**KENT HOMECHOICE PROJECT BOARD ACTION DECISION LOG**

**27 March 2019**

**MAIDSTONE TOWN HALL**

**Present:** Vicky Hodson, Chair; Ellen Black (ABC), Anita Birring, MBC; Tony Stewart, MBC; Anna Dale, CCC; Lorraine Godward, L&Q; Joanne Danston, DBC; Vicky May, TDC; Debbie Fitzgerald, TCHG; Sam Oborne, Golding Homes; Jo Mahieu, WKHA; Nkoli Onyejeli, FHDC; Denice Brend, Rapport; Tracy Chambers, Medway; Elly Toye, Dover; Sarah Lewis, TWBC; Jason Wheble, TMBC; Claire Billis, Clarion Housing; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Jenny Weston, Gravesham

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| **Reference** | **Notes** | **Action/Decision** | **Lead Person** |
| **Minutes of meeting September 2018 and matters arising** | Issues raised by supporting services teams were struggling with supporting with registration. Still an issue at Canterbury. Vicky asked if any further issues can they be raised now?  Other main point from AOB was Dartford mentioned case numbering causing confusion. Jason said it’s still causing issues when the system interfaces with identical numbers so can we have a prefix to help determine the difference.  Folkestone raised issue with merging but seems to be resolved.  Issue about journal attachments not opening in CBL from HPA is now fixed  Shortlist error fixed  VH confirmed Locata has moved to Chrome which it has but some aspects of CBL don’t work on chrome and if you find it you need to report to support site or to VH so they can resolve  Change of circs and review module to be covered today |  |  |
| **Entitledto – overview of new prevention tool** | VH explained that majority of LA’s in Kent are purchasing this homelessness prevention tool. Lettings teams will have access to it but the HA’s will need a session from entitledto if they are interested in it which VH can arrange.  VH demonstrated live module. It takes financial details in relation to housing and the results of the calculation advises the customer what’s affordable and can do a benefits maximisation and advice around / suggestions such as increase wages, hours of work, change area.  The HOO teams with exception of Medway in process of purchasing. |  |  |
| **KHC Website and WCAG 2.1** | Web content accessibility guidelines, new legislation coming into effect September 2020 to benefit individuals with cognitive or LD, low vison using mobile devises. It needs to make sure that every government website complies. I.e. voice readers etc.  Currently the KHC website doesn’t comply fully so this will happen over the coming year but we will only notice the difference in the picture publishing. Each photo will need a description before publishing. It will become part of the wizard. |  |  |
| **Google Charges – changes to google maps** | Google maps used to be free. It’s no longer free since July 2018 and so some KHC functionality doesn’t work and it’s in process of being fixed.  Google provide an allowance of £200 per month and then they withdraw function or charge. We have had to estimate what we use and our estimated charges were on the slide.  Currently using analytics to count up average clicks.  We need some decisions in terms of what’s required. Any queries from customers in relation to the search or maps will be as a result of this. We may just restrict the search to area specific. |  |  |
| **Mobile App** | Mobile app is being withdrawn from end March because the app was going to be improved but those changes are already available on the mobile version of the website. The app didn’t show campaigns, and would accommodate automated reviews and accessibility guidance would also be an issue.  Opportunity taken to just use mobile friendly version of website.  You can still save a website to your phone just like the app. But the instructions vary. Sign in is going to be moved to the home screen to make it easier. Main feedback ref the website the difficulty is the feedback is missing and so that is being added. |  |  |
| **Automated Bidding** | Went live last May 2018. All areas have showed increase use apart from Tunbridge Wells. VH showed statistics ref auto bids. Last financial year 292 lets were via auto bids across Kent (7%).  A review of auto bids has been conducted to include sheltered properties, exclude bath, exclude shower, exclude shared garden, exclude maisonettes, exclude flats and a yes to all areas.  Dartford asked for bedroom size override. LA’s in the room don’t see a need as it works off the people spaces rather than the number stated. VH will check as they are concerned that the applicants may be rejected on the shortlist anyway. Reason for request needed prior to making decision.  Medway mentioned sheltered housing and the age limits so the adverts only display for those that are eligible to reduce the queries where people say “I can only see sheltered”. Medway requested the option for “must match” to prevent bids. Needs to not be automatic with icon in case you have hard to let and need to go to lower age. |  |  |
| **Mutual Exchange** | VH had conducted an online survey ref exchange Locata which was that it isn’t up to date. Frustrations from customers. Homeswapper was demoed in December and a few additional HA’s are going to sign up. VH will request from the Project Board to terminate exchange Locata. A further reason for bringing exchange locata to an end is that the WCAG guidance which would mean costly changes and updates to the website. There is more preference from customers to use sites like Homeswapper and Facebook.  Board meeting is June and then the end will be soon after that. A notice will be added to the website to give notice. |  |  |
| **Change of Circumstance – DPIA and working group** | VH has struggled to get this in motion due a variety of reasons. Meeting held last year to move it forward but complexities over it. VH to put together a working group for the issues. Need to do a DPIA also. Aiming for applicants to log in, see application and update it themselves, just the bits they want to change as an ideal. She met with the digital team in Tunbridge Wells and they want to add in another layer of identification to allow customers to verify themselves when logging in. But we are already experiencing issues with logging in with the email and password so we need to see what is or isn’t possible and whether we wish to process.  Medway, Canterbury, Dover, Swale, Ashford, TWBC and Folkestone & Hythe volunteered. |  |  |
| **Annual review of online form** | Smarter digital services team carried out the user testing on the website and on a mobile device to uncover opportunities for improvement and to test the flow. A few problems identified / potential changes and VH has emailed out to all to request some feedback by 31st March.  View asked ref HB question and financial questions. There are a lot of questions and this is an area that they are struggling with. It was added at the time as some HA partners were keen to see this and we indicated that we needed. VH requested view of whether we can just as for a total for each. Medway doesn’t use it and it can go out of date. HA’s do their own checks etc. anyway. ZC said they don’t use it, they just need to know what the income is and totals. Just want to know what’s being claimed. It was suggested that we can use the entitled to tool on an advert instead of as part of the cbl.  JW advised that TMBC disregard some income and so there is confusion over what is actually the income that we are interested in. Agreed that a simpler approach just to ask what applies which then requests the totals rather than having to go through everyone.  Canterbury advised they use total income and they require the info to be uploaded and they assess after. Its presents and issue for support workers.  ABC don’t use this part, would be ok with a tick list for income  Expenditure not required so we can get rid of that. Just need to know if they have debt.  VH checked consensus that we can change the questions to simplify it. Will draft something based on entitledto.  Question over nfa address for correspondence, but yes it is useful for verifying  The question ref temp living outside the area which relates to those in care or homeless temp accommodation causes confusion and so it will be deleted.  We already ask if they have been placed by another HA.  The property type ref nursing home is confusing. Feedback is that it could be used as respite care and we do need to know so being kept and will split out. Elly advised to change the term for from nursing home to residential.  Some wizard fields on advert to be made mandatory to ensure that area displays on the adverts.  Pictures on KHC website are terrible and need to fill the grey area. The reason is because we are using google grab for pictures but we do need a decent picture. Need to reload the pictures from old adverts as that’s one reason why they are tiny. VH has spoken to Locata and we have the option of preventing small pictures being uploaded.  Jason advises that there is no functionality to ensure our pictures are correct prior to publishing. Google pictures are too small.  Is it possible to get an advert preview? VH to request.  Housing officers to take the photos will be a better option as suggested by Tunbridge wells? Needs to be street scene not exact house. Managers to speak to their void officers ref getting photos. VH will speak to the board.  670 x 400pixels is the ideal for filling the box. |  |  |
| **Financial Assessment of online application form** | As above |  |  |
| **Redaction** | Redaction now in place. Any application on system that hasn’t had any action for 7 years has now been redacted. All personal detail has been removed leaving some information still for reporting purposes. If you want to run a redaction report you can do this on redaction history in report section. It has redacted date of births, it’s made them all the same 01 Jan 1970. That doesn’t include suspended or pending application. LA’s to ensure that anyone suspended or ending siting there that should be removed you need to remove them where needed as shouldn’t be holding the data. You need to do a manual redaction. JW asked if an agreement over 7 years, VH stated it matches the 7 years and that there is a consensus and no written agreement. |  |  |
| **Mobility Levels** | Flagged as challenging to HA partners as all working to different policies. Is there opportunity for consistency across Kent in terms of how we apply mobility levels? ZC stated that they are not good as they are atm. Advised vagueness over level 2. Discussion over need to state whether its full wheelchair access inside or just access from external to internal but not wheelchair access inside.  Discussed those just using adaptations and not using mobility issues. SO also stated that we should just state the options i.e. level access, ramped  Requirement to report to FOI/s in terms of needing to know what properties are wheelchair accessible and which were not. Canterbury would prefer clarification over the mobility levels.  Opportunity to have a discussion over consistency Canterbury, Ashford, Tunbridge wells, Medway. Medway may be able to bring their OT put forward for working group.  Also discussion ref potential to adapt a property.  JW discussed the accessible housing register model. |  |  |
| **Pre Tenancy Training** | Working group has been looking at this over last year. Work happening already across Kent with training modules online and ptt at offer stage. VH keen not to duplicate any of that and looking at work of the JPPB ref this and using their leaflets as a basis to develop videos that can be sent out as you tube links to those that join the register. Sent out staggered and added a resource on Kent Homechoice you tube channel for use by partner as at any stage.  Video shown which will go out to working group and changes will be made as needed. Scripts to be checked for up to date.  TMBC asked how videos would be kept up to date and Vicky will do that as an annual review. |  |  |
| **Any Other Business.** | VH added we have three it systems champion Zoe, Ellen and Chris at Dover. If you need any training then let VH know. T wells requested contact details to be circulated. VH is main contact and she will distribute the work.  Local Housing companies to potentially become KHC partners. Sevenoaks has requested use of Kent Homechoice and currently that’s not possible as it has to be registered providers. This is being reviewed now.  Discussed problem currently that there is a restriction of 3 bids but we need to consider if that restriction should be lifted. Medway advised that they have firmed up refusal policy and so should be ok.  Everyone in agreement to remove three bid limit.  JWadvised ref no registered providers is the lack of standards. The local housing company can become a registered provider but no appetite to force that. Needs to be clear on website what customers are bidding for and what the terms of the tenancy agreement would be. We could potentially develop a separate area on the system for these properties?  Medway queried how would applicants know the difference? A pop us is needed to advise that personal detail could be shared with local housing companies. ABC asked whether they should be bidding and being ranked. LA’s will need to create their own policy. Perhaps advert can be used just to generate interest and not take bids. We were under the impression that they can’t bid. Medway advised could advertise properties as a THO.  No feedback should be given on LHC properties. Also it can’t be restricted to the housing register applicants. There needs to be a policy if they are allocating using the rank set under CBL  Anna at Canterbury asked if we are checking ID in person. Answer was no, scanned is provided and then verified if they come in. HA’s and LA’s check at viewing. ZC asked if anyone upgrades to 365 will find that they lose their spell check on emails. Locata advised her it’s an issue with their IT.  DF advised that they are having trouble getting references. LA’s are saying that they want authorisation to provide reference. It’s a situation both ways around between HA’s and LA’s. ABC advise tenant to check and maybe go back to the allocation team rather than Area Manager.  Medway advised that uploaded documents are not being uploaded the right way up. This is an issue in Canterbury also and in other places. We need to be able to turn the document. There is no rotate button. Medway also asked about the enhanced reviews module. Vicky advised its linked to coc and so that needs to be done first and then the review module can be linked to it. If we decide not to pursue Coc then we will just go ahead with the review module.  Medway also said about problem adverts and whether other LA’s have problem adverts. She requested permissions for the other landlords. She has permissions to access but needs new permissions altered. |  |  |
| **Date and Venue of next meeting** | **Wednesday 25 September 2019 at 10 am at TMBC offices** |  |  |