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| Licensing and Regulatory Committee | Tuesday, 20 June 2023 | Matter for Information and Decision |
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Report Title: **Communication and Consultation Plan for Further Selective Licensing Scheme (2025-2030)**

Report Author(s): **Ben Clark-Monks (Selective Licensing Team Leader)**

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| Purpose of Report: | This report and appendices outlines the proposed communications plan to engage with residents and stakeholders in relation to potentially designating a further Selective Licensing Scheme within the Borough. |
| Report Summary: | The report details the requirements for considering a scheme, outlines the area under consideration and channels that will be used to consult with residents and stakeholders. |
| Recommendation(s): | A. That the contents of the report be noted; and B. That the Proposed Communications and Consultation Plan (set out at Appendix 1 to this report) be approved to allow the consultation process to commence. |
| Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s): | David Gill (Head of Law and Democracy) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Jon Wells (Strategic Manager) (0116) 257 2695 jon.wells@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Ben Clark-Monks (Selective Licensing Team Leader) (0116) 257 2883 ben.clark-monks@oadby-wigston.gov.uk |
| Strategic Objectives: | Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Economy (SO3) |
| Vision and Values: | "Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Customer & Community Focused (V1) Collaborative & Creative (V3) Resourceful & Resilient (V4) |
| Report Implications:- | |
| Legal: | The implications are as set out at paragraphs 1.1, 2.4, 3.2 and 3.4 of this report. |
| Financial: | The implications are as set out at paragraphs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 |
| Corporate Risk Management: | Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) |

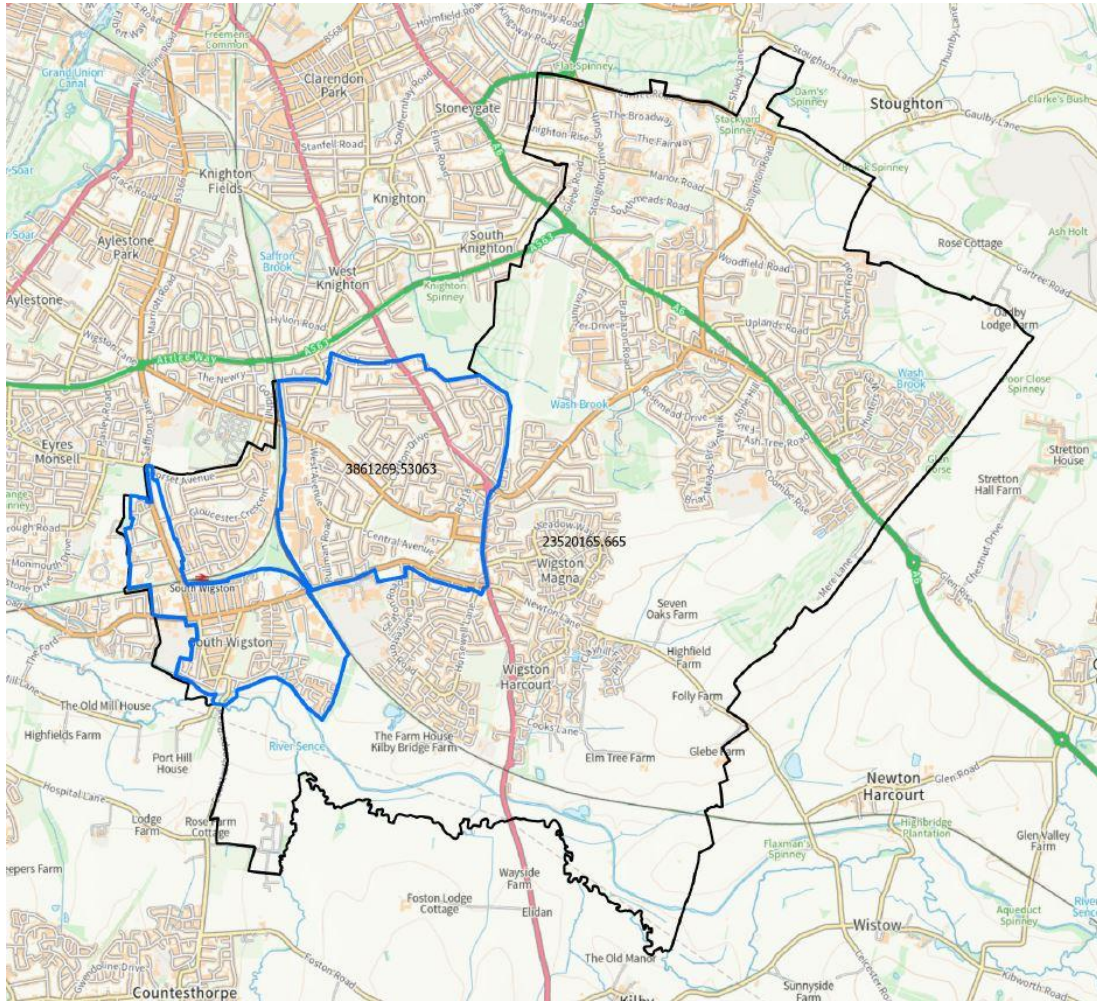
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| | Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Economy / Regeneration (CR9) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8) |
| Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA): | There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable |
| Human Rights: | There are no implications arising from this report. |
| Health and Safety: | There are no implications arising from this report. |
| Statutory Officers' Comments:- | |
| Head of Paid Service: | The report is satisfactory. |
| Chief Finance Officer: | The report is satisfactory. |
| Monitoring Officer: | The report is satisfactory. |
| Consultees: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Helliwell (Marketing and Communications Manager) • Thomas Maccabe (Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager) |
| Background Papers: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective Licensing in the Private Rented Sector - A guide for Local Authorities • Housing Act 2004, Section 80 (9) |
| Appendices: | 1. Proposed Selective Licensing Scheme (2025 - 2030) – Communications and Consultation Plan |

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Act 2004. Section 80 (9) requires a Local Authority to widely consult prior to considering designating an area of Selective Licensing within its Borough with two points enshrined within law, these are.
- To take reasonable steps to consult persons who are likely to be affected by the designation
 - To consider any representations made in accordance with the consultation and not withdrawn.
- 1.2 The existing designation in the South Wigston ward is due to expire in May 2025, this consultation process will help to inform decision making on any potential future schemes.
- 1.3 Subject to the consultation and committee process it would be the intention to build on the success of the existing scheme in more areas of the Borough.

2. Proposed Area

- 2.1 The potential area under consideration consists of the Blaby Road area of the South Wigston Ward and parts of Wigston All Saints, Wigston St Wolstan's and Wigston Fields, as illustrated in the map below with the proposed area marked in Blue and the wider Borough boundary marked in Black.



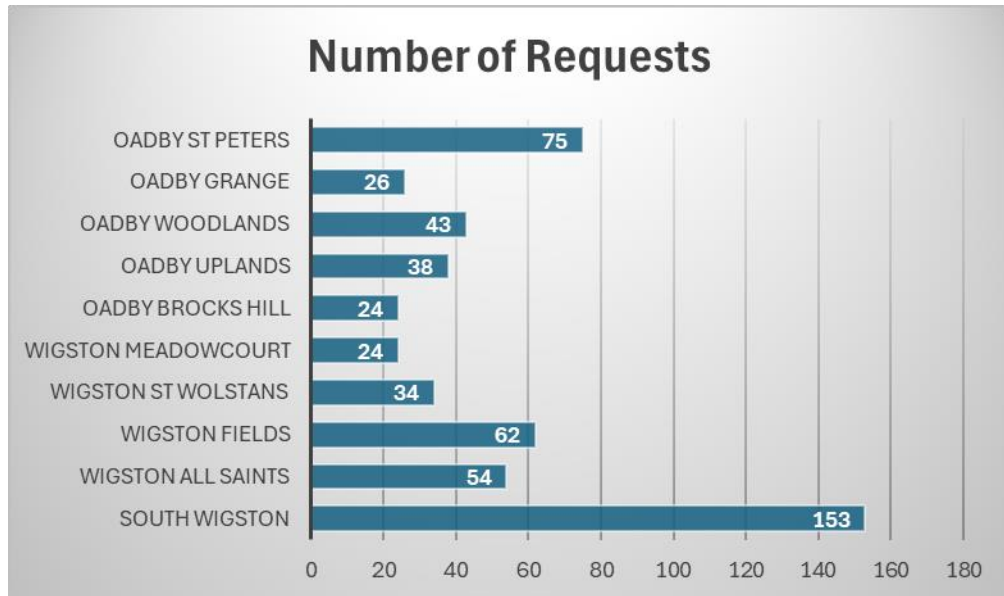
- 2.2 The potential designation accounts for 16.4% of the total geographic area of the Borough
- 2.3 The potential designation could include up to 1000 properties to ensure any designation remains within the 20% of total rental stock within the Borough, which currently equates to approximately 5000 properties.
- 2.4 To successfully designate a scheme you must have at least one of the factors outlined below, the factors in bold are the factors under consideration for this scheme.
 - 2.4.1 **Low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area)** – Not being considered
 - 2.4.2 **A significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour** – Responses from the Community Safety Partnership survey of residents 22/23 noted that 71% of the residents that responded were concerned about Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour or Community Safety in their area, with 81% of respondents from South Wigston answering yes, this was a concern for them.

With 80% of Wigston Residents stating that Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour had increased or stayed the same over the last 12 months, 85% of South Wigston and 78% of Oadby residents with the same response.

Along with these statistics only 16% of Oadby, 22% of South Wigston and 24% of Wigston residents were satisfied with public services dealing with Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety in their areas, with 41% of respondents in South

Wigston reporting they had been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour in the Borough.

2.4.3 **Poor housing conditions** – Housing standards service requests are a statutory duty required to be investigated by Local Authorities. Below is a table outlining service requests received that relate to Housing divided by Ward between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2024.



As can be seen by the chart a significant number of request received relate to properties in South Wigston, which is part of the reasoning for the proposed future scheme including Blaby Road to allow for further proactive work to continue in the area, there are also a high number of service requests received from Wigston Fields and All Saints.

An outlier in relation to these figures is Oadby St Peters with the second highest number of requests, which whilst not being considered within this proposal, which will continue to be monitored, to see if this trend continues.

2.4.4 **High levels of migration** – Not being considered

2.4.5 **High levels of crime** – Crime is not typically reported at a ward level, as Leicestershire Police report crime based on their beat team divisions which for the Borough are South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby, below are reported levels between April 2023 and March 2024 compared to population levels, along with a graph from the Police website showing the last three years crime levels for the areas.

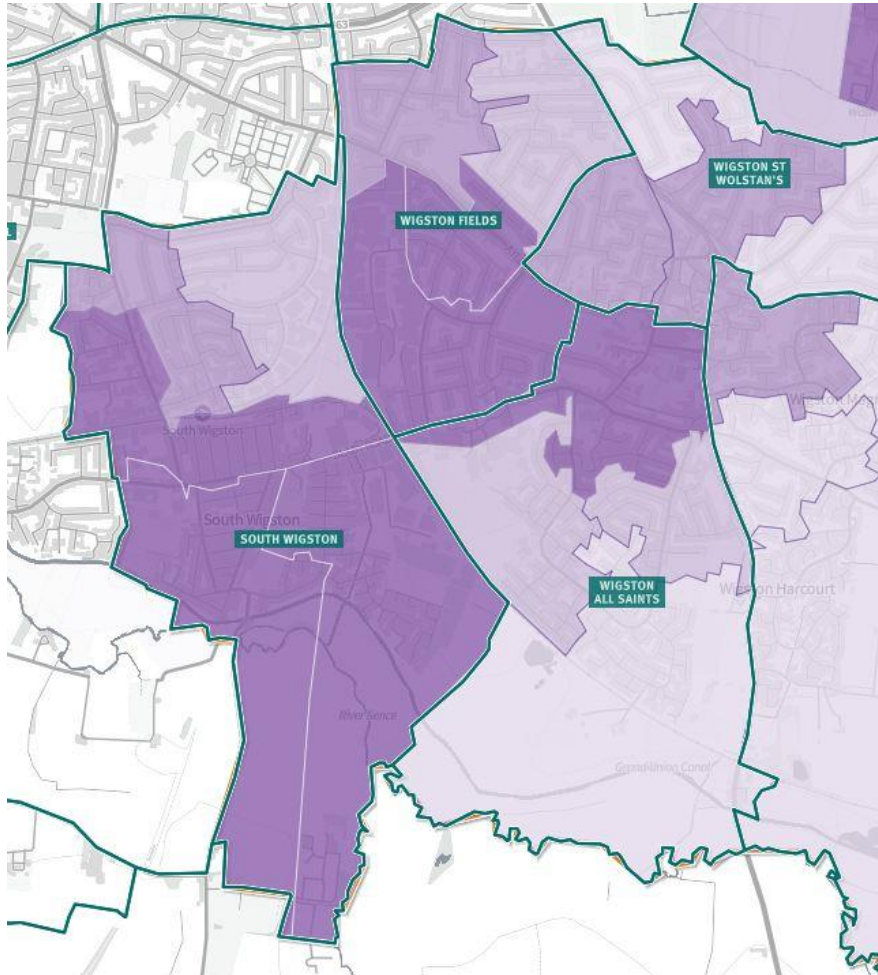
- South Wigston – Within the period from April 2023 to March 2024 there were 922 crimes recorded, with the most recent elector numbers for the ward noted as 6067, meaning 1 in 6 residents have been victims of crime.
- Wigston – Within the period from April 2023 to March 2024 there were 1856 recorded crimes with the most recent elector numbers for the Wigston wards totalling 20,259, meaning 1 in 10 residents have been victims of crime.
- Oadby – Within the period from April 2023 to March 2024 there were 1410 recorded crimes with the most recent elector numbers for the Oadby wards totalling 17,360, meaning 1 in 12 residents have been victims of crime.

2.4.6 **High level of deprivation** - Oadby and Wigston ranks 249 out of 317 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 local authority rank. Oadby has less areas categorised as the most deprived areas nationally in comparison to Wigston. Wigston has five Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are in the 30% most deprived areas nationally. The mean deprivation rating for England is 21.67 and the information below outlines the comparison between national levels and the levels within the potential designation along with a local within Borough comparison.

- South Wigston – Is the most deprived ward within the Borough with an average rating of 21.94 which is above the national average, however when the Fairfield estate is removed as proposed within any new designation this increases to 27.50 demonstrating the increased levels of deprivation within the vicinity of Blaby Road, with the highest score registered in the area being north of Blaby Road with a score of 31.48.
- Wigston Fields – Closely follows South Wigston with an average deprivation score of 21.92 across the four LSOAs within the ward, all of which are proposed to be included in any future potential designation, with the highest score registered at 32.89 in the centre of the ward in the vicinity of Rolleston Road.
- Wigston All Saints – Has an average score of 14.76, however there is a significant range within the All Saints ward as illustrated by the map below with the lowest score in the ward being 5.93 and the highest being 31.27 located in the vicinity of Moat Street, part of this area is proposed to be included within any new designation.
- Wigston St Wolstans – Has the lowest average score within the potential designation at 11.50 with two of the LSOAs in the area having a score in excess of 17 in the vicinity of Wakes Road and Victoria Street with the area around Glenmere Primary having a score of 3.92, similar to All Saints, only part of St Wolstans is proposed to be included to try and capture the more deprived areas of that ward.
- Oadby Uplands – In contrast the average score for the Uplands ward is 7.11 with the highest score of 8.59 in the vicinity of Uplands Road. Oadby Uplands is not proposed to be included within the scheme but has been used as a point of comparison.

2.4.7 Below is a map taken from the department for Health and Social Care's SHAPE atlas tool which maps deprivation levels across England, with areas of higher deprivation being illustrated in darker shades of purple.

(Continued overleaf)



2.5 Retaining the existing fee structure of £840 per property the project could potentially generate over £800,000 for the Authority, subject to discounts.

2.6 More detailed income projections and a full fee structure will be provided to the committee for consideration along with the consultation responses.

3. The Consultation Process

3.1 The plan at **Appendix 1** outlines the methods the Council will use to engage with residents and stakeholders listed at section 4.1 and 4.2 of this report to widely publicise the scheme as required.

3.2 Section 6 of the Selective Licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities document, published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities outlines the consultation requirements for any considered scheme. The guidance document outlines that the Council must undertake a full consultation for a period of at least **10 weeks**.

3.3 It is essential that the consultation provides a clear and informative outline of the considered designation.

3.4 As the considered designation would account for less than 20% of the total rental stock within the Borough and less than 20% of the total geographic municipal area, it means that any scheme would be considered by the members of the Council and would not require intervention by the Secretary of State for Housing.

3.5 Subject to approval a detailed paper outlining the reason for the proposal will be produced to support the consultation process and provide any parties with all the essential information in relation to the scheme, this will include;

- Map outlining the proposed designation
- Explanation why the scheme is being proposed
- Proposed fees and discounts
- The aims of the considered designation
- Potential benefits of the scheme
- Details outlining how a scheme works, i.e. application process, exemptions, etc.

3.6 The document would be published on the Councils website, with paper copies provided to residents upon request. This approach will ensure that all parties could access the document, whilst minimising the environmental impact and cost implications associated with the consultation.

4. Methods of Communication and Stakeholders

4.1 Any consultation should include consultation with the following groups.

- Local Residents
- Tenants
- Landlords
- Managing Agents
- Business Operators within the designated area

4.2 Further to the groups included within the guidance document the Council will also consult with the following groups to ensure that the consultation will be widely publicised.

- Leicestershire Police (Police Area and Beat Levels)
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue
- Leicestershire County Council, Social Services (Adult and Children Services)
- All Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Elected Members
- Office of Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Office of Member of Parliament for Harborough, Oadby and Wigston Constituency
- Chair of the Oadby and Wigston Community Safety Partnership
- Internal Council Departments that may be impacted by designation (i.e. Housing Options, Community Safety and Economic Regeneration)
- Landlord Groups/Associations (i.e. National Residential Landlord Association and Decent and Safe Homes)

4.3 It is essential that all communication channels are open and easy to access for consultees, to ensure effective and accurate responses to the request for consultation.

4.4 There are costs associated to the consultation but the selected methods have been designed to provide best, greatest outreach whilst ensuring value for money by utilising existing platforms such as GOV delivery and email to reduce costs, **Appendix 1** outlines the specific methods used to engage with each group.

4.5 There are unavoidable costs such as the production and delivery of consultation cards, to ensure the requirement that the Authority consult widely. However these will be delivered by hand to reduce costs and postage has been kept to a minimum with email communication used where it is appropriate to do so.

4.6 It is anticipated that the total costs associated with the consultation is anticipated to be approximately £2500.00 to facilitate the methods noted within 4.4 and 4.5 of this report.

These costs will be covered from existing income generated from via the Selective Licensing Scheme.

4.7 Although consideration has been given to ensure that consultees are able to engage through one of the following channels

- Online (Through the Councils website)
- By phone (Through the Councils Customer Service team or directly to the Private Sector Housing team)
- Face to Face (Through the Councils Appointment Hubs and Residents Forums)
- Email (Through the dedicated Selective Licensing Email address)
- Letter (Delivered to the Council Offices)

5. Further Actions and Next Steps

5.1 All consultation responses will be recorded within the DASH system to ensure that all responses are stored in a central location and consultees will be asked to provide information on how they became aware of the consultation and how they have responded.

5.2 All responses will be anonymised, analysed and where appropriate assigned to categories and responses provided and published on the Council's website.

5.3 Following completion of the consultation, a further report will be brought to the appropriate committees which will include a copy of the information documents and consultation responses and subject to the outcome of the consultation a proposed designation for the consideration of the committee.

5.4 It will then fall to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee to decide whether or not to endorse or propose amendments to any proposed designation, prior to submission to full Council to make a final decision.