**Present**: Felicity Dunmall, chair and GCHA; Julie Terry, vicechair and WKHA; Nicola Bowen, Choice Support; Benjamin McGowan, Moat; Georgina Pennicott, Golding; Linda Hibbs, Tonbridge and Malling; Leanne Donald-Whitney, GCHA; Verity Johnson, Dover; Matthew Eddy, MHS; Vitra Cummins, TCH; Helen Ayers, Dover; Anthony Crossley, Ashford; Jill Rogers, Gravesham; Tina Dust, Sanctuary; Helen Miller, KHG; Guests; Ben Hunt, ASB app; Lee Appleyard, MaPS; Manpreet Bhupal, vice chair KHOG; Stacey Clark, KCC;

**Apologies:** Helen Sudbury, and Tom Harding, Folkestone and Hythe; Vikki Perry, Ashford; Vicky May, Gravesham; Tracy Chambers, Medway; Ben Ridley-Johnson

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters Arising | * Mark Goodman declined the invitation to present to update as the findings of the communal bins store pilot are not quite ready. He will present to main KHG in May. * The DA reciprocal agreement questionnaire has been circulated and responses collated. |  |  |
| COMF update | Manpreet Bhupal, KHOG Vice Chair, gave an update on the Contain Outbreak Management Fund;  KHG made a successful £2.5M bid to KCC for this project which aims to address financial hardship arising from Covid-19 leading to homelessness. It has two strands;   1. Funds to each Kent LHA to address financial hardship arising from Covid-19 leading to homelessness in all tenures, 2. Funds to market the LHAs homelessness service to landlords using the website [www.supportforkentlandlords.co.uk](http://www.supportforkentlandlords.co.uk)   COMF funding is for preventing homelessness primarily in the private rented sector but can also be used in the social rented sector and for mortgage arrears. It is for households adversely financially affected by COVID.  Each Council has received £175K and has until 30th June to spend it except Dover and Sevenoaks who were swift to spend their allocation so received a little more but are constrained to the original 31st March 2022 timeline for spending it. Tenants and landlords can seek help by contacting the local authority and if you need contact details you can find them on the website [www.supportforkentlandlords.co.uk](http://www.supportforkentlandlords.co.uk) or use the way you normally contact the local authority.  This is different from a Discretionary Housing Payments so get in touch with your local housing options team in your local council if you have a tenant at risk of homelessness due to financial difficulty caused by Covid.  LD-W what does it cover? MB It is for preventing homelessness that is linked to financial hardship linked to Covid. We must show the link to hardship caused by Covid and preventing homelessness. It can be used for arrears and bills where non payment could lead to homelessness.  MB said members may contact him for help. HM for his email address will email his email address round with these notes. |  |  |
| ASB App | Ben Hunt gave a demonstration of the app.  It allows residents to record and monitor ASB using an app on their phone. It is accessed by invitation to relevant residents only. There is a secure log on and password so you know where the information has come from. They will support each resident on how to set up their account on the app and input data. There are also tutorials for new users. The information input is available to landlords immediately. They are working with 50 landlords across UK.  They are willing to provide demonstrations to landlords. Ben gave a quick demonstration of the app. Residents can record diary sheets, photos, videos and record sound. The noise recording function has been useful in Court.  At the back end staff can see the list of residents invited to use the app. Staff can invite residents to use the app and need their name and email address. Staff can see those who’ve accepted the invitation and are actively using it. They can send a message to the resident. They can download all evidence or select the parts you need. They can send it to a colleague. Members are welcome to contact the service on [info@asbapp.co.uk](mailto:info@asbapp.co.uk)  BH is happy to give landlords a demo. They offer a 3 month free pilot and the costs for the year are £1500.  NB asked whether solicitors and Courts accept this type of evidence? BH explained it can be used for criminal and civil cases.  BMG asked whether customers can migrate data onto own CRM system? BH yes, can run through that during the demo and tailor it to your needs.  JR asked whether it needs a certain specification of phone? BH no, as long as the phone is web based. The app has been tested on different platforms and older and new phones and has worked on all they’ve tried.  BH said they have references from customers and he could provide them if members are interested.  AC said Ashford are almost ready to go with this service. Their IT manager had suggested the use of a .gov email and that can be arranged with ASB app. This is to reduce any concerns residents may feel.  BH has provided a pdf brochure on the app and HM will circulate this by email with the notes. |  |  |
| Money Adviser Network | Lee Appleyard gave a presentation on Money and Pensions Service and Money Guiders which will be circulated by email.  The Money and Pensions Service is free to organisations and members of the public. He introduced the work of the Money Advisor Network and the help it can provide to residents and free training for members employees. MAN is a virtual network of registered debt advisors. The presentation outlined the referral process. Some members have already started using the Money Advisor Network. LA is happy to have a conversation with any organisation that is considering working with them and he ran through the referral partner onboarding process.  Money Guiders  There are many people giving guidance on money and finance matters, as the main part of the job or as a small part of it. They’ve created e-learning which is free for frontline staff. There is a foundation level that takes around 2.5 hours to study (this can be in several sessions) with a multiple choice assessment at the end. Then there are 12 more detailed modules for particular topics including debt, borrowing, welfare and benefits, tax, pensions, etc. Each module takes around 20 minutes. The units are recognised by City and Guilds.  LA is willing to give more details on either idea and members are welcome to contact him using the contact details at the end of his presentation. |  |  |
| Standing Items | Lettings/viewings – any changes or updates to procedures?  AC asked whether anyone uses an intention of notice to vacate. It has proved a pain at ABC. Others did not say that they use intention to vacate.  JR said they are back to viewings in person  FD said they using DocuSign for documents and in person viewings. Auditors support DocuSign.  The White Paper continues to shape the way forward.  FD will be sending a soft survey before they send out yearly survey to inform them on the key issues to focus on.  FD asked the group what we should be discussing at these meetings.  BMG we need to increase customer satisfaction and need to focus on property safety on estate inspections, fire safety, and the responsive repairs too. We need to be able to resource both planned and responsive repairs.  FD many noticed dissatisfaction increasing during the pandemic. It did appear that dissatisfaction was higher in younger people who respond online and a hybrid approach of gathering the evidence showed greater satisfaction.  NB the media are focusing on conditions in social media. We need to be clear that we do know the conditions of our stock and that we need to make sure our stock is up to standard.  BMG highlighted professional standards and that people work in housing because they care about it and this needs to show, including to the media, though the exceptions may be more news worthy. How do we raise the profile of our services and address the stigma that can be attached to social tenants.?  VC how are people doing with recruiting and retaining staff. It has been a challenging for them. The role is varied and demanding and it takes 6 months to settle in.  FD suggested it may be worth training in house.  VC they do have housing apprentices.  JR recruitment has been tough. LAs often pay less than HA. They are aiming to create career progression within their organisation.  LH also creating housing professional progression within the organisation.  BMG they find it easier to recruit in mid and west Kent than east Kent.  Several had noticed that the greater the amount of working from home/flexibility the greater the number of applications.  AC they have had to be flexible to get staff in. He revised the JD to increase the number of applicants. | All  HM  HM | Contact FD with any matters to be discussed as one-off or standing items  Update standing items to include customer satisfaction and consultation  Update standing items to include professional standards and good practice |
| Kent & Medway Housing Strategy | FD introduced the topic. HM shared her screen to show a document that listed the objectives relevant to the group. Members are welcomed to highlight any other objectives from the [Kent and Medway Housing Strategy](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/assets/uploads/large/FINAL-Kent-Medway-Housing-Strategy-2020-2025-29.7.2020.pdf) they feel this group delivers or contributes towards it delivery.  It highlighted the objectives;  *HW7 Inform and influence countywide strategies that impact upon housing support and care provision for all vulnerable clients groups, children, young people, adults and the ageing population*  This is objective is addressed as opportunities arise.  *SH2 Develop an even closer relationship with Kent Fire & Rescue around prioritising fire safety in all tenures, housing new and old, planning and infrastructure, prioritising any emerging legislation and regulation as a result of Grenfell.*  Fire safety is raised at the group frequently. LH asked how can KFRS help with the issue of items in communal areas. FD said some organisations sticker and remove items in communal areas. VJ asked whether they actually dispose of items. FD yes, it’s properly documented and if not collected in 7 days they can dispose of it. VJ said their solicitors require them to serve a Notice and wait a calendar month before they can dispose of it. FD said they justify swift action this as it is a fire risk and that Landlords can be fined if items are left in communal areas.  *SH6 Promote and facilitate the sharing of information about services that can be offered to residents to support the countywide and individual health and wellbeing agendas*  Todays presentation from MaPS could contribute here.  *SH7 Support and provide the opportunity for residents to share more effectively their voice on how their homes are managed and maintained, to provide them with confidence about their overall safety and well being*.  Customer satisfaction will become a standing item.  FD and JT have been invited to a meeting with all sub group chairs and vice chairs later today where the ways that sub groups deliver the K&M Housing Strategy will be discussed | HM  HM | Invite KFRS to speak at future meeting on improving fire safety  Put K&M Housing Strategy on as standing item |
| AOB | Date of next meeting is 20th April |  |  |