

# LABOUR HOUSING GROUP



## CONSTITUTION

*\*As revised at AGM 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022*

This Constitution sets out the purposes, organisation and operating principles of the Labour Housing Group. It is a revision of the previous Constitution, adopted by LHG at its Annual General Meeting on 10th March 2022.

### Section 1: Name

- 1.1 The name of the organisation is the Labour Housing Group (hereafter referred to in this document as "LHG").

### Section 2: Objectives

- 2.1 To work within the Labour movement to develop and promote socialist housing policies.
- 2.2\* To promote Housing as a Human Right.
- 2.3\* To be at the forefront of Labour's mission to achieve decent, safe, secure and genuinely affordable homes for all.
- 2.4 To support Labour Party members to campaign on housing issues across the country.
- 2.5\* To act as a constructive partner and critical friend to the Labour Front Bench in Parliament.
- 2.6\* To make information on housing issues available to Labour Party members and to the general public, and to lead and generate discussion of Labour housing policies.
- 2.7 To promote housing policies that will assist in securing the objects of the Labour Party as set out in its Constitution.

### Section 3: Membership

- 3.1\* Membership of LHG will only be open to:
  - 3.1.1 Individual members of the Labour Party
  - 3.1.2 Constituency Labour Parties, Labour Party Branches, District Labour Parties, and Labour Groups on local authorities.
  - 3.1.3 Trade Unions, and branches of Trade Unions affiliated to the TUC and the Labour Party, and branches of other organisations affiliated to the Labour Party.
- 3.2 All members must accept the Constitution of LHG and share its Objectives as set out in the LHG Membership Application Form.
- 3.3\* All applications for membership shall be submitted either online on LHGs website or to the Membership Secretary, whose contact details will be available on LHG's website.

Only the Membership Secretary will be empowered to accept new members (with the exception noted in 3.8 below), and will inform the EC of their acceptance.

- 3.4\* Membership will commence on the date upon which payment of subscription, payable one year in advance, is made and has been acknowledged by the Executive Committee, at which point new members will be entitled to vote and take part in the activities of LHG.
- 3.5\* Any individual member of LHG who ceases to be a member of the Labour Party will automatically cease to be a member of LHG. Such members will be expected to inform the Membership Secretary of the change in question.
- 3.6\* Membership of LHG will automatically lapse in the event of non-payment of subscription six months after it is due. The Membership Secretary will inform members of their impending lapse. Membership, on the basis of the original due date, will be reinstated on payment of the overdue subscription.
- 3.7\* Any complaint that a member is failing to observe the Constitution of LHG, or that a member does not share the aims and objects of LHG, or is acting in a manner prejudicial to the interests of LHG or the Labour Party, shall in the first instance be referred in writing to the Chair, who will adjudicate having taken advice as necessary. If satisfied that such a complaint is justified, and is incompatible with the interests of LHG or the Labour Party, the Chair shall inform the EC of this, whereupon the EC may resolve to expel the member concerned from LHG, or take such other action as is deemed appropriate.
- 3.8\* Any member who has been expelled from LHG under paragraph 3.7 can only be subsequently reinstated by resolution of the EC.

#### **Section 4: Finance**

- 4.1 The level of subscription for all categories of LHG member shall be determined at each Annual General Meeting. A record of annual subscriptions due from and paid by members shall be maintained by the Membership Secretary.
- 4.2\* The Treasurer of the EC shall collect all money due to LHG and shall be the custodian thereof. All funds shall be held in bank accounts. Cheques drawn on such bank accounts, or other financial transactions, shall be signed by officers authorised to do so by the EC.
- 4.3 LHG's financial year shall run from 1st January to 31st December.
- 4.4\* No member or Branch shall incur expense on behalf of LHG without the written authority of the Chair and the Treasurer.
- 4.5\* Branches (see section 9) may raise their own funds and incur expenditure which can be met from such funds, provided always that it is in furtherance of LHG's national policy objectives, and that it is accounted for to the Treasurer of the EC.
- 4.6\* Any membership fees collected by Branches must be passed in full immediately to the Treasurer of the EC, and the Membership Secretary notified of this.

- 4.7\* The cost of travel incurred by EC members on LHG business, including attendance at EC meetings, CLPs, conferences, etc., will be reimbursed at the cost of the cheapest available standard class rail fare from home for the journey in question.
- 4.8\* Reasonable costs of accommodation and subsistence for LHGs delegates to the Labour Party Annual Conference will be met, subject to specific approval, by the EC.
- 4.9 The accounts of LHG shall be audited each year by two auditors who will be elected at the Annual General Meeting, who will report to the subsequent Annual General Meeting. The Treasurer shall produce for inspection by the auditors all documentation necessary for the complete examination of the accounts.

## **Section 5: Governance**

- 5.1 The day to day administration of LHG, and responsibility for developing LHG policy, will be vested in the Executive Committee (EC) which will be responsible to and accountable to the Annual General Meeting.
- 5.2\* LHG will invite Patrons to support the EC and help further the Objectives of LHG. The EC will recommend named Patrons to an Annual General Meeting, and following approval each Patron will be invited to serve for an initial term of 3 years. There will be no limit to the number of Patrons.
- 5.3\* Patrons wishing to continue in the role after three years will have their position confirmed or rejected by an AGM. There is no limit on the number of terms an individual Patron may serve.

## **Section 6: The Executive Committee**

- 6.1 The EC of LHG shall consist of ten elected members, elected through a ballot of the membership every two years. The EC will be formed by the ten candidates for election who secure the highest number of votes in the ballot. The outcome of the election will be reported to the AGM, with a recommendation that the ten candidates with the highest number of votes will form the EC to serve for the next two years.
- 6.2\* The EC may invite not more than five members of LHG to serve as co-opted members of the EC, in addition to the ten elected members. The reasons for such co-options will be made in writing and approved by the EC, and will include representatives from LHG in Scotland and Wales (in the event of LHG organising in these jurisdictions). Casual vacancies during the tenure of the EC will be filled by co-option, where possible inviting unsuccessful candidates in the most recent AGM ballot in descending order of their vote.
- 6.3\* At least 50% of members of the EC shall be women. If this is not achieved through the ballot (6.1 above) it will be secured by co-option (6.2 above).
- 6.4\* The EC will take action to ensure that its composition properly reflects the diversity of LHGs membership.
- 6.5 Only individuals who have been paid-up members of LHG for 12 months continuously may be members of the EC.

- 6.6\* All those standing for election to the EC must provide a statement which sets out all their professional and other relevant interests in housing organisations, and in organisations which impact on housing policy and practice.
- 6.7\* The officers of the EC will comprise the Chair, two Vice Chairs (one of whom must be a woman), Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Website Administrator, Fundraising Officer, Newsletter Editor, Policy Officer, Social Media Officer, Branches Officer, Red Brick lead and Events Coordinator. Officers will be elected from within the EC at its first meeting following the AGM. An individual EC member may hold more than one office. The Chair will also hold the position of Deputy Treasurer.
- 6.8\* EC officers will report to the EC and in writing to the AGM, on activity within their area(s) of responsibility. The Treasurer and Membership Secretary will report to each EC meeting; others as and when necessary.
- 6.9 In the absence of the Chair, one of the two Vice Chairs will chair meetings of the EC, and in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chairs, subject to the EC meeting being quorate (see 6.10), a Chair will be elected for that meeting by those present.
- 6.10 The EC shall have a quorum of five elected members. In the event of a meeting being inquorate urgent matters will be determined by the officers and subject to ratification at the next meeting of the EC.
- 6.11\* The new EC will take office and meet in person as soon as is practical after the AGM at which its election has been confirmed. Otherwise, meetings of the EC will normally be held by video conferencing unless the EC determines on occasion to meet in person. Meetings will be held as frequently as the business of LHG requires, but in any case not fewer than four times each year.
- 6.12\* Every two years, beginning in 2016, at least eight weeks prior to the AGM, the Secretary will invite all eligible (see 6.12.1 below) members of LHG to nominate themselves or another member for election to the EC. All nominations must be accompanied by a brief written personal statement in support of the nomination and an indication of willingness to stand and, if elected, to serve. These will be distributed to all LHG members with a ballot paper. The Secretary will manage the election process, and report to the AGM on the outcome of the ballot. From time to time the EC will review the balloting process, having regard to the need to ensure that all members are allowed to vote, balanced with the need to be as efficient as possible.
- 6.12.1\*Members entitled to participate will be those whose membership subscriptions are fully paid up at the time of the invitation to nominate.
- 6.12.2 The EC will prepare an annual budget, which will be presented for approval to the AGM each year.
- 6.12.3 The EC will submit a report to each AGM summarising its activities during the preceding year, and an Action Plan for the forthcoming year, for discussion and approval.
- 6.12.4\*The EC will nominate at least one delegate to the Annual Party Conference; the delegate will be a male or female member on alternate years, or one of each in

the case of there being two delegates in a given year. LHG will meet all reasonable costs of the delegate's attendance.

- 6.13\* Any elected member of the EC who fails to attend or participate in three consecutive meetings of the EC, without giving reasonable apologies, will be deemed to have resigned, and a casual vacancy will be created and dealt with as set out in 6.2 (above).

## **Section 7: Annual General Meeting**

- 7.1 The EC shall call at least one general meeting of all members of LHG each year which shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held in person during March. Additional General Meetings may be called at the discretion of the EC.
- 7.2\* At each AGM the date of the next year's AGM and the timetable for giving notice, will be agreed, and can only be changed by the EC in the event of urgent unforeseen circumstances arising.
- 7.3 At least eight weeks' notice of an AGM will be given to all members, and will include an outline agenda, and an invitation from all paid up members (see 6.12.1 above) to submit Resolutions for discussion at the AGM.
- 7.4 All individuals who are paid up members (see 6.12.1 above) will be entitled to attend and vote at the AGM, at any other general meetings and in elections to the Executive.
- 7.5 Organisations which are paid-up members of LHG may send one delegate to each to the AGM or other general meetings. Such delegates must be individual members of the Labour Party but need not be members of LHG.
- 7.6\* Each member present at the AGM shall be entitled to one vote except the Chair who shall have a casting vote in addition to his / her individual vote. The quorum for AGMs and all other general meetings shall be 5% of the paid up membership of LHG as notified to the current or most recent AGM.
- 7.7\* The AGM will undertake the following business:
- 7.7.1 Receive a report on the election of the new EC
  - 7.7.2 Receive a report on activity by the EC during the preceding year
  - 7.7.3 Present a proposed Action Plan for the forthcoming year
  - 7.7.4 Receive an audited statement of the accounts for the previous year
  - 7.7.5 Discuss (and, subject to agreement) approve the budget for the forthcoming year
  - 7.7.6 Receive a report from the EC's Annual Conference delegate
  - 7.7.7 Receive a report on membership and approve membership subscriptions
  - 7.7.8 Discuss any Resolutions submitted from members
  - 7.7.9 Receive reports from all Branches on their previous year's activity
- 7.8\* Any paid up member (individual or organisation) may submit a Resolution for discussion at the AGM. Each Resolution should be no more than 100 words in length if its purpose is internal to LHG, or 250 in the case of proposed Conference Resolutions, and should

be concerned with a contemporary topic that is relevant to the objectives of LHG. A proposed resolution in excess of the prescribed length will be referred back to its proposer for revision.

- 7.9 All Resolutions will be considered by the EC, prior to the AGM each year, at which time the EC may ask the proposer to amend a Resolution, or, where two or more Resolutions are similar in content, that the proposers consider submitting a composited Resolution.
- 7.10\* For a Resolution to be discussed at the AGM, the proposer must be present in person to present the Resolution, unless a formal apology for absence has been given.
- 7.11 At each AGM, and depending on the number of Resolutions that have been received, the Chair reserves the right to determine how much time within the AGM will be devoted to discussing Resolutions.
- 7.12 For a motion, other than changes to the Constitution (see section 12. 2) to be carried at an AGM or SGM, there must be a simple majority of votes in favour from those in attendance.

### **Section 8: Other Meetings and Membership Activity**

- 8.1 A Special General Meeting (SGM) of LHG may be called by a simple majority of the elected members of the EC, or by 5% of the paid up members of LHG giving notice to the EC in writing of the matter or matters required to be dealt with at the SGM. Where an SGM is to be convened, eight weeks' notice will be given of the SGM and the matter or matters to be dealt with.
- 8.2\* LHG will arrange at least one fringe meeting at each Annual Conference, details of which will be published in the regular LHG newsletter, and LHG's other media and communications outlets.
- 8.3\* Each year, LHG will hold at least one 'Policy Day' to discuss policy and best practice which will contribute towards discussions with members of the Shadow Cabinet, Labour Council leaders and others. Such events will be held in person and/or by video conference and will normally be based outside London.
- 8.4\* Each year the EC will organise a national programme of online events which will be open to all LHG members, making use of video conference and other appropriate technology.

### **Section 9: Branches**

- 9.1\* Any local group of not less than ten members of LHG may apply to the EC for recognition as a Branch of LHG. The EC will agree the area covered by any Branch, which, unless the EC so determines, will normally be geographically coterminous with existing Labour Party Regions or the jurisdiction of the Devolved Administrations.
- 9.2 LHG members living in Scotland and Wales are entitled to organise themselves as a Branch of LHG, and upon recognition by the EC will be entitled to send one delegate each to the EC, of which they will be a co-opted member (see 6.2 above).
- 9.3 Branches shall comply with the Constitution of LHG and shall concern themselves only with matters consistent with the Objectives of LHG.

- 9.4 Each Branch shall send to the Secretary of the EC a brief written annual report, before the AGM of LHG, for consideration as part of the agenda of the AGM of LHG.
- 9.5\* The officers of each Branch shall include a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. These, and other members of a Branch Committee, shall be elected annually by all full members of LHG living in the area of the Branch.
- 9.6\* Procedures for the setting up and conduct of Branches, including financial support, shall be determined by the EC. Each Branch must hold an Annual General Meeting and must invite the EC to send an observer to attend.
- 9.7 Each year, Branches may submit a request to the EC for supplementary funding to support their activities, provided these are consistent with and will further the Objectives of LHG (see 4.4 and 4.5 above).

### **Section 10: Publications and Media**

- 10.1 All policy documents or other publications proposed for publication by LHG or by Branches shall first be referred to the EC for approval.
- 10.2 Any statements to the press, or for use via any other media, on behalf of LHG, must be approved in advance by the Chair, or in the Chair's absence, by both Vice-Chairs.
- 10.3\* The EC will maintain LHGs Website ([labourhousing.org](http://labourhousing.org)) within which the Proceedings of LHG will be accessible.
- 10.4\* The EC will maintain LHGs Social Media Accounts.

### **Section 11: External Affiliation**

- 11.1\* LHG will not affiliate to individual CLPs or Regional Labour Party bodies
- 11.2 LHG may affiliate to any bodies which are relevant to the activities of LHG, and can assist in promoting its Objects. All affiliations must be approved by the EC.

### **Section 12: Constitution**

- 12.1\* The EC will review and amend the LHG Constitution as and when necessary to ensure that it reflects the law, the needs of LHG and best practice.
- 12.2 Amendments to the Constitution may only be made by a two-thirds majority vote in favour at an AGM, or a SGM called for that purpose.

### **Section 13: Dissolution**

- 13.1 LHG can only be wound up by a resolution to such effect following debate at an SGM of LHG called specifically for the purpose, or by a resolution to an AGM.
- 13.2\* In the event of dissolution of LHG any remaining funds, after meeting all liabilities, shall be paid by the Treasurer to a registered housing charity or to any other body or organisation sharing the aims and objectives of LHG as shall be approved at the SGM or AGM at which the dissolution is determined.