

**MINUTES OF LANDLORDS FORUM MEETING**

**HELD ON 27th March 2007 (Lister room)**

Present: Muhammed Ali, Andy Christoulou, Laura Mann, Warren Arden, Michael Olubodun, Dean Andreou, Danielle Cutts, Kris Sedgwick, Iftkhar, Waqus, Tina Mudhar, Dee Gahir, Amit Sanger, Sau Adjei, Anthony Ranjit, Amin Warind, Qr Mahmood, Fawad Qayyom, Fawad Qayyom, Damiya Umbetora, Kim Brockhouse, Mustaque Ahmed, Atiq Haque, Tony Norman, Aibi Erediauwa, Yasmin Papaloizou, Raj Singh, Henry Acheampong, S.N Ahmed, M Sabir, Masood Ahmed, Naseem Ahmed, Joanne Odwyer, M Hussain, Asif Yasin, Mouktar Mohammed, Ameen Choudhary, Keu Rakhara, Harvey Juttla, Swati Chhatralia, Masuma Chaudhary.

London  
Borough of  
Newham

(LBN): Surrinder Johal, Sharon Webb, Scott Sangha, Arlene Cowan, Tony Fernandes, Tony Jemmott

Apologies: Modesta Anucha (LBN), David Bingham (LBN)

Chaired by: Surrinder Johal

Minutes by: Sharon Webb

Posted on the Newham Website

<b><u>Matters arising from previous Meetings</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
<p><u>Private Sector Leasing (PSL)</u> No properties being accepted at present. New tendering process is going ahead. For more information contact Mr Frank MacCool (Scrutiny and special project Manager)</p>	

**Tenancy Deposit Protection Mr Phil Alker. (Head of Tenancy Deposit Team-Department for Communities & Local Government)**

Introduced the new Legislation that comes into effect on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

Key Messages

- Inclusion of Tenancy Deposit protection in Housing Bill commanded wide cross-party support.
- Provisions only apply to deposits in relation to assured shorthold tenancies (AST), most common form of new tenancy.
- Schemes will have two main aims:
- Safeguard Tenancy deposits; and facilitate the resolution of disputes arising in connection with such deposits.
- There will be two sorts of scheme: a single custodial scheme; and one or more insurance-based schemes.

**A copy of the presentation can be found on the internet**

<http://www.newham.gov.uk/Services/LandlordServices/details.htm>

**Decent Homes and the Private Sector- Mr Tony Jemmott (Health and Housing Team Manager)**

A key aspect of the Government's Decent Homes Standard is the reduction of vulnerable households living in non-decent homes in the private sector by 70% by 2010. The Government has also restated the duty local authorities have for the placement of vulnerable families in decent homes.

The Decency Standard is the only comprehensive benchmark of quality and safety for housing accommodation across all tenures and is a measure of the Council's progress towards the overall target. The 2003 Newham Private Sector stock condition survey found that some 37% of private sector dwelling failed the decency standard (approx. 24,000) with the greatest failure being predictably in the private rented sector.

Within the Housing Needs Service the procurement processes should include as a minimum, proper systems and procedures. It follows that properties procured for use by homeless households should be inspected and approved to meet the minimum standard for "Decent Homes". (Kelly Report 2006)

The Decent Home standard comprises of 4 criteria;

- a dwelling should have no "category 1" hazards as determined by the Housing Act 2004);
- be in a reasonable state of repair;
- have reasonably modern facilities, and finally;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.</li> </ul> <p>In Newham major contributors to achieving the DH targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newham Homes</li> <li>• RSLs</li> <li>• PSL properties</li> <li>• Owner-occupied sector</li> </ul> <p>What is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust inspection regime of properties in the private rented sector against the Decent Homes Standard.</li> <li>• All landlords should be required to meet this standard in the course of their business.</li> <li>• Procurement procedures use as a tool to drive up standards</li> <li>• Landlord accreditation, education and training</li> <li>• Robust HMO inspection and licensing regime.</li> <li>• All existing PSL properties should be inspected and verified, as decent.</li> <li>• Effective response to complaints by Housing officers and robust action by EHOs/housing enforcement staff where necessary.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Express Inventories – Lisa Williams (Inventory Clerk)</u></b></p> <p>Guest Speaker Lisa Williams talked about the importance of carrying out an inventory to get an accurate description of the property condition before letting. Talked through the process of check-ins and check out reports. Also highlighted the expected life of fixings, furniture and decorations in rented properties.</p> <p>With the introduction of Tenancy Deposit Protection, any claims will need to be supported by written evidence so ensuring an inventory has been done is a must in case of any disputes.</p> <p>A sample inventory was given to all attendees.</p>	<p><b><u>ACTION</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Housing Benefit Update-Arlene Cowan, Senior Benefits Manager</u></b></p> <p>Informed Landlords the new IT system Pericles will take over the old system HBIS from the end of June 07.</p> <p>Over 12,000 cases will be manually inputted and HB confident this will be achieved by the end of June 07.</p> <p>Arlene explained there will be teething problems at the beginning which will be sorted out in due course.</p> <p>If you having problems please contact the Landlords Helpline or email service. 0208 430 200 ext 84439 email: <a href="mailto:Benefits.Stakeholders@newham.gov.uk">Benefits.Stakeholders@newham.gov.uk</a></p>	

<p>A member of the Housing benefit team will be based at each Local service centre to assist clients.</p> <p>Landlords are worried the schedules did not show which clients the overpayments were made to. Arlene will discuss this with Mr Connor Loughran.</p>	<p>AC</p>
<p><b><u>Bond Scheme UPDATE Sharon Webb (Initiative Team Leader)</u></b></p> <p>Sharon reminded Landlords that all properties must have a valid,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas Safety Certificate</li> <li>• Electrical Inspection report</li> </ul> <p>This must be provided when client signs up the Tenancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To Ensure any converted flats have planning permission</li> <li>• All Rubbish cleared/In and out of property</li> <li>• Smoke alarms provided</li> <li>• All free fro Category 1 Hazards-No damp or Mould.</li> </ul> <p>A property Standard checklist will be issued to all Agents next Forum.</p> <p>All of the above will save time and money to Landlords who want their properties let as quickly as possible.</p> <p><b><u>Bond Scheme UPDATE Scott Sangha (Landlord officer)</u></b></p> <p>Scott provided statistics on how the Bond Scheme is performing since its launch in January 2007.</p> <p>Re-iterated that agents must not request fees, deposit or rent in advance from the tenants under the bond scheme. Highlighted how Newham assists clients under the bond scheme and presented a copy of the bond scheme client agreement.</p> <p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>Training for Landlords on Decent Home standards -Dates update at next Forum</p>	<p>SS</p>
<p>Training for Landlords on Decent Home standards -Dates update at next Forum</p>	<p>Ian Dick</p>