**Present**: Sarah Lewis, Chair & Tunbridge Wells BC; Brian Horton, SELEP; Mark James, Ashford BC; Liz Crockford, Sevenoaks DC; Rebecca Walker, Swale BC; Gillian Aylett, TMBC; Sandra Sainsbury, Folkestone & Hythe DC; Arron Nichols & Alana Randall, Medway Council; Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies:** David Jeffrey, Optivo; Rachel Collins, Dover DC; Ashley Jackson, Thanet DC; Tessa O’Sullivan, ACRK

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **When** | **Lead** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Introductions** | Introductions and apologies noted. |  |  |  |
| **Homes England Update** | Homes England unable to attend, RS to ask for any updates to be shared post the meeting. | **ASAP** | **RS** | **RM has updated that no update available currently, will be on the next HSEG meeting call with Becky Ashley (Sept 2020)** |
| **Covid-19 & Strategy and Enabling** | **Tunbridge Wells BC** – In the main working on emergency response, have now got about 35 people in TA, taken on extra units of accommodation ready for move on out of TA, working with Housing Associations, using Direct Lets. In terms of strategy and enabling the work has been limited, any work has been on S106 agreements negotiations, more recently dealings with TCHG and change of property from Intermediate Rent to HomeBuy, TCH can’t see their SO units that are ready or due to be ready in the coming months. These are high value sites in the main.  **Ashford** **BC** – have had a similar request to TWBC from TCH for a rural site in Tenterden, this is a discussion raised by the Planning Officer raised with Legal, Ashford happy to endorse this change. There is likely to be a Deed of Variation. There is a new policy and s106 with a clause about a reverting tenure after a 12 week period if required. Risk assessments have been undertaken for street purchases (with viability for affordability) and will continue as appropriate.  **Sevenoaks DC** – lots of negotiations and section 106, also busy on the Rural Programme, a lot of interest and movement, no delivery to date. S106 for a scheme in Edenbridge with WKHA, as worded as intermediate housing in the agreement SDC could agree by letter that could offer them as intermediate rent. There will be flexibility moving forward.  **Medway** – remain relatively busy, have used hotel accommodation to house rough sleepers, looking at move on options, have the RSI operating in Medway, AN commissions housing related support for Medway. Enabling work has continued, still working towards adoption of their local plan and five year land supply. Lot of sites coming through, had some RP’s contact about reverting of tenure on larger houses within the more rural areas of Medway. Have some SO units coming forward in the town centre, with a demand for these. Working on New Affordable Housing Policy and viability work, and working on the policies that will sit behind the Local Plan for 2021. AR has been working on the K&M stats, still waiting on Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and one other for these stats, this will be shared in draft and final version ready for the next meeting.  **Folkestone & Hythe DC** – still undertaking new build acquisition programme, have been viewing and surveyed empty properties during the lockdown period, housing options in F&H have housed some rough sleepers via direct lets. There are three Hubs in the district working and supporting communities. SS involved in the East Kent Housing move back in house, this will take place from 1st October 2020, ahead of planned timing for this. Planning applications are still being received, considering these and also various new build opportunities. F&HDC have a new Assistant Director and will be responsible for Housing, John Holeman, he started around 5th May.  **TMBC** – focus in the first few weeks was about TA and the immediate need to find additional types of provision, including use of hotels and liaising with other local authorities about securing accommodation. Now the focus is shifting to move on options and considering projects to see if there is an opportunity for interim arrangements to reduce pressures on the housing options teams. There has been engagement with the local RP on direct lets, but there has been a delay on some void works being completed during lockdown, not much movement on OP accommodation currently. Planning have continued as usual via remote working.  **Canterbury CC** – planning applications are still coming through, since lockdown there has been less demand for EB. EB was redeployed part time to support the Community Hub and is now down to one day on this, the Hub was very successful and worked well. Seems quite early to anticipate the full impact of Covid-19 on strategy and enabling. The Travelodge has been used in Canterbury to house rough sleepers, have secured student accommodation in Canterbury for move on and EB is assisting with this work. Haven’t had any approaches from any RP’s about variations on existing agreements.  **Swale BC** – first month of office lockdown RW was redeployed to the Community Hub, working on food parcels, all day job functions took a back seat. More recently the Cabinet at Swale has a priority for Affordable housing delivery, looking at a Housing Company for Swale. Sites have slowed or stopped during lockdown but now picking up. No involvement in housing options so no feedback on this. CEX for Swale Mark Radford passed away last week.  **SELEP** – BH updated work around engaging the three Developer Groups (Kent, Essex and Sussex), having weekly dialogues with Homes England and MHCLG to help gather evidence, this engagement also generated a letter to the Secretary of State and are working through the issues within the letter. The Developer Groups are meeting via virtual calls, understanding that there are people back on site now, completing work started but not necessarily starting new builds. There was concerns about the demand for supplies, currently this is plaster board (a finishing item). There is a danger for the SME’s in that the larger builders (tier ones) will have supply chains and mechanisms to access materials, another concerns is expiry of planning consents during lockdown – waiting on a response from Government for these issues.  The focus for MHCLG is on specific issues, for example, planning, stimulating demand, will be talking about affordable housing and the economy, continued appetite for MHCLG to engage on this. This week there is an item on the CEX agenda for the Planning Protocol, to obtain support for a review of this and continued investment into the Planning Service. Likely to be a push on investment into affordable housing to stimulate the economy and the continued ambition to reform the planning system. BH confirmed that there is discussion on going about the Housing Delivery Test, and the impact on the 2021 calculations due to the impact of Covid-19, there has been no indication to date about this.  BH advised that Homes England are revisiting their 2020-21 priorities and is with Ministers and their role post Covid-19, they have been challenged by Government about how Homes England support SME’s. Likely to be a range of items coming forward from Homes England about how to stimulate the housing market. |  |  |  |
| **Matters Arising Sub Group Updates** | An update paper was shared ahead of the meeting. It was agreed to continue with updates as they are available.  EB advised that there is a Kent Resilience Forum and there is a MA Recovery Advisory Group, to include Housing, Nick Fenton and Brian Horton along with Jo Ellis. The first session was about agreeing the Terms of Reference. To include any feedback from the recovery cells as available. | **When approp** | **RS** | **To share regular updates on all Kent Group activities** |
| **ACRK Update** | TOS was unable to join the meeting but provided the following written update - we were successful in getting the funding for the Kent Community Housing Hub but could not announce it until we’d completed due diligence, which was done just after lockdown started.  This has delayed a launch – currently looking at a July launch, coinciding with the completion of a new website which is currently under construction.  The pandemic has prevented/will prevent some funding targets from being met (which is what the meeting is about today).  The Kent Hub will have its own Steering Group which will initially meet every 2 months and I would like to know if any Local Authority officers would like to join that group – intending to meet on Zoom or Lenham community centre when that’s safe to do so (venue can change if the group have other preferences). | **ASAP** | **ALL** | **To contact TOS about LA colleagues joining a Kent Hub Steering Group** |
| **Draft HSEG Action Plan** | RS circulated a draft Action Plan, based upon the KMHS Action Plan. RS advised that the draft plan was based upon the agreed KMHS Action Plans, that there may be a need to add some more responsive Covid-19 action. This could be to recognise that this is where attention is focused to at the moment.  The Rural Protocol is outstanding and this could be a quick win for the group in terms of completing an objective. It was agreed to move this forward, including having someone to Champion the document.  There is also an action around move on and supported housing – is this a focus for the group? 6,000 additional homes announced by Government for move on for rough sleepers, is this relevant and what type of provision is this? Is this purpose built provision alongside use of existing stock? Homes for Hero’s consultation on discounted sale units – the deadline for this way May 2020, TMBC raised concerned about the impact of delivery on other affordable units. GA suggested it would be a good idea to keep track of any changes coming forward or announcements about funding and calls could be set up as and when required.  BH advised there has been dialogue about First Homes, which is liked by developers, the real concern from Local Authorities is about the funding via S106, which will reduce the amount of affordable housing and other public elements. Suggested First Homes is a good concept if funded and therefore not competing for funding against the affordable element.  BH advised that identifying the most relevant items to Covid-19 recovery would be sensible and to take a view to those other items and apply a timeframe accordingly. There are links to the KDG and KPOG through the plan and consider how to engage with the two groups to achieve the objectives. | **ASAP** | **ALL** | **Agreed to set up a number of calls over the coming months, the first in 2/3 weeks’ time, and then three weekly.** |
| **Training or Information Session Requests** | RS has shared details of upcoming digital sessions this morning, details about other sessions will be shared when available. Colleagues encouraged to share ideas about training or information sessions with RS to ascertain whether KHG can facilitate. | **As approp** | **ALL** | **To contact RS with any training or information session ideas.** |
| **AOB** | RS advised that KHG are meeting virtually as a main membership for the first time on the 25th June, RS to share notes when available. The agenda will be focused around Covid-19 and the role of KHG.  AN advised that there is a form of extension to the HIF in discussion, looking to recruit one or two members of staff to manage the HIF roll out. The local plan is pivoted around a large expansion which can’t move forward until the HIF is through. There is work still progressing but it is slow. |  |  |  |