**Draft KHG EXB Meeting Notes 11 October 2023, Microsoft Teams Call**

DRAFT

**Present**: Brian Horton, interim chair and SELEP; Tessa O’Sullivan, RACE; Louise Humphrey, mhs homes and chair of Equality Diversity and Inclusion group; Vitra Cummins, Town and Country Housing and chair of Tenancy Management group; John Littlemore, vice chair and Maidstone BC; Jeff Sims, ABC communications service; Toni Carter, Dartford and KHOG chair; Sue Oliver, TWBC and Private Sector Housing chair; Amy Cheswick, mhs homes; Becs Wilcox, Medway and Events Group chair; Neil Diddams, West Kent Housing Association and asset management group chair; Charlotte Hudson, Swale BC; Shona Johnstone, Homes England; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Mia Davis, Town and Country Housing and vice chair of asset management group; Simon Thomas representing Kent Chief Planners Group; Vic May, chair of Kent Homechoice and Gravesham BC; Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies:** Christy Holden, KCC childrens services commissioning;Steph Goad, Golding Homes; Sharon Williams, treasurer and Ashford Borough Council; Ellen Schwartz and Anjan Ghosh, Kent Public Health; Mark Breathwick, Medway; Alison Simmons, chair of HHSC and Sevenoaks DC; Sue Oliver, chair of private sector housing group at Tunbridge Wells BC; Mary Gibbons, Moat; Stuart Ilsley, Town and Country Housing;

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **Who** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Updates from sub groups** | The written updates from Asset Management; Equality Diversity and Inclusion; Housing health and Social Care; Homechoice; Housing Strategy and Enabling; Engagement group; RACE, and Tenancy Management groups were posted online here [KHG Executive Board meeting - long - Kent Housing Group](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/events/khg-executive-board-meeting-long/) with the other Board papers.  Asset Management  Neil Diddams explained that the damp and mould event on 12th Sept supported by the Asset Management, Private Sector and Events group, included speakers, breakout rooms and covered insulation products too and was positively received.  The group began looking at how climate change affects homes and found Max Tant’s presentation on surface flooding, how to prevent in new build and address it for existing estates, interesting.  Golding Homes shared their learning on electric vehicle charging which is helping the group.  KHOG  Toni Carter explained that the implementation of the new allocations system, Huume, has been a huge piece of work for each LA and recognised Vicky Hodson’s massive help on this. There are loose ends to tie up but it feels positive and they’re identifying the learning.  Several protocols are being updated. The one for young people is being split into two, one for care leavers and one for homeless 18-18 year olds. DLUHCs HAST team have provided advice.  The reciprocal agreement between social landlords to help tenants fleeing domestic abuse is running. Three households have been moved so far. Two webinars have been run to explain the scheme. All social landlords not signed up are urged to sign and any non stock holding LAs are also welcome to join. The details are available here [A protocol for social landlords to address domestic abuse - Kent Housing Group](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/a-protocol-for-social-landlords-to-address-domestic-abuse/)  HM has been chairing a group looking at the implications of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act and the learning around homelessness has been flagged at KHOG. This is a piece of legislation that affects many teams including private sector housing for licensing, benefit teams and the service who will write the strategy for each LA.  TA is a huge cost and area of work. This is a hugely difficult time for the household going into TA and we need to ensure good quality whilst keeping the costs down.  Toni highlighted how the individuals are extremely busy and the meeting can feel dry and it can feel like the majority of people are not participating. Recently important issues have been raised, like KCC reducing the contract for care leavers which was mentioned and minuted in March, May and July but no comments were raised. Perhaps the meetings are too long and we need very focused meetings with shorter agendas, perhaps just TA, or another topic and nothing else. This could be supplemented by an update twice a year that gives all the updates on commissioning, protocols, etc. It has been difficult to get volunteers for the chair and vice chair role when Toni steps down in December.  Brian agreed that staff are extremely busy and the form of the meeting needs to give a platform to deal with the important issues. Brian and John happy to support to a different way of working.  Charlotte, thanked Toni for her honesty. TA is strategically important across Kent including to finance officers. Do any issues need an escalation route? KHOG could give their view and then send it up for support.  John we do need a more strategic approach at the meetings. Some issues fit between KHOG and KHG main group but risk getting lost. We do need to look at this and perhaps the issue around the changes around Care Leavers contract should have gone to main KHG too. KHOG is well attended but participation and volunteering for tasks is very low.  It’s possible that the volunteer for chair from Jan 2024 may currently be off sick.  Tenancy Management  Vitra Cummings highlighted the [Lets Stay Fire Safe](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/fire-safety/) campaign which is running August-October. Jeff and Dean provided a full toolkit of resources that each member could use as they preferred. This included posters, animations, webpage, and a press release. KFRS gave support and a paragraph we could use on the website but did not allow us to use their logo – they do not allow anyone to use it. 9 members paid funds towards creating the materials and the group allows all members to use the materials.  We’ve had roundtable discussions on dampness and mould, Renters Reform and pet policies. Right Care, Right Person service for people with mental health needs will be presented by Police to the next meeting. The Tenancy Fraud Forum will be running a campaign in November. [Refer Kent](https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/cost-of-living-support/professional-referrals/referkent) has been presented to members again in the hope that organisations will sign up.  The tenancy management group agenda tend to be quite tight with a small number of topics which are discussed in depth. When colleagues make a query to be circulated to the group they are now being asked to give an update on those queries at the next meeting.  Equality, Diversity and Inclusion  Louise Humphrey explained the EDI group that came from the [Housing Diversity Network](https://www.housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk/) baseline [report](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-baseline-report-2022/) and their recommendations. The group has agreed ToR and had a presentation from Stonewall on LGBTQI+ and a discussion on Better Social Housing [Review](https://www.bettersocialhousingreview.org.uk/) in terms of impacts on disadvantaged groups. KHG membership gives members access to HDN. Consumer Standards will be delivered better when we understand diverse needs. There are many accreditations available and Louise is working with HDN to look at creating a useful checklist of where to start.  We need to understand the demographics and the areas we want to focus on and how to meet the diverse needs. We may have speakers from Gypsy and Traveller communities and Ex Service personnel. We will look at allyship. The group would like to become more interactive.  Amy highlighted the change in emphasis on understanding the diverse needs of their tenants and questions whether all social landlords were aware of this.  Events group  Becs the events group is planning an event on consumer standards how to help organisations plan for it, ready for April. If organisations would like to volunteer to facilitate or share best practice that would be great. **Amy C volunteered to support**.  The damp and mould event in Sept went well with high attendance and positive feedback.  The fire safety event with KF&RS event went well. The finance event with Kent Savers Credit Union went well and the breakout sessions were useful.  The KHG awards ceremony in Sept went well and the Events group are using the learning for this to inform next year. Hannah Rourke has volunteered to be vice chair. There will be an event on fire safety in sheltered housing. We’ve supporting the organisers of the conference.  Please do flag topics that would benefit from an event to Sharon and Becs. Amy suggestions an event for complaints handling - including input from the Housing Ombudsman or a landlord sharing their learning from a complaint being upheld.  Brian said that Becs compered the Awards Ceremony and did an excellent job.  Private Sector Housing  Sue Oliver, chair of private sector housing group has a medical appointment and sent HM these notes;  The PSH subgroup met on 28 June, and the meeting covered:   * A presentation on TB and the link with health inequalities and at risk groups, and prevention and early diagnosis * A presentation on retrofitting park homes with energy efficiency measures and eligibility for nationally funded schemes * Round table discussion on progress with enforcing MEES and sharing of good practice and policies * Discussion on county wide resource to co-ordinate retrofit activity   We are also participating in the Supported Accommodation meetings. From the private sector housing perspective, we know that licensing will be required but the guidance is awaited. Licensing will be similar to HMO licensing but will also cover the provision of care, support and supervision, which is not an area that PSH teams currently have expertise in. Additional PSH resources will be required to undertake this work although this cannot be quantified at present. Some New Burdens funding will be available but we don’t know if this will be adequate.  Housing Strategy and Enabling  Mark James, chair of HSEG, apologises for not being able to attend and says the group is moving to 4 meetings a year as they need to meet more frequently. Please see their written report.  Housing Health and Social Care  Alison Simmons sends her apologies and asks the Board to see her written report.  Kent Homechoice  Vicky Hodson said the main focus for the last year has been the implementation of Huume system. The system is bedding in well now. She’s had a review meetings with all LAs and some RPs and find out what the remaining issues are and taken them to Huume. They’d had a reflections and the way forward event and an operational meeting to help flag issues. They are starting an allocations operational meeting to bring focus to ensure the Huume system is used in its best way to give the data that organisations would want. Brian congratulated Vicky on the successful implementation of Huume.  Some RPs felt that some LAs were slow on advertising or letting homes and that nomination agreements could be a way forward to address this. Some homes have not been allocated and that does cause frustration due to loss on rental income but also households not yet into their suitable homes.  Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service (RACE)  Tessa O’Sullivan RACE began in June and surveys have begun. They will also do private surveys.  All SLA partners have paid but one. Now they can see what is available in budget for community led housing. They are organising an online Parish Council and community group event on 8th November. They are looking at housing needs of older people in rural communities and the possibility of co-housing. They have a [page](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/race/) on the KHG website. They sit well within KHG.  Brian said he is very happy with all the work done to bring RACE into KHG and continue this valuable service.  Brian highlighted that the sub groups are the engine room of KHG and the valuable work that goes on there. | JS  HM  SI  SI  VH | Please provide a link to the event to promote it in the newsletter  Set up meeting with Mark D, Robin C, Toni C, John L and Brian H on how to support KHOG and shape future meetings  Contact Amy to seek her support with consumer standards event  Seek volunteers to lead on organising this event at Events Group meeting in November  Send Brian information on delays in advertising or letting homes |
| **Matters arising from July 2023** | HM Circulate MMs presentation on private sector landlords – Done  HM set up working group on supporting private sector landlords – done met and due to meet again on 31st Oct 2023.  HM share presentation on Kent Savers and finance event with Board – Done  BH sent note to RPs and LAs encouraging them to make loans to Kent Savers – done  HM circulate paper taken to KMEG on coordinating retrofitting – done  BH and SW discuss how to extend the partnership assistant role and make recommendation to Board – a paper for this meeting. |  |  |
| **Update from Kent Leaders presentation** | John explained that Tracey Kerly, Brian, Nick Fenton, Sarah Platts (planning rep) and he attended the meeting on 13th Sept and gave a presentation to Kent Leaders on housing. It showed what KHG brings to the table and how it cooperates with planners and developers. It highlighted the challenges to develop housing including affordable housing. It was well received and the focus moved on what we can do to deliver more housing. They highlighted the need for more older persons accommodation. KHG accept an action to progress an action on older persons accommodation.  Since then Brian, Nick, Tracey, Simon, Richard and Sarah (planning reps) met on to plan a follow up letter to Kent Leaders and Kent Chiefs, following an item at a Kent Chiefs meeting to seek their buying. The letter would summarise key areas, including resourcing for planning, rent levels, affordable housing and grant rates, impact of low LHA, etc. showing continued commitment to support them around housing delivery.  Charlotte said there is an issue that is around keyworkers for infrastructure delivery. John highlighted that the ICB have invited us to bring topics to them so perhaps we should seek a slot on their agenda for this. We’d need to have a conversation with Cedi Frederick before that meeting on workforce strategies before requesting the slot at the ICB meeting. | HM | Arrange a meeting of this group with CF to form the idea and how best to take it to ICB |
| **Budget\* and staffing\*** | Helen explained that Sharon has sent her apologies and had signed off the budget papers for KHG and RACE. The key points are;  Kent Public Health will host the project officer role. As such they will not send KHG £20,000 towards paying for that role. Instead KHG will pay up to £9,979 per year to pay a portion towards that role. This makes the role £3,041 cheaper than before whilst getting 30, not 20 hours, per week. The cost to KHG could be £3,326 this financial year should we manage to appoint by December 2023. The post was advertised to 8th October and the interviews are scheduled for 2nd November.  BH highlighted that KHG made a 3 year commitment to this role as we’re running at a deficit. Kent Public Health have advertised the post for one year with the hope to extend their and our budgets allow.  We raised £4000 in sponsorship for the Awards. Due to doing more tasks in house as we have the partnership assistant, and a sponsor paying for the venue directly, the event cost £2,798.95.  The deficit is broadly as expected when the budget was set.  There is an additional paper requesting permission to extend the partnership officer role for a further 12 months from March 2024. This sets out that additional capacity the role brings, and the ability to carry out some tasks in house, so saving money. The treasurer supports the extension for one year and wishes the Board to be aware the reserves are currently healthy but that it should be aware that we are running a deficit.  Brian feels Sharon and he have made a decision on this and are seeking support on this. We have reserves and though we will need to revisit this, and how to address the deficit, he recommends we extend the role for the year. **The Board supported a 12 month extension.**  Tessa had covered the finance part in the RACE update. | HM | Liaise with ABC HR to make this happen. |
| **K&M Housing Strategy** | Brian explained that work is happening to link the work of the sub groups to deliver the strategy. There is an implementation group to monitor delivery. At the 2024 conference we’ll begin to look at what should be in 2025 strategy. That will probably be shorter and more strategic and reflects the situation after the election. |  |  |
| **Working with CIH on housing management qualification** | The Housing Academy, affiliated to the CIH, are monitoring the guidance as released. The housing management qualification is likely to be needed for a number of posts in each social landlord. Currently the level 4 and 5 CIH qualifications are considered suitable and it is not clear whether some other professional body qualifications will also be adequate or whether there is a time limit as to how long ago they were attained.  Amy explained that mhs are putting their first cohort through the qualification. They are finding people are willing but anxious about their study skills. People are also extremely busy. They are providing a room for study one afternoon a week to provide peer support.  They’ve been talking about level 2 apprenticeship route with mid Kent College and with Golding about whether there would be an appetite for an apprenticeship route. Kickstart route may also be useful.  We need to bring more people into working in housing and be prepared to train and support them. It is very hard to recruit to a wide range of posts and the same professionals are moving within the organisations. The Housing Academy also has a training arm. If organisations identified training needs they could be bought in to offer online or face to face training at a reasonable price.  mhs are happy with this approach.  Brian let’s ask people what they’d want training on and then trial the top three to see how it goes.  Charlotte, can we consider the apprenticeship budget to use the levy. CIH are asking whether the apprenticeship path can be used for the Level 4 and 5 courses for the housing management qualifications. | SI | Email KHG asking if organisations like the approach and if so for their topics. |
| **Questions from Regular Updates** | **SELEP – Brian Horton**  The LEP is being wound up in its current form. Some functions will be picked up at a county level and some sub groups may continue over the SELEP areas.  **Marketing\* – Jeff Sims**  The awards worked well, were very well attended, there was a great atmosphere and Becs was a great compere. The event has been covered by communications officers from members and the Kent press have picked it up.  The Lets Keep Fire Safe campaign is going well.  Press releases are due on EDI and DA reciprocal agreement.  Heart radio have sought an interview on rent. Vic May has offered their portfolio holder to do this and will liaise with her on that.  **Medway Council** Mark has been promoted and Bec Wilcox will represent Medway until that post if filled. The group offered their thanks to Mark Breathwick. |  |  |
| **AOB** | Date of 2023 KHG Board meeting; 29th Nov 1.30-2.45.  Dates of 2024 KHG Board meetings; 6 Feb; 28th March; 16th May; 18th Jul; 3rd Oct and 21st Nov. |  |  |

**\*Papers shared in advance of meeting**