

Welcome

From the Chair, to issue 9 of Private Renting Matters.

Changes to Planning Requirements for C4 houses



It was confirmed by Development Control, that from 1 October this year Planning permission is no longer required for newly created small (3 – 6 occupiers) shared houses.

A question was raised about whether an 'article 4' declaration would be made limiting the zones or numbers of student houses. This is one of the areas to be considered following completion of the study into student housing in the city currently being undertaken by Development Control.

Study of student housing in the City



The Chair, Vice Chair and various representatives from PCC, University, residents groups etc., recently attended a focus group as part of a study being undertaken by Development Control (as above item).

A draft report should be available in the next couple of weeks and members will be advised when this is available for viewing on the website. A map showing density of student housing across the city was brought to the meeting. Its accuracy was queried – exemptions from council tax had been used and this could only be an indicator. Some felt that it was a bit late to be trying to control the density and location of student housing when some areas were already at saturation point. University reported that student numbers were steady this year with an increasing percentage staying at home rather than seeking accommodation in the private rented sector.

Council Tax Issues

Discussed again issue of when landlord should be responsible on abandonment of accommodation. Pam Dean reiterated their position and could not see that they would change it. (See previous editions of PRM) However they would not want this to become a big issue and did not think it was as she felt this was the first time it had been raised. Had hoped for update from Philip Oke but unfortunately he was not able to attend due to work commitments.

Issue of bedsits being banded as flats not resolved – Pam advised they had to abide by what valuation officer determined and had to refer properties to him if the existing assessment did not seem to be correct.

In general where a property is in bedsits and there are separate tenancy agreements, the landlord is the responsible person; where the whole property is shared the occupiers will be responsible (although student properties are exempt).

Devon Law

Meeting was advised that Devon Law would not be attending in future as they no longer had funding to operate after 15 October 2010.

Parking Review

The Council is undertaking a review of on street parking in the city.

There had been a chance to fill in an on-line questionnaire about parking on street (now closed) in Plymouth and all those holding a residents' parking permit had been sent a questionnaire.

The information from this is now being collated in order to form a view about whether changes are needed and, if so, what they should be. Updates at future meetings and in local press.

Refuse and Students

LJ had met with waste enforcement team and collection manager again following their attendance at August meeting. They reported considerable problems at this time of year with cardboard being dumped in lanes.

A number of fixed penalty notices have been issued. There was a complaint about the state of North Hill on Sunday morning – council clean the street but do not do anything about front gardens.

This would be down to occupiers and would not be possible to say who had dumped the refuse, however information would be passed to enforcement team for comment.

LJ will send out notice about collection days and useful links to website with minutes in order to get information on good practice out to students.

Plymouth EXPO

Westcountry Landlords Association reported that the EXPO held at the Guildhall in September had been well attended.

On the question of visits to confirm that dwellings are empty, Pam agreed that there needed to be a level of trust and that visits would be sporadic.

[More News in brief >>>](#)

Produced for the Private Rented Forum by
[Westcountry Landlords Association](#)