1. **Logo

   Description automatically generatedA screenshot of a computer

   Description automatically generated with low confidenceTo what extent do you agree with the following statements?**  
   (Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Agree; Strongly agree)
   1. The overall proposal for licensing is a good one
      1. Agree
   2. The proposed selective licensing scheme will improve the condition of privately rented properties in Nottingham
      1. Agree
   3. The proposed selective licensing scheme will reduce anti-social behaviour in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham
      1. Disagree
   4. The proposed selective licensing scheme will reduce crime in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham
      1. Disagree
   5. The proposed Selective licensing scheme will reduce deprivation in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham
      1. Neither agree nor disagree
   6. The proposed designation area of the scheme is the right one
      1. Agree
   7. The fee structure proposed for the scheme is fair and proportionate
      1. Strongly agree
   8. Accredited landlords should pay a lower fee
      1. Strongly agree
   9. Non-compliant landlords should pay a higher fee
      1. Strongly agree
2. **Which statements, if any, would you like to make a comment on? (tick as many as you want)**
   1. The overall proposal for licensing is a good one
   2. The proposed selective licensing scheme will improve the condition of privately rented properties in Nottingham
   3. The proposed selective licensing scheme will reduce anti-social behaviour in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham
   4. The proposed selective licensing scheme will reduce crime in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham
   5. The proposed Selective licensing scheme will reduce deprivation in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham
   6. The proposed designation area of the scheme is the right one
   7. The fee structure proposed for the scheme is fair and proportionate
   8. Accredited landlords should pay a lower fee
   9. Non-compliant landlords should pay a higher fee
3. **Please add your comments on the proposal for licensing (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. Overall, we welcome the proposal for a further scheme of selective licensing in Nottingham and share the council’s determination to ensure everyone has access to a decent, safe and secure home.
   2. According to the proposals, Nottingham’s students make up approximately 1/8th of the city’s population, 5/6ths of which require housing. HESA data tells us that 19190 NTU students live in privately rented properties, with the majority expected to be within the City boundaries. Whilst not all of these will be covered by selective licensing, the PRS is central to student living in Nottingham and therefore we support measures to improve it.
   3. Since the original scheme was introduced, NTSU’s Information and Advice Service have seen 1453 housing cases (not related to Covid or other tenants) since the original scheme was introduced, 572 of which related to issues covered by the licensing conditions. We are still seeing a high volume of cases from the student population and would like more tools to respond to this.
   4. Our main concerns relate to the scale of enforcement of the scheme, and the extent, or lack of extent to which it supports tenants living in poor-quality or poorly managed accommodation to take action or seek recompense.
4. **Please add your comments on whether the proposed selective licensing scheme will improve the condition of privately rented properties in Nottingham (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. Internal property inspections are central to the effectiveness of this scheme and the improvement of the condition of rented properties; The Feb 2022 review highlighted that 25% of internal inspections led directly to improvements in properties, with numerous Category 1 and 2 hazards being removed as well. This data does not cover any improvements made in anticipation of inspection, which would decline if rates of inspection or enforcement are low.
   2. Anecdotally, landlords also appreciate the inspection of properties covered by the scheme, both to validate their efforts and to give them a better understanding of the expected conditions.
   3. Whilst the council does pursue landlords who have failed to license their properties, there is currently minimal evidence of enforcement action against those who breach the conditions of their issued license. Whilst this action may be taking place, it is not apparent from the CPNs published or from the behaviour of landlords towards tenants.
   4. We would also like to work further with the safer housing team to make student tenants aware what they can expect from their landlord and make it easier to identify where the landlord’s property or service does not meet their license conditions.
5. **Please add your comments on whether the proposed selective licensing scheme will reduce anti-social behaviour in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. The proposal suggests that licensing has yet to have an impact on ASB in the PRS, and is unclear how licensing acts a long term strategy to combat it. We believe more detail is required as to what the scheme aims to tackle and what steps short of eviction a landlord is expected to take.
   2. Students are often the focus of reports of ASB, despite both universities’ proactivity in tackling this and in improving behaviour. Our concern from experience is that ‘complaints’ can be made without evidence by those aiming to exclude local students. We remain unsure what incentive or resources landlords have to investigate fully and would welcome further guidance in this area. That almost a third of licence holders provided unsatisfactory or no evidence of compliance in response to an audit indicates the potential for poor-handling of these cases.
   3. In the requirement to demand references from all new tenants it would be useful to include detail of what is expected where references cannot be provided e.g. first-time tenants, new or international students.
6. **Please add your comments on whether the proposed selective licensing scheme will reduce crime in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. Student properties tend to be a particular target of theft, and so we welcome conditions to encourage the security of properties and quick resolution of security issues, however, we do not believe the scheme has any mechanism to reduce criminal activity or its causes.
7. **Please add your comments on whether the proposed Selective licensing scheme will reduce deprivation in and around privately rented properties in Nottingham (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. The selective licensing scheme does not appear to have any mechanism to reduce the deprivation of tenants themselves, although it may alleviate some of the impacts of deprivation relating to housing conditions.
   2. We are wary that some landlords will still use the license fee and costs associated with bringing the property up to standard as a reason to charge higher rents. This is likely to disproportionately affect vulnerable tenants with less flexibility to negotiate or leave and therefore increase the potential for deprivation, however, we do consider this to be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme. Landlords should already be factoring in the cost of maintaining a decent standard of accommodation, and a typical fee is not a particularly high cost monthly over a 5-year license.
   3. Given reports of landlords charging additional fees or cutting off utilities to reduce costs, we suggest that the condition requiring ‘reasonable access to any meters’ should be expanded to include tenants not in control of their utilities. Alternatively, an additional condition could be considered preventing landlords who are responsible for utilities from ‘punishing’ tenants for usual usage or passing on costs without pre-agreed cause.
8. **Please add your comments on the proposed designation area of the scheme (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. Although we do not know the exact number of student properties covered, especially as this consultation is taking place over the summer when many students are moving or away, we believe that this area will cover the vast majority within Nottingham City Council boundaries.
9. **Please add your comments on whether the fee structure proposed for the scheme is fair and proportionate (max 1250 character limit)**
   1. Whilst we do have some concerns about landlords potentially using it as an excuse to raise rents, considering the typical license length is 5 years the proposed fee structure is reasonable, limiting potential costs to around £10 a month.
   2. Whilst we agree that non-compliant license holders should shoulder more of the burden of the scheme’s costs, we would like some thought to be given to the potential impacts of a combination of a higher license fee and a shorter license duration (as is sometimes issued to increase monitoring of compliance). We worry that, as landlords of these properties are likely to be less scrupulous, there is the potential for tenants living in lower quality accommodation to have more costs passed onto them and face higher rent as a result.
   3. We believe all landlords in the city need to do more to improve the quality of accommodation in the PRS, and therefore believe it is fair and proportionate for all landlords to asked to pay into the scheme to some degree.
   4. We also had a comment around the fact that the additional fee per flat in the block license is lower for non-accredited properties than it is for accredited properties.
10. **Please add your comments on whether accredited landlords should pay a lower fee (max 1250 character limit)**
    1. We agree that fully accredited landlords should pay a lower fee than non-accredited landlords so that accreditation provides a saving for landlords, rewarding compliance with a higher standard of accommodation and incentivising positive engagement with sector improvement and training.
    2. It is worth noting that, due to the historic promotion of Unipol to students and the increasing push towards PBSAs, it is more likely that students will already be in an accredited property. This, combined with the lower proportion of accredited properties aimed to be inspected, means that a higher proportion of student properties face no internal inspection by accrediting body or council teams. We think that is important not to overlook inspections of accredited properties, and to design a mechanism for students who identify potentially non-compliance in their properties, if necessary through third-party experts such as our SU Advice Teams.
    3. It is worth noting from the experience of both students’ unions that the focus of Unipol can sometimes be distracted by their operation as a landlord and letting properties.
11. **Please add your comments on whether non-compliant landlords should pay a higher fee (max 1250 character limit)**
    1. Both to distribute the cost of the scheme more on the landlords who fail to bring their properties into compliance voluntarily, and as a tool to incentivise compliance and good landlord behaviour, we agree that non-compliant landlords should pay higher fee.
    2. We would stress the importance of strong and enforced conditions by which a landlord or license holder might be considered “less compliant”. If possible, we would appreciate the safer housing team being able to factor in the experience of third-party organisations, such as our SU student advice teams, into the decision to consider a landlord “less compliant”.
    3. We would also like for tenants to be able to find out if their landlord is considered by the council to be less-compliant.
    4. It is worth noting, however, that we believe all landlords in the city need to do more to improve the quality of accommodation in the PRS, and it is important not to suggest it is “just a few bad apples”.
12. **If you have any other comments about the proposed licensing scheme, add them here: (max 1250 character limit)**
    1. It would be valuable to implement a clearer and more accessible mechanism to request a property be investigated, particularly where the tenant has gone to a support service for advice. This would be valuable for students who are less likely to be familiar with council services but may look online or come to our SU advice services.
    2. There is also a lack of information about how tenants can get restitution if their property has not been up to standard. Despite RROs being mentioned as a method of enforcement in the proposal and by council staff members, there is no information or support with RROs available from the council relating to licensing breaches. The first-tier tribunal can be expensive and complicated, and one of our few students that went through the process had to go through the County Court to enforce the tribunal judgement and apply for a charging order, so may not see their rent returned for some time.
    3. Finally, given the citizens advice findings in 2018 that tenants who complain to the council are five-times more likely to be evicted, we would like to see protection for tenants who rightfully report issues either as a licensing condition, or through anonymous ‘tip-offs’ triggering ‘random’ inspections.