Landlord Steering Group Terms of Reference (LSGTOR)

# 1.0 Aims

* 1. Establish an effective partnership between Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils (‘the Council’), private rented sector (PRS) landlords, letting agents and other PRS stakeholders.
  2. Facilitate and promote a good quality PRS in the Council districts.
  3. Promote and improve the image and reputation of the PRS.

# 2.0 Objectives

2.1 Ensure a consultation process is built into the Council PRS initiatives, so there is reasonable time for genuine feedback from the Landlord Steering Group (LSG) to the Council prior to implementation.

2.2 Share information and experience between LSG members and the wider PRS community on legislation, codes of practice and legal guidance on housing related issues, in particular landlord and tenant law, safety and standards within properties and management practices.

2.3 Resolve PRS landlord, letting agent and PRS stakeholder issues with relevant Council departments.

2.4 Develop good practice to enhance the PRS in the Council districts.

2.5 Raise the profile of responsible renting in the PRS.

2.6 Promote and encourage good living conditions in PRS accommodation in the Council districts, particularly in respect of affordable warmth, energy efficiency measures, crime prevention, fire, gas, electrical safety and wellbeing.

2.7 Promote high standards of professional management between landlord and tenant.

2.8 Encourage landlords in the Council districts to join a landlord accreditation scheme.

2.9 Facilitate and signpost training and development opportunities for LSG members and PRS landlords, letting agents and other PRS stakeholders in respect of housing related issues and other associated agencies within the Council.

2.10 Liaise with the Council Benefit teams in respect of the Local Housing Allowance (Housing Benefit) and any related matters.

2.11 Contribute to the Council strategy, delivery and development of housing provision.

2.12 Facilitate a lobbying and consultation mechanism for housing related issues including the consideration and response to national and local consultation documents that impact the PRS.

2.13 Discuss and agree relevant topics and issues to take forward for presentation and discussion at Landlord Forums and encourage attendees to provide feedback.

2.14 Find better ways for the Council to share information and communicate with the PRS and tenants.

2.15 Encourage the local PRS to submit topics for discussion to the LSG.

# 3.0 Membership

3.1 LSG members will represent at least one of these four groups in the Council districts:-

a) Local authority staff

b) PRS landlords

c) Letting agents

d) Other PRS stakeholders

To encourage the widest representation on the LSG, a maximum of two people from a particular letting agency or other PRS stakeholder and a maximum of four Council officers will be LSG members. Each LSG member has one voting right. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair has a second casting vote to maintain the status quo.

3.2 LSG members will not exceed 24.

3.3 Procedure for appointing LSG members:-

1. The Council decides on their maximum of four officers, including the Housing Managers, to be LSG members.
2. The Council appoints the LSG Secretary. The LSG Secretary is not a LSG member.
3. The NRLA local regional representative will be invited to be a LSG member.
4. Other prospective members contact the LSG Secretary and complete an application form including name, email, address, telephone and mobile numbers and confirm they are a PRS landlord, letting agent or other PRS stakeholder in the Council districts. They include a brief statement on why they want to join and what they hope to contribute to the LSG.
5. Prospective new members are emailed an information pack by the LSG Secretary containing the LSGTOR, the approved minutes of last year’s meetings, the last newsletter and any other agreed documents, before an informal conversation with the Chair or Vice-Chair is arranged to answer any questions.
6. Provided there is a vacancy and the maximum of two members from a particular letting agency or other PRS stakeholder is not exceeded on the LSG, then subject to the completion of a satisfactory application form, the Chair decides whether the applicant can be invited to join the LSG.
7. New LSG members are invited to attend the next LSG meeting, where they briefly explain who they are. Those present introduce themselves to the new member.

3.4 The Chair reserves the right to refuse membership without giving a specific reason.

3.5 Other than the Council, any LSG member can be Chair or Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair will replace the Chair in their absence. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, those LSG members present in the meeting will elect a temporary Chair.

3.6 Resignation of LSG membership should be submitted to the Chair not less than seven days before the meeting at which the resignation is to take place.

3.7 An LSG member who: does not attend at least one meeting annually; contribute to the running of the LSG; contravenes the LSGTOR; does not declare information, which may impact LSG membership; if applicable, fails to join/re-join a redress scheme, may have their LSG membership terminated.

# 4.0 Management

4.1 There will be at least three LSG meetings a year, of which one is the AGM. All meetings are solely for LSG members and any invited guests.

4.2 Nominations for election or re-election of Chair and Vice-Chair at the AGM to be made to the LSG Secretary at least two weeks prior to the AGM.

4.3 The positions of Chair and Vice-Chair are subject to annual election at the AGM and each position shall be for a maximum of three years in continuous post.

4.4 LSG members will have at least 21 days’ email notice of dates and venues of meetings.

4.5 The quorum at meetings is four LSG members. The quorum must include at least one LSG member from the local authority staff and one from another group, as defined under LSGTOR 3.1.

4.6 Agenda items and supporting documents must be submitted to the LSG Secretary at least 2 weeks prior to the next meeting. The LSG Secretary consults the Chair on agenda items submitted and then emails the agreed agenda to LSG members at least one week before the meeting. If motions or nominations are part of the agenda, these must be published with the agenda. The agenda may contain other information e.g. AGM, LSG meetings and Landlord Forum dates provisionally fixed for the following year during the LSG meeting prior to the AGM, dates and Landlord Forum topics or an attached paper for LSG members to consider prior to a meeting. The LSG Secretary takes the minutes and agrees the draft minutes with the Chair, which are emailed to LSG members within 3 weeks after the meeting.

4.7 Unless urgent, documents produced at a meeting not on the agenda, will normally be discussed at the next meeting. Urgent items could be discussed under any other business in a meeting.

4.8 If appropriate, decisions will have time scales, responsibilities and implementation processes.

4.9 Agendas are timed to ensure each item is discussed. LSG members and guest speakers submit timed agenda items to the LSG Secretary. The Chair sets and times the agenda. Non urgent items may be deferred or e.g. task group formed.

4.10 The Chair determines if an agenda item is confidential. Under confidential, any invited guests will leave the meeting. Confidential items are recorded, but not in the general minutes. They are circulated separately at the next LSG meeting for approval and returned at that meeting.

4.11 Members have a duty to declare an interest and not take part in a declared discussion or vote. They may be asked to leave the meeting.

4.12 Meetings will follow formal procedures.

4.13 The Chair is authorised to represent LSG views, where a response is required before a meeting can reasonably be convened.

4.14 LSG members may be mandated to represent the LSG at events and other meetings.

4.15 The LSG may request its identity is not associated with certain activities e.g. support for political parties, groups representing contentious issues or the promotion of commercial products or services.

4.16 Free to attend Landlord Forums are funded by the Council and are held at least twice a year for the wider PRS community**.**

4.17 The Council websites will contain a section dedicated to LSG and documents, including LSGTOR approved minutes, LSG application form, membership list, newsletter and details of past and future Landlord Forums and those approved by the LSG, will be published and regularly updated on the websites by the LSG Secretary.

4.18 No LSG member may use the LSG to promote goods and services without prior LSG approval.

4.19 No LSG member shall make a commitment on behalf of the LSG without Chair’s written authorisation.

4.20 Any dispute as to the interpretation of the LSGTOR shall be decided by the Chair, unless notice is served requesting the matter to be resolved by a special general meeting of LSG members.

4.21 A special general meeting may be convened by four or more LSG members for the purposes of resolving special items of LSG business subject to a written request by email being submitted to the Chair who will then, without undue delay, give at least 21 days’ notice to LSG members of the date and reason for the special general meeting. Motions need a majority of 75% of those LSG members present at a special general meeting to pass the motion.

4.22 No LSG member shall be compensated for providing services to the LSG.

4.23 Guest speakers may be invited to LSG meetings, including representatives of key Council departments to address issues raised by the LSG e.g. Universal Credit and Council Tax. Guests are not members of the LSG, have no voting rights and are not part of the quorum.

4.24 Specialist roles may be established within the LSG with a member responsible for a particular area e.g. HMO Licensing, Green Energy, Council Tax and Universal Credit.

4.25 A task group may be formed by LSG members on an occasional basis, to consider issues and report back to the LSG. Task groups may communicate virtually, via email or face to face.

4.26 At the AGM the previous AGM minutes will be available and approved. Apologies are noted. The Chair verbally presents an annual report. Matters arising are discussed. The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected. LSGTOR may be updated. The Secretary produces a list of LSG members’ attendance at meetings (not Landlord Forums) over the last year for members present to consider under LSGTOR 3.7. Questions are taken under any other business. Immediately following the AGM there is a LSG meeting.

4.27 LSG meetings and Landlord Forums are face to face to enable those people present to network with each other. These may be held virtually e.g. during a pandemic.

# 5.0 Strategic Role

5.1 The Chair or a LSG nominated member will be present at strategic Council meetings on housing issues in order to represent PRS landlords, letting agencies and other PRS stakeholders.

5.2 The LSG will act as the main point of contact for all bodies and agencies with an interest in the PRS, landlord and tenant related affairs within the Council districts.

# 6.0 Chair’s Role

6.1 Provide positive leadership for the successful running of the LSG.

6.2 Be responsible for making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted according to the LSGTOR and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.

6.3 Ensure all LSG members have an opportunity to speak and share their views at meetings.

6.4 Agree the order of business, agenda items and draft minutes with the LSG Secretary.

6.5 Ensure agenda items are timed, so they are presented and discussed within meeting limits.

6.6 In the event of a tied vote, the Chair has a second casting vote to maintain the status quo.

6.7 Decide whether items are confidential. If necessary, appoint a temporary secretary under confidential.

6.8 Authorise in writing for a LSG member to make a commitment on behalf of the LSG.

6.9 Make a decision on a dispute concerning the interpretation of the LSGTOR.

6.10 Investigate, respond and make decisions on issues arising from LSGTOR 9.11 and 9.12.

6.11 In liaison with the LSG Secretary, check LSG materials on Council websites are regularly updated e.g. publishing LSGTOR, approved minutes, membership list, newsletter and details of Landlord Forums.

6.12 In liaison with the LSG Secretary, approve LSG documents and minutes ensuring they are written in plain English and proof read to a high standard, prior to sharing and publication.

6.13 Delegate, as necessary, arrangements for e.g. Landlord Forums and LSG meetings.

6.14 Attend Landlord Forums to e.g. chair the Landlord Forum, promote LSG membership benefits and seek feedback.

6.15 If re-elected annually, serve for a maximum of three years in continuous post.

6.16 Ensure the LSGTOR are followed when dealing with LSG matters.

6.17 Present an annual verbal report at the LSG AGM.

6.18 Represent LSG views where a response is required before a meeting can reasonably be convened.

6.19 Ensure the Chair or a LSG nominated member is present at strategic Council meetings on housing issues in order to represent PRS landlords, letting agencies and other PRS stakeholders.

6.20 Liaise with the LSG Secretary between LSG meetings and Landlord Forums.

6.21 Create task groups, as necessary.

6.22 Draft press releases in consultation with the Council.

6.23 Call special general meetings.

# 7.0 Secretary’s Role

7.1 Make arrangements for LSG meetings, take minutes, record motions and resolutions, summary of key discussions and action points etc. LSG members’ minute comments are identified by their initials. The LSG Secretary, as the data controller, decides whether personal data is published in the minutes.

7.2 Record those present and apologies at meetings. Check the quorum is present.

7.3 Present members’ attendance at the previous year’s meetings (not Landlord Forums) to LSG members at the AGM for their consideration under LSGTOR 3.7.

7.4 Email notice of a meeting to LSG members at least 3 weeks before the meeting. Seek suggestions for agenda items from LSG members at least 2 weeks before a meeting. Present suggestions to the Chair and agree with the Chair the LSG meeting agenda, including timings, motions and other information. Email agenda and supporting documents to LSG members one week before the meeting.

7.5 Prepare draft minutes and agree them with the Chair. Email draft minutes to LSG members within 3 weeks after a meeting.

7.6 In liaison with the LSG Chair ensure all LSG documents and minutes, prior to sharing and publication, are written in plain English and proof read to a high standard.

7.7 Ensure approved minutes are signed by the Chair.

7.8 Regularly update the LSG section on the Council websites e.g. LSGTOR, approved minutes, LSG application form, membership list, newsletter and details of past and future Landlord Forums.

7.9 Ensure LSG members adhere to the LSGTOR.

7.10 Advise LSG members on formal meeting procedures.

7.11 Make arrangements for Landlord Forums, including where necessary, booking a facility well in advance, organising equipment and refreshments, arranging greeters, speakers and presentations, Landlord Forum schedule, contacting potential attendees, advertising, stall holders, signage, attendance registration, special needs, feedback, prepare after event minute for LSG members etc.

7.12 Maintain records of documents such as previous minutes, membership details, important phone numbers and contacts, LSGTOR, newsletters, LSG emails and other correspondence.

7.13 Promptly respond to LSG correspondence, including sending emails and writing letters on behalf of the LSG. Liaise with the press.

7.14 Email a reminder to an appropriate LSG member about action points in minutes, three weeks prior to next meeting or Landlord Forum.

7.15 Email an information pack to prospective LSG members. See LSGTOR 3.3e.

7.16 Maintain a diary of events and meetings and attend to LSG documents.

7.17 Email material, after consulting the Chair, to LSG members between meetings.

7.18 Ensure the LSG is represented, where appropriate, in the Landlord Newsletter on the Council websites, by informing LSG members of editorial deadlines.

7.19 Work closely with the LSG Chair and Vice-Chair. Liaise in good time to meet LSGTOR deadlines.

7.20 Assist, if necessary, with task groups.

7.21 Perform any other secretarial tasks requested by the Chair.

7.22 The LSG Secretary may have another role e.g. Landlord Liaison Officer. In this capacity, they are attending a LSG meeting as a guest.

7.23 Under confidential, the minutes are taken by the LSG Secretary. If the LSG Secretary also has another guest role e.g. Landlord Liaison Officer, the LSG Secretary leaves the LSG meeting for a confidential item and the Chair appoints a temporary minute secretary from the LSG meeting.

# 8.0 Feedback

8.1 It is beneficial for the LSG to receive meaningful, manageable and motivating feedback from each other, the wider local PRS and the Council.

8.2 Feedback:

a) Is around us all the time. Every time we speak or write, we communicate feedback.

b) Can be valuable, whether e.g. verbal or via a LSG survey.

c) Could give LSG members a sense of purpose and build better relationships.

d) Can help the LSG make better decisions.

e) Is about how others are experiencing our organisation and can help LSG shape its future.

8.3 LSG uses feedback to keep learning and developing.

# 9.0   Privacy Notice

9.1 The data controller is the LSG Secretary.

9.2 An LSG member’s identity, contact details and correspondence with the LSG Secretary and other LSG members may be held by the LSG Secretary and LSG members electronically on e.g. a computer, lap top and mobile phone or as a hard copy in a manual filing system. This information is needed for communication and record keeping.

9.3 Identity and contact information may be collected by the LSG Secretary from an application form, by email, in person, in digital form or over the telephone.

9.4 The LSG Secretary, LSG members’ names and their connection with the local PRS e.g. ‘Jane Smith, Letting Agent’ or ‘Abdul Syed, Private Landlord’ will be publicly available. For example, published on the Council websites or on an identification badge at a Landlord Forum. Company and organisation names linked to a LSG member, other than the NRLA representative, will not be published.

9.5 The LSG Secretary provides their contact details to LSG members.

9.6 An LSG member’s name, connection with the local PRS and email address is shared with other LSG members. A LSG member may agree to share additional contact information, such as their mobile number, with other LSG members or elsewhere.

9.7 In the LSG’s legitimate interest and public task of any public bodies who are members of the LSG, share personal data at meetings pursuant to any of the aims or objectives of the LSG as defined in LSGTOR Sections 1 and 2. Personal data will not be used for any other purpose.

9.8 All parties agree to abide by all appropriate data protection legislation including, but not limited to, the Data Protection Act 2018 and agree full control and responsibility for any personal data acquired and/or held by the organisation as a result of being a member of the LSG.

9.9 All parties agree to support each other as required in meeting their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018, including the completion of Subject Access Requests.

9.10 All parties agree to erase personal data acquired by being a member of the LSG after a period of no longer than 3 months after leaving the LSG.

9.11 In the event of any dispute regarding the handling of personal data by any member of the LSG, any other member of the LSG may raise a complaint to the Chair who will investigate and provide a response within one month.

9.12 All parties are aware their membership of the LSG is dependent upon appropriate handling and use of personal data in their charge. The Chair reserves the right to remove members from the LSG if it is reasonably considered their personal data-handling processes are inadequate.

9.13 An LSG member’s contact details must not be shared other than as outlined in this Privacy Notice.

9.14 An LSG member’s identity and contact details may be available in another public domain, for example if they are a letting agent, Council officer or a member of another organisation.

9.15 The LSG Secretary must receive identity and contact information, for LSG membership to proceed.

9.16  Identity and contact details are retained by the LSG Secretary for one year after a member resigns or their application is declined by the LSG.

9.17 Any data subject can request what data is held about them, or find out about their data rights, by contacting the LSG Secretary, who will deal with it under the auspices of the employing Council’s Privacy Notice.

9.18  The LSG Secretary’s organisation will abide by all relevant data protection legislation, including ensuring that data is held securely and not accessed by individuals who do not reasonably need to do so for the purposes identified in the Privacy Notice.

# 10.0 Review

10.1 LSGTOR are subject to review at the AGM and may be amended by LSG members present, provided the proposed modifications or motions have been notified to the LSG Secretary at least two weeks before the AGM and published in the agenda.

# 11.0 Appendices

## **11.1 Appendix 1**

Landlord Steering Group Application Form

## **11.2 Appendix 2**

Landlord Forum Feedback Form

***APPENDIX 1***

**Landlord Steering Group (LSG) Application Form**

LSG members must be a private rented sector (PRS) landlord, a letting agent or another PRS stakeholder in the Warwick and/or Stratford-on-Avon District Council areas. Use **CAPITAL LETTERS** and complete electronically by clicking in the boxes or down load and clearly complete a hard copy by hand.

First name, including title Surname

Telephone Mobile

Email

Home address

***(Insert ‘X’ in box below, if the answer is ‘yes’. If not applicable, insert ‘N/A’)***

Name of your redress scheme

1) Are you a PRS landlord? *(Delete, as appropriate)* Is/are your property/properties located in:

Warwick District Council area? Stratford-on-Avon District Council area?

2) Are you a letting agent?

Name/address of your local agency

3) Are you another PRS stakeholder?

Your role

Name of your local organisation

Why do you want to join and what contribution do you hope to make to the LSG? **Do you have anything to declare that may affect your application?**

*(Maximum 100 words)*:

Signature or electronic signature

Date *(dd/mm/yyyy)*

See LSG Terms of Reference Privacy Notice on the Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon District Council websites.

Provided there is a vacancy and a maximum of two members from a particular letting agency or PRS stakeholder is not exceeded on the LSG, you will receive an information pack and be invited to have an informal conversation with the LSG Chair or Vice-Chair. If your application is successful, you will be invited to attend the next meeting.

Return completed form by post to: Balwant Rai, Landlord Liaison Officer, Housing Services, Warwick District Council, P.O. Box 2175, Milverton Hill, Royal Leamington Spa CV32 5QE **OR** Email as an attachment to: balwant.rai@warwickdc.gov.uk

***APPENDIX 2***

**Landlord Forum Feedback Form**

**Thank you for attending the Landlord Forum.**

What did you enjoy about this Landlord Forum?

Could we have done anything better?

Are there any presentations you would like see in a future Landlord Forum?

Do you have any topics you would like the Landlord Steering Group to discuss at their meetings?

If you wish, please supply your name and contact details:

Name and title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Your feedback is appreciated. **Please hand this form to the Secretary, Chair or other member of the Landlord Steering Group.**

Thank you

Terry Samuel

Chair of the Landlord Steering Group