

# Private Sector Leasing Scheme Shire Homes Lettings Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 1 May 2018

**Time:** 9.30am

**Location:** G9 Room, South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Attendees:** Redacted data

## Agenda

### 1. Apologies and Minutes of the last meeting

- Apologies were received from Matthew Wynn.
- The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

### 2. Legal Updates

- The final amendments to the Service Level Agreement (SLA) have been sent back to Walker Morris.
- Walker Morris has requested further discussion with Shire Homes and Ensors, concerning the Services Fees and VAT.
- The signed SLA is needed as quickly as possible (could talk to Walker Morris without involving Ensors).
- SH will sign the SLA for Shire Homes, and a representative will sign for the Council, perhaps CR as deputy Section 151 Officer.
- Officers' Public liability insurance will be in place after the SLA is confirmed.

### 3. Finance Update

- The board discussed rent payments via the Post Office; software for this is currently being tested.
- End of financial year landlords' statements are in process of being sent out.
- The board discussed the income/expenditure sheet.
- The basis of the SLA is that the Council pays Shire Homes a sum of money each quarter, which is then adjusted to the Council accordingly.
- We will need to register for VAT once the monthly turnover has met a certain limit.
- A draft set of accounts is ready and a final version can be brought to the next meeting. Any comments regards the annual report and financial statement of accounts document 2017-18 take to JH.

### 4. Budget

ML discussed the papers regards the Council budget - detailing overheads, employment costs, and legal fees occurred by the Council (not Shire Homes) then the sum charged back to Shire Homes. Underspent by c.£82k and may request a

roll over, the need for this will have to be demonstrated. 2018/19 budget will be more detailed.

## **5. Rental Negotiations**

- Rental negotiations are ongoing.
- 11 properties are now occupied.
- Accepted offers on 3 further properties, awaiting works to be carried out.
- Another 5 in negotiations and waiting for inspections.
- 20 plus enquiries are in process.
- There are no properties located south of Cambridge City, possibly due to high rental expectations.
- We undertake regular visits to properties and ask landlords for feedback, all positive so far.
- More 3 beds than 2 beds, therefore more flexible with needs and rent costs (based on size of property rather than household size).
- There are a couple of 1-bedroom houses.
- The board discussed King Street Housing properties moving over to Shire Homes. There is one problem with rent arrears regards Section 21 (a person in Cambridge City) our Housing Benefit Team are paying the benefit. We will utilise spend to save for this from the City Council, no connection with South Cambs. Post meeting note: SCDC Discretionary Housing payment cleared the arrears.

## **6. Repairs and Maintenance**

Mears are keeping up to date with maintenance (LM monitors this) and are only carrying out day to day response repairs. Energy Performance Certificates and asbestos checks are charged to the landlord. LM to query £28.68 minimal order rate. Will review structure of the process as property numbers increase.

## **7. Negotiations with Local Authorities**

Offers have been made; SC has circulated revised figures and given other Local Authorities fixed fees, and variable fees per property. Need to recoup initial expenditure. Only looking at Fenland (5 properties), Peterborough (no response) and Huntingdonshire are waiting for a decision, then will look at Shire Homes to manage.

## **8. Marketing / Publicity**

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) are to create a promotional film, showing the good work teams are carrying out to address the housing crisis. ITN productions wish to interview a Shire Homes tenant (allocated four minutes recording time). The film is to be shown at a CIH conference and also on the ITN website, CIH website and on YouTube.

## 9. Any other business

- We are currently advertising to recruit an administrative person for the Shire Homes team and have received four applications so far. The closing date is Wednesday 9 May. Six-month fixed term position initially.
- Will use a scheme for discharging homeless duties, we need to offer a 12 month tenancy in this case, laws in the lease say a landlord can serve notice at eight months if needed (if issued a 12 month tenancy, this would be a concern). Checking with 3C Legal for advice. The board discussed this.
- We are renewing 6 monthly tenancies initially, thereafter we will go to 12 months (this enables tenant security). Maximum would be 3 years, then landlord contacted to discuss continuation (lease would have to be extended with landlord).
- LM and AS visited a property in Cambridge City (Russell Street) which the County Council are offering (is to high standard) we have made an offer to rent it. The board discussed this. Property has been empty for two years; therefore we have offered a low rent. Another property in Burwell, which we have agreed.
- We will sign the accounts outside of this board meeting (if ready).
- The board discussed who the Chair will be of this meeting (as SH is leaving the Council) – this will be updated at the next meeting.

## 10. Date of the Next Meeting

Tuesday 26 June 2018, 11am, Room G9

The minutes of this meeting held on **1 May 2018** were agreed as a correct record.

Signed by the Chair: ..... Date: .....