

MINUTES OF: BARLO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

HELD ON; WEDNESDAY 15th November 2006 @ 6.00pm

VENUE: Ucan Centre, Hatfield Road, Halliwell, Bolton.

Members Present	Bill Singleton	Independent
	John O'Donnell	Private Landlord
	Philip Ward	Private Landlord
	Andy Patel	Private Landlord
	Viv Hare	Private Landlord
	Stuart Lever	Councillor
Also Present	Cath Conniffe	Strategic Housing Unit
	Julianne Scarlett	Private Landlord Project
Apologies	Linda Thomas	Councillor
	Kath Gough	Independent
	Firaz Alnaimi	Private Landlord
	Derek Gradwell	Councillor
	Jane Caldwell	Private Landlord

1. Welcome and Apologies

FA has confirmed that he still wishes to attend and support the group unfortunately the timing of meetings has been a problem. JS advised the group that deputy leader of the Council LT regretted not being able to attend next meeting also 06.12.06 due to other commitments, alternative dates discussed with group were unsuitable.

Agreed: Next BARLO Board for 06.12.06 should go ahead with a deputy Chair

Action: JS to contact FS, LT, DG to provide progress updates

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes were confirmed by all present as an accurate record. And JS provided an update on actions agreed.

- Bolton Community Homes meet again on 01.12.06 we should hear then if a representative identified to support BARLO.
- Task Group involving landlords now set up and meets 27.11.06 to help plan BARLO celebration event.
- JS circulated list of speaker / presentation themes, provisionally booked Police / ASB presentation for next Business Development Group in January, VH pointed out that Choice based Lettings / Homesforyou [CBL] theme was very current and

private landlords through BCH [and NWLA] were being asked to contribute to discussions on development of regional scheme. Group requested this speaker / presentation theme brought forward to January meeting to help private landlord contribute more meaningfully to the discussions.

Action: JS to make necessary contacts for CBL and defer Police /ASB presentation to March 06

3. Code of Conduct

Covering letter for Landlord and Independent representatives [Elected Members already signed up to full Code] which outlines which parts of Code would not normally apply and includes explanatory notes / alternative contact details circulated and discussed. Any final issues / points to be raised within 7 days if applicable.

Agreed: Code of Conduct adopted by virtue of membership

4. Bolton Business Support Unit

Bill Singleton [Unit Manager] gave a presentation which outlined the Services available to businesses in Bolton which includes any person operating as a private landlord. [See presentation handout attached]

Points raised / questions / discussion included

- 250 x new businesses a month registered in Bolton with just 18% still operating beyond first 12 months
- From the above of the 200 businesses a year that register with Business Link 91% are still operating beyond the first 12 months
- New businesses can be supported free by a business advisor for the first two years
- BARLO Housing Ltd could access free training and support as a Company
- Charges for businesses operating over 2 years are £50 per course regardless of length ie 1 – 4 days representing excellent value
- Private Landlords do not always see themselves as professional business
- Excellent links with University, Technical Innovations Centre, Learning Schools Counsel, Ethnic Minority Services, Securities Team, tenants could benefit too from landlord links
- How can BARLO Housing Ltd help to increase awareness and access by landlords to these services which are aimed at small – medium businesses

JD believes landlords would be interested and find Inland Revenue workshops useful, from BARLO / NWLA perspective keen to market ourselves better with appropriate training, and need to expand expertise in IT to develop our websites.

VH felt landlords time and commitment required might be an issue, BS confirmed courses vary in length, day, evening, can take them in bite size chunks as and when appropriate

BS also mentioned can help businesses develop excellent networks particularly with certain Banks and Solicitors who offer specific incentives and benefits. Recent network event 120 businesses attended to listen to guest speakers.

Also Resources available at the centre include IT packages / licences for researching customer groups / competitors / suppliers.

Agreed: BARLO Housing Ltd eligible for free business support and should develop a marketing plan first, leading to editorials, and a business plan.

Action: JD/VH to consult with NWLA on demand for Marketing, IT and Inland Revenue courses. JS to follow up action for BARLO Housing Ltd to establish Marketing Plan

5. Funding and Grant Opportunities

BS previously provided JS with a comprehensive list of grant / funding avenues, with a briefing note now circulated at the meeting describing basic procedures required before applications are normally submitted

Funding ideas covered

- Development of Websites to improve communication, members access, password protected documents, discussion forums etc
- Installation of broadband in student accommodation
- Provision of IT equipment at access points used by Private landlords

JS circulated Police fund application forms as example of information required BARLO will need to have improved information relating to customer groups landlord and tenant eg diversity, vulnerability

Funding ideas covered

- ASB information / tenancy management documents pack for landlords.
- Target Hardening measures linked to NRF / BRI in Tonge – locks, bolts, chains, memo minders, intercoms, door alarms
- Newsletter / Poster / Publicity campaign

CC mentioned that whilst BARLO making referrals for grants in relation to Energy Efficiency / AWARD initiatives possible landlords can access other grants and newly established post Fuel Poverty Officer may be able to help. BS confirmed as owners of properties that may require double glazing or operating in areas with poor environment other grants could be available.

Agreed: Development of Marketing Plan will identify during the process any opportunities and eligibility for such funding / grant applications.

Action: JS to contact Fuel Poverty Officer Katie Wilkinson with regards to grants for businesses eg landlords wishing to make energy improvements to dwellings they own and manage

6. BARLO Progress Update

Details of increases in membership and activity for the period September – November 06 circulated key points noted

- Landlords / properties increase may actually be higher as backlog of inputting due to staff changes
- New - Number of ASB cases taken from evaluation report produced August 06

Group noted it was difficult to recognise trend in figures provided CC suggested template could include + or – in brackets

Action: JS to include ‘increase / decrease’ statistics in brackets on a revised template

7. AOB

VH provided group with a briefing paper on matters relevant to BARLO from recent BCH Board meeting one topic in particular regarding Bolton branding will require an initial response by 01.12.06 which is before BARLO Board meets again on 06.12.06. [See briefing paper attached for details] when this matter could be discussed again in more detail

BS pointed out that the Bolton brand has in fact been very successful and very well received and other private organisations including Warburtons, Reebok, University are considering taking up the ‘Bolton Family’ theme.

VH pointed out and group agreed in principle that BARLO Housing Ltd could consider adopting the Bolton Brand whilst recognising that individual landlords / businesses would not be obliged to follow.

Action: VH to advise BCH that in principle BARLO Housing Ltd willing to consider adopting Bolton branding but would like confirmation of any cost implications.

Next Meeting:

[BARLO BOARD - Wednesday 6th December 2006]

and

BARLO Business Development Group - Wednesday 24th January 2007