**Present**: Emma Bartlett, chair and Canterbury; Lisa Webb, Medway; Brian Horton, SELEP; Donna Michael, Ashford; James Young, Thanet; Kimba Layton Folkestone and Hythe and new vice chair; Leanne Donald-Whitney, GCHA; Rachel Collins, Dover; Sarah Williamson, Dartford; Stuart Clifton, Tunbridge Wells; Tessa O’Sullivan, Action with Communities in Rural Kent; Perry DeSouza, Dover; Helen Miller, KHG; **Guests;** Peter Lock chair of Essex Enabling Group and Laura Atkinson from Essex Rural Housing and Enabling Vice chair; Debbie Smith and Ben Trepess Hometobuy Agent;

**Apologies:** Becky Walker, Swale; Sarah Holmes, Gravesham; Sharon Donald and Liz Crockford, Sevenoaks; Gillian Aylett, TMBC; Sonya Hothi, Gravesham; Mark James; Ashford

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | When | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters arising | HM Asked for permission to record and send to Gillian Aylett.  All actions raised in last meeting have been done. |  |  |  |
| SELEP | Brian Horton raised the most recent letter to Chris Pincher dated 17th January, which has been circulated, which highlights area of concern and opportunity. We will need to respond to the Levelling Up [White Paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom) and its implications for Kent. There are areas of deprivation in Kent so we will need to make the case for funds for those. The 80/20 rule for the affordable homes programme will end.  They are working on the nutrient neutrality issue which impacts on Canterbury, Folkestone and Hythe, Thanet etc. This is beginning to have an impact on development in other areas and that is having an impact on the land values. JY said this is unlocking viability but increasing rents and housing prices so worsening tensions on affordability. Nick Fenton and Simon Thomas have featured on BBC South East on this housing development issues in the last two weeks.  They are aware of issues on recruitment and retention of planning staff. This is flagged in organisations across Kent, Essex and Sussex and they are gathering data on the issues and then highlighting potential solutions. We will need a multi-agency, solution focused, approach to the staffing shortages to address the levelling up agenda.  BH invited members to flag issues to him that he should take up to Chris Pincher or the Ministry.  EB does recognise the issues on turnover in planning colleagues at Canterbury and ensuring they are up to date with current work around enabling. It’s mainly movement between LAs.  PL said same issue in Essex.  EB Canterbury is not giving planning permission for areas that would feed into Stodmarsh. This will continue until a strategic solution is found to the nutrient neutrality issue.  BH there will be a meeting about what to expect at around the nutrient issue in next Kent Housing and Developers Group in March. |  | All | Do contact BH with any issues to be flagged up |
| Home Buy Update | Debbie Smith gave an update on current activities and that will be shared as pdf.  She invited members to sign up for their newsletter by emailing [support@helptobuyagent3.org.uk](mailto:support@helptobuyagent3.org.uk) |  |  |  |
| Rural Housing Update | Tessa O’Sullivan  Rural Housing Enabling Project – many surveys going out. Rural Exception scheme site in Staple is completed and occupied. There is a scheme on site in Hernhill. There is an online consultation on a site in West Kingsdown. They are doing surveys for Sevenoaks and Ashford and likely to begin in Maidstone soon.  Kent Community Housing Partnership’s good news is that Shepherdswell CLT got planning approval. It’s the first to achieve this. This started in 2013 when the parish council flagged the need for rural housing. Initially they could not find the land. CLT and RP partnerships appeared to be working in other areas, like Wessex. Shepherdswell set up a CLT in the hope that land would become available. They partnered with English Rural Housing Association so gained access to their expertise and the funding pots they can access. Church commissioners sold the land because it was to a CLT with RP so that partnership unlocked the land. The CLT accessed grants from the CLT network, the community housing fund and from Dover District Council through their community housing grant. A lot of community consultation was needed. It was a slow and difficult process but this type of partnership does appear to be useful. The Housing Needs survey in 2020 showed there was still a housing need, for number, number of bedrooms. CLT will provide 10 homes for affordable rent and 3 bungalows to enable older people to downsize for market sale aiming to people in village initially. The CLT will own the land and the HA will own and manage the homes.  The Community Hub is still going at a reduced level but the funding has come to an end. They are still doing online events. They are making contact with a property director at the Rochester Diocese to see if they can bring some of their small sites forward for CLH or rural exception sites.  EB asked about how to get RPs to work with community groups. TO’S they spoke to RPs at meetings and directly about this. They are very small schemes and RPs tend to prefer bigger schemes as similar amount of work for large as for small schemes. EB said that RPs are concerned whether they will be viable yet she aims to show the community value of rural housing.  BH suggested invitation to the main KHG for TO’S to talk about how to encourage RPs to consider the small sites, perhaps give an update on the issue and what works. Home England require RPs are working with SMEs, small sites, MMC, etc. so may need to talk with HE on what can be done to support CLT and rural sites. We also need to have a conversation with BA to ask what HE help with on this. EB and BH to take this forward with BA. |  | EB & BH | Highlight the scope and speakers for an item on the main KHG agenda |
| Homes England Update | Becky Ashley – not present |  |  |  |
| K&MHS and HSEG work programme | [Kent and Medway Housing Strategy](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/kent-medway-housing-strategy-2020-2025-a-place-people-want-to-call-home/)  EB explained that she is going to a meeting with all Kent Housing Group sub groups chairs tomorrow on how they are delivering the K&M Housing Strategy.  On objective HD2 said BH there will be a joint meeting of the KHG, Kent Planners and Kent Housing and Developers Group. It may be worth inviting Simon Thomas to speak at HSEG. Sarah Platt from KCC is invited to attend in June which would contribute to HD2 as well.  People to give EB feedback on which areas of the Strategy people wish to prioritise by first thing tomorrow.  EB HSEGs input on the Infrastructure objectives may be oblique as they focus on affordability. However, they do have the opportunity to influence partners.  HD8 the group regularly looks at rural delivery.  HD6 could fit with HSEG and Asset Management.  BH explained that the strategy has been in place for 2 year and we do need to monitor the work already happening to deliver this strategy. We frequently discuss matters in this meeting that fit with objectives in the strategy and need to make those links. | **8/02/22**  **8/02/22** | **HM**  **ALL** | Circulate document with objectives that this group could deliver or contribute towards  Email EB with your views on which of the objectives HSEG should prioritise for 2022. |
| First Homes | LW gave an update from Medway which has a large First Homes project with the Medway Development Company who were successful in the early delivery programme. There will be up to 119 First Homes across two sites in Chatham which they hope to market from March. They are mapping the process, how the applications will work and have made a flowchart that they can share with any other paperwork. They are doing a Deed of Variation to the section 106 which will go on the portal.  Persimmon Homes have also been successful with the early delivery project to do 5 First Homes in Chatham. Another site with 2 First Homes is going through the planning process.  A the Homes England DLUHC webinar last week Bolsover mentioned the need for delegated authority for issuing the authority to proceed and authority to exchange. LW is working on this now so she can sign them off on behalf of Medway.  EB thanked LW for her help. She also attended the webinar and believes the onus appears to be for the developer to provide all the paperwork rather than for the LA to chase.  PDS said they’ve been working on writing a policy document and process, focusing on the administration not the planning side. It highlights have many teams will input on the process. It will probably be overseen by a New Homes Officer on the administrative side. RC said that once the documents have gone through Cabinet they can share them.  RC said that Thanet are considering whether to charge an administration fee. BH believes Sevenoaks will charge. PDS thought that developers pay £150 per unit for processing for the early delivery programme. The LAs can decide whether they wish to charge after the early delivery programme.  EB thought fees were from the developer but there may be choice on whether it’s to the developer or customer.  PL said that Chelmsford has prepared for this and there is information on their website. Preparedness varies across Essex. Admin fees have been raise and will go to Cabinet for a decision. The link to their documents, kindly forwarded by PL is <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/supplementary-planning-documents-and-planning-advice-notes/>  LA they looking at the impact of First Homes on rural housing. This may occupy the same space as rural exception sites. |  | **LW**  **PDS** | Please share these documents with HM for circulation by email  Please share these documents with HM for circulation by email |
| Review Rural Homes Protocol in light of First Homes | [A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/guide-developing-affordable-homes-rural-communities/)  This needs reviewing in light of First Homes. EB invited volunteers to be on a task and finish group to do this. TO’S and EB volunteered. EB asked for any views or points of what should be included. TO’S flagged that Alison Thompson was involved in last draft. |  | **All**  **All** | Consider volunteering to join sub group to update this document  Flag an issues on this to EB |
| Volunteers for vice chair role | Kimba Layton has volunteered to be the vice chair. |  |  |  |
| Agree ToR | Before the meeting HM circulated ToR with minor amendments suggested using tracked changes. Changes were agreed and the new ToR will be dated February 2022. |  |  |  |
| AOB | JY asked if anyone been involved in Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. Gravesham and F&H were successful in their bids.  Kimba said she would find out what had happened and seeking anything worth sharing from Folkestone and Hythe.  HM highlighted that the Asset Management group discuss this and that members of this group could attend the Asset Management. The Social Housing Retrofit Accelerator programme is designed to help LAs and RPs apply. HM will circulate their next newsletter so members can sign up if they feel it is appropriate for them. [www.socialhousingretrofit.org.uk](https://camargue.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=46cd8a77b16a4ef5d940148e5&id=3b4914be05&e=51b8f99844) |  | **KL**  **All** | Share any useful info  Contact HM to be sent an invitation to the Asset Management group |