**Present**: Sharon Williams, Ashford BC and Chair; Tracy Allison, WKHA and Vice Chair; Stephane Mitchell, WKHA and Chair of Events Group; Maria Jacobs, Moat; Mark Breathwick, Medway; Simon Thomas, Canterbury; Charlotte Hudson, Swale; Tim Woolmer, KCC;

**Apologies:** Vicky May, Gravesham, Jeanette Young, KCC, Helen Miller, KHG, Brian Horton, SELEP, Nick Fenton, Kent Housing & Development Group

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference** | Notes/Outcome | When | Who | Action/Decision |
| **Matters arising Oct Board** | Notes from previous meeting were agreed.  Majority of actions were for HM who will update at next meeting.  Budget paper has not yet been circulated, this will be circulated when available and SW will ask for sign off electronically. |  | HM  SW | Update at next meeting  Budget sign off |
| **KHG Budget** | SW has had contact from Sevenoaks Council needing to know the position for the post that KHG fund. SW will chase Allison Dougal on this. BH seemed positive for funding for next year but was unable to confirm.  Only one Council that had not yet paid fees. |  | SW  HM | Speak to Allison Dougal  Chase outstanding fee payment |
| **Staff resources for housing** | Mark Breathwick – Flagging concern around recruitment for technical specialist posts.  Would like to know if this is reflected in Kent and how do we generate more people moving into the Sector. CH confirmed that Swale are experiencing the same with technical roles and also with Housing Options roles.  MJ also confirmed from RP perspective, same experience, and challenges of competing with London market. Moat have rebranded roles, increased salary bands and using apprenticeship scheme successfully.  TW also confirmed challenging recruitment environment at KCC, some posts attracting lots of applicants and some almost none. The virtual working environment is seeing more people interested in working in London. Suggested there also needs to be a focus on retention.  SW - also challenges in recruiting right staff, particularly in Planning.  Following group discussion:  Need to look at opportunities of working with CIH and also with CIEH to look at placements for graduates, to promote housing as a varied and interesting career role.  ST suggested describing opportunities for working in community and engagement would help to encourage more people to be interested in this as an opportunity. Canterbury’s approach is to recruit high quality graduates and put them on a masters training course eg in planning to empower and train them.  KHG to work to understand gaps in salaries and look at policies on flexible working to understand the position in Kent.  MB – Medway doing some work on retention and pay structure which MB will share once it is available. It is always going to be a challenge for Kent to compete with London salaries. Could we look at up skilling.  Need to provide internal promotional opportunities.  CH suggested looking at how we can work with colleges and Adult skills and community renewal fund.  If there was a suggestion from KHG then we could approach colleges. Look at a skills profile.  SW – Could we pull together in Kent and work together to assist each other in the period of having a skills gap shortage across our organisations?  It was agreed that we would have a specific meeting to develop work in this area as we need to prepare for the future and shape the direction and promotes careers in Housing and Planning and Technical opportunities.  Mark, Charlotte, Simon, Tim and Maria to hold a meeting and also ask Brian to join. |  | HM | To organise a meeting to review skills gaps and prepare for future of recruitment |
| **SELEP** | Brian Horton – no update available today |  |  |  |
| **Commissioning updates** | Mel Anthony – no update available today |  |  |  |
| **Updates Medway** | Mark Breathwick – City of Culture has fallen away but good work left behind and taking forward some social housing targeted initiatives. Will work with University of Kent on this.  Pleased with discussions with ministry and should be getting a settlement although no clarity until new financial year. |  |  |  |
| **KHG Events** | Stephanie Mitchell– Strategic partnership event was held on 13th October and was well attended.  White Paper Event held on 9th November, feedback request has been sent out but verbal feedback has been really good with speakers that were engaging and who also enjoyed the event.  Kick Start teams meeting hosted by BH and Eileen Bishop was small but successful.  Upcoming DV event planned for 2022.  Diversity and Inclusion event being planned which will be informed by some research which is ongoing at the moment.  SW - On Monday 22nd there will be a small meeting to look at the challenges of delivering affordable housing in Kent. This was organised based on a report produced by Kent Homechoice and is an issue that we need to tackle which will link in with the Infrastructure deal being worked on by TK currently.  Group will include Simon Thomas, Nick Fenton, Brian Horton, Tracey Kerly, Sharon William, Vicky Hodson and will look at what the issues are and what some of the solutions are and how we can make a difference across Kent.  Monday’s meeting will be a pre cursor to arranging an event on the topic. We will want to ensure that the event is exciting and enables us to come up with some actions to improve the situation for affordable housing delivery.  TA – is it worth asking the new chief exec for Homes England if they would be interested in speaking. Tracy will contact him on behalf of KHG.  Mark Breathwick – lots of focus on supply and should there be a conversation around existing accommodation and TA. Need to consider lobbying the government on how self-contained accommodation is used.  SW – how do we control homelessness which feeds into demand whilst trying to accommodate people in TA. Advised that permitted development rights which are being used in Ashford are having an effect that office blocks are being converted into very small self-contained units of accommodation used as TA. If ABC didn’t use these then London would. Issue which needs to be fed into the discussion.  SW was asked to attend Kent Finance Officers group who were really concerned about the rising costs of TA in Kent and the rise in homelessness generally. Wanted to understand the position from Housing point of view.  SW said that there is work ongoing in London where everyone works together and would like to know if there an opportunity to come together in Kent?  Any work of this nature might cross over with Kent Finance Officers group so it was suggested that  periodically the chair of Kent Finance Officers comes along to KHG Exec  TA - Capital Letters consortium put together by London Authorities. Agrees that looking at something across Kent would be a very good idea. TA will ask if CE of Capital Letters may be happy to attend KHG along with the Chair of KHOG.  CH – Swale, Maid and TW looking to jointly procure accommodation. Landlord forum being held.  CH to invite someone from Maidstone procurement team to KHG  MB– working on Bromley and Waltham Forest model and looking at entering into a joint venture or setting up a purchase vehicle to procure temporary accommodation. Medway future spend on TA could instead be invested to purchase properties which they would have as an asset. Bromley are saving c£8K per property per annum. MB clarified that it would be a blend of settled and TA but would like to maximise settled accommodation.  This will be mentioned at Mondays’ meeting and MB will update as progresses.  TW – A few years ago the London Councils completed some work around rate sharing as boroughs were out pricing each other. Marie Gerald suggested a similar exercise in Kent. Definitely an appetite at Chief Exec level. |  | TA  SW  TA  CH | Contact with CE at Homes England  Invite Chair of KFO group to attend KHG Exec  Contact with colleague at Capital Letters  Invite someone from Maidstone procurement team to KHG |
| **COMF funding** | Appointed Maxim to carry out marketing. SW to ask Maxim to provide an update and a report on progress to be shared at next meeting.  SW to liaise with Lora McCourt for latest return |  | SW  SW | Ask Maxim to produce update report  Contact Lora re COMF |
| **Future topics and AOB** | There is a packed agenda for next meeting.  Digital workstream of financial hardship proposed for main meeting looking to enable people to be more digitally included. |  |  |  |