

Private Sector Leasing Scheme

Shire Homes Lettings Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 12 January 2021

Time: 1pm

Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting South Cambridgeshire District Council

Present: Redacted data

Agenda Item

1. Apologies and Minutes of the last meeting

- Apologies from Sue H.
- HW investigated whether Article of Association mentions the need for an Annual General meeting. It was suggested to label a board meeting as an annual general meeting (AGM). ML advised this is best being carried out in September, due to budget setting, and possibility to make the meeting a public one.

2. General update

- Current stock at 57, steady flow coming through in pipeline. Offer has come in from an investor for 4 properties in Cambridge City. Enquiries ongoing
- Majority of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) at a D but look to make this all properties. GC suggested contacting Siobhan Mellon regarding funding towards improving EPCs.

3. Houses in multiple occupation (HMO) Update

- Current stock at 3 properties, with one more 4 bedroom in Cambourne coming available shortly.

- The difficulties with the 6 bed continue, consensus is that 6 bedrooms is too large for Emma to manage, when considering the vulnerability of our tenants. We have suffered some financial implications from this issue.

4. HMO review

- SC – Overall Housing Advice have found the HMO accommodation very useful. It has kept B&B costs down and prevented homelessness. We are looking at continuing to subsidise the role through the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. There is a risk here in case the grant stops. However, ML mentioned the role is in also factored into the Shire Homes budget.
- PC suggested we complete a Financial Appraisal that includes savings and costs surrounding the role. Alternatively, the report could become more focused on the financial benefits. This should be written from a council perspective as the main aim is to benefit the council.
- No matter the decision this needs to be in line with council processes, PC suggested a discussion with Hazel Smith and also Rory in the Legal Team to ensure we are doing things correctly.

5. Repairs and Maintenance

- GC – Mears are struggling with their resources, mainly due to staffing.
- Currently the full repairs service is still going ahead, however this could change depending on the situation they have. Post meeting note: Mears have converted to emergency only for Council stock but may still continue a full reports service for Shire Homes.

6. Finance update

- ML – We are currently overachieving against the budget. Overall income and costs are level. Rents have not been reported on due to difficulties in the transition period, due to the new Orchard system.
- The business plan does need to be looked at; this can happen at the next meeting.

- LM is currently working on rent increases. Considered a value of 4% increase as tenants have not had an increase in the past 3 years, however the business plan assumes 2%. LM to continue working on this with a commencement date of potentially beginning of March or April.

7. Business Plan

- No further update regarding current lockdown, situation has remained the same. Vulnerable tenants have been referred to Supporting People Team who are organising welfare checks by telephone.

8. Any other business

- Risk assessment to be discussed at next meeting with more attendees.
- LM mentioned difficulties with the new Orchard system, since the departure of DP, issues have arisen. LM to discuss with Martyn or Matt.
- The leases have been amended by an external legal team. Amendments include the notice period has been changed from 4 months to 6 months. This is in line with the new court procedures.

9. Future Meeting

Please ensure all background papers are distributed a few days prior to the meeting.

Next meeting 20 April 2021 1pm

The minutes of this meeting held on 12 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Signed by the Chair: Date: