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## Selective Licensing Backed by MP to Tackle Troubled Rental Areas

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Calls for tighter regulation of rogue landlords in East Cleveland are growing, as concerns mount over crime and antisocial behaviour linked to certain rental properties.

Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland MP Luke Myer is pushing for the introduction of selective licensing across the area, arguing it would hold landlords accountable and help restore order to struggling communities.

Selective licensing, which already operates in parts of Middlesbrough and Stockton, requires landlords to register their properties, meet basic housing standards, and take

greater responsibility for tenant conduct. The move is intended to crack down on the small number of property owners accused of overlooking disruptive tenants.

Brotton councillor Barry Hunt has been vocal in his criticism of landlords failing to act against problem renters. “It’s just a certain few that are causing the bother, and we are getting a bit fed up. If a landlord has someone in a property that is continually abusing the situation, they should be held responsible; they are getting the money every week,” he said.

Speaking in Parliament, Mr Myer echoed the sentiment, stating that “irresponsible landlords” are “dumping dodgy tenants” into vulnerable villages. He believes the selective licensing scheme would be a necessary tool to reassert community standards and improve the quality of life for law-abiding residents.

## Divided Opinions

However, not everyone is convinced. Letting agent Alistair Oswin, based in Guisborough, argues that the real issue lies not in a lack of regulation, but poor enforcement. “Housing associations must also be held accountable. From my perspective, selective licensing is a cash cow for local authorities. It drives landlords out of the sector, reduces supply, and pushes up rents,” he said.

The proposal has triggered debate among residents and property owners alike. Many feel that the scheme unfairly penalises responsible landlords while failing to address the root causes of neighbourhood decline. Critics claim that licensing is simply a revenue-generating measure for councils, with limited evidence of its effectiveness in improving local areas.

“Something has to be done with these landlords, they buy a house for about £5000 in terrible conditions and get as many people as they can to live in it for maximum rent. They then get their money back in about 6 months,” one local said. “It’s absolutely shocking, most of these dodgy landlords are in London, and our councillors are doing absolutely nothing about it.”

Another resident asked, “How many of these landlords are from the South and just rely on letting agents to be their only contact with their tenants? There are good and bad letting agencies; some do only what is required to ensure their fee.”

Redcar and Cleveland Council's cabinet member for neighbourhoods, Councillor Adam Brook, acknowledged community concerns and confirmed that the local authority is reviewing the need for selective licensing. "Anti-social behaviour and crime in our neighbourhoods are completely unacceptable. I've met with local councillors, ASB officers, police, and our MP to discuss action," he said, urging residents to continue reporting problems.

A council spokesperson added that no decision has been made yet. "We are currently assessing the data and encouraging residents to report issues to us. If the data tells us that selective licensing is necessary, we will consider it," she said.

Despite strong views on both sides, the future of selective licensing in East Cleveland remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that both community leaders and residents are demanding greater accountability and meaningful solutions to long-standing issues affecting their neighbourhoods.