DPMSG Terms of Reference

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1. Document control

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Steering Group. Any updates will be recorded in the version history and approved in line with the agreed governance arrangements.

Version No.	Date	Author	Description of Update
1.1	08/05/25	Matt Cole (HMLR)	Added details on how new Working Groups are initiated and approved
1.2	27/05/25	Matt Cole (HMLR)	Added in wording to cover Chair's ability to manage conflicts of interest and commercial interest and process of approving and admitting new member organisations
1.3	24/06/25	Claire Bazell (HMLR)	Added in para to denote responsibilities of Working Group Leads following DPMSG meeting 20/06/25
1.4	14/08/25	Matt Cole (HMLR)	Updates following feedback from Clara Martinelli (MHCLG) on preparation for DPMSG meetings
1.5	03/06/26	Claire Bazell (HMLR)	Updates following the DPMSG re-set

1.6	21/10/26	Laura Murfin (HMLR)	Revision and updates in line with DPMSG membership model

2. Purpose of this Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference sets out how the Digital Property Market Steering Group (DPMSG) will operate. It explains DPMSG's purpose, governance, membership arrangements, roles and responsibilities, decision-making, meeting arrangements, communication approach, and conflict of interest requirements.

3. Background and purpose of DPMSG

DPMSG was founded in 2023 and brings together industry partners, government departments and regulatory bodies that share a commitment to improving the home buying and selling process through the uptake of digital processes.

DPMSG supports delivery of the digital aspects of the Home Buying and Selling Reform Roadmap through its Delivery Groups and partner programmes. DPMSG provides advice, expertise, delivery coordination and constructive challenge. It does not replace ministerial or departmental decision-making responsibilities.

4. Vision and scope

DPMSG's vision is that through collaboration, innovation and a focus on emerging digital technologies it will build on existing progress across the property buying and selling system to get a better result for the customer: simpler, faster, more certain and less stressful.

The scope of DPMSG includes digital or digital-enabling processes related to the buying and selling of residential and commercial property with particular focus on the digitalisation aspects of the Government's Home Buying and Selling Reform Roadmap.

The current DPMSG Delivery Plan supports the outcomes set out in the Roadmap.

5. How our members contribute to DPMSG

DPMSG membership is open to organisations and individuals who support DPMSG's objectives.

DPMSG members contribute insight, expertise, evidence, feedback and constructive challenge to help test emerging ideas, strengthen outputs and ensure DPMSG's direction reflects the needs of the whole property sector.

Some members may also contribute through Delivery Groups or the Strategic Steering Group, where their expertise, role or capacity supports focused delivery. See DPMSG Membership and Participation Guide.

5.1 DPMSG Members

DPMSG Members form the core membership of DPMSG. They stay informed through regular communications, attend all-member engagement sessions, review and comment on relevant proposals and outputs, share evidence and insight, and may contribute to Delivery Groups where their expertise is relevant.

5.2 Delivery Group Members

Delivery Group members are DPMSG members who contribute to specific workstreams where their expertise is most relevant. Delivery Group membership is limited so that each group has the right mix of expertise, capacity and focus to make progress against agreed priorities. These members are accountable for specific delivery aims as agreed within their group.

5.3 Strategic Steering Group Members

Strategic Steering Group members are DPMSG members who provide strategic leadership, oversight and direction. They help set priorities, review progress, challenge delivery and support decisions on recommendations, priorities and governance changes where required.

5.4 Regulatory and International Review Group

The Regulatory and International Review Group provides independent expert advice and constructive challenge of DPMSG outputs, drawing on regulatory and international perspectives. Membership of this group is managed separately in line with DPMSG governance arrangements.

5.5 Strategic Partner Programmes

DPMSG will engage and work alongside partner programmes and related initiatives where there are shared objectives, dependencies or opportunities for collaboration. Such programmes remain responsible for their own governance, funding and delivery arrangements. Partner programmes will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

6. Governance structure

Forum	Purpose	Outputs
DPMSG member engagement	Share updates and invite feedback from all DPMSG members.	Insight, feedback, evidence and constructive challenge.
Delivery Groups	Progress agreed workstreams and develop outputs.	Recommendations, products, outputs and delivery updates.
Strategic Steering Group	Provide leadership, oversight and direction.	Priorities, strategic decisions, approvals and escalation routes.
Regulatory and International Review Group	Provide independent scrutiny and advice.	Review input, advice and challenge.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 All DPMSG Members

- Champion DPMSG's work and support progress towards agreed goals.
- Work in the best interests of consumers across the property system.
- Engage through regular communications and member meetings.

- Review and comment on relevant proposals, guidance and outputs.
- Share evidence, insight, feedback and constructive challenge.
- Keep information confidential where required.
- Declare relevant commercial interests openly and promptly.

7.2 Delivery Group Members

In addition to the responsibilities of all DPMSG members above, Delivery Group members:

- Lead or contribute to agreed DPMSG workstreams and project activity in conjunction with project leads where relevant.
- Attend and contribute to Delivery Group meetings and review any papers in advance.
- Where unable to attend, ensure their views are represented through the DPMSG Secretariat or a suitable deputy where appropriate.
- All Delivery Groups should provide a written update to the DPMSG Secretariat at least 3 weeks in advance of any upcoming DPMSG Strategic Steering Group meetings. The Secretariat will share updates with the Chair in advance of the meeting, and these will inform the agenda.
- Delivery Groups to produce papers to be shared with Chair and Secretariat 2 weeks in advance of DPMSG, outlining high level updates and issues to be escalated at the DPMSG.
- Share technical, operational or subject matter expertise to support the aims of the group.
- Develop recommendations, products and outputs for consideration by the Strategic Steering Group.
- Report progress, issues and outputs to the Strategic Steering Group.
- Invite input from DPMSG members to test ideas and strengthen outputs.
- Seek advice from the Regulatory and International Review Group where relevant.

7.3 Delivery Group Leads

- Lead the planning and delivery of the Delivery Group's agreed work in conjunction with project leads where necessary.
- Ensure the Delivery Group has a clear statement of work, scope, objectives, outputs and delivery milestones.
- Identify the expertise needed for the Delivery Group and consider expressions of interest from DPMSG members.
- Ensure the Delivery Group remains focused, inclusive and able to make progress.
- Provide updates, risks, issues and outputs to the Strategic Steering Group.
- Seek input from wider DPMSG members where this would help test ideas or strengthen outputs.
- Delivery Group Leads may propose Project Leads to support specific pieces of work within a Delivery Group. Proposed appointments should be shared with the Secretariat and Strategic Steering Group prior to confirmation. Project Leads will report through the relevant Delivery Group Lead and support delivery of agreed outputs and milestones.
- If a Delivery Group Lead feels that a Delivery Group member is not meeting these roles and responsibilities, they may escalate this to the Chair who may remove member from the group.

7.4 Strategic Steering Group Members

In addition to the responsibilities of all DPMSG members above, Strategic Steering Group members:

- Represent the interests of the wider property sector, rather than a single organisation.
- Champion DPMSG's work across their organisations and networks.
- Attend and contribute to Strategic Steering Group meetings and review any papers in advance.
- Where unable to attend, ensure their views are represented through the DPMSG Secretariat or a suitable deputy where appropriate.
- Set and review DPMSG's strategic priorities, outcomes and delivery focus.
- Agree the DPMSG Delivery Plan(s) and review whether updates or republication is required.
- Provide leadership, oversight and constructive challenge across DPMSG activity, reviewing progress, risks, issues and key outputs from Delivery Groups.
- Support decisions on recommendations, priorities, delivery activity and governance changes where required.
- Consider proposals for new Delivery Groups.
- Resolve issues relating to Delivery Group membership, in consultation with the relevant Delivery Group Lead and Strategic Steering Group Chair where needed.
- Ensure DPMSG activity and outcomes are shared with all DPMSG members, supporting opportunities to involve the wider DPMSG membership in testing ideas, shaping outputs and providing feedback.
- Where funds or resources are needed to support critical DPMSG activity, consider what support may be available through their organisation, subject to that organisation's own approvals and requirements.
- Represent DPMSG at meetings or events where required.

7.5 Chair

- Bring the Strategic Steering Group together quarterly, in person, unless otherwise agreed.
- Ensure DPMSG remains focused on its agreed purpose, scope and priorities.
- Support consensus-based decision-making and manage voting where consensus cannot be reached.
- Nominate a suitable Strategic Steering Group member to deputise where required.
- Host all-member engagement sessions or suitable alternatives.
- Ensure DPMSG membership and activity do not create unmanaged conflicts of interest or unfair commercial advantage.
- Ask members to step back from discussions, activities or membership where a conflict or serious conduct concern arises.
- The Chair also reserves the right to remove any member whose actions are consistently obstructive or undermine the effective and constructive working of DPMSG.
- Seek approval from the Strategic Steering Group for amendments to this Terms of Reference and ensure it is reviewed annually.

7.6 Secretariat and Project Manager

- Support the day-to-day management of DPMSG.

- Lead stakeholder engagement, communications coordination and relationship management activities to support DPMSG objectives and alignment across government, regulators, industry and partner programmes.
- Support coordination across Delivery Groups, Strategic Steering Group members and external stakeholders to identify dependencies, opportunities, risks and emerging issues.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with members, partners and stakeholders, helping to align activity, share information and support collaborative delivery across the DPMSG network.
- Confirm meeting dates, locations and joining arrangements.
- Work with the Chair and relevant leads to propose and circulate agendas and pre-reading.
- Commission papers, updates and supporting documents in line with the agreed timetable.
- Attend meetings and maintain a record of decisions, actions and key discussion points.
- Maintain project documentation, including risks, stakeholder information, highlight reports and action logs.
- Support Delivery Groups with planning, delivery reporting and escalation routes.
- Support the annual review of DPMSG governance, membership and Delivery Groups.
- Support an annual review of Secretariat and Project Manager resourcing to ensure DPMSG has appropriate support.

8. Membership and appointment arrangements

DPMSG membership is open to organisations and individuals who support DPMSG's objectives. Members may contribute through all-member engagement, Delivery Group activity, Strategic Steering Group membership or other agreed opportunities where their expertise is relevant.

8.1 Becoming a DPMSG Member

1. Applications are made through the DPMSG website.
2. Applicants are asked to provide a short explanation of why they wish to become a DPMSG member and how they can contribute.
3. Applications are reviewed by the Secretariat against DPMSG's purpose and objectives.
4. Where an application requires further review, it will be referred to the Chair for a final decision.

The Chair may remove a member from DPMSG activity on a temporary or permanent basis where their involvement may create a conflict of interest, undermine constructive working, or are inconsistent with DPMSG's purpose and ways of working.

DPMSG membership may be reviewed periodically.

8.2 Delivery Group Membership

Delivery Group membership is limited so that each group has the right mix of expertise, capacity and focus. Delivery Group opportunities may arise at different points depending on delivery priorities, the expertise needed and the capacity of each group.

Delivery Group Leads may invite DPMSG members to join their group or invite expressions of interest from members. Appointments will depend on the focus of the work, the expertise required and the capacity of the group.

Where possible, Delivery Groups should avoid multiple representatives from the same organisation, unless there is a clear need for their specific expertise or role. This helps maintain a balanced mix of perspectives and supports fair access to Delivery Group opportunities across the wider DPMSG membership.

Where opportunities arise, Delivery Group Leads will share relevant details with members, including the focus of the work, the expertise sought and how to express interest.

Expressions of interest will be considered by the relevant Delivery Group Lead, in consultation with the Secretariat or Chair where appropriate. Not every expression of interest will lead to Delivery Group membership, but all DPMSG members will continue to have opportunities to contribute through engagement, feedback, evidence and constructive challenge.

Delivery Group membership nominated leads and specific contributions may vary over time in line with delivery priorities and project requirements.

8.3 Delivery Group Leads

Each Delivery Group will have a nominated lead who represents the group on the Strategic Steering Group. Delivery Group Leads may be nominated by the relevant Delivery Group and ratified by the Strategic Steering Group or appointed directly by the Strategic Steering Group where this supports the setup or effective operation of a Delivery Group. Delivery Group Lead appointments will be reviewed at least annually.

8.4 Strategic Steering Group Membership

Strategic Steering Group membership will include Government policy leads and Delivery Group Leads or nominated representatives. Members are expected to support DPMSG's objectives, provide strategic oversight and act in the interests of the wider property sector.

8.5 Strategic Steering Group Chair

The Chair will be appointed by the Strategic Steering Group, with the agreement of MHCLG as the sponsoring policy department for Home Buying and Selling Reform. The appointment will be reviewed annually, with the opportunity for the Chair to continue, step down or for a new Chair to be appointed.

9. Delivery Groups

Delivery Groups are established to take forward agreed workstreams and develop recommendations, products or outputs for consideration by the Strategic Steering Group. Each Delivery Group should have a clear scope, statement of work, lead, expected outputs and reporting arrangements.

Delivery Group outputs should be presented as DPMSG outputs, subject to appropriate review and approval through the Strategic Steering Group.

9.1 Creation of a new Delivery Group

Should a new Delivery Group be required, the following process will apply.

1. A DPMSG member discusses a proposed Delivery Group with the Secretariat, including the high-level scope, objectives and benefits.
2. The proposer prepares a draft Delivery Group charter or statement of work, with support from the DPMSG Secretariat if needed.
3. The draft is reviewed by the Chair and amended where required.
4. The proposal is presented to the Strategic Steering Group for approval.
5. If approved, the Delivery Group Lead confirms the membership, delivery plan and reporting arrangements.

10. Strategic Steering Group decision-making

The Strategic Steering Group will seek to operate by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions may be made by a majority vote of Strategic Steering Group members present. The Chair will have a casting vote if there is a tie. The Strategic Steering Group is quorate when at least two-thirds of the group are represented.

Decisions made by the Strategic Steering Group represent DPMSG's agreed position for the purposes of its work. They should not be taken as binding individual member organisations or as representing each organisation's separate policy, commercial or operational position.

11. Meetings and ways of working

- The Strategic Steering Group will meet quarterly unless the Chair agrees otherwise. Meetings will be face to face at the Chair's preferred location.
- Additional meetings may be held to discuss urgent matters.
- Delivery Groups should meet monthly, or as required to progress their deliverables.
- All-member engagement sessions will be held quarterly to provide updates and invite feedback from DPMSG members.
- Regular updates will also be circulated to keep members informed between sessions.
- Agendas and pre-reading should usually be circulated at least three working days before each meeting.
- Summary notes of key discussion points, key decisions and actions should be circulated within five working days where possible.

12. Openness, publication and information handling

DPMSG will work openly and will publish its approved governance documents, membership information, delivery priorities, progress updates and final outputs where appropriate.

Working in the open does not mean that all working material will automatically be published. Draft documents, commercially sensitive information, personal data, information provided in confidence, and material relating to the development of government policy may require restricted handling.

Members should make clear when information they provide requires handling and explain the reason. Decisions about publication or disclosure of information held by a government department or public authority remain subject to that organisation's legal obligations and information-governance processes.

13. Conduct, propriety, confidentiality and conflicts of interest

- Members must openly share any private interests that relate to DPMSG discussions.
- Members must declare relevant interests in writing when joining DPMSG and whenever their circumstances change.
- Members must raise relevant interests at the start of meetings where a conflict may arise.
- Members, whether organisations or individuals must not use non-public information for commercial or personal advantage.
- Members are expected to keep information confidential where this is required.
- Members are expected to behave professionally, respectfully and constructively. Where conduct falls below these standards or undermines DPMSG's work, the Chair may decide to remove the member.
- The Chair also reserves the right to remove any member whose actions are consistently obstructive or undermine the effective and constructive working of DPMSG.

DPMSG members must not:

- Let private interests guide their actions or use group resources for personal gain.
- Let personal opinions determine their advice.
- Use private information learned at meetings for their own benefit.
- Ignore the Chair's instructions about conflicts.

Any allegation that a DPMSG member has used their membership to imply endorsement by DPMSG or for commercial gain will be referred to the Strategic Steering Group for consideration. If the allegation is upheld, the member's DPMSG membership will be revoked.

Propriety Rules:

When a conflict of interest arises, the Strategic Steering Group Chair can:

- Ask the member to step out of specific discussions.
- Limit what documents they can access.
- Request steps to fix the conflict.
- In serious cases, recommend removing the member.

Chair's Authority:

- The Chair can investigate possible conflicts and ask members for more information.
- The Chair oversees the group to ensure honesty, openness, and proper conduct.
- The Chair can require members to step back from discussions when conflicts exist.
- The Chair will report serious conflicts and how they were handled.
- The Chair can remove members who break the rules.
- The Secretariat will help the Chair monitor conflicts.
- Each year, the Chair will review how well these rules are working.

14. Communications, branding and use of DPMSG logo

DPMSG communications, publications, presentations, webpages and outputs should align with agreed DPMSG branding. Use of DPMSG branding or logo should be approved by the DPMSG Secretariat.

Members may not use their DPMSG membership in a way that suggests endorsement, approval or commercial advantage. Any queries regarding appropriate reference to DPMSG membership should be referred to the DPMSG Secretariat.

DPMSG members will be listed on the DPMSG website and have the option to have their organisation logo displayed on the site.

15. Budget and resourcing

DPMSG has no central budget. Resources are provided by participating organisations unless otherwise agreed.

16. Review of this Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Steering Group.

17. Links

- A list of DPMSG members and current Delivery Group Leads can be found on the DPMSG Website.
- DPMSG Delivery Plan
- DPMSG Membership and Participation Guide