



Housing Enforcement



Evaluation of Cathays Additional Licensing Scheme 2010-2015

Introduction

Cardiff Council has a duty to enforce Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 which regulates standards in private sector rented accommodation and has, since its implementation in 2006 undertaken a Mandatory Licensing Scheme for all HMOs with 5 or more people in properties with 3 or more storeys. The aim of the legislation is to improve management, amenity, safety standards of HMOs and tackle anti social behaviour to improve living standards within the community. It also gives local authorities discretionary powers to extend the scope of HMO Licensing by way of implementing an Additional Licensing Scheme to meet the needs of their locality if there is considered a need.

The Council recognises the contribution that the private rented sector makes to the authority's housing stock and through the Mandatory Scheme and other initiatives has worked hard to improve standards in those properties with some success. However the limited application of the scheme to houses with 3 or more storeys, made only a small impact in any one geographical area and it was recognised that extra powers were needed, particularly in certain wards, to provide better and more effective solutions to the problems. Therefore following a thorough appraisal and consultation exercise, Cathays Community Ward was declared an Additional Licensing Area at the Council's Executive Business Meeting on 4th March 2010.

The Additional Licensing Scheme in Cathays came into effect on 1 July 2010 and extended the scope of licensing to cover most rented property with 3 or more occupiers who form 2 or more households regardless of how many storeys the property has. The Scheme runs for a period of 5 years, at the end of which, the Council are required to re-declare the Additional Licensing Scheme area undertaking a comprehensive and thorough appraisal and consultation exercise.

Upon expiry of the existing Scheme in 2015, the Council will consider proposals for re-declaring Cathays ward. Since the Scheme was introduced, the Scheme has been routinely evaluated providing an opportunity to regularly appraise the effectiveness of the Scheme, monitor performance and facilitate any necessary improvements. The first evaluation of the Scheme was undertaken in April 2012 followed by another evaluation in 2013, which provided a comprehensive review of the Scheme since its introduction in July 2010 together with a number of recommendations. As we approach the expiry of the 5 year period of the Scheme in June 2015, this report has been prepared to provide a concluding evaluation of the Scheme to inform the possible extension of the Scheme for another 5 year period.

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Background

1.1 Legislative context

Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 introduced the licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMO) requiring that HMOs consisting of three or more storeys AND five or more persons living as two or more single households and sharing some amenities are licensed. Known as Mandatory Licensing, the term applies to those properties in the private rented sector.

Physical and management standards in HMOs can often be low and the aim of the licensing regime is to ensure that the poorest and highest risk properties in the private rental market meet the legal standards and are properly managed to provide greater protection to the health, safety and welfare of the occupants of this type of property.

In Cardiff, a large number of requests/complaints about the condition of private properties in the City relate to HMOs. They are also associated with issues that affect the neighbourhood such as rubbish and anti-social behaviour which can occur because of poor management of the property. HMOs can also change the nature of an area and result in reduced community cohesion.

Whilst the Mandatory licensing regime captures a number of properties, it cannot deal with all the problems highlighted in the private rented sector because it applies to only a small proportion of the stock and makes little visible impact in an area, particularly one with significant issues associated with a high density of HMOs.

Under the Housing Act 2004, additional powers are available to local authorities to extend the licensing regime to other categories of property, namely:-

- Additional licensing powers enabling the Council to extend the scope of its HMO Licensing to other descriptions of HMO either in all or in part of its district.
- Selective licensing powers enabling the Council to extend licensing to other types of properties other than just HMO's in an area of the City where there may be issues relating to low housing demand or anti social behaviour.

Despite the good work undertaken to improve properties throughout the City, it was evident that certain areas in the City were not adequately protected by the existing licensing regime and were displaying a range of common problems such as rubbish accumulation, parking stress, street scene decay and poor housing. The Authority therefore recognised that the extra powers available through the introduction of an Additional Licensing would provide better and more effective solutions.

On 10 September 2009, the Executive resolved to undertake internal and external consultation on the proposal to introduce an Additional Licensing Scheme within the Cathays Community Ward of Cardiff. Following this thorough appraisal and consultation exercise, the area was formally declared an Additional Licensing Scheme area at the Executive Business Meeting on 4th March 2010 with an implementation date of 1 July 2010.

1.2 Profile of Cathays

Cardiff is a university city with approximately 36,000 full time students over the age of 18 in residence. These students comprise approximately 10% of Cardiff's population, many of whom live in the Cathays and Plasnewydd areas, typically in shared terraced pre 1919 houses.

Cathays is an attractive area of the City for students because of its close proximity to campus and the city centre. The area contains a large number of private rented housing (64% of households in Cathays live in privately rented housing -2011 census) and over 64% of Cathays residents are full time students. This high demand for properties allows some landlords and agents to advertise and let poor quality properties in Cathays.

In 2006 a strategic partnership was established between the Council and the City's Universities through the adoption of the Cardiff Student Community Plan which addressed the "studentification" of certain areas of the city housing high numbers of students. Typically these areas displayed a range of problems such as rubbish accumulation, parking stress, street scene decay and poor housing. This partnership was supported by a jointly funded co-ordinator to lead on the implementation of a student community plan but despite this, student unions continue to report that student housing is the single most important issue they have to deal with and community dissatisfaction continues.

This dissatisfaction culminated in a motion being put to Council on 20 November 2008 highlighting the impact of a high student population in certain areas of the City calling for officers to explore how the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 for extending the licensing of HMO's might be applied to Cardiff. The Group established that Additional Licensing of HMOs could provide part of an effective solution and considered which areas of the City would benefit most.

In establishing appropriate areas for declaration, the Council considered a number of additional factors which led to the selection of Cathays as an Additional Licensing Scheme area:-

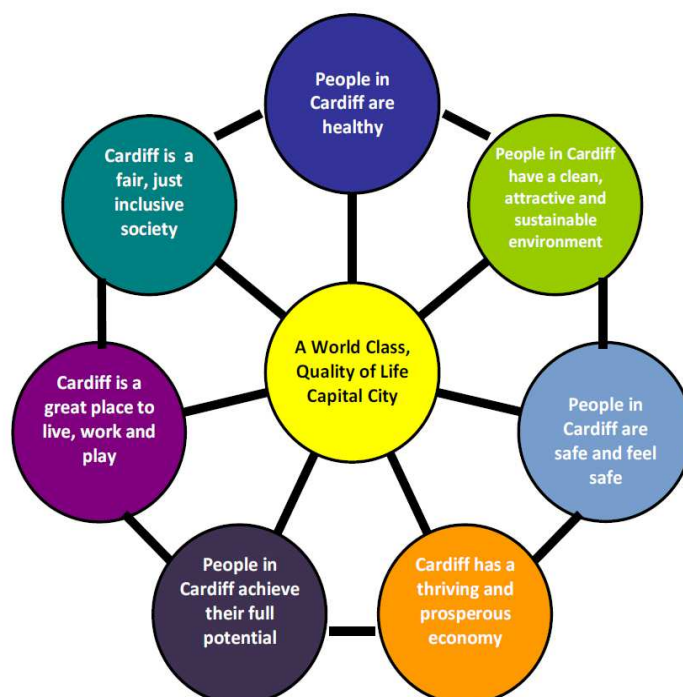
- That Cathays had the highest rate of Housing Enforcement complaints per property in the City. (14.83% of all Housing Enforcement service requests were made about properties located in Cathays).
- The Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey 2005 showed that the highest levels of unfitness in Cardiff were found in Area 5 (Cathays and Gabalfa combined) with 8.9% of dwellings in the area being unfit.
- The 2005 survey also identified Area 5 (Cathays and Gabalfa) as having the highest repair cost per dwelling in Cardiff.
- The Survey also showed Area 5 (Cathays and Gabalfa) as having by far the highest levels of fuel poverty with 19.4% of households living in fuel poverty compared to the second highest of 10.1%.
- During 2008/09, 118 (22.78% of Cardiff total) of Housing Enforcement Accumulation Service requests were received in respect of the Cathays area.

- During 2008/09, 195 (11.74% of Cardiff total) of Private Sector Housing Noise nuisance complaints were received in respect of the Cathays area.
- During 2008/09, 274 burglaries were recorded in the Cathays Community Ward area, representing 12.09% of all burglaries in Cardiff.
- Tenant responses to the Stakeholder questionnaires indicating high levels of concerns about their accommodation and area.

1.3 Links to Policies, Plans and Strategies

Cardiff Council’s Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017 sets out the vision that Cardiff achieves a housing market that supports the needs and aspirations of its community; a market that enables choice and accessibility by providing quality, affordable and sustainable homes. Each section describes the strategic issues for housing services in Cardiff and the activities being implemented that will assist in addressing the priorities. The Additional Licensing Scheme in Cathays is identified within the Strategy as having significant benefits to securing improved housing accommodation and better management of properties whilst improving safety for the occupiers and bringing improvements to the wider community. Furthermore it acknowledges that the implementation of the Scheme in the Cathays Community Ward has focussed on a student housing area, helping to ensure a supply of good quality, well managed private rented sector accommodation. The regular evaluation of the Scheme in Cathays is identified as an activity that will help deliver objectives that ensure Tenants and residents live in homes that are safe and secure.

Cardiff’s “What Matters” Strategy 2010-2020 is a ten year strategy that brings together partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors in Cardiff working together across organisational boundaries to share and deliver what matters most to people in the city. The collective vision of the Strategy is that by “2020 Cardiff will be a world class European capital city with an exceptional quality of life at the heart of a thriving city region”. To achieve this, partners agreed 7 outcomes.



The aims of the Cathays Additional Licensing Scheme contribute directly to a number of these key outcomes, by ensuring Cardiff has a **clean, attractive and sustainable environment, is a great place to live, work and play** and has a **fair, just and inclusive society where people are safe and feel safe, and are healthy**.

During the lifetime of the Cathays Additional Licensing Scheme, **Cardiff's Corporate Plan** has annually set out the Council's priorities for the next 3 years towards the delivery of services to the people of Cardiff. The Plans set out the vision for the City highlighting the priorities that will underpin and take forward the Council's ambitions.

Additional Licensing has been one such priority that is frequently represented in Corporate Plans. Sitting under the "People in Cardiff have a clean and attractive and sustainable environment" outcome (*Corporate Plan 2011-2014*), there was a desire to regenerate local neighbourhoods by developing and promoting Cardiff as a social landlord by evaluating the work of the Corporate Working Group on Additional Licensing for Cathays and considering the benefits of extending the scheme in other parts of Cardiff. The Additional Licensing Scheme also played a key contribution to securing safe and warm housing by promotion, partnership working, support for landlords and effective regulation (*Corporate Plan 2013-17*). Furthermore, by investing in a strategic response to reduce the Council's carbon emissions and increase the Council's generation of renewable energy, it was proposed that the improvements to properties achieved through the additional licensing scheme will improve the energy efficiency of rented accommodation. In 2015, **Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2015-17** continues to place access to good quality housing for Cardiff's citizens as a key improvement objective and commits to ensuring the private rented sector is fit for purpose and homes meet legal standards to protect the health of tenants through prioritised investigation of complaints and the proactive delivery of additional licensing schemes in the City.

1.4 Aims of the Scheme

The purpose of the Additional Licensing Scheme is to improve the standard of rented property within the Cathays Area. This includes all properties that are considered HMOs. The Scheme also aims to tackle wider community issues such as waste, anti social behaviour, energy efficiency and property security by implementing licence conditions for each property and using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. When considering the implementation of the Additional Licensing Scheme the Council recognised that any such implementation would form part of a bigger strategy and that only by working in partnership with other Council Services, Universities, the Police, Fire Service and landlords could the challenges and issues be addressed. The following outcomes therefore represent how, by working in partnership, the Additional Licensing Scheme was anticipated to secure real benefits for tenants, the Cathays area in general and other Council services.

- **Improvements to accommodation** by licensing conditions including means of escape from fire, amenities and space standards and by using other methods such as the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to secure improvements in relation to excess cold and security.
- **Improvements to health and safety** by ensuring gas and electrical installations are safe;

- **Sustainable improvements to the Cathays area** through licensing conditions to improve the “street scene” by requiring suitable waste storage facilities;
- **Better value for money secured by a proactive approach in one area.** By making a concerted effort in one area, increasing presence and regularly visiting HMOs, more long term sustained improvement to overall property conditions will occur;
- **Consistent approach to Tenancy Management and Property Conditions** for tenants living within the area. Licensed properties will abide by a common set of conditions controlling property maintenance and tenancy management including:-
 - Fire safety management;
 - Condition and appearance of communal areas, gardens and forecourts;
 - Control of rubbish and waste;
 - Maintenance of gas and electricity installations;
 - Provision of a written tenancy agreement to each tenant.
- **Improvements made through landlord training** – The conditions attached to each licence require that the licence holder attend appropriate training on the legal requirements relating to private renting and tenancy management such as the Landlord Accreditation Wales Course.
- **Eradication of bad landlords** – Those landlords who are not “fit and proper”, e.g. with a criminal record or bad housing track record cannot hold a licence.
- **Reducing anti-social behaviour** by making landlords more accountable for the behaviour of their tenants and tackle anti social behaviour;
- **Availability of information** – Licensing allows the Council to maintain a public register of licensed landlords allowing the Council to share information with other Council services. E.g. waste management with the resulting efficiency in services and enforcement activity. Also members of the public will have access to the information.

In summary, by introducing the Scheme, the Council would:-

- Ensure that effective management arrangements are in place.
- Reduce the risk of fire, excess cold and other hazards in shared HMO’s and poorly converted self contained flats
- Improve the standard of HMO’s relating to amenities and repair
- Improve the standard of HMO’s relating to security
- Support inexperienced landlords and make all landlords / property owners more accountable for the behaviour of their tenants and tackle anti-social behaviour
- Create a fairer and more equitable situation where landlords of all HMO’s invest in better standards
- Improve the quality of housing to benefit both tenants and the wider community.

2

Delivering the Scheme

2.1 Scope of Additional Licensing Scheme

Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004, lays down the definition of a House in Multiple Occupation together with appropriate exemptions but in short the Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) requires that HMOs consisting of three or more storeys AND five or more persons living as two or more single households and sharing some amenities are licensed. The Additional Licensing Scheme for Cathays extends the scope of licensing to cover most rented property with 3 or more occupiers who form 2 or more households regardless of how many storeys the property has.

Since introducing the Additional Licensing Scheme, the number of properties licensed has increased from 323 properties to 2174.

2.2 Introducing the Scheme

Once the Additional Licensing Scheme was approved on 4th March 2010, the necessary publicity was undertaken with the legally required public notices being placed in the Western Mail and South Wales Echo on 11 March 2010 advising of the proposed implementation date of 1 July 2010. Following the public notice process, 4 objections were received, however these were not taken on board, and the scheme implementation date remained the same.

Recognising the need to raise as much awareness as possible amongst landlords, the Scheme was further promoted in the Council's Capital Times, Unity News and the Landlord Accreditation Wales Newsletter with presentations also being made to the Cardiff Landlord Forum and to Universities, Police Officers and relevant Council Officers. Furthermore, the Cardiff Council website and the Student Housing website, www.cardiffdigs.co.uk were also updated to carry full details of the scheme. Furthermore all letting agents were informed and landlords were also made aware of the need for a Licence by Officers undertaking their duties within the Cathays area.

The initial response to the Scheme was very good with a number of requests for applications being submitted during the first 2 months. September/October saw the first influx of completed applications being returned in large numbers. It was pleasing to note that landlords and agents were approaching the Council to obtain application forms. As time has progressed, awareness has grown further with the majority of licensable properties being licensed, or awaiting the outcome of their application.

2.3 Complementary initiatives

The Council has implemented a number of schemes and initiatives to address the challenges and issues present within the Cathays Community Ward that run alongside the Additional Licensing Scheme as follows:-

- The **Landlord Accreditation Wales (LAW) Scheme** is a national scheme launched in November 2008 that aims to train and support landlords thereby raising standards of knowledge and professionalism in the private rented sector and improving the way landlords deal with their properties and tenants. To date 900 landlords with properties in Cardiff have been trained under the Scheme.

Attendance on a suitable and accredited training course on tenancy management and legal standards in private renting is a condition of the mandatory and additional licensing schemes and incentives have been made available to encourage attendance. Such incentives have included a reduction of £175 in the Additional Licensing fee for each property a landlord owns, and free training to those landlords who became accredited after completing the licensing process.

As an organisation LAW supports landlords with information and guidance on changes in legislation as well as sharing best practice and gives accredited landlords recognition that helps differentiate them from those less reputable landlords who give the rental market a bad name. It is both beneficial to the landlord in terms of business and reputation and to the Council who have less need to intervene when an issue arises.

- Cardiff Council and the three Universities jointly fund a Student Liaison Officer to implement Cardiff's Student Community Action Plan. The post strengthens partnership working between the Council and Universities to reduce the negative impacts associated with large student populations in small geographical areas. The Student Liaison Officer also acts as a single point of contact for student housing and lifestyle issues.
- www.cardiffdigs.co.uk is a dedicated website for students to access a range of housing and living advice on private rented accommodation including costs, accredited letting agents, landlords, moving from halls etc.
- **Halls to House** annual campaign informs students living in halls of residence about living in the private rented sector. Held before the summer break, partners come together to give advice to students about re-use, sustainable travel, securing valuables and advice about moving from halls to houses.
- **'You're In. Now What?'** annual campaign informs students of their tenant responsibilities in the private rented sector by distributing and displaying information on issues such as community relations, rubbish and recycling, security and health and safety. Moving In and Out checklists have been produced to support the campaign. These are distributed to over 600 landlords and letting agents in Cardiff for inclusion in their student tenancy welcome packs.
- **'Lock it. Hide it. Keep it'** is a joint campaign with the police aimed at students to increase safety and reduce/prevent burglaries. A range of initiatives are in place

including increased police presence, marketing drives including door to door safety and community awareness messages, property registration initiatives, and a team of volunteer student police wardens.

- A voluntary action group **Environmental Champions** has been set up to tackle sustainability and environmental issues in the local area. The group is made up of students and community members who regularly take part in sustainability events and environmental tasks such as waste awareness door knocking exercises, river clean ups, supporting sustainability week, working alongside Fairtrade Cardiff, innovative litter picks and environmental projects.
- **Get it out for Cardiff** is a joint, award winning campaign that helps students to clear out their rubbish at the end of the academic year with the aim of re-using and recycling as much as possible. The scheme is designed to help students across Cardiff plan a stress-free move out of their accommodation, whilst ensuring that the local community is left clean and tidy.

21 Green Zones are set up in halls of residences and Student Unions across the city where students can donate clothing, food (unopened tins, packets, jars etc.), small electrical items, books, CDs, DVDs and kitchen items (plates, mugs, utensils, pans etc.). Also 20 YMCA re-use banks across the city which are in place all year round to collect clothes, shoes, bags, textiles, small electrical items, books, CDs/DVDs.

A number of charities benefit from scheme. Food collected for *FareShare Cymru* - supporting communities to relieve food poverty. Clothing, electrical items, media and bric-a-brac are being collected for the YMCA to directly reinvest in projects and services for homeless people at the Cardiff YMCA Housing Association. Kitchen items are stored over the summer and sold to students at the start of term at heavily discounted prices, with all proceeds going to charity.

The Scheme also aims to encourage and educate students to place waste out for collection on the correct day when moving out of their tenancy. The three week scheme in June each year focuses on ensuring the end of term waste is presented and removed in a controlled manner. The campaign also runs all year round to educate and raise awareness of social responsibility and correct waste presentation in the student and landlord community. Before the campaign was launched in 2004 the area suffered extended period of incorrect waste presentation over a several weeks as the student community departed the area, leading to increased pressure on collection and cleansing services. Plus the daily incorrect presentation of waste had a negative impact on the local environment and communities.

Run in partnership between Cardiff Council; Cardiff University; Students' Union; Cardiff Metropolitan University; University of South Wales; Cardiff Digs; Cardiff YMCA; FareShare Cymru; Cardiff Self Storage and Liberty Living, 18 tonnes of waste was re-used by students donating items to charity during 2014.

2.4 Partnership working

The Council firmly believes that securing sustained improvements to the private sector stock in Cardiff can only be achieved through a robust partnership approach involving tenants, landlords, local communities and the voluntary and private sectors and the various council services working collectively. To this end, the authority has a number of arrangements in place, namely:-

- **Licence conditions** - A primary purpose of the scheme is to tackle wider community issues such as waste and anti social behaviour and property security and this is achieved through the implementation of licence conditions that cover these areas. These conditions seek to complement the work carried out by other Council services by raising awareness and educating licence holders and working collectively to address the issues. The following examples demonstrate the scope of the conditions:-
 - All HMO conditions carry requirements relating to noise pollution and waste storage and disposal;
 - Landlords are required to inform their tenants about their responsibilities relating to waste management and recycling, reducing noise and other anti social behaviour. Landlords are issued with a “tenants undertaking” document which explains these responsibilities;
 - Landlords are required to work with waste management to provide suitable and sufficient bins for the size of the household. As well as promoting the retention and use of the kitchen caddies, green bags and food liners.
 - Whilst the first point of enforcement in relation to waste is Waste Management, landlords are requested to remove building waste, redundant furniture and to keep yards and gardens in good order.
 - Landlords are required to notify Pollution Control of alarm keyholders and take reasonable steps to control anti social behaviour.
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- Since 2011, Officers from the HMO Licensing Team have worked in conjunction with the Police on the **Cathays Burglary Project** which uses the Additional Licensing Scheme as a tool to minimise burglary primarily, but also wider community issues such as waste, anti social behaviour, energy efficiency and fire safety in HMOs.

Officers visit properties jointly with the Police and check the property against licence and security standards and offer crime prevention advice. Those properties failing to meet standards are served notices to carry out works.

The results evidence that the burglary project is working and improving burglary in the Cathays area and has evidenced an 80% decrease in burglaries during 3 years. (For further information, see Burglaries Section)

- Joint protocols have been established with both Waste Management and Pollution Control for effective joint working. An example of this joint approach is a pilot initiative with Waste Management, HMO Licensing and Pest Control officers who

make joint patrols on Colum Road to address street scene issues using the broader range of powers available to the 3 sections.

- A copy of the HMO Licence register, giving details of ownership and occupancy is circulated on a monthly basis to Pollution Control, Waste Management, The Anti-Social Behaviour Team, the Police, Trading Standards and Council Tax to assist them in carrying out their duties and to respond more quickly to problems and complaints.
- In 2011/12 a series of inspections by Trading Standards Officers were carried out in Cathays relating to the quality and safety of goods supplied with a tenancy including furniture, fire safety and electrical safety. During these inspections, 165 items of furniture, 30 electrical items, 9 gas safety checks, 10 products under general product safety laws and 21 under other safety laws were checked. Of the breaches discovered, 2 were for non-compliant mattresses; 4 sofas and one chair. All suspect non-compliances were due to furniture not being labelled with statutory labels. All landlords were written to and responded by either producing appropriate paperwork or replacing with furniture that is compliant.
- During 2012, the Consumer Services Team completed a working project/partnership with Cardiff University/ Students Union/Housing Enforcement in relation to tenancy agreements and students regarding legal (civil) contractual issues. This resulted in a group leaflet publication that was given to all Cardiff Students providing advice and information.
- Trading Standards also routinely provide officers at a stand at the freshers' fayre at Cardiff University to discuss Trading Standards issues and raise awareness of the department
- The Council has arrangements in place with landlords in which to educate and inform, namely:-
 - The Cardiff Landlord's Forum and ALMA, both supported by the Council but are landlord/agent led organisations providing valuable information to Cardiff landlords.
 - The Council has held a series of Landlord's Open Days, events that regularly attract over 200 delegates.
 - A Landlord's Newsletter is produced on a bi-annual basis providing valuable information and knowledge and is circulated electronically to landlords in Cardiff.
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- **Operation Saturn** is a police led operation held annually to coincide with the return of the university students in Cathays after the summer vacation. The initiative aims to deter crime and antisocial behaviour and ensure the safety and security of the community and student population. Increased police resources are provided and Council Noise Officers are available throughout the evenings to respond to noise complaints and improve community responsibilities relating to noise.
- **Cardiff Student Community Action Plan** is a collective strategy between Cardiff Council and the City's Universities for delivering improvements that address housing and lifestyle issues associated with high levels of students living in small geographical

areas of the City. The Plan sets out a number of key actions to address a range of issues that improve the quality and quantity of student accommodation, promote a clean, attractive and sustainable environment, reduce crime against students and encourages neighbourliness and respect.

- On 23 March 2015, Cardiff Council hosted a **student community partnership** stakeholder event to review the achievements of the last 3 years work of the Student Liaison Officer and to inform the action plan for the next 3 years. There were keynote speeches from the relevant cabinet members and presentations from the Police, Waste Management, Student Volunteering Cardiff and Housing Enforcement to raise awareness of all the good partnership working that has already taken place. There were workshops on the key themes of 1)accommodation, 2)neighbourliness and community respect, 3) Environment and 4)Health and Safety to refocus all partners and to generate new ideas for the 2015-18 plan.
- The Manager of the HMO Licensing team has been a member of a **Welsh Government Working Group** to study the impact of large HMO concentrations on 6 key towns across Wales with a view to producing a good practice toolkit and to generate proposals for legislative change in the fields of Housing and Planning Law.

2.5 Housing Enforcement - Enforcement Policy

Fair and effective enforcement is essential to protect the economic, environmental and social interests of the public and business. Decisions about enforcement action and in particular the decision to prosecute, has serious implications for all involved and for this reason, the Housing Enforcement Team has adopted an Enforcement Policy. The Policy outlines the Council's obligations to comply with legislation in order to improve housing standards in Cardiff ensuring that:-

- Anyone affected by enforcement action understand what principles are applied when such action is considered;
- Decisions about enforcement action are fair, proportionate and consistent;
- Officers apply current government guidance and codes of practice when considering any formal action;
- A proper scheme of accountability is in place.

Evaluation of the Scheme

3.1 Purpose of Evaluation of Scheme

The Additional Licensing Scheme for the Cathays Community Ward has been in place since July 2010 and must be re-declared at the end of the 5 year period. The expiry of the 5 year term occurs in 2015 and as a consequence it is necessary to undertake a thorough appraisal of the Scheme to establish its effectiveness and inform any possible extension of the Scheme for a further 5 years.

This document represents an Evaluation of the Scheme and builds upon previous evaluations undertaken during the course of the Scheme following its introduction.

To date, the scheme has resulted in extending the scope of HMO Licensing to capture an additional 1664 properties that otherwise would not have required licensing. When introduced it was estimated that only 1400 properties would require a Licence.

All licensable properties are inspected prior to a Licence being issued and this increase in licensed properties represents a vastly improved level of enforcement activity as a result of the Scheme. In order to establish the effectiveness of the Scheme however, we must explore other activities and measures to establish how well the Scheme has met its key objectives and secured the benefits it originally set out to do. Furthermore, if the Scheme is having a positive impact on the area, then consideration should be given to extending the Scheme for a further 5 years. The purpose therefore of this Evaluation Report is to highlight progress made so far and assess the impact the Scheme has made in a number of key areas.

3.2 Methodology and Scope

This evaluation aims to analyse activities and measures held by the Housing Enforcement Team and partners to establish how well the Scheme has met its key objectives and secured the desired improvements.

The primary data source analysed in the production of this assessment is data held on Cardiff's Housing Civica database which holds information relating to licence applications, inspections, compliance and service requests received. This information is supported by additional data provided from services such as Waste Management, South Wales Police and Noise Pollution Teams.

The reporting period used in this analysis is by financial year which enables the report to include recent data and be as up to date as possible.

Limitations

Due to the 5 year term of a Licence, properties can change hands, or no longer be licensable. As a consequence statistics on the Civica database can change during different reporting periods. For this reason, some results produced in this report for previous years may vary slightly from earlier evaluations.

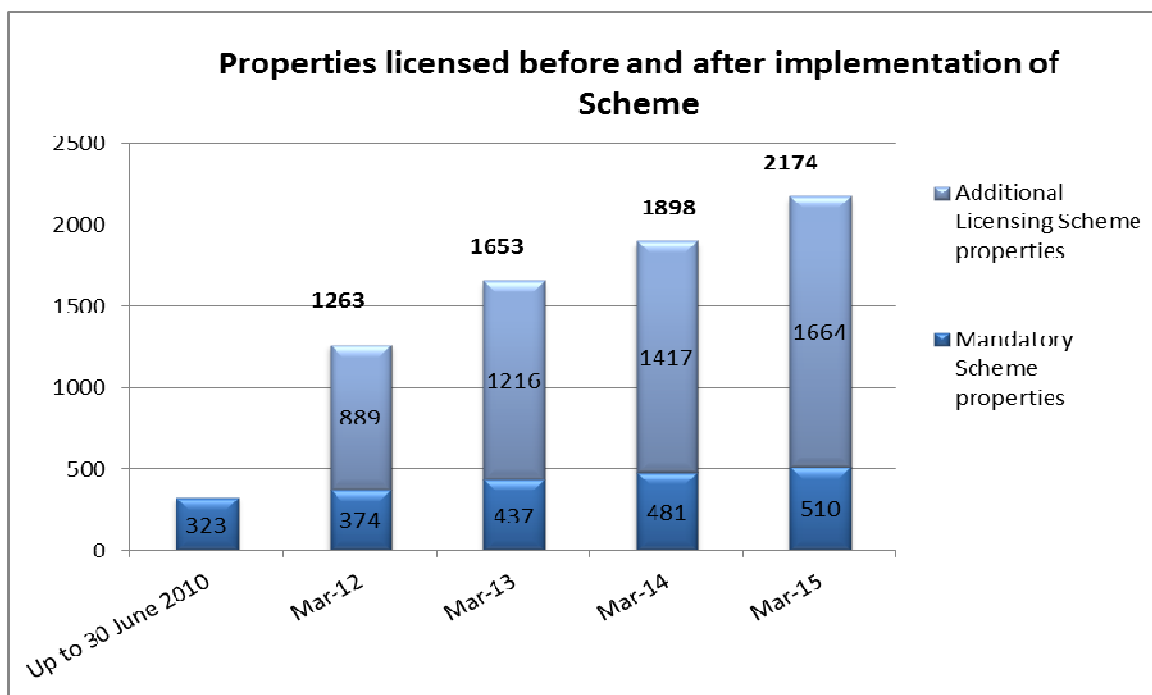
Similarly, at the point in time when reports are produced to inform this evaluation, records may not be 100% up to date, and are subsequently updated after the production of the reports. This too can result in changes to previous results reported in earlier evaluations.

3.3 Analysis of impact of Scheme

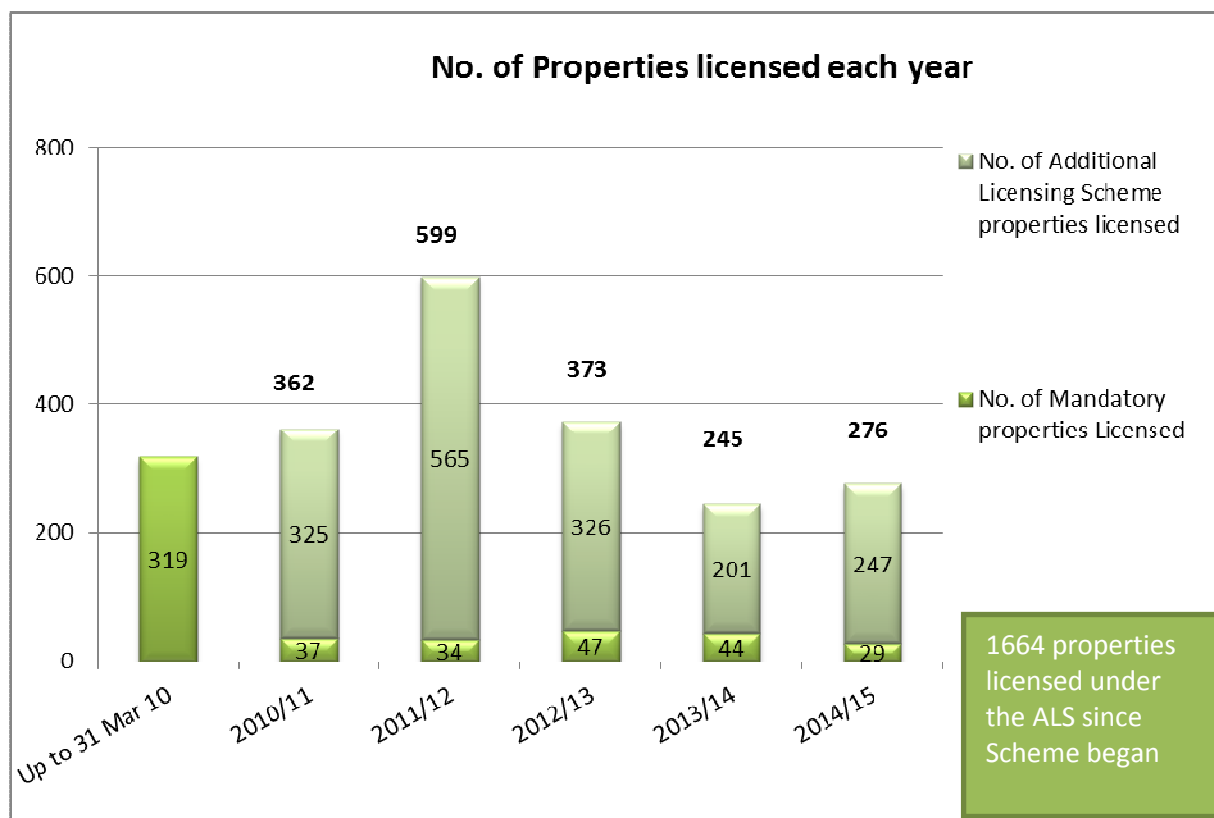
In order to understand and evaluate the impact of the Scheme following its implementation, it is necessary to look at the various statistics and performance measures available to the authority to provide a balanced picture of how the scheme has developed and the impact it has had on the Cathays area. The following measures are therefore presented to highlight the progress made with the scheme following 4 3/4 years of operation, to provide information to inform any future re-declaration of the area.

Number of properties licensed

The implementation of the Additional Licensing Scheme has ensured that the high proportion of properties otherwise excluded from licensing under the provisions of the Mandatory Scheme are now captured by the Additional Licensing Scheme. Currently, 2174 properties in Cathays have been licensed which is a dramatic increase from the 323 previously licensed prior to the scheme's implementation. This is by no means the final number of properties licensed in the Cathays area. There are presently a number of applications being processed, and a small number that have yet to make an application.



The process of identifying properties for licensing under the Scheme was very much the focus of enforcement activity following the Scheme’s implementation in July 2010 and through the following year. The graph below provides a breakdown of licensing activity prior to and since the Scheme’s implementation. It can be seen that the number of properties licensed peaked during 2011-12 following the implementation of the Scheme and we are now at a stage where the majority of relevant properties in Cathays are licensed and/or applications submitted.



Improvement of properties

The principle purpose of the Additional Licensing Scheme is to improve the standard of rented property within the Cathays Area whilst also addressing energy efficiency and property security by implementing licence conditions for each property and using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The following results therefore demonstrate the levels of improvement achieved since the Schemes implementation.

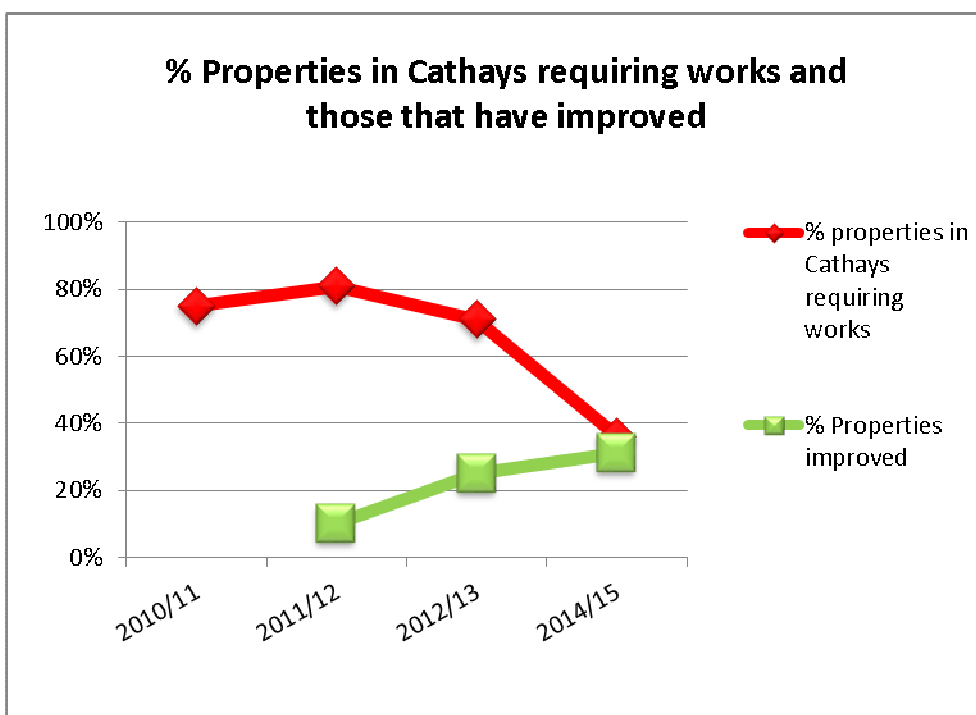
Prior to licensing a property, an inspection is undertaken in order to identify any improvements required to meet licensing standards. The following graph shows the percentage of properties requiring works. It can be seen that after an initial increase in the percentage of properties requiring works following the Scheme’s implementation, the percentage has fallen considerably over the period of the Scheme from 81% in 2011/12 to 36% over the last year.

Further examination of the property records of those licensed purely under the Additional Licensing Scheme show that 41% of licensed properties require improvement which is slightly higher than the overall total. Never the less, this is a positive improvement and demonstrates how the identification of required works and the subsequent remedial works

carried out by landlords as a result of licensing requirements has seen a reduction of the number of properties requiring improvement.

Currently 63% of licensed properties in Cathays meet the required standards. This is either through intervention by the Council, or because they were up to standard when first inspected.

The percentage of properties that have been improved through the licensing regime is 31% which shows a marked increase from 10% in 2011/12. The graph below shows that the gap between those that require improvement and those that have improved has significantly reduced as a result of the Additional Licensing Scheme.

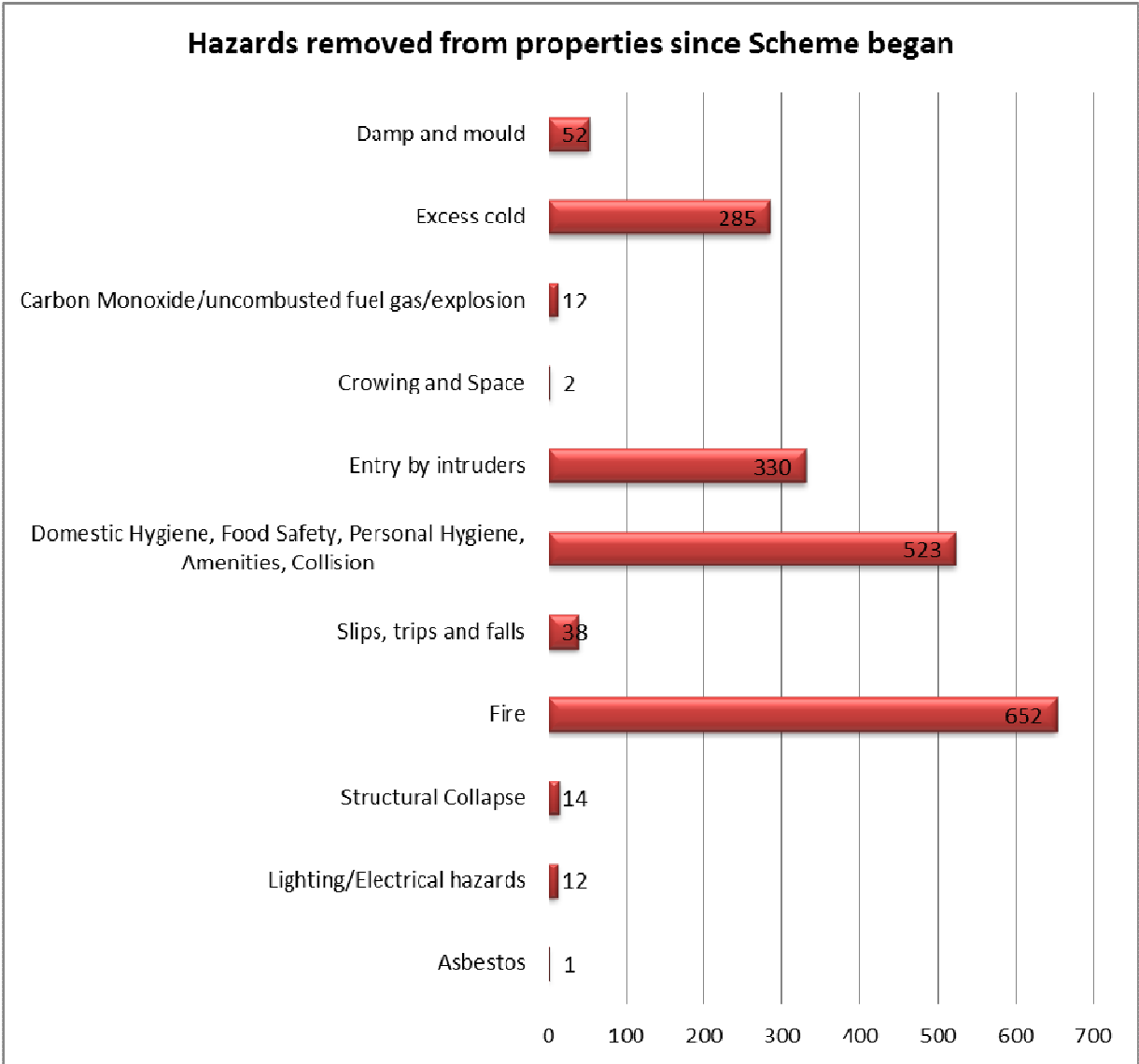


Housing Health and Safety Rating System

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is a risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to the health and safety of occupants in residential properties in England and Wales. The assessment method focuses on the hazards that are present in housing and tackling them to make housing healthier and safer to live in. This method of assessment is undertaken as part of the inspection process following receipt of a valid application. The likelihood and the severity of the outcome combine to generate a hazard score, with hazards falling into Category 1 and Category 2. Each hazard is assessed separately and if judged to be serious with a high score is deemed to be a Category 1 hazard. All other hazards are Category 2 hazards. Where Category 1 hazards are identified, the Council has a duty to take action to remove the risk and at least reduce the risk to a Category 2 and seek further improvements.

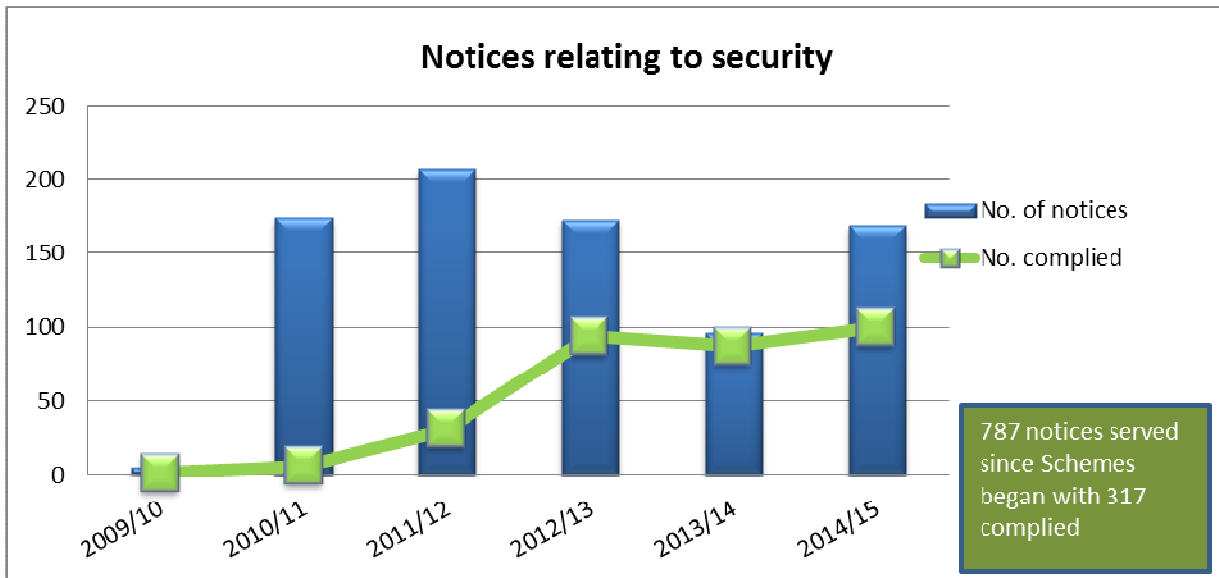
The following graph demonstrates the number of hazards removed from properties in the Cathays area following assessment. Since the Scheme began, 1921 hazards have been

removed consisting of 421 Category 1 hazards reduced to a Category 2, and 1500 Category 2 hazards have been improved.

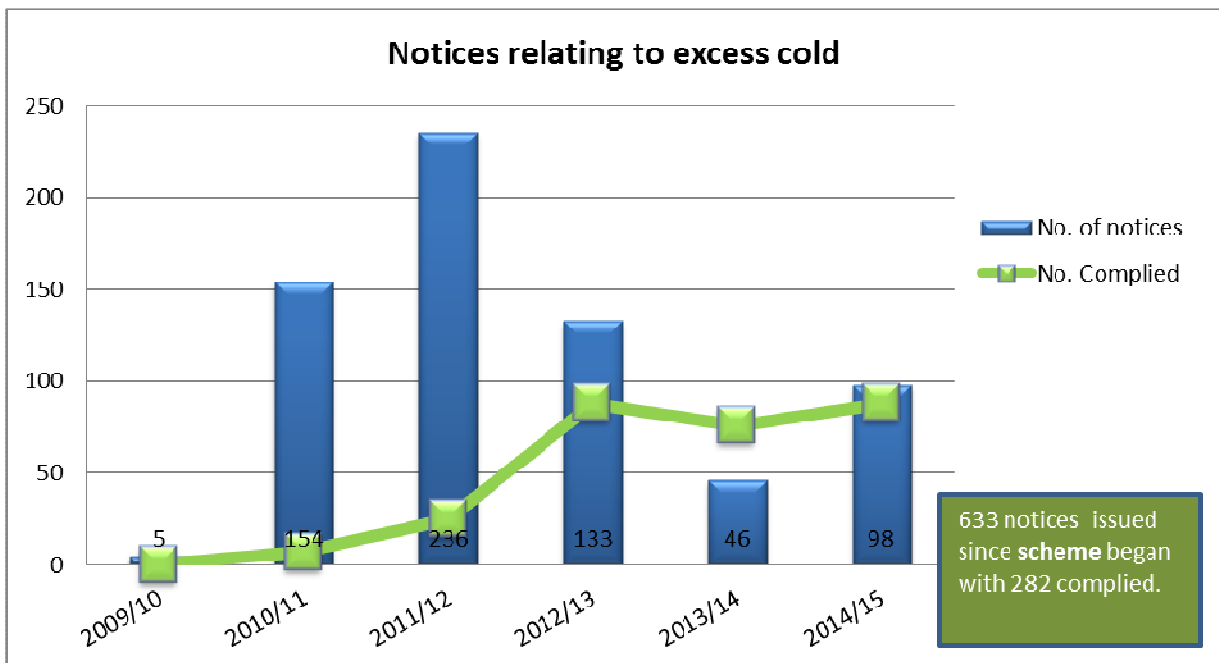


Security and Excess Cold

Since implementing the Scheme, greater emphasis has been placed on securing improvements to security and excess cold in properties during the inspection process and the following graphs demonstrate the number of notices served and complied with. 787 notices have been served in relation to security since the Scheme was implemented representing 47% of the 'additional' properties licensed. Typical requirements include the provision of window and door locks and improvements to rear gates. Currently 40% of notices have been complied with, which shows a marked improvement from 2012/13 when the figure stood at only 10%.



Similarly the number of notices served in relation to excess cold stands at 633 which represents 38% of the 'additional' properties licensed. Typical requirements in this area include the provision of loft insulation improvements to heating systems, eradicating damp and mold etc. Currently 44% of the notices served have so far complied with the Council's requirements. Again, this is a significant increase compared to the first evaluation where only 8% of notices served had been complied with.

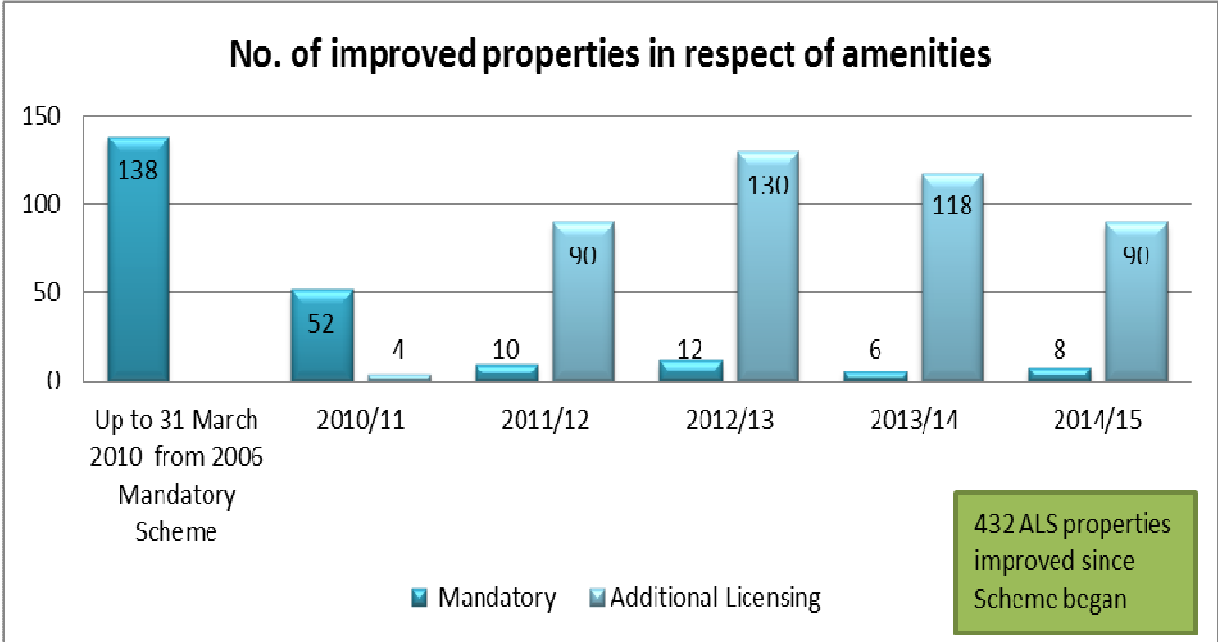
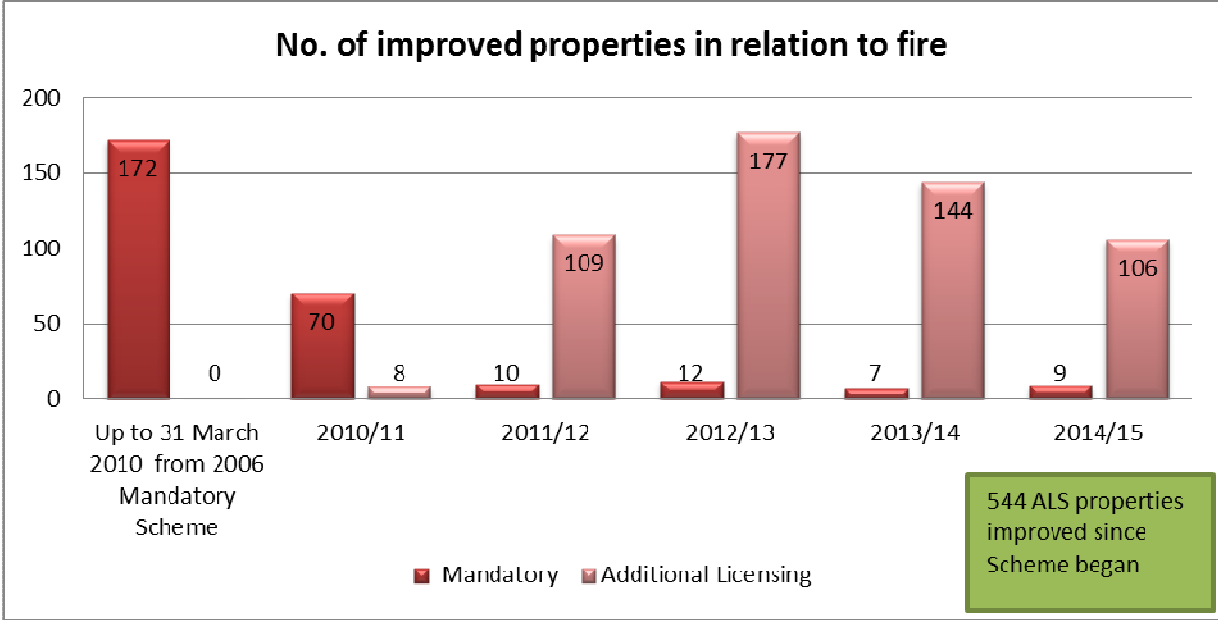


Fire and Amenities

The Council has, mainly through enforcement of licence conditions, secured improvement to 673 properties in terms of fire and amenities since the Scheme began. The following graphs show the number of properties improved for each category.

Of the 673 improved properties, 652 have been improved in relation to fire hazards since the Scheme began together with 520 being improved in relation to amenities. Typical fire

hazards include the absence of or defective fire alarm systems, absence of structural fire protection, fire doors, upgrading of walls and ceilings where required. Typical improvements to amenities is ensuring kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities are suitable and provided in sufficient number for the number of occupants.



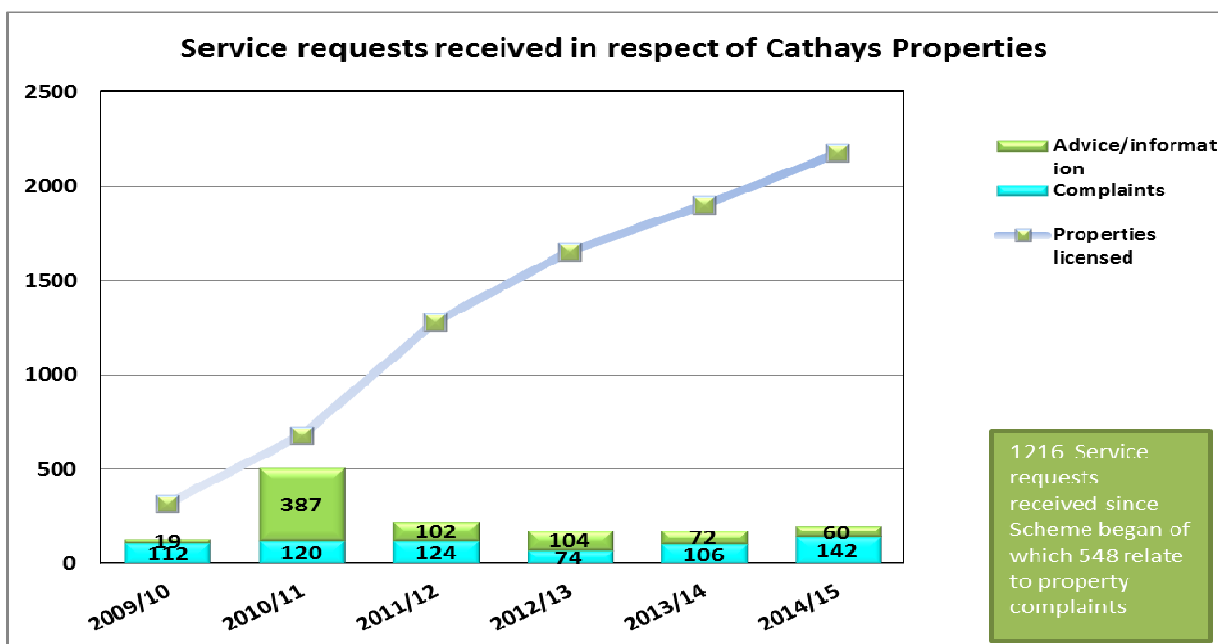
Service Requests

As well as securing improvements to houses in multiple occupation through the licensing regime, the Housing Enforcement Team also receive requests for service. This covers a wide range of issues but principally these are complaints about properties or requests for information or application forms. The following graph demonstrate the number of service requests received prior to and since the implementation of the Additional Licensing Scheme.

Prior to the Cathays Scheme being introduced, Cathays had the highest rate of complaints in the City with just under 15% of complaints relating to Cathays properties. Examining complaints that have been received during the period of the Scheme this situation has improved slightly. During the 4³/₄ year period, Cathays had the second highest rate of complaints next to Plasnewydd representing just under 13% of the whole City.

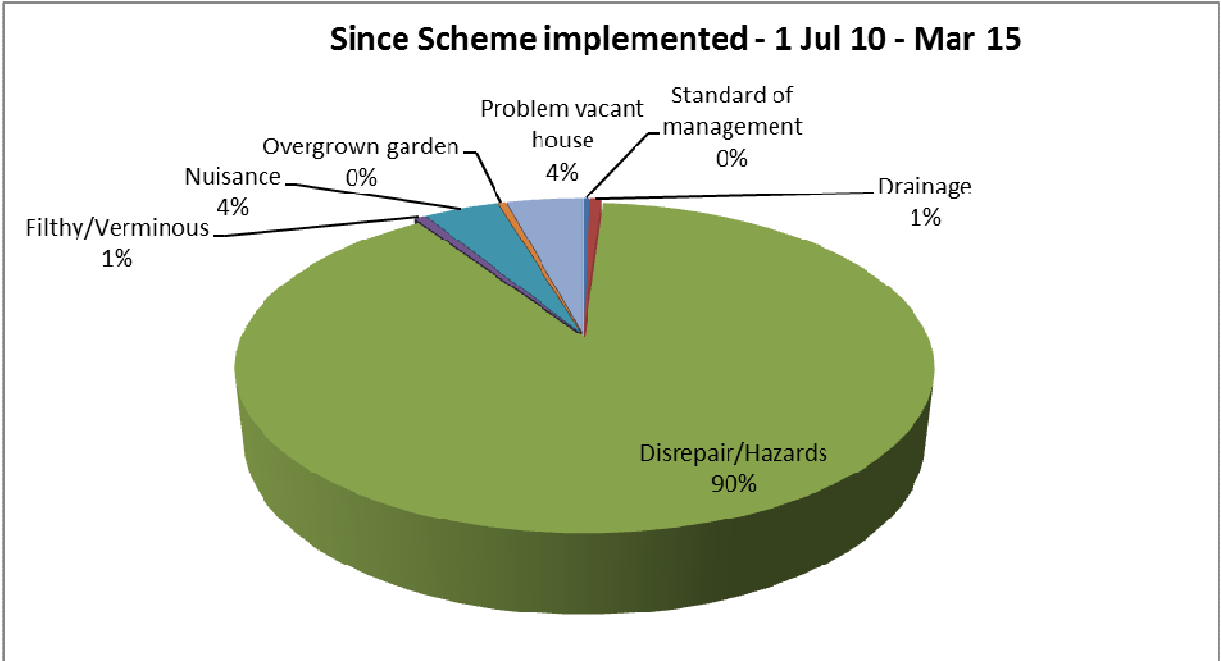
Looking at those complaints relating to Cathays, it can be seen from the graph that the majority of service requests relate to requests for information/ and that these type of requests peaked during 2010/11. This is likely due to the initial promotion of the new scheme when it was first introduced and the concentration of applications we received during the first 6 months. Inevitably the number has reduced as more and more properties have become licensed.

Interestingly, the number of complaints received about property condition has stayed fairly static prior to and through the duration of the Scheme despite the number of licensed properties increasing significantly. One might expect the number of complaints to increase due to such high volumes of licensed properties and greater awareness of the Scheme by tenants and concerned parties but this does not appear to be the case. There are currently 2174 licensed properties in the Cathays area and the number of property complaints during the last year (142) represents 6.53% of those properties licensed. Prior to the Scheme's implementation the number of complaints received represented 35% of those properties licensed. Such a percentage decrease in complaints appears to be a positive indication that the pro-active work undertaken as part of the Additional Licensing Scheme has generated an improvement in properties captured by the Scheme, reducing the need for complaint.



Complaints made about properties fall into several categories, and the graph below demonstrates the main types of complaint received. Prior to and since the Scheme's implementation, the greatest number of complaints received relate to disrepair which can cover a variety of issues that relate to the deterioration in the fabric of a building or lack of attention or investment by a landlord. It also captures all hazards reportable under the Hazard Rating Scheme.

Since the Scheme began in 2010, we have received 1216 Service Requests, 548 of which relate to complaints about property. The following chart summarises the mains types of complaints received during this period. As reflected in the graph above, disrepair which covers a wide variety of issues is clearly identified as the main area of concern.



Problem Vacant Houses

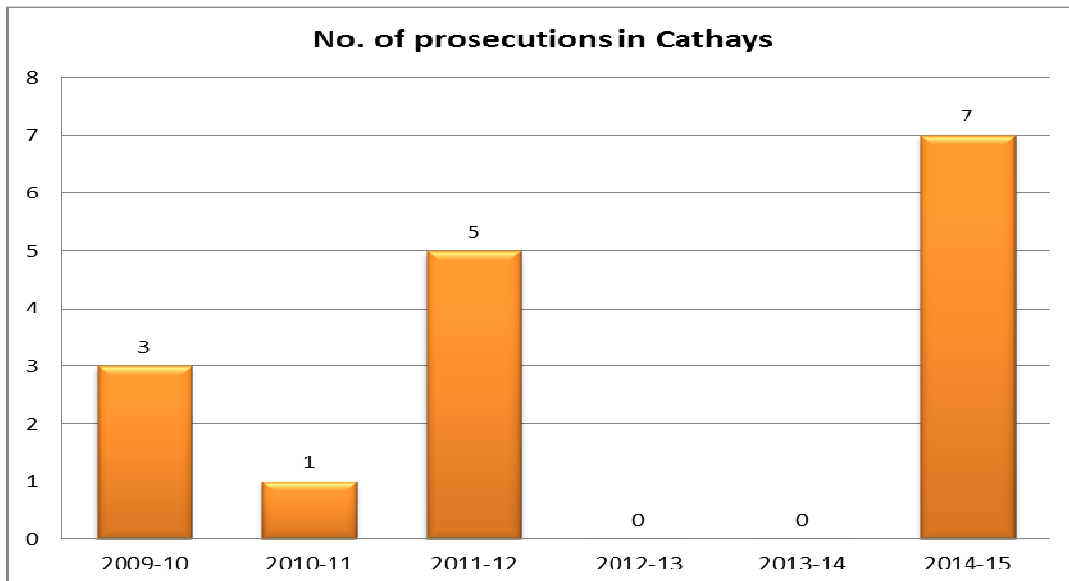
The Council's Empty Property Policy deals with problematic vacant properties that are in poor or deteriorating physical condition causing nuisance to neighbouring properties attracting anti social behaviour or vermin, fly tipping etc, or are subject to unauthorised entry. This active approach has led to over 380 (90 in the last year) vacant houses being returned to use across Cardiff since the Cathays Scheme was introduced, 18 (4 in the last year) of which were in Cathays. Furthermore 20 complaints were received about problem vacant houses in Cathays since the Scheme was implemented.

Refusals

Prior to the Scheme's implementation, 2 applications for Mandatory licences were refused, however none have been refused since Scheme began.

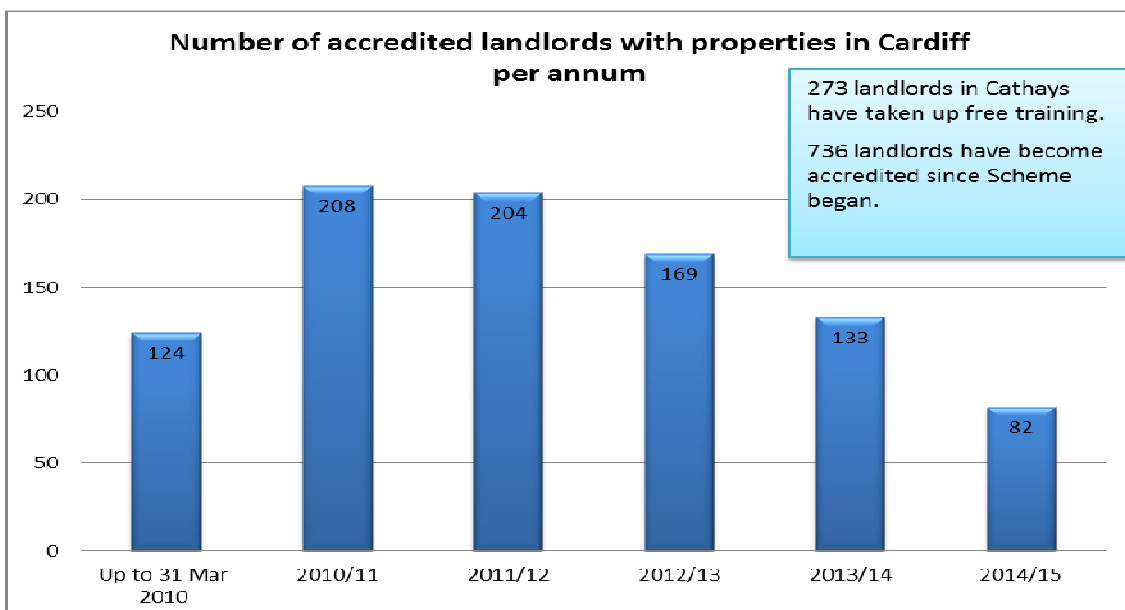
Prosecutions

13 prosecutions have been carried out in relation to properties in Cathays since the Scheme began for either failure to license a property or breach of conditions of licence.

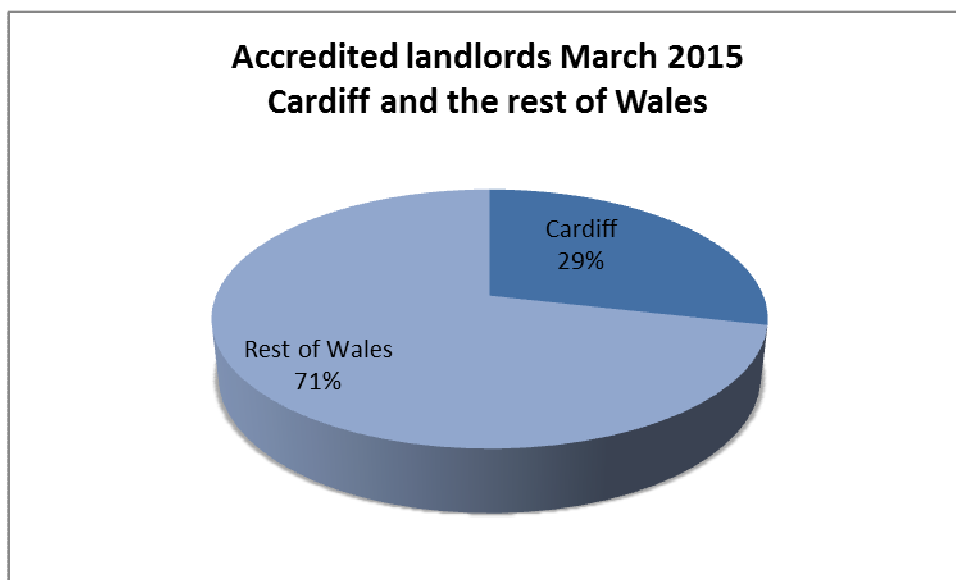


Accredited Landlords

Attendance on a suitable and accredited training course on tenancy management and legal standards in private renting is a condition of the mandatory and additional licensing schemes. During the term of the Additional Licensing Scheme, incentives have been available to encourage attendance. This has been in the form of an initial reduction of £175 in the licence fee for each property if a landlord is accredited at the time of application which was reduced to £100 in 2013/14, or free training for those landlords who become accredited after completing the licensing process. The free training stopped on the 31 March 2015, however since the Additional Licensing Scheme was implemented in Cathays, 273 landlords have taken up free Landlord Accreditation Wales training.



Cardiff has been leading the way with Landlord Training and has trained over 900 landlords with properties in Cardiff (736 since the Additional Licensing Scheme began). This is a significant proportion of the total of Welsh landlords who have undertaken training and represents a massive 29% of the total of accredited landlords in the whole of Wales.



Waste Education & Enforcement

As well as improving private rented properties, the Additional Licensing Scheme aims to support the wider community issues such as waste accumulations and ‘street scene’ improvements by attaching licensing conditions to increase waste control and awareness.

Waste management has complemented their existing student communication plan and activities with the information that the HMO licensing database provides to reach a wider community.

Waste management have a range of legal powers available to them to address incorrectly presented waste and accumulations of waste in frontages. Close working with waste management has complemented the licensing scheme to tackle key issues around waste storage that can easily contribute to incorrectly presented waste and accumulations in frontages if insufficient facilities are provided by landlords.

The waste enforcement officers have increased their focus in the student areas of the city over the last four years. Since the introduction of the licensing scheme greater focus has been on working with landlords to ensure the correct waste storage capacity and equally monitoring and report illegal HMOs that are introduced. Furthermore every year from September onwards Waste Management participate in a number of events and campaigns designed to educate students on how to handle and present their waste.

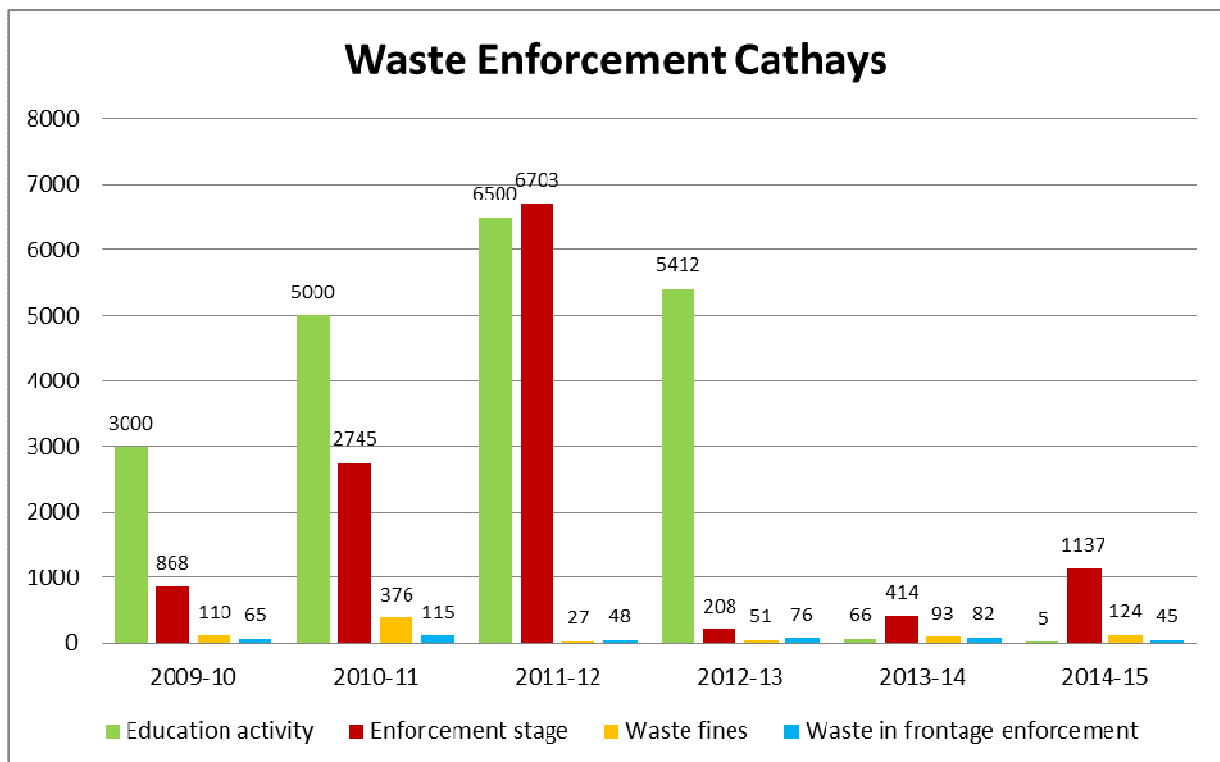
Two Waste Enforcement Officers work within the Cathays ward 5 days a week dealing with all aspects of waste issues both reactively and proactively. They respond to complaints as well as provide on-going education to residents on a daily basis. Education involves face to face contact with residents advising on issues such as frequency of collections, what can and can’t be recycled and also promoting recycling. They also do literature drops to properties where residents are not available through door knocking campaigns.

Enforcement action involves, issuing fixed penalty notices for offences such as littering or breach of section 46 notices. They are also involved in issuing section 215 notices for issues such as waste accumulation within property boundaries.

Waste Management indicate this work has seen a reduction in complaints (though no results were available for this evaluation report) and that a big improvement on previous issues such as bins being left on the highway after collection and wrong waste type out on the wrong week is evident from walking around the area. Recorded Enforcement activity has also dropped as the officers deal with numerous issues proactively before they become logged as official complaints.

The following graph demonstrates the levels of waste enforcement activity in Cathays since 2009 for incorrectly presented waste and waste in frontage issues. The waste enforcement progress shows a funnelling effect as the level of enforcement builds towards the issuing of a fixed penalty notice. The legally required three pre-stages help provide residents opportunity to correct their behaviour before any fine is issued. Education is always the priority, with enforcement a last resort.

In 2010 there was significant focus on ensuring that properties had the correct number of bins for the property in conjunction with the HMO licensing, although the waste enforcement work covered all properties not just those under the scheme. The teams focus was also on ensuring bins were returned to properties after collection and not stored on the adopted highway. This focus was then shifted to support residents through the collection changes in 2011.



The above graph shows a significant drop in enforcement during 2012/13 which is largely due to the greater focus on education within the area. Such activities have contributed to a raising of standards and a reduction in enforcement activity. More recently during the last year, the level of enforcement increased significantly from the year before, but this is largely

due to a Section 46 pilot on problem areas of the ward as a result of concern expressed by enforcement officers and ward members. (See problem areas below).

With the introduction of the new weekly recycling and fortnightly residual collections in September 2011, all enforcement activity was ceased during August to December, whilst the team focused all their resources in supporting residents on the major collection changes. The number of visits and contacts with properties was not recorded in this period. During this period additional monitoring was undertaken to ensure HMO's had the correct waste provision.

During 2012/13 additional information was collated in terms of education and enforcement however it should be noted that during 2014/15 education activities ceased to be recorded which would account for the low numbers shown in the graph.

Problem areas

On Monday 26th January 2015, the Cardiff Council's Waste Management department began a Section 46 pilot on 11 streets in Cathays that had been identified as having persistent problems with waste in the past. The pilot involved delivering Section 46 notices to occupiers on the 11 streets identified. The notice set out the requirements of the waste disposal service that occupiers are required to adhere to. Following receipt of the notice, if occupiers failed to adhere to the service they were presented with a £100 fixed penalty notice.

The number of properties and individuals that have been presented with section 46 notices and warnings is shown in the following table. 770 Section 46 notices were served in total.

Street	No. of Sec 46 notices	Street	No. of Sec 46 notices
Harriett Street	124	Richard Street	131
Wyeverne Road	124	Miskin Street	119
Cogan Terrace	17	Llandough Street	30
Llanbleddian Gardens	74	Glynrhondda Street	80
Llantwit Street	27	Senghenydd Place	5
Ruthin Gardens	39		

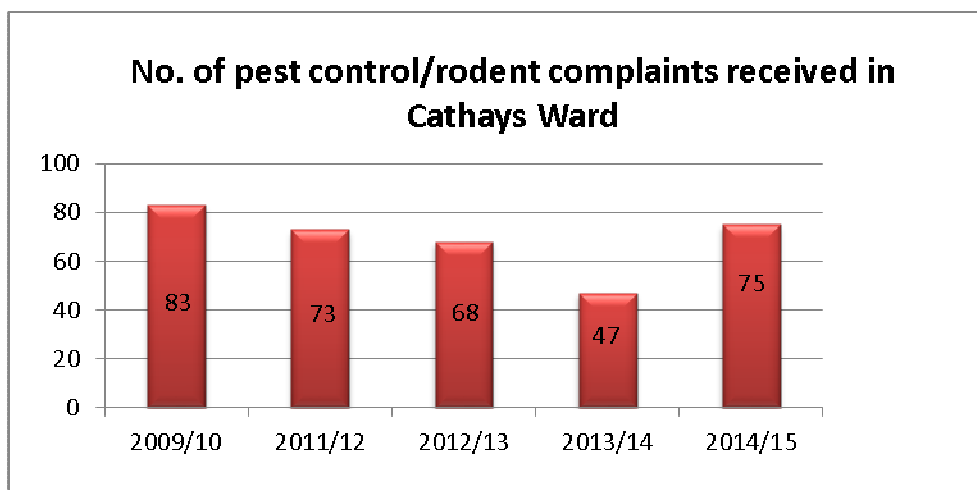
This step of intervention follows continued and focused efforts by the Waste Education and Enforcement teams to educate tenants on the specified streets, and despite these efforts, and the efforts by the Universities and Student Unions to educate students, the problem was apparent. The Universities and Student Unions assisted the Council by ensuring students were aware of the enforcement activity by encouraging students to know their bin days.

In addition to education and enforcement work, the team also undertake complementary initiatives such as improved communication with students via social media and the constant promotion of the free Tidy Text service that sends a reminder text to subscribers the night before their waste collection day to remind them when and what waste should be put out. Furthermore Cardiff Council has won national recognition for its student engagement campaign by being highly commended in the Zero Waste Awards 2012. The campaign aimed to provide students with as much information regarding recycling and waste presentation to help improve the look and feel of the area and increase recycling rates.

Pest Control

There is an association between multi occupied dwellings and pest infestations, particularly rodent pests. Generally this is caused by inadequately stored or accumulated refuse allowing access to pests and infestation. Using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to improve properties ensures that issues such as domestic hygiene, pests and refuse are addressed.

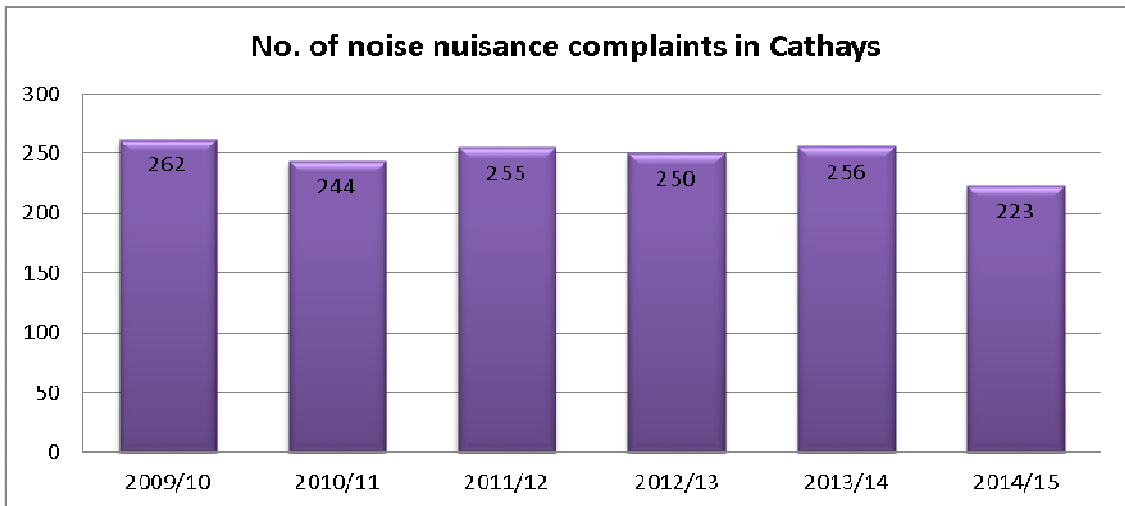
An analysis of the number of rodent/infestation complaints made in the Cathays Ward to the Council's Pest Control Service indicates a downward trend up to April 2014 where the number of complaints was almost halved compared to the number received in 2009/10. The positive trend however appears to have reversed during 2014/15 where complaints rose by 59% in a year. This sharp increase appears to be consistent with the picture across Cardiff where the number of complaints rose significantly from 2013/14, but by only 33%. A possible reason for this increase may be attributable to an advertising campaign that was launched which included bus shelter posters, radio adverts, article in Capital Times and distribution of leaflets. Furthermore a leaflet and poster drop was made to a number of letting agents in the Cathays area. Such publicity may have been successful in raising awareness of the Service which is significantly cheaper than other companies.



Noise Nuisance

The Scheme aims to tackle a number of community issues such as anti social behaviour and noise nuisance through both its licence conditions and participation in a number of initiatives. Cardiff Digs website provides comprehensive information for students on being good neighbours and joint exercises between the Police and Noise Pollution Officers have been undertaken to pro-actively tackle these issues.

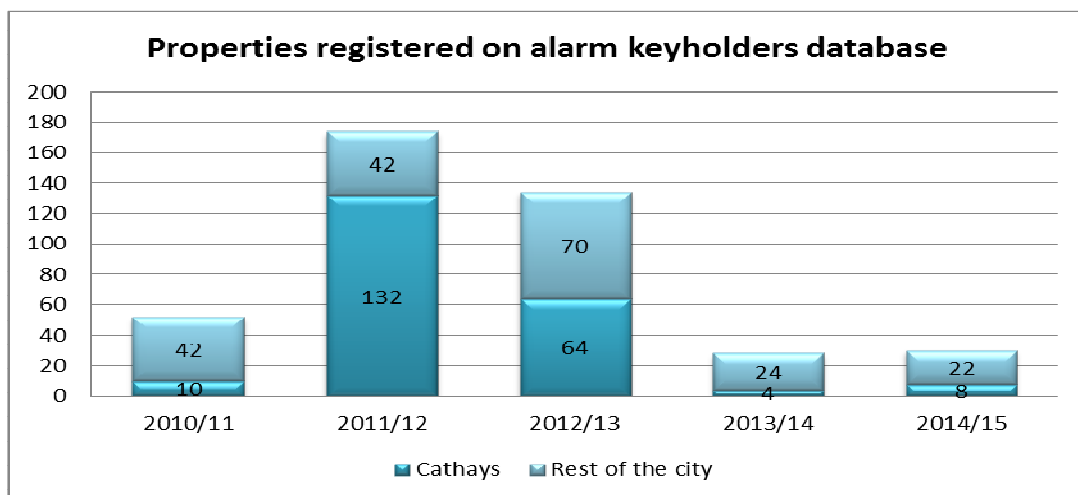
The following graph depicts the number of noise nuisance complaints received by the Council's Noise Pollution Service in respect of the Cathays area. Cathays has the highest proportion of complaints in the City and this can be attributable to lifestyle issues, such as a high proportion of students, younger people and the density of housing stock, e.g. number of flats, proportion of terraced properties. The playing of amplified music is the major cause of noise complaints in the Cathays area and across the City.



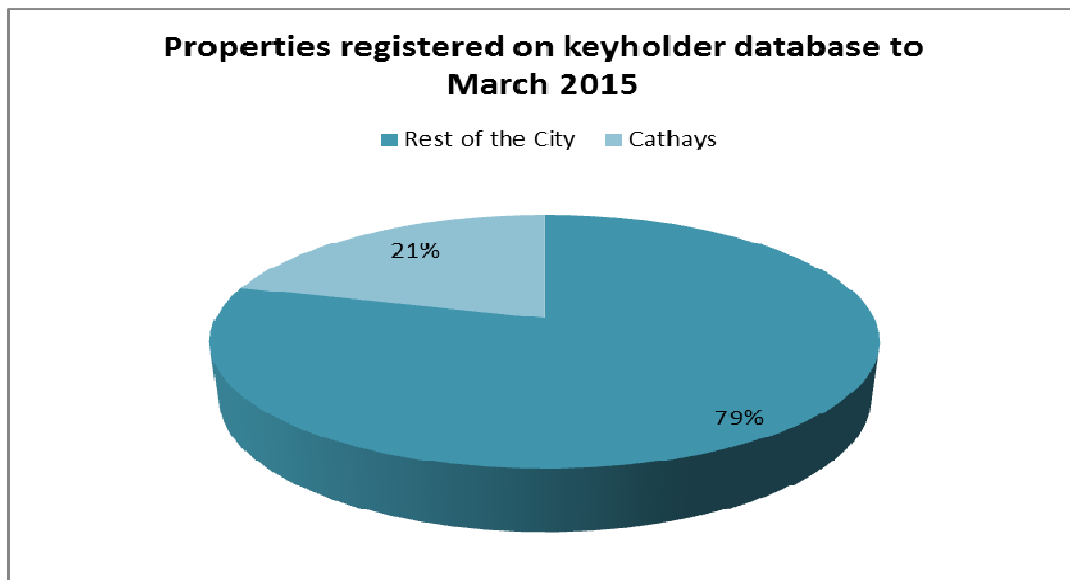
Alarm Holders

It is a requirement of the Licence that arrangements are in place for an appropriate person, having connection with a property, being available to attend the property at any time in the event of a false alarm to ensure that the fire alarm system is properly re-set and that the contact details for this person will be registered with Cardiff Council's Pollution Control Service.

The following graph depicts the number of properties in Cathays and the rest of the City that have registered on the Keyholders Database since April 2010. The graph shows that a large proportion of those registered are properties within the Cathays area, particularly during 2011/12 where there was a significant increase in Cathays properties. This period is particularly relevant when considering the impact of the Additional Licensing Scheme as this is the same period that the Council licensed the largest number of properties under the Scheme.



Similarly when looking at the overall numbers of properties registered on the Keyholders Database, the number of Cathays properties registered makes up more than a fifth of the total registered across the City indicating a positive response from this area.



Customer Engagement

Since 2012 a customer satisfaction questionnaire has been sent to HMO licensees in order to gauge customer satisfaction with the HMO Licensing process. Questionnaires are sent out in the post with Licences for both Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes. In total 81 responses have been received. Initially it was hoped that results could be separated between Mandatory and Additional Licensing, however in practice this has not been possible. The following information therefore is presented as results for HMO Licensing as a whole.

Results from the survey were very positive and a snapshot of results relevant to this evaluation are presented below.

Information/Advice

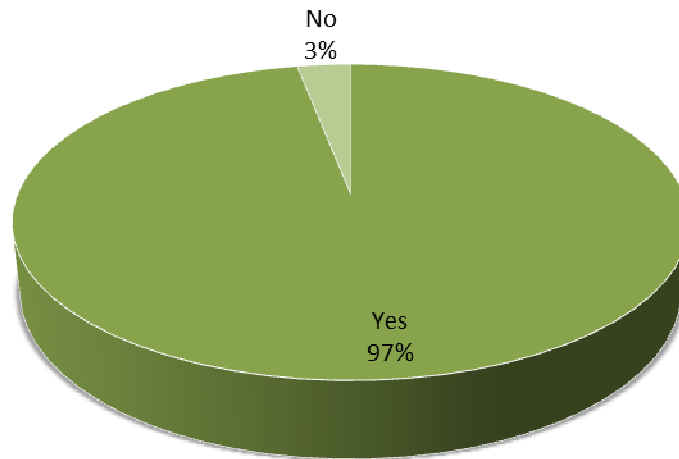
Customers were asked how easy it was to understand the information/advice provided in a number of different circumstances? Of those that responded:-

- 90% found it very easy or easy to understand information prior to making application.
- 89% found information very easy or easy to understand at time of inspection.
- 91% found it very easy or easy to understand in correspondence sent out.
- 70% found information on Cardiff Council's website very easy or easy to understand.

Improving standards

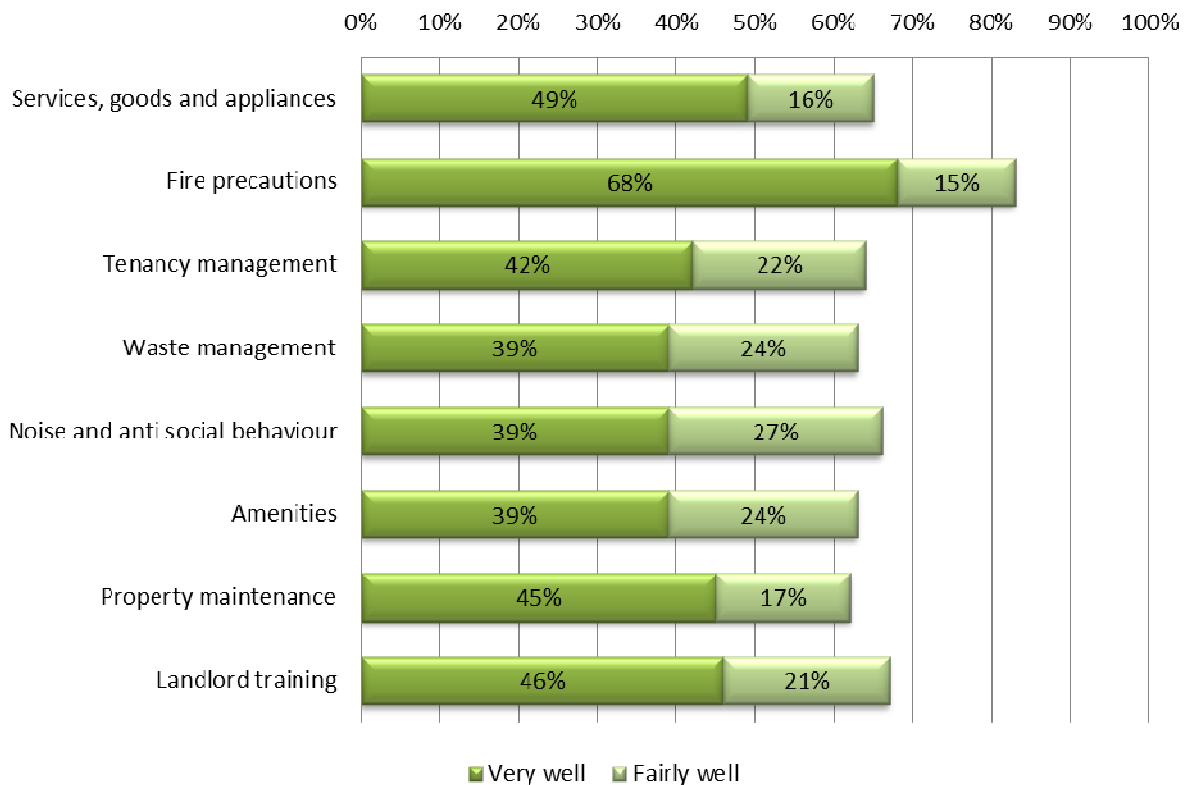
Customers were asked if they thought the Licensing Scheme improved standards in the private rental sector? A positive response was received with 97% saying they thought it did.

Does the Licensing Scheme improve standards in the private rented sector?



Those customers that were required to complete works, were asked how well the process helped them improve standards in relation to a number of areas. When combining the results for very well and fairly well, the following graph shows that customers clearly felt that the process had helped them improve standards in a number of areas. The largest number however felt that the process helped them improve fire precaution standards above other issues with 83% (68% very good) of customers responding favourably in this area.

% respondents who felt requirements to carry out work helped improve standards in property

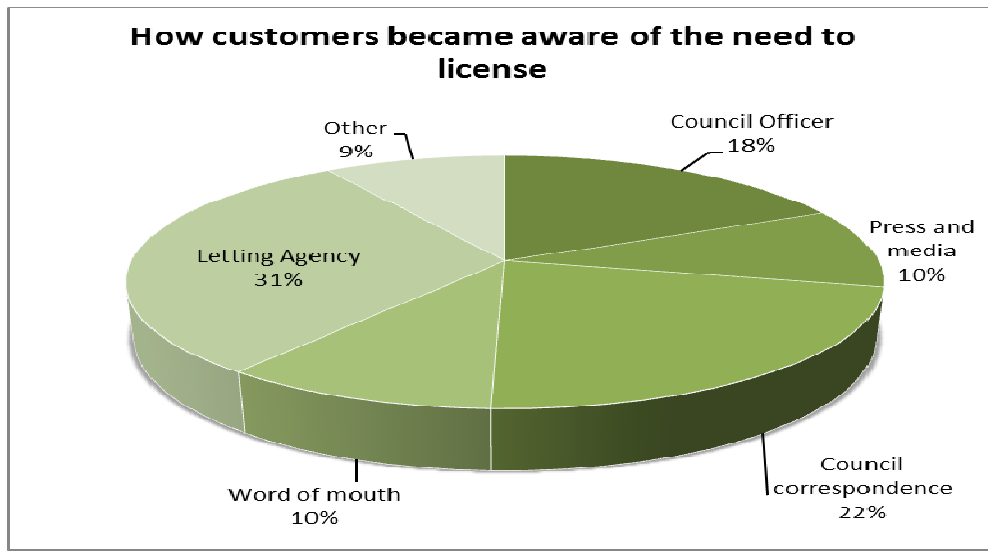


Quality of service and support to customers

Customers were asked if there was anything more the Officer could have done to improve the quality of service provided? Again a favourable response was received with 93% saying nothing needed to be improved.

Awareness of Scheme and understanding of Scheme

Awareness of the Scheme is an important factor in ensuring properties are licensed. Customers were asked how they became aware of the need to license their property? In some cases, respondents ticked more than one box, however it is clear from results that the majority of customers became aware of the need to license through letting agencies.



Landlord Accreditation

Attendance on a suitable and accredited training course on tenancy management and legal standards in private renting is a condition of the mandatory and additional licensing schemes and prior to April 2015, incentives were available to encourage attendance. Customers were asked if they were an Accredited Landlord? Of those that responded, 75% confirmed they were accredited.

Satisfaction with overall level of service

Customers were asked to state how satisfied they were with the overall level of service received from the Licensing Team. An excellent result was received with 96% of customers saying that they felt either very satisfied or satisfied with the overall level of service.

Customer Journey Mapping

Customer Journey Mapping is the process of tracking and describing all the experiences that customers have as they encounter a service or set of services, taking into account not only what happens to them, but also their responses to their experiences. The information is captured qualitatively and quantitatively.

During 2011, a Customer Journey Mapping exercise was carried out with customers who in this case were the licensees of properties licensed under the Additional Licensing Scheme in Cathays. Customers were personally contacted and taken through the process of obtaining a

licence identifying their good and bad experiences. The results were then documented and a report produced on the key issues and recommendations.

It was evident from the report that customers felt that officers were polite, friendly, helpful and accommodating and there was a general feeling of support for the Council in issuing these licences as it would “pick up on the bad landlords” and “the Council and landlords should be working together”. Furthermore, it was felt that it relatively easy to request forms, and the licence pack sent out at the end of the process was helpful. Despite these positive remarks, however, a small number of issues were identified that did not provide such a positive experience. Principally these related to following:-

- The Council’s website and the information contained within it which it was felt had not been helpful, with one customer feeling it was “confusing and contradictory”;
- The application form for a Licence under the Additional Licensing Scheme was criticised for being too lengthy, “over the top” and “very difficult to complete”. Furthermore, landlords who owned more than one property, are required to complete a full form for each individual property which they felt was “very time consuming”.
- The process was too long and drawn out. (At that time applications were taking an average of 90 days from start to finish).
- Supporting documentation was difficult and expensive to acquire.

Housing Enforcement began working to address these issues and as a first step reviewed the application form resulting in a more streamlined and user friendly form with accompanying guidance on completing the form and the information required.

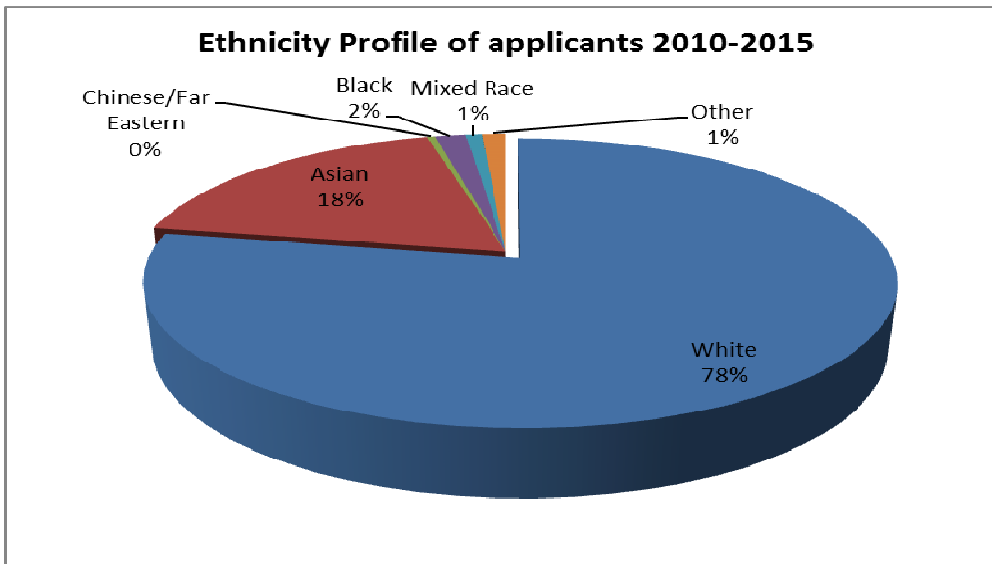
During 2012/13 there was an emphasis on reducing the licensing process and as a result the average time taken to process an application was brought down from 90 days to 56 days (8 weeks).

Opportunities to improve the web pages and guidance contained within it were taken where possible but a full revamp of the web page was not made possible until 2014 when Cardiff Council’s website was reviewed.

Ethnicity Profile of Licensing applicants

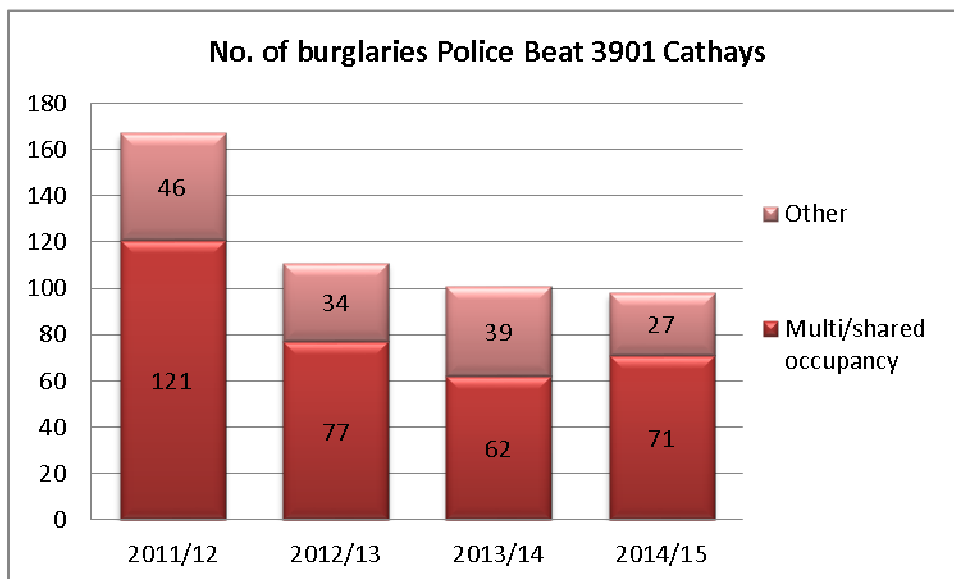
As part of the application process, applicants are requested to complete an Equalities Form. Completion of the form is not compulsory but the following graphs shows a representation of those forms returned since the implementation of the Scheme.

The graph shows a high level of property ownership by the Asian population (18%) compared to Cardiff’s ethnicity make up which according to the 2011 Census is 8% Asian. These results should be viewed with some caution however, as several landlords of Cardiff properties do not reside within the Cardiff area.



Burglaries

Analysis has been carried out on all incidents of Domestic Burglaries which have been committed between 1st April 2011 & 31st March 2015 within police beat number 3901. The graph below shows how the number of burglaries has dropped significantly during that period from 167 in 2011/12 to 98 in 2014/15. This represents a 48% drop in burglaries in the area.



When burglaries are reported, the counting rules used by the police interpret that if the rooms within the shared property are lockable then they are classed as separate burglaries, if the rooms are not then it is recorded as one burglary. However, the results above reflect more in depth analysis based on the examination of each record where it stated that there was shared occupancy, eg. Flat mate or more than one occupant at the premises who were not co-habiting.

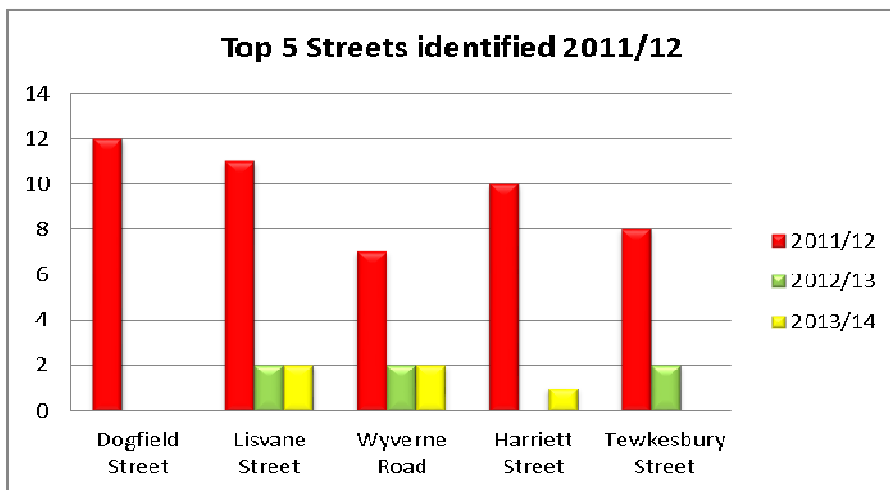
Cathays Burglary Project

Since 2011, Officers from the HMO Licensing Team have worked in conjunction with the Police on the Cathays Burglary Project which uses the Additional Licensing Scheme as a tool

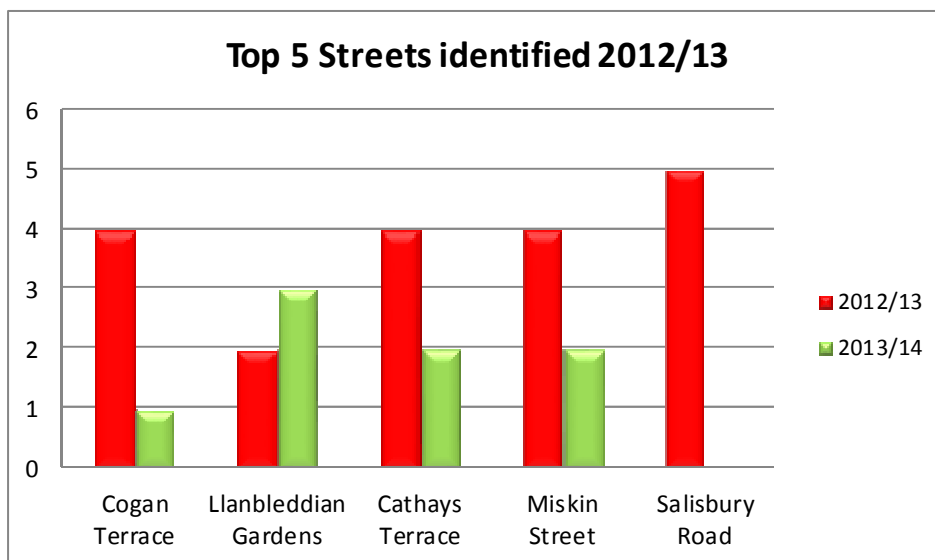
to minimise burglary primarily, but also wider community issues such as waste, anti social behaviour, energy efficiency and fire safety in HMOs.

Officers visit properties jointly with the Police and check the property against licence and security standards and offer crime prevention advice. Those properties failing to meet standards are served notices to carry out works.

Initially the burglary project targeted the top 5 streets for burglary in Cathays which were identified via intelligence analysis. This work has since successfully reduced the number of burglaries in those streets by **89%** decreasing from 48 in 2011/12 to 5 in 2013/14.



The following year the next top 5 burgled Streets were selected and during this 2 year period burglary has decreased by 58% dropping from 19 to 8.



During 2014, it was identified that there was no longer a ‘top 5 streets’ with a higher number of burglaries than other streets as the burglary rates had dropped so much. A new ‘top 5 streets’ could therefore not be chosen to work on for this period. Therefore during 2014 joint inspections were carried out on any properties where a risk was identified and follow up visits were done on any houses which had been burgled. In addition PCSOs complete check sheets when they visit HMOs which are passed to officers in Housing Enforcement. These

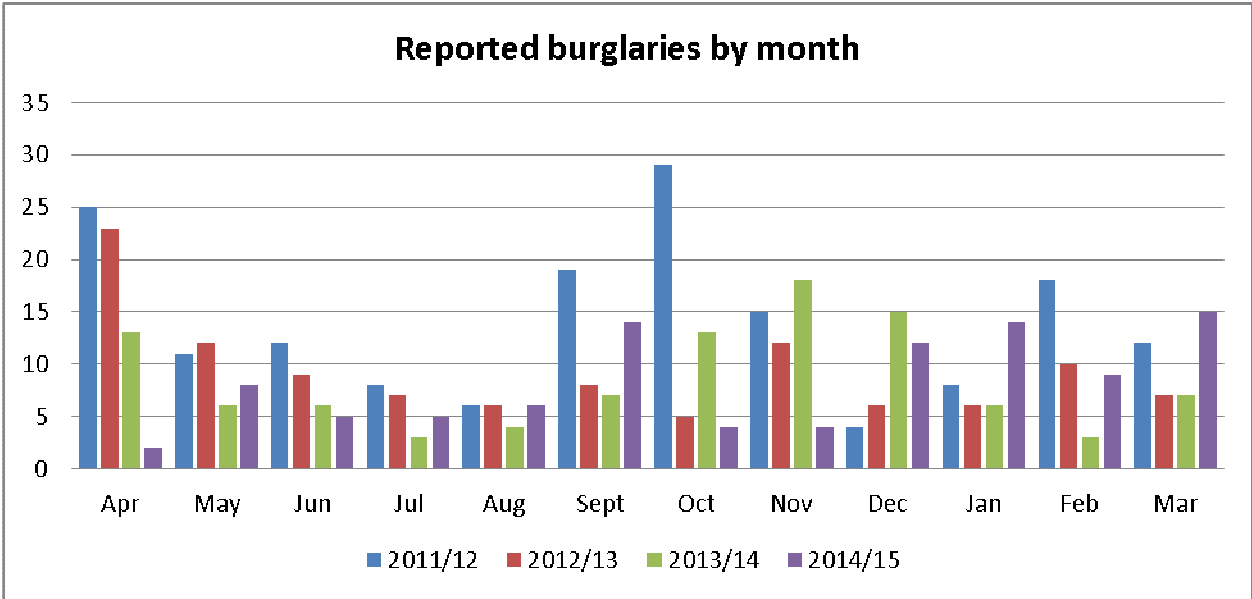
sheets identify any security works required in the house so that officers can then enforce these works. From 2015 onwards a new report will be run covering both Plasnewydd and Cathays and a new top 5 will be chosen covering both areas. This is possible now as Cardiff Council has designated Plasnewydd as an Additional licensing area effective from the 3rd November 2014.

The results evidence that the burglary project is working and improving burglary in the Cathays area, by large extents, an 80% decrease in 3 years is a huge diminution.

The Project is now being held up as an example of good practice and joint working between the Police, Council, Universities and Students in other police force areas and also assists the ongoing Operation Saturn (see below) by reducing burglaries in the Cathays area which runs annually.

Reported burglaries by month

Temporal analysis has been carried out and the following chart shows the number of offences reported each month.



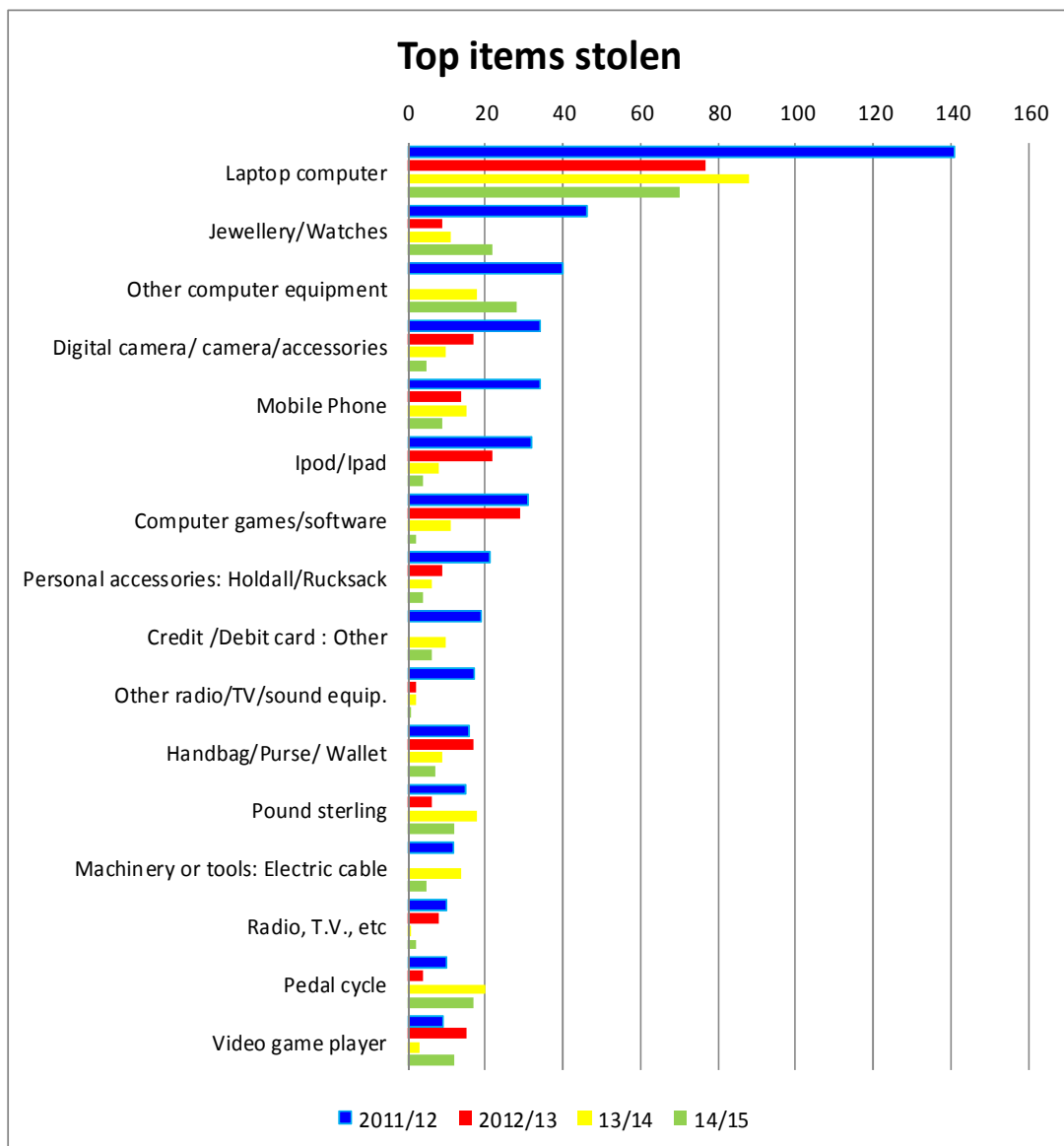
Property Stolen

A search made on the police recording system (Niche) identified the number of items of property which were stolen during burglaries between 2011 and 2015. The graph below shows a huge decline in items stolen, reducing from 604 in 2011/12 to 258 in 2014/15. A reduction of approximately 57%. This reduction is to be expected in line with the reduction in the number of burglaries recorded for the area.



An analysis of the top 10 items stolen in each year, identified a total of 16 different items that feature during the 4 years period. The graph below identifies these items of property.

Whilst certain items feature in the top 10 some years and not in others, laptops have consistently been the number one item stolen across all the 4 years. Despite this, the number of laptops stolen has halved since 2011/12.



3.4 Improvements

Previous evaluations of the Additional Licensing Scheme and customer feedback received have, over the term of the Scheme provided opportunities to review and improve service delivery and the way the licensing scheme is operated. The following list therefore highlights those improvements that have been made during the term of the Scheme.

- **Licence application form** reviewed and new more streamlined, user friendly form with guidance produced. This was in response to customer feedback and the number of forms that were being submitted incorrectly.
- **Customer engagement activities** have been extended via a **customer satisfaction questionnaire** sent to all licensees following the licensing process to obtain feedback on their experience and how the Service could improve.
- **Application process** has been greatly improved by transferring the administration of HMO Licence applications to the Council's Licensing Service who deal with various licensing activities across the Council. This change provided an opportunity to review and simplify the administrative process to deliver a more efficient service. Applications are no longer progressed until application and required documentation are received correctly and validated. This enables housing enforcement officers to focus on inspections rather than chasing up missing elements of the application and provides a clearer more streamlined process for landlords.
- The **turnover time for receipt and verification of an application** has reduced significantly to within 2 days of receipt meaning applications are being processed straight away and if invalid, landlords are made aware of requirements without delay.
- **Guidance documentation** has been reviewed and re-written.
- The **HMO licensing website** has been thoroughly re-written and the information leaflets contained on the website have been reviewed and rationalised.
- The number of **application documents** required to be submitted with an application have been reduced so criminal checks are no longer required. This was found to be delaying the processing of applications and creating an additional financial burden on landlords.
- **Additional payment methods** have been made available to landlords who can now pay via BACS or via debit card machine where payment can be made in person or over the phone. Previously only cheques or cash were permitted.
- Steps taken midway through the term of the Scheme to **recruit additional staff** have addressed low level improvement activity that was evident following the first evaluation in 2012. This has facilitated re-inspection of properties to ensure compliance with conditions and notices.. Furthermore, more recently, the HMO Licensing Team has been strengthened with the recruitment of 3 further technical officers, 2 administrators and are in the process of recruiting a Licensing Support Officer to chase up landlords who fail to submit applications in a timely fashion.
- Significant progress has been made in **reducing the number of outstanding applications** that were evident in 2012. This has in part been achieved through joint

initiatives with Police and Police volunteers, independent street surveys undertaken by housing enforcement officers and the transfer of the administration process to a specialist team freeing up more time for officers to undertake proactive work.

- The positive results that emerged from previous evaluations of the Cathays Scheme has led to a new Additional Licensing Scheme being declared in the Plasnewydd Ward which commenced on 3 November 2014. This Scheme will run for 5 years and will ensure that a further 1500 HMOs are brought within licensing control.

4.1 Key points and Conclusions

The Additional Licensing Scheme for the Cathays Ward has been in place for 4 ³/₄ years since 1 July 2010 and the purpose of this report is to evaluate the progress made during that period. Following the first evaluation in 2011/12, it was not anticipated that significant improvements would be observed at such an early stage, however now the Scheme is near to the end of its 5 year term, much clearer evidence of improvement has emerged. Having scrutinised and examined the various results presented in this report the following key points and conclusions are presented.

- The Scheme has been successful in capturing an additional 1664 properties that otherwise would not have been licensed and inspected.
- A range of improvements have been secured to accommodation through the provision of the licensing conditions and the issue of notices.
- The licensing of these additional properties has ensured landlords provide up to date gas and electrical installation certificates as part of the licensing process ensuring gas and electrical appliances are in a satisfactory condition.
- The number of properties requiring improvement works has improved dropping from 81% in 2011/12 when the Scheme was first evaluated to 36% during the last year.
- The number of properties that have improved as a result of intervention has risen from 10% to 31% resulting in 63% of licensed properties being up to standard.
- The gap between those properties requiring improvement and those that have improved through intervention has reduced significantly during the period of the Scheme. This is a positive indication that the Scheme has been influential in identifying issues and improving accommodation.
- Despite positive trends indicating significant improvement in properties, there still remains a large percentage that require improvement.
- Positive trends are evident in respect of the number of complied notices served in relation to security increasing from 10% to 40%.
- Positive trends are evident in respect of the number of complied notices served in relation to excess cold increasing from 8% to 44%.
- A significant number of hazards have been improved under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The most common hazard improved being fire safety.
- No licences have been refused since the Scheme was implemented.

- Prosecutions in relation to properties in Cathays for either failure to license a property or comply with a notice/improvement works are very low.
- Despite a significant increase in the number of licensed properties since the Scheme's implementation together with greater awareness by tenants, the number of complaints made to the Housing Enforcement Team about properties in the Cathays area has stayed at a fairly static level. There are currently 2174 licensed properties in Cathays and the number of property complaints during the last year represents only 6.53% of those properties licensed. Prior to the Scheme's implementation this was 35%. This would suggest that such a percentage decrease in complaints is a positive indication that the pro-active work undertaken as part of the Scheme has generated an improvement in properties, reducing the need for complaint.
- Since the Scheme's implementation the greatest number of complaints by far relate to disrepair.
- Partnership working between HMO Licensing Officers and Police undertaking joint visits to the 'top 5 burgled streets' with a view to target harden properties and educate tenants on crime prevention has had considerable success and seen a decrease of 80% of burglaries on targeted streets.
- A positive downward trend is evidenced in relation to incidents of domestic burglaries committed in Cathays with only 98 burglaries recorded during 2014/15. This compares positively to 2011/12 total which stood at 167, a reduction of 48%.
- 258 items of property were stolen in 2014/15 which shows a significant drop from 2011/12 when 604 items were stolen. The highest number of items stolen continues to be laptop computers, however this number has halved since 2011/12.
- Cardiff has been leading the way with Landlord Training and has trained over 900 landlords with properties in Cardiff (736 since the Additional Licensing Scheme began). This is a significant proportion of the total of Welsh landlords who have undertaken training and represents a massive 29% of the total of accredited landlords across Wales. The Additional Licensing Scheme has contributed to this number by way of licensing conditions that require landlords to be accredited and the incentives offered for landlords to participate.
- The requirement of the Licence to register alarm key holders with the Council's Pollution Control Service appears to have had a positive reaction with the number of Cathays properties registered representing more than a fifth of the total registered across the whole of Cardiff.
- Customer engagement with licensees/landlords via Customer Satisfaction Survey has received very favourable responses in all areas. Of particular relevance to this evaluation is the excellent result received in relation to respondent's views on the Licensing Scheme where the majority (97%) believed the Scheme improved standards in the private rented sector.

Quality of service and support, scored highly, with 96% of respondents confirming they were satisfied with the overall service.

- Previous customer engagement with landlords via the Customer Journey Mapping process identified a number of key areas requiring improvement which the Council has taken steps to address by way of reviewing the application form and reducing the time taken to process an application.
- The HMO Licensing Team has been receptive to customer feedback and flexible in their approach to the Scheme making improvements where necessary that benefit both landlord and the Council.
- The transfer of the HMO Licensing administration to the specialist licensing team has had positive effects in simplifying the administrative process and reducing the burden on enforcement officers enabling them to focus on enforcement. Furthermore, the reduction in time taken to process an application has sped up the licensing process and provided a clearer more consistent process for landlords.
- Whilst customer engagement has taken place with landlords via surveys and the Customer Journey Mapping methodology, limited engagement has been undertaken with tenants and as a consequence it has been impossible to establish their perceptions of the effectiveness of the scheme.
- Licences issued under the Additional Licensing Scheme will begin to expire in 2015 and require renewal with many properties (31%) requiring improvement. If the Scheme was to expire, these properties would be exempt from the licensing regime and therefore not be improved. Similarly during the 5 year term of a licence, properties can deteriorate and if a Licence was not renewed and inspected, further opportunities to improve accommodation would be lost.

Summary

The purpose of the Additional Licensing Scheme is to improve the standard of rented property within the Cathays Area together with wider community issues such as waste, anti social behaviour, energy efficiency and property security. In preparing this evaluation, analysis has been undertaken into the various elements of the Scheme and it is clear from all results that evidence of the Scheme's positive impact has emerged. High volumes of properties have required improvement and have been improved which demonstrates clearly that not only is intervention by the Council warranted but that this intervention is having an impact on the area. Prior to the implementation of the Scheme, these properties would have been exempt from the Licensing regime and such improvement works would have remained unidentified.

It is clear from this evaluation, that the Additional Licensing Scheme has been a valuable tool in applying standards and improvements to a large number of properties that otherwise would have been exempt. It is therefore imperative that this good work continues. The imminent expiry of the Additional Licensing Scheme in June 2015 provides an opportunity for the Council to continue this good work. It is therefore recommended that the Cathays area be re-declared as an Additional Licensing area for a further 5 years.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendations

- That Council re-declare the Additional Licensing Scheme in Cathays for a further 5 years to build on the good work that is evident within this evaluation.
- Deter prolonged non compliance of licensing requirements by strengthening the enforcement process to be applied to landlords failing to comply with licensing requirements in terms of submitting applications and undertaking improvements.
- Extend customer engagement activities with tenants in Cathays to establish their perceptions of the overall effectiveness of Additional Licensing Scheme. NB. Should a decision be made to re-declare the area, a public consultation will be undertaken which would address this issue.
- Evaluate the Cardiff Student Community Plan to ensure it's effectiveness and implement improvements where necessary.
- Continue to undertake joint activities between Police and HMO Licensing Officers to improve security in licensed properties.
- Undertake routine evaluations of the Scheme to ensure it continues to deliver the required benefits and implement improvements where identified.