

MINUTES OF LANDLORDS FORUM MEETING

HELD ON 16th September 2008 (Lister room) 2pm – 4pm

Present: Mr Chahal, Mr Kunabalasingham, K Chowdry, J Olasupo, M Linzalone, R Turner, T Scrutton, L Osunyemi, S Shah, N Khan, G Nagalingam, M Collins, Mr Baig, A Ranjit, L Mann, W Arden, E Okyere, D Andreou, M Choudhary, Mr Saleh, Dig Property, S Kaur, Jack, A Sangar, T Mudhar, G Gahir, A Karim, M Ahmed, A Sadiq.

London
Borough of
Newham

(LBN): Sharon Webb, Neil Coles, David Bingham, Philip Rugman,
Modester Anucha

Chaired by : Alex Rocke

Minutes by: Scott Sangha

Posted on the Newham Website

<u>Introduction</u> The meeting started at 2.00pm and was chaired by Alex Rocke who introduced himself followed by other officers that were present.	<u>ACTION</u>
<u>Matters arising from previous Meetings</u> None	
<u>Private Rented Sector Issues, Neil Coles, HMO Team Manager.</u> Three main topics were covered by Neil:	

- Reminder and tips on gas Safety in rented accommodation.
- Charging landlords for enforcement action.
- Neighbourhood improvement zone plan.

Neil reminded landlords of their duty to ensure there is a valid gas safety certificate for their properties and that if there is gas cooker present that would also need to be tested. He advised landlords to be sure they are getting the certificates from a Corgi engineer as there has been cases where fake gas safety certificates were being issued by people claiming to be Corgi certified engineers.

Neil showed the landlords a carbon monoxide detector and went through the features and advantages of fitting these devices in rooms which contain gas burning appliances such as near gas boilers.

Fitting these carbon monoxide detectors may also give your tenants reassurance that their landlord is responsible – a good selling point for potential tenants.

The council is looking at charging landlords where they need to take enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004. His question was Should the Council charge landlords when serving Notice? Neil requested feedback from landlords regarding this proposal.

Tower Hamlets Council is currently doing this and they claim it is acting as a good deterrent.

Newham is planning to set up a Neighbourhood Improvement Zone. It will concentrate on areas with crime and anti-social behaviour. Areas where there are illegally converted flats and sheds in back gardens which are being rented out as living accommodation. The plan is to licence all rented properties within that area, in order to promote responsible letting and catch up with rogue landlords.

The plan is to offer a range of incentives for this scheme and Neil requested feedback from landlords on incentives they would consider.

All

<p>Housing Benefits Updates by David Bingham – Senior Council Tax and Benefits Manager</p> <p>David provided the landlords with an update on some changes that were coming to effect from October 2008.</p> <p>Changes to Incapacity Benefit – long term off work New benefit being introduced on 27th Oct 2008. Different emphasis - old claims looks at what the claimant can't do and the new one looks at what the claimant can do. Only effects new claims made after 27th Oct 2008. Claimant will need to take a work capability test and attend a work focused interview to get benefit and the aim will be to get them back to work.</p> <p>No major impact on council tax or housing benefit at present, unless the claim is stopped.</p> <p>Backdating- From 6th October 2008 the period of backdating will be reduced from 52 weeks to 3 months. Therefore maximum backdating will be limited to 13 weeks and under no circumstances will the claim be allowed to be backdated for more than 13 weeks.</p> <p>David reminded landlords of the LHA rates which are being used to determine rent levels.</p> <p>Rent payment schedules are not sent out to tenants at present and there are no plans to give rent schedules to landlords for clients claiming LHA. Tenants are paid every two weeks.</p>	
<p>Energy Performance Certificates – New Legislation coming into effect from 1st October 2008, Chris Grant – EPC Choice</p> <p>Chris Grant introduced himself.</p> <p>He talked about what an Energy Performance Certificate is and showed a sample of one in his presentation.</p>	

<p>He went through the requirement for Energy Performance Certificates and the reason why it was being introduced.</p> <p>He talked through in detail what the survey involves and when the EPC will be required and the likely costs of the EPC.</p> <p>Chris talked about the implications of Non Compliance.</p> <p>Phil Rugman – Newham Trading Standards Officer highlighted the penalties for non compliance and said that it would be the Trading Standards department that would be enforcing this.</p> <p>Handouts about EPC’s were made available.</p>	
<p><u>Update on the Landlord Accreditation Scheme</u></p> <p><u>Sharon Webb – Initiatives Team Manager</u></p> <p>Sharon reminded landlords that converted properties must have planning permission and that any properties advertised with Newham under the Bond Scheme must be vacant and ready to let.</p> <p>Reminded landlords of the forthcoming LLAS Training Dates at the Credon Centre.</p> <p>Sharon reminded landlords/agents what they need to provide (Paper work) to avoid delay in receiving their incentive payments also they could lose entitlement for not providing these documents within the 28 days.</p> <p>Ensure EPC is also provided from 1st Oct along with Gas cert and Electrical report.</p> <p>Sharon thanked forum members for attending and reminded landlords that the next meeting will be in December 2008 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>None</p>	