

Council: Tuesday, 5 November 2013

Non-Executive Business Item: Councillor Brian Salinger

Illegal subletting of Council accommodation

Council welcomes the enactment of the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013; legislation that makes the unlawful subletting of council owned accommodation a criminal offence.

Council notes that upwards of 100,000 council homes are being unlawfully sublet nationally, costing the taxpayer some £2 billion each year. Council further notes that there are more than 60 active cases under investigation in Barnet with a further 72 properties having been recovered in the last two and a half years.

Council firmly believes unlawful subletting to be utterly wrong, not least at a time when there is a shortage of housing – relegating those families being denied a home by this fraud to temporary accommodation, at an average cost of £18,000 per year.

Council therefore encourages anyone engaged in unlawful subletting to take advantage of the council's present amnesty, which runs until the 15th November 2013, and return the keys to the council.

Beyond this date, Council asks the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing to ensure that Barnet Homes Tenancy Fraud Team and the council's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) work together to enforce the legislation, returning abused property to the available stock, recovering the taxpayer's money and pursuing those who have conspired to deny housing to those in greatest need.

Under Council Procedure Rule, Section 1, Standing Order 23.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.