



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL
PROPERTY CHAMBER (RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY)**

Case Reference : **CHI/00HC/MNR/2024/0124**

Property : **83 Blaisdon
Weston-super-Mare
Somerset
BS22 8BL**

Applicant Tenant : **Mr S Taplin**

Representative : **None**

Respondent Landlord : **Mr C North**

Representative : **Bloxham and Barlow**

Type of Application : **Determination of a Market Rent sections
13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**

Tribunal Members : **Mr I R Perry FRICS
Ms C D Barton MRICS**

Date of Inspection : **None. Paper determination**

Date of Decision : **3rd July 2024**

DECISION

Summary of Decision

1. On 3rd July 2024 the Tribunal determined a market rent of £1,020 per month to take effect from 15th June 2024.
2. This rent is higher than the amount proposed by the Landlord's Agent. The Landlord is not obliged to charge this higher amount.

Background

3. The case concerned the determination of a market rent for the subject property following a referral of the Landlord's notice of increase of rent by the Tenant pursuant to sections 13 and 14 Housing Act 1988.
4. On 17th April 2024 the Landlord's Agent served a notice under Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £732.95 per month in place of the existing rent of £685 per month to take effect from 15th June 2024. The notice complied with the legal requirements.
5. On 27th April 2024 the Tenant applied to the Tribunal under Section 13(4) (a) of the Housing Act 1988.
6. The Tribunal does not routinely consider it necessary and proportionate in cases of this nature to undertake inspections or hold Tribunal hearings unless either are specifically requested by either party or a particular point arises which merits such an inspection and/or hearing.
7. The Tribunal issued directions on 28th May 2024 informing the parties that, unless either party objected, the Tribunal intended to determine the rent based on written representations. The parties were invited to make submissions which could include photographs or videos.
8. The Landlord's Agent made a submission to the Tribunal which was copied to the Tenant. The Tenant made no submission other than the original application.
9. Both parties submitted papers by the specified dates setting out their respective cases. The papers were also copied to the other party.
10. Neither party objected to the matter being determined without an oral hearing, so the Tribunal determined the case on 3rd July 2024 based on the written representations received.
11. These reasons address **in summary form** the key issues raised by the parties. They do not recite each and every point referred to either in submissions or during any hearing. However, this does not imply that any points raised, or documents not specifically mentioned were disregarded. If a point or document was referred to in the evidence or submissions that was relevant to a specific issue, then it was considered by the Tribunal. The Tribunal concentrates on those issues which, in its opinion, are fundamental to the application.

The Law

S14 Determination of Rent by First-tier Tribunal

- (1) Where, under subsection (4) (a) of section 13 above, a tenant refers to a First-tier Tribunal a notice under subsection (2) of that section, the Tribunal shall determine the rent at which, subject to subsections (2) and (4) below, the Tribunal consider that the dwelling-house concerned might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing landlord under an assured tenancy-
 - (a) which is a periodic tenancy having the same periods as those of the tenancy to which the notice relates;
 - (b) which begins at the beginning of the new period specified in the notice;
 - (c) the terms of which (other than relating to the amount of the rent) are the same as those of the tenancy to which the notice relates; and
 - (d) in respect of which the same notices, if any, have been given under any of Grounds 1 to 5 of Schedule 2 to this Act, as have been given (or have effect as if given) in relation to the tenancy to which the notice relates.
- (2) In making a determination under this section, there shall be disregarded-
 - (a) any effect on the rent attributable to the granting of a tenancy to a sitting tenant;
 - (b) any increase in the value of the dwelling-house attributable to a relevant improvement carried out by a person who at the time it was carried out was the tenant, if the improvement-
 - (i) was carried out otherwise than in pursuance of an obligation to his immediate landlord, or
 - (ii) was carried out pursuant to an obligation to his immediate landlord being an obligation which did not relate to the specific improvement concerned but arose by reference to consent given to the carrying out of that improvement; and
 - (c) any reduction in the value of the dwelling-house attributable to a failure by the tenant to comply with any terms of the tenancy.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b) above, in relation to a notice which is referred by a tenant as mentioned in subsection (1) above, an improvement is a relevant improvement if either it was carried out during the tenancy to which the notice relates, or the following conditions are satisfied, namely-
 - (a) that it was carried out not more than twenty-one years before the date of service of the notice; and
 - (b) that, at all times during the period beginning when the improvement was carried out and ending on the date of service of the notice, the dwelling-house has been let under an assured tenancy; and

- (c) that, on the coming to an end of an assured tenancy at any time during that period, the tenant (or, in the case of joint tenants, at least one of them) did not quit.
- (4) In this section "rent" does not include any service charge, within the meaning of section 18 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, but, subject to that, includes any sums payable by the tenant to the landlord on account of the use of furniture, in respect of council tax or for any of the matters referred to in subsection (1) (a) of that section, whether or not those sums are separate from the sums payable for the occupation.

The Property

- 12. From the information given in the papers and available on the internet, the property comprises a semi-detached house, within an estate of similar style properties built in the late 1990's which is situated on the eastern side of Wester-super-Mare, about 3 miles from the seafront. Access to the M5 Motorway is nearby.
- 13. The accommodation includes a Hall, Living Room, Kitchen/Diner, 2 double Bedrooms and a Bathroom with WC. Outside there is a Garage, an off-street parking space and small gardens to front and rear.
- 14. The Energy Performance Rating is 'C' and the EPC certificate states that the property has gas-fired central heating, double glazed windows and a floor area of 58 sq. metres.
- 15. There are local shops supplying day-to-day needs and further amenities within the town.

Submissions

- 16. The initial tenancy began in August 2007, but the Tribunal was supplied with a copy tenancy agreement dated 7th March 2012 when the rent was £545 per month.
- 17. The Landlord's Agent made a submission to the Tribunal on 7th June 2024 stating that the only kitchen appliance included in the property is a cooker. In addition, the Agent stated that the kitchen was refurbished in October 2021, and a new boiler was fitted in October 2013, that the 2 external doors were replaced, and various other general maintenance work has been carried out through the term so that the property is in good condition. The agent also stated that the bathroom was original to the property except for replacement fittings.
- 18. The Agent refers to three comparable properties let for rents between £1,050 and £1,150.

Consideration and Valuation

- 19. The Tribunal first considered whether it felt able to reasonably and fairly decide this case based on the papers submitted only with no oral hearing. Having read and considered the papers it decided that it could do so.

20. The Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the subject property might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing Landlord under an assured tenancy. The personal circumstances of the Parties are not relevant to this issue.
21. Having carefully considered the representations from the parties and associated correspondence and using its own judgement and knowledge of rental values in Weston-super-Mare, the Tribunal decided that the market rent for the subject property if let today in a condition that was usual for such an open market letting would be £1,050 per month.
22. However, the property is not let on the basis that is normally required to command such a rent with the Landlord only providing a cooker in the Kitchen and the dated Bathroom. The Tribunal decided that the rent should be reduced by £20 per month to reflect the fact that the Tenant provides a fridge and washing machine and a further £10 to reflect the dated bathroom.

Determination

23. The Tribunal therefore decided that the rent at which the subject property might reasonably be expected to be let in the open market by a willing Landlord under the terms of this assured tenancy was £1,020 per month.
24. The Tribunal directed that the new rent of £1,020 per month should take effect from 15th June 2024, this being the date specified in the notice.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL

1. A person wishing to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) must seek permission to do so by making written application to the First-tier Tribunal at the Regional office which has been dealing with the case. Where possible you should send your application for permission to appeal by email to rpsouthern@justice.gov.uk as this will enable the First-tier Tribunal Regional office to deal with it more efficiently.
2. The application must arrive at the Tribunal within 28 days after the Tribunal sends to the person making the application written reasons for the decision.
3. If the person wishing to appeal does not comply with the 28-day time limit, the person shall include with the application for permission to appeal a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28-day time limit; the Tribunal will then decide whether to extend time or not to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed.
4. The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the Tribunal to which it relates, state the grounds of appeal, and state the result the party making the application is seeking.