**Kent Neighbourhood Management Meeting Action Decision Log – 26th April 2017, Moat Offices, Ashford**

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| **Present**: Helen Sudbury, Golding Homes and Chair; Matthew Eddy, MHS Homes & Vice Chair; Rebecca Smith, KHG; Rebecca Cox, Ashford BC; Danny Regan, Ashford BC; Ben McGowan & Jody Bulman, Moat; Genette Pinwill, West Kent HA; Chailean Dottin-John, Gravesham BC; Matthews Robbins, Amicus Horizon Limited; June Heslop, Southern Housing Group; Tina Dust, Sanctuary Housing; Graeme Bosley, Orbit  **Apologies**: Eileen Martin, Amicus Horizon Limited & KHG Mentor; Pam Millington, Moat; Joanne Downs, Riverside Housing, Anthony Crossley & Vikki Perry, Ashford BC; Louise Taylor, East Kent Housing; Daren Donoghue & Keith Cane, TCHG; Helen Charles, Clarion Housing; Steven Knowles, Dartford BC;  Visitors: Lindsay Felstead, Clarke Willmott LLP; Suzanne Williams, Experian; Debbie Dansey, Ashford BC; | | | | | |
| **Meeting Date** | **Reference** | **Notes** | **Action/Decision** | **Lead Person** | **Timescale** |
| 26/04/17 | Experian Presentation | Social Housing tenants are typically paying a higher rate of APR for products, to increase credit ratings you have to buy materials on credit and pay regularly and clear in full, the Rental Exchange is to allow rent data to be used to increase a credit rating score.  There are three parts to the Rental Exchange, establishing a green tick for rent payments, online (digital) proof of ID and a reward system for those who pay rent on time.  Tenants who are in receipt of housing benefit, full or partial will benefit from the rental exchange programme; it acts as a safety net for tenants transitioning through the Universal Credit journey.  The slides provide information about consent from tenants about joining the scheme and how they can opt out. Experian recommend sharing information to residents about the Rental Exchange with other correspondence to save costs, share by email and follow upon non readers. Experian will provide training for staff on queries about the programme.  Once signed to the scheme data can be put in and also extracted , providing useful credit history about residents. There was a discussion about inviting the sales and marketing colleagues from Experian to the next Kent Homechoice meeting to discuss how to get consent information on the online housing application form.  There should be no charge by current IT providers to carry out the interface with Experian, to contact Suzy if there are any issues. The testing period once signed up is approximately 3 months, with an additional month to then go live. The website has FAQ and more information about the exchange.  MHS Homes are signed up to the Rental Exchange, it has taken almost one year, mostly due to internal issues around DP and Governance. The notification to tenants about the Exchange went out in February and March, there is 28 days and then testing. For those who opted out it was about tenants concern of sharing data more widely. MHS did also receive some letters of support for the programme. | RS to liaise with Vicky Hodson (Kent Homechoice)  SW to provide contact details for Experian Sales Colleagues. | **RS**  **SW** | By 5/5/17 |
| 26/04/17 | Housing Law Update | Big changes through the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Pay to Stay is still voluntary, the extension of RTB remains at pilot stage and Local Authorities are now to issue Fixed Tenancies – a move away from secure life time tenancies.  Successions to Spouse remain for secure tenancies but to other family members will become Fixed by default. These tenancies can be between 2 and 10 years, for households with children under 18 they can continue to have their tenancy extended. Huge change for local authorities, resource intensive. There has to be clarity about reasons to terminate a fixed term tenancy.  There has also been a shift away from the focus on homeownership to building more homes per say.  Right to Rent – impacts more in the PRS but does apply to tenants, who may be renting a spare room to a lodger, tenants need to be made aware of this legislation. In December 2016 a new NSP was introduced for the Immigration Act, important for RP’s who are using AST’s.  Mandatory Possession – LF gave a reminder to the group about the role and use of the Pre Action Protocol. This is about contacting occupiers of the property in question in writing to inform them of the intended action, the time frame for response to be determined by the organisation and circumstance about possession. Can be addressed to the Occupier, there is not a need to have names if not aware of them. This correspondence has to be confirmed as part of the Witness Statement.  Applying for a warrant - going forward if a Rent SPO is breached you have to complete form NP325A, complete with court fees, you cannot use PCOL. N455 for a reissue of a warrant form, N244 if a breach for an SPO and not rent arrears.  Equality and Adjournments, if the Equality Act is raised in proceedings the case is unlikely to be dealt with at an initial hearing as this is only a 5-10 minute listing. |  |  |  |
| 26/04/17 | Kent TFF Presentation | DD gave an overview of her role and career to date. DD is keen to establish a Kent TFF to ensure that much needed housing assets remain available for those who most need them. Sussex TFF is very successful; they have held publicity campaigns, held key amnesties for example.  DD advised that in Ashford they have a Fraud Team and they will be inviting RTB applicants to the Civic Centre for an interview to eradicate potential fraud.  The group then disclosed what their organisations do in respect of Fraud: WKHA – Tenancy Audits annually, tenancy MOT’s, work with their in house Legal team on Fraud and have also undertaken key amnesties. Golding Homes – carry out stringent pre tenancy checks, 1000 tenancy audits per annum, have recently carried out a Tenancy Audit. MHS Homes – 3000 tenancy audits this last year but not perceived as effective, using Greenstone to cleanse data and take targeted approach to Fraud. Also going back to taking photos at point of tenancy sign up. Moat – across their stock and business the focus of fraud is on shared ownership and leasehold properties, have had limited success with key amnesty, get more intel from other residents. Ashford BC – work closely with in house Fraud Team, intel from housing officers and tenants, interviewing under caution can bring results and return of keys. Orbit – have a designated Fraud Officer based in Bexley, lots of tower block accommodation, the officer can work elsewhere but time limited. Target those who fail to provide access for repairs/maintenance or don’t recall rent account credits. Sanctuary – not much experience of sub letting, don’t experience much support from Local Authorities about prosecutions for fraud, undertake Tenancy Audits. SHG – stringent tenancy checks including Right to Rent, take photos at sign up, submit data for NFI, have a Fraud Officer based in London. AHL – take photos at point of sign up, Experian checks undertaken, verify all tenancy changes, have done key amnesties in the past, now a more targeted approach. Gravesham BC – have an in house Fraud Team, Police are situated in the Civic Centre with CSU, get good intel from Police and PSCO’s, movement of criminal activity into Gravesend from London. Key amnesty undertaken in Summer 2016 for 6 weeks and got 5 properties back. Tenancy Audits currently stopped due to internal Governance issues.  DD advised that KCC are very keen to be part of a partnership and maybe able to assist with funding for campaigning or training. | **RS and DD to liaise, draw up draft ToR for a Kent TFF and set up, share with colleagues to establish interest and take a decision about next steps** | **RS/DD** | **By 5/5/17** |
| 26/04/17 | NMSG Feb Matters Arising | Action Log agreed as accurate. Matters arising –  Page 2 – HS advised that Golding now liaising with DWP using secure email and getting information as required, urged colleagues to do the same.  Page 4 – Principles of Affordability – to be discussed at May KHG Executive Board meeting for sign off.  Page 5 – KHG seminar taking place on the 19th July, Housing and Health Seminar, early bird booking rate extended to 8th May. | **RS to feedback outcome from KHG EXB meeting on 17/5**  **Colleagues to visit KHG website Events Page to find out how to book** | **RS**  **ALL** | **By 19/5**  **By 8/5** |
| 26/04/17 | KHG Update | RS reminded the group again about the KHG Seminar, as per the above note, great booking rate and workshop and speaker details to be released shortly. RS working on the County wide DFG project, looking to move to a more integrated model of delivery across Housing Health and Social Care.  RS and colleagues continuing to support all KHG Sub Groups with work streams. The work on the Kent & Medway Housing Strategy is currently on hold until DFG project is progressed further. |  |  |  |
| 26/04/17 | Review of KHG Eviction Protocol | Colleagues feedback on the Eviction Protocol, agreed changes included:  Having an initial referral form and then a shorter form for follow up contact with the Local Authority. To add to the front of the referral form the reason for referral (ASB/Rent Arrears).  There was a discussion about sharing tenants information with a Local Authority Housing Options Team, it was agreed that we need clarity via the Kent and Medway Information Sharing Protocol.  It was also agreed to liaise with KHOG colleagues about what happens once they receive a referral about a potential possession proceeding, need to be aware of the process for them.  RS to change wording in the protocol around the timing of the referral to the LA, that this will be aligned to the court Order granted. It was also agreed to remove the last bullet point on the protocol.  Referrals should not be made at the point of serving Sec 21 Notices, way too early. Referrals should really be made when the eviction date is received, this will probably be approx. 6 weeks before the eviction any way. | **MR to clarify the position within the protocol and feedback**  **RS to set up meeting between HS and JH and KHOG representatives to finalise a review of the protocol.**  **RS to make changes ahead of the meeting between NMSG and KHOG colleagues.** | **MR**  **RS**  **RS** | **By 8/5**  **By 8/5**  **As required** |
| 26/04/17 | Golding Homes Hoarding Policy | HS updated on the Policy at Golding Homes for Hoarding, there are a couple of case studies shared by HS. Usual signals un kept garden, failed access for repairs and maintenance. Working with residents over a period of time, seeking injunction at Court which was granted, progress has been made and the property is being improved, Golding are going back for an SPO and the tenant has agreed to this, this is about safeguarding the agreement between Golding and the resident.  Golding have recently had a possession order overturned at an appeal , Golding Homes now have to cover the cost of the legal work undertaken by the tenants legal representation. This is costly for Golding Homes. The case was lost on reasonableness, due to the tenant not having got representation and provides a defence. The case returns to court for possession,  15 – 19th May is National Hoarding Week – Awareness Week, through Hoarding UK. | **Colleagues to note for information**  **It was suggested we consider doing a Kent wide campaign on this for 2018.** | **RS** | **Jan 2018** |
| 26/04/17 | Mobile Working | GP updated that WKHA can go out and undertake tenancy set up and electronic forms, property MOT’s, Tenancy Audits and other documents all have electronic forms, this has taken some time but it is a positive step forward. This is done through 365 Agile and using the CRM Case Manager as back office. Resilience planning and not relying on one person or expertise to set up a system is key.  ME advised that MHS is currently seconded to work on this project and phase one went live mid-April. He urged colleagues to put the work in, MHS set aside one year to spec it and decide the direction of channel for mobile working. The company used by MHS is to host all services, no testing environment required, changes/updates can be undertaken, published and then go live. Cloud Dialogues is the company used. Integration is key. Phase Two will be two way integration for the project.  SHG are in the feasibility stage of mobile working, looking at the specification of requirements, a pilot has been running in Sussex with feedback due shortly. There will be consideration about the software and also the right equipment for the user.  GB commented that all signups are electronic and the perspective tenant has to kick start this process, now looking as estate inspections as a separate app for mobile working.  Involving staff in the specification of software to enable mobile working and what their requirements are for the system.  AHL work with Ipads and are due to release a new app linked to tenancy verification and undertake similar tasks to others. | **ME happy to share his specification with colleagues** |  |  |
| 26/04/17 | Evolving of Housing Management Service | To add to the July agenda – to set aside one hour for this at July meeting. | **RS to add to July Agenda** | **RS** | **For July** |
| 26/04/17 | Forward Plan 2017/18 | RS to chase up the Sexual Exploitation contact in Kent Police for a future meeting.  To add a discussion of legal services and procurement of these services.  Colleagues also to consider potential training course through Clarke Willmott and share back with RS  The process of review and action of Fixed Term Tenancies, what learning to share and assistance with mobile working. Frequency of tenancy audits and fixed term tenancy reviews.  Data Protection and changes in 2018, preparing for the GDPR (potentially October 2017).  Manifesto pledges from the General Election. | **Colleagues to bring details of who used, costing and what is offered, training offers for staff.**  **To notify RS if training topic needed** | **All**  **All** | **July Meeting**  **As required** |
| 26/04/17 | AOB | GB updated that he recently attended a Stonewall Work Place Conference, pushing the LGBT agenda, potential speaker at future NMSG meeting and low cost training for officers for Kent Colleagues to consider.  RS asked colleagues about the Crime Stoppers Ambassador Scheme and if any sign up or promotion? Crimestoppers holding a rebrand event in July and will include the impact of the Ambassador Scheme, they would like a senior Housing Rep to be there to enforce the benefits of this scheme. | **GB to share details with RS to make contact.**  **RS to share contact details for Stuart at Crimestoppers with HS** | **GB/RS**  **RS** | **When info rec’d**  **ASAP** |

Thanks noted to Moat Homes for hosting the meeting