

Private Rental Sector Selective Licensing in Thurrock

Evidence for Consultation

May 2025

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Socially rented	Homes rented from the council or a housing association
Privately rented	Homes rented from a private landlord
Private rental sector (PRS)	The portion of housing in the borough that is rented from private landlords
Category 1 hazard (Cat 1 hazard)	A serious or immediate risk to a person's health and safety that is related to housing
Category 2 hazard (Cat 2 hazard)	A less serious or less urgent risk that can still be regarded as placing the occupiers' health, safety and welfare at risk
Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	A government prescribed system that rates housing hazards based on their risk to occupiers' health, safety and welfare
Designation	A geographical area chosen for licensing based on evidence
Deprivation	Living on low income and not having the money to pay for some basic requirements
Indices of Multiple Deprivation	A dataset produced by the government to give a relative value to how deprived an area is, compared to the rest of the country.
Barriers to housing and services	One of the government's measures of deprivation. It combines measures relating to housing affordability, overcrowding and homelessness.
Anti-social behaviour (ASB)	Behaviour related to a rented property that causes annoyance and irritation to neighbours and the community. Most commonly noise, litter and waste.
Selective licensing	A local scheme which requires landlords to have a licence to legally let their property
Houses in multiple occupation (HMO)	A single residential dwelling occupied by three or more people forming two or more households, and the occupants share facilities like a kitchen, bathroom, or toilet
Additional HMO licensing	A local scheme which requires landlords to have a licence to legally let their property to three or four sharers
Mandatory HMO licensing	A national scheme which requires landlords to have a licence to legally let their property to five or more unrelated sharers.

Executive Summary

The private rented sector (PRS) in Thurrock has expanded significantly over the last decade, now accounting for 23% of all housing in the borough and surpassing the proportion of council and socially rented homes. While many landlords operate professionally, a growing number of properties in the PRS are associated with poor conditions, anti-social behaviour (ASB), and socio-economic vulnerability. In some areas, over 17% of privately rented homes are estimated to have Category 1 hazards, and ASB rates in certain wards are more than double the borough median. These issues not only place tenants at risk but contribute to wider community instability and increasing pressure on local services.

In response, Thurrock Council is proposing the introduction of a selective licensing scheme in targeted areas of the borough. The scheme would require landlords in designated wards to obtain a licence in order to let their properties. This approach is intended to raise housing standards, support better tenancy management, and address the persistent issues of ASB, poor property condition, and deprivation identified through robust analysis.

The proposed scheme covers 16 wards grouped into four designations based on specific criteria:

- **Designation A** – areas with poor property conditions, high ASB, and high deprivation
- **Designation B** – areas with poor property conditions and high deprivation
- **Designation C** – areas with high ASB and high deprivation
- **Designation D** – areas with high deprivation

Each designation is supported by evidence from stock condition surveys, ASB crime data, and national deprivation indices. For example, in Designation C areas such as Tilbury Riverside and West Thurrock and South Stifford, ASB rates reach up to 23.2 incidents per 1,000 population – more than three times the borough median. Meanwhile, in wards like Grays Thurrock and Little Thurrock Rectory, Category 1 hazards are estimated in over 15% of privately rented homes.

The licensing scheme aligns with several strategic objectives, including reducing ASB, improving housing conditions, ensuring landlord compliance, tackling deprivation, maximising the number of properties licensed, and raising landlord professionalism. The proposed discretionary licence conditions are tailored to each designation based on local evidence and will be consulted on as part of this process.

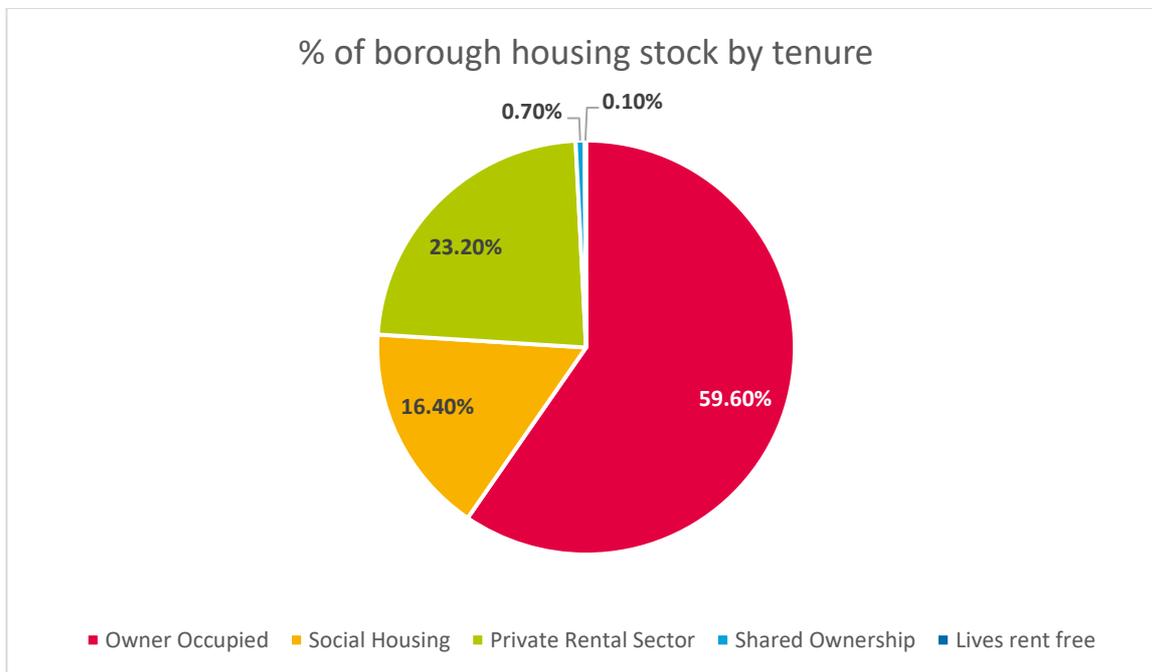
Alternative measures – such as relying solely on HHSRS enforcement, voluntary accreditation, or improvement grants – have been considered. However, these have proven to be either reactive, limited in scope, or dependent on voluntary participation. Selective licensing offers a more consistent and proactive means of addressing systemic issues in the PRS.

The introduction of selective licensing supports the council's wider housing and homelessness strategies, which aim to ensure all residents have access to safe, well-managed, and affordable housing. It also enables early intervention and stronger engagement with tenants and landlords in areas where standards and support are most needed.

The council now seeks views on the proposed scheme, the areas covered, and the draft licence conditions. The outcomes of this consultation will shape the final proposal, which will be considered for implementation in 2025.

The Private Rental Sector in Thurrock

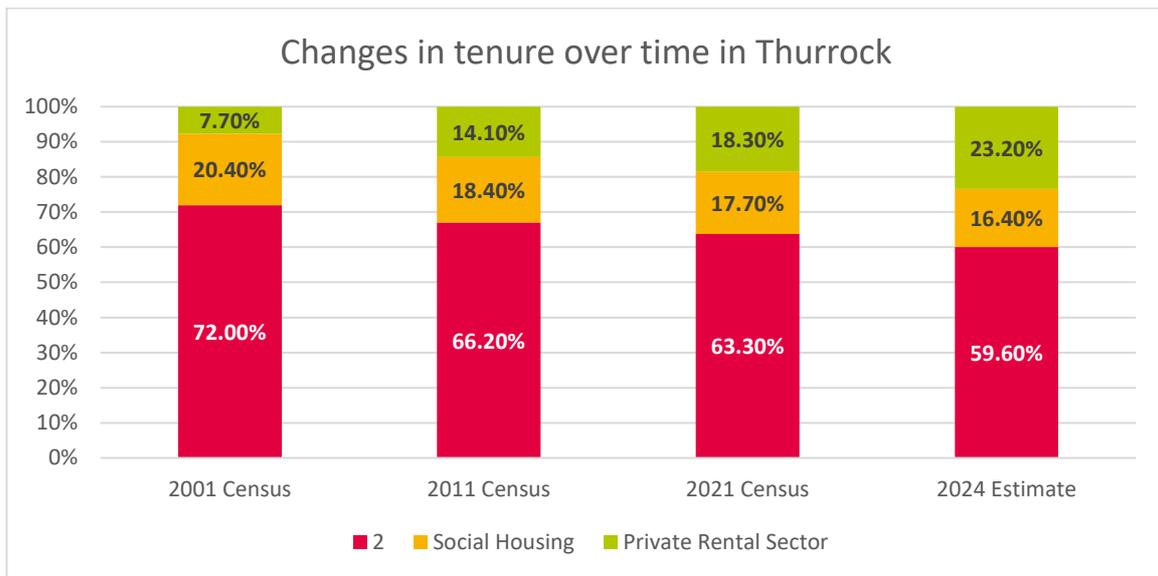
The private rental sector in Thurrock has continued to grow. Recent analysis of the size of the private rental sector in Thurrock estimates at around 15,000 properties, or roughly 23.2% of the overall stock in the borough.



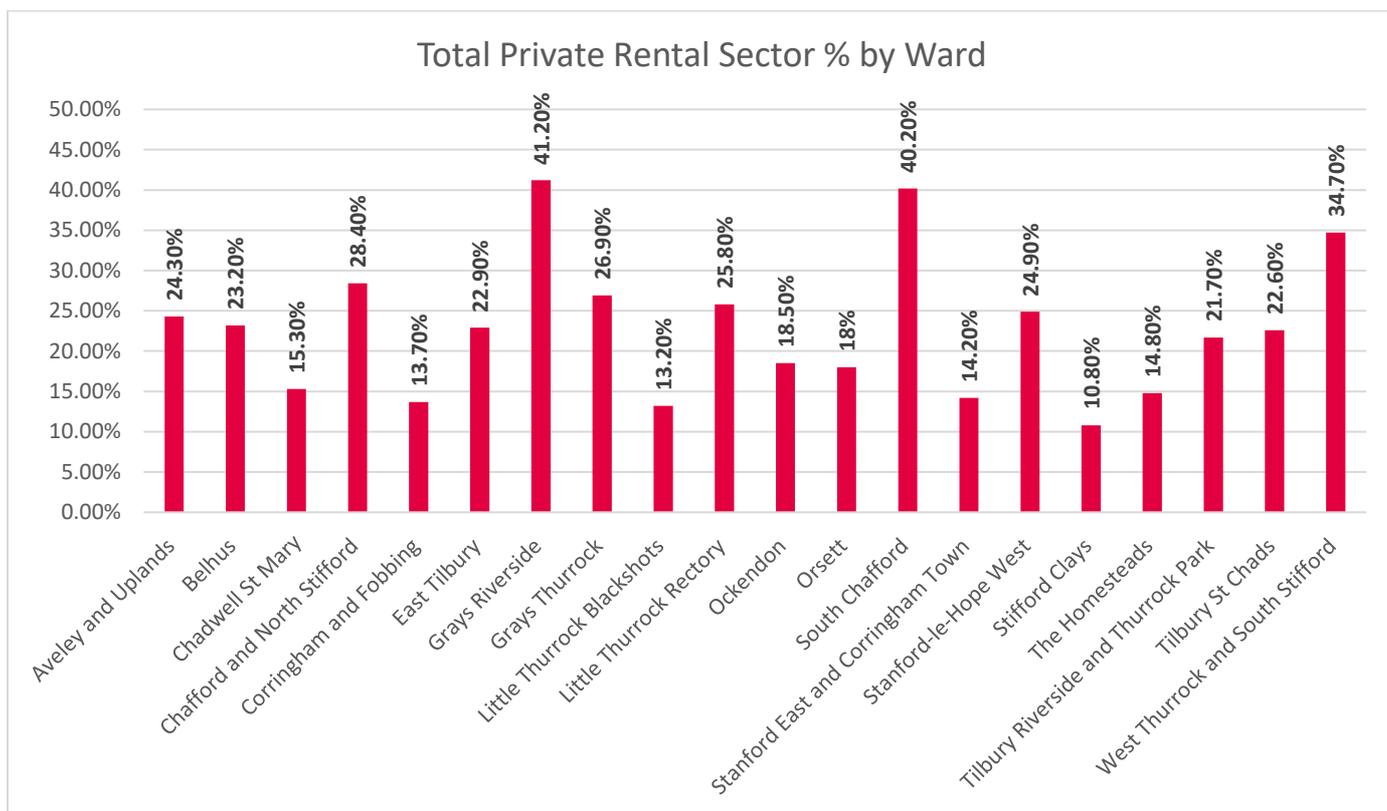
Census data shows that the growth of the private rental sector in Thurrock is greater than the East of England region and England as a whole.

Census	Thurrock (%)	East of England (%)	England (%)
2011	14.1	14.7	16.8
2021	18.3	18.2	20.5
Percentage Difference	+4.2	+3.5	+3.6

This trend will likely continue when considering the increasing gap within the social housing market to meet demand. Within Thurrock, the private rental sector is currently the biggest housing solution for residents who cannot purchase their own property.



The 2021 Census shows that the number of households in Thurrock living in privately rented accommodation has increased by over four percent since 2011, making up 18.3% of the whole housing tenure. The total number of households residing in either council-owned or socially rented accommodation made up 17 percent of the Thurrock population. Estimates in 2024 indicate even further growth of the private rental sector in Thurrock, reaching just under 1 in every 4 properties (23.2%) in the borough.



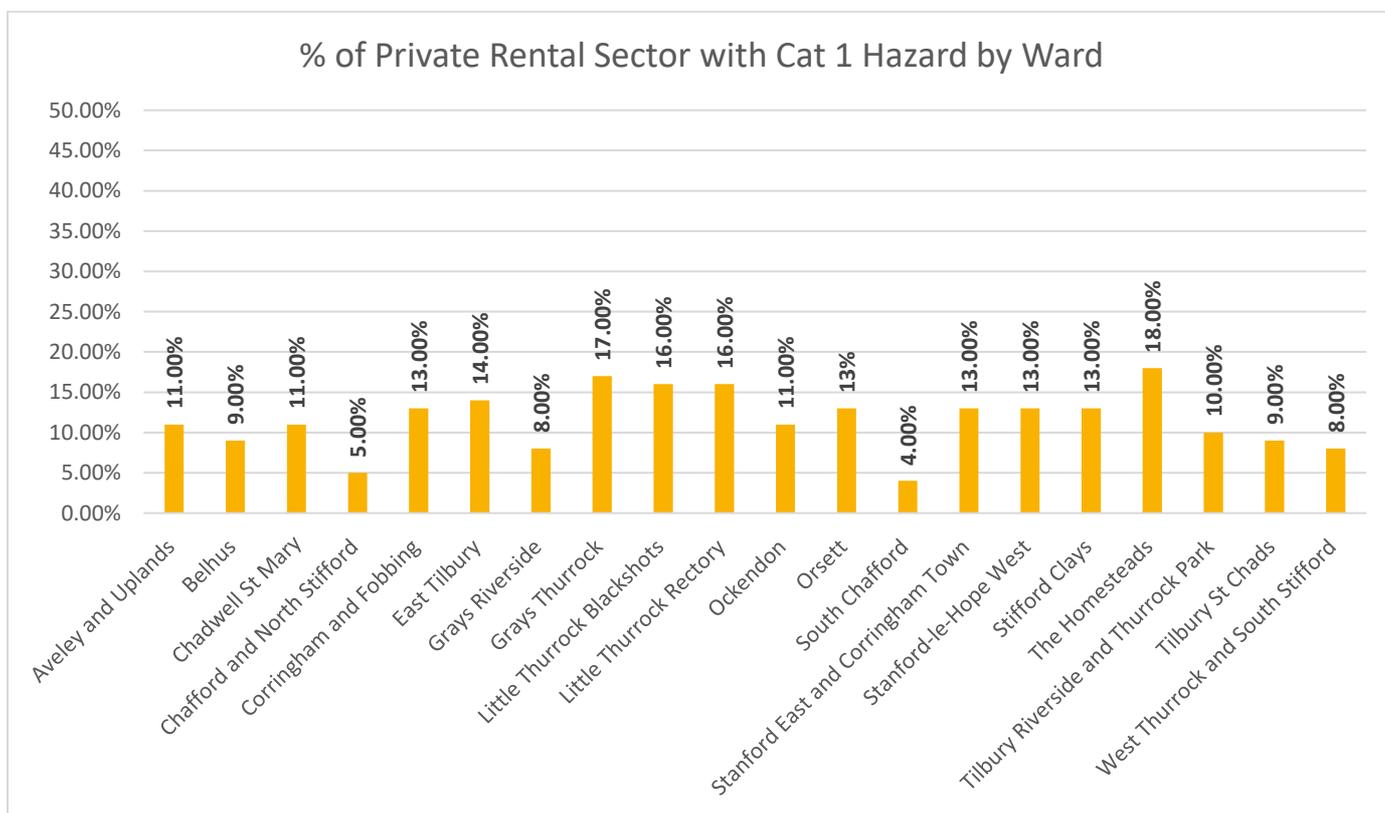
Across Thurrock, the private rented sector plays a significant role in the local housing landscape, but its prevalence varies substantially by ward. The chart shows that Grays Riverside (41.2%) and South Chafford (40.2%) have the highest levels of PRS housing, both exceeding 40%. This

indicates a dominant private rental presence, likely exerting considerable influence on housing conditions, local services, and community stability.

Other wards with notably high PRS proportions include West Thurrock and South Stifford (34.7%), Chafford and North Stifford (28.4%), and Grays Thurrock (26.9%), all of which comfortably exceed the 19% high-threshold benchmark.

A further cluster of wards, including Little Thurrock Rectory (25.8%), Stanford-le-Hope West (24.9%), and Aveley and Uplands (24.3%), also display elevated PRS concentrations. These figures suggest substantial landlord activity and a need for close oversight to ensure property standards are maintained.

In contrast, some wards, such as The Homesteads (14.8%), Stifford Clays (10.8%), and Corringham and Fobbing (13.7%), fall well below the 19% threshold. These areas may face fewer PRS-related challenges, or at least fewer in scale, making them less of a priority for borough-wide licensing interventions.



This chart highlights variation in the safety and quality of private rented homes across Thurrock, focusing on the presence of Category 1 hazards as defined under the HHSRS.

10 of the 20 wards exceed the 12% threshold, indicating that in these areas, a significant proportion of PRS homes present serious risks to the health and wellbeing of tenants.

The highest levels of Category 1 hazards are recorded in The Homesteads (18%), Grays Thurrock (17%), Little Thurrock Rectory, Little Thurrock Blackshots, and Ockendon (all 16%). These findings suggest urgent need for targeted intervention to address potentially unsafe or unfit housing in these areas.

Other wards notably exceeding the threshold include East Tilbury (14%), Corringham and Fobbing, Orsett, Stifford Clays, Stanford-le-Hope West, and Stanford East and Corringham Town (all 13%)—highlighting widespread issues beyond the most acute hotspots.

Several wards fall just below the threshold (e.g. Aveley and Uplands, Ockendon, Chadwell St Mary, and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, all at or near 11%), indicating that while not yet above the benchmark, there remains a risk of deterioration or underreported issues.

Conversely, South Chafford (4%) and Chafford and North Stifford (5%) show the lowest proportion of PRS homes with Category 1 hazards, suggesting comparatively better standards of housing in those locations – though still warranting ongoing monitoring.

Property licensing schemes

Property licensing allows the council to improve the condition and management of privately rented properties. This helps to make renting in the private rented sector safer and fairer for tenants.

There are three types of property licensing schemes operating in England:

Mandatory HMO licensing

Mandatory HMO licensing is a national legal requirement in England for landlords who rent out Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that are occupied by five or more people, forming two or more separate households, and who share facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms, or toilets. The purpose of the licence is to ensure that the property meets specific safety and management standards. Landlords must apply to the local council for a licence and comply with conditions relating to property maintenance, fire safety, and the provision of adequate facilities for tenants.

Additional HMO licensing

Additional HMO licensing is a discretionary scheme introduced by local councils to cover smaller HMOs that are not subject to mandatory licensing. Typically, it applies to properties occupied by three or more people forming two or more households, who share basic amenities. Councils bring in additional licensing schemes where there is evidence of poor property management or high levels of complaints related to smaller HMOs. Landlords must apply for a licence and meet specified property and management standards set by the council.

Selective licensing

Selective licensing is a scheme that allows local councils to require all privately rented properties within a designated area to be licensed, regardless of the size or type of property or the number of occupants. These schemes are usually introduced in areas with issues such as low housing demand, significant anti-social behaviour, poor property conditions, high crime rates, or high migration levels. The aim is to improve the overall quality of rented housing and to ensure that landlords take responsibility for the management of their properties and the behaviour of their tenants.

Proposed selective licensing scheme

Designation	Criteria
A	Poor property conditions, high levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation
B	Poor property conditions and high levels of deprivation
C	High levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation
D	High levels of deprivation

Designation	Ward	% PRS	Above 19% PRS	% PRS with Cat 1 hazard	Above national average poor PRS property condition	High levels of ASB	High levels of deprivation
C	Aveley and Uplands	24.3%	✓	11.2%		✓	✓
D	Belhus	23.2%	✓	9.4%			✓
C	Chadwell St Mary	15.3%		11.3%		✓	✓
D	Chafford and North Stifford	28.4%	✓	4.6%			✓
B	Corringham and Fobbing	13.7%		12.8%	✓		✓
A	East Tilbury	22.9%	✓	14.1%	✓	✓	✓
C	Grays Riverside	41.2%	✓	8.4%		✓	✓
B	Grays Thurrock	26.9%	✓	17.4%	✓		✓
-	Little Thurrock Blackshots	13.2%		15.5%	✓		
B	Little Thurrock Rectory	25.8%	✓	15.8%	✓		
C	Ockendon	18.5%		10.8%		✓	✓
-	Orsett	18%		13.4%	✓		✓
D	South Chafford	40.2%	✓	4.4%			✓
C	Stanford East and Corringham Town	14.2%		13.1%	✓	✓	✓
A	Stanford-le-Hope West	24.9%	✓	13.5%	✓	✓	✓
-	Stifford Clays	10.8%		12.5%	✓		✓
-	The Homesteads	14.8%		17.9%	✓		
C	Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	21.7%	✓	10.3%		✓	✓
C	Tilbury St Chads	22.6%	✓	9.2%		✓	✓
C	West Thurrock and South Stifford	34.7%	✓	7.7%		✓	✓

Designation A: Poor property conditions, high levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation

Which areas are included in this designation?

There are two wards in this designation: East Tilbury, and Stanford-le-Hope West

What is the evidence of poor property conditions, high levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation in the private rented sector in this area?

Analysis of data for East Tilbury and Stanford-le-Hope West indicates that both areas meet multiple conditions relevant to the consideration of selective licensing. Specifically, there is clear evidence of the following issues:

Poor Property Conditions

In East Tilbury, an estimated 14.1% of PRS homes may contain Category 1 hazards under HHSRS, which exceeds the national average of 12%.

In Stanford-le-Hope West, the estimated figure is similarly high at 13.5%.

These figures suggest a prevalence of hazardous or unsafe housing conditions within the PRS in both wards.

High Levels of ASB

East Tilbury has an ASB crime rate of 9.5 crimes reported per 1k population, with Stanford-le-Hope West having an ASB crime rate of 14.9 crimes reported per 1k population.

Both are significantly above the borough median ASB rate of 7.655 crimes reported per 1k population.

This indicates a pattern of persistent ASB in both localities, potentially linked to or impacting the PRS.

High Levels of Deprivation

Both wards show high levels of deprivation within two of the eight recognised domains of deprivation.

This reflects ongoing social and economic disadvantage among residents, which may exacerbate issues within the PRS and contribute to wider community vulnerability.

These indicators collectively support the view that there are substantial concerns relating to property standards, community safety, and socio-economic conditions in the private rented sector within these areas.

How will selective licensing deal with poor property conditions, high levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation in the designated area?

The introduction of selective licensing in these areas will form part of a wider strategy to intervene where there is a strong correlation between poor housing standards, social challenges, and community safety concerns.

Selective licensing will empower the council to require landlords to meet clearly defined minimum housing standards, with a specific focus on identifying and rectifying serious disrepair, hazards, or overcrowding. Through the licensing process, the council will be able to proactively inspect properties, enforce compliance with safety regulations, and ensure that tenants are living in safe, well-managed homes.

In relation to ASB, licensing will help improve tenancy management practices by requiring landlords to take appropriate steps in preventing and addressing tenant behaviour that negatively impacts neighbours and the wider community. The council will be able to provide guidance, set expectations, and, where necessary, take enforcement action to ensure a consistent approach to ASB prevention and resolution.

Furthermore, by creating a formal framework of engagement between the council and landlords, selective licensing will facilitate earlier identification of vulnerable households and allow referrals to be made to support services. This is particularly important in areas of high deprivation, where residents may be more likely to face financial hardship, poor health, or other challenges. Licensing will act as a catalyst for broader place-based support interventions and community development, improving housing conditions as well as wider life chances.

By addressing property conditions, ASB, and deprivation in tandem, selective licensing will contribute to making East Tilbury and Stanford-le-Hope West safer, healthier, and more resilient communities.

The proposed selective licence conditions for designation

As designation A is based on poor property conditions, ASB and deprivation as a collective, there are specific, discretionary licence conditions. These licence conditions form part of the consultation and the council welcomes any views on them.

The proposed licence conditions can be found on the council's online consultation portal.

Designation B: Poor property conditions

Which areas are included in this designation?

There are three wards in this designation: Corringham and Fobbing, Grays Thurrock, and Little Thurrock Rectory.

What is the evidence of poor property conditions and high levels of deprivation in the private rented sector in this area?

Analysis of data for Corringham and Fobbing, Grays Thurrock, and Little Thurrock Rectory indicates clear evidence of poor property conditions in the private rented sector (PRS) across all three wards. This is demonstrated by the proportion of PRS homes estimated to contain Category 1 hazards under HHSRS, which exceed the national average of 12%.

Corringham and Fobbing

An estimated 12.8% of PRS homes may contain Category 1 HHSRS hazards.

This is slightly above the national average, indicating a higher-than-expected level of poor housing conditions.

Grays Thurrock

An estimated 17.4% of PRS homes may contain Category 1 HHSRS hazards.

This is significantly above the national average and highlights a notable concern regarding property standards in the area.

Little Thurrock Rectory

An estimated 15.8% of PRS homes may contain Category 1 HHSRS hazards.

This figure also substantially exceeds the national average, suggesting a widespread issue with poor housing conditions.

Across all three wards, the percentage of PRS properties estimated to contain serious housing hazards is above the national benchmark. This provides strong evidence of poor property conditions and supports the case for considering additional measures such as selective licensing to address the issue.

How will selective licensing deal with poor property conditions and high levels of deprivation in the designated area?

Selective licensing in these wards will act as a targeted tool to address the root causes of housing-related disadvantage and wider social inequality.

By introducing mandatory licensing for landlords operating within Corringham and Fobbing, Grays Thurrock, and Little Thurrock Rectory, the council will gain enhanced oversight of property standards in the private rented sector. Licensing will require landlords to carry out necessary improvements to meet baseline legal standards, and enable proactive identification of hazards such as excess cold, damp and mould, or fire safety risks. This will help to protect tenants and reduce the number of households living in unsafe or unfit accommodation.

Alongside these housing improvements, selective licensing will support the council in tackling broader issues linked to deprivation. Where tenants face financial difficulty, insecure housing, or health issues linked to their living environment, the licensing process provides a structured opportunity to connect residents with support services and to intervene earlier in cases of risk. Improving housing quality is a known contributor to improved health outcomes and educational attainment – key pathways out of deprivation.

Moreover, licensing offers a formal mechanism through which the council can engage with landlords to promote responsible management, encourage longer-term tenancies, and improve community stability in areas with high turnover or fragmented ownership.

Through these combined actions, selective licensing in Designation B areas will reduce housing hazards, support vulnerable households, and help to build stronger, more resilient communities.

The proposed selective licence conditions for designation

As designation B is based on poor property conditions, there are specific, discretionary licence conditions relating to this. These licence conditions form part of the consultation and the council welcomes any views on them.

The proposed licence conditions can be found on the council's online consultation portal.

Designation C: High levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation

Which areas are included in this designation?

There are eight wards in this designation: Aveley and Uplands, Chadwell St Mary, Grays Riverside, Ockendon, Stanford East and Corringham Town, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, Tilbury St Chads, and West Thurrock and South Stifford.

What is the evidence of high levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation in the private rented sector in this area?

An analysis of ward-level data highlights clear and consistent evidence of both high levels of ASB and deprivation in areas which would support the case for targeted interventions such as selective licensing.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

All eight wards under review report ASB crime rates above the borough median of 7.655 ASB crimes reported per 1k population, indicating persistent issues affecting community safety and cohesion. The lowest ASB rate among them is found in Stanford East and Corringham Town at 8.3 ASB crimes reported per 1k population, which is still above the borough threshold. Ockendon and Aveley and Uplands also record elevated rates at 9.4 and 11.1 ASB crimes reported per 1k population respectively. More acute levels are seen in Tilbury St Chads (12.1), Chadwell St Mary (15.8), and Grays Riverside (17.8), pointing to more entrenched patterns of anti-social behaviour.

The highest ASB rates are found in Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park (19.5), and West Thurrock and South Stifford (23.2), where the figures are more than double the borough median. These rates suggest that anti-social behaviour is a significant and ongoing issue in many parts of the borough, particularly in areas with a high proportion of PRS housing.

Deprivation

Deprivation is also a common factor across the wards examined, with each experiencing high levels of deprivation across multiple domains of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Grays Riverside records deprivation in two of the eight domains. Ockendon experiences deprivation in three domains, while West Thurrock and South Stifford also shows deprivation in three areas.

More concerning are the levels of deprivation in Aveley and Uplands and Stanford East and Corringham Town, where four domains are affected. Chadwell St Mary and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park are impacted across five deprivation domains. The most severe deprivation is seen in Tilbury St Chads, which experiences high levels across six out of the eight measured domains.

These patterns demonstrate widespread and layered socio-economic disadvantage, which is likely to compound housing and community challenges in areas with high concentrations of PRS properties.

All wards assessed show both ASB rates exceeding the borough median and notable levels of deprivation across several domains. This combination presents clear evidence of environmental, social, and economic pressures within the private rented sector. The findings provide a strong foundation for considering selective licensing schemes and broader housing-focused interventions to improve conditions and support community resilience.

How will selective licensing deal with high levels of ASB and high levels of deprivation in the designated area?

Selective licensing in these wards will serve as a key intervention to address the systemic social and housing issues that underpin persistent ASB and deprivation.

Licensing will impose mandatory management responsibilities on landlords, compelling them to take a proactive role in tackling ASB linked to their properties. This includes conducting suitable tenant referencing, responding to complaints promptly, and cooperating with the council and police to address persistent nuisance or disorder. By holding landlords to a consistent standard, the scheme will contribute to reducing incidents of ASB and improving neighbourhood safety.

Furthermore, the licensing process provides a structured opportunity for the council to engage directly with landlords and tenants in areas where deprivation is high. This can facilitate early intervention for households at risk of financial hardship, poor health, or housing insecurity. Through this contact, tenants can be signposted to welfare, employment, and support services – helping to break cycles of deprivation.

In many of these wards, deprivation and ASB intersect with wider housing issues such as high turnover, overcrowding, and poor conditions. Selective licensing enables a coordinated approach to improving property standards, encouraging longer-term tenancies, and stabilising communities.

Ultimately, the scheme will help to create safer, healthier environments, supporting residents and landlords alike in addressing entrenched social issues and improving quality of life.

The proposed selective licence conditions for designation

As designation C is based on ASB and deprivation in tandem, there are specific, discretionary licence conditions for this. These licence conditions form part of the consultation and the council welcomes any views on them.

The proposed licence conditions can be found on the council's online consultation portal.

Designation D: High levels of deprivation

Which areas are included in this designation?

There are three wards in this designation: Belhus, Chafford and North Stifford, and South Chafford

What is the evidence of high levels of deprivation in the private rented sector in this area?

Each of the designated wards shows a significant presence of deprivation as measured through the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), despite not meeting the combined thresholds for poor property conditions or high ASB seen in other categories.

In Belhus, there is deprivation across six of the eight IMD domains, suggesting deep and widespread socio-economic challenges affecting income, health, education, employment, and access to housing and services. These structural issues are compounded by a high proportion of private rented sector (PRS) housing, with 23.2% of properties in the PRS – well above the 19% high-level threshold.

Chafford and North Stifford shows evidence of deprivation in one IMD domain. While this may appear limited in comparison to other wards, it still represents a meaningful indicator of disadvantage in a locality that also has a significantly high PRS presence – 28.4%, one of the highest across the borough.

South Chafford demonstrates deprivation in one domain as well, and, like the other wards in this designation, it has a substantial level of PRS housing, at 40.2%, the second highest in Thurrock. Though levels of ASB and crime are relatively low in this area, the concentration of PRS in a deprived context raises concern about the consistency of property management and the potential for unregulated letting practices to worsen outcomes for vulnerable tenants.

How will selective licensing deal with high levels of deprivation in the designated area?

Selective licensing in these wards will provide a targeted mechanism to improve outcomes for tenants living in deprived circumstances by raising standards and strengthening accountability in the private rented sector.

While the headline crime or ASB statistics may not be as acute as in other wards, deprivation alone can lead to unstable housing, lower standards of living, and reduced access to vital services. Selective licensing enables the council to intervene at the point of tenancy and property management – ensuring that landlords are complying with their responsibilities, that housing conditions meet legal standards, and that tenancies are managed fairly and consistently.

Through the licensing process, the council can also identify households in need of additional support. In deprived areas, early intervention is key to preventing homelessness, health deterioration, or financial crisis. Licensing officers will be well placed to refer tenants to appropriate services and to build stronger relationships between housing services and the communities they serve.

Furthermore, the presence of a large and unregulated PRS in these areas increases the risk of informal arrangements, illegal evictions, and neglect. By formalising the expectations on landlords through a licensing regime, the council can better monitor standards and reduce housing-related inequalities.

In essence, selective licensing will help to lift housing standards in wards with high deprivation, while also tackling the broader impacts of inequality by embedding a culture of professionalism for landlords and integrated support for tenants.

The proposed selective licence conditions for designation

As designation D is based on deprivation, there are specific, discretionary licence conditions relating to this. These licence conditions form part of the consultation and the council welcomes any views on them.

The proposed licence conditions can be found on the council's online consultation portal.

Why are some wards not included in the proposed scheme?

There are four wards that are not included in any of the designations: Little Thurrock Blackshots, Orsett, Stifford Clays, and The Homesteads.

Each of the wards is estimated to feature above national average levels of poor PRS property conditions, however at the time of drafting, the size of the PRS in each ward was below the level set out within guidance where selective licensing can be considered.

Proposed selective licensing scheme conditions

There are two types of conditions that can be applied to a selective licensing scheme: mandatory and discretionary. The mandatory conditions are required by Schedule 4 of the Housing Act 2004 and these do not form part of the consultation.

The discretionary conditions are part of the consultation and the council can decide on these in order to deal with the management, use and occupation of the licensed property.

In some circumstances, for a particular property, where the council believes there are specific issues not being covered by the discretionary conditions, additional or more specific conditions can be added.

As the four proposed selective licensing designations are based on different criteria, the discretionary conditions are tailored to tackle the conditions relating to the criteria in each area.

For example, designation B is based on poor property conditions and there are specific proposed licence conditions relating to property condition.

The proposed licence conditions can be found on the council's online consultation portal.

Selective licence exemptions

There are a number of exemptions to selective licensing scheme including:

- a) properties licensable as an HMOs under mandatory or additional HMO licensing
- b) properties let by a local authority or a Registered Provider (RP), traditionally known as a not-for-profit Housing Association
- c) properties already subject to a management order
- d) properties subject to a temporary exemption notice
- e) owners who reside in property they own as their main residence (owner-occupiers).
- f) holiday lets; and tenancies under a long lease and business tenancies
- g) Any building which is occupied principally for the purposes of a religious community whose principal occupation is prayer, contemplation, education or the relief of suffering
- h) Student accommodation directly managed by educational institutions, e.g. halls of residence
- i) properties managed by a charity registered under the Charities Act 2011 and which
 - a. is a night shelter, or
 - b. consists of temporary accommodation for persons suffering or recovering from drug or alcohol abuse or a mental disorder.

Proposed selective licensing scheme fee

The Selective Licensing fees must be proportionate to the scheme's operational costs, and not generate surplus revenue.

The council is required to split the fee into separate payments. The initial part of the fee is charged to cover the cost of processing of the application. If the application for a licence is successful, a further fee will be charged before the full licence is issued. These further fees are contributions to the other costs incurred by the council under the licensing scheme, for example the cost to the council for enforcement of licences.

Fee Type	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Total
Standard Fee	£236.98	£562.16	£235.76	£1,034.90
Higher Rate (operating unlicensed >12 weeks)	£236.98	£1,124.32	£406.10	£1,767.40
Surcharge for Paper Application - New Application	N/A	N/A	N/A	£500

Note: The higher rate application fee is the default fee charged unless the applicant submits evidence that the property became licensable within 12 weeks of the application date. Acceptable evidence includes land registry documents or signed tenancy agreements dated within the last 12 weeks.

A 2% annual inflation uplift has been applied across all parts of the licence fee to ensure the scheme remains financially sustainable over the five-year designation period. This rate is based on long-term average inflation trends as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). It reflects the expected increase in operational costs, such as staffing, IT services, and compliance activities. By applying a modest and consistent uplift, the Council can maintain service quality and enforcement capability throughout the scheme's duration without generating a surplus. This approach also ensures transparency and predictability for landlords, allowing them to plan confidently for future licensing costs.

Alternatives to licensing which have been considered

Alternative Measure	Strengths	Limitations
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<p>Use of HHSRS and Public Health Powers</p>	<p>Enables councils to serve formal notices requiring landlords to carry out remedial works. Where notices are not complied with, the council can undertake works in default. Non-compliance can result in prosecution.</p>	<p>These powers do not require landlords to act proactively. Enforcement can be slow due to appeal rights, which often delay compliance. Works in default are costly and time-consuming for the council, with no guarantee of full cost recovery. Even successful prosecutions do not guarantee property improvements, and associated legal costs are often unrecoverable.</p>
<p>Voluntary Accreditation Schemes</p>	<p>Can help improve management practices and housing standards for landlords who actively participate. Accreditation may support landlords in understanding and fulfilling their responsibilities.</p>	<p>Participation is voluntary, meaning engagement is limited to compliant landlords. Those operating poorly managed or substandard properties are unlikely to take part.</p>
<p>Prosecution and Civil Penalties for Housing Offences</p>	<p>Acts as a deterrent to poor property management and encourages compliance with housing legislation.</p>	<p>These powers are reactive and do not compel landlords to improve conditions proactively. Enforcement alone does not ensure sustained improvements. Without a licensing scheme in place, the council's ability to impose civil penalties for breaches is significantly reduced.</p>
<p>Improvement Grants for Substandard Properties</p>	<p>Where available, grants can assist landlords in funding property upgrades, benefitting both tenants and landlords by improving housing quality.</p>	<p>Funding is extremely limited and dependent on successful external bids. Grants may end up subsidising improvements that landlords are already legally obliged to make. Any scheme would be discretionary and rely entirely on voluntary landlord participation.</p>
<p>Use of ASB Powers</p>	<p>Councils can serve formal notices to address ASB at individual properties, which may help resolve issues in specific cases.</p>	<p>These powers typically apply to the tenant and do not require landlords to take any proactive role in preventing or managing ASB linked to their properties. As a result, the underlying cause may persist.</p>

Proposed scheme objectives

Licensing is part of an overall approach to help improve privately rented properties in Thurrock. As such, any outcomes will be as a result of a range of initiatives and methods that the council can use. However, licensing is an important element and will be assessed against the following scheme objectives:

Objective	Description
1	Reduction in ASB and repeat ASB incidents in PRS properties
2	Improve property standards and tenant safety in the borough
3	Ensure compliance with license conditions
4	Reduce the factors that contribute to deprivation within communities
5	Maximise the number of licensable properties that are licensed
6	Improve the professionalism of landlords and managers, and the management of PRS properties

Designation	Scheme Objectives					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B		✓	✓		✓	✓
C	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
D			✓	✓	✓	✓

Objective 1 – Reduction in ASB and repeat ASB Incidents in PRS properties

Selective licensing will directly contribute to the reduction of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and repeat ASB incidents in areas where this is most prevalent - namely those under designation A.

In these areas, ASB rates consistently exceed the borough median. Licensing will require landlords to put in place appropriate tenancy management practices, including clear tenancy agreements, robust referencing, and timely responses to complaints. It will also provide a formal route for the council to intervene where properties are contributing to neighbourhood disorder.

By embedding a standard of responsible landlord behaviour and creating a framework for enforcement, the scheme will reduce persistent nuisance, help to de-escalate community tensions, and support broader community safety objectives.

Objective 2 – Improve property standards and tenant safety in the borough

Improving property standards is a core driver behind the designations A and B where poor property conditions are particularly prevalent.

In these areas - such as Grays Thurrock, Corringham and Fobbing, and East Tilbury - significant proportions of PRS properties are estimated to contain Category 1 Hazards under the HHSRS.

Selective licensing will require landlords to rectify these hazards as a condition of maintaining their licence.

This objective is also supported in Designation A due to the overlapping issues of ASB and housing condition. Through regular inspections, enforcement powers, and compliance monitoring, licensing will ensure that properties meet legal safety standards and that tenants are not subject to overcrowding, damp and mould, or electrical and fire risks.

Objective 3 – Ensure compliance with licence conditions

Compliance is a central function of the licensing regime and applies across all designations

In every case, the scheme introduces a clear set of conditions that landlords must meet to operate legally. These include standards for property condition, tenancy management, and record-keeping. Licensing creates a formal mechanism for the council to monitor and enforce these standards consistently across the borough.

This objective is particularly relevant in Designation D areas, such as South Chafford and Belhus, where properties may not currently be under close regulatory scrutiny, but where the PRS is prominent and tenants may be vulnerable to poor management practices.

Objective 4 – Reduce the factors that contribute to deprivation within communities

Deprivation is a key concern in Designations A, C and D, where wards experience multiple challenges across employment, education, health, and access to services.

Licensing helps reduce deprivation by improving housing quality, reducing instability caused by poorly managed tenancies, and creating a platform for proactive engagement with vulnerable households. This includes referrals to local support services, assistance with benefits and employment, and enabling earlier intervention for residents at risk.

Furthermore, improved property conditions and reduced ASB will foster more stable, cohesive communities – encouraging longer-term residency and greater local investment.

Objective 5 – Maximise the number of licensable properties that are licensed

This objective is most applicable to Designations A, C, and D, where the proportion of private rented properties is notably high. For example, PRS levels exceed 40% in South Chafford and Grays Riverside, and are consistently above the borough threshold of concern in all Designation A wards.

Selective licensing creates a requirement for landlords to register and comply, allowing the council to build an accurate record of PRS activity. This facilitates enforcement action against non-compliant landlords and ensures that the majority of properties within high-risk areas are brought under regulatory oversight.

Effective outreach and data-matching will be used to drive up registration rates and improve the transparency of PRS operations borough-wide.

Objective 6 – Improve the professionalism of landlords and managers, and the management of PRS properties

Raising standards in landlord conduct and tenancy management is a cross-cutting aim supported by all designation groups.

Licensing introduces conditions that require landlords to demonstrate knowledge of legal responsibilities, uphold property standards, and respond promptly to tenant issues. In doing so, it promotes a shift from informal or poor management practices to more professionalised operations.

In Designations B and D, where ASB may not be acute but where poor management and vulnerability still exist, licensing provides a preventative tool to ensure high standards are in place before problems escalate. For Designations A and C, where serious issues are already present, it supports direct enforcement and behaviour change.

Through this objective, the scheme will build capacity in the local PRS market, foster responsible letting, and improve outcomes for both tenants and communities.

Licensing and wider council strategies

Housing Strategy

Thurrock Council published its Housing Strategy in July 2022, which outlines the council's strategic aims and ambitions relating to housing in the borough.

The strategy is based on four key strategic aims:

- Deliver housing support and services
- Meet housing need
- Protect resident safety
- Strengthen community engagement and empowerment

The overarching vision for the Housing Strategy is:

Every Thurrock resident will have access to a safe, secure, suitable, and affordable home that meets their needs and aspirations, serving as a foundation to support their health and wellbeing.

Residents will be supported at home and in their local area through connected services, neighbourhoods, localities, and communities to achieve their vision of a 'good life'

The council has made a commitment, under the second aim of the strategy, to improve warmth, safety and standards in private sector homes.

We will drive up the standards and quality of homes in the private sector in order to ensure greater availability of safe and suitable homes for Thurrock residents.

We will tackle hazards in the private rental sector in order to improve resident safety.

The introduction of selective licensing will support this by increasing the council's knowledge of the sector in Thurrock, and will provide a stronger legislative framework with which to deal with any identified or known issues.

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Thurrock Council has outlined its strategy for homelessness prevention in the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030. As part of this, the council has committed within the strategy to *foster better relationships with private landlords to improve private sector stock condition and incentivise affordable housing offers*. Within this, the council has outlined that it will *explore the introduction of selective licensing to ensure that privately rented properties in the borough are safe, meet defined standards, and are being managed satisfactorily*.

Further information and details of the consultation

The council welcomes views from all Thurrock residents, especially tenants living in the private rental sector. The views of landlords and managing agents with properties in the borough and anyone or any organisation with an interest in the private rented sector, are also welcomed.

The consultation will run from 12 May 2025 until 21 July 2025. The consultation questionnaire can be found on the council's online consultation portal.

Anyone with a disability or who needs extra help completing the questionnaire can request support by emailing prsconsultation@thurrock.gov.uk. A paper copy of the consultation is also available on request by emailing prsconsultation@thurrock.gov.uk or by visiting any Thurrock library.

Once the consultation has closed the council will review the replies. A full consultation report, including the council's response to any alternatives suggested, will be published on the council's website.

The council has complied with its duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010A. A community and equality impact assessment (CEIA) was carried out as part of these proposals.