

Consultation on Proposed Selective Licensing of Private Rented Homes in Old Moat - Landlords.

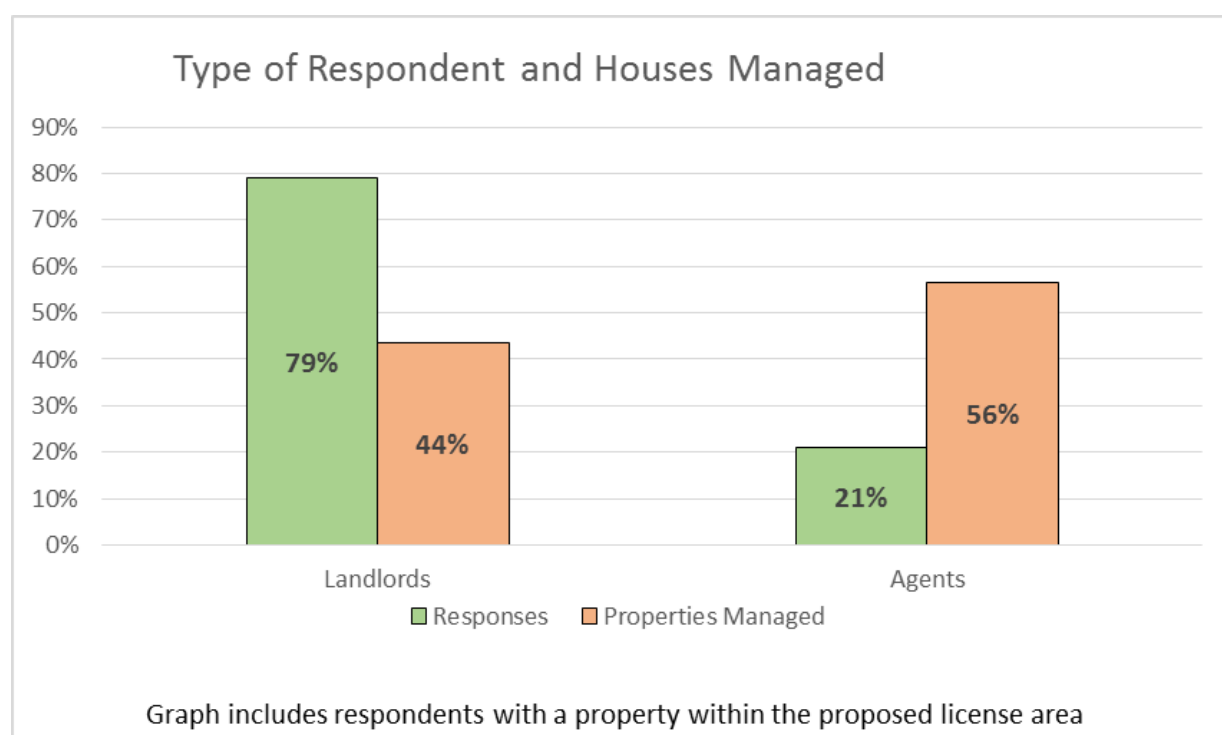
Public consultation with regard the proposed Old Moat selective licensing area took place via an online survey between 20 March and 2 June 2017. Details of the scheme and the proposed area and streets to be covered were provided and views were invited from local residents and landlords or letting agents with property in the proposed area (with different survey questions for each group).

A total of 21 responses were received from landlords and managing agents and 91 responses were received from residents. The survey was voluntary, and self-selecting so is not a truly random sample of the whole population. It should be treated as indicative of the views of local residents and landlords who took part in the survey, but not necessarily representative of all residents or landlords in the area.

1.1. Responses from Landlords/Letting Agents

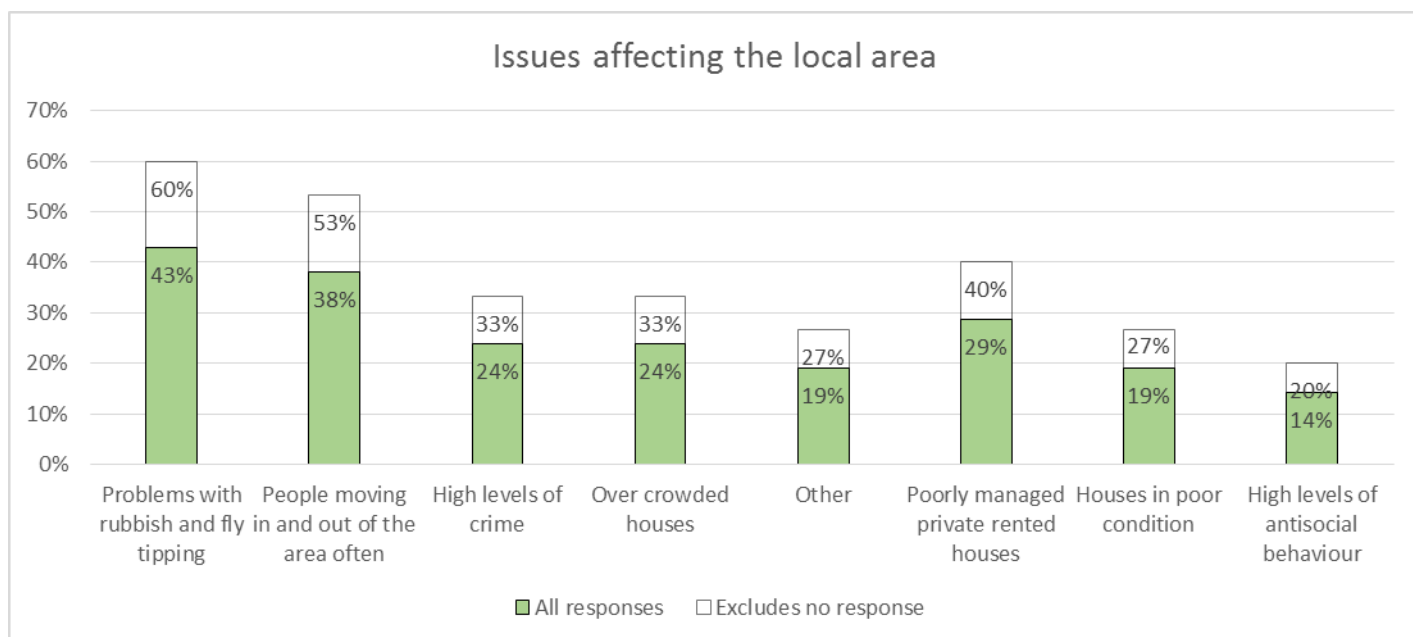
Of 21 responses 71% of the respondents identified as a landlord with property in the proposed licensing area, 19% were letting agents, and 10% were landlords with no properties in the area.

Of the landlords (79%) with properties in the proposed licensing area they collectively managed 44% of properties represented. Of these landlords, 87% owned just one property and the other 13% owned two. Agents in the area only accounted for 24% of responses but controlled over 56% of properties represented. Two of these agents are responsible for 86% of managed properties, with one agent renting more than ten (actual number unknown).



1.2. Issues affecting the local area

Landlords were asked to state which of the following issues affected the local area. Crime, anti-social behaviour, rubbish or fly tipping, poor house condition, poor property management, and transience (people frequently moving in and out of the area).



There were 15 respondents who raised problems within the area, with 6 choosing not to respond. Three of these specified that the issues in their neighbourhood were no worse than elsewhere. Of those that did respond rubbish and fly tipping, and high levels of transience were selected in more than 50% of cases. 3 individuals selected *only* rubbish and fly tipping as an issue, with the other 12 selecting multiple criteria.

Where 'other' has been selected additional responses have included;

- Lack of rental properties. Demand is higher than supply
- Increased rubbish from fast food outlets
- Over development affecting access to green spaces
- Poorly managed gardens

1.3. Issues directly affecting the landlord and their residents in the last three years

Landlords and agents were asked how many of the following issues had affected their property within the last three years. Antisocial behaviour, problems finding tenants, problems getting references, rent arrears, overcrowding.

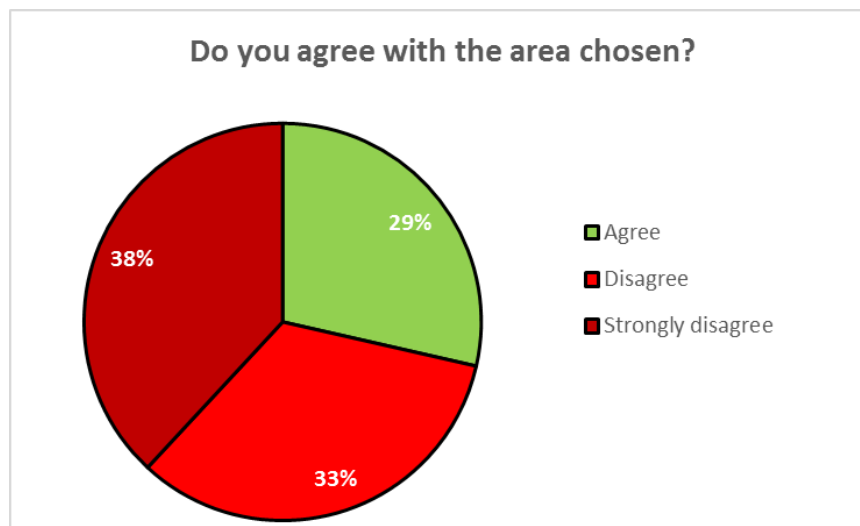
Only 33% of respondents reported problems in the last few years, with 36% highlighting antisocial behaviour and 27% rent arrears.

Issues mentioned included;

- High transience due to student rental market
- Other areas (Moss side and Rusholme) are worse

1.4. Do you agree with the area the council has chosen?

When asked whether they agreed with the area chosen for selective licensing 68% disagreed (with 38% strongly disagreeing), and 29% agreed. None of the estate or letting agents were in favour of the area chosen. Those that agreed with the area chosen had also reported more issues with the area. They were 13 times more likely to report an issue than those that strongly disagreed, and 3 times for those that disagree.



Reasons for disagreeing given were;

- Area should be extended

Suggested included areas are; Wilmslow road (both sides), Owens Park area, Moseley Road

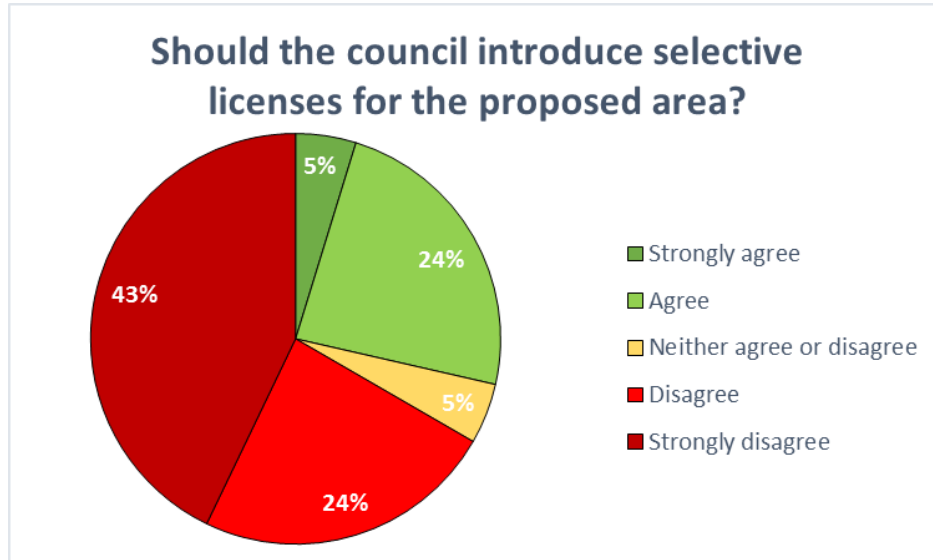
Suggested excluded areas are; Brocklebank Road, Brentbridge Road,

Many respondents used this section to comment on the selective license proposal, not the area chosen. These responses have been included in the final statements.

1.5. Landlord's views whether licenses should be introduced for private rented houses in the area.

Landlords and agents responded with 43% strongly disagreeing with licensing. A further 24% disagreed, to give a total of 67% of respondents not in favour of the proposed licensing.

29% of respondents agreed with the licensing and 5% neither agreed/disagreed. Of those that agreed with the licensing, none were agents.



The following were positive responses to licensing;

- Would help make the area feel safer
- Hold landlords accountable
- Ensure high quality properties

Issues raised as a negative response to licensing included;

- Landlords will increase rent to account for licensing fee
- License is too expensive
- Selective licensing penalises already good landlords
- Cost of license will drain resources for house maintenance
- Previous attempts have failed
- HMO licenses should suffice
- Rogue landlords will ignore licensing anyway

A few suggestions were proposed as alternatives, such as;

- Transparent communication from the council as to what the extra fees will fund
- Exempt good landlords, or those who prove their properties are of good quality
- License landlords not their property
- Encourage communication between tenants and the council to report bad landlords/living conditions
- Fine landlords as and when problems arise instead of licensing

1.6. What support or services could be given to manage privately rented houses in the area?

Landlords and agents were invited to provide suggestions as to what support or services may be of benefit in order to manage their houses to a high standard.

Of those that suggested support/services, the themes raised were;

Improving council, landlord, and tenant relationships by;

- Offer free advice via email, and easily contactable phone lines for reporting issues
- Invite local agents and landlords to consultation meetings
- Offering more support for landlords with problem tenants
- Clear guidance for landlords, letting agents and tenants as to what is expected from each in regards to the property
- Offer tenants more support with reporting bad conditions/landlords
























Ensuring landlords maintain a good standard of property;

- Perform random selective inspections and penalise landlords that aren't keeping their properties in proper order
- Regular inspections and higher fines
- Accreditation scheme with incentives for approved landlords
- Inspect and grade houses on their standard of upkeep

Other responses were in regards to the local environment and asked for more council support with upkeep and increased monitoring of regular fly-tipping areas.

1.7. Would licensing improve things?

Responses to whether licensing could improve things amongst landlords were mixed. The majority of responses didn't think that licensing would help them manage their tenants, improve the condition of houses, or help the area in general. However, 33% strongly agreed that licensing would help with levels of ASB and nuisance, but 48% neither agreed/disagreed nor did not know.

	The way landlords or letting agents manage their tenants	The condition of private rented houses	Antisocial behaviour or nuisance	The area in general
Strongly agree	 14%	 19%	 33%	 14%
Agree	 19%	 14%	 14%	 10%
Neither agree or disagree	 19%	 10%	 38%	 24%
Disagree	 5%	 10%	 5%	 5%
Strongly disagree	 33%	 38%	0%	 38%
Don't know / No response	 10%	 10%	 10%	 10%

1.8. Other Comments

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments at the end of the questionnaire. The key issues raised are summarised as follows:

- Some ASB is external to housing issues
- Increase council presence in the neighbourhood
- Previous licensing has failed
- Area chosen is not appropriate
- Will charities pay the same rent on owned properties?
- Penalises good landlords when bad landlords will simply ignore the licensing regulations anyway
- Selective licensing is an addition bureaucracy for already sufficient existing powers

Other comments raised included:

“As a landlord already registered with MSH I think this will be a repetition of costs”

“I am against mandatory licensing because the evidence is that it does not raise standards of rental properties, but it will raise rents, which ultimately disadvantages both landlords and tenants, and makes the housing crisis worse.”

“The area is not at its current state due to poor tenancies, only by poor management of tenancies.”

“The cost of any licensing fee will be diverted to the tenant.”

“I would urge MCC to work with the landlords and agents in the local area to work a solution to any concerns they may have as there are many ideas all agents and landlords would put together which should keep all parties happy and continued growth in the area.”