

MINUTES OF BARLO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

TUESDAY 31st MARCH 2009

UCAN Centre, Hatfield Road, Halliwell, Bolton

Members present:	Sandra Harris	Private Landlord
	Philip Ward	Private Landlord
	Harold Lever	Private Landlord
	Jane Caldwell	Private Landlord
	John O'Donnell	Private Landlord
	Stephen Rock	Councillor
Also present:	Julianne Scarlett	Community Housing Services
	Cath Conniffe	Community Housing Services
	Rachel Taylor	Community Housing Services
Circulation:	Margaret Clare	Councillor
	Andy Patel	Private Landlord
	Alan Walsh	Councillor
	Stephen Gallagher	Independent
	Sharon Betton	Bond Board
	Kath Gough	Independent

1. Introductions and Apologies

Welcome to Rachel Taylor, Community Safety and Social Inclusion Officer, Bolton Council delivering a presentation 'Domestic Violence Partnership.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

JS spoken to AB regards update for BARLO as appropriate linked to migrant worker research.

JS produced draft certificates for discussion [agenda item]

Opportunity for BARLO representatives to comment on private rented sector research via JC who has been asked to deliver a presentation on Private Rented Sector to Bolton Community Homes.

3. Domestic Abuse

During the presentation [copy attached] members of the group noted the following comments

- Families affected by domestic abuse may break up and can often end up in the PRS

- We know that this is an issue for PRS and nothing currently in place to discourage this behaviour

- Very difficult for individual private landlords to respond as none / little experience of dealing with sensitive issues
- Need to make private landlords more aware in order to begin to tackle problem
- If a tenancy clause in TA we can support landlords / victims
- Need to be absolutely clear about roles and responsibilities so landlords not left to respond without support
- Casework would be undertaken by officers landlords would only be expected to use TA clause appropriately and lock changes
- Landlords may not know about incidents until notified by an officer / Police

Group agreed with JO and JC that after a period of awareness raising among BARLO members, to add into the BARLO model tenancy agreement references to Domestic Abuse.

SG requested that this presentation be delivered to all elected members, CC confirmed that an elected member session at Lewis House was already proposed.

RT advised that free training sessions raising awareness of Domestic Abuse and support available were open to interested private landlords

Action: JS to arrange for RT to deliver presentation at future BARLO Landlord Forum and BARLO tenancy agreement to be amended in due course.

4. Bolton Community Homes

JC reported on points of interest from Bolton Community Homes Board Meeting held on 20.03.09 [see attached] including the AGM, National Housing Programme, ASB Service Centre Update, New Housing Tenures & Equity Stakes

DFG Adaptations – Identified issues with stairlifts / adaptations tenants find it difficult to finance repairs and maintenance of equipment in later years.

Housing Market Economy Intelligence – JC circulated handouts from BCH Board commenting on how a sea change nationally seemed to indicate that views of the private rented sector were being actively sought. BCH has asked JC as our BARLO representative to prepare a

presentation on how the credit crunch is affecting the PRS locally and what are the big issues for local landlords.

JC highlighted some interesting points from the handouts and further comments by the group from the discussion included

- Landlords are dealing with their own banks with equity in their existing portfolios
- Property valuations can be down as much as 30 – 35% in one landlords experience if surveyor not got local knowledge
- Take examples of national statistics and evidence how these do not apply locally
- Plenty out there to let but tenants cannot afford the fees / deposits and landlords too scared not to take cash upfront because of LHA
- Many landlords still not willing to let to LHA tenants and direct payment to tenant perceived as a step backwards by landlords

Action: JS to enquire regards tenants and or landlords responsibilities for maintaining equipment

Action JS to forward BARLO BDG [landlord members] contact details to JC for further contributions to BCH presentation

5. Accreditation Certificates

JS circulated draft accreditation certificates but due to length of time discussing previous Agenda items group was invited to take away and contact JS with any feedback later. SH accepted invitation to liaise directly with JS on any proposed amendments to the draft certificates

Action: JS to set up a follow up meeting with SH

7. AOB

None identified

Next Meeting 1.00pm – 2.30pm on Wednesday 17th June 2009 at UCAN Centre, Hatfield Road, Halliwell, Bolton.