**Selective Licensing for Private Rented Properties in areas of the East and West Marsh: Easy read edition**

North East Lincolnshire Council is considering introducing a scheme to parts of the East and West Marsh that would seek to improve the standard of rented housing in those areas.

Selective Licensing means that all private landlords will be required to hold a valid license before renting out a property. Landlords can apply for a license from the Council, and this involved an inspection of their properties to ensure that they meet the required standard.

Landlords that fail to apply and continue to let properties out to tenants could face steep fines.

The parts of East and West Marsh where the Council is considering implementing this scheme are among the most deprived in the UK, and have lots of significant problems. The areas are outlined in a map shown below.

The area also has some of the highest concentrations of private rented accommodation, high levels of anti-social behaviour, poor property conditions, and frequent reports of nuisance noise and fly-tipping.

Evidence also suggests that the housing in these areas are unable to maintain energy efficiency, leading to high levels of fuel poverty.

Selective Licensing would require landlords to ensure that their properties meet acceptable standards and have the proper checks in place before being rented out.

The scheme is also expected to encourage positive working relationships between the Council and private landlords and curb many of the issues at the root of the problems in these areas.

There are alternative options to selective licensing, however they are less favourable because they are not as thorough in curbing many of the issues residents face, affect fewer properties, and unlike selective licensing, are not be self-financing from the beginning.

The proposals will be subject to a consultation which will be open for around 10 weeks. Following this consultation, a decision will be made.

**What is selective licensing?**

Selective Licensing was introduced by the Housing Act 2004. It gives Council’s the power to designate areas for Selective Licensing (subject to certain criteria being met).

The scheme requires all private landlords operating within a selected area to hold a licence and abide by the conditions the Council sets out.

Licence conditions usually cover things like the safety and standards of the property.

The legislation is aimed at encouraging landlords to meet their responsibilities to communities in where they are providing much needed housing.

The legislation provides local authorities with powers to enforce, through the courts if necessary, against those landlords that do not meet those responsibilities in taking appropriate action.

Selective Licensing also gives Council’s extra powers to punish so-called rogue landlords with hefty fines. This can include court orders requiring a rogue landlord to pay the Council rent received, where unlicensed properties are let.

Registered Social Landlords and their properties are exempt from selective licensing. There are other types of properties and landlords that are exempt, and these are covered in more depth below.

A scheme can address irresponsible tenants as well as landlords, by sharing poor tenant behaviour in a regulated manner where tenants have been proven to cause ASB from moving between properties.

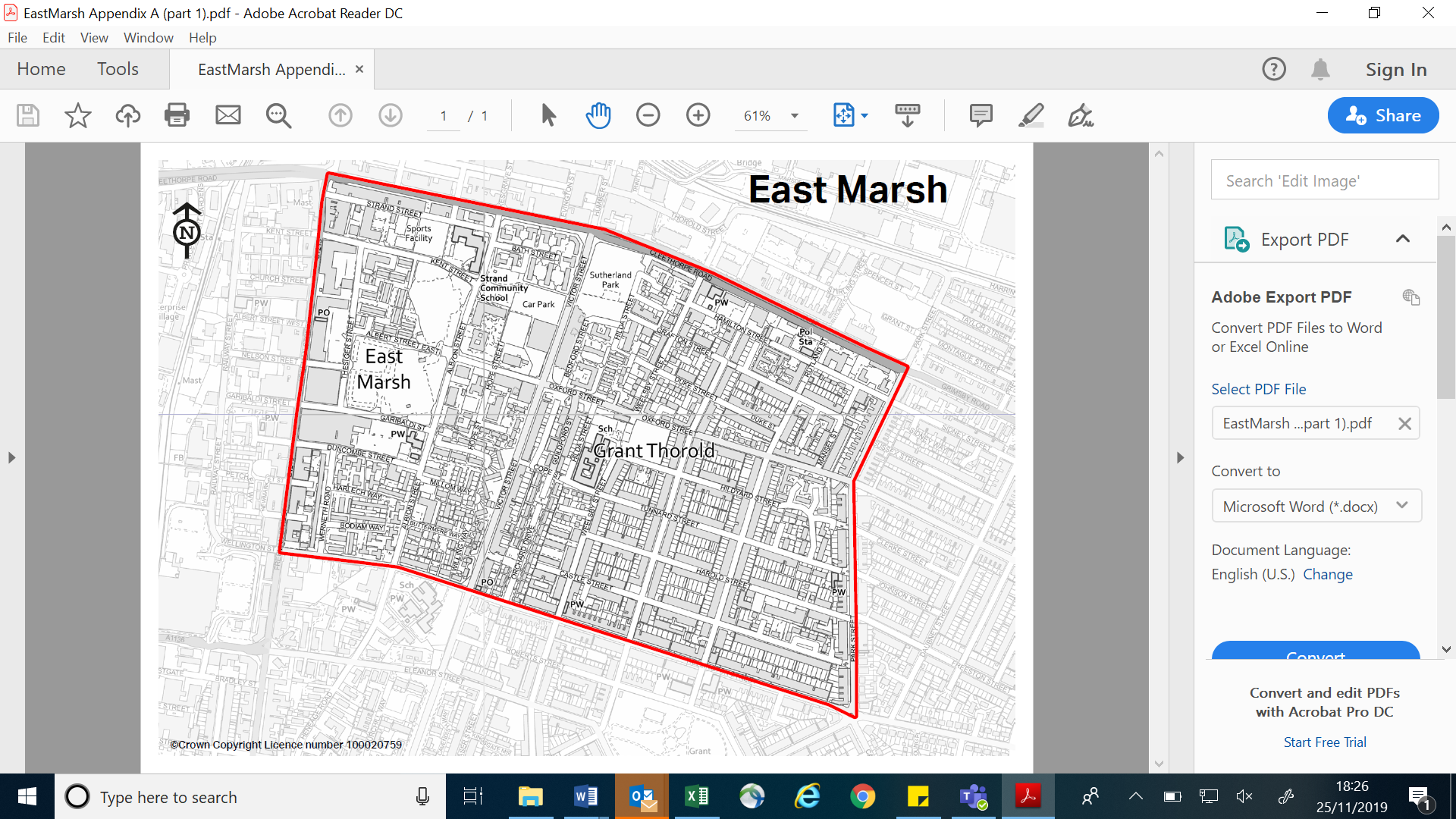
Once a Selective Licensing designation has been made, any private landlord wishing to rent out properties within the designated area must apply for a licence.

A separate licence must be obtained for every tenanted house within the designated area.

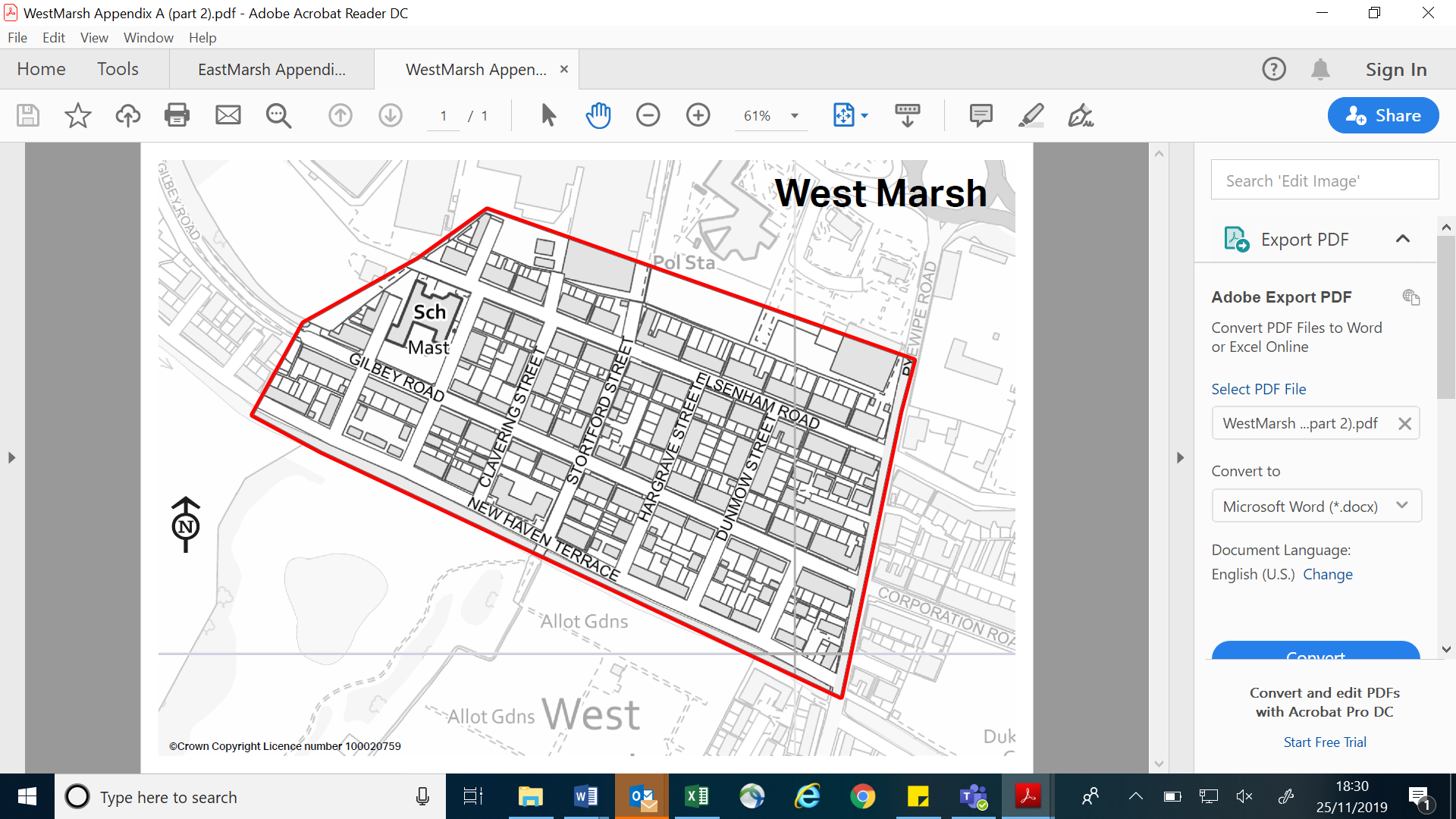
In the context of this proposal, house is defined as a building or part of a building consisting of one or more dwellings.

This is the only option available to the local authority that compels landlords to review how they manage their rented properties and if required, make improvements to management practices

A landlord’s failure to apply for a licence to rent a property in a designated selective licencing area could result in prosecution with the potential of a fine of up to £20,000 as it is a criminal offence to do so.



**Map 1 – East Marsh – Identified area for Selective Licensing**



**Map 2 – West Marsh – Identified area for Selective Licensing**