

# Shire Homes Lettings Board Meeting

## Private Sector Leasing Scheme

**Date:** 5 September 2017

**Present:** Redacted data

**Apologies:** Reacted data :

### 1. Matters arising from last meeting minutes

- Landlord documentation updated, to give a softer approach.
- Missed the advert deadline for South Cambs Magazine, but SC had written an article with regard to Homelessness Prevention and mentioned the PSL Scheme.
- The previous cabinet report, mentioned the additional costs associated with renting a property, worked out at £50 per week/per property based on 70 or £56 per week/per property based on 40.

### 2. Legal Documentation

#### 2.1 Service Level Agreement (SLA)

LM and SC had taken part in a conference call with Walker Morris this morning, to discuss the alterations to the SLA. It was following a meeting with Ensors (our financial advisors) requesting that the SLA document should be split into two documents (Agency Agreement/SLA).

#### 2.2 Shire Newco Limited

SH has signed all the necessary documentation to strike off the original company. The cost of this piece of work is £10, which will be added to the next Walker Morris invoice.

## **2.3 AC**

JH had suggested that we contact AC with a view to being assigned the 'Secretary' role within the company. Due to AC secondment to the Combined Authority, another option was to be explored. ML will discuss with JH and colleagues, about an alternative. A scheme of delegation was also discussed.

## **2.4 Signing of Leases/Council Seal**

Walker Morris have stated that the original lease will need to be signed by SH, as the only authorised signatory. It was mentioned that the seal will need to be 'Shire Homes Lettings (SHL)' seal rather than the Council. LM to discuss with DV, the process within Ermine Street Housing.

# **3. Financial Update**

## **3.1 Landlord Payment Options**

ML confirmed that the bank account is now set up and paying in books and cheque books had been received. ML reported that since Capita had been in the Open Housing system is ready to use, just the input of property details is required. MW will guide LM through this process.

## **3.2 Tenant Payment Options**

ML reported that the Capita AIM system where payments are directed to the right accounts is awaiting an upgrade. This is unlikely to happen until end of October. Capita has provided costs for the work associated with setting up bank statement import and setup costs - £5,250.00.

Setting up of Internet payment funds (so that debit card payments can be received) will cost - £1,562.50.

The set up costs for Post Office and Paypoint will be £1,100.00.

### **3.3 Invoice Payment**

It had been agreed that payment certification sheets will be coloured 'green' for ease of clarification.

### **3.4 Public Liability Insurance for Officers and Directors**

LM and SC had been in correspondence with KT at the City who was organising. The insurance company have requested more information with regard to an item mentioned within the SLA about incurring debt. SC had mentioned this to Walker Morris, who believes it was in the context of 'cash flow'. It was noted that as the SLA was not finalised, and that the wording could be changed.

### **3.5 Ensor's (Financial Advisors)**

A meeting took place in early August, to discuss the implications of being VAT registered amongst other items on the agenda. Ensor's will be pursue these enquiries with the Tax Office, as well as the option of 'Mutual Trading'. Post meeting note: An invoice, for their work to date, had been received, totalling £1,200.

## **4. Budget**

### **4.1 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant**

It was felt that, as long as there were sufficient funds for the King Street scheme and B&B costs, some of this money could be utilised to support some staff within the Homeless Team.

### **4.2 Expenditure**

At present, this stands at £27,000, which are mainly consist of legal and staffing costs.

## **5. Rental Negotiations**

### **5.1 Property Updates**

At present, LM has had over 50 enquires, and is currently in negotiations with 5 landlords (2 in Cambridge City and 3 in South Cambs). One of these properties is the 2 bed Shared Ownership property in Foxton. LM mentioned that the landlord is vacating on 23/9, and a nomination from the Homeless Team had been received for this property.

### **5.2 Incentives for Landlords**

AS to explore some incentives to entice landlords to come onto the scheme, including the provision of buildings insurance. Costs associated with an asbestos survey (£180) to be met by the Council initially.

### **5.3 Rent Setting**

It has been agreed, that the rent on individual properties, could be tailored to the individual tenants, i.e. LHA rate for those receiving HB and higher for those in employment, but not as high as market rents.

### **5.4 AS Role**

It was agreed that AS would source landlords for the scheme, including the incentives mentioned above.

## **6. Repairs and Maintenance Commitments**

Asbestos Surveys to be carried out, in order for Mears Contractors to enter the property safely, to carry out repairs. In light of recent events, LM to devise a Fire Safety Leaflet/Checklist for each property.

From April 2018, it is illegal to let a property which has an EPC rating below E. It was noted that some Environmental Health Officers are trained in EPC surveys.

Post meeting note: it is an 'E' rating not a 'D'.

## 7. Any Other Business

SC mentioned that she attended a meeting yesterday with colleagues from Hunts D.C. They would consider being in partnership with SCDC, for our PSL Scheme. They currently are renting properties through King Street Housing. It was thought that this is a project, in its own right, to be considered in the new financial year.

Stephen mentioned that some joint-working with the Environmental Health could be appropriate, due to their corporate plan objective, 'improve existing private rented housing standards to ensure everyone can be safe and healthy at home'. In response to this, Louise mentioned that, she had been invited to an Information Sharing meeting with MB on 13 September. MH, from Development Services had also received an invite, due to his involvement with the Empty Homes Strategy.

LM mentioned that she had a meeting this week with DL from Town Hall Lettings.

## 8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 7 November 2017 – Swansley B

Wednesday 10 January 2018 – Swansley B

I agreed that these are a true record.

Signed: .....

Stephen Hills – Director

Dated: .....