LocalPad

This is a property management system, developed from StudentPad which can be used to advertise all accredited properties within a corporate branded City of York Council LocalPad website.

It is a mechanism to market properties that have met the standards set by accreditation and encourages landlords to meet them in order to be advertised to the City's private rented market. Feedback to date from landlord focus groups has been extremely positive.

The system is quite flexible in its set up. This could include, for example, the setting up of a web site with subsections that can direct the user to properties which can be organised on a post code basis or an area basis or other criteria.

The Council, as Scheme administrator, would have ultimate control of exactly which properties were advertised and when they are advertised via the site's administration functions.

It must be noted, however, that the landlords can administer most of the changes themselves with a Council based administrator simply overseeing and vetting proceedings ensuring that time allocated to the operation of the system is kept at a minimum.

The details of each property would be displayed in a table format as well as in a full colour brochure style page. Furthermore, the Council has the opportunity to display any information (relating to properties, areas and general advice) it feels would be useful to prospective tenants, which would be designed in a web format and displayed at no extra cost.

Additionally, the Council will be able to access details on properties, produce numerous reports based on different criteria and use the administration site as a management tool for the accreditation scheme.

It is envisaged that private tenants and prospective tenants will be able to access the information from Council offices and by PC. Housing related staff could also assist prospective tenants by printing off lists of houses, which fit their specific requirements.

Benefits of the scheme include-

Customer focus – The Internet based system will provide tenants and landlords with much more interactivity, assisting people in their search for accommodation and keeping pace with what the "modern consumer" expects.

Empowers tenants – Information about standards that they can expect from properties and landlords can be displayed on the website. They will also be able to see which properties are suitable for tenants who are for example students, on housing benefits or whichever information we want to display including accreditation status and property standards.

Encourages landlords to achieve high standards – The web sites linked with LocalPad are very popular, with over 2 million visitors a year accessing property information. This will mean that landlords will hopefully be very keen to take advantage of the advertising but to be able to do so they will have to have adhered to the standards laid out by the Scheme.

Frequent contact with customers – The software allows the administrator to produce an email / letter to all landlords within seconds. It is also possible to easily contact the landlords using the site's automated report functions in order to inform them, either by email or post, on any particular subject including the expiration of safety certificates.

Operational benefits – The management software would allow us to manage large quantities of landlord and property details easily and quickly from year to year. It is envisaged that landlords will have access to their own information, parts of which they will be able to update themselves. This task is intuitive for the landlords and its operation will assist in reducing some of the administration of the Scheme. Institutions' details are also updated instantaneously meaning it is a live up-to-date service. Certain information such as a property's registration status may need verifying and can be held in a vetting bay awaiting approval by Council staff. However, large parts of the software such as gas safety expiry warnings can be automated. The system also has a "day to day task manager" which allows the user to set reminders and record a history of dealings with landlords. Different levels of access to

the control software can be given to different administrators within the Council.

Implementation specification:

The website would designed specifically for York

It would include full branding including colours, logos and styles

Banner adverts would be prohibited

Costs for the system are £4,150 per annum (+VAT) plus £1,000 for every additional licensee to the database, for example if another authority wished to participate in the scheme.

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York Council

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