**KENT HOUSING OPTIONS SUB GROUP (KHOG) MEETING**

**4th April 2019 Held at Maidstone BC Office, Maidstone House, Maidstone**

**Present:** Marie Gerald, Chair, Dartford BC; Stuart Clifton, Vice Chair, Maidstone BC; Ray Easdown, Medway Council; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Rav Kensrey, Gravesham BC; Sylvia Roberts, Ashford BC; Pam Millington & Elly Toye, Dover DC; Mark Damiral, F&HDC; Sophie Valentine, TWBC; Richard Williams, MHCLG; Charles Sheene, Sevenoaks DC; Nina Colley, Sevenoaks DC; Bobbie-Jo Adams, Dartford BC; Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies:** Jane Lang TWBC; Josh Mitchell, NPS; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Deborah White, West Kent HA; Lora McCourt, Canterbury CC; Victoria May, Thanet DC;

**Guests:**  Natalie Hinchliffe, Enabling Homes

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **When** | **Lead** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Minutes/Matters Arising Feb 2019** | Minute agreed as accurate, matters arising included:  Page 1 – Colleagues to check Help for Council details.  Page 2 – Entitled To – some districts are considering or reviewing the tool. MG advised that Dartford BC using and find a useful tool.  Page 4 – IH data – RS to send a reminder to all colleagues.  Page 7 – MG has not completed briefing paper, to take forward. TA stats shared with colleagues as part of the meeting papers. There was a discussion about use and cost of travel warrants. | **ASAP**  **When avail** | **ALL**  **MG** | **Check details on line are correct**  **To share briefing paper ahead of next meeting** |
| **Enabling Homes – Natalie Hinchliffe** | NH provided an overview of Enabling Homes.  Enabling Homes is a Manchester based company but with investment is looking to move into the South East and Kent. The work of the group is across a range of partners. The organisation will source land or buildings, will engage with local authorities or housing associations and have a hedge fund investor who is keen to move the organisations objectives to Kent.  Accommodation provided is fully furnished with a repairs service and up to 3 hours support per week, provided by one of the two housing associations that they are currently working with.  The minimum number of units developed or refurbished is 6, the only cost to the local authority is met by housing benefit, and there is no required investment by the local authority.  Local authorities, if interested, should contact Natalie with information about the areas and client type that they are seeking to find accommodation for. There is no minimum stay for residents and it can be used or designed to accommodation families or single people. The tenancy is granted on a licence basis. | **ASAP**  **With notes** | **NH**  **RS** | **NH to share digital versions of the leaflets so colleagues can look at current accommodation and can provide a list of LA’s currently working with.**  **RS to share presentation** |
| **Homelessness Commissioning Discussion** | DDC have both Porchlight and Look Ahead services set up in their area, a presentation with referral details etc was shared at the Seniors meeting yesterday. There is a reduction in units over all 175 down to 68 units across YP.  Joint Housing Panels – these are not taking place moving forward.  Offender accommodation – MG attending Kent Chiefs and Leaders meeting on 27th March, invited by William Benson, CEX of TWBC. KCC Commissioning attended this meeting also to share the engagement and process around the decision. The message from the briefing paper from districts to the Leaders was not a change to the decision but time to consider transition from existing to new.  It was agreed that there is an extension of 6 months to existing contracts. MG advised Leaders that districts had not been made aware of the implications from the decision of the commissioning. There are now limited numbers of offenders in situ of existing schemes, many schemes have closed already.  Letter from Graham Gibbens at KCC has been sent to all Kent Chief Executives following the meeting of the Kent Chief Executives and Leaders, which doesn’t mention an extension of existing contracts.  SC advised that KCC have agreed a three month extension on the YP scheme, Trinity Foyer. MG is meeting with Clare Maynard (Commissioning) at KCC tomorrow.  RE advised that not currently impact from the commissioning arrangements on Medway, but all areas are at risk of the implications from de-commissioning. | **ASAP** | **MG** | **MG to share copy of letter back to Paul Carter/Graham Gibbens in response to recent correspondence out.** |
| **MHCLG Update – Richard Williams, MHCLG** | **Flexible Homes Support Grant** – some authorities have received an additional sum, there has not been an announcement on this. There are 3 pots of money, two essentially FSHG, split into two amounts to speed up the process of providing grant money. **H-Click legacy data** money also provided. The Prevention Grant and FSHG are essentially the same grant, will allow you to cross out and carry over to the new financial year.  Legacy Data for H-Click to help manage process and costing legacy data from P1E to H-Click so that authorities have a full set of H-Click data. This can be spent on staffing or IT resources to help manage the resources. The amount provided is based upon what legacy data MHCLG anticipate that there left to transfer from P1E to H-Click. Colleagues shared with RW examples of problems with entering data onto H-Click and error messages.  MG commented whether through Locata it is possible to see what data is being submitted.  RW to try and arrange training around technical issues for H-Click. Colleagues would be expected to share examples ahead of the meeting and also ID to enter the MHCLG building.  MHCLG are checking websites regarding information about Homelessness and updates since the HRA 2018. A good website with useful links may assist with reduction in footfall and encourage some people to self-serve. Newham, Brent have both got good examples of websites.  **Rapid Rehousing Pathway** announcement due in Spring 2019. Evaluations taking place of bids currently.  Second round of **Rough Sleeping Innovation** funding has been announced recently.  **PRS funding** recently received, Government advice is to spend in the year allocated but Localism offers the opportunity for finance teams to manage the income as they see appropriate.  RW emailed colleagues about the amount of spend for accessing the PRS, colleagues encouraged to share this information asap with RW. There are two options for MHCLG to consider, raising LHA rates or to increase funding directly to local authorities.  MHCLG are meeting with MOJ about the offender accommodation issue in Kent, the right people are aware of the current situation. RW to share details of a pilot for offender accommodation and who was eligible to bid.  MHCLG are also working and meeting with KCC today regarding 16 & 17 year olds and the current issues with regards to accommodation, MHCLG are asking for anonymous examples or specific issues you are having with KCC and the ideal step they could take to assist local authorities. There are advisors from DoE working on this specific issue.  KCC have recently commissioned a young person’s service that only they can refer into, so local authorities cannot refer into this service/supported housing. SC has raised this directly with relevant KCC colleagues. The protocol that exists in Kent currently states that referrals to districts will only be made when all other pathways have been explored. This issue was raised at the Senior Housing Options Managers meeting yesterday. Is there now a need for a joint housing assessment when the Southwark Judgement makes it is clear that the responsibility lies with Children’s services? There is a meeting in Kent about this on the 8th May, MG and SC will attend for KHOG, Jo Ellis (Chair of KHG) will also be attending for KHG.  RW advised that there will be clamp down on use of B&B for TA, especially for 16 and 17 year olds. MD mentioned an independent advisory organisation who has been used in F&HDC, over the phone service currently ‘Young Lives’. Colleagues agreed an independent advocacy service would be useful across the board. | **As occurs**  **ASAP**  **ASAP**  **ASAP**  **By 3rd May** | **ALL**  **RW**  **ALL**  **RW**  **ALL** | **Colleagues to share examples of H-Click errors with RW and he will liaise with H-Click team**  **RW to feedback whether this is possible and suggest dates**  **Share data requested by RW at the earliest possible time**  **RW to share details of the pilot**  **Colleagues to share challenges with RW, cc RS to take to meeting planned for 8th May** |
| **Protocols – Standing Item** | **Reciprocal Protocol** – this has been revised and redrafted, based on comments from all colleagues who responded. Monitoring kept by each individual authority and discussed at meeting. The protocol is designed to assist in exceptional circumstances you can make a request for assistance and is not fixed or focused just on DV.  Agreed as final version, to be published by RS on the KHG website.  **S.198 Protocol** – There has been a discussion about how to manage referrals, and commitment not to recharge TA provision, also refers to timescales and being proactive to respond. RS to share draft and then for sign off in June.  **Pre-Eviction Protocol** – RS fed back on the comments from NMSG about the revised Pre Eviction Protocol and that notice stage is too early to start the referral process with Housing Options. It was suggested by MG that there is a need to work with RP’s and provide a session facilitated by NHF (MG to provide me with a contact).  **Intentionally Homelessness Protocol** – Not moved forward with this currently. Set up meeting with Early Help and Front Door at KCC, following their restructure.  **TA Placements Protocol** – agreed to send out to colleagues for comment about relevance and necessity to update. | **ASAP**  **With notes**  **When avail**  **With notes** | **RS**  **RS**  **RS/ MG**  **MG/SC /RS**  **RS** | **RS to publish on website**  **RS to share final draft**  **Agreed to park the Pre Eviction Protocol and talk through as part of the planned session discussed. RS to feedback to NMSG**  **RS to contact EH and FD at KCC to set up date (post Easter)**  **RS to share current version of protocol for comment** |
| **Senior Housing Officers Meeting** | PM feedback on the meeting that took place on 3rd April. Attendance from most LA’s and Porchlight and Look Ahead also attended. It was a useful meeting and informative with positive feedback from those who attended. This group will meet quarterly and the next meeting will be hosted in Thanet. Contact details shared and work place shadowing arrangements have been made. |  |  | **PM has shared meeting notes and presentations.** |
| **Standing Items for Discussion –** | Training Opportunities – Homelessness Link Training, RS advised of the costing for this training. It was agreed to consider Shelter as a provider or Mark Pritchard (get contact details from MD). Agreed to set up letter writing training through Mark Pritchard for West of county as F&HDC have got a session planned and can offer out spaces. |  |  | **RS to contact Shelter, Mark Pritchard (letter writing) and also RW about any recommendations for motivational training** |
| **AOB** | Credit Unions / Jam Jar Accounts – raised by KPSHG about whether districts are supporting or advising the use of Jam Jar accounts and credit unions through prevention work etc? The use and referrals are mixed.  RS also raised the Homelessness Session that KHG are planning for mid-July, with Threshold attending to share good practice about Housing First and Crisis to speak about their Ending Homelessness Campaign. Details about the event will be shared when available.  MG advised that there are a lot of discussions about HRA one year one, for example there is a working group to feed in to the Spending Review and what is working and what isn’t and the administrative burden on districts. Joint assessment and shared assessments are examples of good practice, co-location working well, recruitment of staff is difficult. Advice from Andy Gale at recent conference useful, to be shared via presentation.  ET advised that a colleague at Dover has been attending a course that is useful (Grant and Turn to Us) – ET to share link as has local and national information.  TCHG have advised recently at a meeting that they will not house single individuals on UC.  TA Policy for out of area placements – if you place out of borough and you don’t have a policy to refer to then you can be challenged. (Brent Case Law at end of 2018).  PM raised issue about properties and conversion opportunities in the County, as has been approached by a company. MG advised to approach with caution.  SC advised that an email sent from Housing Partners yesterday is a phishing email so please delete. | **ASAP**  **When avail** | **ET**  **ET** | **ET to share AG presentation via RS**  **To share links with RS for circulation** |
| **Next Meeting** | LA only **13th June 2019** at 10 am (MBC) – Through the Gate will attend as unable to attend today. |  |  | **RS has shared meeting appointment via outlook** |