

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 11 May 2026

Report Title

Selective Licensing Update

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Andrew Bramidge, Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Boston Castle
Brinsworth
Dinnington
Rawmarsh West
Rotherham East
Rotherham West
Thurcroft and Wickersley South

Report Summary

Rotherham Council made declarations for six new Selective Licensing areas which commenced in February 2026 for a period of five years. While traditional Selective Licensing tools have enabled the Council to regulate private landlords and deal directly with specific housing problems, during the consultation undertaken prior to declaration, the Council also heard from both tenants and landlords about wider problems in their communities. These included environmental and anti-social behaviour problems, and a lack of direct support to tenants.

To maximise the positive outcomes of these new designations, including improved housing standards, stronger community engagement, and enhanced regulatory intervention, as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process, the Council has agreed an additional revenue investment of £362,000 per annum. This aims to increase the impact of enforcement and regulatory activity, provide additional direct support to tenants, as well as provide increased capacity to ensure local stakeholder groups are well run and well supported.

In addition, the Council also agreed the allocation of a £500,000 capital budget over four years, 2026/27 to 2029/30 spread across the six areas, to deliver targeted improvements that complement enforcement activity. This capital programme will be shaped by the local stakeholder groups, and local teams.

This report sets out the operational model, responsibilities, governance, and expected outcomes for both the liaison function and the capital funding.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Note the report and progress to date.
2. Approve the approach to the community liaison roles and stakeholder panels.
3. Approve the approach to establishing the capital programme, with stakeholder groups identifying local priorities and delegate agreement for the final governance arrangement to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Service Director for Legal Services.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment Part A

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment Part B

Appendix 3 – Climate Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Appendix 2 - Proposed Revenue Investments.pdf](#)

[Selective Licensing Policy - Updated report and appendices pack Agenda Supplement for Cabinet, 20/10/2025](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Selective Licensing Update

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2020–2025 Selective Licensing schemes delivered clear, measurable improvements in housing conditions, community safety and neighbourhood stability across designated areas. The schemes drove proactive compliance and enforcement activity, resulting in thousands of housing and environmental hazards being identified and remedied, significant reductions in serious property risks, and improved standards across the private rented sector. They also contributed to wider place-based outcomes, including tackling criminality and anti-social behaviour through stronger partnership working and delivering demonstrable health benefits in individual cases. Overall, the schemes demonstrated that selective licensing, when implemented as part of a coordinated, multi-agency approach, can secure sustained improvements in both housing quality and community wellbeing.
- 1.2 Following a broad public consultation, the Council agreed to a further six designations to run from 2026 – 2031. The Selective Licensing designations aim to improve private rented sector conditions, reduce antisocial behaviour, and enhance neighbourhood quality. To support these ambitions, the Council committed to an additional revenue investment (totalling £362,000 per annum) to strengthen enforcement teams, tenant/landlord (community) liaison work and management capacity.
- 1.3 The Council also agreed an additional targeted capital programme funding (£500,000 over 4 years across the six areas) that will seek to further support delivery of the outcomes through both regulatory and environmental improvements, increasing community confidence, and long-term sustainable change.
- 1.4 This report seeks to provide an update on the implementation of selective licensing to date, outline the detail of the new investments and provide an overview of the governance structure for the schemes.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Rollout of the new Selective Licensing Designations

- 2.1.1 Implementation of the new Selective Licensing designations is progressing from mobilisation into delivery. Core systems are now in place, with the online application process and website fully operational and applications being processed through both digital and paper routes. Draft licences have begun to be issued, with full licences to follow as volumes stabilise. Neighbourhood Development and Improvement Plans have been formally adopted by Area Management Groups, embedding Selective Licensing within a wider place-based delivery framework. Governance arrangements are being finalised, including the establishment of a multi-agency Steering Group and the development of performance reporting to support statutory returns and local oversight. A targeted communications programme is

underway to increase landlord engagement and licence uptake, responding to lower than anticipated early application levels.

- 2.1.2 A risk based, intelligence led inspection model is being finalised to ensure early enforcement activity focuses on the highest risk properties and landlords, with active inspections scheduled to commence in May 2026. New inspection technology and reporting tools are being introduced to support consistent evidence gathering and governance. Implementation of Selective Licensing is being closely aligned with preparation for the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act 2025, including updated enforcement policies, staff training and partnership working with homelessness and legal services, ensuring the Council is well positioned to deliver both the new designations and forthcoming legislative duties.

2.2 Revenue Investment

- 2.2.1 The additional revenue investment agreed by the Council provides for additional enforcement capacity, with three new Enforcement Officers dedicated to the Selective licensing areas. These new officers will enhance the capacity within the service to respond to environmental, housing and anti-social behaviour complaints in the six areas. Recruitment for these posts commenced in March 2026.

- 2.2.2 In addition, two further dedicated officers have been funded in order to improve local engagement with the schemes and to support the establishment of local stakeholder groups and again, recruitment to these posts commenced in March 2026.

- 2.2.3 Finally, a dedicated management resource has also been provided to give greater oversight of Selective Licensing, ensuring alignment with the Renters Rights Act 2025 and to be accountable for all enforcement coordination (pro-active and reactive) activity across all private sector housing. Recruitment for this role commenced in April 2026.

- 2.2.4 The aim of these combined roles is to:
- Strengthen engagement with tenants, landlords, residents and partners.
 - Provide a visible point of contact for all activity linked to Selective Licensing.
 - Coordinate locality-based responses to housing, environmental, safety and wellbeing issues.
 - Support and service local stakeholder panels.
 - Contribute to neighbourhood development and improvement plans.
 - Ensure insight from residents feeds directly into enforcement and service delivery.
 - Oversee community communications and local reporting mechanisms.
 - Provide day to day engagement, tenancy support, and early intervention to prevent homelessness and resolve issues quickly.

2.3 Capital Investment Programme (£500,000 over 4 Years)

2.3.1 Alongside the additional revenue investment, the Council also agreed to provide capital funding for the six areas. The capital programme is specifically designed to deliver physical improvements that complement the regulatory impact of Selective Licensing. This includes environmental enhancements, safety measures, and small-scale neighbourhood improvements not deliverable through revenue budgets.

2.3.2 Funds will be allocated across the six Selective Licensing areas based on:

- Local needs
- Stakeholder identified priorities
- Alignment with neighbourhood development and ward plans
- Deliverability and measurable impact

2.3.3 Examples of eligible capital spend could include:

- Alleyway improvements, gating, and lighting
- Improvements to communal areas
- Crime prevention design features including CCTV and/or lighting,
- Waste storage solutions
- Landscaping or greening interventions
- Signage and neighbourhood identity features

2.3.4 The process for identification of opportunities for investment will be through consultation with local councillors, local Council teams and partners as well as residents and landlords who engage with the stakeholder panels. Ideas will need to be properly formed and costed prior to seeking the agreement of local stakeholder panels. Following on from this, proposals will be examined through a scheme-wide board, which is further detailed in section 2.5, to identify any consistencies or economies of scale before being submitted for formal approval through the Council's capital governance processes.

2.4 Stakeholder groups

2.4.1 In response to consultation feedback, the Council has agreed to establish new stakeholder panels in each of the designated areas. Stakeholder groups will be multiagency groups representing residents, landlords, partners, elected members and Council services. The groups will identify improvement priorities, review performance of the scheme and impacts locally and propose or review potential capital projects. The panels will also advise on community impacts and emerging issues.

2.4.2 The panels will be brought together initially following focussed communications in local areas in order to attract interest. Firstly, the Council will utilise mailing lists, populated as a result of previous selective licensing work, in order to contact potential local community members, residents and landlords to seek interest to take part in the stakeholder groups. The groups will be arranged virtually and in the early evening in order to maximise attendance for those who may have other commitments during the day. As

the new engagement and liaison roles are established, the Council will seek to more proactively recruit members to these groups by attending local events, engaging with local community and voluntary organisations and working directly with local councillors.

2.5 Governance

2.5.1 Selective Licensing designations and the associated capital and revenue investments will be overseen by new governance arrangements which will be multi-layered. Each designation, as detailed in section 2.4 will have a stakeholder panel, as agreed as part of the scheme implementation, this is underpinned by a bespoke Neighbourhood Development and Improvement Plan (NDIP).

2.5.2

- To ensure an integrated approach across the Council, Governance arrangements will be established that ensure integration with other groups and boards and enable oversight by Cabinet and Scrutiny.

2.5.3 These activities and arrangements are closely aligned with existing structures and will contribute to the delivery of a range of different strategic aims across the Council, not least supporting the thriving neighbourhoods ambitions. Progress updates will be routinely shared across priority areas and strategic groups. The previous Cabinet report set out some of the other key areas which Selective Licensing will contribute towards including:

- Housing Strategy
 - The Selective Licensing Scheme aligns with Rotherham's Housing Strategy, aiming to improve tenant conditions and management standards in the PRS.
- Homelessness Strategy
 - Selective Licensing complements the Homelessness Strategy by improving PRS standards and enabling enforcement officers to support residents into long-term, stable housing.
- Rotherham Empty Homes Plan 2025-2029
 - Although empty homes are not licenced, the scheme supports efforts to bring long-term vacant properties back into use.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy
 - The scheme reinforces the Council's ASB Policy by requiring landlords to actively manage and prevent ASB.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 This report provides an update following the decision to implement Selective Licensing and to allocate additional capital and revenue investment as part of the 2026/27 budget and therefore no alternative options have been considered in the preparation of this report.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The Selective Licensing designation underwent extensive formal consultation, which has informed the approach as set out within this report.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Implementation of the strengthened Selective Licensing model is already underway. Recruitment for the Community Liaison Function has commenced in March 2026, the Private Sector Housing Manager role went out to advert in April 2026, and the Enforcement Officer posts were also advertised in March 2026.
- 5.2 In parallel, governance structures will be established and aligned. The Selective Licensing Board will be convened in June 2026 to agree its terms of reference, membership and reporting arrangements. Stakeholder groups in each of the six licensing areas will be refreshed or established, ensuring they are ready to shape local priorities and feed recommendations into the capital programme from the outset.
- 5.3 Early capital priorities will be identified during the first year, with preparatory work undertaken while governance approvals and stakeholder recommendations are confirmed. As staff become fully operational and the liaison function begins to embed, the relationship between enforcement, community engagement and physical improvements will strengthen, enabling the programme to move into a steady, coordinated delivery phase for the remainder of the five year designation period.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 Where there is a need to engage third party suppliers/contractors to provide goods, works or services to deliver this activity they must be procured in compliance with procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 / Procurement Act 2023 depending on the route to market) as well as the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.
- 6.2 On 4th March 2026, Council approved a £362k permanent revenue budget investment and a £500k capital investment as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2026/27 to support the current Selective Licensing Scheme. This report also outlines the proposed arrangements for use of the capital funding, which will be in addition to the Council's existing financial monitoring processes.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The governance arrangements set out in the report, including the establishment of a Selective Licensing Board and local stakeholder panels, must operate within the Council's constitutional framework. While stakeholder panels may identify local priorities and make recommendations,

formal decision-making must remain with appropriately authorised officers in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

7.2 Other than the above there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within the report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 As this is a progress update report there are no direct HR implications arising from the report.

8.2 Any workforce implications arising from the recommendations will be managed in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The Selective Licensing scheme and the additional revenue and capital investment activity are expected to have a positive impact on children and young people living within the designated areas. Improvements in housing conditions, environmental quality and neighbourhood safety contribute to healthier home environments, reduced exposure to hazards and improved wellbeing outcomes.

9.2 Vulnerable adults, including those living in poor quality or insecure private rented accommodation, will benefit from increased enforcement activity, enhanced tenancy support and improved access to advice. The approach supports early intervention, homelessness prevention and safeguarding by improving visibility of issues, strengthening engagement and enabling concerns to be identified and addressed at an earlier stage.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The Selective Licensing scheme and the associated investment have been designed to support fairness, inclusion and equality of opportunity. The designated areas include communities with higher levels of deprivation and a greater concentration of vulnerable households. By targeting resources and investment in these areas, the programme seeks to reduce inequalities in housing standards, environmental conditions and access to support.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is included as an appendix to this report. The assessment identifies that the proposals are likely to have a positive impact on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010, including tenants, low-income households and those with disabilities or health conditions. Ongoing monitoring will ensure that engagement activity, stakeholder groups and service delivery remain inclusive and that no group is disadvantaged by the implementation of the programme.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The proposals set out in this report are not expected to result in significant negative impacts on CO₂ emissions. The capital investment programme will focus on small-scale, place-based improvements and will be delivered in line with the Council's existing environmental and sustainability requirements.
- 11.2 Where capital projects are developed, opportunities will be taken to support climate-positive outcomes where appropriate, such as improved waste management, environmental enhancements, lighting upgrades and greening interventions. A Climate Impact Assessment has been completed and is included as an appendix to this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Delivery of the Selective Licensing scheme and the associated capital investment programme relies on effective partnership working across a range of internal and external organisations. Key partners include South Yorkshire Police, health services, housing providers, environmental services, voluntary and community sector organisations, and other statutory agencies operating within the designated areas. The strengthened governance and engagement arrangements are intended to improve coordination, information-sharing and joint problem-solving rather than create additional demands on partners.
- 12.2 Partners will benefit from clearer routes for engagement through the stakeholder groups providing opportunities to influence priorities, align activity and contribute to place based solutions. The approach will be designed to complement existing partnership structures and locality arrangements, supporting shared objectives around community safety, housing standards, health and wellbeing. Any implications for partner resources will be managed through existing partnership agreements and ongoing dialogue to ensure expectations are proportionate and sustainable.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There are several key risks associated with the delivery of the Selective Licensing programme and the wider neighbourhood improvement work.
- 13.2 One of the primary risks relates to sustaining meaningful engagement across all six areas. Without consistent involvement from residents, tenants and landlords, the ability to shape local activity and deliver change could be limited. This risk is mitigated through the enhanced presence of the Community Liaison Function, which will lead proactive engagement, maintain regular communication and support inclusive participation.
- 13.3 Risk of delays in delivering capital schemes or underspending against the annual allocation, particularly where projects require complex procurement or experience unforeseen operational issues. This will be addressed

through phased planning, early identification of deliverable schemes, and strong monitoring by the Locality Working Board to ensure timely progress and intervention where needed.

- 13.4 Ensuring equity across the six Selective Licensing areas, there is potential for local expectations or differing levels of capacity to create pressure for an unbalanced distribution of capital resources. The strengthened governance arrangements will provide oversight to ensure decisions are fair, transparent and evidence based.
- 13.5 A further risk arises from the dynamics within stakeholder groups. In some neighbourhoods, there is the potential for a dominant personality or interest group to disproportionately influence discussions or priorities, limiting diverse voices being heard. This will be mitigated through clear terms of reference, officer-led facilitation, and active support from the dedicated officers to ensure balanced representation and transparent decision-making.
- 13.6 Finally, as the programme relies on coordination between multiple Council departments and partner agencies, there is a risk of inconsistent practice or delays due to operational pressures. The new governance structure will support regular review, escalation and joint problem-solving, while the dedicated management capacity created through the investment will improve coordination and accountability.

14. Accountable Officers

- 14.1 Emma Ellis Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

| | Named Officer | Date |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Chief Executive | John Edwards | 24/04/26 |
| Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer) | Judith Badger | 13/04/26 |
| Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) | Phil Horsfield | 13/04/26 |

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