Kent Engagement Group

MINUTES – Tuesday 19th January 2016

Southern Housing Group, 1 Eurogate Business Park, Ashford Kent

**Attending**: Victoria France, Hyde Housing & Vice Chair; Philippa Dale, Ashford Borough Council; Sue Sleet, Southern Housing Group; Carol Francis, TCHG; Catherine Owston, Affinity Sutton; Redmond Hartop, West Kent HA; Lisa Cornish, Orbit; Melanie McAdam, Circle Housing Russet; Rebecca Smith, KHG; Louise Gray, Dartford BC; Helen Critcher, Golding Homes; Michelle Thomas, East Kent Housing; Jan Henry, Moat; Tania McGee, Gravesham BC

**Apologies**: Wendy Mason, Riverside & Chair; Helen Charles & Sara Hutchinson, TCHG; Sarah Leipnik, Golding Homes; Lynsey Brogan, Hyde Housing; Graeme Bosley, Orbit; Beth Eddolls, East Kent Housing; Jodie Miler, Medway Council; Ian Long, MHS Homes; Rachel Morris, Circle Housing Russet; Bozlur Rashid, Amicus Horizon Limited

**Visitors**: Stuart Tickle and Rachel Spencer, KF&RS

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| **ITEM** | **NOTES** | **ACTION** |
| **Introductions & Apologies** | Noted around the table. |  |
| **Minutes and Matters Arising** | RS to add Catherine Owston to apologies for the last meeting.  Page 2 – Volunteers required to assist RS for planning for the next KEG Training Programme, LC and LG volunteered at the meeting, others to email RS if keen to assist.  Minutes agreed as accurate. | **RS to Note**  **RS to liaise with LC and LG** |
| **KF&RS Presentation** | Stuart Tickle and Rachel Spencer, Partnership Managers for KF&RS. Main duties include prevention, working with schools and other vulnerable groups, KF&RS also have a Business Engagement Team working with businesses. Protect and Prevent is the focus for KF&RS, there are significant investments into prevention and retained stations to fulfil this ambition.  Due to open a new station in Rochester, a Road Safety Experience to help reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions, working with schools, families and other groups. Just undertaken co-responding, IEC, immediate Emergency Care response, these include access to medical equipment and assistance to those in medical need.  Ken Knight Review 2013 – a review instigated by the then Fire Minister Brandon Lewis, identified that calls had reduced but staff numbers had remained the same. As a result there have been changes that has resulted in significant savings, including changes to uniform, number of personnel manning an engine, co-location (sharing with other emergency responders).  Schools education is undertaken on a risk basis, depending on where the fires are started, not necessarily areas of deprivation.  Currently undertaking a review of how to identify where the blockages are in terms of vulnerable people, there is currently a pilot with public health looking at potential risks for slips, trips and falls. There is also consideration of home visits (Safe and Well visits) and the potential to assist with fitting equipment to prevent slips, trips and falls, such as hand rails. Collaborative working is the way forward for the service. There is no confirmed timescale yet for the Safe and Well Visits but there is hope to deliver these with partner agencies.  Social Isolation Pilot in Medway, trying to identify who is socially isolated and working with these groups for prevention.  Rachel went through a number of prevention methods that can be used by those who are perhaps more vulnerable clients. All adaptations are provided based on individual assessment. There are also referral routes via KCC, there are Dementia Champions and going to fire stations to deliver this training. There are also initiatives being undertaken working with hair dressers, asking them to help refer clients who may come forward to them about concerns for themselves or family members, with referral forms being completed in the salon.  Stuart advised that there is still some access to budgets with regards to the Fire Fit initiative and are keen to ensure that the brand is used to assist with the Protect and Prevention Fund. There is currently statistics being recorded regarding the co-sharing and location pilots, once available these can be shared.  Carbon Monoxide monitors are no longer given out readily, there are tests undertaken when a visit is undertaken by KF&RS, if the client is considered vulnerable and the risks are high then monitors will be fitted. KF&R happy to assist with any events, RS will share contact details. | **RS to share with the minutes** |
| **KEG Conference** | VF thanked everyone who was able to attend and assist at the recent KEG Conference. WM passed on specific thank yous to colleagues, to Lisa for plugging a gap in the agenda on the day. There was only one complaint to note about the use of flash for photography which should be noted for future events. Overall the conference was very successful.  Rae Thompson of TPAS has agreed that the digital pack she mentioned at the conference is available to share; feedback about Matt Bromley was good, as was the Barclays workshop. Overall the event was a great success and it was agreed that at the next meeting there would be a discussion about a future event and the training programme. |  |
| **KEG Good Practice DVD** | PD explained the current situation, that filming of the tenants has taken place at the conference and now the focus is on the filming of the three senior representatives from KHG. RS advised that she has spoken to Victoria from End to End regarding the filming and confirmed that Paul Hackett, Amicus Horizon and Frank Czwarnowski, West Kent HA have both agreed to be filmed. Paul Hackett will be filmed on 19th February, RS to liaise with End to End and West Kent re Frank. If the film is to be ready for the KHG Conference in April it will be essential to have filming completed by the end of February. End to End will provide questions to those being filmed ahead of the interview, RS to share these with HC and VF as they may have colleagues who are able to assist. | **RS to note** |
| **KEG Tenant Training Programme** | Organise a meeting with RS and WM to plan this training programme. WM has suggested building on the workshop concepts, for example the Barclays workshop ‘Digital Eagles’. RS to arrange and notify members when taking place.  There was a discussion about the training programme, how to take the approach, CO suggested a Pay as You Go approach, RS to add to the agenda for the meeting. LC suggested looking at what training is provided already by organisations and to utilise these across the membership. JH made the suggestion to potentially approach Nigel at Funding For All for assistance with funding. PD commented about the online training that was presented at the last meeting from Becky.  It was agreed that there would be a discussion between the sub group about the remit of the group and how to promote the training programme. | **RS to set meeting with WM, LC and LG and then send out details to whole group for anymore volunteers** |
| **KHG Update** | RS advised that work on the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy has stalled, the recent Government Announcements have meant that there are many unknowns and this has prevented the document content being finalised. It is likely that work on the strategy will finalise for the autumn.  RS mentioned to the group the forth coming KHG Seminar, taking place in April 2016. This is Health and Housing seminar with Dr Jessica Allen speaking and also Gavin Smart of the CIH. There are going to be a number of workshops, offering a variety throughout the day, more details to be shared once the agenda is confirmed. |  |
| **KEG Round Table Discussion** | CO advised that Affinity Sutton have held three regional conferences in 2015 and struggled to get new people to attend and engage, it was agreed that this was a common problem. CO is trying to recruit to service specific groups, especially younger people; LC mentioned that the email sent out by RS gives colleagues the opportunity to have the information to be shared by Orbit. Retention is also an issue, as is reward and incentive. SS commented that an involved resident talking to uninvolved residents is a good way to get new recruits, this happened at the recent tenant’s conference for SHG. LC advised that Orbit is working with Amicus Horizon Limited to develop a buddy system, creating a register of tenants, who complete a biography of skills. This will be promoted to residents and is a way to share experiences and recruit residents. The forms have been completed with customers and LC is happy to share. CO advised that some officers are tasked during visits to new residents to sell the message about resident engagement; PD has run taster sessions to showcase what involvement can provide.  CO advised that Affinity Sutton are due to launch an on line system and would be happy to hear about experiences of others. MT would also be interested to hear about any experiences also, it was agreed that this could be on the agenda for the next meeting of the group. PD advised that Objective Direct is a drop box sharing tool for local authorities and this has launched a new model. MT advised that EKH are looking to utilise Google facilities to share meeting details and papers.  MM advised that Tenancy Information Sessions are being reviewed, so that residents are more engaged in the session and will use this showcase what the organisation can offer in terms of opportunities, trying to promote engagement earlier on in the tenancy. Circle Housing Russet offer apprenticeships through contractors and internally and can assist with putting engagement and volunteering experience on to CV’s, linking to employment and skills.  CF advised that TCHG are recruiting clients through existing community groups such as Toddler Groups, and are attending groups where possible to share the benefits of the engagement. TCHG also have a Community Neighbour Scheme, a way for communities to identify and refer vulnerable residents in a community and this has produced some additional residents for engagement. This is a scheme across a community not just for TCHG residents.  MT advised that EKH have developed a Customer Involvement Strategy, to look at how each of the four East Kent ALMO areas have been approaching elements of engagement with a view to developing a Resident Engagement Strategy. Brendan Ryan, current CEX is due to retire so further changes at East Kent Housing.  PD asked whether colleagues use page turner newsletters, MT advised that EKH have this on their website to view. Housing Officers at Ashford BC were visiting new tenants but this is now set to change due to staff shortages, to replace that are monthly emails to residents (600 residents engaged with email contacts) which asks two simple questions each time. There is a £50.00 voucher as an incentive. PD to share some examples of the questions and now has a ‘tell us’ email to send this out to those residents.  Resident Involvement at Moat is very quiet at the moment due to some staff leaving, on the Community Development side; there has been a merger of this team with the Back to Work Team and established The Moat Foundation. The concept is that officers will look at the statistics around deprivation and target projects that will impact more positively.  LC advised that a good amount of time is now spent looking at Customer Satisfaction across the service provision, also considering social media as an organisation as a whole and will be looking at the current Resident Engagement Agreement.  RH commented that West Kent HA is looking at how they approach residents who are engaged or want to be engaged, for example personalisation of correspondence, telling them where they are in a process in terms of the number of engaged residents. West Kent HA has also just started using TP Tracker, customer satisfaction is prominent in this, this is done by text and responses are good. VF commented that texting is a good way of corresponding with clients.  TM advised that Gravesham BC are still doing newsletters, two a year from four. Resulting from the last tenants conference is to hold five neighbourhood events opposed to one large conference. There is work being undertaken currently to identify where engagement is lacking and go to these areas to promote engagement. Neighbourhood Reps is also now running, working with them to get their communities clean, working with Probation to get Community Pay Back workers to assist with this clean up. The reps are also undertaking the Mystery Shopping for Gravesham BC.  HC advised that Golding have held three events last year to promote engagement and have had some success with new residents, who are under 30 years old. Some feedback that has been given to Golding is that Job Club is potentially a disincentive for people to go along and is keen to hear about other terms.  SHG are changing their offer regarding Resident Involvement, there are now only two regions for SHG, there will be champions links to the Southern Housing Portfolio holder, giving the champions authority to involve other residents. The details are not yet finalised but a big change for SHG.  G15 have recently met, there are now four a year. All members of this group are having similar issues to those expressed in this group, the next meeting is in March and SS will feedback in April. KEG to consider what we may want on the G15 agenda for their meeting in June. | **LC to share via RS for colleagues**  **RS to note for the April agenda** |
| **AOB** | HC updated that there will be a discussion internally at Golding Homes about who should attend the KEG for Golding, if it is not to be Sarah Leipnik then there is a position of Vice Chair, if you are interested in this role to please notify VF, WM or RS via email. | **All to note and contact RS** |

***Thank you to Southern Housing Group for hosting and providing refreshments***