

Soho

Selective Licensing Consultation

6 November - 31 January 2018

Have your say on proposals to introduce licensing for all private rented housing in the **Soho Ward**, to assist in improving standards in the private rented sector.



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 **Birmingham**
City Council



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Foreword

Everybody needs somewhere to call home. A decent and safe home is a basic requirement and a fundamental foundation for a healthy and fulfilling life. That is why the Housing Birmingham Partnership has been formed and why we are committed to our vision that:

"Every citizen can find a great place to live"

For many citizens Birmingham is already a great place to live. The city's economy is growing and investment in infrastructure and new homes will continue to benefit residents. We want to ensure that growth is inclusive and that nobody is left behind. For housing, this means:

- A strong supply of new high quality homes;
- Citizens are able to find, access and sustain housing that meets their needs;
- Neighbourhoods are enhanced and the quality of existing housing is improved.

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) provides valuable accommodation in the city and in general is well managed by responsible landlords. In some areas however, the growth of the PRS has led to changes in local communities and issues of poor management, lack of repair to rented housing and anti-social behaviour by private tenants. The Housing Birmingham Partnership proposes to use enforcement powers to target the worst landlords, agents, properties and neighbourhoods and where necessary introduce selective licensing in target areas.

I am keen to support the consultation on the potential use of Selective Licensing in Soho Ward as part of our approach to improving standards in the PRS.

I would encourage all residents, landlords, business owners and community groups to get involved and let us have your views.



Councillor Peter Griffiths,

Chair of Housing Birmingham and Cabinet Member for Homes and Housing –
Birmingham City Council

Introduction

Birmingham has seen a significant increase in the private rented sector over the last 5-10 years, from around 10% in 2001 to nearly 20% in 2011 so that in many areas it is the largest rental market. The sector is a vital element of the city's housing resource but increasingly communities, the council and its partners are having to deal with issues of high turnover of tenancies, homeless applications where tenancies have failed, anti-social behaviour from private tenants, complaints of poor housing conditions not being responded to by landlords and agents and in the worst cases 'rogue' and criminal landlords and tenants causing real problems to residents and neighbourhoods.

The council and its partners have been working to set out how best to respond to the housing issues in the city.

As part of this, the council is considering whether it needs to use powers to licence private rented sector properties in areas where there are issues of high concentrations of private renting, low demand, anti-social behaviour, crime, deprivation, poor property conditions and migration.

Why are we consulting?

We are concerned about standards in some private rented housing in the Soho Ward and how it affects tenants and local residents.

In particular local communities are saying the growth of private renting is leading to unsightly properties, rubbish dumping, anti-social behaviour, new tenants unsure of the area or where to get help locally and some landlords failing to carry out repairs and keep properties clean and tidy.

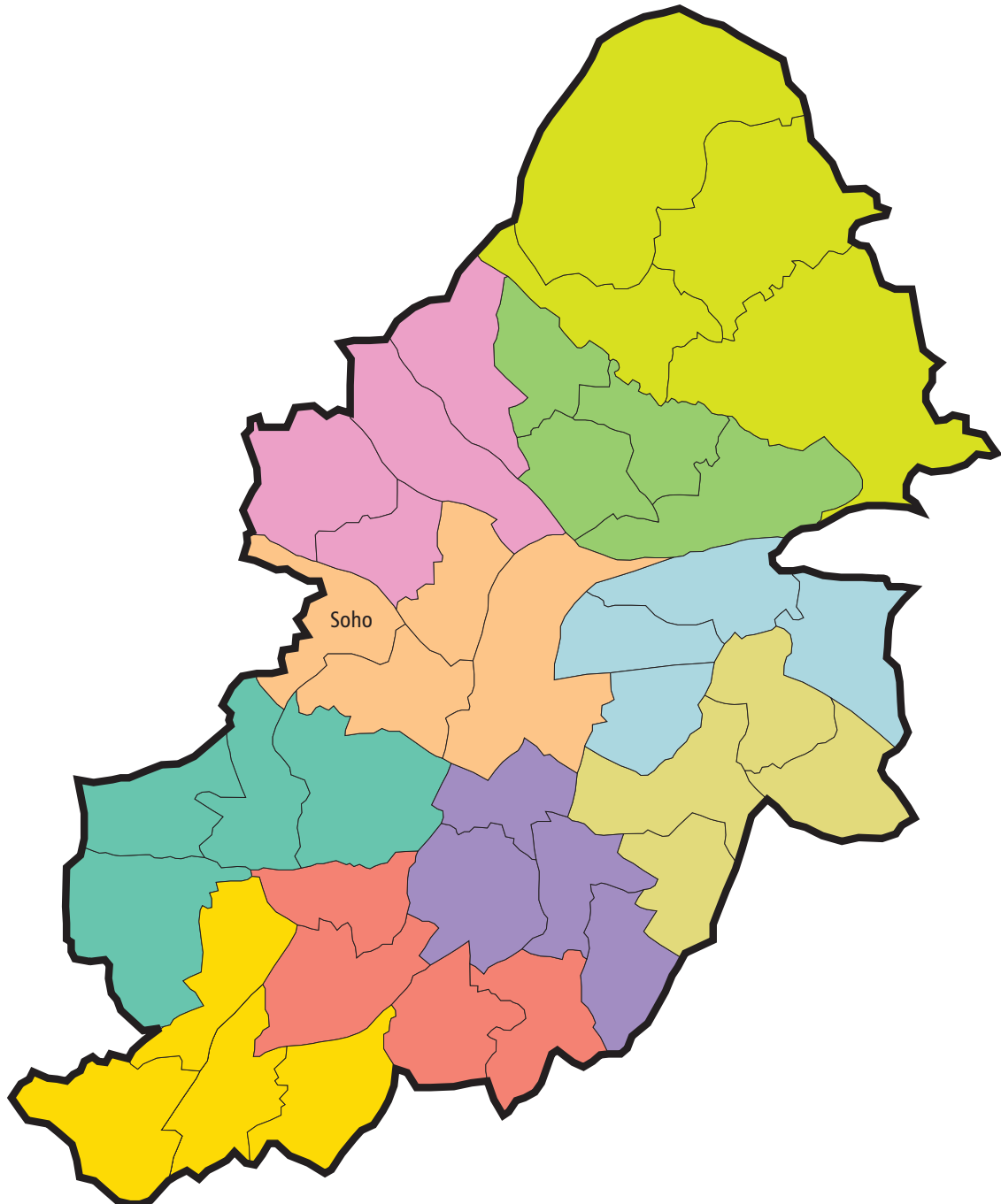
The council has powers to require all landlords to have a licence for a private rented property and we want to consult local people, landlords agents and businesses in Soho Ward to gather their views.

What are we proposing?

The council is proposing to make all private landlords in Soho Ward obtain a licence for their properties which lasts for 5 years and to make sure they manage the properties effectively.

Which area is covered by this licensing consultation?

The proposal is to introduce licensing for all private landlords in Soho Ward but following the consultation it may be all, some part or none of the Ward. Below is a map of Birmingham showing the location of the Soho Ward.



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Will it cost anything?

The council can charge private landlords for a licence and is proposing to charge £500 for a five-year licence. Tenants do not have to pay anything to the council.

How long will the consultation take?

We must do this for a minimum of 10 weeks so the plan is for the consultation to take place from **6 November - 31 January 2018**.

How to get involved and let us have your views

You can complete the questionnaire online or complete a printed questionnaire and return it by the deadline.

Completing using a computer/tablet/mobile phone

You can complete an online questionnaire on the Be Heard website. Visit:
<https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/place/soho-selective-licensing-consultation>

Completing a printed questionnaire

You can pick up a printed copy of the questionnaire from **1 Lancaster Circus, Aston, Birmingham, B4 7DJ** or request a PDF copy by emailing **prs@birmingham.gov.uk**. Please state which version of the questionnaire you want (business, landlord or tenant).

Returning your completed printed questionnaire

Please complete and return the questionnaire by **31 January 2018** using the **FREEPOST** envelope enclosed. You **DO NOT** need to use a stamp.

If you do not have a FREEPOST envelope you can request one by contacting us, see the email address and phone number below.

You can also return by post to the address below, but you will need to use a stamp.

**Birmingham City Council
Private Rented Services
Place Directorate
P.O. Box 16589
Lancaster Circus
Birmingham B2 2JB**

PLEASE NOTE: **You will need to use a stamp.**

If you have any questions about this consultation please contact us.

Email: **prs@birmingham.gov.uk**
Phone: **0121 675 5497**

Officers will be arranging local meetings and events to gather people's views and the proposal will be discussed at the Soho Ward Committee and Ward Advisory Board.

When will a decision be made?

When we have everyone's comments a report will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes in March 2018 to decide if a scheme should proceed

Where can I find out more information?

You can read the council's report on the website by going to

<https://birmingham.cmis.uk.com/birmingham/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/9689/Committee/10/Default.aspx>

You can also read the Government Guidance on Selective Licensing by going to

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/selective-licensing-in-the-private-rented-sector-a-guide-for-local-authorities>

Who can I speak to if I need to discuss this?

The Officer leading the consultation is **Gurrinder Nijjer**, Principal Enforcement Officer.

Phone: **0121 675 5497**

Email: gurrinder.g.nijjer@birmingham.gov.uk





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