**Present**: Tracy Allison, vice chair and WKHA; Brian Horton, SELEP; Vic May, Kent Homechoice; Mel Anthony, KCC; Charlotte Hudson, Swale; Tim Woolmer, KCC; Maria Jacobs, Moat; Guest speakers, Liza Thompson, Kat Dardry, Julie Argent, KCC; Guests; Sarah Parfitt, Kent Finance Officers Rep; Manpreet Bhupal, vice chair KHOG; Cathy McCarthy, HHSC chair; John Littlemore, interim KHOG chair; Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies:** Sharon Williams, chair and Ashford Borough Council; Allison Duggal, Kent Pubic Health; Simon Thomas, Kent Planning Group; Sharon Dene, KCC; Nick Fenton, Kent Developers; Mark Breathwick, Medway;

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| **Reference** | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| **Matters arising Oct and Nov Board** | HM sent a note sent to L&G on benefits and costs of joining KHG following their talk in October but had no reply.  The security update has been made to the KHG website as agreed in October.  We have not heard from Allison Duggal with a decision on whether Kent PH will part fund the HHSC post from April 2022. Allison has now left and Anjan Ghosh is expected to start in mid-February. BH we need to engage with Anjan and send diary events out. TA spoke with Allison D who said she would speak to incoming person  The Skills Gap Review meeting ran on 31st Jan. A survey is to be carried out, possibly leading to an event.  Maxim’s update is provided as part of written COMF update that has been circulated. |  |  |
| **Local Drug Information System** | Julie Argent shared her presentation which will be circulated by email.  The Local Drug Information System, LDIS, was formed to ensure that people receive accurate drug warnings. Media reports can be inaccurate or misleading. LDIS helps assess, then share, accurate information. There is a panel of specialists to run the process. This is only used for urgent information only.  Professional Information Network (PIN) is a network of those likely to find, or need, information. The PIN shares useful information up to LDIS and cascades information down from the LDIS promptly to reduce risk and protect users. Aims to get right message to right people at the right time.  The system is running in Kent and the email is [kentdrugalert@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentdrugalert@kent.gov.uk)  The ask is whether KHG would be part of the PIN to cascade information to the right organisations?  JL this would be useful for outreach teams and those supplying information to tenants would benefit. JA also works with all the community safety units and all are members of the PIN.  JA will give HM her email address and others can volunteer to be PINs.  The group agreed that KHG would wish to be involved as a PIN. | HM | Ask each sub group if they would wish to receive the notifications |
| **Domestic Homicide Reviews** | Kat Dardry from KCC’s Community Safety Team and Liza Thompson who is a chair for Domestic Homicide Reviews gave a talk.  They are working on the action plan for DHR 25. Liza used the case study that was circulated before the meeting, to introduce the topic. A domestic homicide review occurs where a person has died within a relationship and the purpose is to identify any learning and improve practice via an action plan with SMART actions.  In the case studies the recommendation was;  *Social landlords to include a section in their mutual exchange forms addressing the reason for a mutual exchange – if this reason is due to domestic abuse landlords should follow their safeguarding procedures.*  *This recommendation and resulting action would be best assigned to a forum which has the reach and scope to include Social Housing providers across Kent and Medway. It is for this reason that Kent Housing Group were identified as a possible forum to take ownership of this recommendation, and develop, own and progress action(s) to address the recommendation.*    Liza asked whether KHG would own creating an action to address this recommendation. If agreed then an action plan would be needed.  JL suggested KHOG and Tenancy Management sub groups would both be relevant here. Get a couple of officers from each subgroup to meet and write a one page of how to approach this. JL will lead on this.  BH there are 11 grounds for refusing mutual exchange. Need to be careful there is no confusion around behaviours and guidance.  MJ are we looking for applicants to disclose on mutual exchange form? Will they do that if under duress? LT we cannot make that happen but can ensure that the information is sought on the mutual exchange form. This is aiming to be a smart action that can be carried out. The presence of the question on the form may increase disclosure. | JL | Lead a working group of officers from KHOG and the Tenancy Management group to write their approach to this. |
| **Commissioning Update** | Mel Anthony from KCC focused on the Kent Homeless Connects item of commissioning. MA shared her presentation which will be circulated by email.  In mid-December it became clear that proposals made so far wouldn’t create enough savings for the settlement. KCC communicated the proposal to end the Kent Homeless Connects contract in September 2022 with Leaders and Chiefs first and on 5th January 2022 with Kent LHAs. MA has been meeting with LHAs to discuss the impacts for them. This service is for adults, not for children. There are three elements in this contract, supported accommodation, an outreach/floating support service, and the welfare service  On 10th Feb KCC full council will discuss budget Paper that includes ending this service. If the proposal is accepted then KCC will continue to meet with LHAs to find the best ways forward. MA is aware that LHAs working with KCCs on best solutions does not indicate that those LHAs support the proposal. At the KHOG meeting on 27th January she recommended they considering forming a working group to include KCC. There would be an EqIA and public consultation if the proposal is accepted. Closing the service would be a key decision and would need a decision from the Cabinet member. KCC is in discussion with DLUHC regarding this proposal.  CH said they have not had their discussion at Swale yet, though it is booked in. It feels like this is an easy option because there is a hole in their budget. This service is a prevention tool for social care and will impact on vulnerable people and LHA services. CH asked what other options were considered and stated that this doesn’t feel like a balanced proposal.  SP, rep from Kent Finance Officers Group, said this going to create displacement of costs and asked whether there been an assessment of this. She asked whether KCC had any approaches to or from national government as this proposal doesn’t fit with national policy  JL asked where will these clients go and what other services are being changed. If the other services are also diminished the impacts could be more severe. What level of officer would MA want to go to working group of KHOG? LHAs will have to fill the gap left when Kent Homeless Connects ends, so may have to look at other spending, like the Better Care fund, to ensure we can provide adequate services. This proposal would be moving funds around rather than saving funds.  TA this budget cut does not appear to fit with governments intentions on combating rough sleeping. If this service is cost it will displace costs to other places.  VM The initial EQIA provided when this service was begun showed why this service was needed and she pasted this link into the chat function on Teams <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s80967/Vulnerable%20Homelessness%20Service%20Redesign.pdf> It would be interesting to see what the new EqIA will say.  CMc If we will lose the service we will also lose those homes. The buildings will no longer be available for this purpose. It is not a service to turn on and off.  MA responded to the questions posed to say that the KCC had already made a list of services to change and once it became clear further cuts would be needed everything was on the table, many of which were unpalatable. KCC cannot return an unbalanced budget. They will look at the costs of ending the Kent Homeless Connects service. MA welcomes a conversation with JL about what a KHOG working group would like to work on this. They will discuss with DLUHC this week but any requirements must be backed up with sustainable funds. KCC recognise supported housing as a valuable resource and are working with the landlords to find a plan for the buildings.  TA asked whether KCC got the support it needs from KHG? MA appreciates how difficult this is for LHAs. They will value the challenge LHAs can make on the EqIA and the wider impacts on other services.  JL Said there may be savings that could perhaps be made if the Kent Homeless Connects service was recommissioned in other ways.  TW the decision hasn’t been made so do feed in all of the concerns from all perspectives up to and after the 10th Feb, strategic risks, operational risk to influence decision and transitional arrangements. | MA, JL & MB | To liaise on what a KHOG working group on Kent Homeless Connects would look like |
| **KHG Budget** | The budget sheet and paper for KHG to January 2022 was circulated and no comments were raised.  HM outlined the proposed budget for 2022-23, circulated before the meeting, which suggest an uplift of 5% of membership fees. Fees have been static since at least 2016 when Ashford Borough Council began oversight of the accounts and so have not kept pace with inflation. This uplift would also help towards the costs for the HHSC post. She asked;  Should fees be raised in 2022-23 or should a raise deferred to 2023-24? BH suggested we defer as this was asking for more money too late in the financial year. JL suggested we defer to 2023-24. TA explained that we have not received an assurance from Kent Public Health that they will contribute towards the costs of the HHSC function. CH said we need to defer the increase to 2023-24 and that she would need to know by June 2022 if fees would be raised in 2023-24. There was no support for an uplift.  The Board was happy that KHG pay for the HHSC post via reserves or other means.  TW AD has left KCC now. We should aim to get KHG in front of new Director of PH to make contact as soon as possible. The new DPH came from a unitary authority and so knows the importance of housing. BH suggested that we aim for SW, TA, and CMC and to meet them in person to have discussion. TW offered to help make that contact with his office now and help HM to arrange the meeting.  CMC wanted to thank the group for the support for the sub group and the role and highlighted how useful the role is. They have determined that without the role they cannot achieve this.  BH said the Leader, Cllr Gough at KCC knows the importance of this role.  A paper was circulated before the meeting highlighting how the COMF Support For Kent Landlords website and animation could be adapted for use after the project. It showed that KCC was happy for funding for this to come from the COMF fund and that ongoing annual costs for the COMF website would be £7.50. The Board agreed this was a good outcome and to bear the additional £7.50 in with the annual costs for the KHG website. | HM  HM & TW | Raise the fees uplift proposal again at the Board meeting on 25th May and highlight the response from KPH on the HHSC post at that time.  Liaise to set up this meeting |