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

**Thursday 28 January 2021**

**3.00pm– 4.00pm**

**Virtual Meeting**

**1. Present**

Richard Woodcock, Chair (RW), Richard Thomas, Vice-Chair (RT), Terry Samuel (TS), Shera Payne (SP), Paul Chapman (PC), Paul Hughes (PH), Carol Duckfield (CD), John Warburton (JW), Grant Thoday (GT), Balwant Rai, Secretary (BR) and Tina Maisuria (TM).

**2. Welcome and Apologies**

RW welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies: Mark Lingard (ML) and Don Robbie (DR).

**3. Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising**

TS received a threatening letter from Warwick District Council (WDC), Council Tax Department regarding liability to pay council tax at a student property. Some of the content was not accurate and poorly worded.

PH agreed to liaise with the WDC Council Tax Department, who now typically require student IDs and a copy of tenancy agreement.

**Action: TS to email a copy of the letter to PH, who will contact WDC Council Tax Department and report back at next meeting.**

**4. Spring Landlord Forum**

RW asked members to discuss and finalise topics and speakers for Spring Landlord Forum.

TS suggested Green Homes Grant and Record Keeping for Landlords would be suitable topics. Members agreed.

Green Homes Grant to include an update on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).

**Action: CD will liaise with DR about Record Keeping for Landlords topic; TS to act as ‘back up’ speaker.**

**Action: PC will liaise with Act on Energy for a speaker to cover Green Homes Grant and MEES topic.**

**5. Council Officers’ Updates**

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council Report**

PC confirmed Officers are looking at targeted House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) work. Empty property grants and loans are no longer offered. They are awaiting clarity from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for wall insulation where landlords contribute one third of the cost. Also working on 2 private sector leasing schemes.

**WDC Report**

PH explained it was a very difficult year due to Covid-19, so inspections were limited to emergency cases. Officers were asking for photographic evidence of unsatisfactory housing conditions. He has identified about 140 rental properties with an Energy Performance Certificate rated F or G. Starting to send warning letters and compliance notices.

HMO Licensing and Planning consultation has come to an end and a report will go to Executive in March. The Khan v Waltham Forest Upper Tribunal case had influenced the decision to review Council policy.

HMO licence fees have increased by 2% for new applications and 5% for renewals. Multi-discount fees have been abolished.

**6. Student Rental Analysis 2020/21**

Members were previously emailed TS’s Student Rental Analysis 2020/21.

TS briefly talked about the analysis, which included a lower rent rise this year and a significant increase in student properties of 1 and 2 bedrooms when compared with student HMOs of 3 or more bedrooms.

RW thanked TS for his dedicated piece of research work.

**7. WDC Website**

RW suggested LSG minutes should be published on WDC website. PH and PC agreed. There followed a brief discussion on LSG content on websites.

**Action: BR will liaise with PH and Becky Frazer to upload on WDC website previous minutes, Landlord Forum and LSG meetings dates, LSG member list and, once approved, updated LSG Terms of Reference.**

**8. Landlord Newsletter**

RW noted there is only one newsletter on the WDC website.

**Action: PH and PC will liaise with BR to prepare 2 newsletters a year in advance of each Landlord Forum and all members are encouraged to make a contribution.**

**9. Warwick University Off-Campus Landlord Scheme**

SP advised that Warwick University had run the Private Landlord Head Lease Scheme for the last 40 years. The scheme was being closed, so leases will not be renewed. They are moving to a new marketing platform to allow landlords, but not letting agents, to advertise their properties. It should be live from April 2021.

**Action: SP to announce these changes at the Spring Landlord Forum. They will also be published in a landlord newsletter.**

There was a general discussion around the issue of letting agents being permitted to speak at Landlord Forums about their company. In the past, agents have been able to have a ‘stall’ to market their services. RW suggested, as this was a difficult issue, it could be further discussed at the next meeting.

**Action: BR to add agenda item for next LSG meeting.**

**10. National Residential Landlord Association Representative**

DR sent apologies, so BR spoke to him. He is willing to support the Spring Landlord Forum.

**11. AOB**

TS had previously emailed members about a National Landlord Investment Show.

TS requested future agendas are timed to ensure each item is discussed.

RW said it is sometimes difficult to say how long an agenda item will take but if the majority agreed then members and speakers could inform BR in advance of estimated times.

**Action: BR, in consultation with the Chair, will time next LSG agenda.**

JW referred to the proposed Covid-19 mega-lab in Leamington Spa offering job opportunities which had resulted in prospective employees looking to ‘house share’ in the town. With the Article 4 Direction, this effectively prevents new HMOs being created, so he asked whether there was a solution to this situation.

PH acknowledged the issue, but an Article 4 Direction was made to stop the proliferation of HMOs in areas of high concentration. It is a matter for the Planning Department.

**Action: JW will email PH, so it can be referred to the WDC Planning Department.**

TS suggested BR should email minutes to RW to approve, before circulating to members.

Meeting closed 4.30pm.

Next meetings:

2.00pm Wednesday 14 April 2021 Virtual Spring Landlord Forum.

2.30pm Wednesday 9 June 2021 Virtual LSG.