



Rent it Right

A licensing scheme for Bexley

What are we consulting on?

A new local licensing scheme designed to support tenants, landlords and residents who are living in the properties with the highest levels of ASB/nuisance.

This would mean

An 'additional' licensing scheme for smaller Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO).

A possible 'selective' licensing scheme for privately rented accommodation in a defined area.

Who are we consulting with?

- Residents
- Tenants
- Landlords
- Residents associations

- Managing agents
- Estate Agents
- Chief Executives of London Authorities and neighbouring authorities
- Other individuals with an interest in the scheme

Why are we consulting?

The London Borough of Bexley is keen to work in collaboration with residents, landlords and agents throughout the planning and implementation of the proposed scheme.

The consultation will provide the opportunity to share comments and suggestions on the proposals.

When is the consultation taking place?

The consultation will be from 24 October 2016 to 24 January 2017.

Where will information be available?

www.bexley.gov.uk/rentitright

Hardcopies will also be available from

- Civic Offices
- All of the Borough's libraries

Additional licensing

What is the current national HMO licensing scheme?

Licensing of larger HMOs that are three or more storeys high, occupied by five or more persons and who form more than one household; has been mandatory in England since 1 April 2006.

What does the Housing Act 2004 say?

- The Housing Act 2004 gives councils the power to implement discretionary licensing schemes.

- Part II of the Housing Act 2004 gives councils the power to implement an 'additional' licensing scheme for HMOs that fall outside the mandatory HMO licensing scheme (subject to some exemptions).

What licensing regulations are currently in place in Bexley?

The national regulations are in place in Bexley – as above.

What are the proposals in Bexley regarding HMOs?

Extending the Council's licensing powers to include all HMOs.

What will be the benefits to both tenants and landlords?

- Extending the Council's licensing powers will drive up standards and protect tenants and landlords.
- The London Borough of Bexley is looking to better regulate these properties in order to protect tenants, landlords and the local community.

What challenges can HMOs pose?

- Potential overcrowding
- Poor management sometimes leading to anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Where are HMOs located in Bexley?

HMOs are located throughout the borough with the greatest number in the postcode area of DA8.

Selective Licensing

Why selective licensing for properties of the PRS?

Data from a range of Council departments has revealed that there is on average 9% more ASB/nuisance incidence per property in the private rented sector than other tenures

Why choose postcode areas DA8 and SE28?

- Evidence suggests that there has been a significant increase in private landlords sub-dividing properties in some areas of Erith and Thamesmead.

- The highest levels of ASB/nuisance are in post code areas SE28 and DA8, with 34% and 23% of properties having problems compared to the borough average of 19%.

What are the potential benefits to landlords?

Increased support including

- Dedicated staff to deal with ASB
- Assistance with Housing Benefit enquiries
- Information readily at hand for landlords including property standards
- The London Borough of Bexley is consulting landlords on what other benefits they might like to see

What are the benefits to tenants?

- A higher standard of accommodation
- A reduction in ASB
- Safer rented properties

How will landlords apply for a licence?

- An application form will need to be completed
- Specific criteria will have to be met
- The landlord will have to be a 'fit and proper' person
- Help with completing an application will be available for an agreed fee

What does "fit and proper" mean?

In order for the London Borough of Bexley to decide if an applicant is "fit and proper", the following would be taken into account:

- Any previous convictions relating to violence, sexual offences or drug related crimes;
- If the person has broken any laws relating to housing or landlord and tenant issues;
- If the person has been found guilty of any unlawful discrimination.
- If the person has been found guilty of any crimes relating to fraud or dishonesty.

How long will the licence be valid for?

Five years

Would the licence be transferrable?

- No. The licence is for a particular property.

How much would the licence cost?

- The average charge for a licence in London is £500. The London Borough of Bexley is proposing to set its fee following the consultation.

What will happen if a landlord fails to licence a property?

A fine of up to £20,000 could be applied if the scheme is adopted and a licence is not applied for.

To complete the online application form visit:

www.bexley.gov.uk/rentitrightconsultation

If you require a hard copy of the survey visit the Civic Offices or Bexley Libraries.

Thank you for your interest.

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different format, please call 020 8303 7777 and ask for Communications/Graphics. The reference to quote is 696649/10.16

