	**FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL** **PROPERTY CHAMBER** **(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**
Case Reference	**CAM/12UB/MRA/2026/0091**
Property	**59 Kingston Street, Cambridge, CB1 2NU**
Tenant	**Jonathan Steward** **Claire Saint-Amour**
Tenant's Representative	**N/A**
Landlord	**Jan Zajac**
Landlord's Address	**Redford House, Redford, GU20 0QG**
Landlord's Representative	**Countrywide Residential Lettings Limited**
Date of Application	**20 August 2026**
Type of Application	**Determination of an Open-Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**
Tribunal Members	**Judge Banks** **Dr Jan Wilcox FRICS**
Date of Decision	**5 November 2026**
Rent Determined	**£1,500 per calendar month**
Date the new rent takes effect	**27 November 2026**

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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 7 May 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13(2) (as amended) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £1,700 per calendar month (pcm) in place of the existing rent of £1,450 pcm to take effect from 27 August 2026.

2. On 20 August 2026, under Section 14(A3) of the Housing Act 1988, the Tenant referred the Landlord's notice proposing a new rent to the Tribunal for determination of an open-market rent.

3. The tenancy commenced on 27 August 2025. The rental period is monthly.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant

4. As per section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Service charges or furniture provided by Landlord (other than carpets and curtain and white goods specified below) and the costs relating to the same

5. The Tenants have submitted that the Property is partially furnished with a wicker sofa, a loveseat and 2 chairs which are kept in the shed, and an outdoor folding table with 2 chairs.

Liability for Council Tax

6. The Tenants are responsible for the payment of Council Tax in respect of the Property. The rent determined is exclusive of Council Tax.

Any other terms of the tenancy taken into consideration in determining the rent

7. None

Hearing

8. Neither party requested an oral hearing. The Tribunal has considered this case on the basis of the papers provided by the parties and its own knowledge and specialist expertise.

The Property

9. The Property is a terraced house comprising of a living room, open plan kitchen/dining room, downstairs wc, 2 bedrooms and a bathroom. The Property benefits from gas central heating, double glazing, carpets upstairs and a mixture of wood effect and linoleum flooring downstairs and in the bathroom. To the rear of the Property is a small garden with a shed.

Evidence

10. The parties completed the relevant MR1 (tenant), MR2 (landlord).

The Tenant

11. The Tenant submits that the Property is in poorer condition than comparable properties available on the local market. The Tenant refers to deteriorating external paintwork, dilapidated kitchen units, staining to the kitchen ceiling caused by an alleged longstanding leak from the upstairs bathroom, the poor condition of the bath, and a broken garden gate lock which had reportedly remained unrepaired despite being reported. The Tenant also submits that the Property is more expensive to run than comparable properties due to its EPC rating of E, whereas similar Victorian terraced properties are said to have ratings of D or C.

12. In support of their proposed rent, the Tenant relies on a number of local comparables. The Tenant refers to a two-bedroom property on Great Eastern Street which was reportedly let in July 2026 at £1,625 per month. The Tenant states that this property was in substantially better condition than the subject Property, benefiting from hardwood flooring, a larger kitchen, a loft room and an EPC rating of D. The Tenant also refers to a slightly smaller two-bedroom property on Sturton Street which was reportedly let at £1,450 per month and which similarly benefitted from hardwood flooring and an EPC rating of D.

13. The Tenant further relies upon information obtained from neighbours regarding a two-bedroom property at 78A Kingston Street. The Tenant states that this property is in good condition, includes an extension and a modern kitchen, has an EPC rating of C, and had recently been increased to a rent of £1,600 per month. A copy of the rent increase notice for that property was provided as supporting evidence.

14. The Tenant also refers to Office for National Statistics data which, they submit, shows that rents for two-bedroom properties in Cambridge increased on average by 1.9% between June 2025 and June 2026. The Tenant contends that the landlord's proposed increase of approximately 17% is excessive and would cause

financial strain. The Tenant therefore considers that a market rent of £1,500 per month is appropriate, having regard to the property's condition, the alleged lack of repairs, and its poor energy efficiency.

15. The Tenants provided photographs of the Property which appeared to show the Property of being at a reasonable standard and having 2 double bedrooms.

16. The Tenants provided the following comparables:

i. Sturton Street

2 bed Victorian terrace, one bedroom being a double and the second a single. Advertised rent £1,450 pcm.

ii. Great Eastern Street

2 bed Victorian terrace, one bedroom being a double and the second a single with a second floor study/storage room. Advertised rent £1,625 pcm.

The Landlord

17. Although the Landlord provided a response it merely set out that they now proposed a rent of £1,500 pcm. No comparables or any other evidence was provided by the Landlord.

Determination and Valuation

18. Under section 14(1) of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended), the Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the Property might reasonably be expected to let in the open market by a willing Landlord at the beginning of the new period specified in the Landlord's notice. Relevant Tenant improvements or failure of the Tenant to comply with the terms of the tenancy are to be disregarded. Historic issues relating to the tenancy or the personal circumstances of the Landlord are not taken into account. The personal circumstances of the Tenant are only considered if an application for hardship has been made.

19. The Tribunal has considered all of the evidence before it, including matters not expressly referred to in these reasons, and has given such weight to that evidence as it considers appropriate.

20. Drawing upon its own expertise and knowledge of the local rental market, together with the comparable evidence provided by the Tenant, the Tribunal concludes that the market rent for the Property, in its existing condition, would be £1,500 per calendar month. The Tribunal considers that this represents the

rent which the Property could reasonably be expected to achieve on the open market at the valuation date if it were in a broadly comparable condition to the properties relied upon, including the provision of some landlord-supplied furnishings.

21. The Tribunal attached greatest weight to the property on Sturton Street, which was advertised at £1,450 per calendar month and shares similar locational characteristics with the subject Property. However, whilst Sturton Street provides one double and one single bedroom, the subject Property benefits from two double bedrooms, which the Tribunal considers to be a material advantage in terms of usable accommodation. The subject Property also benefits from a separate living room and kitchen/dining room, together with some landlord-supplied furnishings, whereas Sturton Street was offered unfurnished. The Tribunal considers that these features justify a modest uplift from the advertised rent of £1,450.

22. In reaching its determination, the Tribunal has also considered the property on Great Eastern Street, advertised at £1,625 per calendar month. Although this property similarly provides one double and one single bedroom, it benefits from an additional second-floor study/storage room, measuring approximately 9.7 square metres, and is presented to a higher decorative standard. The Tribunal considers that these additional features justify a higher rental value than the subject Property. Both comparable properties also benefit from an EPC rating of D, compared with the subject Property's rating of E. The Tribunal has taken account of this difference, together with the subject Property's less modern presentation and condition, which offset some of the advantages arising from its accommodation and partial furnishings. Having weighed these competing factors, and drawing upon its own knowledge and experience of the local rental market, the Tribunal determines that £1,500 per calendar month represents a reasonable open-market rent for the subject Property in its existing condition at the relevant valuation date.

Open-Market Rent **£1,500 pcm**

Undue hardship

23. The new rent takes effect from the date which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination unless that would cause undue hardship to the tenant. In cases of undue hardship, the Tribunal has a discretion to fix a later starting date up to two months after it makes its determination.

24. The Tenant has asked the Tribunal to fix a later starting date in this case. The Tribunal has considered their financial circumstances, including their evidence that they are both PhD students whose stipends are reducing, giving a combined monthly income of £2,842. The Tenants' calculation of their remaining income was based upon the Landlord's proposed rent of £1,700 rather than the £1,500 determined by the Tribunal. On their stated figures, after payment of the determined rent and estimated household bills, they would have approximately £1,133 per month remaining between them to meet their other living expenses. The Tribunal acknowledges that the Tenants have limited financial resources and that even a modest increase may cause hardship. However, the determined rent represents an increase of £50 per month, equivalent to £25 per tenant per month if shared equally. Having considered the evidence as a whole, the Tribunal is not satisfied that the commencement of the determined rent on the statutory date would cause undue hardship sufficient to justify deferring its commencement.

25. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £1,500 per calendar month with effect from 27 November 2026 which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination.

APPEAL PROVISIONS

If either party is dissatisfied with this decision, they may apply for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) on any point of law arising from this Decision. Prior to making such an appeal, an application must be made, in writing, to this Tribunal for permission to appeal. Any such application must be made within 28 days after the issue of this statement of reasons (regulation 52 (2) of The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rules 2013) stating the grounds upon which it is intended to rely in the appeal.