

Housing and Property Chamber
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland



Decision of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) under Section 26 of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber Rules of Procedure 2017 ('The Procedure Rules') in relation to an application for extension of time limit to determine application for registration as a letting agent under Rule 93 of the Procedure Rules.

Chamber Ref: FTS/HPC/XA/19/3258

Parties:

The Scottish Government ("the Applicant")

Liberty Village (Edinburgh) Ltd ("the Respondent")

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) ("the Tribunal")

Tribunal Member: Jacqui Taylor (Legal Member)

Background

1. The Applicant submitted an Application to the Tribunal under Tribunal Rule 93 for an extension of time to determine the Respondent's application for registration as a letting agent in terms of section 33(3) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. The Application was dated 11th October 2019.

The Application stated:

'The application was made under section 32 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and was received by the Scottish Ministers on 12 October 2018. Scottish Ministers must determine the application or apply for an extension to the time to determine the application by 11 October 2019.

The registration team began processing the application on 23 October 2018.

This application is being considered alongside three other applications received from other entities within the liberty living group. These are:

- 1) Liberty Living Investments 2 LP
- 2) Liberty Living Investments 3 LP
- 3) Liberty Investments 1 Limited Partnership acting by Liberty Liv

Due to the complexity of the structure of these entities it is taking some time to determine how the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 apply to the Respondent and the other entities listed above.

The Respondent continues to seek legal advice to determine which of these entities, if any, need to apply to join the Scottish Letting Agent Register.

Depending on the legal advice received, the Respondent's application may be withdrawn or require amendments.

The Applicant therefore seeks an extension to the time limit to determine the Respondent's application to join the Scottish Letting Agent Register. This extension is to enable the Respondent to do the following:

- 1) Receive legal advice on which entity or entities are required to submit an application to the Scottish Letting Agent Register to be a registered Letting Agent.
- 2) Amend or withdraw their application as appropriate.
- 3) In the event the application is to be amended, to provide all documentation required for the applicant to determine the application.
- 4) To enable the Applicant to fully assess the additional documentation and information provided by the Respondent
- 5) The Applicant seeks an extension to the time limit to determine the application for registration as a letting agent to the 30 March 2020.

2. Documents lodged with the Tribunal.

Documents lodged with the Tribunal by the Applicant were:

2.1 A copy of an email from the Respondent's Solicitor David Bales of Brodies Solicitors dated 11th October 2019 confirming that they had no objection to the Application being made to the Tribunal.

3. Decision

3.1. Requirements of Section 93 of the Procedure Rules.

In connection with the requirements of section 93 the Application correctly detailed the requirements of section (i),(ii), (iii) (iv) and (v) of section 93 the Procedure Rules namely:-

- (i) The address of the Scottish Ministers.
- (ii) The name and address and profession of the representative of the Scottish Ministers.
- (iii) The name, address and registration number of the Respondent.
- (iv) The reason why an extension is sought and
- (v) The date of receipt by the Scottish Ministers of the application under section 32 of the 2014 Act, namely 12th October 2018.

The Application had been signed and dated by Charlotte McHaffie, a representative of the Scottish Ministers, as required.

3.2 Requirements of section 33 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

Section 33(2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 requires the Scottish Ministers to determine an application for registration of a Letting Agent within 12 months of receiving the application.

Section 33(3) of the said Act provides that the Scottish Ministers may apply to the First- tier Tribunal for an extension of the time limit by such period as the Tribunal thinks fit.

Section 33(4) of the said Act provides that the Tribunal may not extend a period unless the Scottish Ministers apply for the extension before the period expires.

The Scottish Ministers received the completed application from the Respondent on 12th October 2018. They submitted the application for extension to the First tier Tribunal on 11th October 2019 ('The Tribunal Application'). The Tribunal Application had been received timeously.

3.3 In terms of Tribunal Rule 18(1) the Tribunal may make a decision without a hearing where the facts are not disputed and to do so would not be contrary to the interests of the parties.

Tribunal Rule 18(2) provides that before making a decision under Tribunal Rule 18(1) the Tribunal must first consider any representations submitted by the parties.

The Tribunal issued a Direction to the parties dated 16th October 2019 directing them to provide the Tribunal with written representations as to whether or not they would wish a hearing to be fixed.

The Applicants sent the Tribunal written representations on 5th November 2019 which confirmed that they are content that no hearing is fixed provided the Respondent is in agreement and the Tribunal is minded to grant the Application.

The Respondents did not lodge any written representations in response to the Tribunal's Direction and consequently the Tribunal consider that the Respondents do not object to the Tribunal making a decision on the Application without a hearing.

The Tribunal determine that a decision will be made without a hearing as the facts are not disputed and it is not contrary to the interests of the parties to do so.

The Tribunal determine that the time period for the Scottish Ministers to determine the application for registration of the Respondent as a Letting Agent under section 30 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 is extended to 30th March 2020 as the Respondent agrees with the Application and it is in the Respondent's interest for the Application to be granted.

Jacqui Taylor

. Legal Member

13th November 2019