

**Landlord Briefing – Burnley Wood with Healey Wood and the Leyland Road
Area Consultation**

September 2021

Introduction

The council is proposing to designate parts of Burnley Wood with Healey Wood, and the Leyland Road area. Selective licensing has been operating in these two areas since November 2016. The schemes come to an end in November 2021. The council has reviewed the progress of both schemes, and believes that whilst both areas have seen improvements, there is still sufficient evidence to show that both areas would benefit from further designations, due to low demand for housing. The proposed designation boundaries have however changed.

During a consultation period the council would usually hold a landlord evening, however due to the ongoing Covid Pandemic it was decided that this could pose a higher risk of transmission. Subsequently the council have contacted all known persons who would likely be affected by the scheme, asking for their comments on the proposals. Questionnaires have been sent to those houses within and near to the proposed boundaries, and we have emailed or written to all known landlords and agents operating in the affected areas. Stakeholders can complete and return a paper questionnaire or complete a survey by following the link in their email/letter.

We held drop-in sessions on:

- 7th September – BW St Stephen's Church – 2pm-6pm
- 8th September – LR Burnley Cricket Club – 2pm-6:30pm
- 6th September – HW Rosehill Baptist Church 2pm-6:30pm

There are further drop-in sessions arranged for:

- 18th October – HW Rosehill Baptist Church – 2pm-6:30pm
- 19th October – BW St Stephens Church – 2pm-6:30pm
- 20th October – LR Burnley Council for Voluntary Services – 2pm-6pm.

This briefing paper is additional information for landlords.

Why Selective Licensing?

The overall goal as part of the wider housing and economic development programme is to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions within the designation areas.

To help create a better housing market and protect the most vulnerable by setting standards for property management.



To ensure all landlords are operating to the same management standards, where the irresponsible or criminal landlords can't undercut those responsible landlords.

To support landlords through the many different requirements and responsibilities within the private rented sector.

Supporting "Good Landlords"

Many landlords feel that they are being penalised and having to pay for those irresponsible or criminal landlords. The legislation does not allow the council to operate per landlord, it is area specific. However, to support those "good" landlords we offer a wide range of support including accreditation known as the Good Landlord and Agent Scheme (GLAS). For joining this scheme there are certain benefits such as a 30% reduction on the selective licensing fees and access to the empty homes loans.



Empty Homes Loans

If you are an accredited landlord you can apply for an interest free loan up to £20,000 to bring an empty home back into use if it is located in one of the Borough's selective licensing areas.

We offer an extra incentive for owners by awarding a 100% local discount for up to six months, once renovation works have been completed on former uninhabitable or long-term empty properties (vacant 12 months or more), and the works have brought the property up to the Gold Accreditation Standard.

One landlord stated:

"I'm indebted to Burnley Borough Council for running its Empty Home Loan Scheme which I have been extremely grateful to be able to participate in. It's allowed a small and struggling landlord like myself to get one of my properties up and running again at a difficult time for me financially. The Scheme was very easy to set up, with a minimum of documents to fill in and lots of help from the Council officers, and the payment to my contractors once the work was completed was really prompt – a first class service!"

Development Days

Since 2014 the Council has held landlord development days for accredited landlords and landlords operating in the selective licensing areas. To date 352 landlords have attended. We offer training specifically for Managing Agents and training on how to address anti- social behaviour. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the Council had to find an alternative solution to delivering these sessions; the training has continued to be successfully delivered on-line via Microsoft Teams' meetings with 24 landlords receiving their training online to date.

The training is currently delivered by the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) and covers all aspects of property letting.

Private Rented Sector Forum and Landlord Evenings

The Council operates a Private Rented Sector Forum which was established in June 2004. The Forum represents landlords, tenants, local communities, and other voluntary and statutory agencies operating in the private rented sector and aims to improve standards across the sector by promoting best practice and raising the profile of responsible renting.

Landlord Evenings are organised through the Forum and are open to all landlords. Through these events the Forum seeks to update landlords on current issues in the private rented sector, improve relationships and strengthen partnership working and share good practice and experiences.



Although the Forum has been suspended during the Covid 19 Pandemic, advice and information has continued to landlords through emails and newsletters. The Forum is restarting in October 2021.

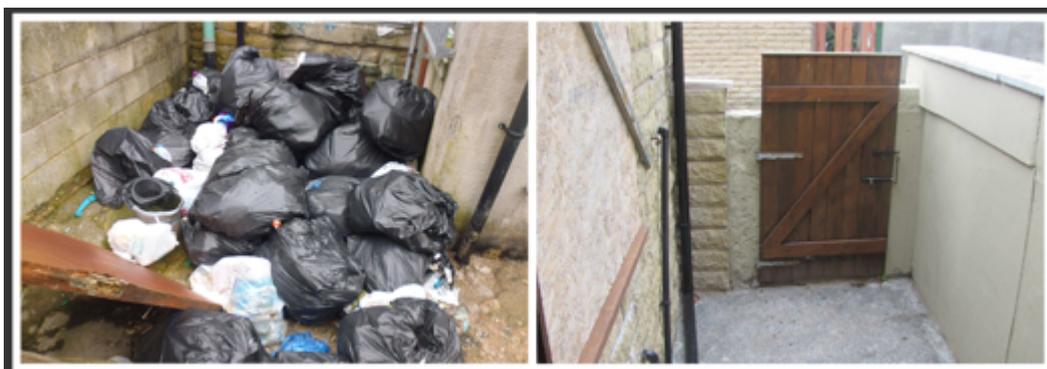
Case study

A landlord acquired a property at auction without inspecting the property with a sitting tenant. At the first visit to the property the landlord was faced with a house that was in serious disrepair and had a tenant that required intensive support. The selective licensing team alongside partner agencies worked with the tenant to find her more suitable accommodation with a package of care to assist her in the new tenancy. As the tenant surrendered the tenancy the landlord was able to access the property and undertake the necessary refurbishment and re-let the property

What has been achieved in the current designations?

As detailed, the overall goal for the selective licensing areas as part of the wider housing and economic development programme is to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions within the designation areas.

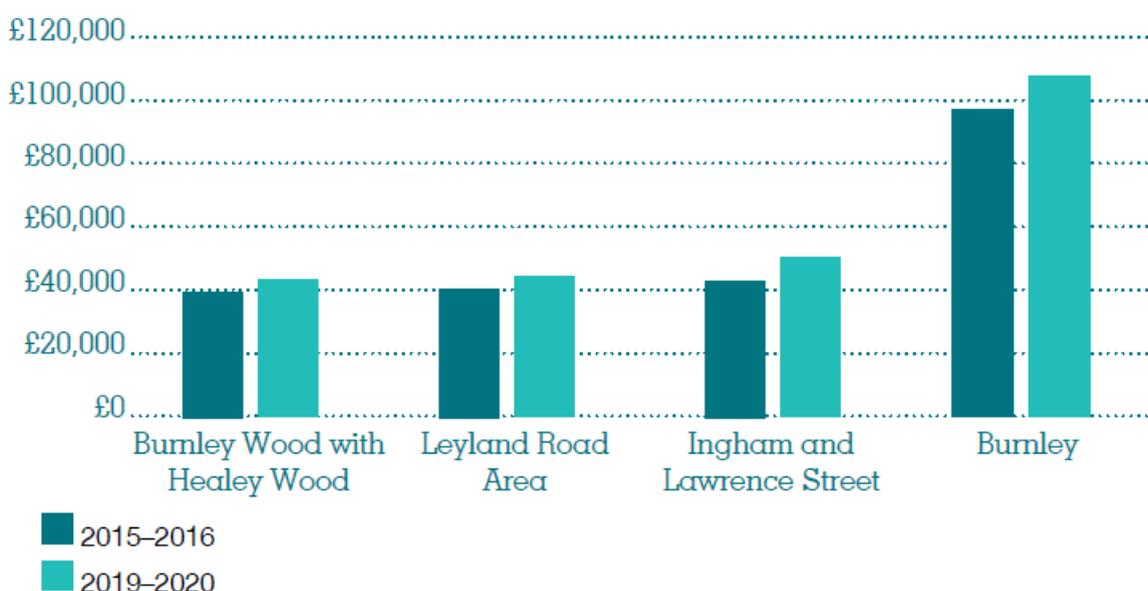
The council subsequently monitors conditions within the areas, including the levels of private rented properties, anti-social behavior, dirty backyards, empty properties, disrepair complaints, house prices and levels of compliance within the schemes. Detailed information can be found in the Interim Report which is available on Council's website. In summary:



The number of private rented properties in Burnley have continued to increase as they have nationally, they are however still higher than the average for the UK, whilst numbers of owner occupiers is significantly lower. With levels of private renting so high, it is more important than ever to ensure that the sector is offering safe and well managed homes.

Overall, since the start of the designation areas, empty homes, dirty backyards and cases of anti-social behaviour have decreased. House prices have increased, going up by around 10% across Burnley, which was reflected in the Leyland Road area. In Burnley Wood with Healey Wood they rose by 12%, and in the Ingham and Lawrence Street area by 23%. This shows increasing levels of confidence in the property market within the licensing areas.

Property Values



The selective licensing team is working hard to process all applications received and thanks those landlords that have made prompt applications. There are, however, some landlords who fail to apply for a licence or breach the licence conditions. In such cases serious action is taken against these landlords by serving civil penalty notices or taking prosecution action.

The most recent of the breaches determined at the Tribunal was in relation to the Licence Holder failing to inform the licensing team within 10 days of any changes in circumstances which would affect the management of the property, in this case a serious conviction in respect of an offence involving schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003. In the majority of cases the Council will work with landlords to resolve breaches, however had the Council been made aware of the conviction and

change in circumstances, steps would have been taken to revoke the licence. The Council deemed this to be a serious breach of a condition which required Enforcement action.

Why another 5 years?

There is an improving picture in the selective licensing areas which is highlighted by the Ingham and Lawrence Street area not being taken forward for a further designation area and the Burnley Wood with Healey Wood proposed designation boundary being altered.

In regeneration terms, 5 years is not a significant amount of time; Government guidance released by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2015 acknowledged the need for licensing to extend beyond a five year designation:

'The Government recognises that licensing may have to be a long term strategy and that it will not provide instant solutions'.

Other public licensing schemes including taxi licensing, licences for public houses, waste carrier licenses and the licensing of mobile home sites are not time limited, they are continually required to ensure public safety. Not continuing with selective licensing in Burnley Wood with Healey Wood and the Leyland Road area at this stage would present a risk that this improvement will not be sustained or built on without a new designation in place for a further five years.