***Kent Housing Group first full member’s meeting of 2018***

KHG members from housing associations and local authorities across Kent and Medway met on 5 February 2018 for the first full KHG member’s meeting of the year at Ashford Borough Council’s Civic Centre.

A packed agenda started with a warm welcome from Sarah Robson, Chair of KHG.

Michael Ridgewell, Programme Director for Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Partnership gave us an update on their five–year ambitions including plans for significant engagement with staff, stakeholders and the public on how housing and health can work together to deliver better outcomes.

Abbie Gardner from the National Probation Service summarised housing and homelessness issues facing Criminal Justice System (CJS) service users in Kent. 15% of the prison population were homeless before entering custody. Just under 5,500 people left prison in 2015 without any access to much needed supported accommodation.

She highlighted that addressing these issues cannot be met by CJS services alone, it’s vital to have local engagement, leadership and commitment from a wide range of stakeholders, including Local Housing Authorities, housing providers and all other agencies with a responsibility for reducing re-offending.

Carol Cairns from Homes England gave an update on their priorities for the newly expanded organisation including playing a far bigger role in investing in supply and intervening in the market to help deliver 300,000 homes a year by the middle of the next decade.

We then had a [PlaceShapers](http://www.placeshapers.org/) update from Frank Czarnowski, Chief Executive, [West Kent Housing Association](http://www.westkent.org/). PlaceShapers is now a national network of 119 community-based housing associations. He described that both KHG and PlaceShapers share similar values. While PlaceShapers may have bigger collaboration, retaining the Kent perspective is vital.

Also on the agenda were presentations from Richard Miller, McClaren Construction Group, Michael Clever from [The Housing Forum](http://www.housingforum.org.uk/) who shared some of their key initiatives to deliver benefits to member organisations and finally updates from Mel Anthony, Christy Holden and Caroline Smith from Kent County Council.

The next meeting is on 16 May 2018 and will be hosted by Kent County Council, Sessions House. **If you’d like to know more about joining us please contact the KHG Partnership Manager.**