

ITEM 10

**Recommendation from Cabinet
7th January 2020**

Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 January 2020

Present:

Members:

Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor A Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor K Caan
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor T Khan
Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Seaman

Deputy Cabinet Members

Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor R Ali
Councillor B Gittins
Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor D Welsh

Non-Voting Opposition
Members:

Councillor A Andrews
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members:

Councillor R Brown
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Sing

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's

M Reeves (Chief Executive)

People

G Quinton (Deputy Chief Executive (People)), N Hart

Place

M Yardley (Deputy Chief Executive (Place)), S Bennett,
D, Blackburn, A Chowns, B Hastie, P Jennings,
J Kilgallon, J Newman, R Sugars, A Walster, S Weir

Apologies:

Councillor N Akhtar

RECOMMENDATIONS

65. Declarations of Interest

Councillors R Ali, K Caan and A S Khan declared disclosable pecuniary interests in matters the subject of Minutes 67 (Additional Licensing in Coventry – Consultation Results) and 68 (Selective Licensing in Coventry – Consultation Results).

They left the meeting for consideration of these items.

68. Selective Licensing in Coventry - Consultation Results

Further to Minute 95/18, the Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which set out the results of consultation on Selective Licensing in Coventry.

The report indicated that the Housing Act 2004, Part 3, provided a discretionary power, subject to carrying out consultation and approval of the appropriate national authority, for Local Housing Authorities to licence all private landlords in a designated area with the intention of ensuring that a minimum standard of management is met.

On the 8th January 2019, the cabinet authorised a city-wide 10 week consultation beginning on 9th January 2019 and ending on 20th March 2019. The consultation was undertaken in the form of on-line questionnaires, ward drop in sessions, focus groups and Member meetings. There were a mix of responses with the highest number being from landlords and residents. Notably, there was an even balance between those in support and those against introducing selective licensing. However, detailed investigation revealed the strength of the views conveyed more were in strong disagreement than those strongly supporting. Furthermore, a much higher proportion of respondents disagreed that the fee structure was reasonable and proportionate. Notwithstanding, the response to the principle of the scheme was generally support for mechanisms within the proposed scheme which included fee reduction criteria, higher fees for non-compliant landlords, longer licences for compliant landlords and conditions around property condition and management. Generally there was a concern around how areas had been selected, the use of data from the 2011 Census, and, in particular Ward Councillors raised concern with some areas not being included where they considered there to be problems which brought the issue of out of date data into question further. The consultation results were set out in full in Appendix 2 of the report submitted.

It was noted that in April 2018, the Government Select Committee completed research which included evaluating Selective Licensing. More recently, in July 2019, the Government published findings from an independent review of the use and effectiveness of Selective Licensing Schemes. This review resulted in several recommendations which included looking at the criteria applied to engage validation by the Secretary of State for designations and the data sources used to specify the designated area. How the Government proposes to move forward is currently unknown. It is anticipated that changes to the current legislation will be

implemented in due course. The report also provided a summary and analysis of the consultation results and a recommendation.

In addition, a petition bearing 14 signatures was received objecting to the Selective Licensing and was set out within the report. The petition organiser was invited to the meeting for the consideration of this matter, but did not attend. The petitioners were opposing the imposition of selective and additional licensing schemes and requested that the proposed licensing schemes be stopped. The Cabinet noted the matters raised by the petitioners.

It was proposed that officers keep Selective Licensing under review, alongside the implementation of the Additional Licensing scheme, until such time as the conclusions of the Independent Review of Selective Licensing are published by Government. Once the results are published, officers should be in a better position to apply a more accurate, up to date statistical assessment, using appropriate evidence that should also become available. As such, the non HMO private rented housing would continue to be managed using existing powers set out within the report. The Cabinet noted that if the Additional Licensing scheme is progressed as recommended, the team will increase and existing staff will be able to concentrate solely on the management of the non-HMO private rented housing using the relevant powers that already exist.

RESOLVED that, having considered the consultation results attached at Appendix 2, the Cabinet request that the Council approve the following:

- 1. That the proposed Selective Licensing scheme not be progressed at this time.**
- 2. That officers are instructed to review the conclusions of the Independent Review of Selective Licensing once these are published by Government and conduct an accurate, up to date statistical assessment, once appropriate evidence becomes available and report the findings to Cabinet at a future meeting.**