

The Scheme Executive

**Minutes of meeting held on 25th November 2009 at 1:00 pm in the Graduate School,
University of Hull**

Present

Reece Andrew (RA)	Chairperson
Belinda Garry (BG)	Scheme Administrator
Andrew Lee	University of Hull
Jill Cooper (JCo)	University of Hull
Ben Ball (BBa)	Lincoln University
Amy Fairweather	Lincoln University
Jason Coleman (JC)	Humber Landlords Association
Paul Ramsey	Humber Landlords Association
Ben Wilcox	Hull University Union
Alice Marshall	Hull University Union
Julie Hilton	Hull City Council
Graeme Barley	Hull City Council
Christopher Baker	Hull City Council

Apologies

Simon Allison (SA)	University of Hull
Gina Rayment (GR)	Hull University Advice Centre
George Slater (GS)	University of Hull
Steven Greaves	Lincoln University Union

In Attendance

Tracy Webb Secretary

The meeting began with introductions.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Action Plan items discussed

2. Lettings Boards Update

GB – A code regarding Letting Boards has now been drawn up and finalised by KuHCC in agreement with landlords. The code will be a voluntary one aimed at all landlords and not only Scheme landlords. If landlords fail to comply to the code then it is likely that councillors will then ask for enforcement which may mean that planning will need to be requested each time a landlord wants to erect a letting sign which would not be beneficial for anyone. Signs are not to be put up until one week before the Lettings Fair (Wednesday 27th January 2010) and should be removed by 1st May 2010 unless not let and then to be removed within 14 days of letting the property.

The code was accepted by the Executive and it was agreed that it will be included as a condition of membership in the new Landlords Handbook.

A press release will be issued in co-operation with the Students Union.

3. Government Proposed Legislation on HiMO's

BBa already aware of proposed legislation though this has not been endorsed.

RA HCC now approves building for student accommodation in the City Centre, even though Hull has its own Student Village in the Newland Avenue area. There seems to be different legislations for different HiMO's.

BW concerned that more accommodation is now further away and has raised this with KuHCC. There may be need to change attitude rather than policy. RA informed that this is a national issue and not just local. Need to liaise closely with KuHCC (Julie Hilton) regarding accreditation. KuHCC need to review report and feedback to the Executive. Seems to be wider than the Scheme remit.

BBa says more to do with student conduct than housing.

RA to liaise with HCC over these issues.

4. Rise in Student Population and Effects on the Local Community

BW has advised of the proposed Student Community Strategy in relation to the increased number of students now within the private sector community. Problems that have been brought to their attention in particular houses, SU have sent letters to those houses (noise problems in Falmouth Street) and have had a good reaction from those residents so far. Also SU have created a Shush Campaign for students leaving Asylum, by giving out lollipops and on Wednesdays water to try and keep them quiet on their way home to avoid noise issues within Taylor Court, Cranbrook Avenue and Newland Avenue.

BW has a meeting with Street Angels who help 'intoxicated' students home on Saturday nights to help with noise levels. HUU are involved with the Newland Avenue Christmas lights event this year.

BW has put ideas forward for meetings within the Beverley Road, University and Newland Wards to involve the community and the local Councillors for ways in which to deal with any current problems. BW feels Scheme is in a unique position in order to help with events and publicity and hope to change stereotypical views of students.

Ideas were supported by the Executive, however concerned as these views are not always continued every year with each SAB team, any projects should be passed on so that continuation is maintained.

5. Inspection Feedback

BG has informed that Standards for properties have moved forward considerably since the inception of The Scheme. There are some houses that are still not aesthetically pleasing but overall the safety features are now compliant. However students still do not always look past the decor of a property and some education is required in this area.

CB advised that 100 inspections had taken place by Hull City Council and that more will continue to be done. CB is to provide a comparison of licensing.

RA informed that there is a 20% level of rubbish in gardens that is currently on view. To raise in the Scheme guide and also through Students Union that non house waste rubbish should be removed by landlords. Also advised that there is a Recycling Point behind 52 Cranbrook Avenue which is open to all.

6. Example Welcome Back Information

BG provided letter currently sent out by The University of Nottingham.

BW suggested that these sort of letters although a good idea would be seen as being sent from authority if sent by the University or the Council. BBa suggested it may be best coming from the Students Union. BW to provide letter to be sent.

RA hopes this to continue on a yearly basis.

7. 2009 Intake Update/ Planning for 2010 Intake

JC advised that at the beginning of Session the University portfolio was full and in total we directed 600 first year students to the Scheme, including 80 to Pacific Court. Positive feedback from the arrivals day from both students and parents. Intake is expected to be the same for 2010/11 and hopefully remain stable for 2011/12. Some problems occurred where landlords were unable to provide properties or needed to change properties at the last minute due to re-letting or not ready, both within the Scheme and Head Leasing. First year students do not wish to live with 3rd/4th year students and this would not be ideal.

BBa advised their numbers had increased by 500.

BW requested if Loten Building would be returned to Student Accommodation. RA confirmed this would not be the case.

BG advised that there are currently 1000+ Scheme properties. BG to find out from landlords if they will be taking on any new properties in time for next Session. The geographical area has been widened for student properties for first year students due to demand. However to minimise isolation the Scheme Administrator tried to accommodate students in several houses on the same street. An example was Park

Grove which was used this year and has worked well using four properties in that Grove.

RA suggested that accommodation closer to the University be reserved for first years as there are potentially a large number of properties available on Princes Avenue, however reserving bed spaces closer to the University could be seen as discriminative to Continuing students. If the University can provide figures then landlords may be more willing to reserve places for students. RA to look into this and any guarantee given to landlords.

Long term strategy is that the increased numbers are short term due to the demographic downturn; this will probably start with Session 2011 but hopefully the numbers will be maintained. Plans for new University accommodation are still at the discussion stage. University is looking towards PG Research Students and increasing International Students for the future.

8. Waste Management Proposals

BW had a meeting with the Council in regards to Waste Management. Need to emphasise by informing residents of bin collection days, maybe this can be included in property packs given by the University or landlord. Leaflets from the Council often get lost with the junk mail through the door.

BBa suggested landlord's have a generic information sheet for specific streets.

JCo advised that it is sometimes hard to get students to conform, as the Council have different days per each side of the street the information sheet would be difficult to maintain and set up. Bring out the bins day was a good idea, just not very well advertised.

AL suggested that the Executive has a communications campaign at certain points throughout the year and to make sure that all students get set information. AL/BW to discuss options about perhaps emailing the information out.

RA advised that BW should make contact with Trevor Savage, Environmental Officer, who will be able to advise on Waste Management.

9. Any Other Business

1) Student loans – still approx. 1000 students waiting for their loans to come through. Appeals to be patient while asking for money, may be advisable to ask for a copy of the letter from the loan company that the money will be coming through. Sector 1, London recently evicted students for none payment of their first instalment. University of Hull will not be following suit.

2) Local Election Voting – BW advised that Susan Duvall has informed him that students in the area are not forthcoming with information in order to register in the area to vote, but she is finding it difficult to find the information she needs from the University. AL suggested that Student Records would be the area to help provide any information required for this, just may have been missed due to the time of year the information was

asked for. 87% of the Newland area have registered to vote, but need to cover the University and Cottingham Areas.

3) AL raised how complaints should be dealt with in regards to behaviour rather than housing problems? Should the Scheme be involved in some way? JC informed that it can be difficult for complaints to be followed up due to Data Protection as Advice Centre are not allowed to tell us who originally made the complaint so we are unable to follow the matter up to find out if it is resolved.

AL asked if there are any particular themes of specific problems coming through.

RA asked BG to produce a report of complaints possibly for the next Executive.

4) Accommodation Fair –mystery shoppers to be set up by the Students Union. To provide feedback on information given by landlords. Housing Info Week caused a few problems in 2009, as students thought it was the time to look for housing. BW confirmed that nothing under this name had been set up for next year.

5) CB advised that the handbook would need to be amended to include electrical installation requirements, certificates are to be provided every 5 years. Properties for 2 people and under are exempt from this scheme. ICI certificate to be provided for each property and are part of the safety check standardisation. Need to draw student's attention to this fact. EPC's, although no enforcement this was confirmed as being in the Landlords Handbook but should be in Students Scheme Handbook for information. There is a need to know how to police this with students and to bring it to their attention. There is the provision to input the details on the Scheme website i.e. current and potential ratings. Landlords need to send EPC information to The Scheme to have the details added on if they have not done so already.

6) Next meeting January 2010, before the Accommodation Fair, date to be advised.

10. Action Plan

Minute	Action	By Whom
2. Lettings Board Update	Press release	RA/BW
3. Government Proposed Legislation on HiMO's	To liaise with HCC over Studentification.	RA
5. Inspection Feedback	To include information on garden waste in landlords booklet.	BG
6. Example Welcome Back Information	Letter to be created by Students Union.	BW
8. Waste Management Proposals	Communication campaign and standard letters to be sent out to students to be set up.	AL/BW
9. Any Other Business	2) List to be created of current Student addresses by Student Records? 3) Report of complaints. 4) Students Union to provide Mystery shoppers for the	BW BG BW/AM

	lettings period. 5) Scheme handbook to include information on certificates and EPC's.	BG
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