**Present**: Emma Bartlett, chair and Canterbury; Kimba Layton, vice chair and Folkestone and Hythe; Lucy Jordan, Dover; Sonya Hothi, Gravesham; Sarah Williamson, Dartford; Mark James, Ashford; Tobi Phillips, TWBC; Brian Horton, SELEP; Naomi Palmer, Thanet; Gillian Aylett, TMBC; Presenters; Debbie Smith and Ben Trepess, Help to Buy; Becky Ashley, Homes England; Ema Blay and Chantelle Hart, L&G;

**Apologies:** Leanne Donald-Whitney, GCHA;Sarah Holmes, Gravesham;Lisa Webb, Medway; Ashley Jackson, Thanet; Daniel Killian, Gravesham; David Jeffrey, Optivo; Rebecca Walker, Swale; Simon Thomas, Canterbury; Perry De Souza, Dover;

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reference | Notes/Outcome | When | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters arising | K&M Housing Strategy  HM Circulate document with objectives that this group could deliver or contribute towards - done  All Email EB with your views on which of the objectives HSEG should prioritise for 2022. – **EB still seeking group input**  LW Please share these documents with HM for circulation by email – **Done**  PDS Please share these documents with HM for circulation by email - **Done**  All please volunteer to join working group to review [A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/guide-developing-affordable-homes-rural-communities/) **Done** and new version with KHG with sign off.  Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, **Done**. HM also forwarded an invitation to a CCN meeting F&H and Gravesham were presenting on their successful bid.  Contact HM if you would like to be invited to Asset Management meeting – **done**  Simon Thomas from Kent Chief Planning Officers will attend next time. |  | All | Contact EB with your thoughts on which actions from the K&M Housing Strategy to address next. |
| Sign off revised Guide to rural housing. | The updated version is now with the KHG Board for approval then will go onto website. |  |  |  |
| KHG event topics for next 12 months | The KHG events group has asked each sub group to identify 1-2 topics that the sub group would like to attend an event on.  LC suggested training for achieving net zero in new and existing stock. HM supported this as it would work well with Private Sector Housing and Asset Management sub groups too. The landlord pays for the works and the tenants see the reduced bills. How do we make sure that tenants benefit and which parts to pass on to tenants and how to pass it on? MJ different colleagues looking from different angle, so capital spend, but also fuel poverty and balancing the needs of landlords and tenants. Also may need a different approach for new build and retrofit.  The Events group was asked whether anyone from HSEG would like to join the events group to take a many hands make light work. Please contact HM to volunteer. MJ said it’s a key sub group and helps shape KHGs image.  KL suggested home and window orientation to use sunlight in winter and keeping cool in summer. There is an objective in the [K&M housing Strategy](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/kent-medway-housing-strategy-2020-2025-a-place-people-want-to-call-home/) looking at overheating in summer. This could be part of net zero topic above or separate. |  | All | Contact HM if you’d like to volunteer to join the events group or to just help plan HSEG related events. |
| Viability tools | MJ said ABC use SDS ProVal but have very few licences to use it. What do others use?  Do you have a social housing revenue account debt cap? How much are you prepared to borrow to fund social housing? ABC aims at 125% cap so they can pay everything back 1.25 times.  BH raised concept of good and bad debt. He suggested that spending money on building new homes, particularly when may reduce TA cost burden, could be seen as good debt that meets the LAs objectives.    BH TK and SW hosted a meeting to look at what ABC has done in and out of the HRA. MJ has slides on this he can share.  BH said viability is hard to understand for LAs and RPs. This can create a difficult relationship between partners. BH facilitated some meetings, hosted by Red Loft, to address this area and bring people together. Over 90 people attended the meetings and they hope to run the sessions, with learning from earlier sessions, again this summer and early September.  KL highlighted that Homes England Capacity of Excellence has viability training event on 11th July. |  | MJ  BH | Please share slides as appropriate  Inform the group when the next sessions are planned. |
| First Homes processes and approvals | MJ ABC has an early delivery programme and s106 has been sorted and he is keen to ask how others are doing eligibility criteria, potential buyers, etc.  PDS has shared Dover’s policy which has been circulated.  LJ there are templates and she will ask PDS to circulate when appropriate.  EB asked that the group keep sharing their progress so we can all learn from each other. |  | PDS | Circulate templates when appropriate. |
| Home Buy Update | Ben Trepess and Debbie Smith gave an update on current activities.  The Equity Loan Scheme will end at March 2023. All applications must be made by 31st October. The build must be completed by end of December. There is an FAQ document <https://media2.helptobuyagent3.org.uk/media/e11cyasf/agent-websites-updates_customer-faqs_help-to-buy-2021-2023_2022>  The contract for Help to Buy ends 31st March 2023 and it is not clear what the path will be after that. HE is investigating the matter to inform next steps. A re-tender may take place this autumn.  In April 2022 they compiled stats for last financial year for each LA. If you don’t have yours please send them an email at [support@helptobuyagent3.org.uk](mailto:support@helptobuyagent3.org.uk) and they will send the stats over.  The agency newsletter is due in July which will include an update on the mortgage market. If you haven’t signed up for the newsletters yet email [support@helptobuyagent3.org.uk](mailto:support@helptobuyagent3.org.uk) to arrange this.  The new shared ownership model is anticipated with lower percentages of ownership. Home Buy Agent hasn’t seen these yet.  The systems are being changed to address accessibility issues on the website tonight. |  |  |  |
| Rural Housing Update | Tessa O’Sullivan – written update has been circulated  **Rural Housing Enabling**  **Activity**   * We have a steady and busy programme of housing need surveys (HNS), majority Sevenoaks and Ashford due to their concentrated rural housing work but also other areas. * Quite a lot of activity in Sevenoaks area; site searches, public consultations, planning applications (submitted and being worked up). * Following an HNS for Aldington and Bonnington to feed into their Neighbourhood Plan, presented at a workshop on rural exception sites/site finding. * Planning application being worked up by English Rural for Egerton local needs scheme. * Waiting for outcome of planning application in Newington and Peene (Folkestone & Hythe). * Scheme onsite in Hernhill, due to complete July 2022 (English Rural).   **Rural Housing Week 4th- 8th July 2022**  This is an annual campaign promoted by the National Housing Federation to showcase the work of local needs rural housing development partners. This year, we have joined up with the Kent Housing Group to hold a one hour online event to hear about local needs affordable housing in Kent and the recent update to the Rural Housing Protocol. It’s on Tuesday 5th July at 12.30. [Here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/action-with-communities-in-rural-kent-rural-housing-week-2022-tickets-333500949317) is the booking link.  **Kent Community Housing Hub**   * Recently secured funding from the South East Consortium for community engagement work; to assist groups to engage with their wider community e.g., hosting events, growing and maintaining social media and digital presence, conflict resolution, networking etc. * Seeking more funding on an ongoing basis. The CLT Network/Community Led Homes are now lobbying Michael Gove to reinstate the Community Housing Fund. * Working on a cohousing model for older households in rural areas * Presented at the DDC (with Canterbury and Folkestone & Hythe) Community Led Housing Conference. Very good event and range of speakers from various CLH projects. * Attending some summer community events to promote CLH |  |  |  |
| Becoming bid ready | The KHG Board highlighted that when government funding comes the bidding timescale is often short and it is easy for those organisations without a ‘shovel ready’ project, to lack time to bid. Also, it takes time to decide whether you’d want to bid as a consortia, be that Kent wide or with a few other organisations. There was a meeting with all the sub group chairs and the action from that was to ask each sub group to;   * Identify any topics they would like to bid on * Scope that out to form a good idea of what they’d want to bid for, what it should achieve, the amount needed, etc. * Tell the Board the topics, an outline of the project and any help needed from the Board to prepare it.   Lucy Jordan – Dover is looking at brownfield release and self build and may want to bid.  MJ – brownfield release fund – can it work for smaller plots? If anyone makes it work for a smaller site MJ keen to know more.  LJ they didn’t have enough info on smaller plots and trying to gather it this time.  EB CCC will also be looking at this, including HRA owned land – EB asked that all share any successes.  MJ ABC had a presentation on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund that suggested the second phase will come in August. It also welcomes consortia bids. There is a support service for LAs and HAs to prepare their bid. The details are here [Home | Social Housing Retrofit Accelerator](https://socialhousingretrofit.org.uk/)  MJ ABC has set up a housing delivery framework to support them working with HAs. The framework enables RPs with land to come forward to ABC too. For working with LAs a site that straddles a border could work but could also be around procurement rather than site focused. It could get a better price, or attract different developers, if for a larger number of homes. Perhaps archetypes could be shared between in-house architects, particularly to fit an odd shaped piece of land? LAs could probably only become strategic partners if they joined together to reach the minimum numbers.  EB supports all ideas highlighted and suggested that we began with procurement. A subgroup need to come back to this idea to flesh so it can respond to the KHG Board on the topic, an outline of a project and if any help is needed, then specifically what that help would be. If interested in exploring the procurement idea please let EB know.  CCC probably interested in the architect plans sharing ideas. |  | All | Volunteer to join a short task and finish group on how joint procurement could help. EB to coordinate. |
| L&G | Ema Blay and Chantelle Hart from L&G shared their presentation that will be circulated by email on how L&G have moved into providing affordable homes. They are now a strategic partner with Homes England. They aim to build 750 homes in the south east each year. They are progressing schemes in Ashford, Gravesham, Tonbridge, Dover, Swale and Medway. They do not have a minimum number they will work with.  They work with management partners and are currently work with Optivo and Pinnacle locally.  They are regulated by the Social Housing Regulator.  They are keen to work with members of this group.  Please do get in touch with EB or CH from L&G to ask any questions. Their contact details are on the presentation. |  |  |  |
| Homes England Update | Becky Ashley from Homes England gave a verbal update;  Homes England have 4 new members joining the Board.  RCGF returns are due to the end of June and there is new IMS guidance and modules.  There is a Traveller site programme for delivery of new and refurbished pitches, with £10m capital funding. This is not be administered by HE so send bidding enquiries to the department by 13th June.  For the Care and Support specialist housing fund the parameters not been confirmed and details will come. If you have specialists housing schemes do contact your HE manager to have a discussion.  The compliance audit reports for 2021-22 have been released and providers must acknowledge their report within 3 months. Please contact your contract manager with any queries. Please keep your contact details up to date in the compliance audit system to avoid missing messages.  The Capital Funding Guide was updated in March so please have a look. Chapters 4, 6 and 11 have been updated.  On affordable housing 2021-22 all KPI targets met so HE wanted to thank partners.  CME is open and there are resources to allocate. Please contact BA to discuss new opportunities. They are aware of tender price pressures.  If you are a delivery partners working with Strategic Partners please speak to the SP as your first port of call on any new scheme.  Bidding is closed on RSI and bids are being assessed and allocation is being announced  HE are working with the Department on Levelling Up and looking at placed based working and details will follow. |  |  |  |
| AOB | Nominations for the KHG Excellence Awards is open so please nominate colleagues by 26th August. Here is a [link](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/kent-housing-group-excellence-award/) to the categories and the application form.  Reminder of the domestic abuse awareness event, running online on Monday 20th June from 10-12.30. If you would like to attend please email HM to book your place.  Help to build is administered by Homes England – and then this will go out to tender for other parties to run.  Date of next meeting; 18 October 10-11.30 |  |  |  |