

Discretionary Property Licensing Evidence Report: Summary

2026



Introduction

Slough Borough Council is keen to hear your views on its proposals to introduce additional and selective licensing across the whole of the borough before any decisions are made. If you are a tenant, resident, landlord, letting agent or a business, living or operating in the borough you could be affected by the proposals in this document.

This information document is a summary of the proposals. A more detailed evidence report can be downloaded from the Council's consultation hub at <https://slough.citizenspace.com/>

The consultation on the proposals starts on Wednesday 15th July 2026 and will run for 10 weeks, closing at 11.59pm on Wednesday 23rd September 2026. Following the consultation, a full report on the findings and outcomes of the consultation will be presented to the Council's Cabinet who will decide whether to implement one or both of the proposed schemes.

If approved, the schemes would be in operation for five years, with approval to renew the scheme at the end of this period being required. If implemented, the scheme(s) will be reviewed annually with the results published on the Council's website.

What is additional licensing?

The proposed additional licensing scheme would extend licensing requirements to smaller Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) that do not meet the mandatory licensing threshold. This would include properties occupied by three or four people, forming two or more households, and who share some basic facilities or amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.

Additional licensing would also require what are known as Section 257 HMOs to be licensed. These are converted buildings of self-contained flats where the conversion did not comply with the appropriate building standards in place at the time and still do not.

Additional licensing can only be implemented if the Council considers that a significant proportion of HMOs in the borough are being managed sufficiently ineffectively as to give rise, or to be likely to give rise, to one or more particular problems either for those occupying the HMOs or for members of the public. Based on the available data, the Council believes this is the case and therefore proposing to license all HMOs not already covered by mandatory licensing including Section 257 HMOs.

What is selective licensing?

Legislation gives Council's the power to designate areas subject to selective licensing, subject to certain evidential criteria and public consultation. Legislation allows for six different reasons for the introduction of selective licensing. They are that the area:

- is, or is likely to become, an area of low housing demand
- is experiencing a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour
- is experiencing poor housing conditions
- has experienced, or is experiencing, an influx of migration into it
- is suffering from high levels of deprivation
- is experiencing high levels of crime

The Council feels that selective licensing will contribute towards addressing poor housing conditions. The Council may only make a designation after they have considered if there are any other available courses of action to them and if these would produce the intended outcomes that the designation would achieve; and if making the designation will significantly assist them to achieve the objectives. If a selective licensing designation is approved, the landlord of every privately rented property in the designated ward would be required to obtain a licence from the Council (subject to a number of exemptions set out in the full evidence report on pages 29 and 30).

It is an offence to let a property in an area designated for additional and/or selective licensing without a licence. Failure to apply for a licence could lead to a landlord:

- facing a Civil Penalty Notice of up to £40,000
- prosecution including an unlimited fine and a criminal record
- being put on the National Rogue Landlord Database
- being banned from working as a landlord (and losing the licence to rent anywhere in England) for at least 12 months, and in some cases indefinitely

The Council or tenant can also make an application to a Residential Property Tribunal for a Rent Repayment Order if the landlord has been convicted of the offence of operating a licensed property without a licence. Under a Rent Repayment Order, up to 24 months rent would be repaid to the Council or tenant.

Desired Outcomes

The Council objectives for the proposed licensing designations over the five-year period are:

- To improve housing conditions in the borough's private rented sector by proactively identifying and remediating poor housing conditions.

- To improve property management standards and reduce risks related to overcrowding by ensuring that licence conditions are complied with and licence holders are “fit and proper”.
- To protect vulnerable tenants by ensuring landlords and agents manage properties professionally.
- To increase tenant awareness of the minimum standards they can expect in rented accommodation and what their other tenancy rights are.
- To reduce anti-social behaviour arising from private rented accommodation by compelling licence holders to investigate complaints and take appropriate action in line with the licence conditions.

Alternative options considered

Other courses of action to address the issues described in this report have been considered. These include traditional enforcement action and landlord accreditation. However, we do not consider these options, either individually or together, to be sufficiently effective in tackling poor housing conditions and other issues associated with HMOs.

Licence Fees

The Council can recover the costs of administering the scheme(s) and would charge landlords a licence fee. The fees relate to the costs of the scheme(s) and cannot be used for other purposes. The Council has calculated that the cost for a licence of up to 5 years for an additional licence to be £950 per property, and the cost of a selective licence to be £750. This is split between a Part A fee which is due on application and covers the processing cost, and a Part B fee which covers compliance and enforcement and must be paid before granting a licence. An additional fee of £75 is proposed for a licence application where a landlord has had to be prompted to make an application.

Where three or more self-contained flats are owned or managed by the same person, a proposed discount of £75 will be applied to the Part A fee in respect of the second, third flats etc. The full Part A rate will be charged for the first flat

Licence Conditions

The Licence will include a range of conditions aimed at ensuring licensed properties are safe, meet basic standards, and that they are managed in a satisfactory way. The proposed conditions are set out in full in the Appendix A and B of the evidence report.

The proposed licencing conditions include requirements related to:

- Gas safety
- Electrical appliance safety
- Furniture fire safety
- Smoke and carbon monoxide (where applicable) alarms
- Landlord “fit and proper person” assessment
- Measures to prevent overcrowding
- Security of the property
- Waste and recycling
- Emergency contact arrangements

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