**Present**: Genette Pinwill, Chair & West Kent HA; Mark Groves, Kent County Council; Ben McGowan, Moat; Keith Cane, TCH; Mark Foskett, The EST; Matthew Eddy, MHS Homes; Sophie Hargreaves, Clarion HG; David Edie, Dartford BC; Stuart Clifton, KHOG Chair & Maidstone BC; Anthony Crossley, Ashford BC;

**Apologies:** Helen Sudbury & Tom Harding, Folkestone & Hythe DC;Matthew Robbins, Optivo;June Heslop, Southern Housing Group; Felicity Dunmall, GCHA; Rebecca Wilcox, Ashford BC;

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **When** | **Lead** | **Action/Decision** |
| **The EST Overview** | As a business are an independent organisation, working to mitigate the climate emergency agenda, provide support and work with those who are struggling financially, how they can still have a good quality healthy lifestyle whilst minimising energy consumption.  Working across the housing sector about the offer from The EST to advice clients/customers about reducing energy consumption and assisting those who are in financial hardship. There is a business consultancy service on offer too.  There are a number of tools available through The EST including Data & Insight, Home Energy Efficiency, Home Analytics, Product Performance and Research and Evaluation. INFACT is a bulletin that could be useful for customers, a way to update and engage, consumer ready with up to date facts and figures. Provides insight that organisations could use as part of the wider communication undertaken by organisations.  There is an offer of a training webinar, for specific areas about who to assist tenants/homeowners around bespoke elements including fuel poverty, financial hardship. This will provide assistance with how to engage to ensure better outcomes for those who are seeking advice. The webinar would include breakout sessions and follow up with ‘train the trainer’ sessions to widen the knowledge.  EST also offer Endorsed Advice, once training completed they are then qualified and accredited by EST to provide confidence to customers who are in need of support/advice.  Contact details for Mark –  Email: [mark.foskett@est.org.uk](mailto:mark.foskett@est.org.uk) Mobile: 07834 737942 | **With Notes** | **RS** | **RS to share the slides with the notes** |
| **Discussion Session** | SC provided some context for this discussion session, to understand the rent arrears policies and how registered providers can work with local authorities, concerns around tenants/applicants and in the current climate rent arrears being a significant impact/barrier to housing and how historically rent arrears is a barrier to eligibility to allocations/application for housing. Will policies be amended or remain as they are currently? SC advised that MBC have discussed and will take each case individually for access to their housing register, taking into consideration for example the impact of Covid-19 upon a person’s financial capacity.  GP advised this is timely, how to consider the arrears and being reasonable in consideration about why there is a rent arrear, especially with the impact of Covid-19.  DE advised that Dartford BC are commencing a review of their policies internally and can share details when available.  BM advised that a difficulty is the variation in the eligibility across the different local authorities they work with, Moat do try to ensure that those who are keeping to an agreed payment plan (existing or former tenant arrears) will be considered for housing, their current policy allows for this consideration of an individual’s circumstance.  ME advised that MHS have reviewed their policy and to reflect the current situation with Covid-19 and the impact on finances and then access to housing.  SC advised that the majority of applicants to Maidstone over the last 6 months have been single NFA, or informal arrangements of staying with friends, anticipating an increase in those who are experiencing financial hardship. SC advised that pre-Covid Maidstone BC met with Golding Homes regarding their policy about housing and debt, they have now reviewed their policy to look at the most recent tenancy and to take into consideration their situation, to prevent the unintended use of Discretionary Housing Payment to clear former debt to enable access to housing. SC advised that local authorities are keen to work with housing providers to prevent evictions where possible, to use the Pre Eviction Protocol recently reviewed, important to demonstrate the steps taken to support tenants and mitigate the impact of Covid-19 currently. Local authorities may be able to provide additional support to help maintain tenancies (applying for DHP, access to Hardship Funding etc).  Agreed to keep in communication with KHOG and to consider for a future agenda | **As Avail**  **When req’d** | **DE via RS**  **RS/ GP** | **DE to share details when available**  **To note for future agenda** |
| **KSAS Overview** | MG provided an overview about KSAS, created in 2013 providing short term services and goods to alleviate crisis situations, can support with food, energy, clothing with criteria to meet through an application process.  KSAS can provide energy vouchers for those with key metres, due to Covid-19 they are providing supermarket vouchers for food and asking applicants to shop for themselves.  The application process is online via the KCC website – <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/benefits/home-essentials-in-a-crisis>  Since Covid there is additional funding from Central Government, there is some flexibility to the criteria to support households impacted by the pandemic. Working internally to share the messages about who can access the service.  As the intervention is short term support to assist with an immediate crisis. Two weeks’ worth of support to be provided currently. Each application is assessed on its own merits.  Contact details for Mark Groves – [mark.groves@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mark.groves@kent.gov.uk) |  |  |  |
| **Court Proceedings Update** | Since the last meeting there have been some changes to the stay on evictions, colleagues shared feedback on the process; GP advised that WKHA have identified a few cases for reactivation and are now in the pipeline.  BM advised that Moat have two evictions planned for next week, the other experience is that the process with regards to reactivation is quite slow.  Agreed to keep on the agenda and to share different experiences with the Courts at future meetings. |  | **RS/ GP** | **To keep as standing item on the agenda for KTMSG** |
| **Virtual Lettings Guide** | GP and ME have both added some information to the draft document through Teams, colleagues encouraged to add any commentary to the document and a final version can then be shared.  GP advised that when you use the link you do need to switch the profile at the top of the page to Ashford BC Guest and then you can access the file to add updates.  Could add a section about Social Distancing lettings and how to tailor for vulnerable clients.  AC asked colleagues whether viewings are carried out/filmed whilst void contractors are in place to help improve turnaround times, currently Ashford BC do this at the end of the works. Golding Homes are the only partner who have switched to all virtual and RS to put AC in touch with them.  WKHA are doing socially distanced viewings but have virtual as a plan B if needed, this is undertaken at the end of the void works. TCH advised that they are still undertaking virtual lettings, only for exceptional circumstances, others are using key safe access and use electronic sign up. SC advised that Clarion are following a similar approach to TCH, the only issue is when the contractor puts the wrong key safe code on the key safe. Working well otherwise, as for TCH.  Moat are doing a mixture, using virtual when the surveyor has access to a video but editing and sharing can cause a backlog, or undertaking a socially distanced viewing where the officer provides access but does not enter the property, documents are signed electronically. Officers will open all doors and windows and clean down all surfaces, also advising applicants to abide to the rule of six or reducing the number of people attending. Videos have been successful but the speed of this does impact the use.  GP suggested it would be useful to share an overview/bullet point what each organisation is undertaking around lettings and the average turn around on void times, what have you introduced that you wouldn’t change again. To use the link through Teams or to send to RS individually through email. | **By 19/10** | **ALL** | **Colleagues to use the Teams File or via email share their bullet points and top tips** |
| **KTMSG Agenda Planning** | Agreed to set up a date for early December, RS to share meeting date.  SH advised that a member of Clarion HG is attending a Hoarding during Lockdown and supporting tenants, there may be feedback on this for the December meeting. | **ASAP**  **Dec 2020** | **RS**  **SC** | **RS to share date for December 2020**  **To share feedback on the webinar** |
| **AOB** | AC asked about what colleagues do with regards to properties that come with white goods and warranties? Ashford BC have acquired units which have high end white goods included. Are they service charged or gifted? ME advised that MHS historically have gifted white goods, their tenancy agreement states that they are not responsible for white goods. BM advised that gifting a high end white goods product could impact on the tenant with regards to being financially responsible for the goods. |  |  |  |