

**MINUTES OF LANDLORDS FORUM MEETING**

**HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> January 2010 (Lister room) 2pm – 4pm**

Present: Lisa Duxbury, Ben Uihendu, Adrian Howe, Ahmed Choudhury, Lisa Lindo, Haroon Siddiq, Russell Hawkes, James Bolt, Amraaj Sanhu, Abdul Khalik, David Brener, Jacob Endzweig, Gregory Phillip, M Ali, Khalid Chowdry, Mr&Mrs Hanson, Maria Barnes, Nihat-Hussein, Ahmet-Husseyin, Adnan-Ghauri, Saadia-Mahmood, M-Ashraf-Din, Amit-Sangar, Alfred,Shailesh Patel, Amarjit Chaggar, Charanjit Singh, F Adeniyi, Imran, Sara Watson, Lionel Vonde, Rose Giwa, Mrs Chawdhry, Mukith Uddin, R Turner, P Brown, H Khan, Yunus Patel, Felix Okene, Sumaira Zafar, H S Rai, Kazi Arif, A R Chowdhury, K S Gill, Hasan Turker, Justine Wharton, S Shah, Paul Chrisostomou, Anthony Olakanpo, A Warind, L Mann, S Master, Mahendra Singh, Nikki Girboan, Polly Nandhry, Karamat Hussein, Sewa Singh, Satdru Kumar, Sadik Shah, Ayyub Patel, Faisal Ahmedabadi, I A Shah, R Giwa, P S Panesar, K Kalabalsingham.

London  
Borough of  
Newham  
(LBN):

Speakers : Ray Page - Principal Delivery Manager Public Health & Drainage, Fred Baxter-Housing Options Manager, Sharon Webb – Initiative Team Manager, David Bingham -Senior Council Tax and Benefits Manager, Ian Dick - Housing Service Standards Strategic Manager, James Dykes, Moses Nyaunu – Prevention & Advice Manager.

Chaired by: Fred Baxter – Housing Options Manager

Minutes by: Wab Chowdhury – Landlord & Initiatives Officer

Apologies: Modesta Anucha – Strategic Housing Needs Manager

Minutes will be posted on the Newham Website

<b><u>Introduction</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
The meeting started at 2.00pm and was chaired by Fred Baxter who introduced himself followed by other officers that were present.	All
<b><u>Matters arising from previous Meetings</u></b>	
None	

**Ray Page -Principal Delivery Manager Public Health & Drainage**

**Ray Page reported on the subject of Pest Control**

Why Landlords should control pests:

- 1) Complying with the law: -  
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949  
Public Health Act 1936
- 2) Insurance – pest damage may not be covered
- 3) Health & Safety – fires have been caused by rodents chewing through wires
- 4) Loss of income: -  
Infested properties more difficult to let  
Cost of repairs (e.g., electrical wiring)

Ray Page informed Landlords that his team can provide an in-house service for: -

- 1) Private domestic properties - owners, tenants and landlords
- 2) Service Level Agreements for Newham Homes & Swan Housing Association
- 3) Schools and other public buildings
- 4) Religious buildings and charities

But that they don't provide a service for commercial properties, i.e., they can't treat shops or factories. However, his team can treat the flats above such premises.

The pests that his team does provide treatment for are:

- Rats
- Mice
- Cockroaches
- Bed bugs
- Fleas
- Wasps

They will also treat other insect pests, e.g., Pharaoh ants. For pigeon control the team would offer a survey and quotation for the remedial work required.

There are 12 Pest Control Officers who carry out work around the borough. All are qualified and experienced.

In total, the service makes 35-40,000 calls per annum.  
In 2009, 4172 initial visits were made: -

Rats	784
Mice	1538
Cockroaches	893
Bed Bugs	662
Wasps	219
Others	76

Ray was asked "Are there any charges?" For rats, no. The service is free for all domestic properties in the borough. For all other pests, yes. We have a scale of charges for the pests we treat.

**Landlord Charges are as follows:**

Pest	Charge (Incl. VAT)	No. Visits
Mice	£105	4
Cockroaches	£105	4
Pharaoh Ants	£135	4
Bed Bugs	£120*	1
Fleas	£85	1
Wasps & Bees	£75	1
Dermestes Beetles	£65	1
Garden Ants	£65	1

\* Cost for up to 3 bedrooms and 3 beds. Each additional room or bed, charged at £30

With respect to Houses In Multiple Occupation, the team can provide an individual quotation on request, since the layout of these properties can differ widely.

**Housing Benefits Updates by David Bingham – Senior Council Tax and Benefits Manager**

**David provided the landlords with an update on the Housing Benefit Reform Consultation.**

Key points being:

1) Supporting People into work: the next stage of Housing Benefit reform

- Consultation paper published December 2009
- Closing date for comments 22.02.10
- Public Consultation open to anyone
- Consultation document can be found at:
- <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2009/supportingpeopleintowork.shtml>

David Bingham reported on comments made by the government i.e.

- Customers now have a right to expect support from a modern welfare system but they also have responsibilities. We believe that most people of working age should be in work or preparing to move into work in return for the help that the benefit system provides.
- Our principal objective for a reformed Housing Benefit system is that it should complement our wider welfare programme by supporting people to move into work. But it should also support their aspirations for a decent home in a mixed community, and it should be affordable and represent value for money.
- the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance has also been accompanied by a greater increase in Housing Benefit expenditure than we had expected originally.

**The main features of Consultation 1**

- **Transition into work payment** - this is similar to the current extended payment scheme - for the first 3 months in work, HB would continue to be paid at the out-of-work rate.
- **Fixed period awards** - It's proposed to: fix awards for 6 months, apart from reporting major changes; fix only the earnings element; or ignore changes falling within a certain band.
- **High LHA rates** - The Government's determined to reform the LHA to stop the most expensive properties distorting the system. Options include: excluding the most expensive properties either locally or nationally; using smaller LHA areas; using rents paid locally by working households; changing the LHA calculation; group together areas with similar benefit rates; use different indicators - like distance travelled to work by low-income employees.

### The main features of Consultation 2

- **Fairer size criteria** - The Government wants to know about changes that would meet needs more appropriately without increasing overall costs including only allowing one bedroom per child from the age of 18.
- **Using HB to enforce property standards** - The Government is considering linking HB entitlement to property standards and allowing people to choose to have HB paid to their landlord in return for improvements in the quality and energy efficiency of a property.
- **Local lettings agencies** - The Government is recommending that local authorities set up local lettings agencies and they want to see whether HB could have role in their operation.

### The main features of Consultation 3

- **Long term considerations**
- Merge Housing Benefit with other income-related benefits?
- Create a form of housing tax credit?
- Maintain a reformed Housing Benefit as a separate extra-costs benefit?
- **London issues** – “We do not want the circumstances that exist in London to dictate Housing Benefit rules nationally but we cannot allow the problems in London to go unaddressed. We want your views on how we can address the issue of high rents and benefit rates in London through applying the banded approach or capping rates at the level affordable by other working households not eligible for Housing Benefit.”

David also reported on the comments made by Theresa May MP(Conservative Party) in March 2009 i.e.

- All those who are able to work should be in work...we need to re-establish the link between work and welfare. A huge problem with welfare in this country is that it has lead to a culture of benefit dependency. Too many have been left stranded on benefits, with income from the state being the only kind they are ever likely to experience.
- Government doesn't always know best and we must harness the expertise of the private and third sectors in the job of getting people back into work
- The current welfare system is complex and confusing. Benefits feeding off other benefits, people falling through loopholes in the system, or worse still exploiting those loopholes. The reams of paperwork required are often repetitive and deter some of the neediest from claiming the benefits they are entitled to. The problem is that all too often those who deserve help find the system daunting and unworkable and those who understand the system and the loopholes are the less deserving. So our third principle must be to develop a welfare system that is simple so that it is both easier for users to understand and easier for the government to identify fraud.

**Steve Moore (Divisional Director of Cleansing Waste & Recycling)**

**Steve Moore updated Landlords on services offered by teams in his directorate.**

**Special Collection Service**

The Cleansing Team will:

- collect up to 6 household items **free of charge**. This includes bagged household and garden waste.
- collect usually within 48hrs days of the request **or for households without storage facility** by dated appointment. **(items should only be put out on agreed day of collection)**
- collect bagged garden waste free of charge under the special collection scheme **(but not soil or rubble)**.

They will provide free estimates for items not covered within the free collection service. **Tel:- 020 8430 2000**

What can Landlords/Tenants do to help?

- They must keep the item(s) for collection within the boundary of your property while you wait for them to be collected.
- They should place all items for collection in an accessible and visible place.
- They should be aware that your special collection may be collected by two separate vehicles for recycling purposes, i.e. White goods **Tel:- 020 8430 2000**

**Refuse Collection:**

The Cleansing Team will:

- collect your normal household waste once a week.
- rectify any missed collections within 24 hours of them being reported.
- put your bin back inside the boundary of your property after emptying it.

What can Landlords/Tenants do to help?

They can cut down on the volume of household waste by recycling as much as possible in the orange bags provided.

- They can dispose of your waste carefully and tidily in the receptacle provided.
- They can make sure your waste gets collected on the scheduled day of collection by putting your container in a position where the collectors will see it and is easily accessible with the bin handles facing outwards.
- They should only put household waste in your bin it will not be collected if there is non-household waste stored within the bin. **Tel:- 020 8430 2000**

## Fly tipping

Steve Moore reminded Landlords that is illegal, unsightly and unsafe - and clearing it up costs taxpayer's money. Council officers will investigate all fly tipping and where possible prosecute identified offenders.

In response to reports of fly tipping they:

- Will remove small amounts of fly tipping within 24hrs of it being reported and larger amounts where possible within 48hrs.
- Will remove any that is causing a danger or an obstruction the same day.

What can Landlords/Tenants do to help?

- You can cut down on the amount of waste by recycling it.
- Can dispose of your waste carefully and tidily in the container provided by the council.
- Can use our special collection service to get rid of any large unwanted household items including bagged garden waste that is too heavy for the normal refuse collection.
- Identify fly tipping offenders to the Council

## On Trade Waste - Landlords with other business

All businesses that create waste must have a contract with a registered waste carrier. The Cleansing Team can provide businesses with a regular Trade Waste Collection Service for an agreed fee.

What can Landlords/Tenants do to help?

- Should store any business waste carefully and tidily within your premises so that it is not causing a hazard or health and safety issue.
- Should arrange to have your waste collected regularly by a registered waste carrier.
- Can take business waste to the Reuse and Recycle Centre in **Jenkins Lane, E6**. You will have to pay a fee relating to the amount of waste you are disposing of.

**Tel:- 020 8430 2000**

## James Dykes (Senior Environmental Health Officer.

### Pilot Neighbourhood Improvement Zone)

#### **1. James Dykes updated Landlords on the Boiler scrappage scheme.**

Following on from the announcement in the 2009 Pre-Budget Report, the government has now launched a new boiler scrappage scheme. The scheme will assist up to 125,000 households to install new fuel-efficient heating systems that will enable them to stay warm without wasting energy. The scheme is open to both owner occupiers or private tenants in England who currently have a G-rated boiler in their property. The scheme is being managed by the Energy Saving Trust and households eligible for

assistance will receive a voucher for £400 towards the cost. For full details of the scheme.

Richard Tacagni  
Head of Function (Housing)  
Email: [richard.tacagni@lacors.gov.uk](mailto:richard.tacagni@lacors.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 7665 3880

## **2. James Dykes updated Landlords on the HSE campaign for students in Private Rented Sector (PRS) and warned of Carbon Monoxide (CO) dangers.**

The potential for students in the PRS suffering CO poisoning from unsafe gas appliances is heightened in winter months. The HSE's new campaign reminds of the dangers and includes material for students, parents and landlords. More information is available on our website.

John Marr  
Policy Officer  
Email: [john.marr@lacors.gov.uk](mailto:john.marr@lacors.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 7665 3844

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### Bond Scheme update – Sharon Webb Initiative Team Manager

Sharon Webb updated that all bond scheme properties in the Newham borough will be inspected for property condition quality checks and planning permission checks.

SW updated that Bond Scheme clients do sign the “sharing information with your landlord” section on the Housing Benefit Form.

### Moses Nyaunu – Prevention & Advice Manager

#### Tenancy Sustainment Update

Moses Nyaunu reported that Supporting People provided initially the funding for Sustainment Officers but as now the funding has been withdrawn this recruitment has been halted. Moses apologised to Landlords for poor performance in this area

Fred Baxter interjected that we will continue with Tenancy Sustainment.

Moses Nyaunu said he would provide statistics in the next Landlords Forum with respect to how many Bond Scheme tenancies have been sustained and response times. Moses assured Landlords that referrals are not being ignored.

Sharon Webb reiterated that Landlords should still inform the Initiatives team after 4 weeks of rent arrears and not wait for the 8 week rule to take effect. And her team would then investigate the arrears and in some cases HB

<p>payments could be made direct to the Landlord.</p> <p>The referral process is to be accessed via the Prevention Advice Team, Landlords, Internal departments where individuals are residing in the Bond Scheme or Temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Moses reported that the Prevention Advice Team's aim is to continue good working relationships with the landlord and educate and empower clients to live independently to maintain their tenancy and to go on to live without support. Moses will endeavour to update landlord at all times and provide an accessible service to client and landlord with a view to reduce the reoccurrence of homelessness.</p> <p>Contact Details: <b>Moses Nyaunu 0208 430-2000 Ext 31457 / email <a href="mailto:moses.nyaunu@newham.gov.uk">moses.nyaunu@newham.gov.uk</a></b></p> <p><b>Fred Baxter thanked forum guest/speakers &amp; members for attending</b> and reminded landlords that the next forum meeting will take place around January 2010, 2-4pm Lister Room East Ham and the agenda will be sent nearer to the time. Meeting closed at 16.00</p>	
<p><u>Any other Items for discussion at the next forum</u></p> <p><u>None</u></p> <p><b><u>Futher information</u></b></p> <p>In response to the Olympic &amp; regeneration activity in the borough we are doing a survey in 2009 of all hotels, hostels and B &amp; B accommodation with the fire brigade and other agencies to ensure safety and standards are being maintained.</p> <p>Further information from Neil Coles - HMO Team Manager 0208 4303798.</p> <p>Know an empty property, land or building please ring our Empty Property Hot Line on 0208 4304436 and let us have details.</p>	