

**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/19/3240**

**Parties:**

**The Scottish Government ("the Applicant")**

**Westgate Scotland Ltd T/A Westgate Estate Agents ("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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 limit to determine the application by 11 October 2019.

The registration team began processing the application on 15 May 2019.

A number of documents remain outstanding. These documents are required to enable the applicant to fully assess the respondent's application to join the Scottish Letting Agent Register.

The Respondent has not yet provided a copy of their professional indemnity insurance policy.

Some of the procedures that the Respondent currently has in place do not fully meet the requirements of the Letting Agent Code of Practice and as such require amendment.

The Respondent has indicated that they operate a "client account" but have yet to provide written confirmation from their bank of this. They have also indicated that they have applied for a client money protection insurance policy but have not yet indicated if this application was successful or provided a copy of the certificate for this policy.

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) To demonstrate compliance with paragraph 130 of the Letting Agent Code of Practice by providing a copy of their professional indemnity insurance policy to the Applicant.
- 2) To amend their repairs and complaints procedures to comply with the Letting Agent Code of Practice (as per paragraphs 86 and 112 respectively) and to provide a copy of these amended policies to the Applicant
- 3) To obtain a dedicated client bank account if they have not already done so (as per paragraph 121) and to provide written confirmation from their bank that the account meets the requirements of the Letting Agent Code of Practice (as per paragraph 122).
- 4) To obtain a client money protection insurance policy if they have not already done so (as per paragraph 126) and to provide the Applicant with a copy of their client money protection insurance policy and
- 5) To enable the Applicant to fully assess the additional documentation and information provided by the Respondent in relation to the reasons above.

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 dated 9<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as the Respondent agrees with the Application and it is in the Respondent's interest for the Application to be granted.**

.....  Legal Member 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019