

# Anti-social behaviour and the private rented housing sector in Enfield

## Evidence base and research summary

*February 2014*

### 1. Summary

1.1 This document provides a summary of the research completed to build an understanding of the evidence to support a decision around the implementation of an additional and selective licensing scheme across the London Borough of Enfield.

### 2. Background and requirements

2.1 This document is designed to support the decision for the implementation of an additional and selective licensing scheme of the private rented housing sector in the London Borough of Enfield.

2.2 To establish such a scheme, one of two criteria must be satisfied: i) that the area is experiencing low housing demand (not the case in Enfield) or ii) that the area is experiencing a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour and that some or all private sector landlords in the area are not taking appropriate action to combat the problem that it would be appropriate for them to take; and the making of a designation, when combined with other measures taken by the LHA, or by the LHA in conjunction with others, will lead to a reduction in, or elimination of, the problem.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Housing Act 2004, Section 80(6).

### 3. Growth in the private rented sector

3.1 As with much of London, the housing market in Enfield has seen significant change over recent years. A key feature of this change across the capital has been a growing and adapting role for the private rented sector.

#### Census data

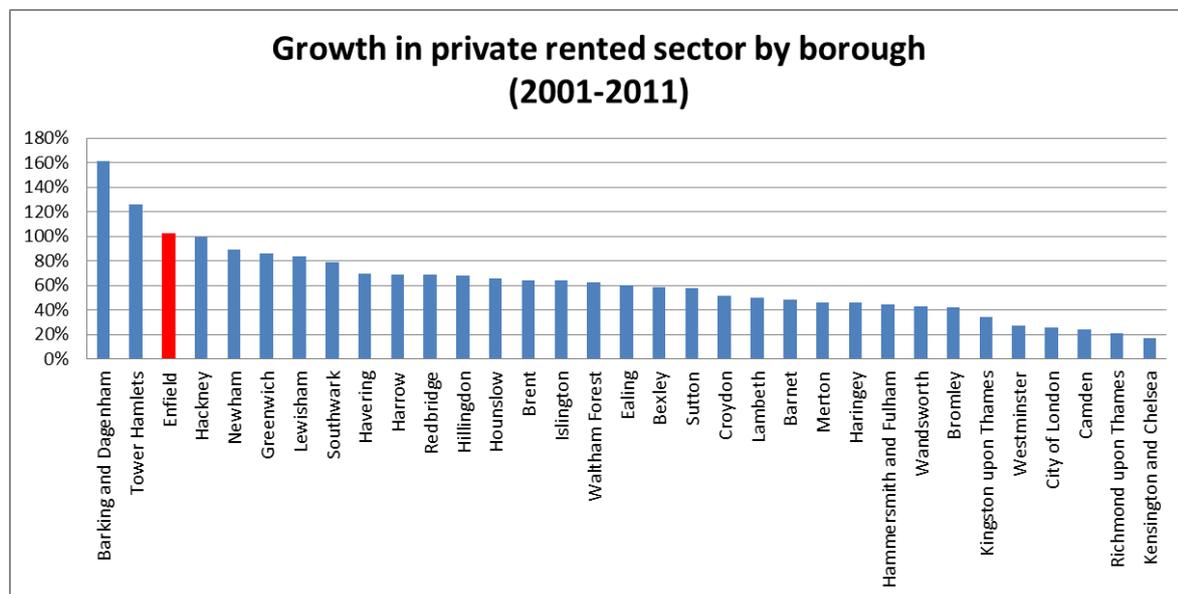
3.2 In the decade 2001-2011, census data suggests that the number of households in the capital increased by just over 250,000, or a growth of 8%. The private rented sector, however, increased by 57% in that period. The sector now makes up over 25% of housing stock in the capital.

3.3 There has been a significant (103%) increase in the size of the private rented sector in Enfield, with the number of households in that tenure increasing from 13,105 to 26,591. This does not just mean more homes, and has significantly come at the expense of home ownership, but there has also been a small amount of household growth.

Tenure	Number of households (2001)	Number of households (2011)	% Change
Total households	110,398	119,916	8.62%
Home owner	77,994	69,462	-10.94%
Social Housing	19,299	21,073	9.19%
Private Rented	13,105	26,591	102.91%

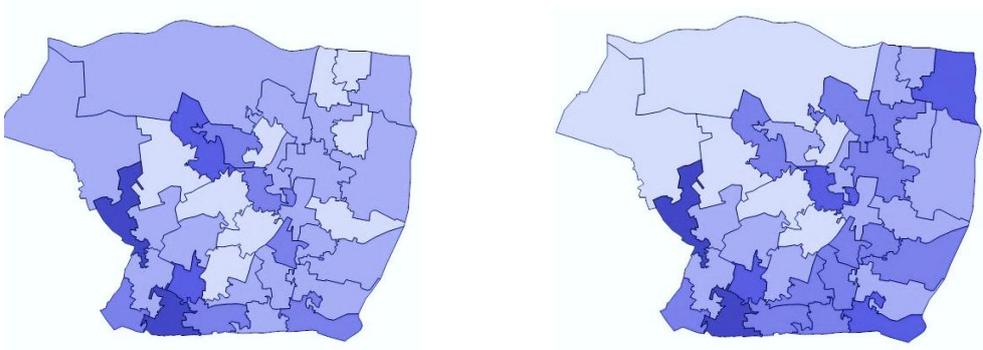
Table 1 - Enfield household changes, 2001-2011 (Census)

3.4 Compared to other London boroughs, Enfield has the third highest relative increase in its private rented sector (see figure 1), and the fourth highest numeric increase.



3.5 There has also been a change in pattern of where that private rented housing is located within Enfield. In 2001 it was primarily found in the south west of the borough around the centres of Palmers Green, Southgate and Cockfosters.

3.6 As the below maps from the Office for National Statistics show, the numbers of properties have increased across the borough, and the spread is much more of a borough wide phenomenon, with the private rented sector now providing housing in all neighbourhoods and for all communities. There has been a significant growth in the east of the borough, and the below map from ONS highlights the different spread of density of private rented housing.

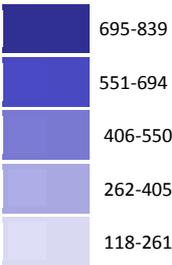


Source: 2001 Census Area Statistics

Source: 2011 Census Area Statistics

**area type** 2001 super output areas - mid layer  
**xml1** Private rented  
**Data** Number

**Legend**



**area type** 2011 super output areas - mid layer  
**xml1** Private rented  
**Data** Number

**Legend**

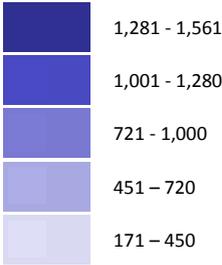


Figure 1 - Neighbourhood changes 2001 -2011 (ONS)

**Public sector housing to private rented sector housing**

3.7 Looking at public sector housing, here too the situation has also been affected by the increase in the PRS. Over the last two years there has been an increase in the sale of social rented properties within Enfield. This increase comes on top of the amount of formally social rented properties sold since the creation of the 'Right to Buy' scheme in 1980.

3.8 As a result of this, as of the end of November 2013, there are 4,547 leasehold properties within Enfield Homes social housing in the borough, which accounts for 28.7% of all the units in Enfield Homes estates. It is estimated that 50% of

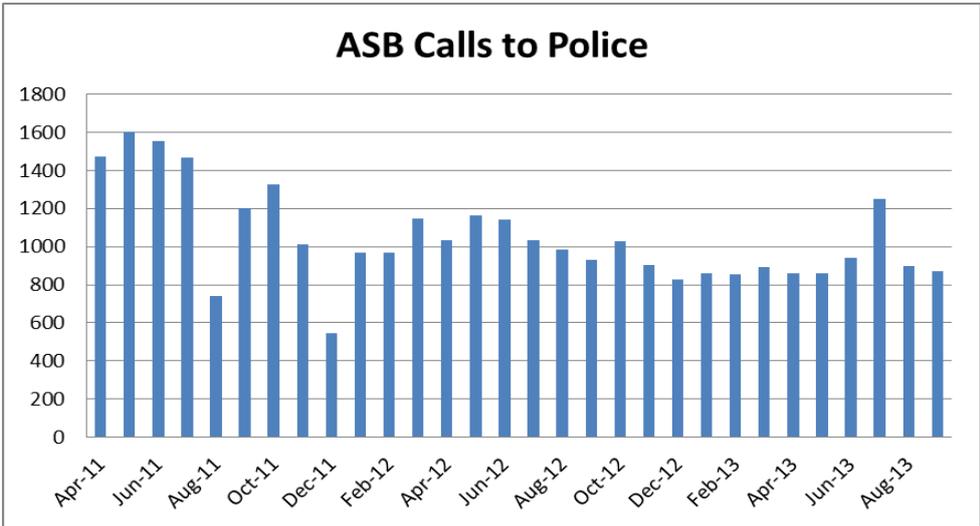
those leasehold properties are owned by absentee landlords. From this information it can be inferred that these properties are rented out.

### **Modelling a more accurate number of private rented properties**

- 3.9 There is no single clear data set which indicates whether a privately owned property is rented or owner occupied. There are, however, several markers that have been shown elsewhere to be correlated with and, hence, predictive of, a privately rented household.
- 3.10 This methodology has been used by Professor Les Mayhew in his work with a number of other authorities, and as a way to improve the accuracy of Census and other population estimates.
- 3.11 These markers or risk factors were applied to comparable data taken from Enfield and then analysed by Professor Mayhew. These include points such as whether it is a benefit-claiming household; there have been multiple changes of residents at an address; or changes in the persons responsible for paying Council Tax.
- 3.12 These risk factors help identify whether a property is likely to be an HMO, single family rented or owner occupied. The results are reported in the form of a risk assessment based on the number of risk factors applying to each address and deal with the first of two of these categories – HMOs and single families.
- 3.13 The results are not, therefore, certain, and tenure type cannot be completely validated unless and until a property is actually visited.
- 3.14 Based on this information, and balancing the level of risk in the model with what is known from the Census, it is reasonable to estimate that there are between **15,327** and **19,279** single family rented properties in the borough, and up to **12,715** and **12,723** HMO properties in the borough. This would give a total of between **28,042** and **32,002** properties in the borough.
- 3.15 This suggests that there is approximately a 60:40 split between single family and HMO stock in the private rented sector in the borough.
- 3.16 Overall, the indications are that the privately rented sector is substantial and certainly far bigger than the number of properties covered by the presently very limited licensing scheme for HMOs under the 2004 Housing Act. This is mainly due to the size of building stock in Enfield, which is below three stories and therefore not covered by the existing HMO licensing scheme.

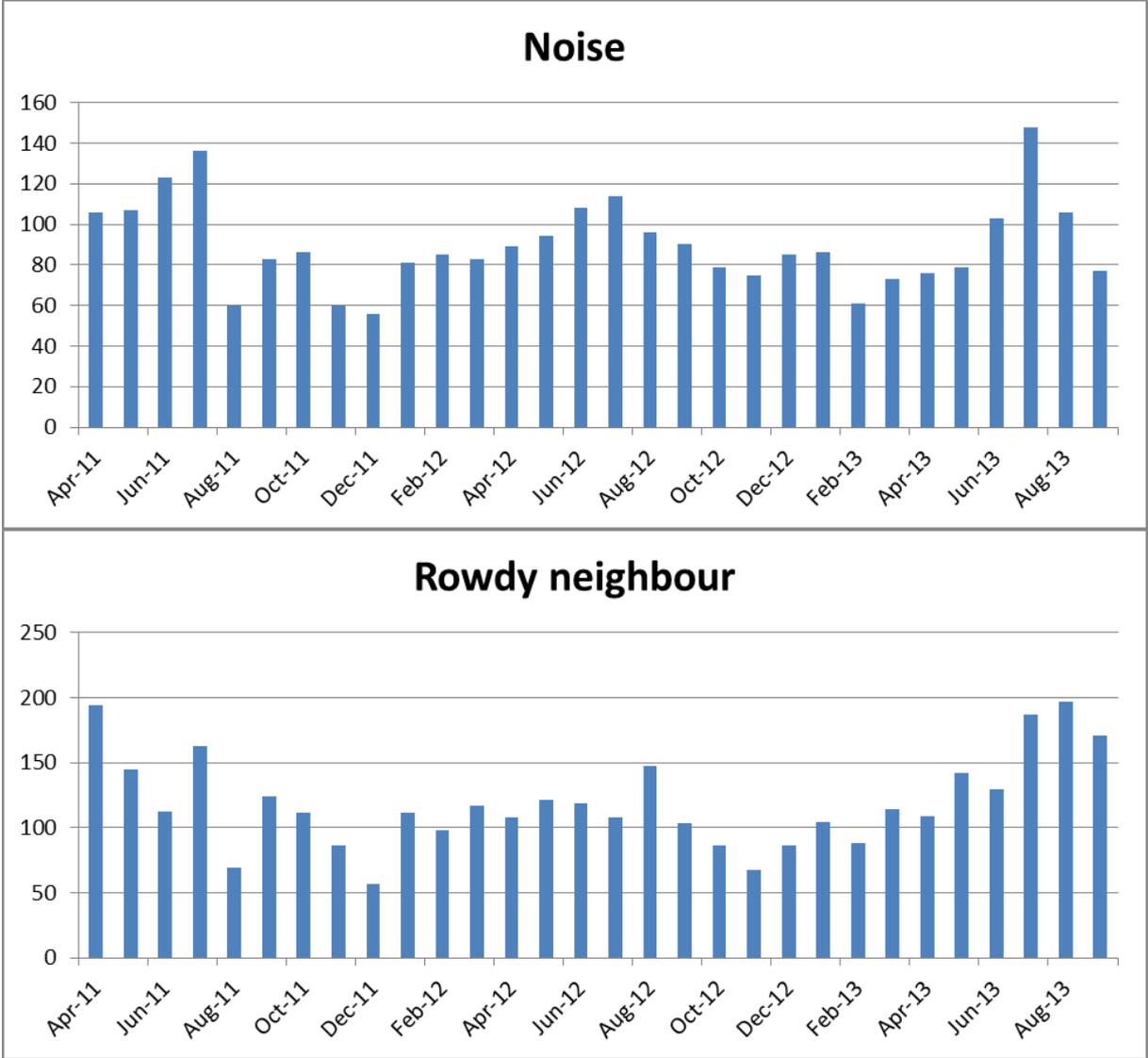
## 4. Anti-social behaviour

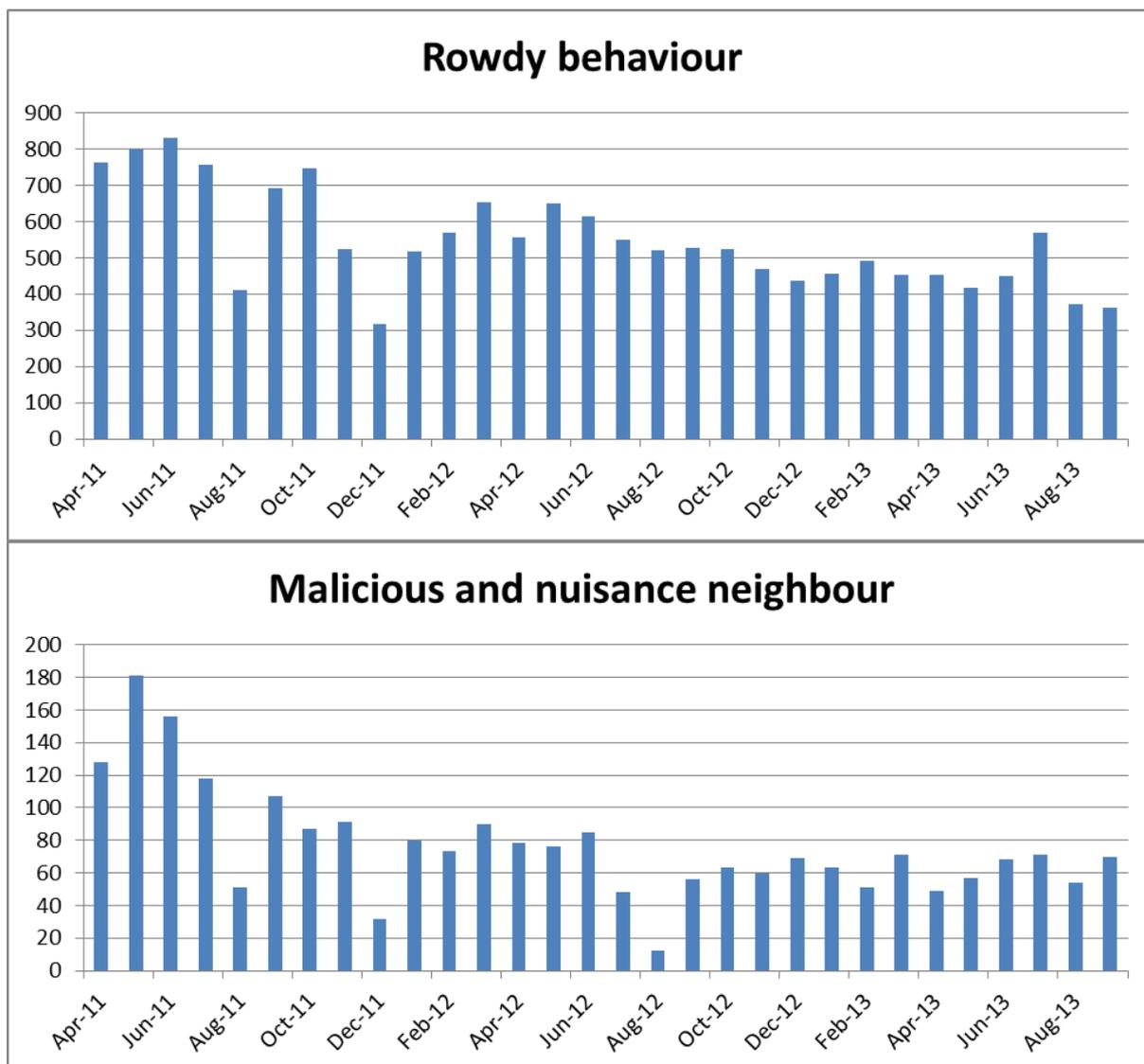
- 4.1 Tackling anti-social behaviour has long been a priority for Enfield, and there have been a number of initiatives to bring this under control within the borough in recent years.
- 4.2 These initiatives have clearly been successful in a number of ways. The volume of ASB calls in Enfield has declined for four consecutive years (a drop of nearly 35% between 2008 and 2013), and the proportion of residents perceiving ASB to be a big or a fairly big problem in their local area has consistently fallen (12% in 2012 compared to 32% in 2008 and 45% in 2004.)
- 4.3 Despite these positive changes, ASB remains a significant and persistent issue in this borough. Last year, Enfield Council spent over £340,000 on its ASB team that deals with all cases of ASB that do not involve Enfield Homes (i.e. private lets, home owners and RSLs).
- 4.4 Perceptions of ASB are measured based on 8 specific nuisance behaviours, including: people using or dealing drugs; rubbish or litter lying around; people being drunk or rowdy in public places; people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion; noisy nuisance neighbours; and vandalism, graffiti and other criminal damage. There were 17,622 reports of ASB to police in 2012 with a further 5,761 reports to the local authority regarding environmental ASB (fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, graffiti).
- 4.5 In the 30 months from April 2011 to September 2013, there were 31,349 complaints made to the police around ASB. It is also worth noting that this is only one type of ASB complaint, as services, such as environmental crime, receive complaints around issues such as domestic noise.
- 4.6 When looked at across those months, it is clear that there is a positive story for Enfield, with a downward trajectory from the peaks of July 2011 (which coincided with the London riots of the summer of that year). It is also worth noting that there tends to be a peak in July, and this was particularly marked within 2013.



4.7 Within these reports of issues, there are several types of anti-social behaviour. Some of them are more or less directly connected to housing. When looking at four key types of ASB which are particularly relevant to residency and the definition of anti-social behaviour as described in the Cabinet report (rowdy behaviour, rowdy neighbours, noise and malicious or nuisance behaviour), some clear differences emerge.

4.8 Complaints about noise have not moved, but have continued to follow seasonal trends (peaks in the summer which is understandable, but no reductions). Recent data in the summer of 2013 was higher than that of the year of the riots (2011). Complaints around rowdy neighbours has continued to average over 100 complaints to the police a month, and this appears to have an increasing rather than a decreasing trend, alongside the seasonal movements. Although rowdy behaviour, which averages over 500 complaints in the period, came down recently, there is no clear pattern yet. Malicious and nuisance neighbour complaints appears to have stayed at the same level since a peak in 2011 (again, possibly linked to the riots of that year) and therefore continues to be a concern, albeit smaller than other issues.





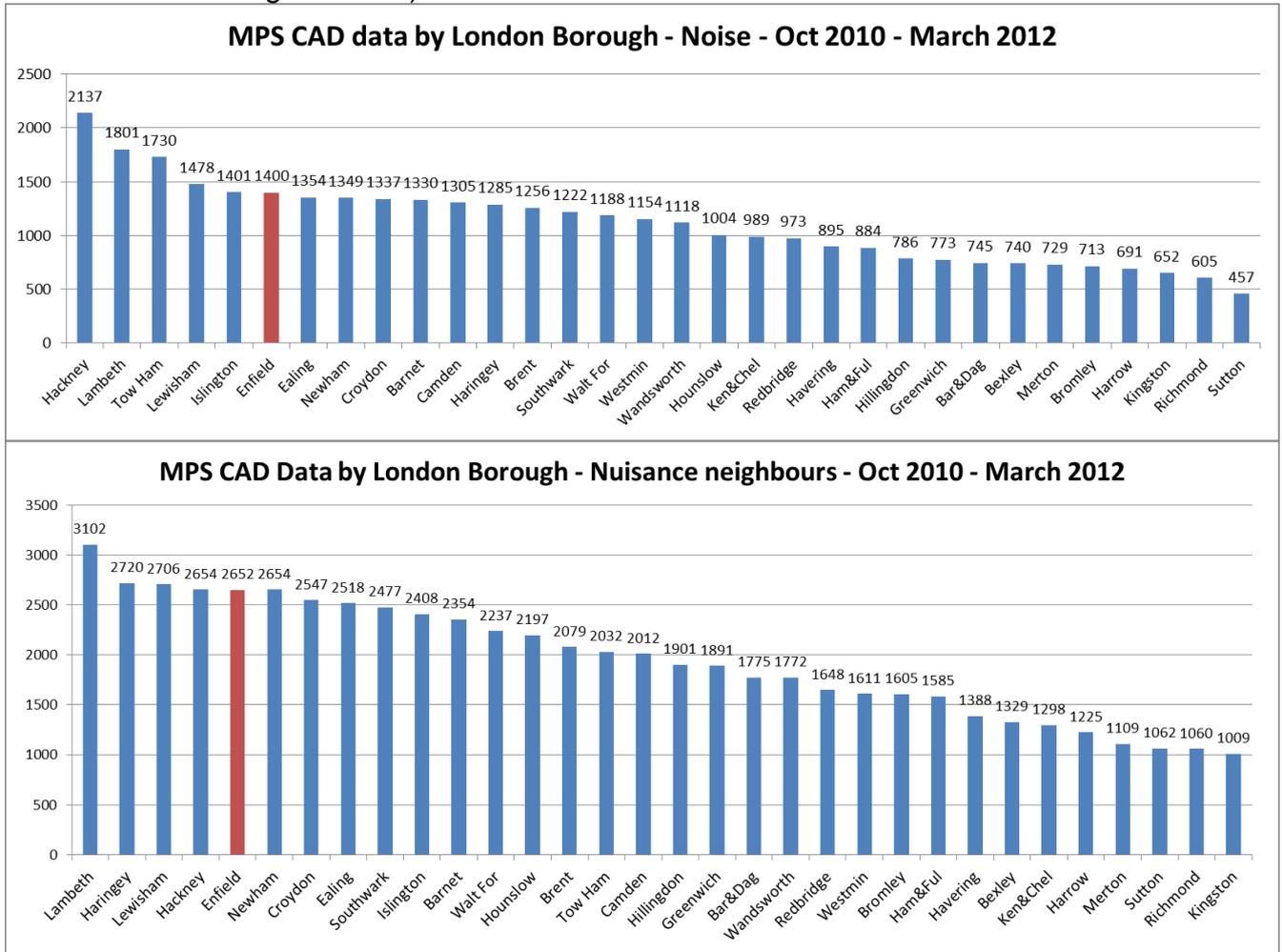
4.9 This is suggesting that for those issues which may be mostly relevant to housing, noise and rowdy neighbour being the most apparent, there is a smaller likelihood that the ASB has fallen, and is potentially starting to increase in terms of rowdy neighbour complaints.

4.10 As highlighted above, police data is only one type of recorded information. In terms of noise alone the community safety unit has received the following noise complaints in the last few years, again showing a rapid increase.

Year	ASB Noise Complaints to CSU
2010/11	2,457
2011/12	2,580
2012/13	2,911

4.11 When looking at the two categories of noise and nuisance/ rowdy neighbours in comparison to other boroughs, it is only possible to get data from an earlier period (October 2010 - March 2012). Enfield has the fifth highest level of

nuisance neighbours reports (2652 incidents against the London average of 1955) and the sixth highest number of noise reports (1400 incidents against the London average of 1349).<sup>2</sup>



## Residents' Perceptions

4.12 Enfield conducted its Annual Residents Survey for the second time in 2012. The survey gained a large sample size (1,500 respondents). The results from the latest survey conducted in 2012 show the top three concerns about ASB within the borough were:

- Rubbish or litter lying around (28% of residents)
- Teenagers hanging around on the street (24% of residents)
- People using or dealing drugs (16% of residents)

## Conclusion

4.13 This information shows that whilst at a macro level, Enfield has seen some positive trends in reducing ASB, issues like noise and neighbour relations continue to create problems for the borough. The above figures suggest a persistence which needs to be dealt with for the residents of the borough, and an issue which is not currently being solved by existing measures.

<sup>2</sup> Data obtained from Newham Council

<https://mgov.newham.gov.uk/documents/s53751/Appendix%20ASB%20and%20PRS%20Evidence%20Base%20report%20FINAL.pdf>

## 5. The link between the PRS and ASB

5.1 It is impossible for any authority to directly and causally link all anti-social behaviour to the property tenure in every instance. Data is not collected in a way that can provide certainty around the tenure of every perpetrator. Therefore, a mixture of evidence must be used, and any decision made around the link between a property tenure and anti-social behaviour has to be made on a balance of that evidence.

### Overall and statistical relationship

5.2 In November 2013, research by Professor Les Mayhew looked into the relationship between rented properties and anti-social behaviour in Enfield. This work involved two parts:

- i) To model, as accurately as possible, the number of private rented properties in the borough (see section 3 above); and
- ii) To explore the relationship between those properties and anti-social behaviour.

5.3 In looking at that relationship, the work concluded with the following statements after exploring an attempt to directly link addresses to incidents, and then with a geographic relationship:

*However, the indications are that the privately rented sector is substantial and certainly far bigger than the number of properties covered by the presently limited licensing scheme for HMOs under the 2004 Housing Act. It is also of interest that single family private rented properties seem to be more associated with ASB – perhaps because they are not as regulated.*

*Enfield Council's hypothesis that privately rented properties are associated with high levels of ASB also appears to have reasonable justification. In the limited instances where addresses were linkable, higher than average percentages of ASB were attributable to higher risk privately rented households.*

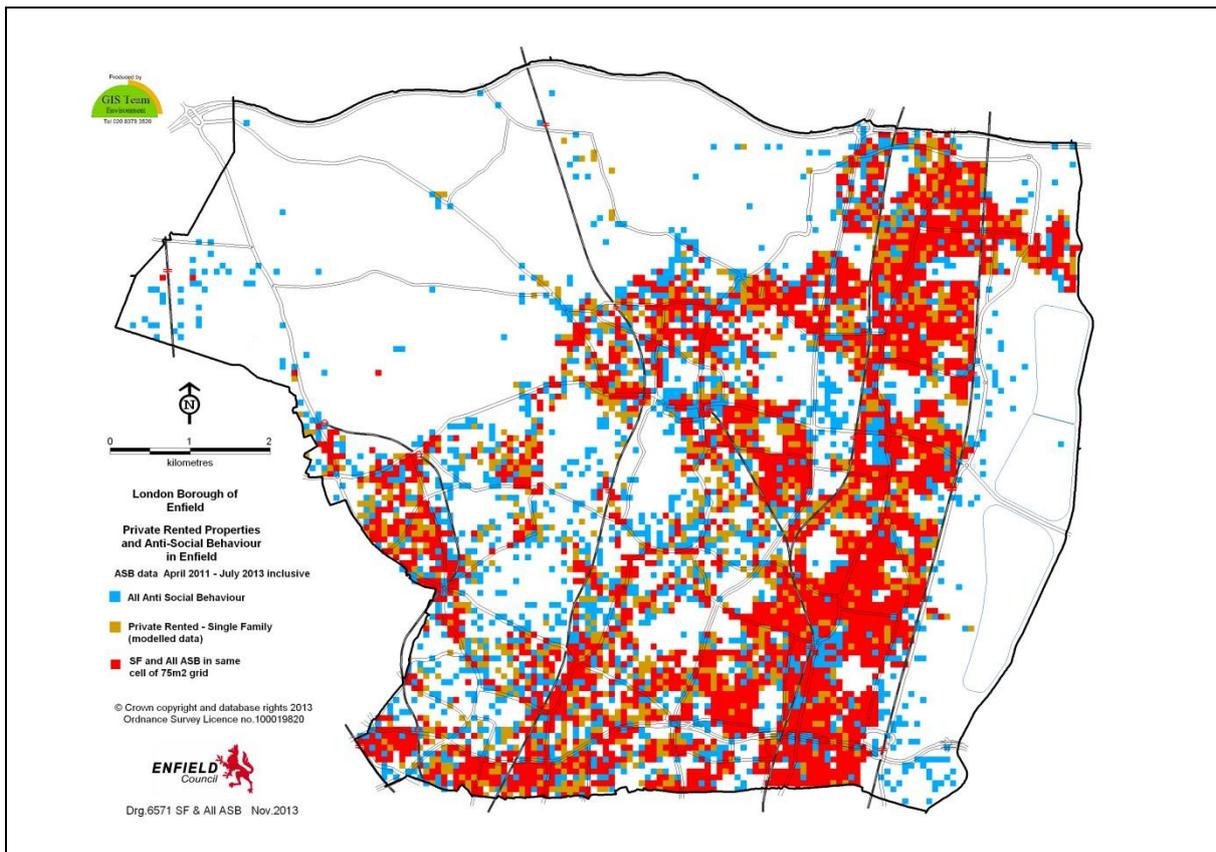
*More substantive evidence however was found by geographical association between reported incidents or rates of ASB and the co-location with higher risk households – especially potentially high risk single family private rented households.*

*Of course co-location is not proof of a link to an individual household or address but it is suggestive that levels of ASB and privately rented properties are associated even if exact causation cannot be established.*

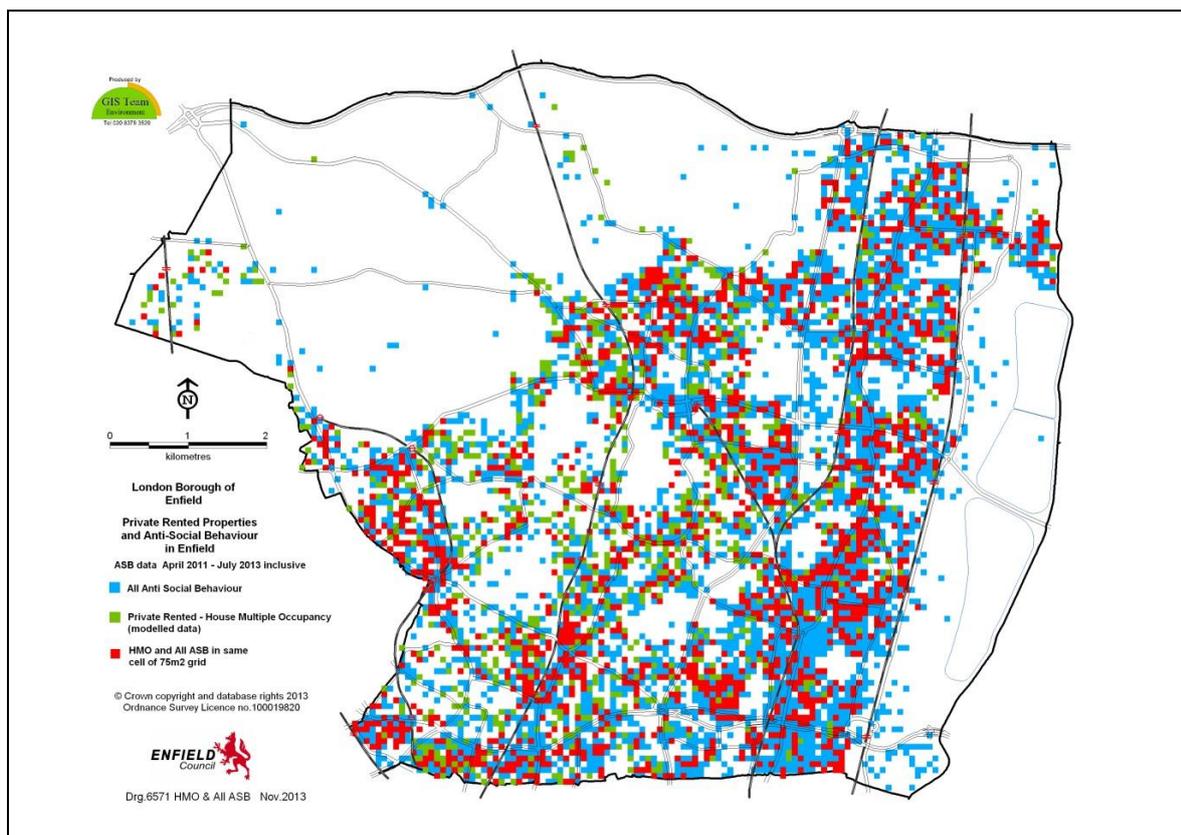
5.4 When all ASB types were associated with the tenure, it was clear from the research that highest ASB incident rates tend to be associated with single family privately rented properties as one travels east in the borough (i.e. there is a stronger relationship in the east than the west of the borough) and with both HMOs and single family privately rented properties as one moves from north to south (a stronger relationship in the south of the borough).

## Geographic ASB relationship

- 5.5 When mapped across the borough, the four types of anti-social behaviour which correlate most with the definition of ASB in section 4 (rowdy behaviour, rowdy neighbours, noise and malicious or nuisance behaviour), can be seen to have a geographical relationship with the location of the private rented sector.
- 5.6 In terms of connecting the information, the following map highlights a 75m<sup>2</sup> area grid of the borough where both private rented properties which are rented by single families and one of the four types of anti-social behaviour are located in the last two years. This is the type of property which would be licensed under the Selective Licensing scheme.



- 5.7 The second map highlights that whilst there are fewer HMOs than single family properties (the first map) it is clear that the associations are still strong. This association is also not confined to any single part of the borough. This second type of housing would be covered by the proposed Additional Licensing scheme.



5.8 These two maps do not repeat the statistical analysis which was carried out within the Mayhew research, and which led to the conclusions in 5.3 above. They should not be taken as statistical analysis on their own; more a geographic representation of the findings from the more detailed research. However, they do demonstrate the scale of the relationship across the borough as a whole. There is a relationship in all parts of the residential areas of Enfield, and it is particularly apparent for single family properties.

### Evidence from environmental services

5.9 Crime and anti-social behaviour are not the only issues that a poorly regulated and managed private rented sector can produce. More environmental anti-social behaviour issues can also significantly impact upon an area.

5.10 In terms of Environmental Crime, data obtained from DEFRA highlights that fly-tipping is a more significant problem for Enfield than for its neighbouring boroughs (see table 2). This consequentially has huge cost implications for the Council. The Council spent £4.8 million in 2012 to keep Enfield's streets clean of litter and rubbish. The Council issues approximately 4,400 fixed penalty notices for littering every year at a cost of £200,000.

LA Name	Total Incidents
Enfield	17,871
Haringey	12,398
Waltham Forest	3,951
Barnet	1,697

Table 2: Fly-tipping. Source: DEFRA (2012-2013)

5.11 Enfield has the highest number of fly-tips occurring in private/residential areas in comparison to its neighbouring boroughs (438).

LA Name	Private / Residential Incidents
Enfield	438
Waltham Forest	165
Haringey	10
Barnet	0

Table 3: Source: DEFRA (2012-2013)

5.12 There have also been increases within Enfield over recent years in a number of other areas that are recorded by the Council's envirocrime team, two of which (fly boarding and untidy gardens) are strongly related to poorly managed housing.

Year	Fly boarding – estate agent board	Untidy gardens	Persistent dog fouling
2010/11	93	694	89
2011/12	133	838	170
2012/13	198	1,069	255

Table 4: Further environmental issues

### Evidence from housing enforcement

5.13 A further important consideration is the maintenance of the housing condition in the sector. There has been a 67.6% increase in the number of enquiries the Council has received from private tenants in the five-year period from April 2008 to March 2013 in terms of issues around housing. This team is known as Housing Enforcement.

Year	Housing Enforcement Enquiries
2008/2009	718
2009/2010	833
2010/2011	1,056
2011/2012	1,171
2012/2013	1,204
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,982</b>

Table 5: Housing enforcement enquires by year

5.14 Since 2008 the Council has responded to 3,787 housing disrepair complaints from tenants in private rented properties. By comparing the number of responses recorded for 2008/2009 (453) with 2012/2013 (1055), this reveals an increase of 133% in housing disrepair complaints that the Council has been acting on. This highlights that the problems with the private rented sector appear to be growing faster than the sector itself.

Year	Housing Disrepair Responses
2008/2009	453
2009/2010	539
2010/2011	745
2011/2012	995
2012/2013	1,055
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,787</b>

Table 6: Housing disrepair responses by year

5.15 It is clear that tenants are both contacting the authority more often about tenancy issues, and that the authority is responding to disrepair issues more often. The growth in these responses over a five year period suggests a faster growth in issues and concerns than there is a growth in the PRS, suggesting a reduced quality in the private rented sector as it grows.

### Overcrowding

5.16 Overcrowding is also an issue in Enfield. Using the overcrowding measure of where there are more than 1.5 persons per bedroom, the 2011 Census found that 29% of all private renting households were experiencing overcrowding. The data indicates that only 8.5% of these were classified as 'multi person households,' for which additional licensing is already available.

5.17 The Shelter report 'Chance of a lifetime' notes that children in overcrowded housing are more likely to develop respiratory problems, more likely to have slow growth and delayed cognitive development and are 10 times more likely to contract meningitis. There is also a direct link between childhood tuberculosis and overcrowding. This is a significant problem as families with children account for around a third of the increase in PRS households over the last decade.

5.18 Cold homes are associated with higher risk of mortality during winter. In Enfield, there were 29.3% more deaths during winter compared to non-winter period in 2011/12. This compared to 18.2% in London and 15.8% in England and was amongst the worst 10% in the local authorities in England.

5.19 Further, overcrowding can negatively impact children's education, family relationships and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The number of people living in overcrowded conditions has risen overall: while the number of children living in overcrowded housing increased by 18% in London between 2008 and 2011. As identified by the housing register, the charts below show an increasing problem with private sector overcrowding.

5.20 Furthermore, whilst overcrowding is an increasing problem for private rented households, severe overcrowding is also a significantly increasing issue. Severe overcrowding is defined as "a household with at least two less bedrooms than would be expected for the household size". Overcrowding figures include the severely overcrowded households.

- 5.21 Overcrowding increases the likelihood of associated ASB such as noise and 'nuisance neighbours', and this data suggests that the private rented sector is not currently managing this challenge.
- 5.22 As well as general overcrowding, there are further abuses. Analysis of complaints received in 2011/12 indicates that the Council received at least 55 complaints about garages etc. being used for residential purposes. This may well be an underestimate. In 2012/13 this increased to 139. As more resource is being focussed on this issue, it is clear that the numbers are growing, and that the figures are very conservative estimates for what is commonly known as 'beds-in-sheds'.
- 5.23 'Beds in sheds' is an umbrella term for structures in the back gardens of houses that are rented out even though they are not supposed to be used for living accommodation. Described as "modern-day slums" by campaigners, the term now encompasses a wide range of both structures and living conditions. This has historically not been an issue in Enfield, and more associated with high residential turnover boroughs in East London. The growth in the demand for the private rented sector in the borough suggests that this problem may be manifesting itself in Enfield as well.
- 5.24 Conditions can vary enormously, with many people living in illegal structures that have no electricity, running water or a toilet. It is not only a lack of facilities that is a problem, living in structures that are not supposed to be used as accommodation also poses huge fire risks. London firefighters reported tackling 235 fires over three years in buildings that should not have been occupied but appeared to be, in which there were four deaths and 45 serious injuries.

## **Conclusion**

5.25 This paper has brought together the following pieces of information:

- i) Information on the growth and scale of the PRS in Enfield
- ii) Information on changes to ASB in the borough in recent years
- iii) Information on other externalities which are linked to PRS
- iv) Statistical analysis of the relationship between ASB and PRS
- v) Geographic analysis of the distribution of the relationship across the borough
- vi) Increases in issues such as housing enforcement and overcrowding.

5.26 It is this collection of information, and not any single data set, which suggests that there is a significant and persistent problem of anti-social behaviour that is linked to the growing private rented sector in Enfield.