

# Private Sector Leasing Scheme

## Shire Homes Lettings Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 23 January 2019

**Time:** 1:30pm

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

**Present:** Redacted data

### Agenda Item

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

Apologies were received from (MW), (DG) and (DP)

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 2. Legal Updates

- Public Liability and Officers/Directors Insurance – public liability insurance all in place just waiting on the invoice of £3,343.20. LM has chased this and will check again.

#### 3. Directors/Governance

- AC resignation is officially complete.
- RP has now been appointed as interim secretary in replacement of AC.
- SC has spoken with Hazel about appointing a councillor. Hazel phoned LM for further information regarding this. AC clarified that cabinet can formally nominate and agree on an appointment. HW will clarify whether the Councillor will need to be on Companies House.

#### **4. Repairs and Maintenance**

- CP is looking at the maintenance contract that Shire Homes Lettings (SHL) and ESH have from Mears in terms of value, compliance, risks and assurance.
- There isn't a concern, but Mears don't have a short turnover time. Other contractors have been used for certain void properties. These contractors have been recommended by colleagues but are on councils approved list.
- ML asked how the rates compare? There is not a lot of difference, but we request a quotation, prior to any works order being issued, however the ethics of using them is the issue.

#### **5. Business Plan**

- SHL currently have 27 properties with 6 more on agreed terms. The landlords completing works is what slows things down.
- 40 is a stretched target for the end of the financial year, summer is more realistic.
- Concern was brought up whether this will bring implications in terms of finance. ML confirmed that there will be no large impact as payments are matching well.
- If there is concern or great impact at any point it will be brought to Boards attention.
- We need to be mindful of our resources within the team as the properties and workload are increasing. Possibility to expand the team.
- ST has created a flow chart for deciding whether applicants need to claim HB or UC. Caroline has a copy of this which LM will retrieve.
- SC has made a bid for a Private Rented Sector (PRS) access fund, we have the infrastructure for this however it is not certain whether we will win it. We will keep an eye out for any further pots we could bid for.
- Staff leaving / sick is a risk to negotiations, the business plan update will look at the risks.

## 6. Audit Report

- The audit was undertaken before Christmas. It was collaborative, and the Auditor listened well. Everything is fair.
- Staffing - LM being off and no admin in place is a risk. SH gave suggestion of a shadowing scheme from her team to bring suitable cover when needed. This would bring difficulty in terms of access, but it will be looked into.
- We need to be mindful of staffing capacity with increasing property numbers. We will put it on quarterly agenda.
- There was discussion about whether MH is right for the implementation of staffing, BP was a suggestion however due to him being mentioned in the report it was not agreed.
- IT – as an interim, spreadsheets should be password protected and cells to be locked to make them secure. There is a possibility of adding more data to Orchard, this will be discussed with Lucy.
- The audit report is all agreed, and everyone is happy – To be distributed.

## 7. Finance Update

- ML explained the Apr – Dec Finance Statement. Only concerns shown on the statement were from timings of outgoing and incoming payments.
- There currently isn't enough data to report on tenant recharges, but this is something that will be done in the future.
- CP mentioned the risk of Landlord recharges / liability. The 12-month break for landlords is a risk we should be prepared for.
- Discussion on whether we should be carrying out works on behalf of landlords as it is our incentive to take away the task for landlords. The business plan renewal should look at outweighing the benefits and time consumption for staff.
- RP wanted to confirm that using the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) approved list for contractors is okay, however Chris mentioned we shouldn't rely on someone else's list unless someone from the board also checks it.

- The repairs liability needs to be considered and Chris can give guidance on this.

## **8. Payment Option Update**

- The automated system is now working, tenants can go on website to pay rent. There is a small charge for debit cards, but this doesn't cause for any concern. ML is going to let LM know the costs generated from this, along with the post office card costs.
- There is no update on post office payment cards, LM is catching up with MW regarding rent accounts.

## **9. Rental Negotiations**

- Cambridgeshire County Council have properties, but they are not to a good enough standard to take on, and require some work
- Ongoing negotiations with owners.

## **10. Marketing / Publicity**

- The website has been updated to be more User friendly by Mel in Comms. The Facebook page is running and being updated when required.
- Although members are already aware of SHL from the drop in in The Street, it will be useful to make them more aware which could lead to volunteers and more properties coming forward.

## **11. Any other business**

- Assurance that LM workflow is ticking over and all is okay. Issue with understanding rent accounts was raised, Louise is having a meeting with Matt to discuss this and rent arrears reporting.

## **12. Future meeting**

1:30pm to 3:30pm Wednesday 17 April 2019 – Spitfire Room.

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

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

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