**Meeting of Landlord Steering Group (LSG)**

**Wednesday 24 January 2024 from 2.15pm – 4.45pm**

**at Warwick District Council Offices**

**Draft Minutes**

**Present:**

Terry Samuel (TS) Chair, Balwant Rai (BR) Secretary, Runjit Bhopal (RB), Kam Gadhary (KG), Paul Hughes (PH), Anthony Kempster (AK), Suman Masih (SM), Shera Payne (SP), Don Robbie (DR), Kevin Tebbett (KT), John Warburton (JW), Amie Widdows (AW), Richard Woodcock (RW).

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

TS welcomed LSG members, including new member Suman Masih and guest Kevin Tebbett. Resignations from Gurdip Chatha and Sue Warburton were noted.

Apologies:

Paul Chapman (PC), Carol Duckfield (CD), Parveen Rai (PR) and Richard Thomas (RT).

**2. Approval of AGM Minutes – Wednesday 25 January 2023**

Passed unanimously.

**ACTION 1: BR to upload minutes on to Warwick District Council (WDC) website.**

**3. Approval of LSG Minutes – Wednesday 18 October 2023**

Passed unanimously.

**ACTION 2: BR to upload minutes on to WDC website.**

**4. Matters Arising**

None.

**5. LSG Chair’s Annual Report**

The LSG Chair’s report commented on membership, LSG meetings, Landlord Forums, websites, task groups and the role of LSG Chair. He suggested ideas for the future.

Membership has been steady, similar to last year, however there is a shortfall of eight members and there are currently more males than females.

Recommended increased membership should include at least two more letting agents.

LSG members were thanked by TS for their support over the past year.

**ACTION 3: BR to circulate Chair’s report to LGS members with draft minutes.**

**6. Election of LSG Chair and Vice-Chair**

JW nominated TS for LSG Chair. Passed unanimously.

No Vice-Chair nominations. RW would be prepared to stand if nominated or he was happy for someone else to stand for Vice-Chair. Vice-Chair appointment deferred.

**7. Review of LSG Members’ Attendance at Meetings Since January 2023**

TS stressed that any LSG member failing to attend at least one meeting a year may have their membership terminated.

Discussed the annual LSG attendance sheet. There are now 16 members with many regularly present in meetings.

**8. Proposed New Document: ‘Procedures for Organising a LSG Meeting’**

Passed unanimously.

**9. Proposed Update: ‘Procedures for Organising a Landlord Forum’**

Passed unanimously.

**10. Proposal: ‘Using income generated from Landlord Forum sponsorships and stall charges, create an ‘LSG Income Fund (LIF)’ for the purpose of reimbursing LSG members’ expenses, procuring LSG resources and improving LSG activities’**

Discussed the proposal to create a fund to reimburse LSG members’ expenses, develop activities and provide resources where funds would be distributed according to a prescribed priority arrangement.

Some concerns were raised, but a majority of members agreed:

**ACTION 4: Warwick and Stratford District Councils’ representatives would consider the proposal further and report back at next meeting.**

**11. Proposed Update: ‘LSG Terms of Reference’ (LSGTOR)**

TS proposed amendments to the LSGTOR.

Passed unanimously.

**12. Student Rental Analysis in Leamington Spa for 2024 and 2025**

TS presented his analysis, which was sourced from a range of student agency websites.

An increase in Purpose Built Student Accommodation was having an adverse effect on letting traditional, smaller PRS properties.

**13. Zoe Court’s Feedback on LSG Questions Previously Raised**

Discussion on Zoe Court’s answers to previous questions raised by LSG.

**ACTION 5: PH to contact Zoe Court to seek further clarification and then to feedback at next meeting.**

**14. Feedback on Updating Websites**

TS confirmed start time of next May Landlord Forum should be 12.30pm instead of 1pm. This has been amended on the WDC website.

**15. Feedback on NRLA Publicising Landlord Forums in Their ‘What’s On’ Section after DR Consults his New NRLA Marketing Director**

DR mentioned the new Director’s focus is more on direct marketing. For example, the ‘NRLA on Tour’ event being held at NAEC, Kenilworth.

**ACTION 6: DR to provide microphones, speakers, screen and projector at SYDNI Centre for the Landlord Forum on Tuesday 21 May 2024.**

**16. Numbers on Landlord Contact List Compared to Previous List**

Current total is 533 people. Of those, some are not landlords but are, nevertheless, interested in housing issues. TS said he would explore new ideas on how to increase membership.

**17. Report on Fire Extinguisher Proposals:**

**a) ‘With modern fire extinguisher development, WDC to investigate whether Licence Holders can annually self-certify firefighting equipment, fire blankets and fire extinguishers, in domestic premises with a view to updating (HMO) 1.4 and 1.6’**

**b) ‘With modern fire extinguisher development, WDC to investigate whether fire extinguisher recommendations should be updated to include the use of ‘All Fires’ extinguishers in HMOs to eliminate the wrong type of extinguisher being used on a fire’**

PH advised that Warwickshire Fire Service had reported back with no objection in principle to both proposals.

**ACTION 7: PH to seek formal approval by consulting Legal Services.**

**18. Provide Comprehensive Guidance Documents for Private Landlords on:**

**a) Warwick and Stratford District Council’s ‘Landlord Checklist’**

**b) Warwick and Stratford District Council’s ‘Private Landlords’ Handbook’**

Discussions were held between PH and PC and they agreed to develop these documents and brand them under their Council logos for publication on their websites.

**ACTION 8: PH and PC to produce documents and determine publication timescale.**

**19. Cabinet Report on WDC Additional Licensing Council Decision**

PH confirmed that LSG representations featured in the Cabinet report and the document can be downloaded from the WDC website.

**20. Proposal: ‘Warwick and Stratford Private Sector Housing Managers and others to include a link in external email footer to promote subscription to newsletter and Forum link’**

The WDC Media Team are working on graphics for the footer and the team will use it when sending email communications.

AW advised Stratford District Council (SDC) are making similar arrangements.

**21. Task Group Report on: ‘Invite Warwick and Stratford District Councillors to a meeting with LSG to improve the Councillors’ knowledge base and their relationship with LSG Private Rented Sector stake holders’**

This task group had not been able to take this forward. KB advised he would take the matter to Departmental Management Team and seek views from Lisa Barker, Head of Housing.

**ACTION 9: KT and PH to seek views from Head of Housing on councillor involvement with LSG meetings and Landlord Forum.**

**22. Proposal: ‘At LSG meetings, encourage LSG members to bring along hard copies of documents, which may raise awareness of current matters relating to the PRS. Place on a ‘Reading Table’, for perusal’**

TS showed LSG members a letter from his M.P. about ‘Joint and Several Agreements’, a Net Rent article on General Data Protection Regulation violation and an example of a Tenancy House Handbook.

Above documents placed on the ‘Reading Table’ for members to peruse and photograph.

**23. Programme for LSG Landlord Forum, Tuesday 21 May 2024 at SYDNI Centre, Cottage Square, Sydenham, Leamington Spa CV31 1PT.**

Draft programme was discussed.

Two topics agreed for first session: ‘Crime Special for Landlords’ and ’Self-Managing Landlord Tips. House Handbook Part 1'.

Reserve topic is ‘Planning and HMOs’.

**ACTION 10: BR to arrange speakers from police and fire service.**

The SYDNI Centre is a DIY venue, so LSG members were asked to volunteer to help set up at 11am and pack away furniture at the end of Forum.

**ACTION 11: Volunteer LSG members AW, KG, DR, BR and TS to meet at the SYDNI Centre, Leamington Spa CV31 1PT at 11am on Tuesday 21 May 2024.**

**24. Programme and Strategy for Contacting Landlord Forum Stall Holders and Sponsors**

TS presented a briefing note on stalls.

Two letting agents were interested in sponsoring the next Landlord Forum.

**ACTION 12: BR to contact potential sponsors after confirming with PH, whether sponsorship could proceed.**

**ACTION 13: PH to liaise with Finance Team about sponsorship funding.**

**ACTION 14: BR to place Eventbrite advert on website by Friday 16 February 2024.**

**ACTION 15: BR and AW to contact stallholders. Maximum stalls 28.**

**25. Discussion on ‘Joined up Approach with Local Council’**

TS suggested Councillors are invited to LSG meetings and Forums as guest observers.

**ACTION 16: KT and PH to liaise with Head of Housing in regard to invitation to future LSG meetings and Forums.**

**26. Ongoing Discussion on ‘Student Market –** **Why is it declining?’**

A similar number of HMOs are being advertised in Leamington Spa each year. Is the student market declining?

There are more PSBAs with modern facilities and they are less expensive in Coventry said SP. The market is ‘shifting’ rather than ‘declining’. More students from India rather than China.

DR advised there are more British universities now operating in China.

Need to seriously consider demand and supply, suggested RB, as a cost pressure on landlords.

**ACTION 17: This item to be discussed further at the next LSG meeting.**

**27. Set Up Task Group to: ‘Examine the LSG’s current direction; identify areas for improvement and implement a strategy for evaluating the impact’**

Item deferred to next LSG meeting.

**28. Warwick and Stratford District Councils’ Updates**

PH advised that the Additional Licensing Scheme has been launched and a new team is in place to manage the administration. Around 30 to 40 applications received and there are around 700 additional properties likely to be licensed.

Further questions from JW and SP were answered by PH, regarding Additional Licensing. No update from SDC.

**29. National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) Updates**

DR advised there are no particular legal updates. However, there is an ‘NRLA on Tour' event at NAEC Stoneleigh on Thursday 1 February 2024.

**30. AOB**

LSG logo raised by TS.

**ACTION 18: TS asked if media team or any LSG member could produce and submit a LSG logo to discuss at the next LSG meeting.**

TS drew attention to:

a) The ‘NRLA on Tour’ programme at NAEC Stoneleigh, Kenilworth CV8 2LZ on Thursday 1 February 2024 from 1.30pm – 5.15pm

b) The ‘National Landlord Investment Show’ in the Holte Suite at Aston Villa FC, Villa Park, Birmingham B6 6HE (Witton Road entrance) on Wednesday 15 May 2024 from 9am – 6pm.

**Meeting closed at 4.45pm.**

**Future LSG Meetings and Landlord Forums**

**Next LSG Landlord Forum:**

Tuesday 21 May 2024. 1.15pm – 4pm at

The SYDNI Centre, Cottage Square, Sydenham, Leamington Spa CV31 1PT

**LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 5 June 2024. 2.15pm – 4:45pm at

Stratford-on-Avon District Council Offices, Elizabeth House, Church Street,

Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6HX

**LSG Landlord Forum:**

Wednesday 6 November 2024. 1.15pm – 4pm at

Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Luddington Road, Warwickshire CV37 9SE

**LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 16 October 2024. 2.15pm – 4:45pm in Leamington (Venue TBC)

**LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 22 January 2025. 2.15pm – 4:45pm in Leamington (Venue TBC)

**LSG Landlord Forum:**

Wednesday 14 May 2025. 1.15pm – 4pm in Leamington (Venue TBC)