

Queensgate Zone 1

Introduction

Queensgate ward as a whole has the fourth highest level of private renting in the borough.

The average house price in Queensgate for 2022/2023 was £63,860.

The new designation of Queensgate came into force on the 27th April 2025.

On the 6th August, the Selective Licensing Team conducted the 1st physical external audit of the Queensgate designation to gather visual data on the back streets and yards in the area and do external audits of all rented properties.

Purpose of the audit

The purpose of the external audits was to collect visual data including :-

- State of the back streets (fly tipping etc).
- State of the back yards of rented properties (correct waste disposal bins, cleanliness, and secure gates and walls)
- Visible defects/ external house defects on rented properties
- Internal inspection where there was evidence of disrepair, dissatisfaction or a check of smoke/carbon monoxide alarms were evident.
- Occupancy checks on vacant or non-licenced rented properties were identified from council tax records.
- Desktop checks were also made of Gas Safety Records, Electrical Installation Condition Reports and Energy Performance Rating of the licenced properties.

Target Area



Zone 1 streets included Cobden Street, Ribblesdale Street, Bar Street, 3-45 Cleaver Street, 2-46 Cleaver Street, Bromsgrove Road, Shackleton Street, Heath Street and Pheasantford Street.

Ribblesdale Street and Bar Street are long streets running off Briercliffe Road and have easy access to the local shops and to the town centre. These streets are a popular area for renting.

There are a total of **280** properties in this zone, **133** of which are rented and classed as 'Part 3' properties for licensing purposes.

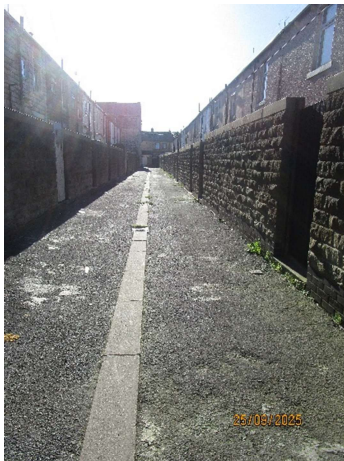
Back Streets

There was a large amount of fly tipping consisting of sofas, mattresses and fridge/freezers. This was specifically around Bar Street and Ribblesdale Street.

10 reports of fly tipping were made to the Councils Street scene department which was cleared in the following few days.



Taken at the time of the audit



Taken at the post audit

Back yards

On audit day, 7 dirty back yards were found with black bags and household waste being stored. On return to the office I contacted the owners of the properties advising that the yards need to be cleared and that Street Scene could offer a yard clearance and would be able to offer to quote for the removal of the rubbish. I also sent emails to Street Scene. On the follow up visit only 1 of these properties still had a dirty back yard.

I will continue to monitor the area and work along with Street scene to tackle this issue through educating residents and making sure strict sanctions are issued where possible.

Disrepairs

On the day of the audit the team externally inspected properties using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which is a tool that the Local Authority uses to identify and detect potential risks and hazards to health and safety from deficiencies of the property.

The audit identified **61 of the Part 3 properties had some sort of disrepair**. A lot of these properties had multiple disrepairs such as slipped roof tiles and vegetation in gutters. Although we found a lot of the properties required new yard gates and painting to the front and rear elevations. The properties with more serious disrepairs were prioritised for inspection.

Following the initial audit day, relevant owners and landlords were contacted via email, clearly listing any issues whilst also advising them of the follow up audit and a deadline to complete the repairs.

On the follow up audit **25 of the properties identified still had disrepairs**. An action plan will be completed to ensure compliance.



Front elevation requiring repainting



**Front elevation on follow up
audit**



Rear elevation on audit day



**Rear Elevation on follow up
audit**

Following the initial audit, 8 properties were raised for inspection, these were referred to the Housing Standards team to carry out an internal inspection using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

On audit day, 2 Part 3 properties had Home Improvement Agency letters posted. We cannot enforce owner occupiers to make improvements to their homes but these letters advised the residents of possible grants available to them for financial assistance that the Council is able to offer to improve standards of housing and quality of life.

Case Study - During the course of the audit, a property within the Queensgate area was identified as being in a state of significant disrepair. Initial observations included :

- A boarded rear window
- No rear yard gate
- Accumulation of household waste including a fridge/freezer
- Broken slates to the roof

Following these concerns, a formal inspection of the property was arranged. The internal inspection revealed several additional issues including :-

- Lack of smoke detection
- No carpets throughout the property
- Inadequate kitchen facilities

An email was sent to the property owner detailing the findings. It was advised that a formal schedule of repairs was to be issued and completed within 28 days.

This work has now been completed satisfactorily, and the Council will continue to monitor the property and further inspections will be carried out on the remaining properties within the portfolio.



Rear Elevation - Photographs taken on the day of the audit



Rear elevation after work completed

Selective Licensing Applications

Selective Licensing came into force in the Queensgate area on the 27th April 2025. The scheme requires all private landlords operating within the designated area to obtain a licence in order to legally rent out their properties.

Since the scheme came into operation we have received **81 (59%)** licence applications for this zone. All received applications are currently under review and being processed in accordance with the licensing procedures.

Reminder letters will be issued in due course to all non compliant landlords, advising them of their legal obligations under the Selective Licensing scheme and warning of potential enforcement action should they continue to operate without a licence.

Continued failure to apply may result in penalties, including civil penalties or prosecution, as outlined in the Housing Act 2004

Outcome of audit

The implementation of Selective Licensing in Queensgate is progressing steadily. Efforts are now focused on ensuring full compliance through a combination of ongoing application processing, targeted communication, and enforcement where necessary. Working together with the owners, landlords, Police and Street scene there has been a considerable amount of works carried out to the properties and cleaning of back streets which has led to the improvement of the area. The area will continue to be monitored over the coming months by the Landlord Licensing Officer and Street Scene throughout the remainder of the Selective Licensing designation.