (8%) said they did not know.

Those who completed the online survey are more likely than the face-to-face respondents to feel the re-designation of the additional (HMO) licensing scheme will have a positive impact on them (38% compared to 32%), as seen in Figure 8. Those completing the online survey were also more likely to feel this will have a negative impact on them compared to the face-to-face survey (19% compared to 2%). More of the face-to-face respondents feel it will have no impact on them (59% compared to 32% for those online).

Private renting tenants in Sefton are more likely to feel this will have a positive impact on them (55%), compared to Sefton residents (36%) and private landlords (26%). Along with 'other' respondents, more Sefton residents and private landlords believe the re-designation will have no impact on them, up to 53% for Sefton residents.

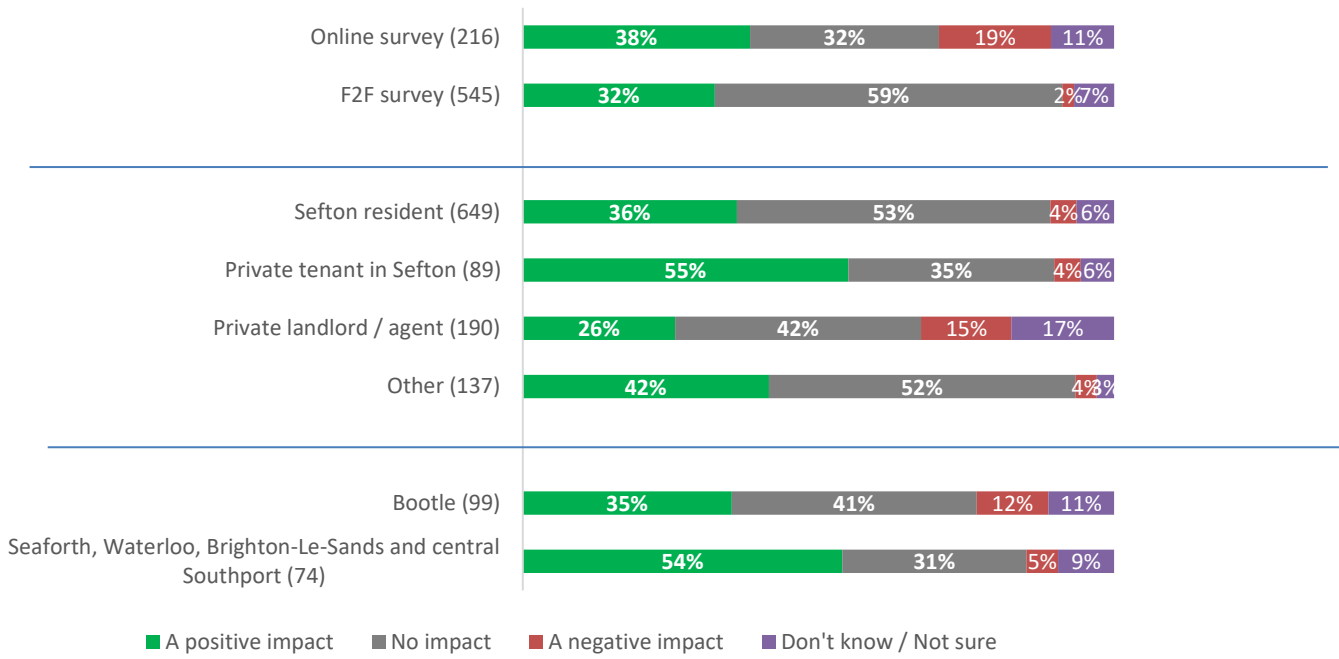
Those living in Bootle (35%) are less likely to feel positive towards the implementation of the additional licensing scheme compared to those living in the Seaforth, Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands and Southport area (54%).

Figure 7: What impact, if any, do you feel the Additional (HMO) licensing schemes would have on you if they were introduced?



Sample base: 761

**Figure 8: What impact, if any, do you feel the Additional (HMO) licensing schemes would have on you if they were introduced?
– By subgroup**

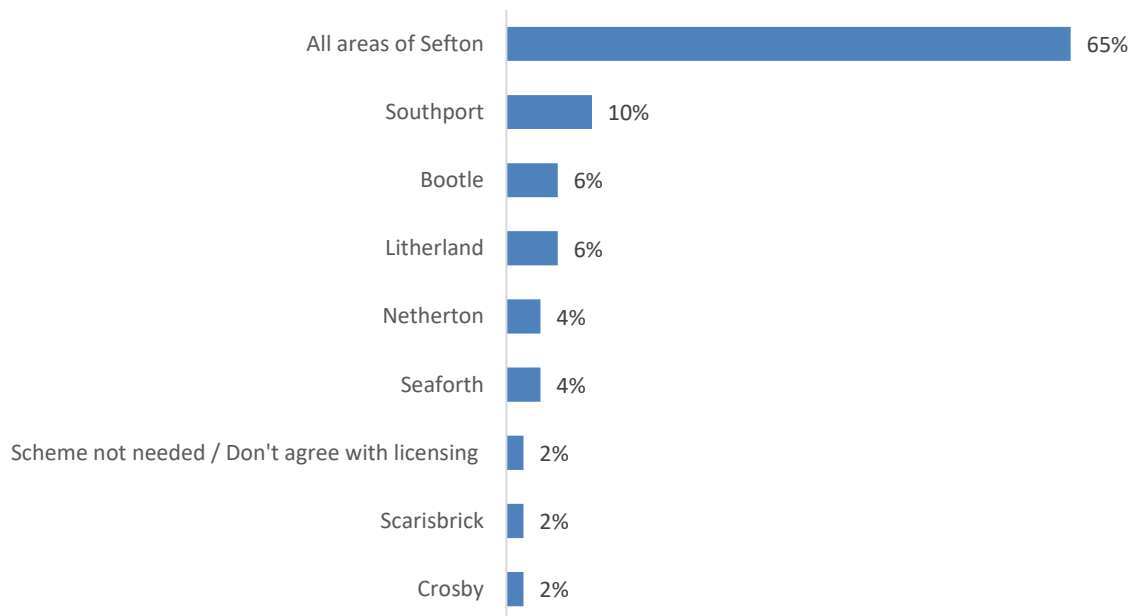


Sample base in brackets

Respondent comments on Additional (HMO) licensing in other areas

Respondents were asked whether they thought any other areas in Sefton would benefit from the additional (HMO) licensing scheme. 48 respondents to the online survey gave an answer which can be seen in Figure 9. By far, the most common answer was that of all areas in Sefton, with 65% of respondents stating this, followed by one in ten (10%) stating Southport. All other answers were chosen by 6% or less.

Figure 9: Are there any other areas in Sefton that you feel would benefit from an Additional (HMO) licensing scheme?

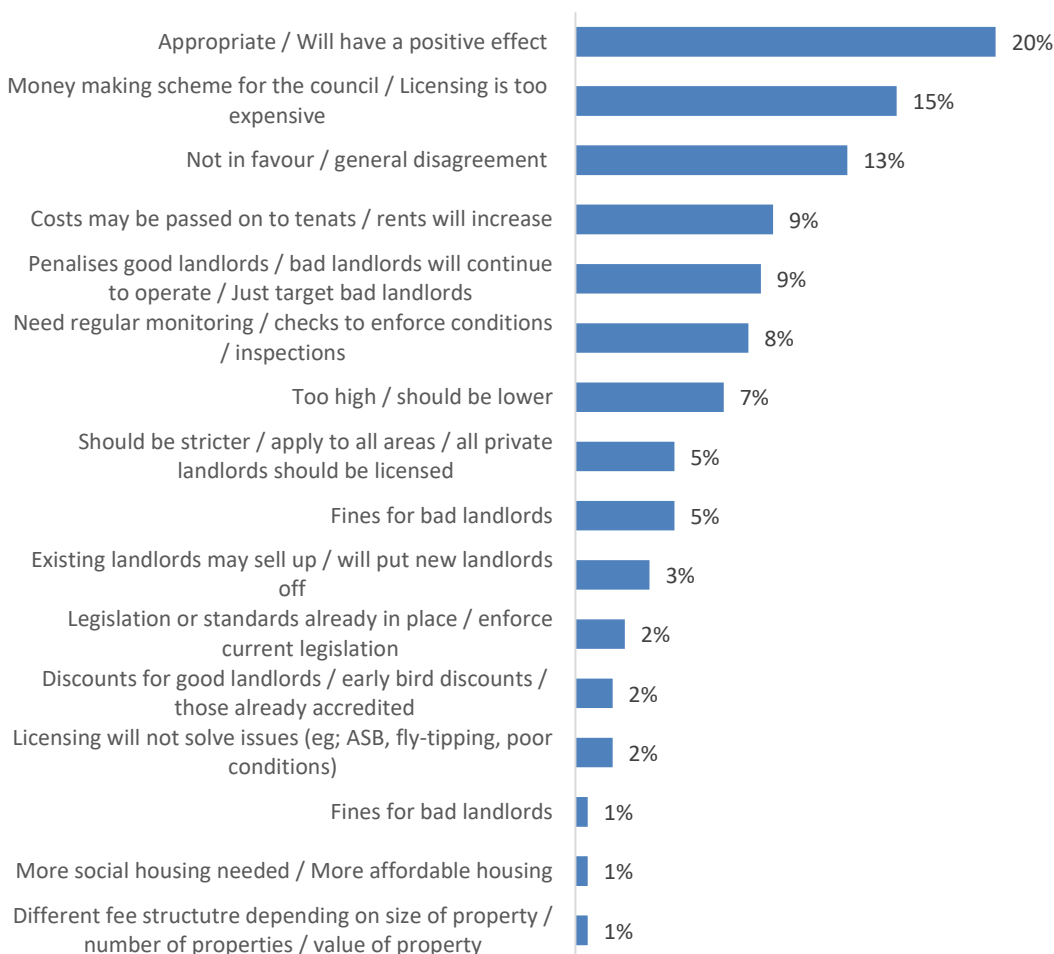


Sample base: 48

Respondent comments on both re-designation proposals

Respondents were invited to add any further comments about either of the licensing schemes. 129 respondents from the online survey gave an answer to this question which have been coded into groups. The results depicted in Figure 10, show that a fifth (20%) of respondents stated that the schemes were appropriate and will have a positive effect, the most common answer. 15% did, however, feel that the licensing schemes were a money-making scheme for the council and that the licences are too expensive. 13% stated they were not in favour or had a comment around general disagreement.

Figure 10: Are there any other comments you would like to add about either of the proposed schemes?



Sample base: 129

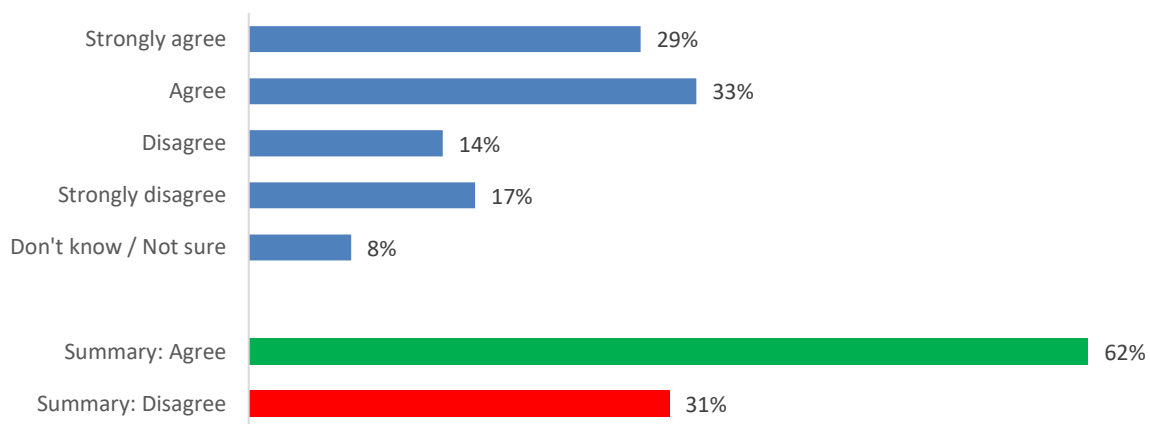
Selective licensing fees

As part of the consultation, respondents were asked to comment on the proposed fee of £695 for the selective licensing scheme for a five-year licence (excluding any discount or additional costs). This equates to £139 per year or £2.67 per week. It is also proposed that for each additional unit (under the same ownership and within the same building) a charge of £30 per additional unit will apply.

Figure 11 shows that around six out of ten (62%) respondents to the surveys agree that the proposed selective licensing fee is reasonable, with 29% strongly agreeing and a third (33%) somewhat agreeing. Around three in ten (31%) respondents disagree with the proposed fees for the selective licensing, with 17% disagreeing strongly.

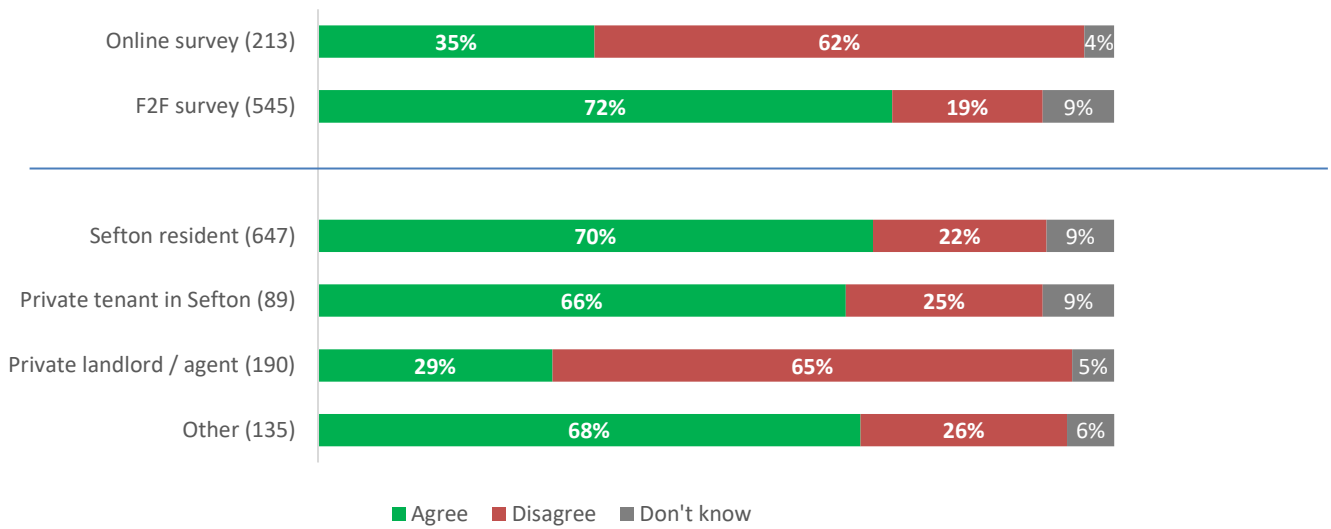
Figure 12 shows that agreement with the selective licensing fees is significantly higher amongst those who completed the face-to-face survey compared to the online respondents (72% compared to 35%). Almost half (46%) of those completing online strongly disagreed with the fee proposals, compared to just 5% of those completing the survey via face to face. Both Sefton residents (70%) and private tenants in Sefton (66%) are significantly more likely to agree the fees are reasonable compared to private landlords and agents (29%). Private landlords are much more in opposition of the proposed fees, with almost two thirds (65%) disagreeing with them.

Figure 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed fee for Selective Licensing?



Sample base: 758

Figure 12: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed fee for Selective Licensing? By subgroup



Sample base in brackets

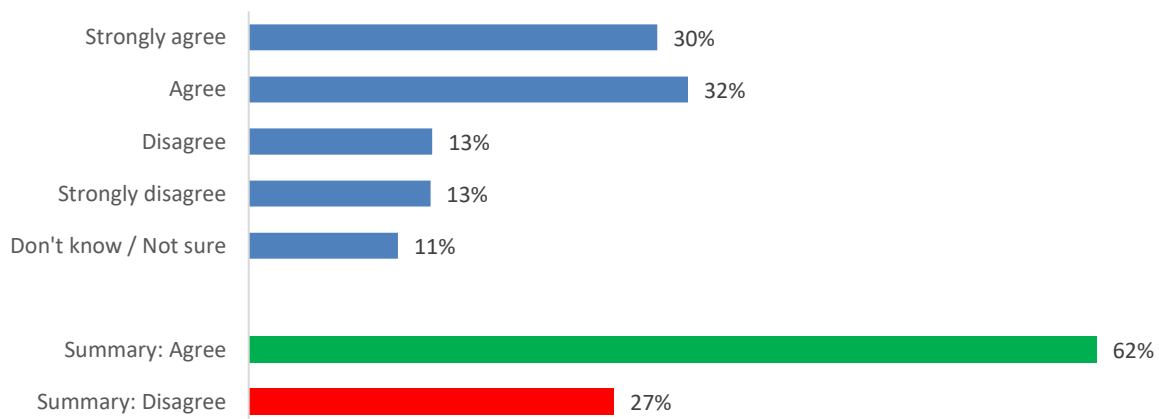
Additional (HMO) licensing fees

Respondents were also asked to comment on the proposed fee of £950 for the additional (HMO) licensing scheme for a five-year licence (excluding any discount or additional costs). This equates to £190 per year or £3.65 per week with additional unit costs for those larger properties. It is also proposed that for each additional unit (under the control of the same proposed licence holder and within the same building) a charge of £30 per additional unit will apply.

Figure 13 shows that similar to the selective licensing scheme, around six out of ten (62%) respondents to the consultation agree that the proposed additional (HMO) licensing schemes fee is reasonable, with 30% strongly in agreement and a third (32%) somewhat agreeing. Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents disagree with the proposals for the additional (HMO) licensing fees, with 13% strongly disagreeing.

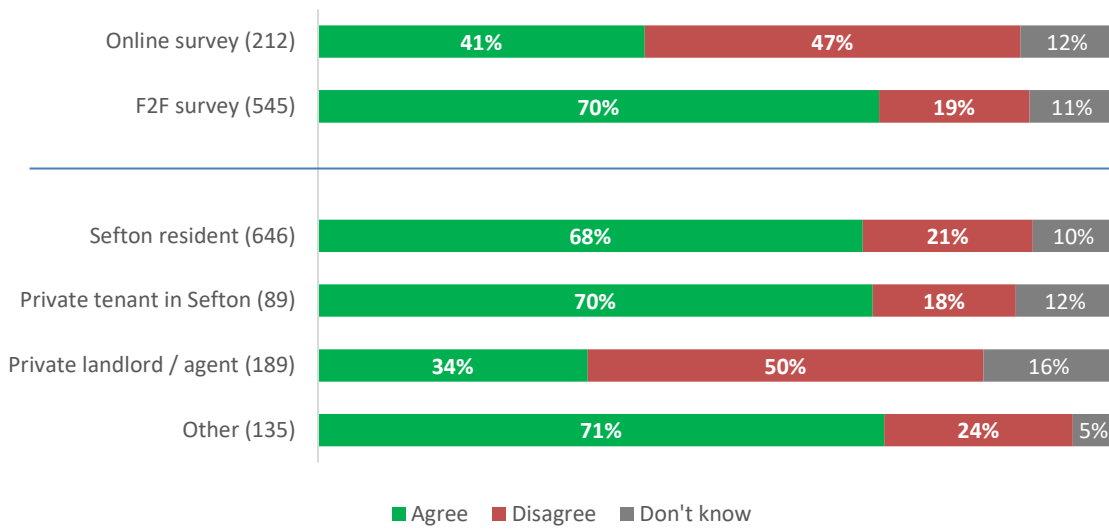
By survey method, Figure 14 shows that those completing the online survey are significantly more likely to disagree with the fee proposals compared to those who completed the survey via face to face (47% compared to 19%). Sefton residents (68%) and private tenants in Sefton (70%) are also significantly more likely to agree with the fee proposals compared to private landlords and agents (34%).

Figure 13: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed fee for Additional (HMO) Licensing?



Sample base: 757

Figure 14: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed fee for Additional (HMO) Licensing? By subgroup

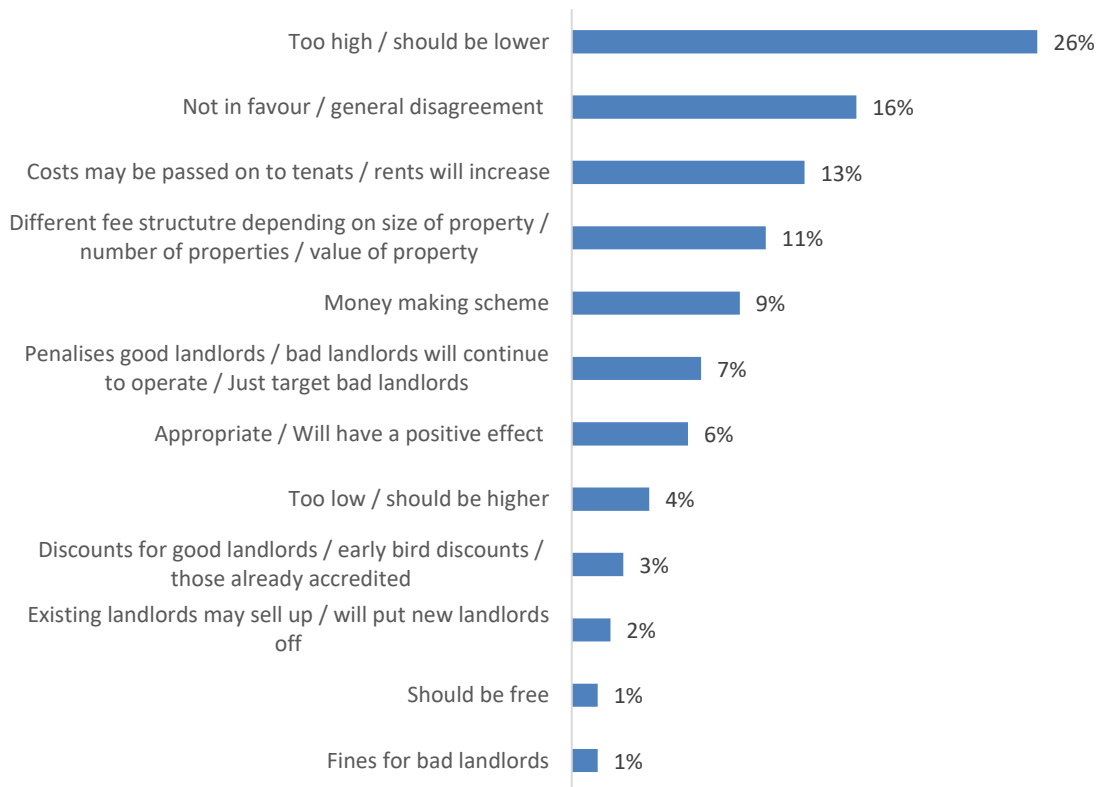


Sample base in brackets

Comments on Licensing fees in general

128 respondents gave an answer in response to being asked on whether they had any comments regarding the licensing fees. Around a quarter (26%) of responses were around the fees being too high and should be lower, followed by 16% stating they are not in favour and a general disagreement. 13% commented on the fact costs may be passed onto tenants in the form of rent increases, a topic which was also covered in the online focus groups.

Figure 15: If you have any comments about the licensing fees, please provide them below



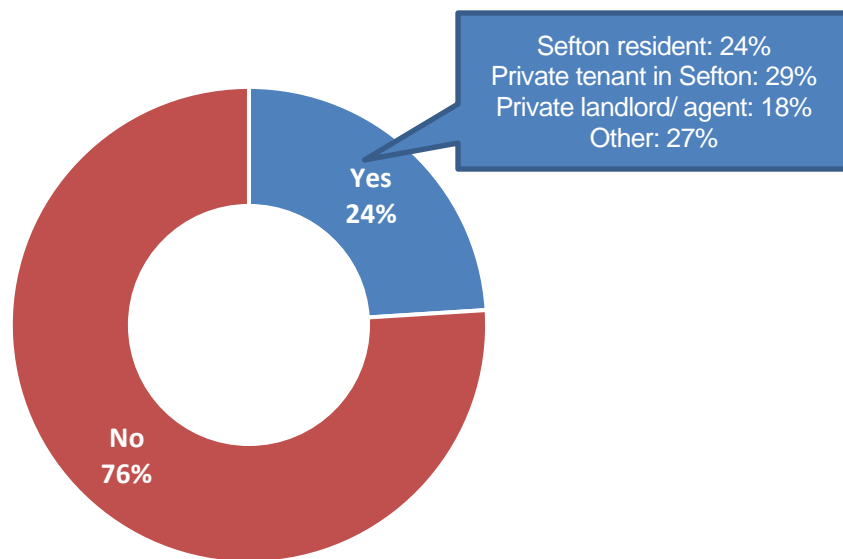
Sample base: 128

Licensing conditions

There are mandatory licence conditions that must be applied to Additional (HMO) and Selective licences. The Council can also apply other conditions to deal with the management, use and occupation of the property. The proposed licensing conditions would seek to prevent overcrowding, poor property conditions and help tackle deprivation and anti-social behaviour.

Respondents in the face-to-face survey were asked whether they had read the licence conditions. Just a quarter (24%) said they have read through the licensing conditions; this figure was slightly higher among the private tenants (29%) as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Have you read these licence conditions?



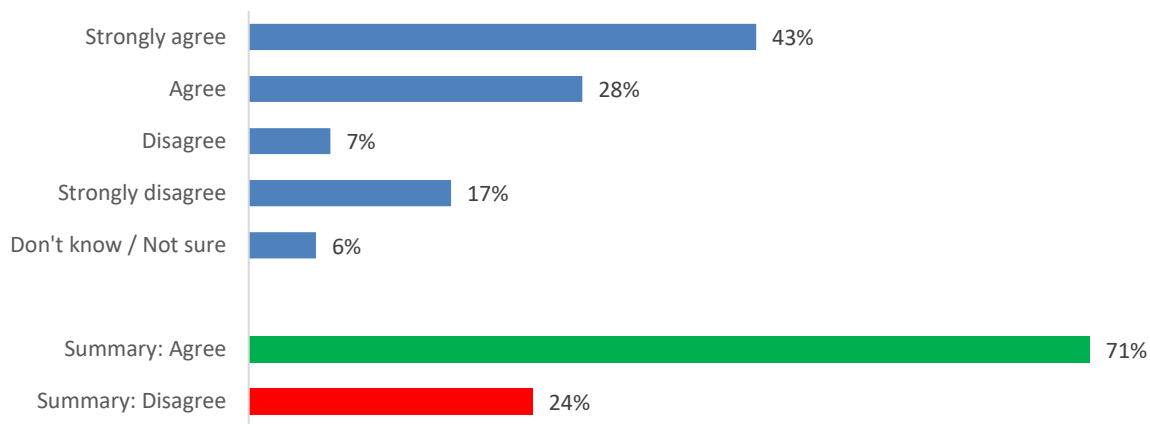
Sample base: 545

Agreement with proposed Selective Licensing conditions

Both surveys asked respondents about their level of agreement or disagreement with the proposed licensing conditions. Figure 17 shows that around seven in ten (71%) agreed with the proposed selective licensing conditions, with 43% strongly agreeing. About a quarter (24%) disagreed with the conditions, with 17% strongly disagreeing. A further 6% said they did not know or were not sure.

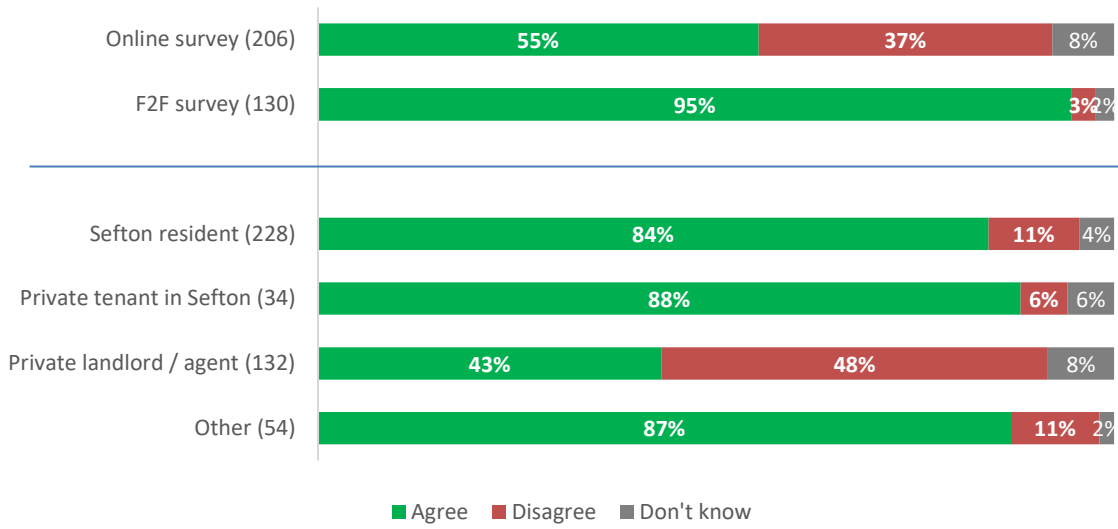
Figure 18 shows that 94% of those who completed the face-to-face survey agree with the selective licensing conditions, a significantly higher proportion compared to those completing the survey online (55%). Similar to other perceptions throughout the consultation, both private rented tenants (88%) and Sefton residents (84%) are significantly more likely to agree with the selective licensing conditions compared to private landlords and agents (43%). Amongst private landlords and agents, a higher proportion disagreed with the selective licensing conditions (48%) than agreed with them (43%).

Figure 17: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Selective Licensing conditions?



Sample base: 336

Figure 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed licence conditions for Selective Licensing? By subgroup



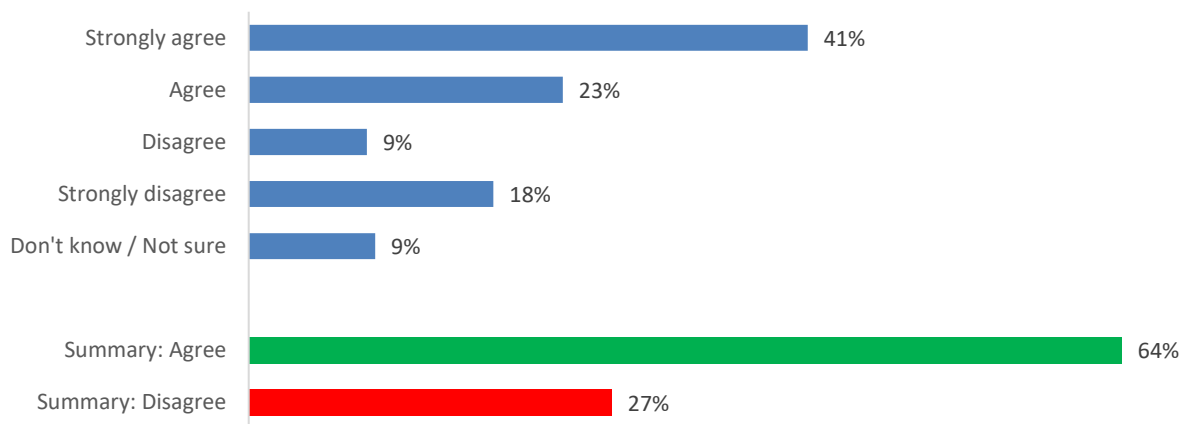
Sample base in brackets

Agreement with proposed Additional (HMO) licensing conditions

With the additional (HMO) licensing conditions, Figure 19 shows that around two thirds (64%) respondents agreed with them, with 41% strongly agreeing. Just over a quarter (27%) disagreed with the conditions, with 18% strongly disagreeing. Around one in ten (9%) said they did not know or were not sure.

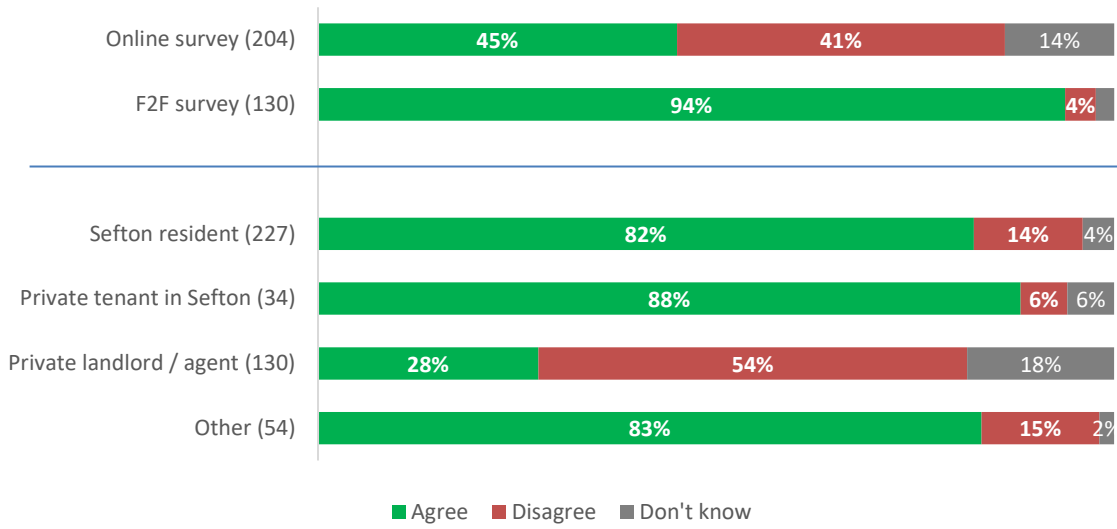
94% of those who completed the face-to-face survey agree with the additional (HMO) licensing conditions, in Figure 20 you can see that this is a significantly higher proportion compared to those completing the survey online (45%). By respondent type, just 28% of private landlords and agents agree with the additional (HMO) licensing conditions, a significantly lower proportion when compared to Sefton residents (83%) and private tenants in Sefton (88%).

Figure 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Additional (HMO) Licensing conditions?



Sample base: 334

Figure 20: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Additional (HMO) Licensing conditions? By subgroup

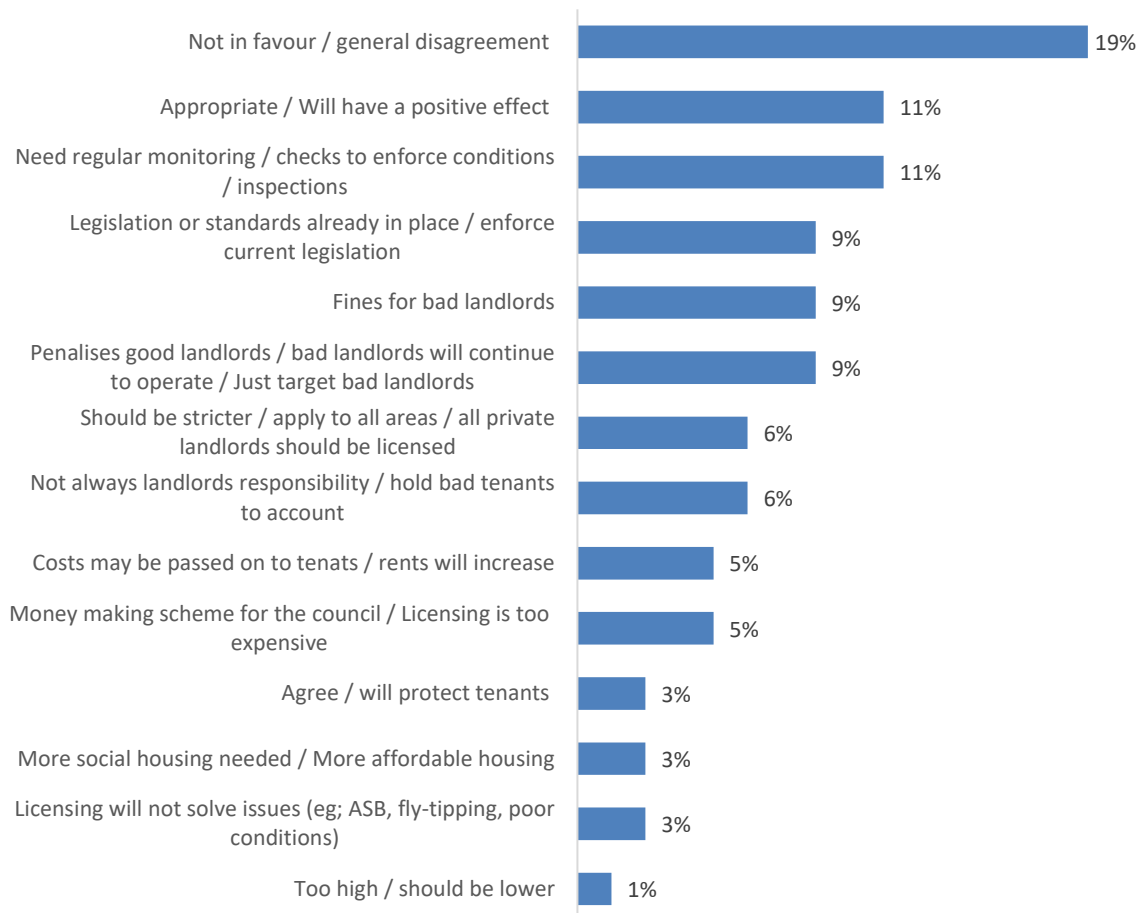


Sample base in brackets

Comments on proposed licensing conditions

Respondents completing the survey online were also asked to provide any other comments that they have around the proposed licence conditions. Comments made are shown in Figure 21. Around a fifth (19%) mentioned they were not in favour or had a general disagreement towards them and this was the most common response to this question.

Figure 21: If you have any comments about the proposed licence conditions, please provide them below

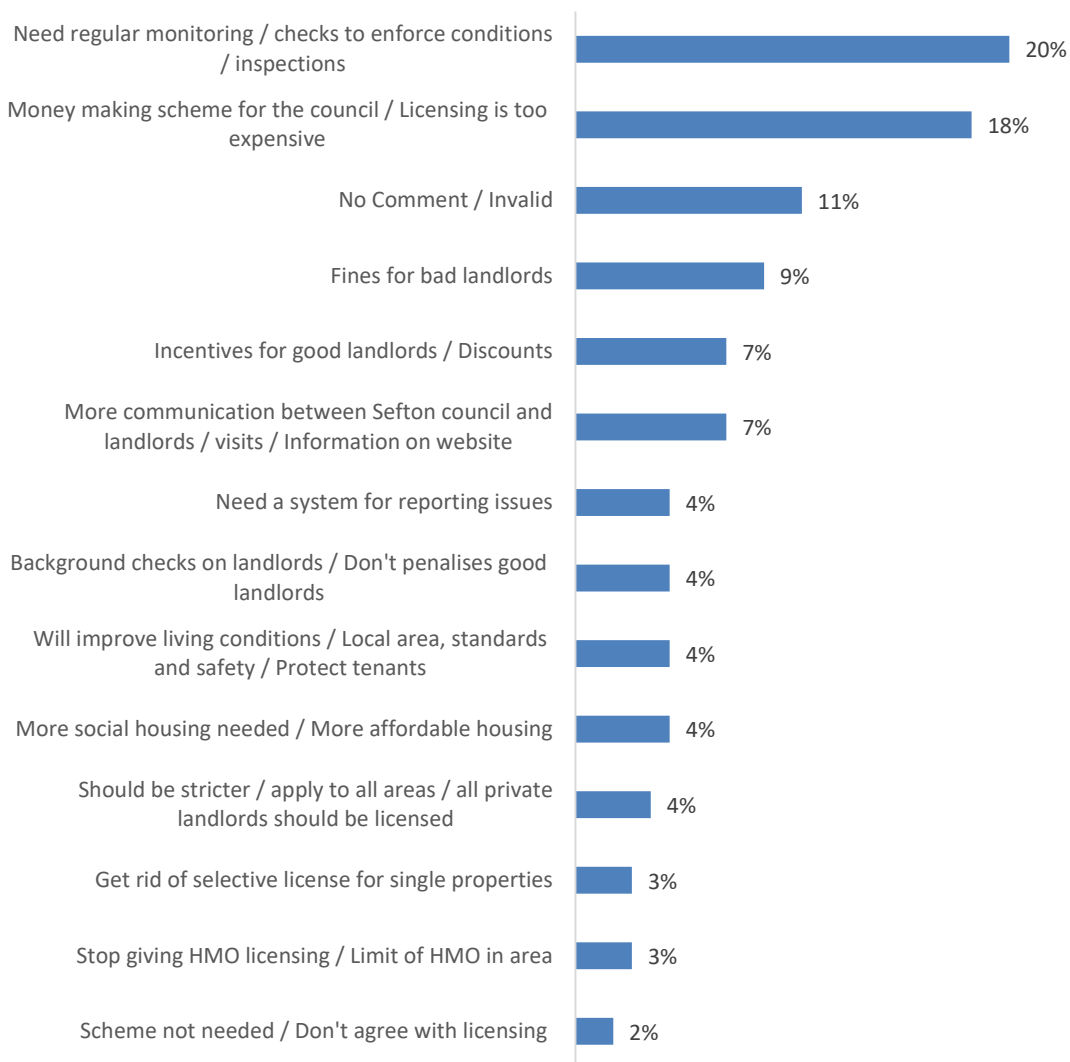


Sample base: 67

Any further comments about the licensing proposals

Finally, respondents were asked if that had any further comments for the consultation around Sefton Councils licensing proposals. 92 respondents gave a comment. A fifth (20%) of respondents answering this question gave a comment around the need for regular monitoring/ check for enforcement conditions and inspections. This was the most common response given to this question. Figure 22 shows other responses with 18% that commented negatively on the proposals in terms of the proposals being a money-making scheme for the Council and the licensing being too expensive.

Figure 22: Do you have any further comments about the Licensing proposals?



Sample base: 92

Stakeholder views on licensing schemes proposal

As part of the consultation, we spoke to two organisations for comment, although invited a wider group. These were with Wirral Council and Living Well UK, which provides social prescribing health and wellbeing support in Sefton. Views were often applied about both licensing schemes.

Wirral Council were largely positive towards the proposals and discussed the successes they have had with similar schemes to tackle the private rented sector. Living Well, whilst in favour of the re-designation, did share concerns over the finance side and how much of this is passed down to the tenant.

Need to deal with poor housing conditions in the PRS

Some stakeholders noted that living conditions and mobility issues often come up a lot when speaking with Sefton tenants about their homes.

“...with additional regulation it’s not as easy for everyone to just rent out properties and neglect the conditions for those living in the area...”

These stakeholders are also in agreement that there is a lack of choice in housing options which allows private landlords to potentially not fulfil all their requirements in housing standards. This is mentioned as especially in the case of smaller accommodation such as bungalows.

“The lack of stock is a big one, smaller accommodation such as bungalows is a big thing, especially within the Northern parts of the area, which means those that need these properties are struggling to get in the market”.

Costs of licensing passed onto tenants

Potential costs being pushed onto the tenants themselves were also discussed.

“I wonder whether rents and costs will increase to cover the work that needs to be done with licence. Some private rent is extremely high already, and this could be somewhere landlords look to recoup the costs”.

Another mentioned the Council should support landlords in affording licensing such as having an instalment scheme to help especially those landlords with large portfolios to spread out the licence fees.

“To supplement the licence scheme, something we have done is to help the landlord out, is to offer instalments, such as the fees being paid in two parts, which helps to spread out the burden”.

How the licensing requirements are monitored

One organisation expressed a concern over how the private landlords are governed on the licence scheme, and to what extent the additional fees actually benefit the properties and tenants.

“How often are they checked, a landlord has to go through all these procedures, but how often are they checked by the Council and if they are buying lots of properties, do they have a certain number of checks that need to be carried out?”

One stakeholder said they are working with and have support for monitoring landlords such as the Residential Landlord Association.

“...we have the support of the RLA, so we can sought their views which helped to bring extra perks to the licensing scheme such as a bulky waste collection”.

Impact on tenants

Stakeholders noted that the licensing scheme does potentially offer more security to private tenants when looking for accommodation in the area, as scheme regulations mean the home they are potentially moving into is of a higher standard.

“...I’d like to think it was having a positive impact on tenants as they know when a licence is approved they have to provide a well-maintained home, which adds security to the tenant”.

“Things like boiler checks and other things that occur when a tenant moves in should be done prior which relieves stress.”

Some feel that awareness of the licence scheme is pretty low, which may allow private landlords to get around keeping to regulations they agreed to with the licensing scheme.

“I’d say no [most in Sefton are not aware of the scheme] to be honest, I only really have an idea as I work in housing, the general public I’m not sure people are aware. Would people be aware of what their private landlord under the scheme should be doing? I think some promotion of the scheme would be a positive thing, especially if it’s going to be extended to 2028”.

Stakeholders mention that the licensing scheme may help to put private renting on par with social housing in terms of tenant protection and safety in renting a property.

“Maybe in the past people have thought housing associations are safer...I think in the past there has been a worry the private landlords can just remove tenants when they like, with the licensing schemes this offers more protection for tenants”.

One interviewee also mentioned that the scheme helps to stop the bloat in the private rented sector and has the potential to remove some private landlords who are offering a poor product for tenants.

“Some less desirable landlords are moving out of the area as the don’t want to and can’t afford the licensing fees...I think with Sefton and indeed Liverpool, the joint efforts across the Mersey region helps for a unified approach in removing poorer landlords”.

Landlord support and concerns

Whilst these stakeholders agree that the licensing scheme is often seen as a negative amongst private landlords, one organisation believes some landlords are actually on board with the proposals, especially in terms of levelling the playing field as they feel some private landlords do not play by the rules which can tarnish their image.

“We get the landlords that love the scheme as it creates a level playing field across the landlord sector. However, you get the other landlords that don’t like the licensing as it means they have to do things. This helps to Council to tackle poor housing conditions however”.

Another part of the licensing scheme is it helps landlords to raise their management.

“The scheme helps to get landlords to do what they should be doing, raising the management standards. That’s what we are finding. We do get a lot of landlords that don’t want to be told what to do and claim the scheme is an additional tax”.

“We have teams that work solely in selective licence areas which offer support for private rented tenants. They deal with tenants and signpost them to different organisations and charities which can support them.”

Feedback from online focus groups

As part of the consultation, M·E·L Research ran three online focus groups, with a range of people taking part after having expressed an interest from the surveys. General feedback and comments from the online focus groups includes the following:

Issues locally

- One respondent questioned the link of the licensing and ASB, saying they operate in areas where ASB is lowering and feels if there is a licence fee on private landlord schemes, it should be for all landlords.
- All respondents in one focus group have issues with the Council dealing with fly tipping and littering. The way it is sorted means that tenants/ landlords are encouraged to leave things outside the house when they move out, which means it looks not very nice for neighbours.
- One landlord who operates and lives in Sefton noted a couple of properties in a “rough” area with ASB issues. He discussed some examples of tenants who did not get on with neighbours, dog issues and garden issues, unable to resolve between themselves.
- One private tenant noted that a lack of housing options within Sefton makes it really hard to find a good landlord, and that the licensing scheme can help to alleviate this issue. They said that managing agents often side with the landlord, which makes tenants feel isolated when dealing with their rent and housing.

Current and proposed schemes

- Some landlords feel that the licensing scheme tars all landlords with the same brush and does not separate the good landlords from rogue ones. Landlords in the groups feel they provide a really great service to tenants but feel they are being punished because of a small number of poor landlords with the current licensing scheme.
- There were comments made on the types of communications landlords receive from the Council, with letters often perceived as worded harshly. This causes a ‘rift’ between landlords and the Council and does not help when they should be working together to improve the sector and to identify rogue landlords.
- One participant had read in the consultation documents that inspections would take place during the scheme. They thought there had been a very low number of inspections during the current scheme, which other respondents agreed. A number of landlords across the focus groups commented on very few inspections for their own properties, especially from those who own a large portfolio. Some had received no inspections on their properties, raising questions about whether the scheme is actually tackling rogue landlords. One landlord said that the inspections the Council runs as part of the licensing scheme did not seem to have a large impact on the sector and made no huge changes to residents either.
- Some landlords who operate across Merseyside also commented on the cost of the licence scheme within Sefton compared to similar schemes, such as in Liverpool. Some respondents agreed that they would feel more comfortable with the scheme if they saw more evidence on what the licence fee was going to offer, rather than what sometimes feels like a money-making scheme for the Council.
- Some are unsure what the scheme achieves on top of all the regulations landlords have to abide by anyway, with documents such as EPC certificates.
- Another issue that was brought up was around the amount of support around the licensing scheme. An example was made of another local council that ran a landlord forum, where the council can work with landlords to help tenants from both a financial aspect and maintenance aspect. There was agreement about a seeming lack of interaction with Sefton Council.

- Some landlords wanted support for good landlords in the form of incentives. They mentioned that the licence fees should go purely on putting money back into the scheme in the form of increased inspections to actually make actionable decisions on rogue landlords. Many feel they are just pushing the licence fees onto rents and not actually making better changes to the properties they maintain.
- Certain landlords working with HMOs made comment on the lack of value they feel they have had with the additional licences, with one commenting that they cause more trouble than they are worth, especially with the increased maintenance costs compared to a standard private rented property.

Alternatives

- Some landlords indicated that automation of the licensing scheme and the documents they need to submit would be ideal, helping to reduce the slow process they sometimes experience when getting checks done.
- Others mentioned an AirBnB type programme where properties and private landlords could be reviewed, which would help tenants to have a better idea of the property and landlord before they started a tenancy.
- Some residents and private tenants suggested that landlords should have to take a type of training course to be able to let properties in Sefton, which would ensure they are keeping their properties maintained to the current standards. There was also a suggestion that private landlords living outside of the area should have to use a managing agent within Sefton so tenants have local access to support and property maintenance.
- Other residents suggested higher penalties, as this would further help to combat poor maintenance of properties. This would not only benefit the tenant living in the property but also residents around the property, helping to increase the visual aspect of the local neighbourhoods.

Differences the scheme will make

- Several landlords were largely in agreement that the licence fees the scheme incurs will likely be passed onto the tenant through rent increases across the local area.
- Others felt that the scheme will have a minimal impact on rogue landlords due to a perceived lack of inspections and action from the Council. One landlord commented on the funding for local councils, saying that environmental standards are often underfunded and understaffed to deal with certain regulations. They commented that councils often raise money through new licensing schemes, which adds to the conveyor belt of costs for landlords that then pass into tenants' rent.
- Another participant said that the police and environmental teams can hardly ever help with ASB as a tenant is under tenancy agreement and that nothing will change with a licence scheme.
- Some tenants across the focus groups agreed that it can be difficult to work with landlords. One tenant mentioned they have had multiple rent increases but no improvement to their properties, even though they have been advised about needing things done. As an example, they said their kitchen was 30 years old and the back wall needs replacing yet the landlord says most things are down to tenant. If inspections were to increase as part of the re-designated licensing scheme, these issues may be supported quicker and tenants may feel they have the Council on their side, as they often feel isolated when working with private landlords and agents.
- However, tenants and landlords often agreed that if inspections and penalties are not increased, they can't see the licensing scheme having a profound impact on the local private rented sector, other than costs being passed along to tenants.

Written response feedback

Finally, all stakeholders were offered the chance to provide their feedback to the consultation in a written response, which were sent to a dedicated email address, or forwarded on from members of Sefton Council. In total, two stakeholders provided feedback to the consultation, as well as a written response from the National Residents and Landlords Association (NRLA). The verbatim written responses can be seen below.

Response from two landlords

“Dear Ms Harding, I am a Labour Party member and a landlord that has a license. my son who is a facilities manager and deals with the letting agency and tenant. has had to jump through hoops to get the license and pay for it on my behalf.. I have only one property that is rented out, the tenant is an elderly lady who is always apologetic when she contacts my son when she needs a job doing at the property as she is afraid that she will be evicted. This will not happen as my son and I understand her insecurities. So much so that the rent hasn't been increased for years as we believe the tenant would be badly affected if we were to increase it. The license is five hundred and thirty pounds, add this cost to the letting agent fees, gas and electric safety checks, insurance etc and I am absolutely convinced that these costs lead to higher rents. I am holding onto the property in trust for my autistic grandson, I am not wealthy, my income in total is under thirteen thousand pounds annually. I am disgusted with the council only targeting certain areas for licensing as this is discrimination. If you believe in landlord licensing, then all landlords should have to obtain a license, and the license fee should be a lot less than five hundred and thirty pounds. My son is of the opinion that landlords should pay for a license if they don't let through a letting agent, perhaps the council will take this suggestion in consideration, as he thinks my having to pay out this year over two thousand six hundred pounds is excessive.

Best Wishes Mrs J Kemp”

“Hi, my view is, I am a good landlord. I only have one rental property. I am a nurse with little extra money. Anything my tenant texts me about is resolved in a few days. I pay this fee to Sefton but I have no idea how it benefits my tenant or makes me a better landlord. I understand why landlords who have many rentals or a bad record should be challenged but this achieves nothing for my tenant or my care of her and the property. I think it's an unfair fee.

Regards Sara “

Response from the NRLA

Dear Sir or Madam,

Selective and Additional Licensing Proposals

The NRLA is an association following the National Landlords Association and the Residential Landlords Association merger. Our membership represents over 95,000 landlords and agents, the largest organisation in the sector. Members own and manage around 10% of the PRS, equating to half a million properties.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation to renew selective and additional licensing schemes in the borough. The NRLA objects to the relevance of property licensing schemes by local authorities. Although we understand the aims of Sefton Council, we believe that licensing does not align with the successful completion of these aims.

The NRLA seeks a fair legislative and regulatory environment for the private rented sector while ensuring landlords know their statutory rights and responsibilities.

Main Objections

Waste management

When tenants are nearing the end of their contract/tenancy and are moving out, they will dispose of excess household waste through various methods. These include but are not limited to putting waste out on the street for the council to collect. This is in the hope of getting their deposit back and is made worse when the council does not allow landlords access to municipal waste collection points. Local authorities with many private rented properties need to consider a strategy for collecting excess waste at the end of a tenancy in place of selective licensing.

Suppose such a scheme is not already in place. Would the council consider a free/low-cost service for private landlords to remove numerous bunk items for when tenants vacate the property and not dispose of such waste beforehand?

Antisocial Behaviour

Landlords are usually not experienced in managing antisocial behaviour and do not have the professional capacity to resolve tenants' mental health issues or substance dependency. Suppose there are allegations about a tenant causing problems, and a landlord ends the tenancy. In that case, the landlord will have dispatched their obligations under the selective licensing scheme, even if the tenant suffers from any of the above issues.

At the commencement of a tenancy, the landlord outlines the tenant's obligations concerning noise (and other matters such as waste disposal, compliance with relevant legislation, and consideration for surrounding neighbours). The landlord can manage a tenant only to the extent of their mutually signed and agreed contract for living in the property- not for a tenant's activities beyond this.

Sefton Council has many existing enforcing powers that can rectify the identified problems as part of the council's housing strategy. These include:

- Criminal Behaviour Orders
- Crime Prevention Injunctions
- Interim Management Orders
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders
- Improvement Notices (for homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard)
- Litter Abatement Notices (Section 92 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990)
- Fixed Penalty Notices or Confiscation of equipment (Sections 8 and 10 of the Noise Act 1996)
- Directions regarding the disposal of waste (for example, Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990)
- Notices to remove rubbish from land (Section 2-3 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949)

Conclusions

The NRLA believes local authorities need a healthy private rented sector to complement the other housing in an area. This provides a variety of housing types that can meet the needs of residents and landlords in the area. The sector is regulated, and enforcement is essential for keeping criminals who exploit landlords and tenants. An active enforcement policy that supports good landlords is crucial as it will remove those who exploit others and create a level playing field. It is essential to understand how the sector operates as landlords can often be victims of criminal activity and antisocial behaviour with their properties being exploited.

If the scheme is approved, the council should consider providing an annual summary of outcomes to demonstrate improvements to tenants' and landlords' behaviour and the impact of licensing on the designated area over the scheme's lifetime. This would improve transparency overall. The NRLA has a shared interest with Sefton Council in ensuring a high-quality private rented sector but strongly disagrees that introducing selective and additional licensing is the most effective approach to achieve this aim both in the short term and long term.

Yours Faithfully,

Samantha Watkin, Policy Officer, National Residential Landlords Association

Samantha.Watkin@nrla.org.uk

Appendices

Appendix A: Consultation document

Appendix B: Coverage of consultation

Appendix C: Survey (online version)

Appendix D: Profile breakdown

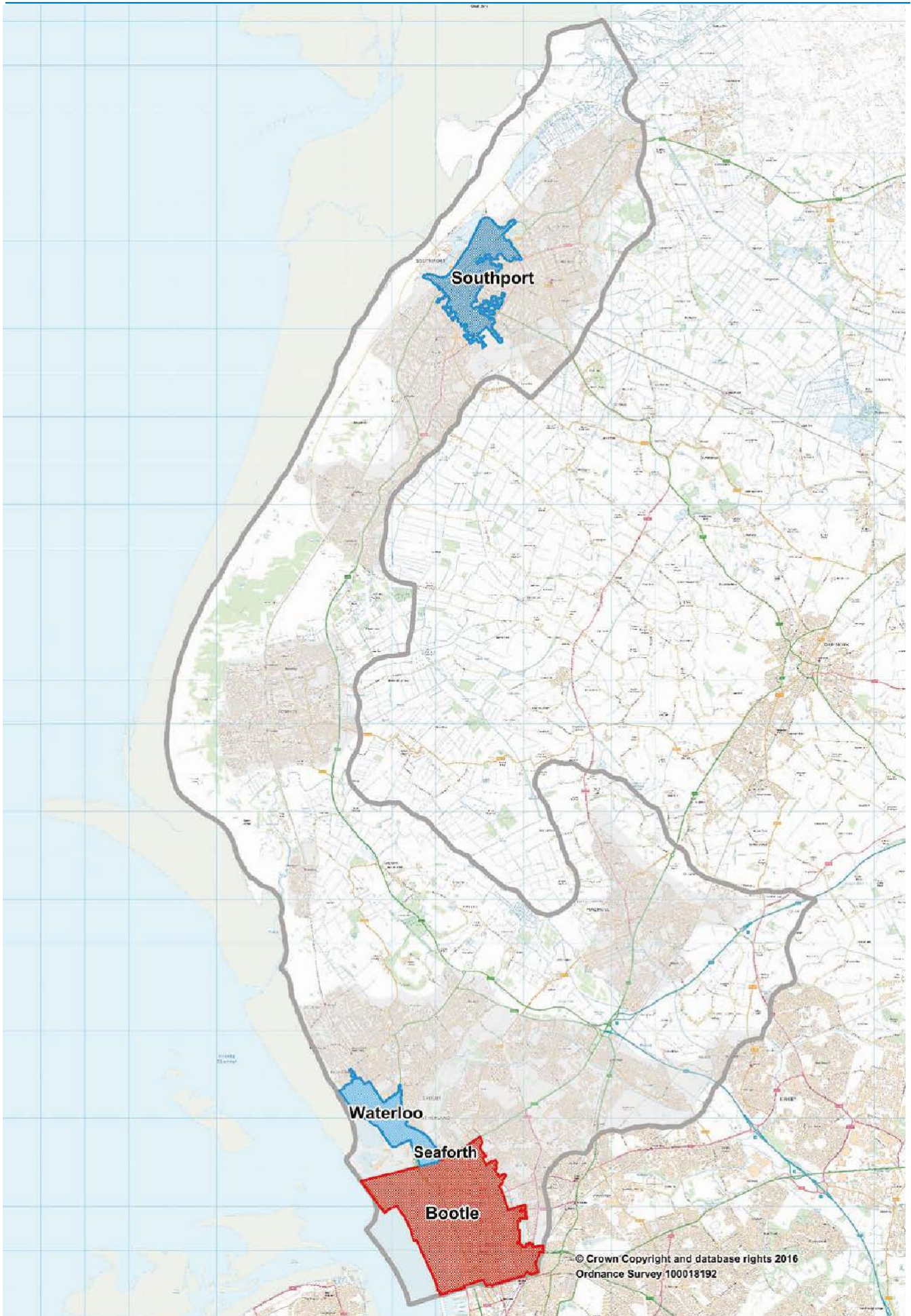
Selective & Additional (HMO) Licensing Proposal for Sefton



Consultation Document

9 May to 31 July 2022





Contents

Introduction	4
Why is Sefton Council seeking to re-designate the 3 licensing areas?.....	5
What are the benefits of licensing.....	6
How licensing fits with Sefton Council’s strategies	6
What has licensing achieved so far?.....	8
Re-designate the Selective Licensing in the Bootle area	8
Re-designate the Additional (HMO) Licensing areas in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-le-Sands/Seaforth & Southport.....	9
How will the schemes be delivered?	10
Licence application and Fees.....	11
Consultation	13
Evaluation and decision making.....	13

The Appendices below will be available on the consultation page on the website at www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-consultation

Appendix 1

Maps and Address List of Proposed Selective Licensing Designated Area

Appendix 2

Draft Selective Licensing Conditions

Appendix 3

Maps and Address List of Proposed Additional (HMO) Licensing Designated Areas

Appendix 4

Draft Additional (HMO) Licensing Conditions

Introduction

Sefton comprises a largely self-contained housing market, however, there is a north-south divide with a higher proportion of owner occupiers outside of Bootle and Netherton, and house prices are generally higher in central and north Sefton than in the south of the Borough. Whilst there is a mix of house types and tenures across Sefton, there is less choice in south Sefton where there are more terraced houses, and more homes owned by housing associations or private landlords.

Bootle located in the South of the borough suffers from a wide range of entrenched problems that arose out of many years of socio-economic change. As one of the most deprived areas in England, Bootle suffers from high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and poor housing conditions.

Central Southport and parts of Waterloo/Seaforth also suffer similar problems, a situation that is not uncommon in other coastal communities. In the north of the borough, Southport was a highly desirable area with a viable economy based on tourism, but longer-term changes in the tourism industry and the recent economic downturn have had a detrimental impact and decline on this traditional seaside resort. Many guest houses and small hotel property owners had to sell up or diversify. That has led to many buildings being converted into flats or Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), particularly bedsits, to maximise rental income. A number of property owners also decided to create small flats in pursuit of the maximum number of rental units.

Changing socio-economic conditions have also created a demand and need for privately rented HMO's, in areas such as Waterloo/Seaforth and Southport, which have a shortage of alternative social rented housing. The economic downturn,

welfare reform, seasonal work, international migration has all helped create a larger cohort of people who have come to rely on private rented sector flats and bedsits. In recent years, the accommodation offer has largely been aimed at the lower end of the market, accommodating many vulnerable households.

The three proposed licensing areas for re-designation are now characterised by high levels of unemployment, benefit dependency, crime and ASB, and health inequalities. While individual private landlords cannot be held responsible for these wider changes, a significant number are contributing to the deprivation and poor health outcomes by providing poorly managed and unsafe homes.

Here we evaluate and highlight the successes relating to the implementation of the current private sector licensing schemes in March 2018. However, we also outline the requirements for the continuation of these schemes; to further improve the housing conditions and management for our residents in the private rented sector and to fully achieve Sefton's strategic housing vision

Why is Sefton Council seeking to re-designate the 3 licensing areas?

To achieve Sefton's vision, it is clear that although great strides have been made through our current schemes, more still needs to be done to improve the housing conditions for our residents in the private rented sector.

The Local Authority considered whether there are any courses of action, other than re-designating Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing, that might achieve the same objectives in the proposed areas such as;

Property Accreditation which continues to be supported by the Local Authority in promoting good property management. The Local Authority will again offer licence fee discounts for members of Sefton's Property Accreditation Scheme as is offered in the current licensing schemes. The majority of properties accredited are within the licensing areas which suggest that many landlords and agents may have only signed up to receive the licence fee discounts and would not have done so otherwise. Sefton have accredited 664 properties, 535 of those have been accredited since the introduction of the Selective and Additional (HMO) licensing schemes and almost all of them have been licensed properties. Despite a considerable uptake in accreditation applications this still only represents 4.2% of the private rented stock in the Borough. Any reliance on voluntary accreditation, as an alternative to Selective/ Additional (HMO) Licensing, is not considered to be a viable alternative to licensing.

Officers again considered introducing a district-wide scheme for Selective licensing, but this was not taken forward because the evidence is not yet sufficient to introduce the whole district and therefore such an application is unlikely to be supported by the Secretary of State (who has

to agree to the implementation of such a big scheme)

The Local Authority has, therefore, concluded that re-designating remains the effective course of action to assist in achieving its objectives. Licensing since 2018 has had a substantial impact on landlord and agent behaviour and has improved their engagement and relationship with Sefton.

Licensing of privately rented properties, albeit generally unpopular with landlords can provide several benefits to them for example as mentioned in the quotes below. There are also benefits to their tenants and the wider community.

Comment from a local Managing Agent:

"The fire hazard in the property was only brought to our attention as a result of the Selective licensing scheme, and with the guidance from the Housing Standards Officer, we were able to remove the serious hazard without delay"

Comment from local landlord:

"I grew up within the local community where I have my rental property and have noticed many changes over the 45 years that I have been in and around the area.

Since the purchase of my rental property I was shocked by the lower standards of living that people were having to put up with and I always said I wouldn't be one of those landlords that monopolise off these unfortunate ways.

The licensing scheme is a very good idea of weeding out any landlords who are not up to standard, it is also a very good way for the local authority to keep a closer eye on hot spots.

This scheme should have started a few years ago in my opinion."

What are the benefits of licensing for landlords?

- Responsible landlords will receive information and support to help tackle antisocial behaviour
- Poor performing landlords will receive support and training to help them improve
- Landlords will be more knowledgeable and legally compliant with tenancy matters
- Improved rental income as areas are maintained and improved
- Increase of property value
- Improvement in the reputation of private landlords
- Shorter void periods
- Landlords who have voluntarily engaged with a recognised accreditation scheme can also benefit from a reduced licensing fee
- Greater ability for the landlord and authority to deal with rogue tenants.

What are the benefits of licensing for tenants?

- More professional landlords providing good quality homes
- Likelihood of improvements to their properties
- Licensing will create a clear set of rules that all landlords must follow
- Reduced risk of homelessness and increased length of stay
- Licensing would ensure private landlords are managing and maintaining their properties
- Minimum standards for rented housing are met leading to improved health outcomes for occupiers.

What are the benefits of licensing for the community?

- Increased housing demand
- Reduce crime and ASB
- An areas image is improved and more desirable to live in
- Improved security and more settled communities
- Reduced number of empty properties
- Better housing
- Reduced environmental problems, such as graffiti, litter and fly-tipping
- Landlords will also have to give and ask for references for their tenants
- Protecting vulnerable people who may currently be living in poorly maintained properties.
- Lower demand on public services such as NHS/Council/emergency services due to improved living environments

How licensing fits with Sefton Council's strategies

Licensing alone cannot guarantee improvements in the designated areas. The Local Authority and its partners recognise that a holistic and joined-up response can achieve beneficial outcomes for the community.

Housing should provide a living environment that is as safe and healthy as possible. Tackling problems of poor housing to protect the health, safety and welfare of the occupants is a significant wider determinant of health. Officers within the Housing Standards team focus primarily on helping tenants living in private rented sector housing, by requiring landlords to carry out necessary repair or improvement works, to remove serious health and safety hazards.

Whilst great improvements have been made in recent years through the Decent Homes programme within the social housing sector, and Housing Market Renewal has sought to redevelop the poorest groups of housing in Bootle together with some improvements to existing housing stock, too much of the borough's existing stock is not fit for purpose, and in its current state risks becoming unsustainable. The Local Plan and Housing Strategy interventions will help provide a further drive to ensure that our existing homes play a full role in raising the quality of place and become part of neighbourhoods where people choose to live, work and invest.

Sefton's Housing Strategy

A key priority of Sefton Council's Housing Strategy (2016-21) is to improve the quality of existing housing stock to benefit households, neighbourhoods and communities. This will remain a key message in the emerging Housing Strategy refresh (currently under development and anticipated to be fully adopted by the Council in April 2022). It is recognised at a borough-wide level; that an up-to-date Housing Strategy is prerequisite for introducing a Selective Licensing scheme within Sefton. As guidance states:

“selective licensing is not a tool that can be used in isolation. The local housing authority will have to show how such a designation will be a part of the overall strategic borough wide approach”.

Empty Homes Plan

Sefton Council remains fully committed to tackling empty homes. Our current Empty Homes Plan ensures that we continue to have a targeted approach to bring long term empty properties back into use. Much of the Local Authority's intervention and effort since 2018 has focused on Bootle and Southport, in conjunction with Selective and Additional licencing schemes, which contain the highest concentrations of empty homes.

The Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing schemes have provided a tool for engaging with empty homeowners and targeting resources across the designated areas.

Homelessness Strategy

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 includes several changes to the way that people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are supported. In the Council's subsequent Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023 Action Plan, there are a number of actions relating to Private Rented Sector offer to increase engagement with the Private Rented Sector.

The Local Authority places greater emphasis on prevention of homelessness. Finding alternative housing in the PRS has become an increasing means of assisting households threatened with homelessness.

Renting from a private landlord has long been the main housing option for single homeless people. Yet with more people finding home ownership unaffordable and social housing unavailable, the private rented sector is increasingly seen as a long-term solution to broader housing needs.

The sector, however, currently presents real challenges for people regarding access, affordability, standards and security. Licensing should help reduce these challenges.

By re-introducing Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing, the Local Authority will have greater confidence that there are adequate safeguards in place to ensure that any homeless applicants are allocated appropriate, safe, affordable, good-standard accommodation in a greater number of PRS properties in the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing areas.

In the social housing sector, there is a shortage of one-bedroom accommodation and

virtually a nil supply of single room (bedsit) accommodation. So many young, single households will become reliant on the PRS and HMOs.

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

It is essential that private landlords take their responsibilities seriously and work with local agencies to ensure that communities do not suffer from persistent ASB from their tenants.

Sefton ASB Mission Statement: Statement of Purpose

This strategy sets out how agencies in Sefton will work together to effectively manage and resolve reports of anti-social behaviour; building upon the excellent partnership work already operating across the Borough and ensuring together we continue efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour and provide every member of the community with the highest possible standard of service. This strategy does not sit in isolation but is intended to run alongside existing anti-social behaviour policies as a framework of activity adopted by agencies in Sefton as an overarching approach to tackling anti-social behaviour

What has licensing achieved so far?

Since the commencement of the licencing schemes in March 2018 to end of August 2021, 288 licensable properties have had serious Category 1 health and safety hazards removed. The total number of hazards removed from all licensable properties is 1113 and 370 of them being the most serious Category 1 hazards. The main hazards that have been removed from the properties are hazards relating to Fire Safety, Electrical Hazards, Damp & Mould, Excess Cold and Falls between Levels.

In the first 3 years of the schemes 570 compliance visits took place. The number of compliance visits undertaken was severely

below target due to the Covid pandemic, that prevented officers from the Housing Standards Team carrying out routine compliance visits in the third/fourth year of the scheme. Of those 570 inspections, 58% of properties were non-compliant on first inspection. However, following informal intervention by the Housing Standards Team, 98% of these properties became compliant. The main reasons for non-compliance were the failure to have a Gas Safe report for the property, failure to have an Electrical Installation Condition Report where required, and failure to have smoke alarms fitted.

To summarise, there is evidence to indicate that the licensing schemes are leading to improvements in housing conditions. Selective and Additional (HMO) licensing and the need to obtain a licence has helped Sefton Council identify high risk properties requiring intervention, often where tenants would not have risked complaining to their landlord. Licensing has further highlighted the large number of landlords who are unaware of the basic legal responsibilities when renting out property. The application process identified just how many properties do not have the minimum requirements such as a Gas Safe Certificate. Without licensing, it is fair to conclude that most of these properties would remain without one, leaving tenants at serious risk.

Re-designate the Selective Licensing in the Bootle area

A Selective Licensing designation may be made if the area to which it relates satisfies one or more of the following conditions. The area is one experiencing:

- low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area)
- a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- poor property conditions
- high levels of migration
- high level of deprivation
- high levels of crime

A designation can only be in force for a maximum of 5 years.

A licence would be valid until the end of the scheme no matter at what point during the scheme it was issued. The Local Authority also has the discretion to grant the licence for a shorter period of time where there are problems with the application such as evidence of insufficient management. Once the licence has been issued the licence holder must comply with the conditions attached to the licence. Where there is a breach of those conditions the licence holder may be prosecuted with a fine of any amount per breach.

When assessing ASB, government guidance says that a Local Authority should consider crime, nuisance neighbours and environmental crime and then assess whether landlords are failing to take appropriate action to help resolve the problem.

The law states that any decision to implement a Selective or Additional (HMO) licensing scheme must be consistent with the Local Authority's housing strategy and must be part of a coordinated approach for dealing with homelessness, empty homes and ASB. The Local Authority must be satisfied that there are no other courses of action that might provide an effective remedy and that the introduction of a licensing scheme will significantly assist in dealing with the problem. So, there is a lot of evidence that Sefton analysed before it introduced its current scheme.

A Local Authority can implement a Selective Licensing scheme provided it meets all the

requirements in the Housing Act 2004 and they have consulted with everyone affected by the designation for a minimum of 10 weeks.

When assessing the geographic breakdown of the Housing Standards service requests with regards to poor property conditions and disrepair since the start of the current housing licensing schemes, the hotspot highlight that the current Selective and Additional (HMO) licensing areas remain the main areas of housing disrepair and poor conditions. Therefore, the renewal of the licensing schemes in March 2023 should persist with broadly the same neighbourhood boundaries and streets, to help continue to improve the quality of the private sector properties in these focused areas.

Re-designate the Additional (HMO) Licensing areas in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-le-Sands/Seaforth & Southport

An Additional (HMO) Licensing designation may be made "if a Local Authority considers that a significant proportion of HMOs are being managed insufficiently enough to give rise to one or more particular problems either for those occupying the property or for members of the public."

Evidence of poor management practices can be evidenced through issues that arise within the property such as poor conditions or within the local community including ASB and crime. Over the 3.5-year period 189 service requests were received from HMO properties. 153 of those within the licensing areas equating to 81%.

Therefore, this provides evidence of poor property management across this sector and specifically within the proposed re-designated areas.

Parts of Waterloo/Seaforth and central Southport have high levels of deprivation, being within the worst 10% most deprived areas nationally. Both areas also have above the national average of

flats/maisonettes within the PRS and have a significant stock of larger style properties that in recent years have been prone to conversion, to either bedsits or self-contained flats. Hence there is a strong correlation between these issues and the location of the PRS.

The number of service requests received by the Council regarding poor property conditions within Southport and Waterloo/Seaforth are just over twice the rate of the Sefton average. This highlights both areas as having poorer housing conditions, therefore, poor management practice.

Overall, Additional (HMO) Licensing can provide additional powers to help the Local Authority tackle poorly managed privately rented property. An estimated 33% of the private rented sector HMO accommodation across Sefton is in Waterloo/Seaforth and central Southport. Re-designating the Additional (HMO) Licensing areas will continue to build upon improvements to the management standards in this sector, improve living conditions and ultimately lead to a better quality of life for residents. It will help the areas to be more conducive to good landlords but provide an environment that is less opportunistic and attractive for poor and rogue landlords.

How will the schemes be delivered?

The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing schemes continue to contribute to improvements in housing conditions across the private rented sector. All licensable properties should receive a compliance inspection over the period of the licence. The Local Authority will provide advice and support to landlords to help to bring property conditions up to the required standards along with ensuring that the landlord's statutory responsibilities are also met.

The administration of the licensing application process, including the undertaking of inspections

and the provision of general advice and support to landlords will continue to be undertaken by Licensing Compliance Officers. Specialist support services will also be provided in relation to supporting landlords to deal with ASB. The income received from the fees shall be used to cover the additional costs incurred by the Local Authority in employing these staff with associated costs.

The Housing Standards Team will focus resources proactively with the key aim to improve the physical appearance of neighbourhoods and the quality of housing across the designations, particular focus will be on ensuring that the management of properties meet required standards and where necessary landlords or agents are educated appropriately to improve their management processes ensuring any issues are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Landlords will need to abide by a set of conditions as part of their licence. These conditions shall be finalised following feedback from the consultation process.

Licensing has enabled the Council to take a proactive approach to improve the living conditions and environment for tenants, some of which are the most vulnerable. Considerable progress has already been made with landlord engagement and the proposed re-designations should continue to build on this relationship. This will enable the Council to focus resources on housing related enforcement activity within the designated areas, whereby landlords either fail to licence their properties or fail to comply with licence conditions. It is also likely that issues regarding poor housing conditions or ASB across other areas of the Borough may be brought to the attention of the Local Authority as a result of the increased awareness generally brought about by licensing.

Licence application and Fees

In setting licence fees, the Local Authority must follow certain principles. In particular, the fee must not exceed the actual and direct costs of processing an application, monitoring compliance, and enforcing the scheme. The fee structure is also required to be reasonable and proportionate.

The licence fee, is therefore, set to cover the administration and associated

costs of the licence. A review of fees will be undertaken annually and will be adjusted to reflect changes in costs.

A licence would normally be granted for a period of the scheme and no further fees would be payable during the life of the licence. However, licences are non-transferrable in accordance with sections 68 (6) & 91(6) of the Housing Act 2004. A change of licence holder will, therefore, require a new application fee.

Selective Licensing	£	Annual Equiv. £	Weekly Equiv. £
Full Fee	695	139	2.67
Accreditation	545	109	2.10
Accredited Managing Agents	495	99	1.90

In addition to the above fee:

For each additional unit (under the same ownership, within the same building) a charge of £30 per additional unit will apply.

Although the costs of running the Selective licensing scheme have increased, for example higher staffing costs in line with cost of living and additional staffing numbers. Sefton now has more data on the private-rented sector within the Borough, particularly within the Selective (and Additional) licensing areas. The original scheme implemented in 2018 had fees estimated on 2800 Selective licences being issued, however,

this figure was exceeded and the additional number received has been factored into the above and allows the proposed fees, therefore, to remain the same for Selective licences.

Furthermore, feedback from landlords throughout the duration of the current scheme was that they felt it was unfair for larger portfolio landlords to benefit as they only needed to pay one licence fee when they owned multiple flats within the same building. So, although they were receiving higher rental income in relation to another landlord owning only one property in the same building, they paid the same fee. Sefton, therefore, has proposed that in these instances an extra charge will be applicable at the rate of £30 per additional unit within the same building. This unit charge is proposed to be included across all housing licensing schemes.

Additional (HMO) Licensing fees for HMOs are proposed to be similar to those charged for mandatory HMO licences under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004.

Within the proposals for the re-designation of the Additional (HMO) licencing schemes, the fees have been increased from current levels. The reasoning for this, is that in the current Additional (HMO) Licensing Scheme, it has become apparent that the licensing of HMOs consisting entirely of self-contained flats (so called ‘Section 257’ HMOs) is extremely time consuming due to the multi layered ownership arrangements and conflicts between freeholders who often cannot agree who would apply and pay for the licence. There were also several HMOs where the type and status of occupiers varied due to sales of flats. The definition of a section 257 HMO requires that for a building to be an HMO, more than a third of the flats within it must be occupied by persons other than leaseholders. Thus, a building comprising of three flats could cease to be an HMO because of just one of the flats becoming owner occupied. It also makes it difficult for

freeholders to identify whether their property is licensable as they may not know whether an individual leaseholder is in residence or has sub-let the flat.

Additional (HMO) Licensing	£	Annual Equiv.	Weekly Equiv.
Full Fee	950	190	3.65
Accreditation	800	160	3.08
Accredited Managing Agents	750	150	2.88

In addition to the above fee:

For each additional unit (under the control of the same proposed licence holder, within the same building) a charge of £30 per additional unit will apply.

Discounts

The following discounts have been factored into the proposed fee calculations which will be confirmed following consultation feedback.

For the purposes of Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing, an accredited landlord is a landlord who is accredited with the Sefton Property Accreditation Scheme. A landlord who is accredited with the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) will also benefit from a discount. The ability to apply for an accreditation discount will be available for 6 months after the commencement of the scheme only OR 6 months from date of completion for newly purchased properties until 28 February 2027. It is intended, subject to Council agreement, to offer a reduced and proportionate rate for landlords where the date of completion of a newly purchased property is between 1 March 2027 and 28 February 2028.

There is also a discount for managing agents who are part of our Managing Agent Accreditation Scheme and then only if they are the proposed

licence holder. Managing Agent accreditation is only available to agents who manage properties for other landlords and a full assessment of managing practices will be made by Housing Standards Officers to achieve accredited status. Further information on managing agent accreditation is available on our website.

Refund policy

We will give a refund for a property licence only if an application was made by mistake. Situations considered to be a mistake are if:

- the property is outside the designated area
- a duplicate application has been made
- an application was made for an exempted property.

How have fees been calculated?

The introduction of any housing licensing scheme needs to operate on a cost neutral basis to the Council. Sefton has calculated its fees, based on the anticipated running costs of the schemes.

The licence fee covers a five-year period. The fee is to pay for staff to administer and enforce the scheme, with additional funded legal support and resources. This amounts to £2,268,587

An estimate of the projected costs of administering the schemes together with the corresponding fee income is shown in the following table. The income has been based on an assumed number of licensable properties being 3465, an estimated percentage rate has also been applied to take account of discounts. The projected income has been calculated at £2,268,585

Any shortfall will be met by the Council. However, the Council has identified large numbers of privately rented properties during its current schemes and we expect these numbers will continue to increase. Additionally, based on evidence from our current schemes we expect to issue increasing numbers of penalty notices on non-compliant landlords especially following the lifting of Covid restrictions. We, therefore, expect to meet any shortfall within the fee structure.

Estimated total for 5 years

Expenditure	Costs (£)
Staffing costs	2,112,438
Legal	49,948
Support & Resources	106,200
Total Income	2,268,585
Total Expenses	2,268,587
Overall Total (deficit)	2

Evaluation and decision making

Following the closure of the consultation period the responses will be evaluated and published on the Sefton Council’s website. The responses will be considered and will inform officer recommendations to Cabinet Members before making a final decision as to whether to proceed with Selective and/or Additional (HMO) Licensing.

If the Council’s Cabinet agree the proposed re-designations for the purpose of Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing, we expect the Selective Licensing and Additional (HMO) Licensing designations would become operative on 1 March 2023, with both schemes lasting for a period of five years. If Cabinet decide not to designate the area, Sefton could continue solely with a reactive enforcement regime, linked with the more assertive promotion of Accreditation.

Consultation

The Housing Act 2004 requires that before making a designation, the Council is required to undertake a formal consultation process on the proposed implementation of any licensing designations and take reasonable steps to consult with persons likely to be affected. This includes local residents, tenants, landlords, managing agents and other members of the community who live or operate businesses or provide services within the proposed designation and neighbouring areas that may be affected.

Our engagement and consultation process will last for a period of 12 weeks, which commences on 9 May 2022. To provide an impartial consultation, M·E·L Research, an independent research agency, are undertaking the consultation process.



Appendix B: Coverage of consultation

Consultation activities

Pre-consultation activity:

Cabinet approval to present Business Case and receive approval to consult

2 Dec 2021

Press Releases:

Pre consultation 25 March 2022

Start of consultation 9 May 2022

During 17 May 2022

During 24 May 2022

Reminder near end 19 July 2022

Promotion of consultation includes news articles on:

Sefton website

My Sefton

M·E·L Research webpage

All Sefton social media (see statistics below)

Staff intranet

Article on the NRLA website

All HST officers including link to consultation on email signature.

Social media:

Facebook			
Month	Engagement Rate	Reach	Reactions
May			
16	8.87%	9486	6
25	3.35%	4541	3
June			
11	8.62%	58	3
20	2.29%	350	3
27	0.69%	723	2
July			
4	30.77%	26	3
12	7.59%	1977	1
17	2.44%	41	0
29	4.05%	74	0
Total	7.63%	17,276	21

Twitter			
Month	Engagement Rate	Engagements	Impressions
May			
16	1.49%	20	1345
25	1.80%	13	724
June			
11	0.90%	6	668
20	1.08%	10	927
27	3.31%	65	1961
July			
4	2.63%	33	1256
12	2.69%	22	819
17	5.45%	63	972
29	6.66%	44	661
Total	2.89%	276	9,333

LinkedIn				
Month	Engagement Rate	Reactions	Shares	
May				
16	3.01%	4	1	
June				
11	7.53%	15	1	
20	1.40%	2	0	
27	0.43%	0	0	
July				
4	2.68%	5	0	
12	2.59%	1	0	
17	3.22%	0	0	
29	1.18%	1	0	
Total	2.76%	28	2	

Leaflet published and distributed:

64,000 leaflets distributed by Royal Mail across licensing and its neighbouring areas to all residential and commercial properties.

Housing Standards officers provided information to tenants, landlords and agents when dealing with disrepair complaints or undertaking compliance visits.

Emails promoting consultation with links sent to:

Elected members

Landlords/Agents/others – who expressed interest in being kept updated

Officers of HST added ‘signature’ to all emails

All neighbouring Local Authorities

All landlords/agents/accredited landlords who we hold email addresses for

All current licence holders and managing agents

Other stakeholders including police, fire and rescue, housing associations, landlord associations/groups, CVS organisations public health and other local organisations.

Consultation methods:

Online survey to residents, tenants and landlords

Residents survey (face to face survey of 545 residents across Sefton)

Focus groups amongst residents, tenants and landlords

Written responses from stakeholders to the consultation

Stakeholder consultation – 3 completed/returned

Meetings and events held/attended

M·E·L Meetings with landlords/residents/tenants etc:

4th July 2022 (Online focus group – 7 attendees)

5th July 2022 - morning (Online focus group – 5 attendees)

5th July 2022 – afternoon (Online focus group – 5 attendees)

Appendix C: Online survey

22041 - SEFTON PRS CONSULTATION 2022

Private Rented Sector Licensing Consultation in Sefton

We want to hear your views about proposed licensing schemes to improve private rented sector housing in Sefton.

As a thank you for participating, you will be entered into a prize draw to win one of three prizes of high street gift vouchers. The 1st prize is £100 in vouchers, 2nd prize of £50 in vouchers and a 3rd prize of £25 in vouchers.

Before making a decision, the Council wants to hear your views about the proposal and any alternatives we could consider. The Council would specifically like to hear from private tenants, landlords, letting and managing agents, residents and businesses or organisations operating in Sefton and surrounding areas.

You can see full details, including supporting documents, at www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-consultation.

If you have any questions, then please email seftonprs@melresearch.co.uk or call freephone 0800 0730 348

This should take no more than 10 minutes. The closing date for the consultation is 23:59 on 31 July 2022.

The consultation is being run by M·E·L Research, an independent research company. Information you provide will only be used for research purposes and you will not be personally identifiable in any reports, however organisations may be identifiable. M·E·L Research work to the Market Research Society code of conduct.

We will hold all information securely and strictly in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Please visit the following to read our privacy notices: <https://melresearch.co.uk/privacypolicy>.

To begin the survey please click "Next"

Background

Sefton Council is committed to making the Borough a safe and attractive place to live in. As part of its Sefton 2030 vision there is a significant ambition to improve and attract investment to improve Sefton's prosperity. This includes ensuring Sefton residents have access to good-quality housing choices. Housing Licensing will play an important part in achieving this, by improving conditions within the private rented sector, which has previously had less regulation.

Since 2001, Sefton has seen a significant increase in the size of the private rented sector. This increase is Borough-wide, but particularly high in the areas being considered for the redesignation of the housing licensing schemes.

Sefton Council is proposing to continue with its Selective and Additional licensing schemes for privately rented properties across selected areas of the Borough. It feels that although improvements are showing across property conditions, crime and anti-social behaviour, there is still more to do, particularly around the management of privately rented properties and to improve the living conditions of its residents. Therefore, the Council feels that re-designating both the Selective and the Additional (HMO) licensing schemes for another five years will enable further improvements to be made.

Consultation on the proposal

The Council is consulting on two proposals (full details of the matters being considered and the evidence behind the proposals are detailed in a consultation document which can be found here: www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-consultation. The proposals are:

Re-designate the Bootle area for Selective Licensing

The current Selective Licensing scheme in this area has made significant impact to improve the living conditions for the residents but there is more to achieve. Landlords of all privately rented properties in the Bootle area would need to apply for a licence from the Council. They will need to meet minimum management and property standards and these will help protect landlords, tenants and residents.

Re-designate the Additional (HMO) licensing scheme in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands/Seaforth and central Southport

This is where landlords of any house in multiple occupation (HMO) in these specific areas would need to apply for a licence from the Council. This would help the Council ensure the properties are managed properly.

Please give us your views.

Q1 - Which of the following best describes you?

Which of the following best describes you?

Please select all that apply

- Sefton resident
- Private landlord
- Letting agent
- Managing agent
- Private tenant in Sefton
- Work in Sefton
- Business in Sefton
- Other (please specify) _____

Q2 - What is your full postcode

What is your full postcode?

This information will not be used to identify you. The information will only be used to help the Council to understand if there are differing views from respondents in different areas.

Please type in

Q3 - What is the name of the business/organisation you are responding on behalf of?

What is the name of the business/organisation you are responding on behalf of?

Please type in

SchemeProposals

Local authorities can choose to require private landlords or their agents to obtain a licence so that they can rent out their properties. This gives the Council the ability to offer support to landlords as well as identifying who and where landlords are, and powers to improve management and property standards. This can be done via 'selective' or 'additional (HMO)' licensing.

The Council is committed to improving the private rented sector and believes that by redesignating its licensing schemes would lead to an improvement of management and property conditions across the designated areas and aims to:

Improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector, and make them more attractive to tenants

Reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) Improve the image of Sefton and make areas more desirable to live in Increase property values Ensure shorter void (empty) periods Provide support to landlords to help tackle ASB Protect vulnerable people who may currently be living in poorly maintained properties The Council is therefore considering the following proposals.

Q4 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designation a selective licensing scheme in Bootle?

Re-designate a selective licensing scheme for private rented properties in the Bootle area This requires all private sector landlords renting a property in the area to have a licence and meet the necessary criteria in order to hold a licence.

This would allow the Council to take action where there is non-compliance with licence conditions. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designation a selective licensing scheme in Bootle?

Please select one option only

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not sure

Q5 - What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a selective licensing scheme would have on you if it were introduced?

What impact, if any, do you feel implementing a selective licensing scheme would have on you if it were introduced?

Please select one option only

- A positive impact
- No impact
- A negative impact
- Don't know / Not sure

Q6 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designate an additional (HMO) licensing scheme?

Re-designate the additional licensing scheme for HMO properties in parts of Waterloo, Brighton-Le-Sands / Seaforth and central Southport This requires all private sector landlords to hold a licence for each house in multiple occupation (HMO) and they would have to meet the necessary criteria in order to hold a licence.

This would provide safe homes for tenants to live in and allow the Council to take action where there is non-compliance with licence conditions.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designate an additional (HMO) licensing scheme?

Please select one option only

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not sure

Q7 - What impact, if any, do you feel the additional (HMO) licensing schemes would have on you if they were introduced?

What impact, if any, do you feel the additional (HMO) licensing schemes would have on you if they were introduced?

Please select one option only

- A positive impact
- No impact
- A negative impact
- Don't know / Not sure

Q8 - Are there any other areas in Sefton that you feel would benefit from an additional (HMO) licensing scheme?

Are there any other areas in Sefton that you feel would benefit from an additional (HMO) licensing scheme?

Please type in

Q9 - Are there any other comments you would like to add about either of the proposed schemes?

Are there any other comments you would like to add about either of the proposed schemes?

Please type in

Q10 - To what extent do you agree if disagree with the proposed fee for Selective Licensing?

If licensing is re-introduced, in order to cover the Council's costs of administering the schemes the Council would need to charge landlords a fee to apply for a licence that would last up to five years. If licensing is re-designated, it becomes a mandatory requirement within the Borough. As the licence fee would then be a mandatory cost to landlords it will be subject to relevant tax relief, which will further lower the actual cost to landlords (and any cost which landlords might pass on to tenants).

1. Selective licensing fee

The proposed fee for selective licensing is £695 to cover up to five years. This equates to £139 per year or £2.67 per week. It is also proposed that for each additional unit (under the same ownership, within the same building) a charge of £30 per additional unit will apply. Details can be found here at www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-consultation. This is based on an estimate that there are around 3,200 properties that may fall under this scheme. A reduction in the fee of £150 is proposed to be given for those who are accredited with the Sefton Property Accreditation Scheme or the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA). There is also a discount of £200 for managing agents who are part of

Sefton's Managing Agent Accreditation Scheme and then only if they are the proposed licence holder.

To what extent do you agree if disagree with the proposed fee for Selective Licensing?

Please select one option only

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not sure

Q11 - To what extent do you agree if disagree with the proposed fee for Additional (HMO) Licensing?

2. Additional (HMO) licensing fee

The proposed fee for additional licensing is £950 to cover up to five years. The costs for processing an additional licence are higher because the properties are large and can have more complex ownership arrangements this increases the time required to process an application so the licence fee reflects the level of resources required for the running of the scheme. This equates to £190 per year or £3.65 per week with additional unit costs for larger properties. It is also proposed that for each additional unit (under the control of the same proposed licence holder, within the same building) a charge of £30 per additional unit will apply. Details can be found in www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-consultation. This is based on around 240 properties that fall under this type of scheme. A reduction in the fee of £150 is proposed to be given for those who are accredited with either Sefton's Property Accreditation Scheme or the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA). There is also a discount of £200 for managing agents who are part of Sefton's Managing Agent Accreditation Scheme and then only if they are the proposed licence holder.

To what extent do you agree if disagree with the proposed fee for Additional (HMO) Licensing?

Please select one option only

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not sure

Q12 - If you have any comments about the licensing fees, please provide them below.

If you have any comments about the licensing fees, please provide them below.

Please type in

Q13 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Selective Licensing conditions?

There are mandatory licence conditions that must be applied to Additional and Selective licences. The Council can also apply other conditions to deal with the management, use and occupation of the property. The proposed licensing conditions would seek to prevent overcrowding, poor property

conditions and help tackle deprivation and anti-social behaviour.

A copy of the proposed conditions can be found at: www.sefton.gov.uk/licensing-consultation.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Selective Licensing conditions?

Please select one option only

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not sure

Q14 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Additional Licensing conditions?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Additional Licensing conditions?

Please select one option only

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know / Not sure

Q15 - If you have any comments about the proposed licence conditions, please provide them below.

If you have any comments about the proposed licence conditions, please provide them below.

Please type in

Q16 - Do you have any further comments about the Licensing proposals?

Do you have any further comments about the licensing proposals? Please include any suggestions for alternative ways of dealing with problems in the areas or any ideas for improving the proposed schemes.

Please type in

Q17 - Would you be interested in attending one of our online focus group discussions?

Would you be interested in attending one of our online focus group discussions?

Please select one option only

- Yes, I would be interested
- No

Q17_Email - Please provide your email address below.

Please provide your email address below.

Please type in

Q18 - If the Council decides to go ahead with the proposed licensing schemes, would you like them to contact you with details of the scheme?

If the Council decides to go ahead with the proposed licensing schemes, would you like them to contact you with details of the scheme? If so, we will share just your contact details with Sefton Council, not your response to this survey.

Please select one option only

- Yes, I would be interested
- No

Q18_Email - Please provide your email address below.

Please provide your email address below.

Please type in

Q19 - Finally, would you like to be included in the free prize draw?

Finally, would you like to be included in the free prize draw? Please tick the relevant option below.

Please select one option only

- Yes, please include me in the prize draw.
- Yes, please include me but give my prize to a local charity.
- No

Q19_Email - Please provide your email address below.

Please provide your email address below.

Please type in

Q20 - Do you consent for your personal information to be processed in this way, for this survey only?

This last section asks you some optional questions about yourself so we can fully understand different people's views and experiences. You can complete as much or as little as you wish. This is being collected to help the Council in meeting its public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. All information that you provide is used only for the purpose of this survey and is not shared with any party, including Sefton Council.

Do you consent for your personal information to be processed in this way, for this survey only?

Please select one option only

- Yes
- No

Q21 - How old are you?

How old are you?

Please select one option only

- 18 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 59
- 60 - 69
- 60 or over
- Prefer not to say

Q22 - Are you...?

Are you...?

Please select one option only

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q23 - Do you consider yourself to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment?

Section 7 (1) of the Equality Act states that: 'A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.'

(Please note that 'process' does not mean only a medical process)

Regarding the above statement, do you consider yourself to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment?

Please select one option only

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q24 - Do you currently identify with your birth sex?

Do you currently identify with your birth sex?

Please select one option only

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q25 - Are you...?

Are you...?

Please select one option only

- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Define differently (please type in) _____
- Prefer not to say

Q26 - How would you describe your sexual orientation?

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Please select one option only

- Heterosexual / straight
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Define differently (please type in) _____
- Prefer not to say

Q27 - Do you have any of the following?

Disability: Do you have any of the following?

Please select all that apply

- No, none of these
- Physical impairment
- Learning difficulty
- Learning disability
- Autism / Asperger's
- Mental health condition

- Visual impairment / blind
- Hearing impairment / deaf
- Long-term illness that affects your daily life
- Dementia
- Prefer not to say

Q28 - Do you consider yourself to be 'disabled'?

If you have ticked any of the boxes above, or you have cancer, diabetes or HIV this would be classed as 'disability' under the legislation, do you consider yourself to be 'disabled'?

Please select one option only

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q29 - What is your religion/belief?

What is your religion/belief?

Please select one option only

- No religion/belief
- Christian
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Sikh
- Other religion/belief (please specify) _____
- Prefer not to say

Q30 - Do you identify as...?

Race/ethnicity (please note that Sikh and Jewish are collected in the Religion/Belief question previously) – do you identify as:

Please select one option only

- White
- English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Latvian
- Any other White background (please specify) _____

- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
- White and Black Caribbean
- White & Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background (please specify) _____

- Asian/Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background (please specify) _____

- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (please specify) _____

- Another ethnic group
- Arab
- Any other ethnic background (please specify) _____

- Prefer not to say

Thank you for your time.

Please click on the "Submit" button below to submit your survey.

If you would like more information about who we are and how we use the information provided please see our privacy policy at: <https://melresearch.co.uk/privacypolicy>. This includes information on your privacy rights, including the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

Appendix D: Profile information

Profile information of those completing the survey

Please note that 227 respondents did not give a response to the profile information questions so have been excluded from the tables below.

Age (537 responses)

	Number	%
18 to 29	59	11%
30 to 39	94	18%
40 to 49	71	13%
50 to 59	111	21%
60 to 69	108	20%
60 or over	92	17%
Prefer not to say	2	0%

Gender (537 responses)

	Number	%
Male	270	50%
Female	264	49%
Prefer not to say	3	1%

Do you consider yourself to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment? (537 responses)

	Number	%
Yes	31	6%
No	478	89%
Prefer not to say	28	5%

Do you currently identify with your birth sex? (31 responses)

	Number	%
Yes	30	97%
No	1	3%

Sexual orientation (537 responses)

	Number	%
Heterosexual / straight	488	91%
Gay	5	1%
Bisexual	4	1%
Prefer not to say	40	7%

Do you have any of the following (537 responses)

	Number	%
No, none of these	428	80%
Physical impairment	39	7%
Learning difficulty	2	0%
Autism / Asperger's	3	1%
Mental health condition	22	4%
Visual impairment / blind	3	1%
Hearing impairment / deaf	6	1%
Long-term illness that affects your daily life	22	4%
Dementia	1	0%
Prefer not to say	31	6%
Summary: Any	78	15%

Disability (537 responses)

	Number	%
Yes	69	13%
No	442	82%
Prefer not to say	26	5%

Religion (537 responses)

	Number	%
No religion/belief	176	33%
Christian	315	59%
Hindu	5	1%
Jewish	2	0%
Other religion/belief	4	1%
Prefer not to say	35	7%

Ethnicity (537 responses)

	Number	%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	467	87%
Irish	9	2%
Polish	8	1%
Any other White background	12	2%
White and Asian	4	1%
Indian	8	1%
Chinese	2	0%
Any other Asian background	2	0%
African	6	1%
Any other ethnic background	4	1%
Prefer not to say	15	3%



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