

# Private Sector Leasing Scheme

## Shire Homes Lettings Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 20 May 2020

**Time:** 2pm

**Location:** Microsoft Teams Meeting, South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Present:** Redacted data

### Agenda Item

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

- The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record.
- HW to follow up on additional director role

#### 2. General update

- LM – Currently at 41 properties, 7 houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) bed spaces with an addition 6 bed space HMO and 3 more self-contained properties in the pipeline. There are been 2 hand backs.
- 3 tenancies have been started at a social distance, all tenants have been contacted for welfare checks, no concerns have been found.
- We have marketed through South Cambs magazine, Royston Crow and parish council leaflets.

#### 3. Risk Register

- SC – It is being reviewed due to COVID-19.
- Leases – LM – First lease expires this year, landlord has decided to renew. Two landlords have used their 1-year break clause, one of the tenants moved into social housing and the other transferred to another of our properties.

- Identifying properties – LM – No current risk, steady flow of properties coming in, some turned down due to being listed or requiring major work.
- Management costs – LM – no major concerns, all landlords are willing to contribute when asked.
- New LHA rate is a concern as it is 8% over market rent. PC suggested more complex rent rules to protect tenants as SC mentioned not all are on benefits so this LHA rate can be very unaffordable for them.
- LM – We will not be offering landlords new rates, most are unaware of them anyway, but we are always honest on our rental offers.
- Rent arrears and debt – LM – A few large debts but all are being worked on and none are a major concern. PC suggested increasing this risk due to COVID-19.
- Staffing – HW – HMO role is a current risk as it is not permanent, same with Admin role originally. Wording should be adjusted slightly to reflect this.
- Void costs – HW – This is a usual risk, that is increased due to COVID-19, it may well continue throughout the year. LM – This is more of a risk to the council, if it is continued and a concern then we will bring it up with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC).
- Health and safety in properties – LM – We are cautious of what we take on, no property has a EPC lower than E. CF – There could be an increase of landlords coming to us with properties lower than E. GC – we could make offers with landlords with poor properties to help bring them up to standard, benefiting the landlord and the environment.
- PC felt this risk should be increased with an impact of 5 due to carbon monoxide issues being very serious.
- Risk to staff – LM – Louise is the only one doing sign ups, leaving everything inside the properties for tenants to return in the post, contractors are carrying out emergency works or works on void properties.
- All visits are on hold, we should be closely following government guidelines.
- HMO Risks – SC – This is a new risk, the main risk being commitment to a lease we no longer wish to continue with if the HMO role is not made permanent. The risk is low, but the impact is high.

#### **4. Business Plan**

- ML – The business plan was circulated at the end of January, it needs to be approved.
- There are no new major concerns to the business plan due to COVID-19, as we are still getting a flow of properties and no major voids.

#### **5. Finance Update**

- The final accounts were circulated with the agenda, the only figure which might change is the overhead recharges from the council, as these haven't been finalised.
- Shire Homes is costing the council less than budgeted, which is a positive, our money to landlords is also lower than our rental income.
- Shire Homes have been working with audit recently, it is taking longer due to a new requirement of reporting leases, however no concerns have been raised.

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

- LM – no major updates, Mears are carrying out void and emergency repair works. They are still taking reports however all jobs are on hold until further notice.

#### **7. HMO**

- EC- currently at 2 properties with 7 rooms, all occupied and all on HB. We are in the process of taking on a 6-bedroom house through Ermine Street. There have been no issues between tenants, the mix is working well.
- CF questioned the demand, unfortunately we can only see the demand in what comes through from Housing Advice, however SH mentioned the highest demand on their service is single person accommodation.
- SH has praise for ECT work so far.

**8. Any other business**

- No further business to report.

**9. Future Meeting**

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

Next meeting to be two months' time, rather than three months' time. To be confirmed: 21 July.

The minutes of this meeting held on 20 May 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

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