Campaign business case (2026/27): Landlord licensing

Cabinet Member sponsor	Cllr Robert Johnson
Corporate Director sponsor	Tom Cattermole
Service area and lead	Private Housing Services Triza Handa Spencer Randolph
Purpose and background	All rented properties in Brent must now be licensed (except for single household properties in Wembley Park). Brent operates three licensing schemes: - **A Selective Licence** - required for properties rented out to a single household, such as a family home - **A Mandatory Licence** - required for larger HMOs with five or more people from two or more households - **Additional HMO licensing scheme** - required for smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with three or four people from two or more different households (introduced 2 February 2026) To get licensed, landlords must show they meet certain standards, including safe housing conditions and proper management arrangements. The council inspects properties once applications are received, sets conditions that landlords must follow, and can take enforcement action if standards are not met. This helps ensure rented homes are safe and properly managed. There has been good uptake of licences to date, however, a continued communications campaign is needed to maintain awareness, increase compliance, and ensure all landlords are appropriately licensed.
What have you tried so far to achieve this and what challenges or barriers have you encountered?	Approach: A number of communications campaigns have been delivered alongside the introduction of the various schemes. Following the introduction of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme in February 2026, all landlords are now required to be licensed. In response, a new

	campaign was launched with one simple message: All landlords must be licensed - it's the law. This broader approach, with one clear message has helped reach a wider pool of landlords and increase applications across the Selective, Mandatory, and Additional HMO schemes. A range of communications activity has helped drive applications, including spotlighting successful prosecutions and highlighting enforcement officers in action across our channels. Barriers / potential challenges: • Compliant landlords are largely already engaged and licensed • Difficulty in reaching non-compliant landlords via traditional channels • Data availability - data and intelligence needed to support targeted communications in hotspot areas
Corporate objective **Mandatory**	Prosperity and stability in Brent
Desired outcome(s) **Mandatory**	• 70% of all privately rented properties in the borough to be licensed by April 2027 (previously 65% we have increased the target) • Better standards in the private rented sector
Return on investment **Mandatory** - *Reducing demand on council services* - *Generating savings* - *Supporting income generation* - *Improving community safety and wellbeing*	• Supporting income generation
Data and insight **Mandatory**	• Following the introduction of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme in Feb 2026 and our clear message that all landlords must now be licensed, between February-May 2026, the council received 2,557 new applications, generating £1,326,290 in income • Total number of private rented properties in Brent - 47,130 (as of June 2026) ○ 27,902 - 59% of all properties licensed and 65% of HMOs

	○ Selective – 23,253 of 40,000 eligible properties (58%) ○ Mandatory – 2,405 of 3,494 eligible properties (68%) ○ Additional – 2,244 of 3,636 eligible properties (61%) 19,228 unlicensed properties remaining • 5,686 unlicensed properties have expired licences • Low compliance hotspot areas ○ Queens Park – 48% compliance (589 properties require a license) ○ Harlesden & Kensal Green – 50% compliance (509 properties require a license) ○ Kilburn – 56% compliance (505 properties require a license)
Target audience	• Landlords • Private renters
Timeframe / dependencies	
Budget	£10K communications budget

Communications recommendation:

We recommend delivering a time-bound campaign. Communications activity has been successful, 59% of all privately rented properties are now licensed, delivering a clear return on investment and generating significant income for the council. We are on track to reach our target of 70% of all privately rented properties in the borough being licensed by April 2027, but we are now moving into a more challenging phase, as most compliant landlords are likely already licensed and the remaining gap is made up of harder-to-reach, non-compliant landlords. The next phase will therefore require data and insight on hotspot areas, alongside a more targeted and innovative approach to reaching the remaining unlicensed landlords. We will continue to use proven tactics, including capturing visible on-street enforcement activity and highlighting successful landlord prosecution stories, which drive awareness and lead to a significant increase in applications. For example, in October 2025 our story on a rogue landlord who failed to provide a bathroom door in one of his properties achieved 10 media hits, including regional coverage in the Evening Standard. That month, we received 817 applications, a 92% increase compared with September 2025 (424 applications). Insight suggests that a notable proportion of unlicensed properties have expired licences, meaning the landlords were previously compliant, but have not renewed their licenses. Messaging

will therefore evolve beyond encouraging landlords to 'get licensed', to also emphasise the importance of renewing licences when required.

We will also develop a dedicated strand of activity aimed at tenants, raising awareness of their rights as a whole, using the Renters' Rights Act as the foundation for this messaging. The focus will be on reaching tenants in identified hotspot areas. This will cover:

- The Renters' Rights Act - which strengthens protections for tenants in areas such as tenancy security and protection from discrimination
- Landlord licensing - which helps ensure rented homes are safe, properly managed, and meet legal requirements

Together, these messages will help tenants understand both their rights and the standards their homes should meet, and how to report concerns where landlords may not be complying with their legal obligations or minimum housing standards, including the option to provide details of their landlord (where known) to help us reach them.