**Kent Engagement Group**

**MINUTES – 21st April 2016, Ashford Borough Council, Council Chamber, Ashford Kent TN23 1PL**

**Attending**: Wendy Mason, Riverside & Chair; Victoria France & Lynsey Brogan, Hyde Housing; Ian Long, Melanie McAdam & Rachel Morris, Circle Housing Russet; Carol Francis, Town & Country Housing Group; Louise Gray, Dartford BC; Philippa Dale, Ashford BC; Jan Henry, Moat; Helen Critcher, Golding Homes; Catherine Owston, Affinity Sutton; Bozlur Rashid, Amicus Horizon Limited; Tracey Marshall & Tania McGee, Gravesham BC; Lisa Cornish, Orbit

**Apologies**: Sarah Holden, TCHG; Jodie Miller, Medway Council; Sue Sleet, Southern Housing Group; Sara Hutchinson, TCHG; Redmond Hartop, West Kent HA; Sue Sleet, Southern Housing Group

**Visitor**: Nicola Sinclair, B&CE Charitable Trust

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| **ITEM** | **NOTES** | **ACTION** |
| **Introductions & Apologies** | Introductions and apologies noted. |  |
| **B&CE Presentation** | Nicola introduced herself to the group. Nicola provided the group with the background to the Charitable Trust the B&CE, the Trust was set up in 1991 and Nicola has been in post for the last two years ago. There is a video on the B&CE Website which shows the benefits of the work undertaken by the Trust.  There are three main objectives for the trust 1) Financial Aid or Assistance; 2) Health and Safety and 3) Training and Education. The Trust will work and sign post with partner organisations to ensure distribution of funds effectively and also to sign post if they are unable to help directly.  There is an option for pre-qualify when applying for assistance, what documents are needed, how to obtain proof of industry etc. Generally all applications, if all the information is received, are decided within a seven day period. Each case is reviewed on its individual merits, there are two applications per person permitted. Similar Charities and organisations that B&CE work with include The Lighthouse Club, Electricians Foundation and the Builders Benevolent Fund.  The website link is <http://bandce.co.uk/corporate-responsibility/the-charitable-trust/> | **RS to share the presentation with the Group** |
| **Minutes & Matters Arising** | Minutes agreed as accurate. |  |
| **Election of Vice Chair** | Lisa Cornish, Orbit has put herself forward for the position of Vice Chair. VF nominated LC for Vice Chair and then was seconded by Melanie McAdam. |  |
| **KEG Good Practice DVD** | PD has watched the DVD and although heavily led by housing associations the commentary and resident elements on it are all good. Boz advised that there was a position noted about organisations putting forward residents and staff, it is heavily led by Amicus Horizon Limited. The group watched the DVD and there were discussions about the content and messages.  The simple message was about resident engagement can save your business money, from those who are in more senior positions to share the message to those on the ground. There was a comment about how having residents involved will save money, what are the real examples? It was suggested that we could have a banner streaming across the bottom of the film from both LA’s and HA’s to have more data and examples. The issue with regards to costing were also discussed.  It was agreed that RS would speak to End2nd about costing for an additional edit and then to share with KEG 4 and how is best to showcase without confusing the viewer. It would also be useful to view and understand those interviews that didn’t make the cut – can these be considered for use?   * Repairs, complaints and development – examples of how residents have been engaged and helped to shape the business and save money – these were elements that made up the original scope. Boz updated that £300 per day editing costs.   IL advised that he will show the current version of the DVD to some members of his board and establish their feedback on the content and message. | **RS to speak with End2End and then liaise with the DVD Group members for next steps**  **IL to feedback to RS ASAP** |
| **KEG Tenant Training Programme** | LC advised that a small group of KEG members met to look at the training programme for KEG to provide, what works for some and what doesn’t, what could be delivered by the group.  The idea is to ensure that hosting of any training is to be undertaken in house, to save money and to use existing staff to deliver some of the courses. To have an agreed list of who could deliver what training courses. Sara from TCHG have an online customer base that they could contact to establish interest in training courses, would all members be able to do this to establish the interest.  The potential courses included (RS to share list with the minutes):   * Food Hygiene – cost and at what level? * First Aid – cost and at what level? * Dementia Awareness and Friend Training – could be delivered easily in house or via KCC links who currently deliver this training. * Care Related Training – an external trainer? Cost? Would this interest your residents? * Assertiveness and Communication Skills – delivery in house? Supporting residents into work placements or training * Meeting and Presentation Skills – as above * Barclays Digital Eagles – this was a success at the KEG Conference, this could potentially be delivered in local area, IL to follow up on this.   HC advised that Barclays have visited Golding Homes twice recently, the colleague from Medway Barclays was exceptional in delivery of this training. HC to share contact details for follow up.   * Basic DIY skills, not to impact on any statutory Health and Safety Skills * Money Management – how to pitch and promote to ensure interest and how to engage with residents. ‘Savvy Saving’ for example.   It was agreed that members would use the list to be circulated to engage residents about what courses they would be interested in, what would incentivise them to attend? A realistic time frame for this was to set up from September 2016 to avoid residents signing up and then dropping out at a later point in time.  It was agreed that colleagues would contact residents and feedback via RS by 30th May. The small training group will then meet to consider to feedback.  TM advised that there are charities that provide training sessions for those who live near waterways and are potentially at risk of drowning. RS to add to the list to be sent out by RS with the minutes. | **RS to Note**  **HC to note**  **ALL TO NOTE**  **TM to share with RS** |
| **KHG Update** | RS advised that recent work streams have been the set up and the delivery of the KHG Seminar, which took place yesterday on 20th April, another successful and well attended event.  KHG hosted a Future of Housing Briefing in February of this year, this was a half day briefing with speakers from LA and HA representatives explaining the true impact of recent budget announcements on their business planning going forward. From the briefing a number of task and finish groups have been established to consider particular areas, such as affordability and development capacity to see how KHG can influence these agendas going forward. This work will feed into the KHG Housing Strategy.  KHG are also working on the development of a new website, this will be a joint website with the Joint Policy and Planning Board, a site that will host all the information that members require, more suitable to our needs and more user friendly.  RS advised that the KHG Excellence Awards are now open for nominations, there are 8 categories, all information about these and how to nominate are now on the KHG Website, using the following link, RS urged colleagues to view and nominate:  <http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/KHG_Excellence_Awards_2016.aspx> | **If you attended the seminar you will receive an email about an online feedback survey, please complete**  **RS to share details once the website is ready to go live** |
| **Round Table** | LC advised that Orbit have undertaken their Customer Review and have 35 recommendations, 15 of which are work in progress, the remainder are new objectives. One of the issues was incentives and rewards, going forward Orbit will not offer incentives for involved residents. One way to recognise achievements of those residents who are engaged is to consider putting customers forwards for external awards, TPAS being as an example. LC asked for examples of how to complete nomination awards. Boz advised that putting forward customers for national awards has a huge cost associated, travel expenses etc.  HC advised that Golding Homes operate a Community Chest Fund with several applications from the Medway area, is there anyone or anywhere else that offers such funding for signposting? IL advised that in Medway there isn’t, they do have a training budget but not for community funding. Riverside does have limited stock in Medway and therefore limited funds, Orbit also have stock and LC will find out about any funding available and contact HC.  HC has also run a successful project with Kent Sport in Parkwood in Maidstone. This was between February and April and all the community was engaged. Golding is hoping to run a second project between June and October and would like to hear from any partners who may wish to engage with this project.  PD has completed the page turning on line newsletter for Ashford BC, on the Ashford BC website – <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news-magazine> . PD advised that she used a company called Page Suite.  TM advised that herself and TMcG spent a day in Lambeth recently to undertake an estate walk and door knock, with residents, Inspectors, about 40+ staff on the estate. TM suggesting a good concept to roll out in Kent , a softer approach to estates in Kent.  CO asked about access to training, do people use in house trainers? MMcA advised that Circle used to have internal training available who sat in Learning in Development. Golding Home has a colleague who provides internal training regarding safeguarding. A lot of training is now provided via e-learning. Amicus Horizon has a Training Academy and there is also a Corporate Trainer in HR, this works regionally across AHL. CO suggested it would be useful to have a list of recommended trainers/agency.  LB advised that Hyde have used a trainer who is well recommended and will share details. LC advised that Orbit employed TPAS to be independent for Scrutiny training, Riverside used HQN, and these are both costly. CF advised that TCHG have used Working Futures.  It was agreed that if colleagues have spaces on training courses that information is shared amongst the group to fill spaces.  LB advised that she has recently started in a new role at Hyde, supporting for stock swaps, mergers and other elements, if anyone has tips to share please contact Lynsey.  CF advised that a good part of her role is now about Tenancy Sustainment and have worked with an organisation called Community Matters, who offer Energy Advice. CF can share examples of case studies about the monetary savings of residents that have used their service and they will also attend events.  MMcA advised that residents of Circle are being consulted on the proposed merger with Affinity Sutton, the feedback and how to engage with residents in the future. Summer 2016 is the proposed deadline for the merger of the two organisations.  VF bid farewell to the group, she thanked colleagues for support and the joint working. VF is due to leave Hyde in the next few months. Colleagues noted best wishes to VF for the future. | **ALL to note and share with LC**  **ALL to note and contact HC if interested in joint working opportunity** |
| **Any Other Business** | No other business noted. |  |

Thanks noted to Ashford BC for hosting the meeting and providing refreshments