

# News Desk

February, 2008

## SUPER TUESDAY

FOLLOWING A USEFUL MEETING LAST YEAR WITH SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS, GRAHAM ALLEN, MP FOR Nottingham North arranged for a delegation including Cllr. Dave Trimble, Shane Neville (Planning) Mike Cole (Student Strategy) and Maya Fletcher (NAG) to meet with Iain Wright MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning on Tuesday, 5 February, 2008. The University of Nottingham also sent a representative.

Top of the agenda was the urgent need for Government to enact changes to planning legislation which will require people who want to change a family home into an HMO to apply for permission to do so. Indications are that Government is becoming increasingly receptive to the arguments put forward by the delegation.

The Minister has accepted an invitation from Cllr. Trimble to come to Nottingham. He has also accepted the NAG's invitation to meet with us and visit our neighbourhoods some time in late spring.

## NOTTINGHAM IS VENUE FOR NATIONAL MEETINGS

ON THURSDAY, 13 MARCH, 2008, THE COUNCIL HOUSE WILL HOST THE SECOND COUNCILLORS' CAMPAIGN for Balanced Communities Conference. The venue and part of the programme will be shared by delegates to a meeting of the National HMO Lobby hosted by the Nottingham Action Group.

Speakers including Dr. Roberta Blackman-Woods MP for Durham and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Balanced and Sustainable Communities, Dr. Richard Tyler, Co-ordinator of the National HMO Lobby, and Cllr. Alan Clark, Executive Board Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Regeneration, will give their perspectives on 'balanced communities'.

Themes for talks and discussions include: '**Managing Studentification**' – noise, car parking, waste disposal (with Nottingham's Environmental Services officers); '**Planning for Studentification**' – Local Development Frameworks (LFDs) and their uses (with Andrew Crates, Community Planning Officer, Leeds City Council); '**The Politics of Studentification**' (with Dr. Darren Smith, Reader in Human Geography, University of Brighton).

The events are free for Nottingham Action Group and National HMO Lobby members. **We hope to see a good number of NAG members at the Council House on the day ...!**

## PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR TO BE FOCUS OF REVIEW

A MAJOR REVIEW TO IMPROVE THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED BY HOUSING AND Planning Minister Yvette Cooper. The review will look at how the increasing number of buy to let accommodation and student tenants has impacted on the private rented sector, the quality of homes and who the users of the sector are. It will also examine the impact of demographic and social change on the future demand and supply in the sector

The terms of reference of the review include the questions: '*What are the tenant and landlord views and experiences of the sector? What are their priorities for change and how can these contribute to policy development?*'

At the meeting with the Nottingham delegation on Tuesday, 5 February, Iain Wright MP said that he was keen for Nottingham (including the NAG) to contribute to this review

## TAKE-AWAYS FEELING THE HEAT

OWNERS OF TAKE-AWAYS IN LENTON AND RADFORD ARE CLAIMING THAT THEY ARE LOSING BUSINESS because they are not able to cater for students wanting late night/early morning food.

The *Evening Post* has reported that the City Council's Development Control Committee has authorized its officers to take enforcement action against take-aways serving food after midnight when they only have planning permission to stay open until 11 or 11.30 p.m.

The owner of El Passo Pizza on Lenton Boulevard was quoted as saying: '*This is a student area. They need some place to eat when they come back from the clubs. ...*'.

Apparently, he had spent £1,000 in 2005 to get a licence to remain open until 4.00 a.m. without also applying for planning permission to do so.

He says he will challenge the Council's decision and will be speaking to his local councillor shortly.

The City Council see controlling the hours take-aways are open as an important way of protecting local amenities, creating a family-friendly atmosphere, and achieving the long-term objective of restoring balanced and sustainability to our neighbourhoods in Lenton and Radford.

**VISIT THE NAG WEBSITE:**

**[www.nottinghamaction.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamaction.org.uk)**

## WELCOME TO NEW HOUSING MINSTER

CAROLINE FLINT HAS SUCCEEDED YVETTE COOPER AS HOUSING MINSTER AT THE DEPARTMENT OF Communities and Local Government. Ms. Flint said shortly after arriving at her new post: *'I am delighted to have been appointed Housing Minister. Housing is a key priority for this Government. We desperately need more affordable housing – to help first-time buyers and young families who are struggling to get a foot on the housing ladder. And we need to tackle the challenge of climate change by making our homes greener. I relish the opportunity to drive forward the Government's ambitious programme of investment and reform.'*

## HMO LICENSING

IT IS A REQUIREMENT OF THE HOUSING ACT 2004 THAT ALL HMOs WITH 3 OR MORE STOREYS AND 5 OR more occupants are licensed. The fee is around £600 for each property and is valid for 5 years.

Three pilot HMO Action Zones have been set up in some neighbourhoods in Nottingham (The Arboretum, The Lenton 'Drives' and parts of Sneinton) with high concentrations of HMOs. Extra officers are now operating in those areas to raise the profile of the licensing scheme and to ensure that all licensable HMOs are licensed.

It appears that landlords are being very slow in applying for licences despite a great deal of advance warning.

In cases where landlords fail to licence their HMOs, the Council is prepared to prosecute.

## IS THERE A WHEELIE BIN ON A PAVEMENT NEAR YOU?

THE CITY COUNCIL IS TAKING FORMAL ACTION IN CASES WHERE WHEELIE BINS ARE LEFT OUT ON Streets. Failure to comply will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. Repeated failure to comply will result in prosecution.

We understand that the first prosecutions will take place in February.

## 'TO LET' – 'LET BY' SIGNS

THE CITY COUNCIL AND UNIPOL NOTTINGHAM ARE LOOKING INTO STOPPING LANDLORDS AND THEIR agents displaying 'To Let' and 'Let By' signs past the statutory limits (14 days after granting of a tenancy) and to controlling the size and position of signs.

Action taken in Leeds has resulted in smaller and far fewer 'To Let' and 'Let By' boards in areas like Headingley with large numbers of HMOs.

## UNIVERSITY INCREASING OVERSEAS STUDENT INTAKE

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM – BRITAIN'S LEADING LIGHT IN THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER Education – confirmed this week that overseas student numbers at its British Campuses have hit an all time high

with 7,500 students from 141 nations. The total number of UK students at its University Park, Jubilee and Sutton Bonington campuses is now 23,500. In a press release, Vincenza Raimo, Director of the University's International office said: *'Despite an increasingly turbulent world political and economic environment, the University of Nottingham had a record international student intake this year. Just like many British students, international students come to Nottingham for its vibrant international community - being able to mix with students from so many different countries greatly adds to the educational and social experience. We firmly believe it helps to prepare them better for today's global employment market. The city itself offers a warm welcome and fantastic social and cultural life, with new architecture, galleries, shopping and entertainment, enjoyed by UK and international students alike.'*

## INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE

A NEW TOWN GOWN WEBSITE HAS BEEN LAUNCHED THAT FOCUSES ON COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR communities that surround higher educational institutions. The site has both an international and an academic focus, examining the planning processes being used in various parts of the world to address near-campus-neighbourhood well being. The site is a collaborative effort, with contributing authors from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada who add their expertise to town and gown planning. TownGown World encourages contributors from a variety of demographic groups and geographic areas to contribute to our knowledge of community-planning issues that affect near-campus communities.'

[Press Release from the Editor, TownGown World  
[www.towngownworld.com](http://www.towngownworld.com)]

## ASPIRE: A TOWERING AMBITION

AS REPORTED IN THE NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST RECENTLY, A MYSTERY BENEFACTOR IS PAYING (£800,000) for a sculpture at the University of Nottingham's Jubilee Campus site, to be called 'Aspire'.

It has been designed by Ken Shuttleworth, the architect of London's Gherkin building and it will be the tallest free-standing artwork in the country. It will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University's Royal Charter.

Vice-Chancellor, Sir Colin Campbell, said: *'... it conveys the ambition of our city – which aspires to greater prosperity, more highly skilled and knowledge-based employment, improved educational standards and an excellent quality of life.'*

At 60 m, the sculpture is which taller than Nelson's Column, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Brazil's Christ the Redeemer statue and three times the height of the Angel of the North.

Made of 8 m of concrete and 52 m of red and orange steel, the sculpture will dominate the City's skyline. It will be lit at night and seen for miles.

Comments about the installation on the Nottingham Evening Post's website cruelly include:

*What a mess I think that the money can be better spent, its a eyesore I hope that it does not get planning permission*  
*My nomination for the name of the wonderful creation is The Waste Paper Basket.*

We can report it did get planning permission.