

MINUTES OF BARLO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Wednesday 17th June 2009

UCAN Centre, Hatfield Road, Halliwell, Bolton

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

1. Introductions and Apologies

Welcome back to Kath who has been absent for health reasons and Stephen who will now find alternate day time meetings easier to attend.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

JS confirmed Rachel Taylor attending next landlord forum delivering the presentation on Domestic Abuse and discussing proposals to add clause to BARLO Tenancy Agreement.

JS spoke to Disability Team who advised extended and discounted warranty available on stairlifts when fitted. The overall cost is £2 a week and applicants normally receive DLA / Care Component benefit entitlement which is there to help pay for this type of expense.

JC has made contact with certain BARLO members to help her put together BCH presentation outlining issues in private rented sector nationally and the local perspective.

SH has met with JS to further develop the Accreditation Certificates.

3. BARLO Survey Results

During the following presentation [copy attached] members of the group made the following comments during discussions

- Newsletter could contain shorter bulletin style articles, produced bi-annually and include private landlord contributions
- Other than Gas and Electrical Safety Certificates requests for discounts on other contractors / services has been very low and therefore not being pursued.
- Fire safety / energy efficiency products and services came out as least important to landlords this may be because the Accreditation Officer deals direct with the tenants making referrals.
- Landlords agreed that the Fire Service initiative promoted via BARLO & Housing Benefits was a fantastic service.
- Could we seek the tenant perspective on BARLO and the Accreditation Scheme.
- Lease management services would be attractive if guaranteed rents only 10 – 15% below Local Housing Allowance rates.
- Landlords may be reluctant to engage if perceived high risk tenants, Lease Management Scheme operator would also want to manage risk very carefully.
- Will need to ensure competitive with other landlord organisations if introduce membership fees.
- Could landlords claim tax allowance against Membership fees.

Action: JS to share results, consult further and develop membership fee proposals at future Landlord Forum / BARLO meetings

4. Safer Homes Funding Bid

The Home Office has launched a Safer Homes Funding Initiative earlier this year and after very low take up in the North West has contact Local Authorities direct to see if any voluntary groups can be persuaded to submit funding applications very quickly. As a result BARLO Housing Limited with support from Community Safety Team in Bolton Council submitted a bid for £29k to secure 200 homes in the private rented sector. If successful the homes targeted will include properties to be inspected by Housing & Public Health Unit in the Rumworth area and any new properties inspected for Accreditation Scheme purposes.

Action JS to liaise with Community Safety Team & Home Office and report back to BARLO Board / BDG when outcome known.

5. Accreditation Certificates

Final draft of the Accreditation Certificates circulated which reflects feedback from SH our main Landlord representative and officers.

Agreed the certificates will be issued as appropriate on all future and renewal accreditation scheme applications. Certificates may also be issued as appropriate for properties previously registered.

Action: JS to ensure Accreditation Scheme Certificates are made available and distributed as agreed.

6. CLG Consultation Response

A brief summary of the Governments response to the Rugg report was circulated JS advised that Bolton Council would be submitting its own response which would reflect its long history and experience of partnership working in the private rented sector. Suggested NWLA might want to consider submitting its own response and landlord perspective.

Some concerns raised by landlords that simply taking landlords off the register will not be enough to stop them operating and vulnerable / worst tenants will end up in slum properties.

Action HL to take consultation paper to NWLA committee and propose submit own response.

7. AOB

Following recent concerns JS confirmed BARLO raising awareness and providing refresher session on Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes Also collecting information from tenants on whether they are aware if any deposit has been protected. SB advised that since the introduction of TDS there has been a marked increase in take up of the Bond Board Scheme.

Next Meeting: Details to be confirmed later