

**MINUTES OF LANDLORDS FORUM MEETING**

**HELD ON 2nd October 2007 (Lister room) 2pm – 4pm**

Present: Pat Dunphey, M Choudhary, Suman Mohan, Millie Mohan, A Duah, A Turker, L Mann, W Arden, E Okyere, M Gard, H Pitt, I Gurleon, T Papaloiron, D Cults, A Silvair, H Antoniou, D Antoniou, M Kramer, A Razzaq, S Jamal, K Bansal, Farruck, Waqgs, S Shah, A Sangar, G Singh, T Scrutton, B Joseph, Naveed, H Juttla, R Sheppard, N Akhtar, J Bovcher, S Ahmed, M uddin, R Arora, T Mudhar, D Badar.

London  
Borough of  
Newham

(LBN): Modester Anucha, Sharon Webb, Scott Sangha, David Bingham, Shannon Forte, Sue Walker, Lorraine Linnane, Lorraine Hancock, Tony Jemmott, Helga Cumberbatch

Apologies: Tom Moore

Chaired by: Modester Anucha

Minutes by: Scott Sangha

Posted on the Newham Website

<b><u>Matters arising from previous Meetings</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
None	

<p><u>Working with landlords to improve energy efficiency in properties, Assistance available for you and your tenants</u> <u>Sue Walker - Energy Efficiency – Project Manager</u></p> <p>Sue carried out a presentation on what their department does. Explained they cover all tenure sectors in the borough i.e. Council stock, Registered Social Landlords, owner occupied and private rented. They are responsible for</p>	
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developing and implementing the Council's Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategies and monitoring all Domestic Energy Efficiency activity .

Their work in the private sector involves Work on Fuel Poverty, Promote renewables, Low Carbon Building Programme, GLA Green Concierge Scheme (Green homes), Energy Savings Trust.

Sue talked about fuel poverty – is when people are forced to spend more than 10% of income on keeping warm.

Newham has the highest percentage of people living in fuel poverty in London (7.4%)

Tenants on qualifying benefits of accredited landlords can get help with cavity wall and loft insulation and heating repair or installation.

**Tenants should contact Warm Zone free on: 0800 389 7286**

As part of the presentation Sue illustrated the main energy losses from a home and showed a table of the typical prices of insulation.

Where to look for Additional Information:

- The Energy Saving Trust <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>
- <http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/home/>
- DIY Planet Repairs <http://www.london.gov.uk/diy/>
- London Greenhomes <http://www.greenhomeslondon.co.uk/faq.aspx>
- Centre for Sustainable Energy <http://www.cse.org.uk/>
- The Carbon Trust <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/default.ct>
- EDF Green Lanes <http://www.joingreenlane.com/>
- British Gas <http://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy-efficiency.html>

[Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour \(ASB\)- Your questions answered - Lorraine Linnane - Crime and Anti Social Behaviour Service](#)

Explained how the Enforcement and Investigation team investigates anti-social behaviour and associated crime that impacts on Newham's residents.

They deal primarily with 'people' issues and behaviour that alarms, harasses or distresses other people.

They focus on investigating the anti-social behaviour in question and the underlying causes and seeking solutions to stop it.

This can include ensuring support is provided to vulnerable residents as well as helping perpetrators to prevent their behaviour becoming a problem for other people.

Most of the work undertaken by the team requires them to work closely with other agencies and council services such as the Metropolitan Police, Social Landlords and Environmental Health Officers.

Lorraine highlighted the difficulty in getting in touch with private sector landlords and stated that if landlords do have ASB problems with their tenants they can contact the team on **0800 731 3300**.

Stated the ASB team would like to work with landlords and happy to assist them. Suggested that landlords should consider putting a clause in their Tenancy agreement regarding ASB.

If landlords need assistance and are planning to seek possession of the property due to ASB, landlords can log complaints using the free phone number and the team can help by logging these complaints which can be used as evidence in Court along with officers statements. There is no charge to landlords. All part of the service and reminded landlords of their responsibility towards their tenants.

A leaflet was made available to take away:

Anti-social behaviour- Summary of landlord policies and procedures for tackling ASB.

Decent Homes Training for Agents

ACTION

- Tony Jemmott- Health and Housing Manager

Tony talked about the service requests that were made from private rented sector tenants- since 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 07 to July 07 457 requests were made from tenants including disrepair, illegal eviction and harassment.

Reminded the landlords of the presentation by Russell Moffat at the last forum, how he went through the key elements of disrepair in private rented sector properties.

A presentation showing pictures of various properties with defects was shown. The landlords were asked to point out what disrepair could be seen and the associated hazard.

Local housing Allowance (LHA)- How it may affect you?

- Shannon Forte - Benefits Liaison Officer

Shannon talked about what Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is and highlighted that it will be introduced in April 2008 and gave details of the Local Authorities who have already been piloting the LHA.

Explained the background of Housing Benefits and stated that the reason for the introduction of LHA is because the Government felt changes in HB was required and that claimants need to take responsibility for their own affairs including financial arrangements. It does not replace HB scheme.

Shanon went through tenancies which are not affected by the Local Housing Allowance, how the size criteria is worked out and the different category levels. LHA will be introduced on 7 April 2008, For new claims and change of address Existing claims will continue under the old rules until break in claim or move.

Talked about the safeguards in place for landlords and the LHA dummy rates published in October 07.

Sandra Williams from the Rent service to be invited at the next forum in Jan 08 to talk about the BRM.

15.55 On-line Council Tax -Moving In/Out - form for landlords and managing agents

- Helga Cumberbatch – Team Manager- Newham Council Tax

Helga talked about the introduction of a new on line form for registering tenants, in order to help reduce paper flow for back room office staff.

Benefits

- Paper forms become digital for online completion
- Become more efficient when registering Tenants
- Prompt billing to reduce council tax arrears for your tenants

Helga stated some facts about Newham. It has a high transient population and one third of our residence is in receipt of Council Tax Benefit. The current annual account turnover of the whole database is 40%.

- Newham has a high volume of short term tenancies
- A vast amount of time is spent tracing council tax absconders rather than providing advice and assistance to our residents
- The problem is becoming such an issue that pressure is being put on the Government to make Landlords liable for the council tax irrespective of whether a tenant is in the property or not.
- New initiatives are being worked on to help us to bill promptly to collect council tax.
- One of these is introducing an online registration form for Landlords & Managing Agents

Helga went through details that they would like from landlords:

- Inform us within 21 days of any change in circumstances

“This Is Legislative”

Where possible would like you to provide “If Known” when requested information e.g.

Tenants

- Contact details
- Employment details
- Forwarding address of previous tenant

Scott Sangha  
to send out  
invite

<p><u>Housing Benefit Update</u></p> <p>- <u>HB Manager</u></p> <p>David Bingham reminded landlords that the housing benefit will only be paid from the date the tenant actually moved in, not necessarily from the start date of the tenancy. So it is landlords responsibility to ensure the tenants move in on the start date of the tenancy to prevent any arrears.</p> <p><u>Update on the Bond Scheme</u></p> <p><u>-Scott Sangha –Landlord Officer / Modester Anucha</u></p> <p>Scott presented latest figures on the number of families housed under the Bond Scheme.</p> <p>Modester Anucha announced the new incentive payments that will be offered to landlords as of 1st October 2007, when tenants move into properties under the Bond Scheme. The incentive payment (one –off non refundable fee) for 2 bed properties in or out of the borough will be £1000 and for other bed sizes will be £500. She reminded landlords in return they are not to charge tenants under the Bond Scheme any fees.</p>	<p>ACTION</p>
<p><u>Any other Items for discussion at the next forum</u></p> <p>More information on LHA and why the Rents set by the Rent Service are so low.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>Shanon Forte and The Rent Service to be invited at the next forum in Jan 08</p>