

News Desk

March, 2008

BBC INSIDE OUT SPECIAL REPORT ON STUDENTIFICATION

FOUR YEARS AGO, THE BBC'S EAST MIDLANDS 'INSIDE OUT' PROGRAMME FILMED STUDENTIFICATION IN PROGRESS ON THE STREETS OF LOUGHBOROUGH AND Lincoln.

Last Autumn, largely as a result of the efforts of the NAG and our colleagues in the National HMO Lobby, the programme's producers decided to return to the subject, this time focussing on Nottingham's student/HMO issues as well as revisiting Loughborough.

The team spent a day visiting parts of Lenton and then they came to a meeting of the NAG at the Hillside Club later that evening.

A special report based on last autumn's filming is due to go out on as part of the BBC's Inside Out programme on **Friday, 28 March 2008 at 7.30 p.m.** In addition, Radio Leicester and Radio Nottingham are both going to broadcast items relating to the programme earlier that day.

In the case of Radio Nottingham, this will probably involve early morning (8.40 a.m. or thereabouts) interviews with a representative from the University of Nottingham and some-one from the NAG.

SUCCESSFUL COUNCILLORS CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL HMO LOBBY MEETING

ON THURSDAY, 13 MARCH MORE THAN 80 DELEGATES FROM THE COUNCILLORS CAMPAIGN FOR BALANCED COMMUNITIES AND THE NATIONAL HMO LOBBY MET IN the Council House for a full day of events focussing on Balanced Communities and 'The Agenda for Change'.

The NAG hosted the National HMO Lobby side of the day. Lobby members came from as far a field as Canterbury, Leeds, Manchester, Southampton and Swansea, as well as from our near-neighbours in Loughborough and Leicester.

As Richard Tyler said in a report he has mailed out to the National HMO Lobby: '... it was good to see so many new faces!'

Judging from feedback after the meeting, the whole day was a success and well worth the effort that had gone into it.

The NAG website will carry some of the presentations and papers given during the day and the NAG magazine will fill in with more information.

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR REVIEW RESEARCH UNDER WAY NOW

IN HER KEYNOTE SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE ON THE 13 MARCH, ROBERTA BLACKMAN-WOODS, CHAIR OF THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON BALANCED and Sustainable Communities urged everyone to send their representations to Dr. Julie Rugg of York University who is conducting the research on behalf of the Government.

Dr. Rugg has a list of questions she wants to address with respect to the student renting sector.

THE QUESTIONS:

- Can the private rented sector (PRS) deliver student housing without undermining community cohesion?
- Can the PRS accommodate a further increase in student numbers?
- What policies can local authorities and HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) put in place to ameliorate the concerns of local residents?
- What is the contribution of large-scale private sector halls of residence ('purpose build') – the advantages and the disadvantages?

Because the timescale set by Government for the review is so short, the NAG committee has had to send in a preliminary representation via Richard Tyler and the National HMO Lobby without consultation with NAG members.

However, the NAG will act independently on Dr. Blackman-Woods' advice and will put together a representation to send to, amongst others, Dr. Rugg and her colleagues. To do this the NAG needs to ask:

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Your answers to Dr. Rugg's questions along with your comments are important. The NAG will use them to help prepare the document to be sent to Dr. Rugg.

So please, let us have them, and the sooner the better.

E-mail us at: contact@nottinghamaction.org.uk

Telephone us on: 07762-525-625

Write to us: c/o the Hillside Club, 357a Derby Road, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DZ

GOVERNMENT TO CONSULT ON HMOs AND PLANNING LEGISLATION

DURING 2008 THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE ISSUING A CONSULTATION PAPER INVITING COMMENTS ON potential changes to the current Use Class Order, particularly in relation to Use Class Order for dwellings (C3) and the current definitions of what constitutes an HMO.

In preparation for this (and as indicated by Iain Wright when the Nottingham delegation met with him in February) the DCLG is commissioning research into the problems associated with high concentrations of houses in multiple occupation with particular reference to HMOs occupied by students.

FOCUS GROUP TO MEET IN NOTTINGHAM

AS PART OF THE DCLG COMMISSIONED RESEARCH, FOCUS GROUPS ARE TO MEET IN A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY TOWNS AND CITIES, INCLUDING ONE ON Thursday, 3 April in Nottingham.

A number of people from interested agencies (including the Council, universities, students, landlords and residents) have been invited to attend.

Two representatives from the Nottingham Action Group have been asked to joint the focus group.

The group will have a chance to discuss, amongst other things: the positive and negative effects of studentification; which planning and non-planning tools can be used to address the problems; what barriers exist to implementation of them.

Similar meetings are scheduled to take place in Leeds, Loughborough, Southampton and Bristol

NOTTINGHAM ACTION GROUP TO ATTEND HMO SEMINAR

THE NAG HAS ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO ATTEND A SEMINAR IN LONDON ON THURSDAY, 9 APRIL AS PART OF THE EVIDENCE-GATHERING WORK INITIATED BY Iain Wright's team.

Cllr. Dave Trimble has also accepted an invitation to attend.

The aim of the seminar is to look at the emerging outcomes of the research under way and to discuss options on how to move forward.

We understand the seminar will look at HMOs occupied by migrant workers as well as those with student tenants.

The number of attendees will be limited to 35 to 40 which should be enough to get a spread of views whilst ensuring that everyone gets heard.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are estimated to be around 8,000 HMOs in the City of Nottingham, three times the national average. Over half are occupied by students. Only 50% are subject to mandatory HMO licensing.

FIXED PENALTIES FOR WHEELIE BINS IN LENTON DRIVES

THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF SOMEONE IN SNEINTON HERMITAGE WHO PERSISTENTLY LEFT HIS WHEELIE BIN ON THE pavement took place recently. Subsequently, at a recent meeting of the Council's Student Co-ordination and Delivery Group, Lenton Drives HMO Action Zone team reported that it had issued over 200 warnings to HMO households in the Drives area of Lenton regarding wheelie bins left out on pavements.

Two student households (with 10 occupants between them) have been issued with Fixed Penalty Notices.

We understand non-payment of these fines will result in prosecution.

UNIPOL-DASH CODE - STUDENT HOUSING CONSULTATION

UNIPOL FINALLY ARRIVED IN NOTTINGHAM IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR. SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN WORKING TO ESTABLISH ITSELF AS THE FIRST PORT OF call for students looking for accommodation in the private rented sector.

As part of its work, UNIPOL is undertaking a review of the present accreditation scheme (to be renamed the UNIPOL-DASH Code) and its standards.

Three NAG members are representing us on a working group set up specifically to review the proposals for the new Code and to establish the new standards that all accredited landlords will have to comply with.

Part of the Code relates to 'the community' and includes responsibility of landlord/tenants when it comes to maintaining the property and its curtilage in a decent state, proper waste management, etc.

Once the ground work has been completed, the Code will go out for extensive consultation and it is hoped that the NAG will be able to organize at least one public consultation event at which established residents will be able to hear about the new Code, ask questions, and make suggestions.

More information about what is happening in the Nottingham student housing market can be found in a briefing by UNIPOL to landlords and published on the UNIPOL Nottingham website:

<http://www.unipol.org.uk/nottingham/Owners/briefing.asp>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WEDNESDAY, 4 JUNE

Dr. Darren Smith will be spending the day with the NAG in and around Nottingham, finishing up with an evening meeting open to all (time and venue to be decided).

WEDNESDAY, 23 JULY

Dr. Roberta Blackman-Woods and colleagues in the All Party Parliamentary Group are coming to Nottingham at our invitation to meet us and visit our neighbourhoods.

More information about these and other events is on its way. Keep an eye on our website:

www.nottinghamaction.org.uk