

# **Report on Brent Council's Consultation on Selective Licensing Proposals**

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## Executive Summary

Brent Council carried out a public consultation into their proposals to introduce two selective licensing designations, the first known as designation one in three wards, the second designation in 18 additional wards. The council proposed introducing selective licensing through two designations, designed to tackle the most pressing issues within the ward.

Designation one – Poor property conditions and very high repeat antisocial behaviour (ASB):

- Dollis Hill
- Harlesden & Kensal Green
- Willesden Green

Designation two - Poor property conditions:

- Alperton
- Barnhill
- Brondesbury Park
- Cricklewood & Mapesbury
- Kenton
- Kilburn
- Kingsbury
- Northwick Park
- Preston
- Queens Park
- Queensbury
- Roundwood
- Stonebridge
- Sudbury
- Tokyngton
- Welsh Harp
- Wembley Central
- Wembley Hill

To consult with landlords, tenants, residents, stakeholders and other interested parties, the council carried out an online survey. The council also hosted several public meetings with landlords, tenants, residents, and landlord groups. The council used digital and print media to advertise the consultation, as well as in-person methods.

The consultation ran for 12 weeks from 31 October 2022 until 23 January 2023.

In total, 853 responses were received from the online survey. The online survey incorporated a quantitative approach and qualitative responses through free text boxes. Qualitative feedback was also received at public meetings and written responses from interested parties.

The consultation looked at the level of support for introducing selective licensing. The consultation also sought views on the proposed licence conditions, fees, and the respondents' perceptions of the issues of poor property conditions, anti-social behaviour and deprivation in the borough.

## Key Findings

	<b>Overall</b>	Landlords, letting or managing agents	Residents or local businesses	Other stakeholders
Total consultation survey responses	853	358	448	47
<b>Agree with selective licensing proposal for designation 1</b>	<b>45%</b>	16%	68%	73%
<b>Disagree with selective licensing proposal for designation 1</b>	<b>41%</b>	68%	22%	15%
<b>Agree with selective licensing proposal for designation 2</b>	<b>43%</b>	10%	66%	66%
<b>Disagree with selective licensing proposal for designation 2</b>	<b>46%</b>	75%	25%	21%
<b>Agree with proposed selective licensing conditions</b>	<b>54%</b>	30%	71%	71%
<b>Disagree with proposed selective licensing conditions</b>	<b>32%</b>	52%	19%	20%
Responses to the question	848	356	445	47
<b>Selective licensing fee is about the right level</b>	<b>20%</b>	3%	34%	23%
<b>Selective licensing fee is too high</b>	<b>63%</b>	95%	40%	47%
<b>Selective licensing fee is too low</b>	<b>11%</b>	0%	19%	21%

The results of the consultation survey and the views of stakeholders gathered during the consultation will be analysed in this report.

## Introduction

### Background

The private rented sector (PRS) in Brent has seen rapid growth over the last eleven years, with around 58,000 homes in the borough privately rented. However, poverty is widespread across the borough with many households experiencing financial difficulties. In addition, there is significant and persistent evidence of antisocial behaviour (ASB) across particular wards in the borough.

Above average London rents and rising energy costs has severely impacted affordability which in turn has led to overcrowding, a deterioration in property conditions and high levels of evictions and homelessness.

The prevalence of Covid-19 has demonstrated the vulnerabilities of those in the most deprived areas, often where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are concentrated.

Whilst the majority of PRS properties are well maintained and safe, there is a growing minority that are sub-standard and dangerous. Even well-meaning landlords may not always be up to date with the latest legal and safety requirements. These properties not only endanger the health, safety and wellbeing of tenants, but cause issues with neighbours and end up requiring many interventions from already stretched council teams.

Brent Council has introduced various five-year licensing schemes intended to tackle some of the problems associated with private rented properties in the borough. The first selective licensing scheme applied to all non-HMO privately rented homes in the wards of Harlesden, Willesden Green and Wembley Central and ended in December 2019. The current five-year selective scheme applies to the old wards boundaries of Dudden Hill, Kensal Green, Kilburn, Mapesbury and Queens Park.

### Proposals

The council is proposing to introduce two new selective licensing designations that will apply to all privately rented properties in 21 wards of the borough.

The first phase (designation 1) would cover a total of three wards and would allow the council to deal with the worst ASB and poor property conditions.

The second phase (designation 2) would cover a total of 18 wards on the basis of poor property conditions.

The consultation focused on the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the council's proposal to introduce the selective licensing scheme, and the two proposed designations. The consultation also looked at views on the proposed licence conditions, fees, and the respondents' perceptions of the issues of anti-social behaviour and poor property conditions in the borough.

### Public Consultation

The consultation ran for 12 weeks from 31 October 2022 until 23 January 2023. To try and capture as much feedback from landlord, tenants, residents and other stakeholders the council used several approaches to promote the consultation.

A programme of communications and marketing activity took place to inform all stakeholders that the council were consulting on a new selective licensing scheme and encourage participation.

The communications informed and educated all stakeholders on the successes of the previous scheme, proposals for the new scheme and the benefits.

The approach to communications and marketing focussed on digital activities, physical hard copy communications and in-person events to meet the needs of the digitally excluded.

#### Landlord and managing/letting agent events

The council held a series of meetings and forums to gather feedback from landlords and to make them aware of the consultation. These events are summarised below:

- Virtual landlord forum, 14 December 2022
- Midas Landlord focus group, 11 January 2023

The above meetings were widely publicised and more than 500 people registered for the events. A total of more than 260 attended.

#### Residents, tenants and other stakeholder events

The council held a series of meetings and forums to gather feedback from residents, tenants and other stakeholders and to make them aware of the consultation. These events are summarised below:

- Harlesden Brent Connects, 31 October 2022
- Kilburn Brent Connects, 2 November 2022
- Kingsbury & Kenton Brent Connects, 10 November 2022
- Residents meeting with Roundwood ward, 11 November 2022
- Willesden Brent Connects, 15 November 2022
- Wembley Brent Connects, 17 November 2022
- Public drop in session, 6 December 2022
- Public drop in session 7 December 2022
- Public drop in session 11 January 2023
- Public drop in session 18 January 2023
- Renters representative groups, 11 January 2023

The above meetings were publicised to more than 7,000. A total of more than 420 attended.

#### Communications Channels

The council used a wide range of communication channels to promote the consultation and make stakeholders aware of the proposals.

Activities to engage all stakeholder groups, inside and outside the borough, and raise their awareness included:

- A direct email to landlords, MPs and landlord and tenant representatives was sent on 10 November 2022
- Updating the council website corporate homepage to include the consultation
- Posting a news article about the consultation on the council website
- Press release to announce start of consultation was published on 31 October 2022
- Inclusion within the Brent Black Community Action Plan members newsletter on 14 November 2022, 19 December 2022, 9 January 2023 and 23 January 2023.

Using the council's social media

- 15 twitter posts with a total of 14,503 impressions, 533 engagements, 84 re-tweets and 32 likes
- 14 Facebook posts with a total of 4,761 people reached, 28 engagements, 15 likes, 225 clicks, 5 comments, 8 shares and 5,149 impressions
- One LinkedIn post on 1 November with a total of 607 impressions, 15 engagements, 10 clicks, 4 reactions and 1 comment.

Activities to reach out to Brent tenants and residents included:

- The consultation was included as an item in an email to private tenants on 4 January 2023 to 1,777 subscribers
- A direct email to all resident associations in Brent was sent on 14 November 2022
- The consultation was included within the following e-newsletters:
  - Your Brent on 31 October 2022 and 9 January 2023 to 12,121 subscribers
  - Business newsletter on 8 November to 13,682 subscribers
  - Brent Town Centre newsletter at the end of November to more than 220 Brent businesses
- A full page advertisement was placed within the Brent Magazine, delivered to 135,905 households across the borough.
- An out of home campaign ran with adverts added to 55 JC Decaux print and digital sites across the borough. The out of home campaign ran from 21 November to 5 December 2022
- A borough-wide leaflet drop to 135,905 Brent households was completed on 25 November 2022
- Pull up banners were installed and displayed at:
  - Ealing Road Library
  - Kilburn Library
  - Kingsbury Library
  - Willesden Green Library
  - Wembley Civic Centre Library
  - Wembley Civic Centre Welcome Desk from 9 November 2022
- Two libraries within the borough displayed information on digital screens
- The Civic Centre displayed information across six screens
- Seven Community Hubs displayed pull up banners
- An announcement was published on 17 November 2022 and sent to 164 Brent headteachers
- Six student sector providers were contacted on 28 November 2022:



- Iqstudent.com
- Scape
- CRM
- Fresh
- UNITE
- Quintain.

Activities to reach out to landlords included the landlords newsletter and was distributed on 31 October 2022 to 20,909 subscribers.

Activities to reach out to landlords outside the borough included:

- A digital campaign on the London Property Licensing (LPL) website which ran for 12 weeks. LPL is the award winning, leading website for informing private landlords in the UK. It is the only website dedicated to providing simple, impartial and expert advice on property licensing and explaining the licensing requirements across every London borough. The website reaches out to landlords based throughout the UK and those based abroad. The campaign started on 31 October 2022 and ran until 23 January 2023. The campaign included:
  - A pixel banner advert promoting the licensing consultation was placed on eight London borough pages from 31 October 2022 to 23 January 2023. Anyone clicking on the advert was taken directly to the council's consultation webpage. The eight boroughs were the neighbouring boroughs:
    - Barnet
    - Brent
    - Camden
    - Ealing
    - Hammersmith & Fulham
    - Harrow
    - Kensington & Chelsea
    - Westminster
  - On 31 October 2022, the London Borough of Brent webpage was updated with information about the licensing consultation and how to take part. During the consultation the London Borough of Brent's webpage was the third most viewed borough webpage on the LPL website
  - From 31 October 2022 to 23 January 2023 a pixel banner advert promoting the consultation was placed on the LPL homepage
  - From 31 October 2022 to 23 January 2023 a banner headline attached to a rotating image at the top of the LPL home page with a link to the consultation listing
  - From 3 November 2022 to 23 January 2023, the consultation was promoted on the LPL latest events webpage. It was also promoted in the events section on the LPL home page and eight borough pages
  - A news article about the consultation was posted in the LPL news section on 31 October 2022, promoted on social media and in the LPL newsletter. The five most recent news stories are listed on the LPL home page and the London Borough of Brent's page

- The licensing consultation was promoted in posts on the LPL Facebook page and the LPL LinkedIn page on 1 November 2022
- Tweets about the licensing consultation were published on the LPL Twitter Feed (@lplicensing) every 12 to 14 days, timed to cover a variety of morning, afternoon and evening posts, between 2 November 2022 and 23 January 2023. During this period the @lplicensing twitter feed had more than 2,300 followers, generating impressions, likes, retweets and comments.
- The consultation was promoted in the LPL newsletter on 2 November 2022, 8 December 2022 and 21 December 2022. The newsletter is widely distributed to landlords, letting agents, organisations, local authority officers and government officials and sent to more than 3,500 people who have requested updates on housing regulation and property licensing schemes
- A paid Facebook campaign ran from 9 November to 21 November 2022. The campaign received 583 clicks that went directly to the consultation page
- Emails were sent to neighbouring borough regulatory services on 14 November.

Activities to make digitally excluded and vulnerable stakeholders aware of the consultation included:

- Reaching out to local community and outreach groups to ask them to share the consultation with the groups they interact with:
  - Rumi's Kitchen
  - Granville Community Kitchen
  - Kilburn Street Kitchen
  - Salvation Army Lunch Club Brent Food Bank
  - Sufra
  - Willesden Mutual Aid
  - Posters were sent to eight Wellbeing Family Centres on 9 November 2022.

Activities to make stakeholders within the council aware of the consultation included:

- Notices were placed on the internal channel Yammer on:
  - 31 October 2022, and seen by 157 members of staff
  - 9 January 2023 and seen by 93 members of staff
- Updating the council website corporate homepage to include the consultation
- Posting a news article about the consultation on the council website on the first day of the consultation
- Six digital screens in the Civic Centre displayed messages
- Members bulletin was published on 4 November 2022
- Managers brief was published on 7 November 2022
- Weekly round up was published on 23 November 2022
- Email to all Housing staff was sent on 5 December 2022
- Brent Black Community Action Plan members newsletter on 14 November 2022, 19 December 2022, 9 January 2023 and 23 January 2023
- Using the council's social media:

- 15 twitter posts with a total of 14,503 impressions, 533 engagements, 84 re-tweets and 32 likes
- 14 Facebook posts with a total of 4,761 people reached, 28 engagements, 15 likes, 225 clicks, 5 comments, 8 shares and 5,149 impressions
- One LinkedIn post on 1 November with a total of 607 impressions, 15 engagements, 10 clicks, 4 reactions and 1 comment.

Activities to make other stakeholders outside the borough aware of the consultation included emails to neighbouring London borough councils Private Sector Housing teams at:

- Ealing
- Westminster City
- Camden
- Harrow
- Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Barnet.

## Consultation Methods

The council used several formats to gather feedback from stakeholders on the consultation.

### Online Survey

The online survey was open to the general public. In total, there were 853 responses to the online survey. The consultation survey was the main method of gathering feedback during the consultation. Respondents were asked their views on selective licensing, the proposed fees and conditions, and their views on issues within the borough. Their responses are analysed and broken down by stakeholder type below. Respondents could also request a paper version of the survey.

### Public Forums

The council ran online public forums to provide more information about the proposed scheme and to gather feedback from stakeholders who would be impacted by licensing. The public meetings were held over Microsoft Teams and in person where council officers presented information about the proposed schemes, followed by a question-and-answer session.

### Other Written Feedback

The council accepted feedback on the proposed licensing schemes by email or written response. The feedback in the emails received has been analysed below and the written responses received can be found in the appendices.

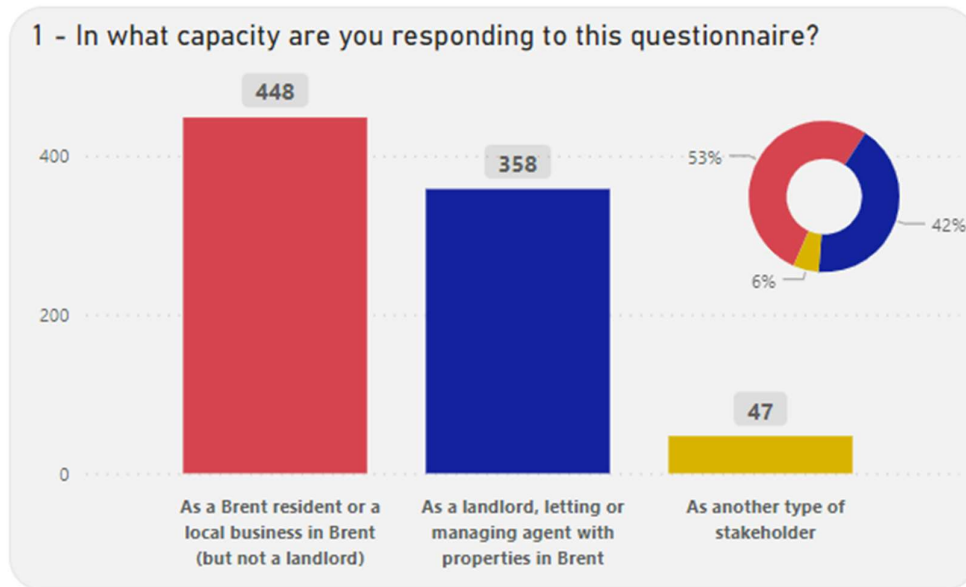
## Consultation Survey Results

This section of the report presents the results from the consultation survey. There were 853 responses to the consultation survey.

In the following analysis, the percentages are based on the answers to the question and will state where less than the total 853 respondents answered the question.

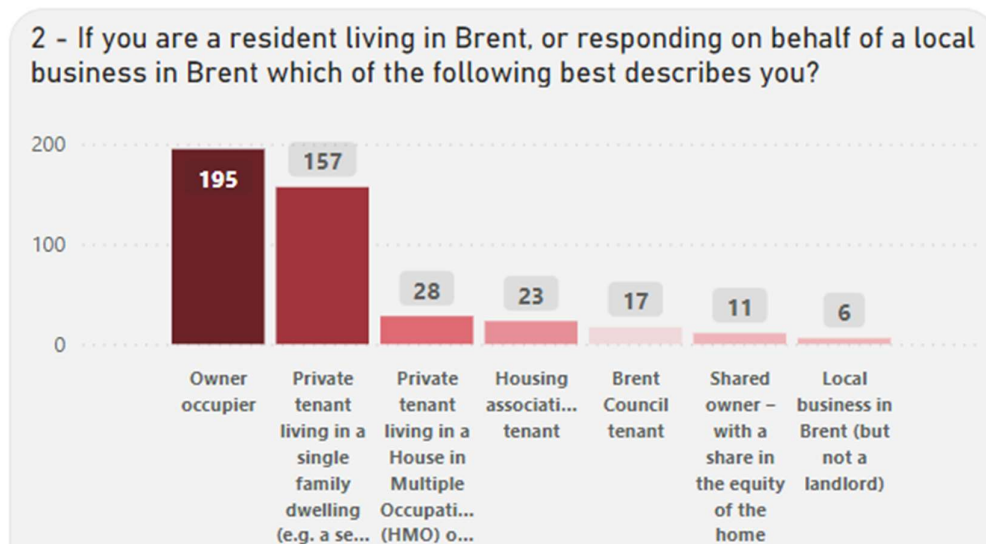
### Overall Consultation Response

Respondents to the consultation were categorised into the following stakeholder groups.



Respondents who stated they were a Brent resident or local business, or a landlord, letting or managing agent were then asked which description would best describe them.

Of the 448 residents and local businesses who responded, 195 (44%) said they were an owner occupier and 157 (35%) said they were private tenants living in a single family dwelling.

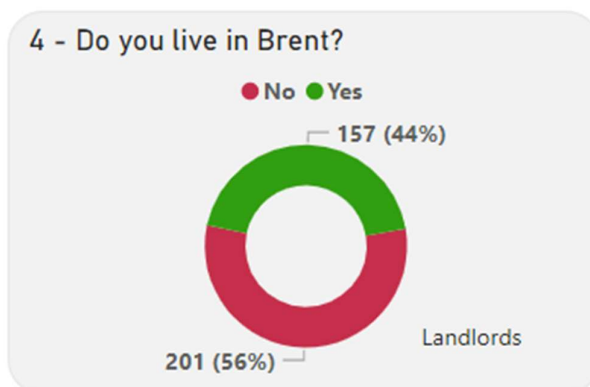


Of the 358 landlords, letting or managing agents who responded, 213 (59%) said they were a landlord who manages their own property, and 121 (34%) said they were a landlord who uses a managing agent.



The range of respondents to the consultation show a good representation of views from different stakeholder groups.

Landlords, letting or managing agents who responded to the consultation were asked if they lived in the London Borough of Brent. Of the 358 landlords, letting or managing agents who responded, 157 (44%) said they lived in Brent, and 201 (56%) said they lived outside of Brent.



These results clearly indicate that the consultation reached landlords both in and outside the borough.

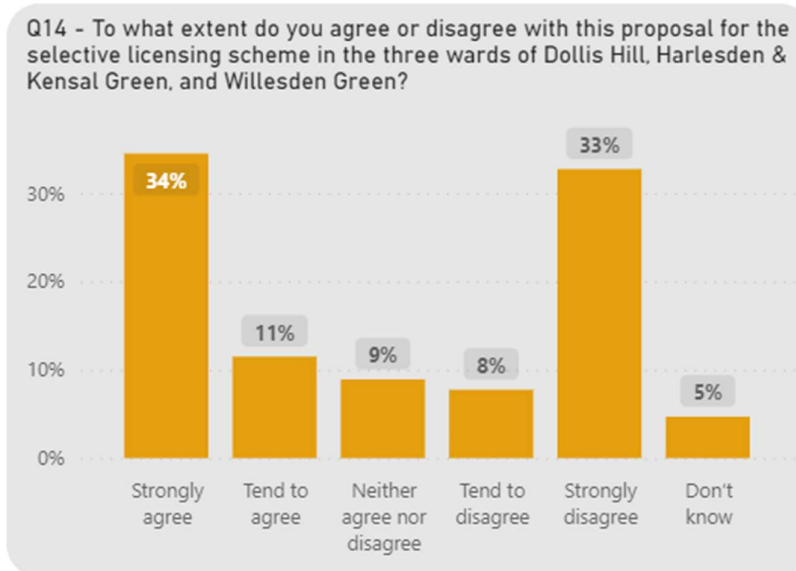
### Views on the proposed licensing scheme for designation 1

The council is proposing to introduce two selective licensing designations which would apply to privately rented homes across 21 wards. To understand the views on the two designations, respondents were asked about the two designations separately. This section covers the responses regarding the proposed selective licensing scheme in designation 1, which would apply to the following three wards, Dollis Hill, Harlesden & Kensal Green and Willesden

Green based on the criteria of poor property conditions and very high repeat antisocial behaviour (ASB).

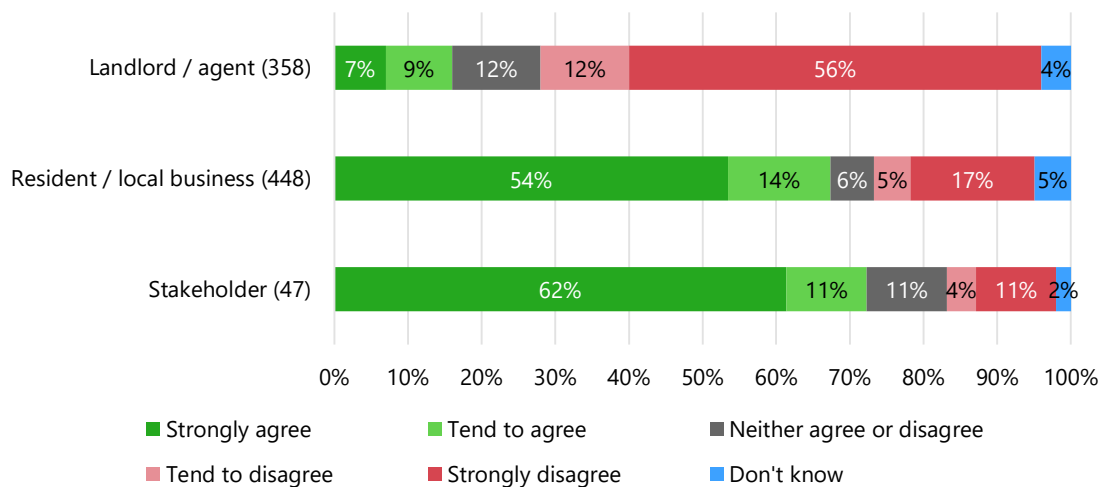
The overall majority, around 45% of respondents, agree with the proposal for selective licensing in designation 1 and around 41% disagree.

All respondents (853) to the online consultation answered this question.



Looking at the responses by group, residents / local business and other stakeholders are in favour of the proposals with over 65% of each group agreeing. Landlords are opposed to the proposals with over 65% disagreeing.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal for the selective licensing scheme in the three wards of Dollis Hill, Harlesden & Kensal Green and Willesden Green?



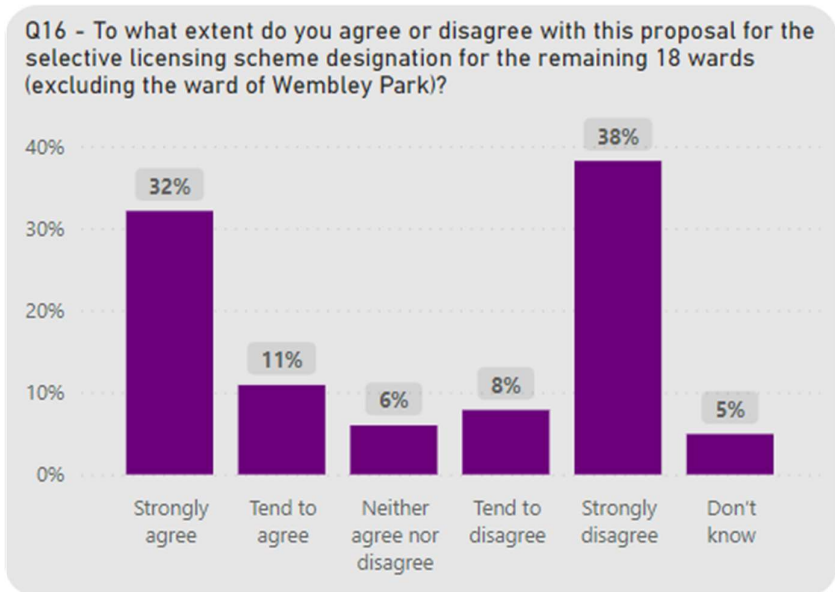
### **Views on the proposed licensing scheme for designation 2**

The council is proposing to introduce two selective licensing schemes which would apply to privately rented homes across 21 wards. To understand the views on the two designations, respondents were asked about the two schemes separately. This section covers the responses regarding the proposed selective licensing scheme in designation 2, which would apply to the following 18 wards based on the criteria of poor property conditions:

- Alperton
- Barnhill
- Brondesbury Park
- Cricklewood & Mapesbury
- Kenton
- Kilburn
- Kingsbury
- Northwick Park
- Preston
- Queens Park
- Queensbury
- Roundwood
- Stonebridge
- Sudbury
- Tokyngton
- Welsh Harp
- Wembley Central
- Wembley Hill

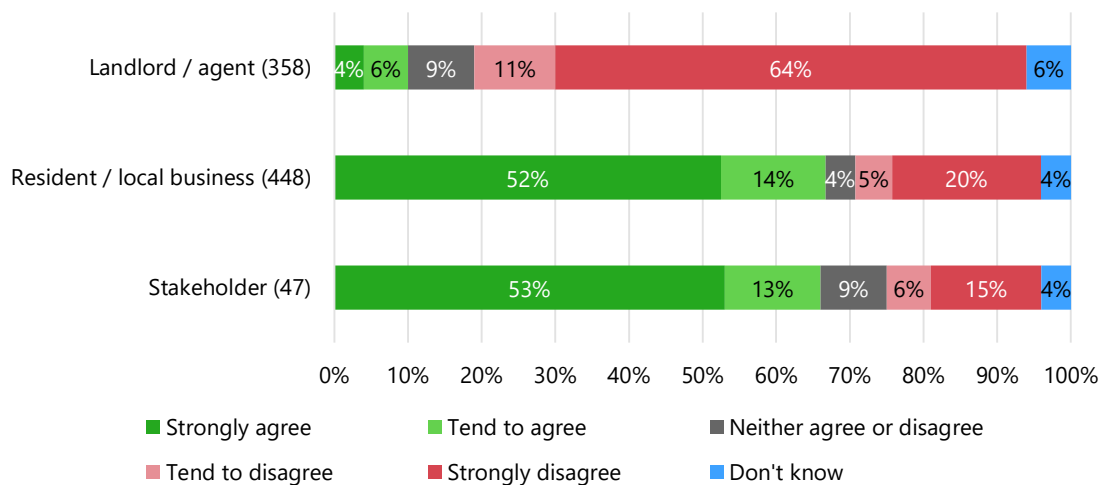
The overall majority, around 46% of respondents, disagree with the proposal for selective licensing in designation 2 and around 43% agree.

All respondents (853) to the online consultation answered this question.



Looking at the responses by group, residents / local business and other stakeholders are in favour of the proposals with over 65% of each group agreeing. Landlords are opposed to the proposals with around 75% disagreeing.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal for the selective licensing scheme designation for the remaining 18 wards (excluding the ward of Wembley Park)?



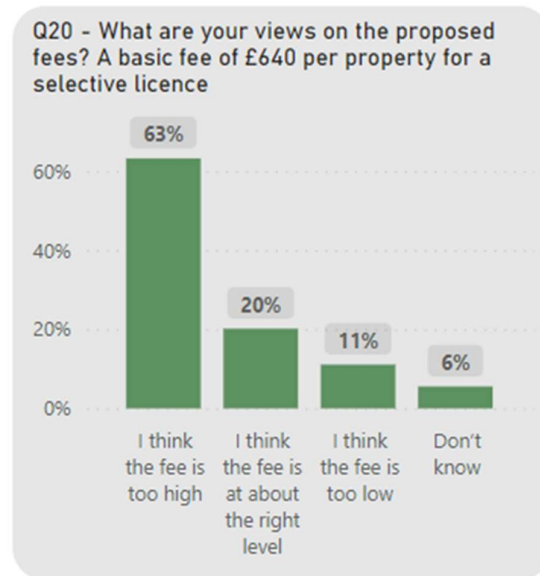
### Views on the proposed licensing scheme fees

The consultation asked respondents for their views on the proposed licence fees for the proposed selective licensing scheme. Information about the proposed licence fees was provided within the consultation documents.



Respondents were asked how reasonable they feel the proposed selective licence fee of £640 for a five-year licence is.

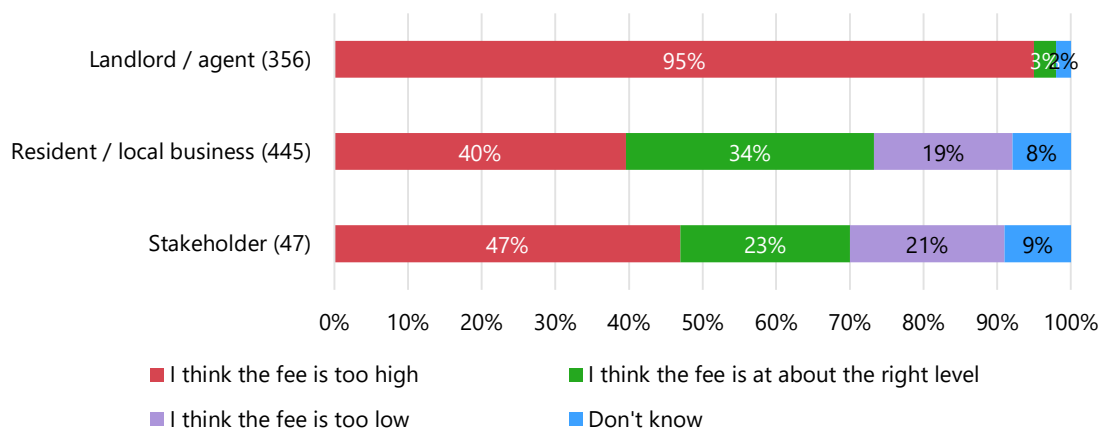
The overall majority of respondents, 63% said that they thought that the fee is too high. 848 respondents to the online consultation answered this question.



Looking at the responses by group, 356 landlords/ agents, 445 residents / local business and 47 other stakeholders answered the question.

Residents / local businesses and other stakeholders had a more mixed view of the fee, with 40% and 47% respectively saying that the fee was too high. However, 53% of residents/local business and 44% of other stakeholders said the fee was about the right level or too low. Landlords / agents had a more consistent view, with 95% saying that the fee was too high.

What are your views on the proposed fees? A basic fee of \*£640 per property\* for a selective licence



## Free Text Comments

The free text comments for the questions asking respondents to explain if they disagreed with the proposed licence schemes, and if they had any further comments were analysed. The analysis looked at the responses by stakeholder type.

### Landlords/agents

For landlords / agents, the top reason given for negative responses is the perception that PRS licensing is a money-making scheme for Brent Council. Over a quarter of negative comments from landlords focused on this subject area. This reflects a general sense of cynicism about Brent Council. For instance, respondents question what the council is doing with the money from the scheme. There also are some requests to see the data and calculations that the fees are based on.

- *"This is just another 'cash grab' introduced to rinse landlords' pockets as much as possible."*
- *"I believe Selective Licensing is nothing more than a cash collecting scheme for Brent Council."*
- *"I feel it is another money grabbing exercise, not to help the landlord or tenant."*
- *"I paid the fee and have seen nothing from the council. No checks, no property inspection."*
- *"Prove with facts that the last scheme from 2015 achieved anything. I haven't seen any data."*

In regards to the concerns raised by landlords, the next most important issues with PRS licensing are that 1) extra costs incurred by landlords will lead to higher rents, and 2) the PRS scheme treats both responsible and rogue landlords in the same way. Both these notions received around a fifth of negative comments from landlords.

- *"As I stated in the previous page, any cost to landlords is passed to the end users, who are tenants."*
- *"Unnecessary burden on the landlord which WILL be passed onto tenants."*
- *"Deal with problem landlords and not have one size fits all policy and be more flexible with responsible landlords."*
- *"The licensing scheme does nothing for decent landlords."*

Lastly, landlords also expressed some concern that PRS fees would incentivise them to sell their properties, resulting in reduced housing stock in Brent as a whole. While, as with residents, concerns over lack of enforcement were also mentioned as some landlords felt that current legislation is already robust enough and more bureaucracy isn't needed.

- *"The higher the fees are the more landlords will just quit the market."*
- *"If the fee gets too high the landlords will leave the borough."*
- *"I would only be in favour of selective licensing in Brent if I really thought it targeted rogue landlords and had the resources to be properly enforced."*
- *"Anything a selective license is likely to add is already covered by existing procedures and services."*

## Residents/ local businesses

For residents, the top reason for negative responses is the perception that PRS licensing will increase rents. Almost a third of negative comments from residents mentioned this.

- *"Licensing only has the effect of pushing up rents and property prices."*
- *"You will push landlords out of renting resulting in fewer properties which will result in higher rents."*
- *"I don't believe it's time to do more licensing which in the end will be reflected in the tenant's rent."*

Next comes the idea that PRS licensing is a money making scheme for Brent. Over 20% of resident comments mentioned this.

- *"Kensal does not have an anti-social problem and I view this as a method of raising more funds in an illegitimate manner."*
- *"Licences are purely being introduced to raise revenue for the Council."*
- *"Licensing appears to be a money-making scheme for Brent."*

Other notable themes were lack of enforcement and the idea that PRS licensing treats good and bad landlords in the same way.

- *"A difference will only be made if they are properly enforced."*
- *"Be careful not to price good landlords out of Brent. Good landlords have a much lower profit margin. Bad landlords charge us tenants the same rent but with much worse upkeep and responsiveness to repairs."*

## Other stakeholders

The most notable sentiment among stakeholders is that PRS licensing is unnecessary, providing no benefit to those involved. A third of stakeholder comments related to this.

- *"I don't see any benefit."*
- *"No need for it."*

Other themes that appear important to stakeholders are that licensing will lead to higher rents and that it is a money-making scheme for Brent.

- *"Licensing is not necessary, it is just a money making exercise."*
- *"A blanket rule of selective licensing for every PRS property will increase the cost for landlords therefore the rent will go up which is already high, this can lead to homelessness."*

## Alternative Solutions

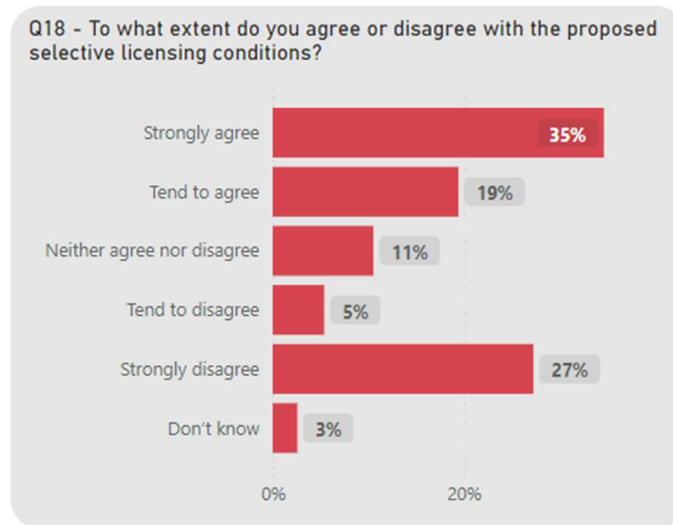
Many of the respondents had suggestions about how to improve the scheme and the private rented sector in Brent in general. These focused on three main areas:

- Lowering the licensing fee
- Better enforcement of current legislation
- The council should increase its own housebuilding

## Views on the proposed licensing scheme conditions

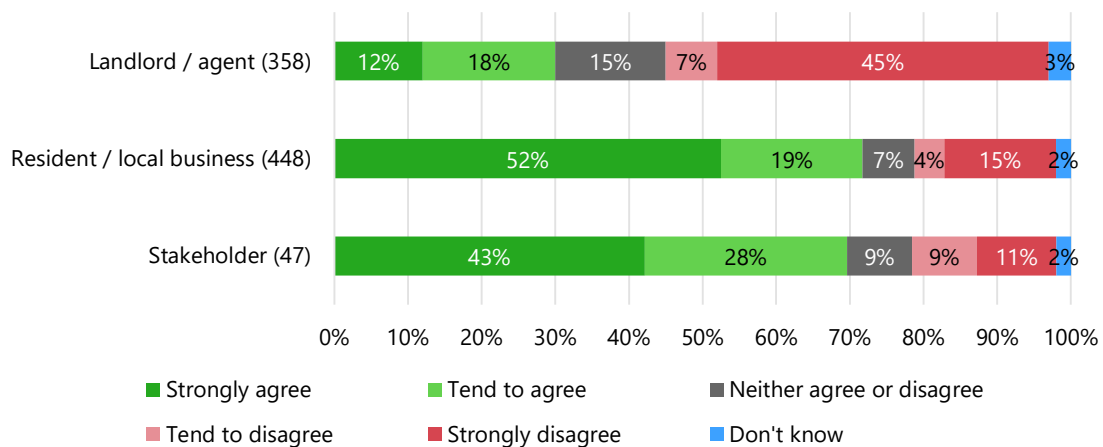
The consultation asked respondents for their views on the proposed set of licence conditions. Information about the licence conditions was provided within the consultation documents.

The overall majority of respondents (54%) agreed with the proposed licence conditions. All respondents (853) to the online consultation answered this question.



Looking at the responses by group, residents / local businesses and other stakeholders are in favour, with over 70% of each group agreeing. Landlords are opposed, with 52% disagreeing with the proposed licence conditions.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed selective licensing conditions?



## Comments regarding the licence conditions

The free text comments for the questions asking respondents to explain why they disagreed with the proposed licence conditions were analysed. The analysis looked at the responses by stakeholder type.

### Landlords / agents

For landlords / agents, the most common theme in the comments regarding the licence conditions is that the conditions are already covered by existing law, and therefore questioning the value of the proposed scheme:

- *"All of these issues are already addressed by law and by competent landlords who also require them for building insurance. Brent is adding nothing by requesting what is already being complied with."*
- *"All the conditions are already mandatory under Landlords and Tenants legislation. Putting this in a licensing is nothing more than check tick exercise. The license simply does not add value"*
- *"Most of these conditions are covered by law anyway and should be followed but I do not agree selective licencing is the way to do this"*
- *"Some of the conditions are already mandatory. there is no need for more paperwork and red tape. tenants are free to move on if conditions are unsuitable."*
- *"These are basic requirements which most responsible landlords do anyway. Making them for a licence in addition to this is unnecessary."*
- *"These are covered by Law in any case we don't need repetitive work by Brent on this"*

Landlords also expressed a view that good landlords will already be meeting these conditions:

- *"They are all things a responsible landlord already does, by Law. The council do not require any further fees to chase down those that do not comply"*
- *"All the conditions listed (gas appliance safety cert, electrical safety cert, How to Rent booklet, references, and so on are things a good landlord does anyway, and he/she should not need to pay the council for a licence for something they already do. Why not canvass individual tenants asking about their personal tenancies then target the bad landlords that way?"*

A theme in landlord responses, and in all other stakeholder responses, was opposition to the licence condition requiring references from tenants:

- *"Landlords can vet their own tenants and shouldn't be forced to obtain references and council should not be able to have this much control on properties"*
- *"many Brent tenants do not have any persons who could provide honest references for their renting, even when they are existing/previous Brent council tenants!"*

Another theme was that licensing would cause rents to increase and that it is a money-making scheme for the council, and that the fee is too expensive.

- *"It is just going through the motions and a way for the council to make money."*

- *"as before, not fair on tenants. increased costs for landlords will always be passed to tenants in higher rents. this is unfortunate for tenants."*
- *"I agree to the standards but not the high fee that the council requires for doing nothing."*

Lastly, landlords felt that the council should be doing more to support landlords and that tenants also have responsibilities as well:

- *"Other than the costly eviction route that can take up to 12 months through the courts - what support does a landlord have when the tenant does not look after the furniture or comply with the terms of the occupation? As it stands the tenant can in many ways trip up the landlord on technicalities which prevents the landlord seeking justice through the courts. The landlord can also do with free legal support as the tenant currently does - justice shouldn't be one sided!"*
- *"Landlords should not shoulder all responsibility, tenants must do their part as well"*

### Residents / local businesses

Similarly to the responses from landlords / agents, the most common theme was that the licence conditions are covered by existing law:

- *"Aren't this already legal requirements?"*
- *"The conditions set out are already legal conditions applicable to any rental houses"*
- *"These are generally already required under a standard lease. This scheme does not provide additional requirements"*
- *"These are standard conditions which landlords already have to meet in order to let a property."*

Residents / local businesses also stated that they thought licensing would cause rents to increase:

- *"Just adding further layers of cost, which will increase rents for tenants. You will end up with a borough with little or no rental accommodation available within the next five years."*
- *"Reduce rental stock and push up rent prices"*

Other themes were that there should be more conditions and opposition to the condition requiring references from tenants:

- *"How about having to provide the right number of bins? Telling the truth about the number of people? Having the right number of people relative to rooms and bathrooms in-line with Building Regulations? Insulating the property to a minimum level? Proving they have a cleaning contract for properties in multiple occupation, when tenants tend to not do anything?"*
- *"There ought to be greater regulation on people proposing to be landlords i.e that they are indeed a "fit and proper" person, are responsible, have the means and capability of maintaining a property and the basic understanding and respect that the property is another a tenant's home"*

- *"They do not go strong enough - some of these landlords own hundreds of properties and businesses in the borough and they should have a duty of care to ensure their properties are well maintained, clean and tidy inside and out and that their tenant do not undertake ASB"*
- *"I don't agree with the final condition of references. It's an unfair ask on tenants who might face barriers in securing a reference that is deemed acceptable, and might lead to forms of discrimination. While the conditions for selective license puts some onus on landlords, they aren't required to provide proof of being an otherwise good landlord, so tenants shouldn't be asked either."*

### Other stakeholders

The most consistent comment from stakeholders was that they disagreed with the licence condition relating to licence holders asking for references from tenants:

- *"References are a further obstacle to prospective tenants which disproportionately affects lower income families"*
- *"The requirement for persons wishing to occupy a dwelling to supply references makes it extremely difficult/impossible for people with no history of renting in England to live anywhere but 'the shadow PRS' as landlords will invariably demand a reference from a previous landlord. For those who have recently arrived in England, it is extremely difficult/impossible to negotiate an alternative referee because those people are not familiar enough with local law to know that landlords are not obliged to provide a reference so landlords cannot be specific about the source of any reference. But in any event, in practice, such a requirement leaves those newly-arrived unable to access licensed property."*

Other themes that appeared in the comments from stakeholders are that the conditions are already law and concerns about the implementation of the scheme:

- *"All the conditions included to obtain a selective licencing are already law (such gas safety etc) so why you need a separate licence. If you need to see safety documents create a central database where landlords can upload themselves. This shouldn't cost much and doesn't require admin teams to administrate the licencing scheme like how its done now. Council can check the landlords on database for up to date documents where necessary."*
- *"Do not disagree however have doubts regarding if it is going to be executed properly"*

## Views on issues in the Brent

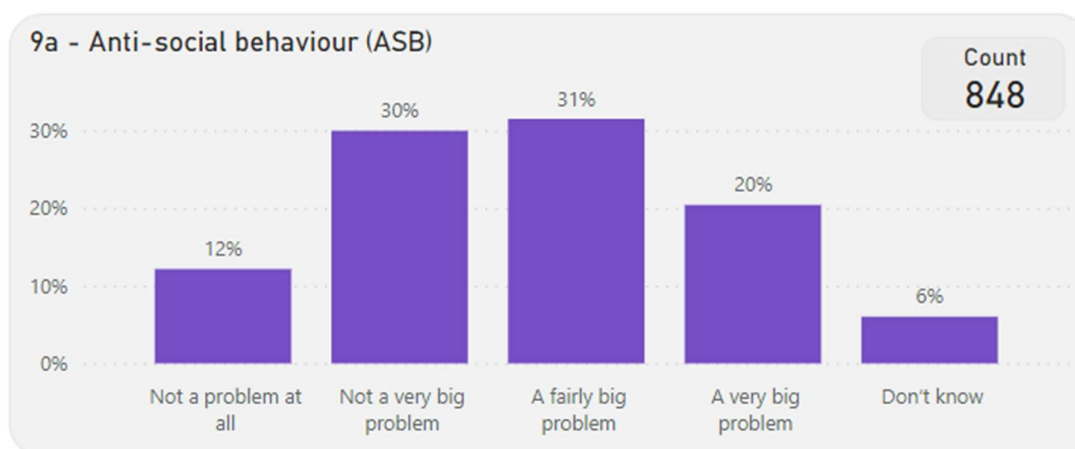
Respondents to the survey were asked their opinion of issues relating to poor property conditions, ASB and deprivation in private rented properties in the borough.

Respondents were asked to what extent they believed that anti-social behaviour, poor property conditions and deprivation are problems in their local area of Brent.

For each question the number of responses is shown as 'count' for the total responses, and in brackets against each stakeholder type.

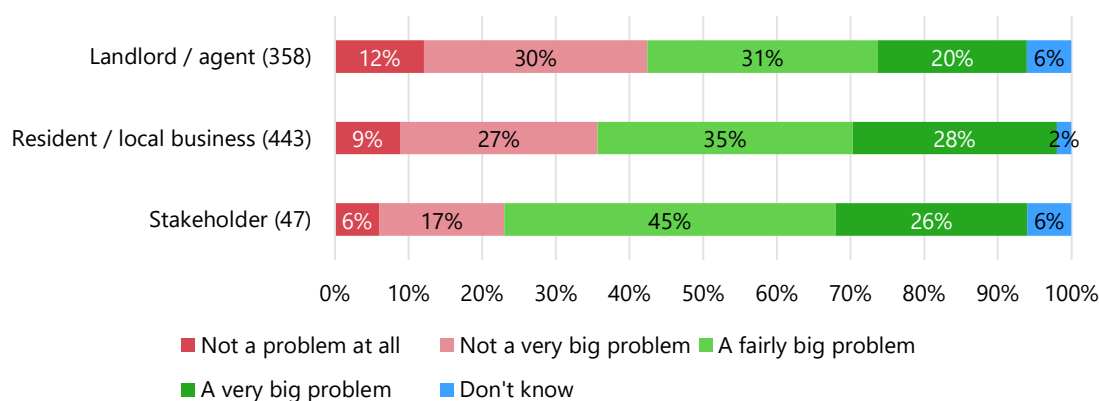
### Anti-social behaviour

51% of respondents thought that ASB was a very big or fairly big problem as opposed to 42% who thought it was not a problem at all or not a very big problem.



Looking at the responses by group, over 50% of all respondent groups think that ASB is a fairly big or very big problem in their area.

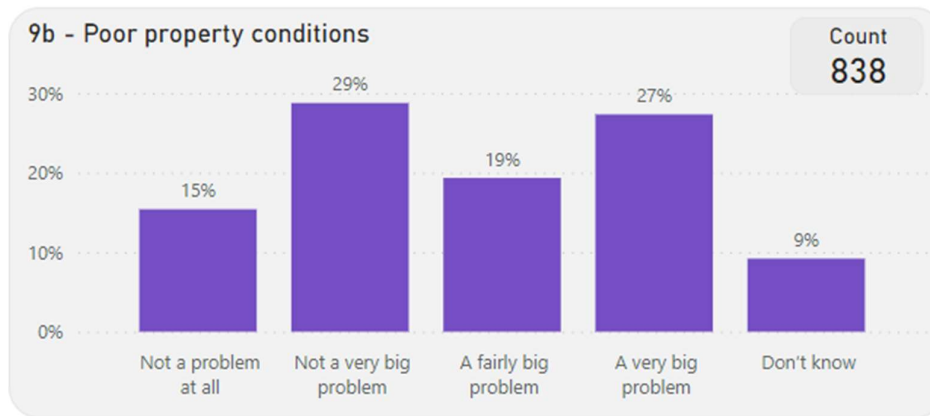
### 9a To what extent do you believe ASB to be a problem in your local area of Brent?





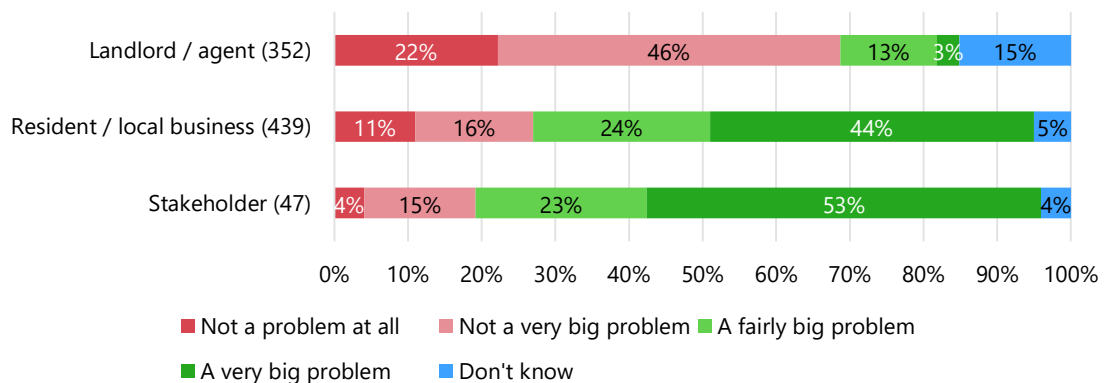
### Poor property conditions

For poor property conditions, the majority of responses stated that they thought that poor property conditions are not a very big problem (29%) or a very big problem (27%).



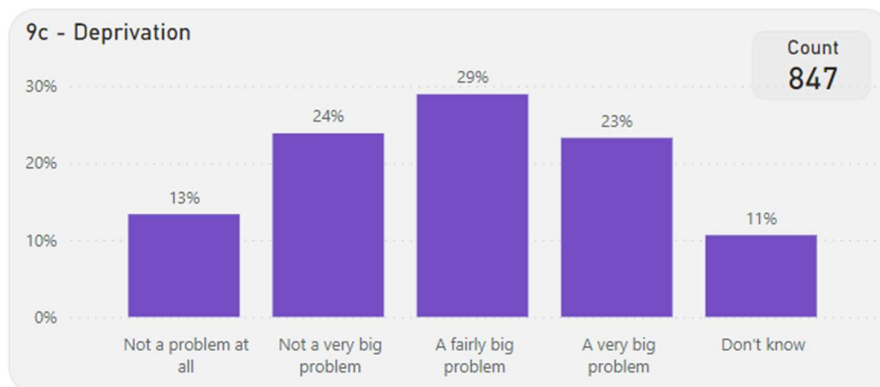
Looking at the responses by group, residents / local businesses and other stakeholders think that poor property conditions are a fairly big or very big issue (over 65% of each group). Landlords / agents think it is not a problem at all or not a very big problem.

### 9b To what extent do you believe poor property conditions to be a problem in your area?



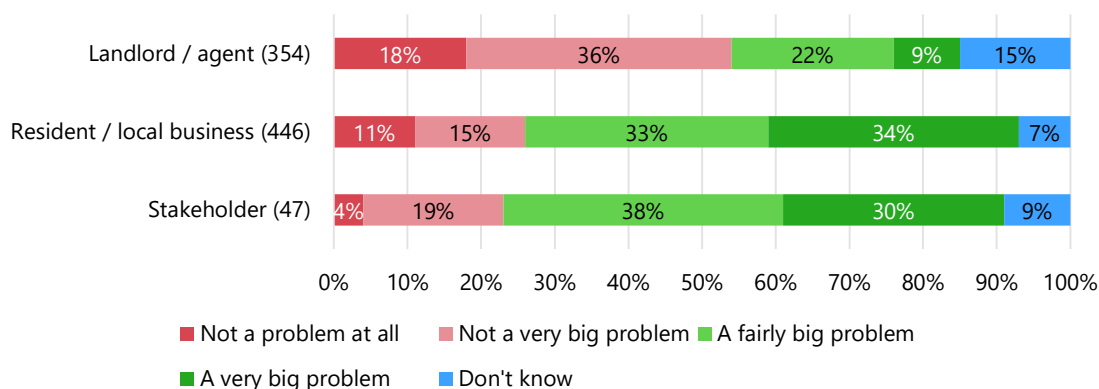
## Deprivation

For deprivation, the largest proportion of respondents (29%) responded that deprivation is a fairly big problem.



Looking at the responses by group, residents / local businesses and other stakeholders think that deprivation is a fairly big or very big issue (over 65% of each group). Landlords / agents think it is not a problem at all or not a very big problem (54%).

### 9c To what extent do you believe deprivation to be a problem in your area?



## Views on the private rented sector in Brent

Respondents were also asked about their views on the private rented sector in Brent.

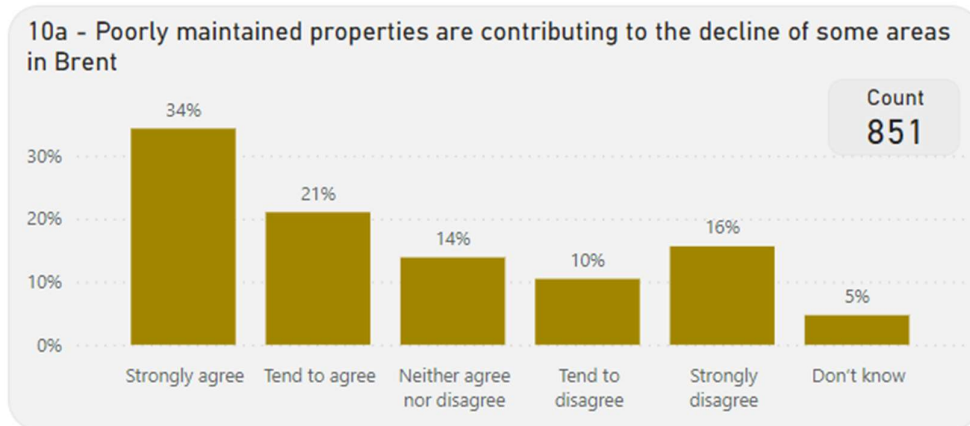
### Poorly maintained and poorly managed properties

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that poorly maintained properties and poorly managed properties are contributing to the decline in some areas in Brent.

For each question the number of responses is shown as 'count' for the total responses, and in brackets against each stakeholder type.

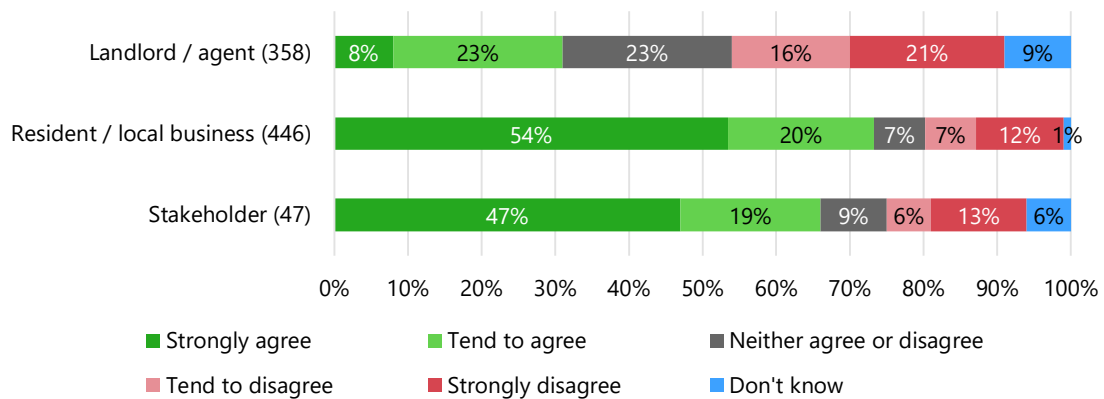
*Poorly maintained properties*

When asked about poorly maintained properties contributing to the decline of some areas in Brent, the largest proportion of respondents (34%) strongly agreed.



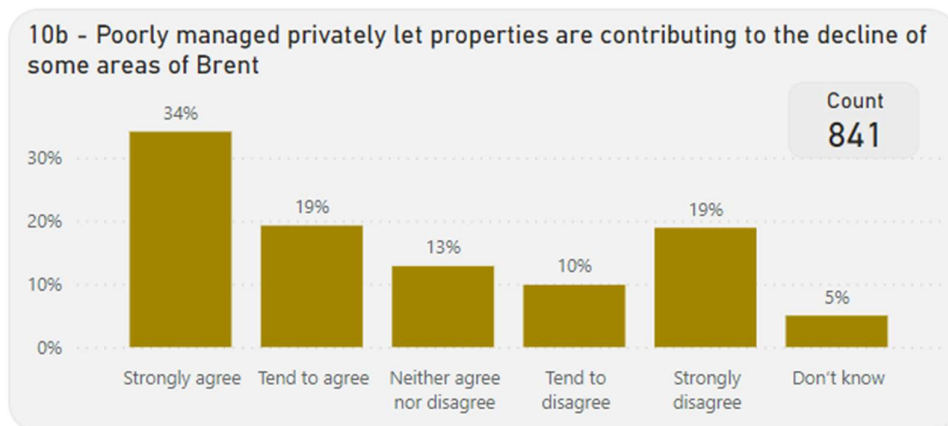
Looking at the responses by group, residents / local business and other stakeholders strongly agree that poorly maintained properties are contributing to the decline of some areas in Brent. The response from landlords is more evenly spread, with 23% responding with tend to agree and neither agree or disagree, and 21% strongly disagreeing.

10a Poorly maintained properties are contributing to the decline of some areas of Brent

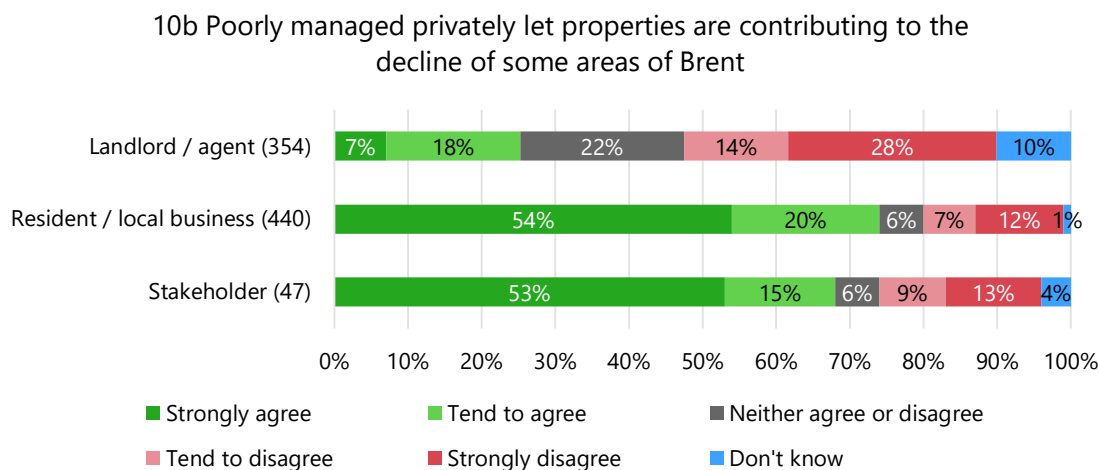


*Poorly managed properties*

When asked about poorly managed privately let properties contributing to the decline of some areas in Brent, the largest proportion of respondents (34%) strongly agreed.



Looking at the responses by group, residents / local business and other stakeholders strongly agree that poorly maintained properties are contributing to the decline of some areas in Brent. The response from landlords is more evenly spread, but the largest portion of respondents (28%) strongly disagree.



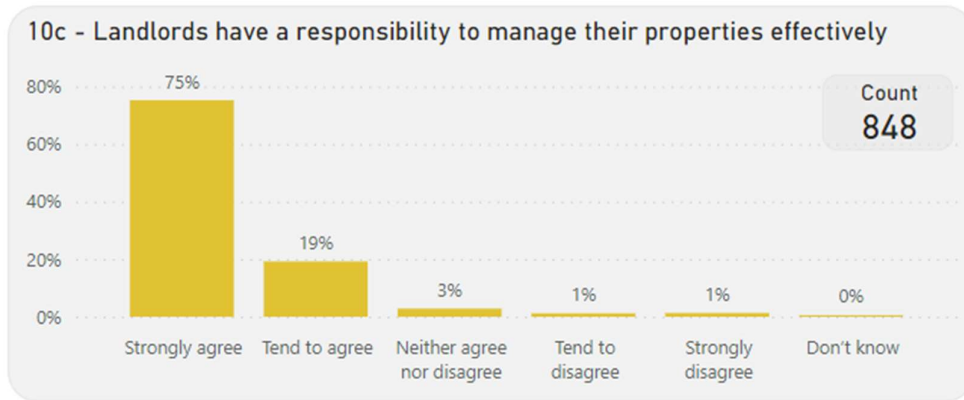
*Landlord responsibility and 'fit and proper' persons*

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that landlords have a responsibility to manage their properties properly, and that to help with the management of privately let properties in the borough, landlords should be 'fit and proper' persons.

For each question the number of responses is shown as 'count' for the total responses, and in brackets against each stakeholder type.

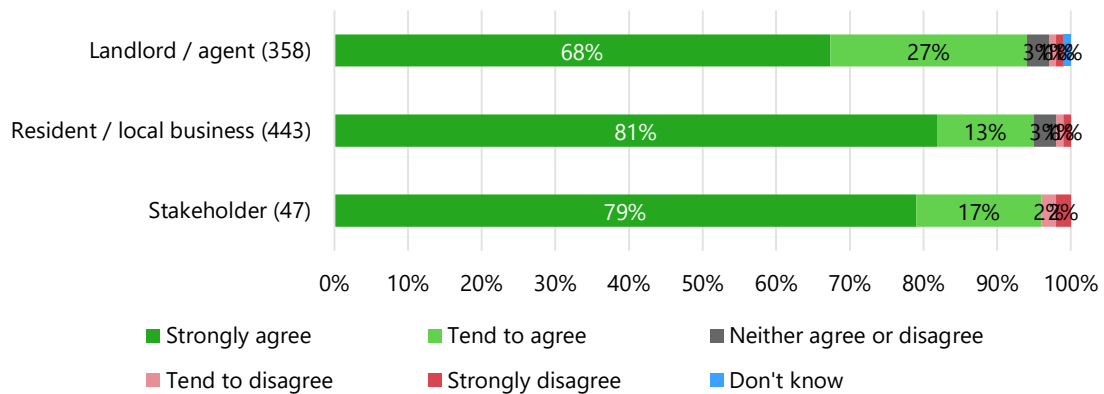
*Landlord responsibility*

When asked if landlords have a responsibility to manage their properties effectively, the largest proportion of respondents (75%) strongly agreed.



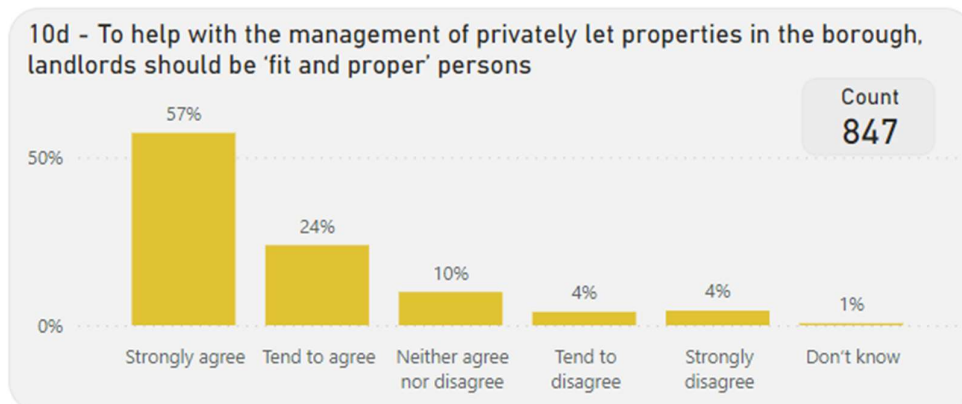
Looking at the responses by group, there is consistent strong agreement from each stakeholder group.

10c Landlords have a responsibility to manage their properties effectively

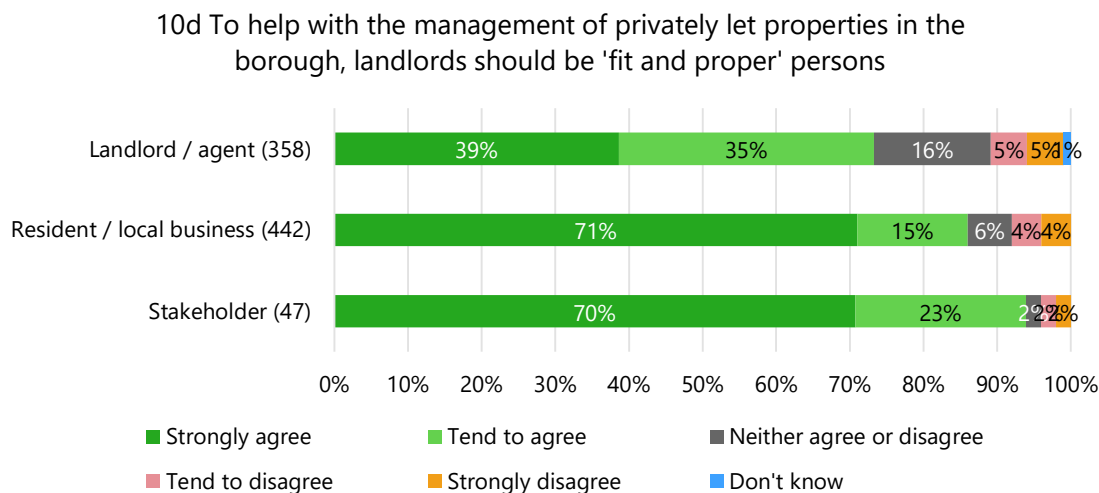


*'Fit and proper' person*

When asked if to help with the management of privately let properties in the borough, landlords should be 'fit and proper' persons, there was strong agreement (57%).



Looking at the responses by stakeholder group, the majority of each stakeholder group agreed with the statement.



### Views on existing and previous selective licensing schemes in the Brent

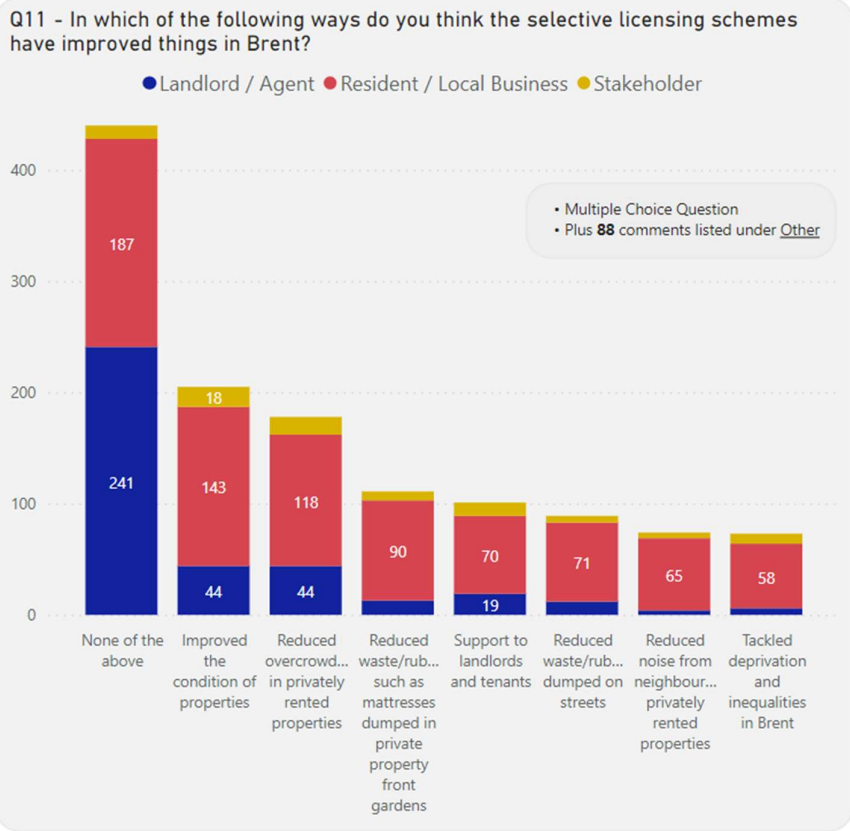
Respondents were also asked about their view on the previous and current smaller selective licensing schemes in Brent.

#### Views on the existing selective licensing scheme

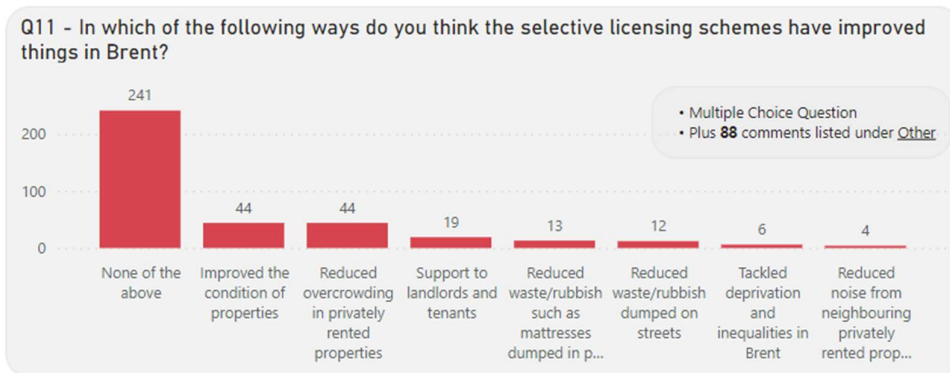
Respondents were asked if they thought that the selective licensing scheme had improved things in Brent. The question gave the following options and respondents could choose as many as they thought applied:

- Improved the condition of properties
- Reduced waste/rubbish such as mattresses dumped in private property front gardens
- Reduced waste/rubbish dumped on streets
- Reduced noise from neighbouring privately rented properties
- Reduced overcrowding in privately rented properties
- Tackled deprivation and inequalities in Brent
- Support to landlords and tenants
- Other (Please specify)
- None of the above

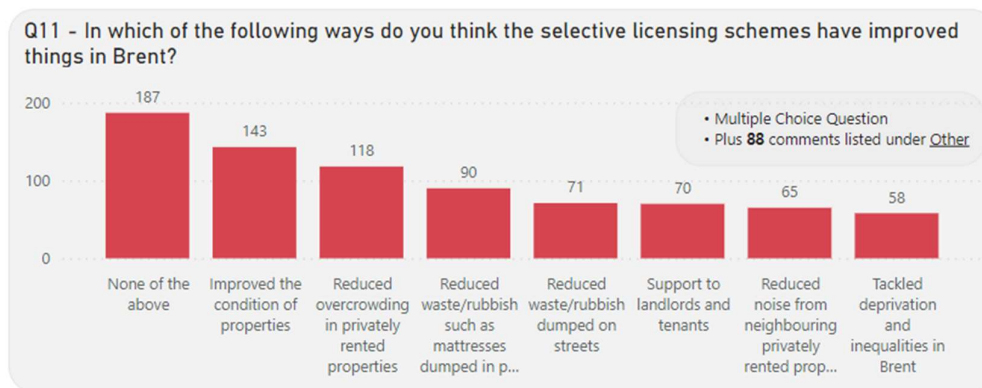
The option that received the highest number of responses was “none of the above”.



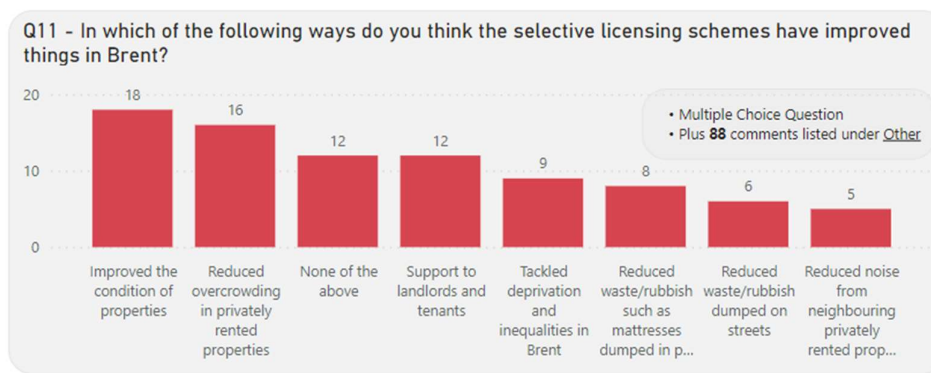
Looking at the responses by group, landlords / agents had the largest response for “none of the above”, with comparatively very few other responses.



Residents / local businesses also gave the highest number of responses to “none of the above”, but there were also a high number of responses for “improved the condition of properties” and “reduced overcrowding in privately rented properties”.



The highest response of other stakeholders was “improved the condition of properties” and “reduced overcrowding in privately rented properties”.



### Views on the consequences of stopping the selective licensing schemes

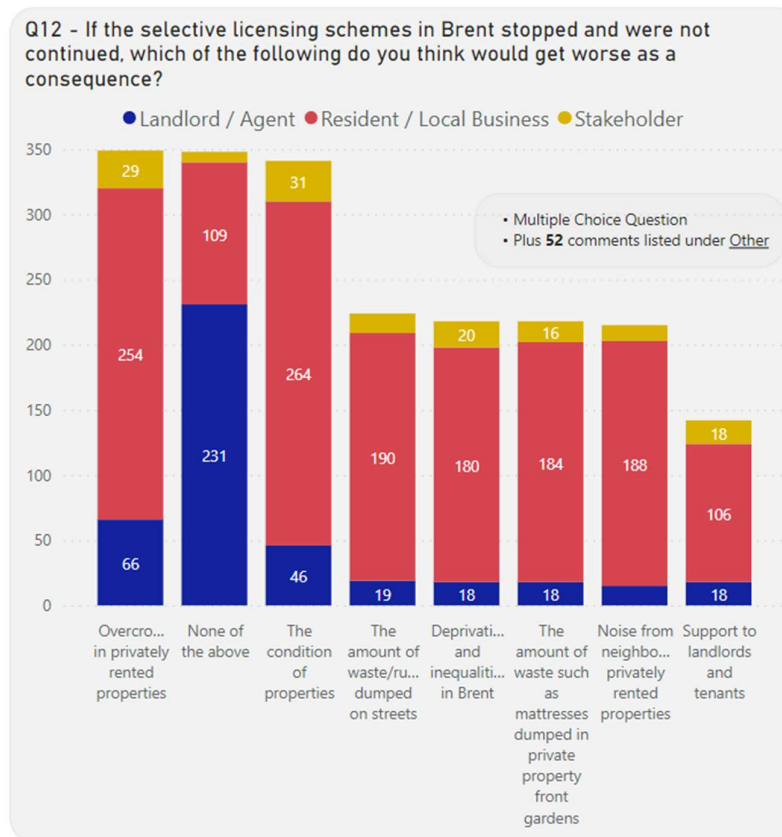
Respondents were asked if the selective licensing schemes in Brent stopped and were not continued, what issues they thought would get worse as a consequence.

The question gave the following options and respondents could choose as many as they thought applied:

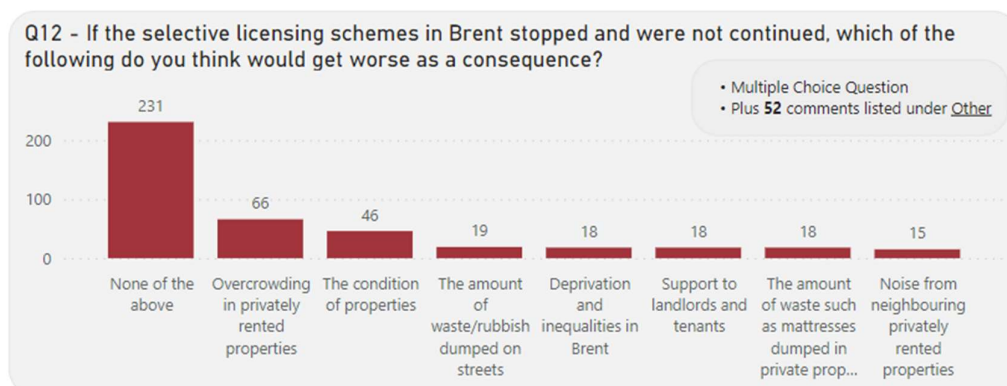
- The condition of properties
- The amount of waste such as mattresses dumped in private property front gardens
- The amount of waste/rubbish dumped on streets
- Noise from neighbouring privately rented properties
- Overcrowding in privately rented properties
- Deprivation and inequalities in Brent
- Support to landlords and tenants
- Other (Please specify)
- None of the above



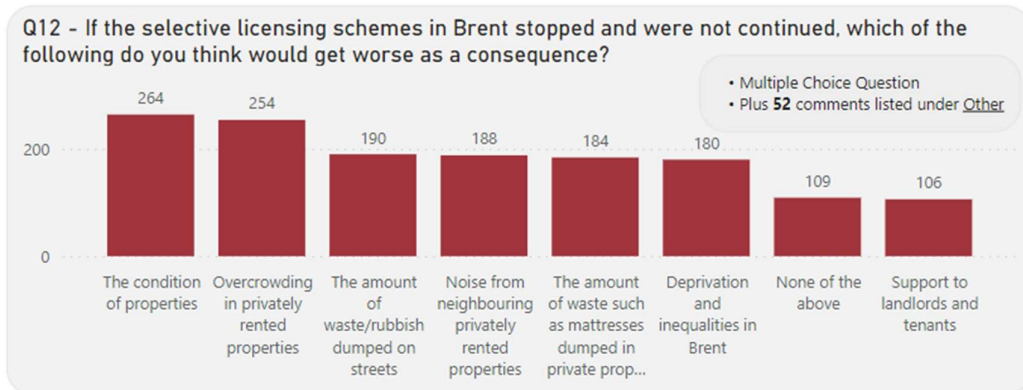
The highest number of responses were for “overcrowding in privately rented properties”, “none of the above” and “the condition of properties”.



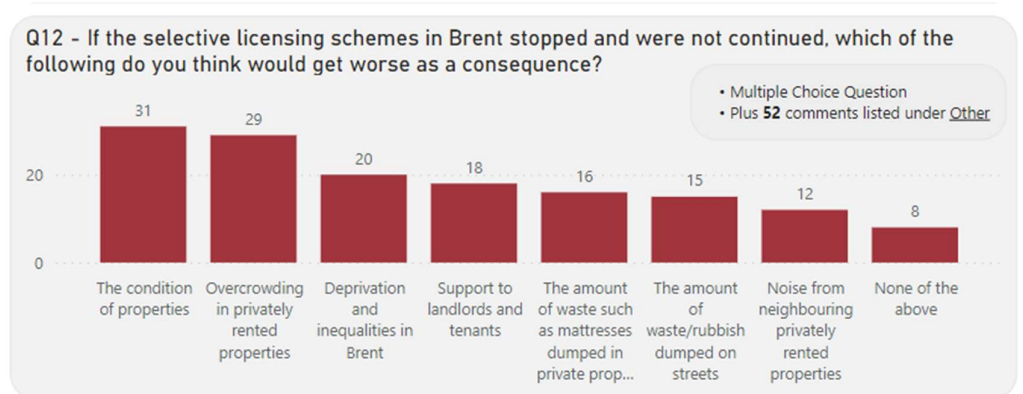
Looking at the responses by group, landlords / agents had the largest response for “none of the above”, with comparatively very few other responses.



Residents / local businesses gave the highest number of responses to “the condition of properties” and “overcrowding in privately rented properties”.



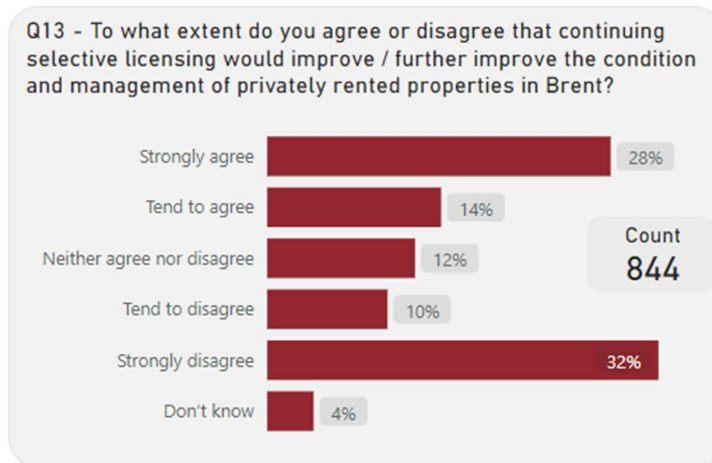
Similarly, other stakeholders also gave the highest number of responses to “the condition of properties” and “overcrowding in privately rented properties”.



### Views on if continuing selective licensing would improve the condition and management of privately rented properties

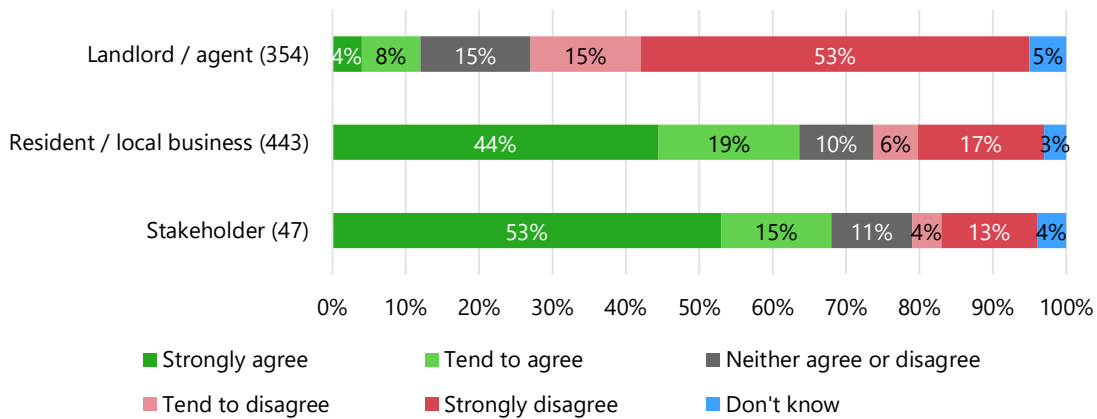
Respondents were asked the extent they agreed or disagreed that continuing selective licensing would improve / further improve the condition and management of privately rented properties in Brent.

844 respondents to the survey answered this question.



Looking at the responses by group, residents / local businesses and other stakeholder agree that continuing selective licensing would improve the condition and management of privately rented properties in Brent, whilst landlords / agents disagree.

13 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that continuing selective licensing would improve / further improve the condition and management of privately rented properties in Brent.



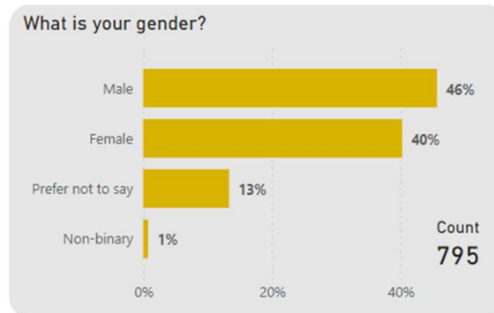
## Online Survey Respondents

The respondents to the consultation survey were asked if they would give their age range, sex and their ethnic background. Their responses were compared with benchmarks for the borough.

The number of respondents to each question is shown in each graph as the “count”.

### Gender of respondents

Respondents were asked their gender. 93% of respondents chose to respond to this question. The highest proportion of responses were from male respondents.

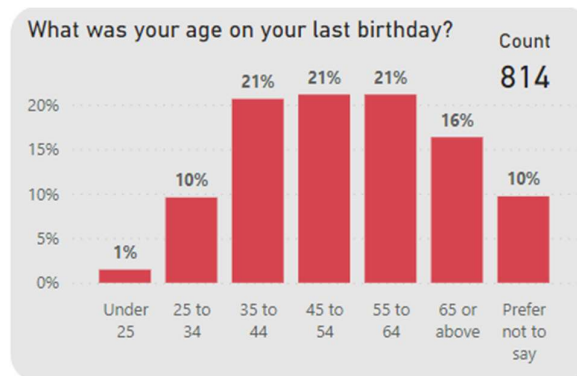


A proportion (13%) of those who answered the question gave the response of “Prefer not to say”.

According to the 2021 Census, the population of Brent is 51% female and 49% male, therefore male respondents are slightly overrepresented, and female respondents are underrepresented in the consultation.

### Age of respondents

Respondents were asked which age bracket they were in. 95% of respondents chose to answer this question.

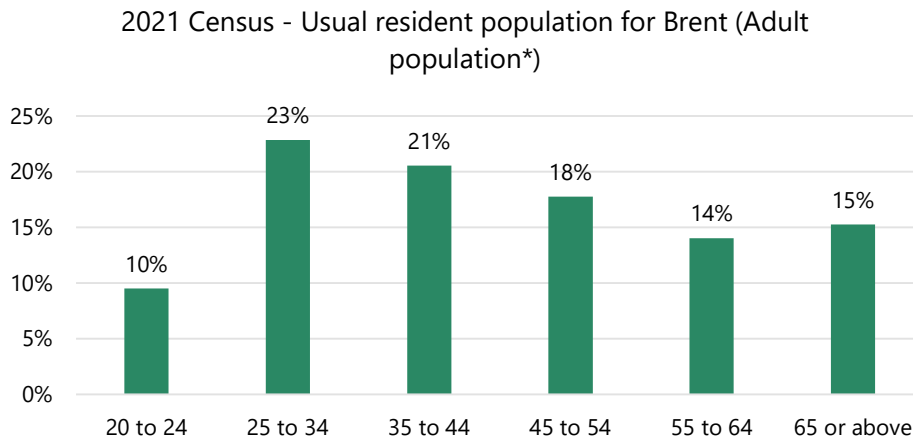


The expectation is that residents, landlords and stakeholders 18 and over were likely to respond to the consultation.

A proportion (10%) of those who answered the question gave the response of “Prefer not to say”.

The age groups of 35 to 44, 45 to 55 and 55 to 64 were evenly represented by the respondents, with each group making up 21% of respondents. The age groups of 55 to 64 were overrepresented in the consultation.

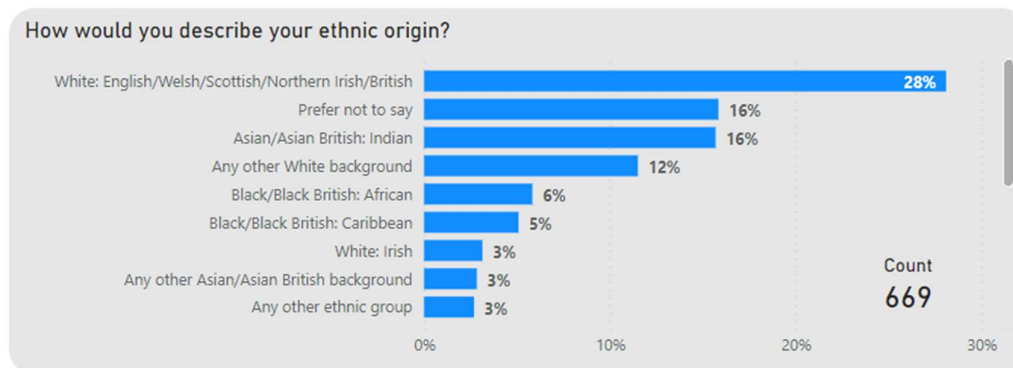
The 25 to 34 age group is underrepresented at 10% compared to the Census figure of 23% for that age group in the London Borough of Brent.



\*Please note that the Census figures are the percentage of the adult population (percentage based on figures with ages 0-19 removed)

### Ethnic origin of respondents

Respondents were asked "How would you describe your ethnic origin?". 669 (78%) of respondents chose to respond to this question.



31 - How would you describe your ethnic origin?	%	Count
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	28%	188
Prefer not to say	16%	106
Asian/Asian British: Indian	16%	105
Any other White background	12%	77
Black/Black British: African	6%	39
Black/Black British: Caribbean	5%	34
White: Irish	3%	21
Any other Asian/Asian British background	3%	19
Any other ethnic group	3%	18
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	2%	12
Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background	1%	10
Mixed: White and Black African	1%	8
Arab	1%	7
Mixed: White and Asian	1%	7
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	1%	5
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1%	5
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	1%	5
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0%	2
Any other Black/Black British background	0%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>669</b>

A notable proportion (16%) of those who answered the question gave the response of “Prefer not to say”.

The 2021 Census results for Brent regarding ethnic groups are shown below:

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Percentage (2021 Census)</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	0.6
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	1.0
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	19.5
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	4.5
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	7.2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	9.1
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	6.3
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	2.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	0.9
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2.0
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	15.2

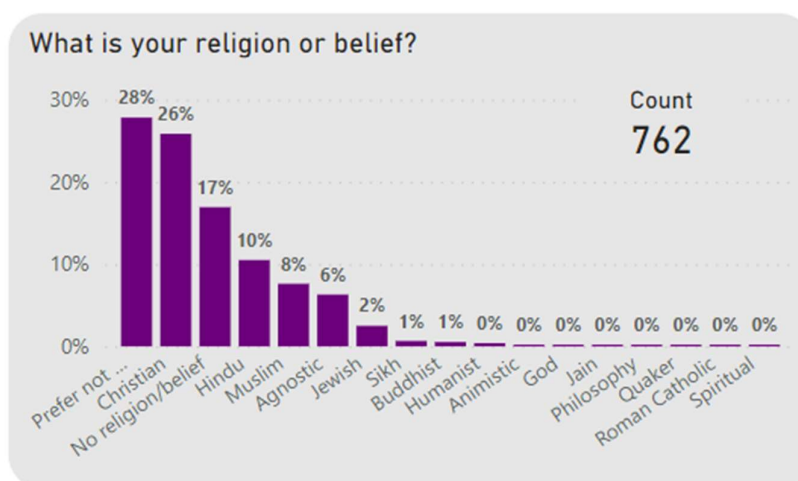
<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Percentage (2021 Census)</b>
White: Irish	2.7
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1
White: Roma	0.7
White: Other White	15.9
Other ethnic group: Arab	5.3
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	4.7

The largest group were people of White British ethnic origin (28%), which is above the borough's demographic figure of 15.2%. However, any other white background (12%) is slightly under the borough figure of 15.9%. The proportion of respondents of Asian/Asian British: Indian ethnic origin (16%) is slightly below the borough figure of 19.5%.

The proportion of black / black British: African (6% of respondents vs 9.1% of the borough), black / black British: Caribbean (5% of respondents vs 6.3 of the borough), Asian / Asian British: Pakistani (2% of respondents vs 4.5% of the borough) and other Asian / Asian British background (3% of respondents vs 7.2% of the borough) are below the borough figures.

### Religion and beliefs of respondents

Respondents were asked their religion or beliefs. 89% of respondents chose to answer this question. The largest proportion of respondents gave "Prefer not to say" as their response.



The 2021 Census results for Brent regarding religion or beliefs are shown below.

<b>Religion or beliefs</b>	<b>Percentage (2021 Census)</b>
No religion	13.6
Christian	38.8
Buddhist	0.9
Hindu	15.6

Jewish	1.1
Muslim	21.4
Sikh	0.5
Other religion	1.3
Not answered	6.9

Based on the answers of those who gave their religion or beliefs, Christians, people with no religion, Hindus and Muslims were underrepresented in the survey's respondents.

### Sexual orientation of respondents

Respondents were also asked their sexual orientation. 89% of respondents chose to answer this question. The largest proportion of responses were from people who identified as heterosexual / straight. A large portion of respondents, 32%, gave the responses "prefer not to say".



For clarity, the consultation survey respondents responses were:

Sexual orientation	Percentage (Consultation response)
Straight or Heterosexual	61.4%
Prefer not to say	32.4%
Gay man	2.5%
Bisexual	2.2%
Lesbian	0.8%
Pansexual	0.1%
Asexual	0.1%
Queer	0.1%
Irrelevant / none of your business	0.2%

The 2021 Census results for Brent regarding sexual orientation are below.

Sexual orientation	Percentage (2021 Census)
Straight or Heterosexual	85.10
Gay or Lesbian	1.31
Bisexual	1.29
Pansexual	0.45
Asexual	0.04
Queer	0.03
All other sexual orientations	0.07

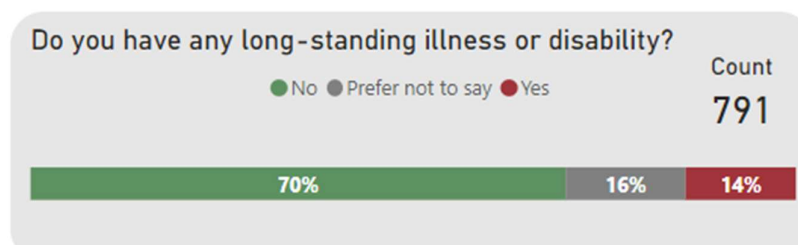


<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Percentage (2021 Census)</b>
Not answered	11.70

Straight / heterosexual respondents are underrepresented by the consultation responses (61% compared to 85% according to 2021 Census). Gay and lesbian respondents were slightly over presented, as were bisexual respondents.

### Long standing illness or disability of respondents

Respondents were also asked if they had a long-standing illness or disability. 93% of respondents chose to respond to this question.



A proportion (16%) of those who answered the question gave the response of “Prefer not to say”.

14% of the respondents to the question said they have a long-standing illness or disability, which is comparable with the combined figures of 7.1% of people in Brent who are disabled under the equalities act and their day-to-day activities are limited a lot, and the 7.6% of Brent who are disabled under the equalities act and their day-to-day activities are limited a little (figures from 2021 Census).

## Public Meetings and Written Responses

Brent Council held three public meetings, attended five Brent Connects meetings and a residents' ward meeting and held four public drop-in sessions to gather feedback from stakeholders. Feedback was also gathered through written responses on the proposed schemes by email. Below is a summary of the key themes that came out of the Brent Connects and the written feedback. It should be noted that council officers were present at every meeting and that most of the sessions were taken up by a question and answer session following on from a presentation about the proposals. During each public meeting, council officers attempted to address all questions posed by attendees or directed them to the consultation documents for further information (often when there were specific questions about the proposed licence conditions, fees etc). Council officers also responded to email queries that were sent as part of the consultation.

The full email and written responses can be found in the appendices. All representations to the consultation will be considered in line with the Housing Act 2004 and published as an Annex to this consultation report.

## Landlord Meetings

The council held two meetings aimed at engaging with landlords and agents, to make them aware of the consultation and to gather their feedback. There was an online meeting (via Microsoft Teams) which was held on 14 December 2022 with around 120 attendees (the actual number of attendees fluctuated during the meeting as attendees joined late or left early), and an in-person event held on 11 January 2023, with 140 attendees.

For both meetings, a presentation was given on the two proposed selective licensing schemes, followed by a question and answer session, where attendees could give their views and ask questions about the proposals. Participants were able to express their opinions freely and to highlight areas on which they required clarification while suggesting matters for the council officers to consider. The main themes of the questions and views expressed were:

- Licensing will force landlords to leave the market / sell their properties
- The fee is too high
- Questions about the level of inspections that will take place under the scheme
- Licensing is money making scheme for the council / a landlord tax
- The emphasis of the scheme is to penalise not supporting landlords
- Which landlord organisations are eligible for a discount?
- Why is licensing necessary for landlords with managing agents
- Issues are often due to tenant behaviour, which is not the responsibility of the landlord
- What is the benefit of the scheme to landlords?
- Will there be advice and support for landlords?
- How will the council make landlords aware of the proposed scheme if approved?
- If there are issues with damp and mould, this may be due to the tenants behaviour, as they will control the heating and ventilation of the property, and may not want to

heat and air the property in the winter and during a cost of living crisis/high energy prices.

In summary, most landlords and agents held strong views and were negative to PRS licensing in general. In particular, the negative perception linking ASB to private renting and the effectiveness of selective licensing schemes in combating problems in the areas, and the economic costs of licensing schemes on landlords.

Some attendees made points and suggestions about ways that Brent Council might act to make the scheme either more effective or less unpalatable to landlords and agents e.g., a focus on inspections and to consider the impact of the licence conditions, with thoughts on the impact on housing homeless clients.

### **Renters Representative Forum**

The council held a meeting with renter representatives aimed at gathering their feedback on the proposed schemes. The forum was held in person on 11 January 2023 with representatives from Brent Renter's Union, Willesden Residents Town Centre team, Crisis, Single Homeless Prevention Service and Brent Advice for Renters.

At the meeting a presentation was given on the two proposed selective licensing designations, followed by a question and answer session, where attendees could give their views and ask questions about the proposals. Participants were able to express their opinions freely and to highlight areas on which they required clarification while suggesting matters for the council officers to consider. The main themes of the questions and views expressed were:

- How is the scheme going to be enforced and what difference will it make to tenants?
- The scheme should be more about aggressive enforcement, and punishing landlords if they don't meet the conditions
- What is the enforcement policy?
- Will the council fine landlords if properties aren't licenced?
- How are you planning to educate tenants and landlords?
- The licence conditions should have more emphasis on the property conditions
- The council need to educate tenants on their rights, but be aware that tenants can face eviction if they report their landlords, so the emphasis should be on the council not the tenants, and there needs to be better information for tenants when threatened with eviction
- Other councils found that landlords feel more responsible for their properties with licensing schemes, but they are aware it's a balance between improving conditions and not reducing the stock of PRS available
- The council should support smaller landlords, who may need a lot of communication and support. The licence conditions can give them a guide
- Will the council consider an early bird scheme to encourage early applications?
- What are metrics for success when the scheme is rolled out, and what the benefits of the scheme will be.

In summary, the attendees supported the proposed selective licensing scheme, but were of the view that the schemes had to be enforced for them to have an impact. There was also an emphasis on support for tenants who complain to the council about their rented properties, or make the council aware of an unlicensed property, as there was a view that this would lead to illegal evictions.

### **Brent Connects and Written Responses**

Below is a summary of the key themes that came out from both the written responses and the feedback from the public meetings:

- Concerns that licensing will cause an increase in rents
- Questions about how the scheme will be enforced and inspections
- Questions about the council's capacity to enforce the scheme
- Questions about how licensing can address ASB, and if it would have an impact in ASB
- Questions about the role of tenants, and the need for tenants to be educated on their rights and responsibilities
- Questions about what the benefit is for landlords of the scheme
- Questions about why licensing is necessary, with existing legislation on rented properties.

### **Appendices**

Please see Consultation on Private Sector Licensing in Brent Appendices document. The appendices include:

- Maps of the proposed licensing designations
- The survey questions
- Communication visuals
- Email responses to the consultation.