**Present**: Sharon Williams, Chair & Ashford BC; Tracy Allison, Vice Chair & WKHA; Caroline Smith, KCC; Brian Horton, LEP; Elly Toye, Dover DC; Helen Campbell-Wroe, P2I; Linda Hibbs, TMBC; Jane Lang, Kent Homechoice & TWBC; Rachel Collins, Dover DC; Cathy McCarthy, WKHA; Sarah Williamson, Dartford BC; Marion Money, NRLA; Donna Pearson, Look Ahead; Stephen Elliot, Riverside; John Littlemore, Maidstone BC; Nick Fenton, KDG; Andrew Bircher, MHS Homes; Bev Covington, Clarion HG; Sasha Harrison, SHG; Ashely Jackson, Thanet DC; Debra Exall, KCC; Julian Watts, Ashford BC; Marie Royle, Canterbury CC; Shola Alao, Hyde Housing; Mark Foster, KSS CRC; Maria Jacobs, Moat; Rebecca Wilcox, Ashford BC; Rebecca Smith, KHG; Mark James, Ashford BC; Annemarie Roberts, Golding Homes; Adrian Hammond, Folkestone & Hythe DC; Mark Breathwick, Medway Council

**Apologies:** Clare Maynard, KCC; Peter Dosad, Dartford BC; Alison Thompson, ERHA; Jo Ellis, Town & Country Housing; Louise Taylor, Dover DC; Christy Holden, KCC; Kerry Newbury, Optivo; Louise Humphrey, MHS Homes; Mike Barrett, Porchlight; Liz Crockford, Sevenoaks DC; Daniel Killian, Gravesham BC; Steve Nunn, Moat; Cynthia Allen, KSS CRC; Tim Woolmer, KCC; Simon Thomas, Chair of Kent Planning Officers Group & Canterbury CC; Jo Scullion, GCHA; Steve Nunn, Moat

**Speakers**: Alex Riley, SE LEP; Mike Whiting, KCC; Becky Ashley, Homes England; Abi Germaine, Sanctuary HG; Jenny Dixon-Sherreard, KCC; Lydia Jackson, KCC;

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **When** | **Who** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Introductions** | SW welcomed colleagues to the first full membership meeting of KHG for 2021. |  |  |  |
| **Kent & Medway Housing Strategy** | SW provided a summary overview and reminder about the completed Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, sharing an overview of the key themes, the sub groups and structure of KHG and posed a series of questions about the role of KHG in responding to immediate and longer term challenges and how the KMHS can be used to support a collective response.  **H&WB** – significant focus on the role of housing in this service area with a dedicated group and resource funded to provide a platform to make changes and consider the position strategically and operationally.  **Safer Homes** – a new theme for the KMHS, indication from the membership to recognise and use the strategy to have safe and secure homes, all partners to have an effective and timely response to legislative change and communicating out messages. How to give residents a voice and platform to have a positive change or impact. How to reduce the negative stigma associated with social housing.  **Infrastructure and Investment** – attracting, influencing and understand the impact of investment is key, all forms of infrastructure have a role to develop and sustain successful communities, links to other countywide strategies and the Kent and Medway Infrastructure Deal. A role to understand the challenge, engage with the Deal and highlight housing as a key piece of infrastructure.  **Accelerating Housing Delivery** – access to land, price of land, grant funding, navigating planning, supply chains, workforce, Brexit, the list is extensive but the strategy should help manage the challenge and enable discussions with Government.  **Affordability** – right type in the right location along with sustaining of existing tenancies, Covid-19 will continue to have an impact on all tenures with regards to financial wellbeing. Are we prepared and in a position to prevent homelessness moving forward?  SW posed a number of questions to the membership about how to use the strategy to respond to current challenges, what are priorities? who and how will take on the challenges? Is there good practice and expertise that can be shared?  Discussion – BH reminded colleagues about the value of KHG and the KMHS, remain the only county area to have a bottom up strategy, a document that joins up the range of partners working in Kent and Medway. Provides a solid foundation to how we have and will continue to respond to Covid019 and the continuing work of developing the Kent and Medway Infrastructure Deal.  TA advised that with RS will be considering implementation of the strategy and invited colleagues to share expertise on how to track strategic delivery or would like to be part of an implementation working group to notify TA and/or RS.  SW also welcomed TA to the role of Vice Chair for KHG and her commitment to the group. | **10/02** | **RS** | **Slides to be shared with notes.** |
| **SELEP Update** | AR Sector Engagement Lead with BH provided an update on the SELEP, AR is the main contact for the LEP. SELEP Economic Recovery and Renewal - to be released in March, set out the broad role of SELEP for recovery, clear messaging, set out activities in the short term and next steps, will replace the Smarter Faster Strategy.  Does this replace a local industrial strategy? This has been paused, a draft worked upon and will wait upon the Government Mandate for progress but the draft will be used to update the current Recovery and Renewal Strategy. Inform direct decision making around investment opportunities.  The slides set out the four key strategic opportunities within the strategy.  Key challenges and opportunities to be addressed in the strategy, a loss of up to £12bn in 2020 due to the pandemic, concerns about growing unemployment, impact of Covid on the hospitality and entertainment sectors, economic equalities and how to adapt to technical change and operating environments moving forward. Skills and training runs through all key strategic opportunities. Details about each strategic aim covered in the slides provided by AR.  Communities for the Future – how to build on the adaptations through the pandemic, age appropriate homes, clean green homes, promote housing and infrastructure to support new ways of working, innovation opportunities to be realised, protect and enhance natural resources. Smart building approaches, building on existing work, providing support to Towns and High streets.  Details of the timeline are included within the slides shared by AR. Colleagues encouraged to respond to questions within the slides (see final slide).  BH added that Nick Fenton, Chair of KDG and Housing and Development Group for SELEP so there are links across the county wide groups currently. Since Covid through the LEP and across the three Developer Groups there has been dialogue with MHCLG and Ministers. The three chairs will be meeting with Chris Pincher on the 23rd February 2021 and based upon the correspondence recently shared, confidence and concerns about the housing market and responses to the end of Stamp Duty holiday and Help to Buy scheme.  SW stressed the importance of all members to feed in to the process and developing work as all this work and outcomes will impact upon delivery going forward. | **10/02** | **RS** | **Slides to be shared with notes.**  **RS to share copy of letter from three Developer Chairs to MHCLG Ministers which provides a summary of the key issues.** |
| **KCC Affordable Housing Select Committee** | MW congratulated SW on appointment as Chair and JE for her work as previous Chair. A recommendation from the select committee was a dedicated Housing Unit, as an organisation working towards the contribution of housing supply. Recognise the demand for affordable homes is increasing, as build and rebuild the local economy following the pandemic and delivery of affordable housing can help stimulate this work. MW shared the key recommendations (<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=752&MId=8488>) consultation will take place across all Kent groups and across all departments of KCC to have an oversight of all housing related matters. Expect the lead officer for the Housing Unit to attend KHG meetings and other groups to represent and ensure liaison. The unit will be evaluated after 6 months, the unit should add value and support others in delivery. Can KCC play a more joined up role with KHG, what can a housing unit do to delivery more affordable housing, how can our existing strategies and protocols be dove tailed in to the unit? Essex have a Housing Unit set up and KCC are taking some learning from this but want to have all partners engaged in the shaping of the unit.  SW welcomed the recommendations and understand the details of how it will operate in practice. KHG works closely with KCC and is a key player within decision making of KCC. BH thanked MW for joining the meeting this morning, KHG was involved in providing evidence for the Select Committee.  MJ from Ashford BC raised a query about Extra Care Housing and when phasing will commence or be planned due to the ageing population. MW advised that this work is underway and should be ongoing with partners in the sector to ensure sufficient supply. The point of contact for the Housing Unit will be crucial for communication across all areas of delivery.  SW commented about through KHG and the new unit how to make sure housing is accessible and affordable for those on the housing registers with complex needs and that tenancies are sustainable and these customers can be immersed into local communities. |  |  | **Colleagues may contact MW with any thoughts or feedback about the proposed housing unit.** |
| **Homes England Update** | BA (Senior Growth Manager for HE) updated the group with the following information – Affordable Housing Focus within current two programmes, both are running side by side. Programme One is the 16 – 21 Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme which is in Q4, huge focus on delivery to year end, thanks to all partners for continued engagement on forecasting, to keep talking to HE about progress, within the programme HE still have a small amount of grant to allocate, only for starts before the end of March 2021 and completion by March 2022. Programme Two is the AHP 2021-26 CME opened for new bids for the programme, fund of approx. £7.4m 50/50 split for CME via IMS which are assessed on case by case, then other 50% will be allocated through Strategic Partnerships, which are longer term commitments. Waiting for further information on the structure of Strategic Partnerships, including the hurdle rate, will be a competitive process for providers who wish to have a Strategic Partnership with HE and this will run through Summer 2021, likely for Strategic Partners to be selected by September and key message is that is providers or new entrants considering a partnership but who have a scheme they want funding commitment may want to put through the CME process, you can still count this homes towards hurdle rate but also the commitment to funding.  Still waiting for outcome of the White Paper consultation on the Shared Ownership and Leasehold Model, this needs to be factored into the CME 2021-26 bids, there will be an opportunity to review bids before entering into the contracts.  For the 2021-26 programme the products are Affordable Rent, Social Rent, Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership, with 10% targets for Supported housing and 10% rural, for a Strategic Partnership there is a min 25% target for MMC delivery and target of SME internally for MMC – look at Capital Funding Guide, providers putting bids in will see a new format and the additional questions around S106 and MMC, there is an additional supporting information part to the offer line for new grant bids, everyone who wants to submit a bid should provide supporting info and context as possible to speed up decision making.  BA encouraged colleagues to speak to their HE representative with any queries.  SW asked colleagues about consideration of Rent to Buy delivery in Kent as a programme? BA advised that there is interest in the product, it is not a new grant funded project as was available in the 16 – 21 programme. There is not a huge volume through the programme currently. |  |  |  |
| **ACE Ambassador Scheme** | AG and MH advised that there has been fantastic support from KHG and the membership organisations for this programme. MH provided an overview about the project, including how it is funded and outcomes, the programme ends in March 2021, the ongoing message is about keeping communities safe as well as collaborating and innovating through partnership.  Going to engage with communities, will be looking to KHG for ideas about how to do this. The second ACE workshop took place yesterday, looking at building relationships across all systems/services, lots of skills, knowledge and relationships that services have with residents and how to build on this. Considering capacity and support availability of services for those that need them in a timely way.  More details within the slides about the background to the project and what the outcomes are hoping to achieve. AG has been responsible for taking this work forward with Sanctuary having taken part in the programme before the pandemic. Social Housing landlords have a unique position in being able to enter a home and see the wider picture of the household’s life, part of a bigger picture and England are catching up with progress in Scotland. Sanctuary have identified a number of key points within their processes, policies and approaches to embed the trauma informed approach. The Scotland staff of Sanctuary are looking to restructure to enable this additional point at which a conversation can take place to enable tenancy sustainment. Rolled out internal training on awareness and basics of ACE’s, taking further projects into communities and make a model in Kent for the rest of the UK.  MM advised that Private Landlords are considering Breathing Space, which from May 4th a tenant can use the Breathing Space (regulated) when accrued existing debt has a moratorium debt and can only enter this if a perceived way out, the communication about the debt would be through the FSA, to give tenants the opportunity to regroup whilst paying current rent. This all has to take into account mental health of the tenants and the impact on the moratorium length. MH advised that there is an ACE’s piece that could fit with the Breathing Space and connect to services or support to assist with this approach. |  |  | **Slides to be shared with notes.** |
| **Corporate Parent Update** | The Corporate Parenting Annual Report was shared with the meeting papers, a reminder that all members have a corporate parent responsibility. CS thanked KHG for the donation for the 2020 Christmas Campaign, the original target was to raise £10,000 to buy a £5 gift voucher for each care leaver in Kent, and total raised was £17,000 which enabled 1900 hampers to be delivered before Christmas to open on Christmas Day. There is a legacy fund to use in 2021 and this along with £14,000 grant funding through the Young lives Foundation will assist with supporting all young people moving on to independence with a Welcome Pack.  Now starting to plan for recovery after Covid, the impact on the mental health of young people has been devastating, four deaths in 2020 within the care leaver cohort, three of these from suicide, a very vulnerable period for YP, continuing to work to identify those who are most vulnerable, education and employment has also been impacted through Covid for these young people. All these factors will be linked to housing and how to support young people to come through this experience. | **As approp** | **10/2** | **Colleagues to read through the Report shared and to feedback any questions via KHG or to Caroline Smith at KCC.** |
| **DA Local Partnership Board** | Working to set up a new DA Board for Kent. Recapped on the focus of the Bill, including upper tier authorities to provide support for victims of DA and their children and to set up a multi-agency board. The Bill sets out who needs to be on the new Board, included within the slides.  Any comments on the TOR before formalised would be welcomed by JSD. In terms of structure and where the LPB will sit within existing DA partnership arrangements, there will be a Kent and a Medway LPB, which will be positioned between the existing forums and aligned with the operational board chaired by Kent Police (Tactical Group for whole of Kent and Medway). Want to ensure the LPB to be an extension of the Tactical Group to ensure all areas of business and contacts are connected and covered.  The structure and as learning comes forward there may be opportunities to streamline the Governance and review over 6 to 12 months. Two asks for KHG, the D/B representation and Housing provider representation. Head of Service level is the most appropriate fit for the LA representative, also need to have Community Safety expertise from districts, all districts are welcome to be represented but ideally to have one from each area, as per slides. Keen to understand from the districts what would be useful for them to bring to the LPB? Housing Services is what the Bill refers to for representation, to include housing providers, to provide insight and assistance for move on and secondary housing options (MHCLG view), interested to understand how housing providers can be represented and what to bring?  Districts Feedback – JL queried the rationale for the grouping of the districts, this is based on the contract for the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse contract. CS asked about the link to Front Door services for this piece of work, JDS advised that this is in place.  Housing Providers Feedback – not prescriptive but a representative to share a potential collective view for these organisations. DE confirmed that open at this stage about representation, if people want to be part of this to confirm with KCC colleagues. BH suggested an option of MM for the Private Sector Landlord perspective. | **ASAP** | **ALL** | **Slides to be shared with notes.**  **Colleagues invited to feedback to the questions around representation for LA/Housing Providers on the LPB** |
| **Kent Crowd Funding** | LJ from KCC provided an overview to follow up the papers shared ahead of the meeting, regarding Crowd Funding Kent. This is a crowd funding programme to launch in Kent across the KCC area, broad outcomes looking to CF and support projects to support community action and those impacted through Covid, assets and venues and helping to maintain the volunteering offer. This is launching on the 17th March and two funding rounds per year, the first in Spring 2021. There are a number of ways for partners to support through promotion, funding but an invite to come along to the event in March to learn more about the opportunities. Working with SpaceHive to deliver this project who are happy to work with interested parties. | **ASAP** | **ALL** | **RS to share the information about the event when available for colleagues to consider and pass on as appropriate.** |
| **Countywide Updates** | Paper provided in advance of the meeting, if you have something to offer to a group or to attend please contact RS for details. No matters arising. DE and JL have been speaking about rough sleepers and everyone in campaign, working with Health to assist in this work, there will be an item on this issue for KHOG in March, please ensure that KHOG colleagues are prepared with regards to the ask of PH, GP’s and the vaccination role out. DE advised that there is funding from Government for Covid response, reactive rather than sustainable funding including the Winter Fund, Contain Outbreak Management Fund which can be used in a number of ways – enabling self-isolation, and KCC has agreed a £10m funding from Covid under-spend, for spend on financial hardship, on digital poverty and also the work around street homelessness. Kent Public Health is hoping to use some of the money to provide wrap around support to keep people off the streets longer term. A challenge in local Government currently is how to manage the distribution and management of the funding, using trusted partners to identify and refer to the KSAS or food banks so funding is going to these places also. If coming across individuals or families who are vulnerable to make the links and referrals.  JL advised that will confirm about the links to the work around KPH and the Health and Housing Social Care Sub Group but to keep clear lines of communication that have been established. | **DE**  **JL** | **As avail**  **ASAP** | **DE to share a report on the current funding and financial support available through KCC**  **JL to take this action for KHG** |
| **KHG Events Update** | RS advised that the deadline for the KHG Extraordinary Awards has been extended to 5pm on the 26th February, with the nomination form and guidance on the KHG website. Great opportunity to nominate a person, project or team for their extraordinary work over the last 12 – 18 months, opportunity for each membership organisation to nominate once and then details about the event to be shared after the new deadline date. KHG Events Newsletter shared yesterday confirming all details along with sponsorship opportunities. | **ALL** | **5pm on 26/2** | **ALL to consider the nomination for the KHG Extraordinary Awards.** |
| **AOB** | MR raised about plans for SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) and cold weather, any districts on the approach to take with those who refuse accommodation offers, to avoid street deaths. SW advised that there are navigators making connections and make a temporary arrangement for the street homeless, MR asked if can use Mental Health assessments for those refusing accommodation to safeguard the most vulnerable individuals. SW suggested a safeguarding referral and JL offered to provide MR with the Maidstone Outreach worker and their approach. MB advised that working with other providers in the voluntary sector, through soup kitchens for example who have a different relationship with street homeless. | **ALL** | **ASAP** | **Colleagues to feedback any advice to MR at Canterbury CC** |