

# Landlords' forum news

A newsletter for Haringey landlords

Issue 10 26 August 2009

**LAUNCH OF  
HOMELESSNESS AND  
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## Message from Cllr John Bevan

"Welcome to the first Landlords' Forum for 2009.

The Landlords' Forum is an opportunity for everyone involved in the private rental sector to discuss with the Council any issues that arise from our joint working practice.

These are difficult credit crunch times and we may not be over the worst of it. I hope you will join in the discussion at the forum of the potential impact of the credit crunch on the private rented sector and the opportunities that come with these challenges.

As a borough we already face substantial housing pressures

and we recognize that we

can only meet the level of housing needs by working with yourselves to provide high quality, well-managed accommodation.

I hope the topics discussed tonight are both informative and useful and I look forward to working with you to improve the borough."

## Recycling Waste: Now you can recycle food waste too

The **food waste collection service** is currently available to nearly 70,000 properties in Haringey.

To find out whether you can recycle your food waste, or for information about your collection day, please visit our web page [www.haringey.gov.uk/food\\_waste](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/food_waste) or call 020 8885 7700.

If you live in an area with this service you should have received two bins for the food waste collection.

If you have not received these then please contact the **Haringey Enterprise Call Centre** to request them:

**Tel:** 020 8885 7700

**Email:** [haringey.enterprise@enterprise.plc.uk](mailto:haringey.enterprise@enterprise.plc.uk)

### HARINGEY LANDLORDS' FORUM

#### Next Meeting

**18 June 2009 from 6-8.30pm**  
**Council Chamber, Civic Centre, High Road, N22**  
**THIS IS A PROVISIONAL BOOKING**  
**AND WILL BE CONFIRMED**

# Launch of the Housing and Homelessness Strategies

**It's been a busy time for Haringey's Strategic and Community Housing Services who, in the last six months have launched both their Housing and Homelessness Strategies.**

The Homelessness Strategy 2008-11, launched at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Tottenham on 12 September 2008, is an ambitious three year strategy which aims to tackle the cause of homelessness, increase the supply of affordable homes and remove the barriers to the private rented sector.

It has been developed in consultation with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including service users and service providers.

More than 125 stakeholders also met to debate the Housing Strategy 2009-2109 at a one day housing conference on Thursday 18 February 2009.

Borough Councillors joined private landlords and other invitees from voluntary organisations, statutory bodies and resident associations to discuss the direction the council and its partners will take in order to meet housing objectives for the next decade.

Chief among those objectives is

the need to create affordable and attractive housing to meet the high demand in the borough.

Key note speaker David Lunts, London Director of the Homes and Communities Agency, laid out his vision for the future of public housing and reinforced the importance of local authorities delivering on their housing ambition.

A lively debate followed in workshops centred on the main themes including Sustaining Delivery: Working In Shifting Economic Conditions and Working With The Private Sector.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr John Bevan also addressed the conference and reiterated the aim of bringing more empty homes back into use.

"We have a high demand for affordable housing in the borough, and we will use every power at our disposal to bring more empty homes back into use while working effectively with the private rental sector to reduce housing demand," said Cllr Bevan.

A copy of the draft strategy can be found at [www.haringey.gov.uk/housing/strategy](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/housing/strategy)

## A Day In The Life...



**Landlord Norman Wilkins from Bounds Green has lived in Haringey for 55 years. For the last 18 years he has owned and managed properties in Haringey.**

### What do you like about Haringey?

It's an up and coming place! There's a great mix of nationalities and everyone gets on well.

### What is a typical day for you as a Landlord?

Life as a landlord is very busy. I spend a lot of time collecting rent from the tenants in person. I have been doing this for some time now and they all know me well.

Sometimes I get calls from tenants about repairs to their home. These jobs can be big or small.

I am especially busy when I have a new tenant as I have to check their proof of identity and references.

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(l-r) David Lunts, Cllr John Bevan, Niall Bolger, Cllr Claire Kober at the Housing Conference

# Update from the last Landlords' Forum

**The last Landlords' Forum was held in November 2008 and was an enormous success attracting around 80 landlords.**

We are pleased to report that the feedback we received at the last landlords' forum showed that it was considered to be both an informative and worthwhile experience.

We have, therefore, decided to hold them on a quarterly basis.

At the last forum we discussed a range of issues including Haringey's 10 Year Housing Strategy, the work we are undertaking with private landlords and the Local Housing Allowance.

Since then we have investigated, on your request, the number of tenants (who rent privately) who have their housing benefit paid directly to their landlords. Figures obtained from the Housing Benefit Team show that 11% of claims are paid directly to the landlord in order to safeguard the tenant and sustain their tenancy.

Landlords can also be reassured that if they let their property through one of the Council's

schemes administered by the Private Sector Lettings Team each case can be assessed to see if a direct payment to the landlord would sustain the tenancy for longer.

With the economic downturn upon us, times can be tough for landlords. In 2008 Buy to Let Repossessions accounted for 9.5% of all repossessions compared with just 5% in 2006. In the third quarter of 2008 10.7% of all mortgages, in at least 3 months arrears, were Buy to Let Mortgages - an increase of nearly 4% from six months earlier.

The credit crunch may continue to bite but at Haringey we are working tirelessly with landlords to provide fully vetted tenants to fill your properties in a timely fashion and we are confident we can continue to do so.

We look forward to strengthening our relationship with you and continued success for the future!



**Tim Fisher,**  
Deputy Head of  
Benefits and  
Local Taxation  
Service  
addressing  
landlords at the  
last forum

## FUEL POVERTY ACTION PLAN

Many homes in Haringey can suffer dampness due to an inability to heat homes to a sufficient level. With high fuel costs, this problem can be escalated.

Residents who spend more than 10% of their income on fuel bills are officially defined as 'fuel poor' and are therefore at risk.

In the current economic recession fuel poverty is of increasing national concern and has become a key priority for action. As part of the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Councils are required to report on their actions, together with partners, to alleviate fuel poverty.

Haringey Council is committed to improving access to affordable warmth for all residents and aims to work together with partners to deliver an affordable warmth strategy for the borough.

In future, the Council will be working with residents, landlords, energy conservation groups and other key stakeholders in Haringey to develop the aims and objectives of the Strategy, together with an action plan to help reduce fuel poverty. The Council will also seek to attract resources to the borough to help deliver the Strategy.

For more information about how you can play a part in delivering affordable warmth please contact Rosie Green, Housing Strategy & Partnerships Manager, [rosie.green@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.green@haringey.gov.uk) or John Mathers, Fuel Poverty Officer, [john.mathers@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:john.mathers@haringey.gov.uk).

# Empty Tottenham House Auctioned To Recover Unpaid Council Tax

**An empty property, which was put up for auction by Haringey Council to recover £6,700 in unpaid council tax, is due to be sold.**

The completion of the sale, which is imminent, will allow Haringey council to bring the home back into use.

The Dorset Road property had fallen into disrepair while the owner was living abroad for the past 16 years.

Cabinet Member for Housing Services Cllr John Bevan said the enforced sale is part of a campaign of action to transform the borough's 50 worst empty eyesore homes into good quality residential properties.

"There is a high demand for good-quality, affordable housing in Haringey and demand is set to grow in the coming decade. Transforming empty eyesore homes is one way we can aim to meet demand.

"We asked the government to issue eight compulsory purchase orders and are targeting a further 28 other properties throughout the borough for enforced sales," said Cllr Bevan.

These sales are enforced by a Court Order when the owner owes money to the council and

once sold, the debt is repaid and the remainder of the profit is returned to the owner.

The sale of the property will give an opportunity for new owners to return the empty property to a habitable state, and have it occupied.

Cllr Bevan said: "We will do everything in our power to bring our worst eyesore properties back into use, so that more people in Haringey can enjoy a decent home."

Grants of up to £17,000 are available to assist owners of empty properties wishing to rent their properties to the council.

First time buyers can also qualify for a grant of up to £25,000 if they buy a vacant property that is in disrepair.

To find out more about the help on offer to bring vacant properties back into use, contact Haringey Council's Empty Property Officer on 020 8489 4214.

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This is also true for tenants whose contracts are up for renewal.

I also often come into contact with landlords and other letting professionals through my work and we share information and contacts.

## **How do you think the property market is shaping up?**

We are in difficult times and it is hard to predict what's going to happen next.

We all want the economy to get back on its feet but it may take some time.

What it does mean is that rather than people selling their homes they are letting them out. Therefore the lettings market is more competitive.

## **What has it been like working with Haringey Council?**

I have had good experiences working with the council and I really want to further our working relationship. However, it would be great to receive more updates from the council regarding my tenants who are in receipt of benefits. Even if it was just a short letter to say that my tenant had indeed approached the council for benefits for one of my properties, and that the claim was currently being processed.

*To have your say please contact Clare Leahy by emailing her at [clare.leahy@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:clare.leahy@haringey.gov.uk)*