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

**Wednesday 16 October 2024 from 2.15pm – 4.45pm**

**at SF1 Warwick District Council Offices**

**Draft Minutes**

**Present:**

Terry Samuel (TS) Chair, Balwant Rai (BR) Secretary, David French (DF), Paul Hughes (PH), Emily Kelly (EK), Anthony Kempster (AK), Shera Payne (SP), Aileen Rahilly (AR), Kevin Tebbett (KT) guest, Richard Thomas (RT), Ashley Trinder (AT), John Warburton (JW) and Richard Woodcock (RW).

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

TS welcomed LSG members, including new member Aileen Rahilly. Resignations from Don Robbie (DR) and Carol Duckfield (CD) were noted. Members asked if a letter of thanks could be sent to DR and CD. Kevin Tebbett welcomed as a guest. Those present introduced themselves.

Apologies: Runjit Bhopal and Amie Widdows.

**ACTION 1: BR and PH to send a letter of thanks to DR and CD on behalf of LSG.**

**2. Approval of LSG Draft Minutes – Wednesday 24 January 2024**

Approved unanimously.

**ACTION 2: BR to upload minutes on to Warwick District Council (WDC) website.**

**3. Matters Arising**

**3.1. WDC Constitution**

The Council Debating Process was projected and TS explained amendment procedure.

An amendment:

a) Must be relevant to the original motion. So, if the original motion is about ‘cats’, it cannot be changed to be about ‘dogs’.

b) Basically, proposes a change to a motion. It could: leave out words; or leave out words and insert or add others; or insert or add words.

* If an amendment is carried, then this becomes the substantive motion, and the original or

previous substantive motion is lost.

* The amendment could be accepted by the proposer of the original motion, so the amendment becomes the substantive motion on which members vote.
* A new substantive motion could be amended again.
* The Chair determines the validity of any proposed amendment.
* The Chair’s decision on any proposed amendment is final.

Questions from RW. After discussion, it was agreed unanimously this model will be followed in the future. Model and text to be added to the Landlord Steering Group Terms of Reference for annual review at next LSG meeting.

**3.2. LSG Chair’s Diary**

Slides of TS tasks undertaken since the last LSG meeting were projected.

TS advised NRLA local reps were no longer available and a NRLA representative is unlikely to attend future LSG meetings.

LSG members thanked TS for his contribution.

SP raised whether there is any cost of printing for the Landlord Forum (LF). The idea of introducing QR codes to replace physical documents was discussed. The LSG is not set up for this at the moment, but it could be considered for future LFs.

**3.3. Election of LSG Vice-Chair**

TS reminded LSG members the role of LSG Vice Chair was vacant and they were asked to consider nominations for the next LSG meeting.

**3.4. Strategies for Increasing LSG Membership and Delegates at LFs**

This could be discussed further in the next LSG meeting, commented TS. For example, had targeting a selection of letting agents’ landlord databases with LF adverts been successful?

**3.5. LF Advertising**

TS advised Kris Walton (KW) from WDC Media Team will photo and video the event for follow-up work including developing the LF promotional video.

TS added, a ‘Day after Forum’ press release, including photos, will be emailed to the media and other interested parties.

**ACTION 3: BR to ask KW to send to delegates, media, landlords and post on LF website. BR to send to LSG, stalls and letting agents.**

**3.6. Review of LF Tuesday 21 May 2024 in Leamington Spa**

Agreed this was the most successful LF to date with 80 delegates and 17 stalls.

**3.7.** **Programme for Stratford LF, Tuesday 22 October 2024**

A draft LF programme was presented by TS.

The LF programme was discussed including:

‘Legal Updates’ by Steven Bletsoe (SB), NRLA Representative.

Citizens Advice Bureau, Propertymark and IKEA have booked a stall, advised TS.

AT confirmed Stratford Racecourse is booked for October Forum with sound system, light refreshments and free car parking.

TS advised the venue should accommodate 24 stalls. Six volunteers offered to help on the day from 10.45am.

**ACTION 4: BR to send sample floor plan to AT.**

**ACTION 5: BR to forward SB’s email to AT.**

**ACTION 6: AT to check whether the larger room, furthest from the entrance, is booked at Stratford Racecourse and whether there is sufficient furniture to accommodate 24 stalls, i.e. 24 tables and 50 chairs and up to 120 chairs for delegates.**

**3.8. Updating Websites**

WDC website is up-to-date and TS thanked those responsible.

**ACTION 7: BR to add AR’s details on the website.**

**3.9. Does the LSG need a volunteer agreement involving level of supervision and support, training, insurance and health and safety issues?**

TS had asked previously whether volunteer LSG members are covered by the Council’s employer or public liability insurance when undertaking activities such as assisting at LFs?

PH and AT are developing a proposal.

**ACTION 8: PH and AT to produce document.**

**3.10. Using income generated from LF sponsorships and stall charges, create a ‘LSG Income Fund’ for the purpose of procuring LSG resources and improving LSG activities’.**

LSG members agreed to purchase two LF pull up banners.

Money is spent on printing for Landlord Forums, said TS.

SP requested a simple financial statement of income and expenditure is added to the minutes.

**ACTION 9: BR and PH to discuss with KW costs of printing through WDC Media Team and report back.**

**3.11. Zoe Court’s (ZC) Feedback on LSG Questions Previously Raised**

PH put ZC’s response on the screen and explained the 6 and 12 monthly calendars.

TS remarked, it looks like ZC will provide a 12 month calendar as requested by LSG.

TS said, more grey bins for HMO licenced properties are not additional, they are a requirement for the licence conditions, so grey bin permits should be referred back to ZC.

WDC Private Sector Housing checks type and number of bins at properties, said PH.

Is there a bar code on bins? asked RW. They use sticky labels, replied TS.

**3.12. At LSG meetings, encourage LSG members to bring along copies of documents or artefacts, which may raise, for example, awareness of current matters relating to the PRS. Place on a ‘Reading Table’.**

TS requested members bring along useful, relevant documents for others to read.

**3.13. Implement some minor amendments to standard WDC HMO licence conditions following consultation with LSG and selection of HMO tenants.**

PH mentioned it needs feedback from tenants and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. No changes of standard licence conditions have been made at this time.

TS referred to the trend in other authorities to remove fire extinguishers to encourage tenants to escape from the property.

**ACTION 10: PH to report back at next LSG meeting.**

**3.14. 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’**

PH advised it is in progress.

**ACTION 11: PH and AT to report back at next LSG meeting.**

**3.15. Joined up Approach with Local Councils**

Members raised portfolio holders should be invited.

At this time, the portfolio holder has reported difficulty attending LFs outside school holidays, stated PH, however he will invite them to the next LF.

KT said he will speak to the Head of Services.

AT stated, Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) had invited the portfolio holder to the upcoming LF. He expected the portfolio holder or another Councillor to attend at least part of the LF.

**ACTION 12: KT to speak with Head of Service, Lisa Barker.**

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

No time to further discuss this issue, so it was postponed to the next LSG meeting.

**3.17. Set-up Task Group to: ‘Examine the LSG’s current direction; identify areas for improvement and implement a strategy for evaluating the impact.’** There were no volunteers for this task group, so the LSG is moving forward on an ad hoc basis, said TS.

**ACTION 13: TS will consider future direction in his annual report in next LSG meeting.**

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

PH mentioned they have received 550 applications for additional licensing. Reminder letters would be sent to those yet to apply and enforcement action will be taken where necessary. Letter to students and landlords have been sent regarding waste.

AT is keen to establish the number of landlords who are SDC based or who have property in the SDC area compared to those in the WDC area at next LF.

**ACTION 14: TS to modify next LF sign-in sheet so delegates tick whether they have rental properties in a) Leamington, b) Stratford c) Elsewhere.**

**ACTION 15: PH to investigate whether alternative venue available for WDC LSG meetings with free car parking. PH has booked SFI, WDC offices for LSG January 2025 meeting.**

**3.19. Legal Updates**

None.

**4. Proposal for the Introduction of a Private Landlord Offer by WDC.**

KT introduced the landlord offer and stated he wants to work with the landlords. The offer includes incentives for landlords including one month rent in advance and £500 as an incentive and help with the tenancy agreement, monthly rent will be paid, property will be looked after, no void period and property maintenance with a constant support. They are looking for one bed and 3 to 4 beds properties. He further added they are facing budgetary expenditure and lack of large properties stocks, so this is a discussion document and would like LSG, your comments and feedback. Another option is to introduce a Private Sector Lease (PSL) scheme.

TS thanked KT for outlining the offer. He made a comparison with Milton Keynes DC, which is offering £6,800 incentive. Other authorities are offering incentives in excess of £500.

RW raised local housing rate rent may not cover WDC market rent. DF estimates the rent may be £1,000pcm.

For some tenants the issue is support, stated KT and support will depend on tenants.

One bed properties move quickly in the open market, commented AK.

DF said it is likely to appeal only to specific sectors such as landlords who are moving away from the student market.

SP suggested as an alternative, the Local Authority leases the property.

KT stated a PSL scheme is also in progress.

Will there be a rent guarantee, asked SP?

KT explained, rent will be paid every month and WDC will cover any damage costs.

The Renters’ Rights Bill will be helping this scheme, advised DF.

The landlord remains responsible for repairs and maintenance, clarified KT.

KT mentioned PSL was used in Sandwell.

TS mentioned whether C4 licensed properties will retain their planning permission, if the local authority occupies the property temporarily with C3 tenants.

**ACTION 16: KT to consider points raised and report back at a future LSG meeting.**

**5. AOB**

BR has attended a Landlords Fundamentals course, organised by Wolverhampton City Council, which focussed on raising Landlord awareness of new legislation.

TS commented, if elected, he is willing to stand for a Chair for a third and final term. If other members are interested in putting themselves forward for Chair, then they are most welcome. TS reminded members the position of Vice-Chair is also available.

A telephone contact sheet for LSG members’ voluntary completion was circulated by TS. List to be distributed to LSG members.

**ACTION 17: BR to circulate telephone list to LSG members.**

Meeting ended 4.47pm.

**NOTE: Item below is not published as part of the minutes.**

**6. Future LSG Meetings and LFs**

**LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 22 January 2025. 2.15pm – 4.45pm at SF1 - Ansell Way, Warwick CV34 4UL

**LSG Landlord Forum: SYDNI Centre:**

Wednesday 14 May 2025. 12.30pm – 4pm in Leamington at the SYDNI Centre

**LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 18 June 2025 (provisional). 2.15pm – 4.45pm at Stratford-on-Avon (Venue TBC)

**LSG Landlord Forum:**

Tuesday 21 October 2025 (provisional). 12.30pm – 4pm at Stratford-upon-Avon (Venue TBC)

**LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 21 January 2026 (provisional). 2.15pm – 4.45pm in Leamington (Venue TBC)