Housing Strategy & Enabling Sub Group

Tuesday 5th July2016

Committee Room 2, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford Kent TN23 1PL

**Attending**: Jennifer Shaw, Co Chair and Ashford BC; Liz Crockford, Co Chair and Sevenoaks DC; Tony Stewart & Alison Elliott, Maidstone Borough Council; Aaron Nichols, Medway Council; Sarah Lewis, Tunbridge Wells BC; Hannah Gates and Stephen Baldry, HCA; Andrew Paterson, Canterbury City Council; Ashleigh Stacey, Thanet DC; Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies**: Brian Horton, KHG; David Jeffrey, Ashford BC; Andrew Connors , Maidstone Borough Council; Jane Griffiths, BPHA; Chris Knowles & Satnam Kaur, Tonbridge and Malling BC; Sharon Donald, Gravesham BC; Rebecca Walker, Swale BC; Sandra Sainsbury, Shepway DC

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| **ITEM** | **NOTES** | **ACTION** |
| **Introductions and Apologies** | Introductions and apologies noted around the table. |  |
| **Minutes and Matters Arising** | Minutes agreed as accurate. Matters arising noted included:  *Page 1* – There has now been a press release about the five East Kent Authorities discussing and undertaking work to establish the feasibility of an East Kent Council. This involves Ashford Canterbury Thanet Dover and Shepway.  *Page 5* – No additional update from BPHA – RS to request if any information to share from JG. LC did ask whether other colleagues are aware if housing association partners have their own allocation/sales policy about help to buy. JS advised that she was aware that everyone went through HTB and are then assessed based on the agents policy. LC offered to write and establish from HA partners whether they have their own HTB assessment and policies and what they are.  *Page 7* – RS to liaise with Graham at KCC about the data shared with him from HSEG. | **LC to write and feedback responses**  **RS to note** |
| **KMHS REFRESH & SELEP** | RS advised that she was unable to provide an update about SELEP. With regards to the KMHS Refresh RS advised that the next steps about this are on the agenda for KHG EXB on 14th July. It has been agreed that this refresh and development of an Interim Strategy will go ahead, this will see us through the unsettled times coming forward and KHG EXB members will agree on the top four or five key themes to cover in the document. Once timescales are agreed and set the sub groups will be advised and where appropriate and necessary asked to assist with the development. |  |
| **HCA update** | Sir Edward Lister is the new HCA Chair.  The Shared Ownership Affordable Homes Programme and is still accepting bids and is live. The criteria for this programme has been expanded with regards to ‘vulnerable persons’, this has been expanded to include homeless people.  The conclusion of the Starter Homes consultation is yet to be shared. There is still no news from Lenders about Starter Homes.  There are a lot of outstanding issues which is all hinged on the outcomes from the EU Referendum and a potential General Election being announced for later in the year.  There was a discussion amongst colleagues about the appetite and interest from current developers and other partners with regards to delivery of affordable housing units. Will the appetite differ with the bigger HA partners that are undergoing mergers?  LC advised that SDC have recently completed a SHMA and are now into the next steps of the viability assessment, how will percentages of affordable units differ going forward in comparison as to what has happened previously.  JS advised that the Draft Local Plan is out to consultation for Ashford, there is no desire at Member Level to have affordable housing delivery in the Town Centre and viability has also impacted on this decision.  The HCA Review is still on going and the review is due to be completed before the summer break. |  |
| **HSEG ACTION PLAN** | RS circulated the plan with the meeting details.  **Objective One** – RS has updated about the KMHS Refresh earlier in the meeting, timescales will be updated in the plan once known.  **Objective Two** – There was a discussion about the role of the Affordability Task and Finish Group and the outcomes from the first meeting. RS advised that this group is about understanding the positions from both perspectives, from those with the statutory responsibility and then the HA partners who have their business plans and income streams to consider. LC would be keen to understand more about who is using an affordability model and what the differences in them are. There are many issues linked to this work stream and it’s not clear whether this group will provide answers but some of this work is about preventing fragmentation between local authorities and HA partners.  **Objective Three** – This has been left as a pending item as it is not clear yet where this protocol sits, due to the uncertainty about the outcomes of recent Government announcements.  **Objective Four** – This protocol is completed with the exception of the element around the Voluntary RTB. Starter Homes are now not an issue for this as Rural Exception Sites are exempt. It was agreed to reconvene a meeting of this small group to finalise the document. The group needs to consider the statement to be included about the VRTB.  **Objective Five** – RS will pick this item up with KHG EXB members next week, it was suggested that this could be picked up through the refresh of the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, again there is unknowns about the exemption from the 1% rent decrease that has been imposed for other stock, as this exemption is currently only for one year but is already having an impact on the delivery of OP accommodation as developers are stalling due to the uncertainty around viability of sites/schemes.  **Objective Six** – There was a discussion about whether this is now a document that is required, RS to check with EXB colleagues for clarity.  **Objective Seven** – There are two authorities who are yet to provide information to Arron for the benchmarking report, RS to liaise with them both direct. AN hoping to complete this on Friday 8th July. It was agreed to invite Graham Herbert from KCC Business Research and Intelligence Unit to the next HSEG meeting, to talk about his units role, where they obtain data from, what is used for, who uses it and to ensure that our data collection in HSEG is not a duplication. | **SL and CK are both invited to attend the next meeting of this group in September so can feedback progress at the September HSEG**  **RS to set up meeting and finalise document**  **RS to take to KHG EXB on 14th July and feedback to HSEG colleagues**  **RS to take to EXB and feedback**  **RS to action** |
| **BPHA UPDATE** | JG was unable to attend so there was no update at the meeting. |  |
| **KHG UPDATE** | KHG are still continuing to work on outcomes from the KHG Future of Housing Briefing that took place in February. As advised at the last meeting the Affordability group has met once and will meet again in September (SL and CK to attend), Eileen Martin is arranging to meet with KCC colleagues about the Supported Housing elements and the Future Funding (Investment) briefing is taking place today 5th July.  The KMHS refresh and interim strategy will of course produce objectives and outcomes for implementation and monitoring, once completed the Implementation Group will monitor progress and act as chasers for those who are responsible for specific outcomes, LC and JS were part of this group last time around.  KHG recently presented about key strategic housing issues for Kent and Medway at the Joint Kent Chiefs Away Day on 30th June. CEX colleagues were updated about the issues around Welfare Reform, homelessness presentations, acceptances, use of temporary accommodation, levels of housing delivery, the future of social housing and the implications from the Housing and Planning Bill. Joint CEX’s were asked to support KHG with the refresh of the KMHS. Outcomes from this will be shared accordingly.  RS will be working on a county wide piece of work with regards to Delivery of DFG’s, this is about reviewing the current process for DFG’s, to ensure that the customers journey end to end is at the forefront of how the process is undertaken. This will be a piece of work undertaken with KCC colleagues and all Districts and Boroughs will be consulted, as will the relevant delivery agents. A project board will be established and Satnam Kaur will lead the project and provide support for RS.  The next KHG meeting is September 2016, the agenda is yet to be finalised but KCC will be attending to provide an update about the Kent Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.  The KHG and JPPB new joint website is almost completed and details will be shared when available to use. |  |
| **Table of Initiatives** | This table was circulated by RS with the meeting papers. JS shared details about a product in Yorkshire; JS will update and share the link within the table. Any additional updates to be shared via RS. | **JS to update and share via RS** |
| **AOB** | LC raised a point about the recent change in the NPPF and on sites less than 11 units you cannot ask for affordable housing contributions (with the exception of exemptions to this change – S157 exemption) that was raised at the recent Rural Steering Group meeting. There are now groups of authorities in other areas of the Country that have been granted S157 status, the aspect of interest for Sevenoaks is the seeking of affordable housing units on the sites of 11 units or less. LC is going to write again to DCLG about this status and is happy to do this on behalf of other districts and boroughs that may have similar areas for inclusion. AP to share details of discussions within Canterbury City Council and a draft statement for inclusion in their Local Plan.  JS raised another outcome from the Rural Steering Group meeting, that Kent Homechoice are going to amend the application form to include a tick box that will refer to a need for Local Needs Housing. This will them allow an applicant to complete a whole application form for housing. This point is included in the minutes of that Rural Steering Group. Vicky Hodson also advised that each district had the opportunity to explain their local needs criteria on the Kent Homechoice site; this has been put forward by Housing Options Teams from each of the districts. | **ALL to note and share details with LC (including a summary note about why the area should be included) – Deadline is 31st July for information. LC to share the original correspondence via RS**  **LC urged colleagues to check their pages to ensure they are happy with content provided on the site** |

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