**KPSHG Meeting Notes 14th September 2020, Teams Call**

**Attending –** Kerry Petts, Chair and Folkestone & Hythe DC; Julian Watts, Ashford BC; Daniel Shaw, Sevenoaks DC; Richard Hopkins, Thanet DC; Marion Money, NRLA; Dave Eldridge, Foundations; Rachel Evans, Dartford BC; Ashley Jackson, Thanet DC; Dipna Pattni, Gravesham BC & KEEP; Francesca Bayliss, KCC & KMSEP; Donna Crozier, Peabody HIA; Glyn Pritchard, Swale BC; Nigel Bucklow, Maidstone BC; Tim Lovell, Canterbury CC; Jason Wheble & Hazel Skinner, TMBC; Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies** – Jane Miller, KCC; Richard Stanford-Beale, KF&RS; Susan Hughes, Swale Staying Put; Peter Littlewood, iHowz

Introductions and Apologies noted

KP advised that there was not an update from the Kent Resilience Forum for this meeting, that any future updates will be shared via email or at a future meeting.

**Foundations Update**

DE provided an update on the Foundations Response to Covid-19, Foundations have moved online, Regional Workers were based from home prior to Covid-19.

Foundations is doing a monthly webinar on a Tuesday, 22nd September is the next one planned, they last usually last for one hour, similar format to DFG Champion meetings.

DFG Basics are now run twice monthly by DE and another Foundations colleague, these are interactive sessions, there is no minimum number but 6 -8 colleagues are good, these are free and lasts about two hours, the next session is 24th September at 10am.

Delta Return – this has not been released yet, Government advised due shortly with the same format as last year. Foundations do not have a date for this yet.

Healthy Homes Award – likely to be later in the year.

Adaptations in Housing Association Stock, this is a follow up report to one produced in 2008. The delay in publishing the report Adaptations in the Private Rented Sector, partly due to merger of organisations.

The final big document is a Guide to adaptations for children and young people with autism/challenging behaviours, out for consultation which closes 18th September, DE will consider feedback by the end of September. It has not been commissioned by anyone in particular. The idea is to provide background to autism as a condition and to set out how the legislation can be used and provide good practice and case studies where adaptations have happened successfully.

Foundations have had interns working with them over the summer, this year two are from Manchester University, reports to be finalised this month, one intern is working on a part time basis until the end of this year.

The Innovate Project is central Government Business Department, Paul Smith at Foundations has been successful in being allocated funding, to develop a suite of 5 tools to streamline the DFG process, largely driven by academics, will be interesting to see this used for practical implementation. These include paperless systems and use on online case management systems. If colleagues interested the FCM (Foundations Case Manager) at Foundations can provide an overview.

DE happy for colleagues to make contact outside of the call today with any queries and courses can be delivered on line,

MM advised that NRLA waiting to launch the tool kit at the AAPG, waiting for the Chair to nominate a date for this. The merger and Covid-19 did delay the launch of the tool kit. Hoping for this to happen in autumn 2020.

FCM operates on licences, cost depends on the numbers used, and it is a cloud based system which works well in two tier systems. In the context of Delta you can get standard reporting set up. You can have a free demo without commitment. DE explained useful for a number of people to interact and manage the case details and through put, all from different locations. It doesn’t currently have the ability to do a test of resources but this is likely to come forward.

**Marion Money NRLA Update**

One online fundamentals course, which is one a month virtually, this is about landlord accreditation. The volume of calls to the advice line is highlighting the struggle of changes being announced by Government. The latest N5B has been off line since 17th August is back on line with the tenant’s form which is used for an appeal, both back on line from Friday last week.

The new CEO has a clear vision, open dialogue with the Government included, has commissioned a U Gov poll, he is keen to engage with all members and use research to evidence base the communications. The CEO has a weekly meeting with MHCLG, a lot of high level dialogue continuing, and also part of the judicial working group regarding the reopening of courts.

Working on targeted campaigns, Funding for Renters and Justice for Landlords, working to constructively maintain tenancies. ASB has been a consequence of Covid, which was not necessarily an issue pre Covid times. Landlords are taking forward some money claims on line, where there is limited engagement on line.

Slides from MM provide details about Funding for Renters, looking for support for landlords who are at financial capacity. There needs to be caution and dialogue about those leaving the PRS and their future options for housing, what are the options to maintain a tenancy in the PRS, how to work with tenants. Also working with an Independent Advisory Board and participating with smaller organisations to understand the national issues and impact upon them.

MM highlighted the ongoing issue with Universal Credit, there is no commitment yet from Government about the long term use of a higher LHA rate.

The EPC rating and the level C, is the rate of C going to be brought forward earlier than 2030? How will this impact the PRS?

Dave Smith, Legal Counsel working with the NRLA, keeping up to date with changes in legislation.

**KMSEP Update** -

FB provided a verbal update for colleagues, the Warm Homes Schemes is back to completing insulations, with enhanced safety and social distance measures. Still considering options for the new framework for Energy Efficiency measures, looking to extend to 2021 to ensure that no gap in the offering. The next KMSEP meeting is the 17th September.

Solar Together Kent was postponed in March but now open for registration until 6th October 2020, there have been 350 applications to date, with marketing this week. There is now an option for those with solar panels to install battery powered schemes.

The KMLES is now available on line, using this link <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kent-and-medway-energy-and-low-emissions-strategy>

**KEEP Update** –

DP provided a verbal update, including the continuation of OFGAS Scheme, formed part of the wider Warm Homes Funding, more referrals since July via a number of avenues. DP is administering all this applications. KEEP have put in a bid for the Green Homes fund to be used as a top up fund, waiting on the outcome for this. Continuing on collective switching and other climate emergence.

Started to try and engage with SSC more and the Health partners to see if there is opportunity to work more together on the renewable side of projects.

**HIA Update -**

DC advised that all Peabody colleagues remain at home working and will do so until at least the New Year 2021. Offices are currently considered dropping points for minimal use. Are actively working with Peabody about office space for those who are not working in the best conditions for some. Most staff who were furloughed are back to work, there is an apprentice handy person who remains on furlough. Advertising for a qualified surveyor due to a current staff member leaving.

The biggest issue is lack of work and lack of fee, 53% down on fees at the same point last year, in some but not all areas of the county, it is very inconsistent. **ACTION** - RS to feedback that an overall update/countywide update from JM at KCC would be helpful, with regards to the work and through put from the OT service. How many people are on the DFG waiting list within the OT service for example?

Much of the case work is being completed in the main over the phone, collecting evidence in person if only essential. KP advised that the EK JMG is taking place on 17th September so may be able to get an update from JM at this meeting.

NB advised that learnt that ARMS at KCC may potentially be holding DFG cases having had to prioritise work load through the initial Covid-19 pandemic, which could account for the lack of referrals.

DC advised that the Hospital Discharge Service is continuing, virtually, they are working on a risk assessment about the return of staff to the sites, this is in conjunction with a risk assessment being undertaken by the Hospital. This will differ by hospital due to the capacity for space and social distancing.

GP provided an update for SSP, similar to Peabody with lack of fees, kept the service running throughout Covid-19, hospital discharge and falls works have still had expenditure, the contractors are taking all necessary precautions. Waiting to process the schedules and access to properties or information from the OT service. Children’s OT’s seem to be working differently and trying to establish how to get these grants through. Office wise there is one in office permanently but on limited numbers overall.

**KF&RS** –

One outstanding issue for KF&RS is with the Kent Technical Group. RH advised that KF&RS have been written to by KPSHG across all Kent, 11 have done this to date.

**RISE 2020**

This is now a virtual platform, starts tom 15th September and colleagues can still share presentations or videos to the colleagues at RISE, this will remain open. KP has contact details for RISE colleagues. 22nd June 2021 is the new planned date for the next RISE event, the working group from this group will be meeting later this week to talk through planning for supporting this event. KP can add colleagues to this working group if they want to be involved.

**Additional Updates/Matters Arising/AOB**

MM advised that not doing live events until January 2021 but the SE event is welcome to all landlords, not just members of NRLA so Marion can share the details for LA’s to share. MM happy to host a Kent Forum regarding the Energy Efficiency in the PRS, colleagues to confirm interest and how to explain to landlords what is on offer to them.

FB advised that there is due to be some increased communications about the Green Homes Grant and to work with Trading Standards about prevention of scams and happy to work with MM to advice landlords in the PRS or anyone else who would like input on this.

There is accreditation training via iHowz which is free training, RS has shared the details.

The next meeting is 7th December 2020, at 9.30am via Microsoft Teams.