14/01/2021



Minutes - Meeting of the Landlords Liaison Group

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## Introduction and group rules

The meeting organised in the form of an online conference on the Teams took place on 14th January, 2021 at 18:00.

### Participants:

**Landlords:**

**Armadeep Singh Barmi**

**Christopher Sharp**

**Colin Davis**

**Paul Dermody**

**Margaret Gretton**

**Suyanto Suyanto**

**Andrew Paris**

**Richard Kenny**

**Council representatives**

**Pete Mitchell –** Head of the Safer Housing

**David Hobbs –** Selective licensing Manager

**Graham Demax –** Housing Partnership Manag

**Helen Foster –** Development Officer

**Julie Liversidge –** Licensing Manager

**Cllr Linda Woodings –** Portfolio Holder

**Lisa Allison -** Comms

**Paul Greevy –** Strategic Housing Manager

**Robert Skwierawski –** Business Support

**Matthew Turner** – Principal data Analyst

**Partners:**

**Linda Cobb -** DASH

**Matt Allison - Unipol**

**Giles Inman –** EMPO

**Clair Marshall**

**Edward Rowlands**

**Jackie Sivier**

**Louise Johnson**

**Naomi Sutherland**

Pete Mitchell greeted everyone and all the participants briefly introduced themselves.

## Previous actions

**Pete Mitchell** gave an update on the action points from the previous meeting.

Action log is available in a separate document and is also sent out to the participants. Please pay particular attention to **Action 11** - all the participants of this forum are requested to prepare and provide us with the particular examples of flaws in the application process, reports should be specific, particular case related so that the council can address the issues, amend staff training and procedures.

All the issues, ideas, proposed changes and the other correspondence should be be sent to: robert.skwierawski@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

## NPRAS – who, what, and why

**Helen Foster** presented the work done by NPRAS – Nottingham Private Rented Assistance Scheme



* It is increasingly difficult to find social housing for people, more and more eviction notices from private rented accommodation and people becoming homeless
* NPRAS supports landlords, agents, and tenants
* NPRAS helps homeless people to find the accommodation, it matches landlords and potential tenants, provides negotiations, helps in obtaining required documents, assists in agreement preparation
* Pays deposit and / or bonds help with benefit claims for tenants
* NPRAS helps to avoid evictions by providing assistance and mediation.

**For landlords** NPRAS acts in a similar way as an estate agency managing a property but the services are free of charge. The services comprise:

* Tenant finding service
* Deposit assurance
* Rent in advance
* Inventory
* Help with welfare benefits and direct payments
* Tenancy preparation and sign up with documents
* Mediation

**For tenants**:

* Help with direct payments and welfare benefits
* Prevention from eviction protocol
* Rent arrears
* Mediations
* Last financial year NPRAS homed 331 people

For the landlords NPRAS additionally offers Tenancy Management service for £35 per month. The service includes most of the things that a letting agent would do, including: inspections, gas safety inspections, rent collection, check outs, repairs arrangement

Landlords who decide to house rough sleepers will receive from NPRAS guaranteed rent.

Contact for the landlords to NPRAS is 01158761644 NPRAS@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

The number above is also for the contact about eviction protocol.

## Burning issues for landlords

* **Giles Inman** expressed an opinion that it is extremely difficult to reach NCC customer services and it is good news that some help and contact can be provided by NPRAS in this way helping also EMPO because they try their best to support landlords especially about repossession issues. **Pete** agreed that the communication with the council needs to be improved
* **Chris Sharp** had a question to NPRAS about their deposit protection scheme if it can offer similar mediation and appeal procedure as DPS. **Helen** explained that landlords needs to prove disrepair, inspection confirms this. Procedure is different to DPS, however not less favourable because a landlord can claim costs directly from NPRAS. Appeal against NPRAS decision goes to NCC complaint department, then if necessary to Ombudsman.
* **Giles** came back to the issue of problems with repairing bins by NCC and the neglected and littered areas surrounding some of the private rented properties. Landlords have been asked to prepare photographic documentation of external inspections, some are in a very bad state and sadly many of them are within Nottingham City Homes.

The explanation was given that the areas have mixed properties, many do not belong to NCC.

Management of the areas needs to be done in partnership with the landlords. **Lisa** suggested our forum is not the right place for the discussion about this problem. The forum is about the improvement of the housing service.

**Action**: Determine the way of landlords – council partnership to tackle the neglect in the rented areas and determine what department needs to manage the partnership.

* There was a voice that the council is obliged to carry certain responsibilities and should not pass them over to the landlords. This brings us back to Action point 1 where the need for consistent approach to private landlords and for supporting them was expressed. To give particular examples – fly tipping in front of the properties, illegal graffiti should be addressed by NCC, not making the landlords responsible for this. Rather than spending time notifying the landlord that something happened on a public highway, it would be better to contact the highways directly. **Pete** noticed that the council only makes the landlords aware of the issues happening at their properties and does not order to take action.
* **Action:** Verify the content of letters sent to landlords about fly tipping, graffiti, etc. at their properties and check when the issues need to be directed straight to a relevant department, e.g. highways

## Update on the scheme enforcement including enforcement pages

**Lisa Allison**: Information about CPNs (Civil penalty Notices) and prosecutions is available on NCC website. The info comprises penalties paid and prosecutions, it does not give people’s personal data.

More compliance work will be presented on the website in the future.

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/housing/private-rented-accommodation/investigating-housing-offenses/>

**David Hobbs**: We received 24 069 licence applications, roughly 21 000 of them are individual and 3 000 block ones in 43 blocks.

We have issued about 20 000 individual draft licenses and 1 000 draft licenses in blocks.

17 000 final licenses have been already issued, the cases left are mostly more complicated ones and with problems in having 2nd payment received.

We still receive about 170 – 200 applications per month and deal with the recent cases as well.

## My property look up

**Matt Turner**, council principal data analyst presented new the functionality the council website My Property will have

<https://geoserver.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/myproperty/>

It will be possible to see the licence status of a property after providing the address in the address field not only if it already has a licence, but if a licence has been applied for. It will be much easier than using current redacted register.

There was a suggestion that the accreditation status of DASH and Unipol should be added to the info about the licence status.

**Action**: Add the accreditation status to the property info on My Property website

## Private Rented Housing webpages

**Lisa Allison** requested the participants to provide feedback on the service.

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/housing/private-rented-accommodation/>

## AOB

* We need to decide whether it is possible to join the managing agents and landlords meetings to avoid repeating the same issues and dealing with the similar problems twice. On the other hand agents had previously requested to have their meetings separate. There is also a question of frequency of the meetings and whether they couldn’t be organised at earlier time e.g. at 16:30 or 17:00.

**Action**: Decide whether to merge the agents and landlords meetings and decide about frequency and possibly earlier time

* It is important to make the best use of our group. All the participants are required to prepare the issues they would like to discuss, present particular ideas about improving the council services, and communicate any other issues prior to the meetings by contacting Robert Skwierawski on robert.skwierawski@nottinghamcity.gov.uk