

Public Document Pack

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.

Date: Monday, 24 May 2004

Time: 10.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. The Lanes - South Yorkshire Police Accommodation (Pages 1 - 2)
Update on negotiations

Extra open item

Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme

4. Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme (Pages 3 - 26)
5. Exclusion of the Press and Public
That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs, indicated below, of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
6. Central Station House, Manvers (Pages 27 - 32)
(Exempt under Paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Act - financial affairs of another body/negotiation of terms)
7. Compulsory Purchase Order - Doncaster Road, Dalton (Pages 33 - 46)
(Exempt under Paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Act - expenditure to be incurred/negotiation of terms)

Extra exempt item

8. Tender Report - Decent Homes Scheme at Middle Eastwood (Pages 47 - 52)
(Exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Act – expenditure to be incurred by the Authority)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. **Meeting** CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
2. **Date of Meeting** 24 May 2004
3. **Title** Request for accommodation by South Yorkshire Police - Update Report.
4. **Originating Officer** Paul Walsh
Neighbourhood Housing Manager
Town Centre Neighbourhood Office
Tel Ext 3471
5. **Issue**
To provide an updated report on progress with negotiations with South Yorkshire Police, regarding their request for accommodation.
6. **Summary**
Agreement has been reached for premises to be made available to South Yorkshire Police, for a local police base, at The Lanes, East Dene.
7. **Clearance/Consultation**
The local ward members have been advised of the present position.
8. **Timing**
A property has been identified and is on hold pending the conclusion of a formal lease agreement. This matter needs to be concluded as swiftly as possible to minimise any further rent loss on the property identified.
9. **Background**
Minute Number 45, 14 July 2003 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services, granted approval for negotiations to take place with South Yorkshire Police, regarding the rental of premises to them for office accommodation. These negotiations have been ongoing with respect to renting accommodation at The Lanes to them, at full market rental. South Yorkshire Police have consistently requested a variable rent and negotiations have been protracted. However, the matter has now been resolved, with South Yorkshire Police agreeing to rent at full market rental, with Housing Services retaining landlord repairs and maintenance responsibilities.
10. **Argument**
In seeking to address the issue of anti-social behaviour in the area, the presence of the police at The Lanes will have a positive impact. A similar arrangement at St Johns Green, Kimberworth Park was established in February 2003. The Police have provided statistical evidence to demonstrate the positive impact it has had on the area. Public order and nuisance crime has reduced by 54%, burglary offences have reduced by 80%, shoplifting and other offences have reduced by 40% and criminal damage has reduced by 40%. CCTV equipment is also installed at St John's Green, which will also have positively contributed to these figures.

11. Risks and Uncertainties

There are no guarantees that a Police presence will achieve similar results to St John's Green, but the implication is that there is a strong possibility that it will.

12. Finance

The Police have identified sufficient revenue funding and will be responsible for the rent and all other outgoings, including Business Rates payable, utility bills and property insurance. Housing Services will retain responsibility for repairs and maintenance, the cost of which will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account. The police have confirmed that they will provide an intruder alarm at the property and sufficient security measures to meet their needs, from their own resources. The Neighbourhood Warden Service will also monitor the premises to deter any acts of vandalism, which would impact on repair costs to the premises.

13. Sustainability

The successful elimination of anti-social behaviour will assist in the sustainability of the local neighbourhood, improve community confidence and reduce levels of reported crime. The work being undertaken to address this problem contributes towards Priority 9 - to increase the level of public reassurance and reduce the fear of crime, of the Borough's Strategy to Reduce Crime and Disorder. The project also demonstrates a positive partnership approach to tackling crime and disorder. A police presence at The Lanes may also contribute to improved demand for accommodation, in the area.

14. Wards Affected

Ward 11

15. References

Correspondence from South Yorkshire Police is on file.

16. Presentation

Following discussions with South Yorkshire Police and community representatives, a local police office is proposed for The Lanes at East Dene. The office is to be funded by South Yorkshire Police, with a revenue contribution from RMBC. This project demonstrates Rotherham MBC's continued commitment to working in partnership to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and make Rotherham the best place to live, learn and work.

17. Recommendations

PROPOSAL TO RENT THE LANES, EAST DENE TO SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AT THE CURRENT STANDARD RENT BE APPROVED.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. **Meeting** CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

2. **Date of Meeting** 24 MAY 2004

3. **Title** PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

4. **Originating Officer** Rob Pearce
Principal Policy and Planning Officer
Tel Ext 3437

5. **Issue**
To consider the introduction of a Private Rented Sector Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

6. **Summary**
The scheme is intended to acknowledge, and actively promote good standards and management practice by landlords in the private rented sector and to promote better understanding between landlords and tenants.

The Accreditation Scheme will recognise and incentivise landlords who are committed to providing good quality, properly managed accommodation to rent.

The scheme to be introduced initially in two pilot areas covering Brinsworth and the neighbourhood management pathfinder – Eastwood and Springwell Gardens.

The accreditation scheme to be extended borough wide after a six-month pilot introduction period.

7. **Clearance/Consultation**
The development of the Accreditation Scheme has been assisted through reference to guidance published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

In addition we have made use of good practice examples from schemes already being operated by other local authorities.

The accreditation scheme is supported by the Rotherham and District Residential Landlords' Association.

8. **Timing**
It is intended to implement the pilot accreditation scheme in July 2004.

9. **Background**
The principal aim of the scheme is to encourage landlords throughout the district to maintain their properties in a safe and decent condition, in good repair with a good standard of management.

10. Argument

By introducing an Accreditation Scheme, the Council will be able to improve the quality of private rented houses throughout Rotherham. This is consistent with the Housing Strategy which aims to increase access to, and choice of, accommodation across all housing sectors and improve the character and diversity of neighbourhoods through housing market renewal.

It will also contribute to raising home energy efficiency standards that will support Rotherham's Affordable Warmth Strategy.

It supports the Community Strategy Scheme priority to create safe and inclusive communities.

The insistence on timely and regular gas and electricity safety checks is a key health and safety issue.

We will support the scheme through the introduction of a private landlord training programme. Where this encourages landlords to bring empty property back into use, it will support the achievement of our BVPI 64 target.

Accredited landlords will be confident that their property is of an acceptable standard and that they are providing good quality housing for their tenants.

Prospective tenants will be confident that a property that has been awarded accredited status will provide decent, safe and secure accommodation.

11. Risks and Uncertainties

Lack of interest from landlords who are not concerned with raising or maintaining standards. Housing may be particularly poor and, therefore, landlords are unwilling or unable to raise standards to achieve accreditation status. Certain areas may become more attractive to private landlords wishing to acquire properties there. The scheme will be managed in such a way as to minimise or mitigate these risks – we will actively promote and market the scheme to landlords and support and assist them to reach the required standards to achieve accredited status.

12. Finance

In recognition of the voluntary nature of the accreditation scheme and the likely cost to landlords of meeting the scheme standards, it is proposed that no charge should be made to those applying for accredited status.

The introduction and management of the accreditation scheme by the Council is expected to be achieved, in the pilot areas, through the use of existing staff resources.

However, an application for financial support has been submitted to the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder.

If successful the additional funding would enable us to employ a dedicated officer on Scale SO1 to take forward the development of the scheme and to rigorously encourage landlords to participate in the Neighbourhood Management area.

The application is for £50K in the period 2004/06. A decision on the application is awaited.

13. Sustainability

The Accreditation Scheme aims to influence the management and condition of housing. Improved standards will help reduce tenancy turnover and contribute to improved neighbourhood sustainability. It is also expected to contribute positively to:

- improving the image of the Borough;
- reducing crime and strengthening community safety;
- creating a sustainable healthy environment;
- improving housing choices for those looking for accommodation;
- building partnerships to provide effective services;
- tackling social exclusion.

14. Wards Affected

Initially 6, 11 and 15 expanding to all when Borough wide.

15. References

Housing Quality and Choice. The Housing Green Paper - O.D.P.M.

Developing a Voluntary Accreditation Scheme for Private Landlords – A Good Practice Guide – O.D.P.M.

Rotherham M.B.C. - Housing Strategy 2004-2007

16. Presentation

None

17. Recommendations

THAT THE COUNCIL INTRODUCES A PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME.

THE SCHEME TO BE INTRODUCED INITIALLY FOR SIX MONTHS IN TWO PILOT AREAS COVERING BRINSWORTH AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT PATHFINDER – EASTWOOD AND SPRINGWELL GARDENS.

THE ACCREDITATION SCHEME TO BE EXTENDED BOROUGH-WIDE AFTER EVALUATION OF THE SIX MONTH PILOT.

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

**ROTHERHAM'S NEW
ACCREDITATION SCHEME
FOR PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSING**

**Housing and Environmental Services,
Housing Strategy
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council,
Norfolk House,
Walker Place,
ROTHERHAM.
S65 1HX**



R. Pearce
(May 2004)

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

HOUSING STRATEGY – PRIVATE LANDLORD ACCREDITATION

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

**ROTHERHAM'S NEW ACCREDITATION SCHEME
FOR PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSING**

Introduction

Local Authorities are increasingly taking a strategic approach to meeting the housing needs of people in their area.

There is greater recognition for the important role of the private rented sector in providing housing accommodation for some people.

One aspect of this new approach is a desire to work with private sector landlords to improve the quality and standing of this important sector of the housing market.

One of a number of possible ways of doing this is for the Local Authority to introduce a private rented sector landlord accreditation scheme.

The Scheme

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has developed a Landlord Accreditation Scheme to reward and recognise the many local landlords who are committed to providing **good quality, properly managed accommodation** within the Borough and encourage all landlords to meet the standards over time.

The proposed scheme has received support from the Rotherham and District Residential Landlords Association (RDRLA).

What is Landlord Accreditation?

It is a set of standards (or code) relating to the physical condition and management of privately rented accommodation. Landlords who join the scheme and meet the standards are given accredited status.

The accreditation scheme will be operated on a voluntary basis.

There is no compulsion for landlords to join but we hope that the benefits to be gained will encourage them to do so.

Requirements of the Scheme – The Landlord

The Landlord should have a good track record. We will need to be satisfied there is no history of harassment or illegal eviction of tenants and of non-compliance with enforcement action taken by the Council.

Where such a history exists we will work with the landlord to assist them to achieve the standard and monitor their future performance.

Requirements of the Scheme – The Property

We will need to have the opportunity to inspect all of the properties included in the application for accredited status to check for compliance with the scheme standards.

Strategic Context

The introduction of an accreditation scheme will assist us in meeting our housing strategy objectives.

The scheme will contribute to each one of our 4 key themes included in the strategy:-

- Developing neighbourhoods.
- Ensuring Decent Homes.
- Renewing the housing market.
- Providing fair access and choice.

It also links to National, Regional and Sub-Regional Priorities and Targets, e.g. the Government's objective to secure a larger better quality, better managed private rented sector with the introduction of accreditation schemes a key measure to achieve this.

For more detailed information reference should be made to the Council's Housing Strategy.

In addition, the Accreditation Scheme will make a positive contribution to the renewal of the housing market in Rotherham and the South Yorkshire sub-region.

The strategic aim of Transform South Yorkshire – the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder is:-

“to build and support sustainable communities and successful neighbourhoods where the quality and choice of housing underpins a buoyant economy and improved quality of life.”

The Accreditation Scheme will provide a mechanism to strengthen weak housing markets to offer real choice and better quality accommodation in the private rented sector in areas dominated by poor quality and uninspiring housing.

Aims of the Scheme

The principle aim of the scheme is to encourage landlords throughout the district to maintain their properties in a safe and decent condition, in good repair with a good standard of management.

Other aims include:-

- To reduce the numbers of empty, unused properties in Rotherham.
- To reduce crime and opportunities for crime.
- To limit anti-social behaviour.
- To improve the image of the Borough.

How the Aims will be Achieved

We will achieve the aims of the scheme by:-

- Encouraging and supporting landlords in the provision of good quality rented accommodation.
- Recognising landlords whose properties meet the accreditation standard.
- Enabling tenants to make an informed choice when choosing rented accommodation.
- Working with landlords to improve the general standard of private rented accommodation within the Borough.
- Working in partnership with other agencies and local companies.
- Publicity to raise the profile of the scheme and encourage participation by landlords.

Benefits of the Scheme – Landlords

- Landlords who obtain accreditation will gain the right to display the accredited landlord scheme logo in the property.
- Landlords will be awarded a certificate of membership to confirm the dwelling meets the scheme standards and this may also be displayed in the property.
- Landlords who obtain accreditation will also gain the right to use the scheme logo on correspondence as a hallmark to indicate good practice.
- Tenants will be encouraged to seek accommodation from accredited landlords.
- Landlords can expect to gain a market edge over other landlords who are not members of the accreditation scheme.

- Services and support provided by the Council and the landlord accreditation team, for example the opportunity to advertise vacant houses in the Council's property shop and advice to meet the standards.
- Landlords can be assured of support through the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in the event of any problems arising and affecting the tenancy.

It is also anticipated that 'Accredited Status' will bring landlords the following general but important benefits:-

- An advantage over other providers in attracting new tenants.
- A better image with potential lenders.
- A lower turnover of tenants producing savings on re-letting and loss of income from voids.
- A decrease in abuse of properties.
- A reduction in insurance premiums.
- Access to other discount schemes in the future.

Benefits of the Scheme – Tenants

- Tenants will be able to make an informed choice about the property they choose to rent.
- They can identify property that have met relevant standards.
- Landlords will have agreed to follow a charter, which includes the provision of a written tenancy agreement, and regular checks of the gas and electrical supply.

Services and Support Networks

- A code of standards to be followed by accredited landlords.
- Advice and information on tenancy issues.
- Membership certificates indicating accredited status.
- Opportunity to advertise accredited property vacancies in the Council's Property Shop.

Membership Code of Standards

The standards are associated with compliance with:-

- Gas Safety.

- Electrical Safety – fixed installation and portable appliance testing.
- Fire Safety.
- Furniture Safety – if let furnished.
- Fitness and suitability for habitation – with aspirations to meet the decent homes standard.
- Repair.
- Management.
- Commitment to improved energy efficiency.

Where does the Scheme Operate?

Initially the scheme will be operated in two Pilot Areas – Brinsworth and the Eastwood/Springwell Gardens Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Area.

The Pilot will be operated for a period of six months, it's impact analysed and any lessons learned will be fed into the extension of the scheme across the Borough.

Who is eligible

All landlords of single let houses and houses in multiple occupation are eligible to apply for accreditation. Accredited status will be given to landlords whose properties and management meets the standards set down in the scheme.

Application and Acceptance

Participation by owners in the scheme will be by application on a form supplied by the Council.

The form will be property specific.

If properties and the landlord meet the necessary standards, then accreditation will be awarded. Accreditation is typically for three years. At the end of the first and second year, the landlord will need to certify that the property still meets those standards and will also have to supply the Council with copies of gas and electrical safety certificates and any other relevant documentation. Self-certification of properties will be supplemented by spot checks on a percentage of properties each year.

Should the property not comply, the opportunity will be given to rectify any failures within three months. Should the timescale not be met the application will fail and accreditation at a future date will require a fresh application.

Should a complaint be received about an accredited property, there will be an automatic re-inspection. At the end of the three year period, the landlord will need to make a new application.

It is important that standards are maintained and the Council has the right to revoke accreditation at any time.

Summary

It is anticipated that owners of accredited properties will place themselves in a more advantageous position within the private rented housing market by having:-

- The opportunity to advertise vacant properties through the Council's Property Shop.
- Inclusion on a list of accredited properties kept by the Council.
- Be recommended by word of mouth from one group of tenants to the next.
- Be secure in the knowledge that they have taken all reasonable steps to secure and safeguard the health, safety and welfare of tenants, and
- Reduce the possibility of legal enforcement action by the Council.

NB. Disclaimer

Individuals/tenants must always satisfy themselves about the standard of their accommodation. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council neither guarantees or warrants its condition and accepts no liability if the tenant finds the accommodation wanting notwithstanding that the property may be accredited.

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
WORKING WITH
LANDLORDS AND TENANTS IN
ROTHERHAM
TO IMPROVE STANDARDS
IN RENTED ACCOMMODATION**

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

CODE OF PRACTICE

**Housing and Environmental Services,
Housing Strategy
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council,
Norfolk House,
Walker Place,
ROTHERHAM.
S65 1HX**



ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

HOUSING STRATEGY – PRIVATE LANDLORD ACCREDITATION

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

**PROMOTING GOOD STANDARDS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR
A GOOD LANDLORD CODE OF PRACTICE**

What is the code of practice?

This Code has been produced as a model of good practice for owners of private rented accommodation within Rotherham. It has been developed by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council for the benefit of all concerned with private rented sector housing.

The code requires landlords to comply with minimum standards laid down in Housing Law. In a few respects it also requires the landlord to go a little beyond those standards.

Landlords who comply with the code will be able to show that their properties are well managed, free from unacceptable risks to health and safety and in reasonable repair.

Why should a landlord comply with the code?

Firstly and most importantly it will help the landlord comply with his/her legal obligations. Secondly landlords who comply with the code will distance themselves from incompetent or unscrupulous landlords thereby benefiting from an enhanced reputation.

Landlords who meet the requirements of this Code of Practice can expect to be well placed to receive approval under any new licensing scheme that is developed in the future.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this Code please contact Rob Pearce, Housing Services, Housing Strategy Section, on Rotherham 01709 823437.

If you are interested in obtaining approval under the scheme please complete the form at the back of this leaflet.

Code of Practice

1.0 **Before the Tenancy**

Landlords shall ensure that:

- property details are described accurately;
- the terms of the tenancy are fair and prospective tenants are allowed a reasonable time (not less than 24 hours) to consider the suitability of the accommodation and terms of the tenancy;
- clear information is provided as to whether tenant or landlord is responsible for the payment of water/gas/electricity and council tax bills;
- clear statements are issued to prospective tenants with regard to rent and service charges due.

2.0 **During the Tenancy**

2.1 **Right to privacy and self-determination**

Landlords shall ensure that:-

- tenants have access to the property and their room(s) at all times;
- tenants receive their own mail directly without interference;
- tenants are able to receive visitors in their own home (subject to an acceptable standard of behaviour – as required by the tenancy agreement);
- tenants do not have to receive visits from the owner or owners agents without 24 hours written notice – except in emergencies;
- tenant's privacy is respected.

2.2 **Right to be Consulted and Informed**

Landlords shall ensure that:-

- where legally required to do so, they will provide tenants with a form of receipt for payment of rent e.g. a rent book, and supply a full rent breakdown;
- each tenant is provided with a tenancy/licence agreement that comprehensively but simply explains the rules and organisational details of the property. The contents of any agreement will include information on:-
 1. the services which are provided as part of the accommodation and charge made for each service;
 2. the names and addresses of all parties with an interest in the property i.e. owners, managers, agents, caretakers etc.;
 3. what house rules (if any) exist;
- that on taking up the tenancy the tenant is provided with information on:-
 1. what to do in case of fire;
 2. arrangements for laundry, heating, meals, telephones etc. as applicable – more likely to be applicable in houses in multiple occupation.

2.3 **Right to Enjoy Safe, Well Maintained Repaired Housing**

Landlords shall ensure that:-

- the property/dwelling unit has all basic amenities available internally, is free from unacceptable risks to health and safety and is in reasonable repair;
- that any house in multiple occupation (HMO) is brought to the attention of the Council or any registered/licensed under any Registration/Licensing Scheme which may come into force;
- an 'out of hours' telephone number is available in the case of emergency repairs;
- in single family units the electrical installation and fixed electrical appliances are checked for safety every ten years by a competent and approved contractor (NICEIC or ECA or other contractors approved by the Local Authority are accepted in this respect). A periodic inspection report as required by BS 7671 to be kept available for inspection at all times;

- in multiple occupation or other shared properties the electrical installation and fixed electrical appliances are checked for safety every five years by a competent and approved contractor (NICEIC or ECA or other contractors approved by the Local Authority are accepted in this respect); a periodic inspection report as required by BS 7671 to be kept available for inspection at all times;
- in multiple occupation or other shared properties any portable electrical appliances provided by the landlord are tested for safety annually and between tenancies;
- **all gas appliances and flues are checked by a CORGI registered engineer for safety every 12 months; and a copy of the gas safety report is given to all tenants;**
- furnished property/dwelling units conform to the Furniture and Furnishing (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988;
- all properties/dwelling units are provided with a minimal level of energy efficiency measures, to include:-
 1. tank and pipe lagging;
 2. roof void insulation to Building Regulation Standard;
- all relevant public liability insurance is in place for the dwelling.

Landlords should also consider the following matters:-

- where the dwelling is in single household occupation, basic fire safety measures which may include interlinked mains powered smoke alarms with circulation areas of the dwelling;
- security measures are provided in accordance with the recommendations of the area Crime Prevention Officer and which do not conflict with legally required fire safety requirements.

2.4 Right to be Represented

Landlords shall agree:-

- to work with and co-operate with all agencies providing a service for tenants in respect of any complaint or grievance.

2.4 **Right to Afford to Stay in Property**

Landlords shall:-

- accept a deposit of no more than six weeks rent which will be returnable providing that the tenants obligations have been met within 28 working days of such obligations being complied with;
- where accommodation benefit recipients, ensure a pre-tenancy determination has been requested.

3.0 **At the End of a Tenancy**

Landlords shall ensure that:

- they have followed the correct legal procedures to end a tenancy;
- where disputes arise between owners and tenants, a reasonable and prompt response is adopted in order to effect a satisfactory resolution to the problem;
- when properties are vacated **immediately** steps are taken to leave the premises, yards and gardens etc. in a safe, secure and hygienic condition.

4.0 **Equal Opportunities**

Landlords shall ensure that

- in the provision and letting of housing or associated services no person or group of persons applying will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons

**Private Rented Sector
Landlord Accreditation Scheme**

I would like to be considered for approval under any new scheme. Please send me an application form when the scheme commences.

Your name:

Your address:
.....
.....
.....

Your telephone number:

Your e-mail address:

Your comments/suggestions on how landlord accreditation should operate

If you require further general advice about the Council's proposals for a Landlord Accreditation Scheme please contact:-

Rob Pearce,
Principal Policy and Planning Officer – Housing Strategy
Housing Services,
Norfolk House,
Walker Place,
ROTHERHAM.

Tel: 01709 (82)3437
Fax: 01709 (82)3430
E-Mail: rob.pearce@rotherham.gov.uk

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

GOOD LANDLORD SCHEMES STANDARDS

**Housing and Environmental Services,
Housing Strategy
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council,
Norfolk House,
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S65 1HX**



R. Pearce
(May 2004)

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
HOUSING STRATEGY – PRIVATE LANDLORD ACCREDITATION

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

**ROTHERHAM'S NEW ACCREDITATION SCHEME
FOR PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSING**

STANDARDS REQUIRED

The standards are associated with compliance with:-

- a) Gas Safety
- b) Electrical Safety
- c) Fire Safety
- d) Furniture Safety (if let furnished)
- e) Fitness and suitability for habitation
- f) Repair
- g) Management

Gas Safety

Owners of rented property are required to have all gas appliances checked by a CORGI registered person for safety at least once per year and provide a copy of the safety certificate for tenants. Servicing of appliances is a separate activity from that of a safety check. Servicing should also be carried out annually.

Carbon monoxide (CO) sensor alarms located close by all gas appliances would be desirable.

Electrical Safety

The electrical installation including wiring, switches and sockets must be in a safe condition and inspected by a competent electrician, preferably NICEIC approved. Any report should recommend how often the installation should be re-inspected. In the event of defects/danger signs, an electrician must be called immediately.

In furnished lets portable electrical equipment should have a PAT test carried out.

Fire Precautions

Smoke alarms should be provided in all rented accommodation. However, the standard for multi-let properties, because of the higher risk, requires the provision of adequate means of alarm; fire protection and escape route for tenants. The precise specification will be determined following an inspection by an Environmental Health Officer/Fire Protection Officer depending on the circumstances. Fire precautions

must be well maintained and alarm systems tested regularly. Requirements will include either a Part 6 mains interlinked or L2 systems.

Furniture Safety

All furniture provided in furnished lettings must meet the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended) which covers beds, mattresses, lounge suites, cushions, pillows etc., and be labeled accordingly if possible. Responsibility for compliance rests with the person letting the property.

Fitness and Suitability for Habitation

Properties must be fit for habitation at the beginning of any tenancy and be maintained in that condition for the duration of the tenancy. In simple terms this means compliance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1985 which requires that the house is:

- Structurally stable.
- Free from serious disrepair.
- Free from dampness which is prejudicial to health.
- Has adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation.
- Has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water.
- Has satisfactory facilities for the cooking and preparation of food including a sink with a hot and cold water supply.
- Has an internal WC.
- Has a suitably located bath or shower and a wash hand basin, each with a hot and cold water supply.
- Has an effective drainage system for both foul and surface water.

and complies with the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Sections 8 & 10 which also relate to fitness for habitation.

The property must not be overcrowded or must not be intended for letting in such a manner that it would result in overcrowding i.e.

There must be a sufficient number of bedrooms to avoid the need for people of opposite sex, over the age of ten, sleeping in the same room UNLESS living together as husband and wife.

AND

- a) Rooms of less than 50 sq. ft. shall not be regarded as habitable.

- b) Rooms between 50 and 70 sq. ft. shall not be used for sleeping by anybody aged 10 or over.
- c) Rooms between 70 and 90 sq. ft. shall not be used for sleeping by more than 1 adult (or 2 children) – (a child is defined as someone under the age of 10).
- d) Rooms between 90 and 110 sq. ft. shall not be used for sleeping by more than 1 adult and 1 child, OR 3 children.
- e) Rooms greater than 110 sq. ft. should not be used for sleeping by more than 2 adults, 1 adult and 2 children OR 4 children.

Repair

Owners of rented property are required to maintain the property in reasonable repair at all times. It is also essential that emergency procedures are in place for the tenant should circumstances demand urgent remedial actions.

Management

The property must be well managed. In the case of Houses in Multiple Occupation this must extend to all communal areas and shared facilities, ensuring good maintenance and cleanliness.

Management responsibility also extends to decorations – both internal and external, gardens, refuse storage and boundaries.

Thermal Comfort

We will offer help to facilitate improvements to the thermal comfort of houses that are accredited under the scheme:-

- All loft spaces to have a minimum 200 mm insulation.
- Cavity walls to have cavity wall insulation.
- Hot water cylinders to have a suitable a jacket.
- Properties should be free from serious condensation.
- We will offer advice on home energy efficiency to landlords and their tenants through the Council's Home Energy Advice section.

This will include advice on, for example, the fridge/freezer saving scheme.

- We will advise landlords of the availability of discounted energy efficiency work, for example, the central heating discount scheme through "Save 'n' Warm".

By virtue of paragraph(s) 7, 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) 7, 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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