**Present**: Sharon Williams, Chair and Ashford BC; Maria Jacob, Moat; Brian Horton, SELEP; Mark Breathwick, Medway C; Mel Anthony, KCC; Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies:** Tracy Allison, WKHA and vice chair; Vicky May, Kent Homechoice Board; Nick Fenton, Kent Developers Group; Charlotte Hudson, Swale BC; Simon Thomas, Kent Planning Group;

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| **Reference** | Notes/Outcome | When | Who | Action/Decision |
| **Housing Diversity Network** | Mushtaq Khan from Housing Diversity Network joined the group for this item. TA, BH, MK and HM met recently and invited MK to visit and introduce himself, and the network, to the Board. HDN is a not for profit organisation that works with HA, LAs etc. It helps boards become more diverse, provides staff training, an accreditation scheme, conferences and webinars, and regional diversity groups including a London group. Groups are currently meeting online. There could be a Kent diversity group.  Mushtaq explained it is useful to begin with a survey, like the one circulated previously, on current diversity in the workforce in Kent, and the Network could offer this, probably free. This can inform any subsequent plan.  BH supported MK’s offer of beginning with a report to understand the current situation. SW would like KHG to help facilitate a regional approach on diversity and would like MK, TA, BH and HM to return to the Board with a proposal on how to take this forward. MA also supported using this trusted brand to bring this useful agenda forward.  MK suggested a regional strategy/approach for members of KHG to sign up to may be useful. | Oct 21 | MK, BH, TA, HM | Further meeting on how to progress towards an assessment and an approach for Kent. |
| **Matters Arising July EXB** | MA The offer of a workshop is open. BH has volunteered to mentor the events group until we find a chair. Ask the events group to organise the DA event  No update on L&G registered Provider.  BH explained that key personnel around buildings and energy efficiency are leaving KCC and the purpose of KMSEP needs clarifying, perhaps along with KEEP. BH will liaise with LB at KCC to understand what the gaps are and what resources KCC will provide. He will ask the Asset Management group to pick up social housing decarbonisation part of the agenda.  SW has contacted CCC and SBC re KHG fees. CCC have paid. SBC is working with us.  MA has spoken with Allison Duggal about PH representation and AD hopes to have a consultant to attend this Board meeting. MA to advise who will attend board and also for the HHSC group. AD is keen to maintain funding but no commitment made. AD is interim in the post so KHG will need to be seen to be energetic and valuable and aim to be part of induction of new person when in post.  **Challenges for our Disabled children**  SW has asked PSHSG to discuss at that group which next meets in December  MJ sought information from Habinteg and found the Homefinder UK project. This aims to work with private sector landlords to help people with disabilities identify homes suitable for their needs, matching tenants to housing. Dover DC appears to be part of a pilot on this. Maria will send presentation to circulate. Habinteg are happy to present on this pilot to KHG main group HM and MJ to get Habinteg to do a slot on main KHG in 2022.  MB not started the scoping meeting on how to use Choice Based Lettings to identify void homes with adaptations and better ways to use the Better Care funds to help children with disabilities needing home adaptation, yet. HM to support by seeking suitable date.  BH, wants to encourage widest possible engagement with Asset Management group | Sept 21  Sept 21  Oct 21 | Events group  TA  BH  MA  MJ and HM  MB  HM | Liaise with Mel Anthony to arrange an DA event  TA to contact L&G  BH to discuss with LB and then raise at Asset Management group.  MA to advise on contacts and continue conversation about funding  HM and MJ to get Habinteg to do a slot on main KHG in 2022.  Arrange this scoping meeting and feedback to Board.  appointment for Asset Management group sent to MB so he can arrange Medway rep attendance. |
| **KHG Budget** | The Budget Sheet and notes were circulated before the meeting. HM talked through the income and expenditure and highlighted all subscriptions paid except one that has now been acknowledged and PO has been promised.  The COMF funding shows the amount relating to KHG and not the amount we that will go to the LHAs.  Kent Public Health have agreed funding of £20,000 for this current financial year, this will be added to the KPH reserve to cover the cost of the salary for the part time post to support the Housing Health and Social Care Sub Group, the reserves balance from the KPH reserves will then be zero. Reinforced the importance of liaising with Kent Public Health and the need to be clear on the financial contribution for the part time post for the HH&SC post, preferably on a longer time frame. |  |  |  |
| **Armed Forces Covenant** | BH is the Armed Forces Champions for the group. There is a K&M Civilian Military Partnership Armed Forces Covenant Conference event on 21st Sept. BH requested to roll over this item until Tim Woolmer is at the meeting, to understand the future needs. |  | HM | Put Armed Forces Covenant on next agenda. |
| **SELEP** | BH is still liaising with MHCLG and Homes England and their interest in the topics continues. The LEP is going through a review process to understand their role going forward. |  |  |  |
| **Afghan relocation** | SW was requested to discuss how LAs are responding to this and identify the role(s) for housing associations. ABC has committed to provide settled housing for up to 10 families, has a hotel with a number of refugees and is ensuring residents get the support they need. A huge number of health issues have been highlighted. Families have arrived with almost no possessions and ABC have appealed for donations. ABC are not using social housing stock, the same approach as the Syrian resettlement work. This does raise affordability as funding is for 12 months and we have not had any confirmation on ongoing funding.  MB this has become a political issue at Medway. Medway has committed to taking 2 families. It shares concerns around long term funding and the size of families. Medway also had 3 Afghan families with passports come through as homeless and eligible for services. MB is keen to ensure all get access to same level of support.  BH explained there is a forum for recording properties being made available for Afghans in Essex and enquired whether something similar would be done by Kent?  MA agreed it is that politically hard to be seen to be using social housing, but perhaps use those homes that are hard to let, including HA homes that are hard to let. She will find out what KCCs role will be.  BH asked to highlight how useful it would be to get knowledge on longer term housing  MJ Moat drives most lettings through LA partners, with almost no direct lets.  SW explained that part of the funding from government is around integration into community and helping them access services and KCC is supporting this via some commissioned services, but the funding is currently for a year. This may be because this initial group have worked with UK services and so its likely that one adult in each family can speak some English.  Some families appear to have recourse to public funds and can use the homelessness route and others may not. Afghans will have no local connection so can apply anywhere and this issue will be discussed at KHOG.  MB perceived the biggest barrier could be habitual residency. Medway Council has decided to consider them all habitually resident.  SW DWP may provide guidance on this. |  | MA | MA establish if KCC has a current coordination role or intends to create one. |
| **Recycling in flats** | Mark Goodman of ABC joined the group for this item and gave a presentation on the recycling in flats pilot with the Kent Resource Partnership. This aims to improve recycling rates, improve appearance of bin areas, reduce contamination of recycling and reduce fly tipping, including of bulky items, at the bin stores.  They wish to make bin stores bright and clean with clear signage.  Resource London has shown a programme that works and KRP want to do similar.  Request that KHG supports the work of KRP on improving bin stores by sharing the message.  MJ said great work with their teams at Stanhope and that the children enjoyed the engagement activity. Moat would be keen to explore with Mark Goodman what more they can do. On new build developments there doesn’t seem to be enough thought on bin store the KRP has shared their guidance on bin stores.  SW suggested MG speak at the February KHG meeting and that the issue of planning should be included there. Can ask Tenancy Management if they would wish to invite Mark to speak there too.  MG to share design guide to be shared with the Board. |  | HM  HM | Ensure Mark G is invited to Tenancy Management sub group  Share the design guide with Board. |
| **Commissioning Update** | MA They are experiencing a crisis in finding social care workforce. They are looking at solutions around use of technology, voluntary sector, etc. in the short term. Longer term they have plans to attract more staff.  Winter Planning; an October fire break has been mentioned which makes things less predictable. There is also the possibility of staff leaving as they will be required to have a first vaccination by 16th September and the second jab by 11 November. If they decline they cannot work in care homes.  KCC is aiming to understand the implications of Boris’s announcement on 7 Sept 2021 around social care funding  They are recommissioning Kent Homeless Connect, informed by engagement with KHOG.  DA is high on the agenda. KCC is receiving £3.1m and so looking at commissioning for this. Members maintain a commitment to DA services. They are concentrating on a new approach to the Sanctuary Scheme, how to improve the offer for those with complex needs and so cannot access a refuge, and supporting therapeutic interventions, including for children who are victims of DA.  MA is taking the overview of services to Leaders and Chiefs to gain buy in throughout organisations. |  | **HM** | Contact SC to ensure that KHOG is feeding into the Kent Homeless Connect commissioning engagement |
| **Medway Council** | MB Medway’s Local Plan was adopted in 2003. The new one goes through governance in October and then go to consultation early in 2022. They are pursuing city related matters, including City of Culture and will ensure that people in social housing benefit from this, so refurbish MUGAs to give a new colourful feel, pursuing child friendly city to ensure that when they make changes they engage young people and bring benefits to them.  MoJ is moving into Medway Council’s building and they are embedding flexible working. Homelessness is up by 21%. They are looking at venture to buy homes for Temporary Accommodation and pushing on HRA development to deliver new homes, including mixed tenure developments. |  |  |  |
| **KHG Events** | On 16th September the Housing Forum, with partners KHG, BPTW and Countryside, are running the Development Partnership Forum event. It runs from 10-3pm, face to face at the Corn Exchange, Rochester.  On 22nd September KHG and KCC are running a virtual session on understanding extra care housing with breakout sessions on market conditions and demand, marketing extra care and strategy and policy.  On 13th October we’re planning a virtual event on Strategic Partnerships. We will have speakers from Homes England and the Housing Associations that have been successful in bidding in the previous round. A further round of SPs were announced last week and HM has contacted them to invite them to speak. This is booked for 2-3.30, but may become 2-4 if all the new SPs wish to speak and more details will be sent soon.  On the 9th November we’re planning a virtual event on the White Paper. We have confirmed speakers from the Social Housing Regulator and Cipfa Cco. HM is liaising with a housing provider who has done a lot of work on tenant engagement and when all is confirmed HM will send further details out.  We will be working with the Housing Diversity Network with a view to running a virtual event with them in December 2021 to February 2022, if that timing works with the other work with the HDN.  SW and BH will talk on how to tackle housing demand. HM to arrange a meeting on this, to include MB, ST, NF. Include thoughts around SP and what they have said they will deliver in Kent. |  | **HM** | **Arrange a meeting** |
| **COMF** | The bid submitted to KCC for COMF/Helping Hands funding was successful. The two work streams are;   * To develop a campaign for private sector landlords to encourage them to liaise with their local authority early with the aim of preventing evictions where possible. This stream will have a website, a marketing campaign and may include a video/animation. * To give money to each LHA under KCC to help tenants suffering financial hardship as a result of Covid-19. It is expected that it will mainly be used to tackle rent arrears but could also be used to help owner occupiers.   Initially £131,250 will be allocated to each LA, with an assessment by a panel in December to determine where to allocate the final funds, based on which LHAs appear most likely to be able to spend it by 31st March 2022. The recommendations of the panel will be forwarded to the Board for comments around 17th Dec for a quick response so payments can be made by 10th Jan. KCC has agreed a minority of the fund can be used to pay for staff to run the scheme.  No LHA IT or communications team has been able to provide the marketing, website and animation/video service in the short timescale required by the grant. SDS based at TWBC, who provided the Homechoice website, will provide the website @ £7k plus VAT. It is highly likely that an in-house team at Dover District Council will provide the video/animation and the cost will be confirmed soon but in the region of £1k. We have not yet engaged a provider for the marketing side and will use the leads provided by Kerry and Maria.  KCC has provided the grant agreement which has been signed and returned. The draft MoU has also been circulated to all LHAs for comments and ABC’s legal service has given advice on this. The MoU was circulated to Board members yesterday afternoon. We would hope to send the final version of the MoU to each LHA by Friday 10th and when the agreement is signed by all parties we will send the funding out by BACS for speed.  KHG will collate the data from each LHA and provide a monthly return to KCC. It will also provide an end of project report. |  |  |  |
| **Future Topics and AOB** | The Board agreed that it will be the decision making body for whether non member organisations should be permitted to attend sub groups, for example Action for Rural Housing at HSEG, GSE EH for Asset Management and HomeBuy Agent for HSEG. This will be monitored by Board and it will avoid diluting the benefit from being members.  Jane Lang flagged that we’ll need a link with Andrew Rabey and Adult Safeguarding.  The Charity Shop Gift card is being piloted in Kent. They hope that councils/HAs etc. may wish to buy the cards to help the most vulnerable access household goods etc.  All to consider what should be on the February KHG agenda and feed into HM |  | **MB**  **HM**  **All** | **MB to find out what the ask is**  **Invite to speak at Feb 2022 KHG**  **Suggest items for 02/22 KHG agenda** |