**Draft KHG EXB Meeting Notes 12 July 2023, Microsoft Teams Call**

DRAFT

**Present**: Brian Horton, interim chair and SELEP; Brandon Lewis, Brian’s intern; Amy Cheswick, MHS Homes; Clare Maynard, KCC; Linda Hibbs, TMBC; Charlotte Hudson, Swale; Steph Goad, Golding Homes; Mark Breathwick, Medway; Sharon Williams, Ashford and treasurer; Jeff Sims, ABC Communications service; John Littlemore, Maidstone and vice chair; Marion Money, NRLA; Simon Thomas, Canterbury Kent Chief Planning Officers rep; Tim Woolmer, KCC; Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies:** Christy Holden, KCC childrens services commissioning;Anjan Ghosh, Kent Public Health; Vicky May, Gravesham and Kent Homechoice Chair; Mary Gibbons, Moat;

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **Who** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Matters arising from May 2023** | HM Circulate MG’s presentation on K&M Integrated Care Strategy – done  HM circulate the three questions from Mike Gogarty;   1. Does the strategy reflect our systems and your organisations high level priorities? 2. Is there anything fundamentally missing that you would want to see in future iterations of our strategy? 3. What do you feel we, the ICS should do to mature and develop our strategy in 2023/24 and what commitment could you make as system leaders to embed our strategy ambitions across the integrated care system?   and collate responses from Board. – done and no responses received.  VH and VM asked to raise any issues with Kent Homechoice and move to Huume. Vicky Hodson has requested a slot at the KHG meeting this morning and will also present to the Board if matters not resolved at the main KHG meeting.  JS, liaise with MJ to create a press release for RACE. Done and available [here](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/new-drive-to-provide-affordable-rented-homes-in-rural-areas-race-launched-by-kent-housing-group/)  Share communications from Kent Savers with Board to seek views on committing the £15k for 5 years. Done  HM send JL forms to become signatory for KHGs Kent Savers account. HM forwarded the forms from Kent Savers to JL. Begun. |  |  |
| **Homes England Update** | Shona Johnstone was unable to attend this meeting. Here update to main KHG can be seen in the notes for that meeting stored online [here](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/events/khg-main-meeting-2/) |  |  |
| **Challenges facing the private rented sector** | Marion Money, from the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA), shared a presentation will be circulated by email.  NRLA takes a large number of calls from landlords to their advice line every week.  Marion described the landlords with many being individuals, many with 1-2 homes.  National data sources shows 19% of households live in PRS and only 6% of tenancies in PRS are ended by the landlord which challenges perceptions formed from the media. There are more older homes in the PRS and these are harder and more expensive to bring to current and future thermal standards.  Landlord confidence, their wish to invest in the sector, is at a historic low  Tenant demand is high. It is easy to let homes. There is an influx from tenants from London which may push up prices in Kent. Tenants appear to be staying in smaller homes to control costs.  There is falling supply of homes in the PRS. More landlords appear to be selling then buying. Some internet sites will sell tenanted homes to new landlords but landlords get a better price for vacant possession.  Why is confidence low;  The landlords are concerned about the;   * Rental reform including abolition of section 21, open ended tenancies that can affect how to get a guarantors, etc. * changes in tax structure and abolition of mortgage interest relief, and unintended impacts basis tax on turnover from other changes; * interest rates; the majority of landlords have a mortgage and many on interest only; as such increases in interest rates are likely to lead to increases in the rent as landlords cannot absorb further increases. Many are looking to sell homes and leave the rental market. * Possible changes on the EPC, a cost cap of £10,000 has been suggested. NRLA suggest is should be a portion of the value of the home   The buy to let market has ageing landlords who are beginning to retire, particularly when the market becomes challenging.  Rents; some only raise rents with change of tenant – but hard to do when interest rates increase.  These come together to have a devastating impact of the supply of homes to let in the PRS.  Linda Hibbs from a local authority point of view it is very hard to find a home within LHA rate, many are more than £100 more than that so not affordable. Homes places on the market come off the market very quickly. Landlords are asking for more rent in advance. They have a large number of households in TA and costs are huge. There is additional pressure from immigration programs, care leavers etc.  Mark Breathwick, agreed with Marion and Linda’s points. What would landlords want that we don’t do?  Marion, lobbying government so they understand the impacts of LHA rates being far behind the market rates it hurts vulnerable tenants hoping to move into PRS and potentially social rents too.  Could LA act as guarantors for open ended tenancies?  SW we need to lobby on issue of LHAs not keeping up with market rates.  ABC social lettings agencies has been successful but also looking to assist people with rent top ups but cannot sustain this long term.  SW LA to act as guarantor would need to be defined so all understand the agreement.  SW the majority of tenancies ending in Ashford are due to landlords are evicting – statistics may vary across the country.  MM there is a backlog of s21 and some have been re-issued. ASB is a big reason for eviction.  BH HM Convene a separate one hour meeting to identify the asks of LAs and asks from LAs to HE and DLUHC and how to address the perfect storm. This will aim to create one side of A4 on what we can do, what we’re asking for. | HM  HM | Circulate presentation from NRLA  Invite Board members, LH and MM, to meeting to identify what LAs can do and what we’re asking Government for. |
| **Kent Savers** | SW event yesterday went well. Kent Savers talked through the work they do and their work with Ashford. Kent Savers are creating a checklist of when their products will be useful that housing staff can use when with clients. Share the presentation from event with this group.  Brian Horton is meeting Kent Savers on 14th July to convert the deposit KHG has with them to a loan, as described in an earlier email from SW, to allow give Kent Savers security when lending to vulnerable people. BH intends to write the RPs and LAs to encourage them to make loans to Kent Savers for 7 or more years, at no interest to increase their capacity to do the work they do.  SG they will explore this. CH is not sure that LAs can but will have the conversation.  The Board was happy for Brian to send that letter.  Sharon explained that organisations can support Kent Savers via working together on very low/no interest loans for tenants and those threatened with homelessness.  MHS are talking with KS to underwrite low/no interest loans and to promote savings for vulnerable residents and their staff. Amy will share when further along. | HM  BH | Share the presentation from event on 11th July with the Board  Send a note to RPs and LAs encouraging them to make loans to Kent Savers, |
| **Hosting a retrofit role in KHG** | Brian Horton explained that KMEG received a paper from Peter Dosad from the LA colleagues on recognising the changes in resources around KCC and LAs and lacking coordination around retrofit in private rented and owned sector. The paper recommends a new role jointly funded by LAs. KMEG requested second paper to provide a costed proposal in September. TM the proposal was pitched at Chief Exec awayday. They supported to get more details and then likely to support.  BH asked whether KHG could host the role and whether Ashford BC could host for HR purposes.  SW asked what the resource would do. BH it’s a coordination role for those working on retrofit in LAs and helping us become bid ready. SW this is on the agenda for CAKEDOG for east Kent LAs.  JL; there is not a Kent wide approach to HUG etc. across Kent. We’d need to see the details of the proposal before could agree support.  BH it appears there is support at KMEG and Chief Exec levels but if people do not coalesce around the concept AND state they are willing to fund the role, then the ask comes back to KHG to host.  SW needs to read the report and understand the role. It may need more than coordination. If one idea is about helping LAs to share resources that can be very challenging at the moment.  HM to re-issue the paper and invite feedback. Then need to take case to KMEG and if funding is agreed then we’ll bring idea back to KHG to make a decision on hosting. | HM | Circulate the paper that was taken to KMEG |
| **K&M Housing Strategy** | Brian Horton explained work is progressing and sub groups are sending regular updates on their work which are available with the other papers for this main KHG meetings [online](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/events/khg-main-meeting-2/). Moving forward the intention is to create a report in format that can be circulated to Chief Executives, Leaders, Board Members, etc. |  |  |
| **KHG Budget\* including Comms proposal** | HM highlighted the proposal for providing KHG with a communications service from Sept 2023 to August 2024, from ABC communications service, which was circulated by email with the budget papers. The rates for work are the same as the previous year but the quote is £9,460, not the £11,600 currently paid, as the newsletter is shorter now.  Brian highlighted that we must return to reviewing the subscription rates this year and we’ll discuss extending the Partnership Assistant role from the original one year fixed term at the October Board meeting.  Kent Public Health are keen to host the project officer role. This needs final approval at Kent Public Health before it can be advertised. HM has informed the previous host organisation that we’re seeking alternative hosting arrangement and that has been acknowledged. SI and HM are supporting the HHSC sub group as best they can. There will be an underspend due to the salary not being paid and once the post is filled this can be quantified.  HM highlighted that there is a page in the budget sheet for the Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service now. Tessa has explained that further income is anticipated and requests for POs are being sent out to three organisations as agreed in the SLA when the service began. Tessa O’Sullivan has provided a written paper on this services. | BH and SW  BH and SW | Create a recommendation for the Board on the communications proposal  Discuss how best to address extending or making role permanent |
| **Kent Homechoice\*** | This was covered at this morning’s KHG meeting. BH and JL expressed thanks to Vicky Hodson and Vicky May for their huge efforts on this work |  |  |
| **Questions from Regular Updates** | **SELEP – Brian Horton**  Brian explained that the finance arrangements from Government have not been finalised yet. It is likely that the responsibilities for the work done by LEPs is to go to upper tier LAs. They are identifying some things which are better done at a regional level.  **Medway Council – Mark Breathwick.**  DLUHC withdrawing from the Hoo Peninsular Housing Infrastructure Fund schemes have become public.  **Marketing\* – Jeff Sims** (this short paper was circulated with the agenda)  Since then Jeff has attended the finance event and that will go in HomeFront and that will come out to members next week.  **Events Group\* – Becs Wilcox** (this short paper was circulated with the agenda)  **Commissioning Update – Clare Maynard and Christy Holden**  **Rural and Community Housing Enabling (RACE)\*** **- Tessa O’Sullivan** (this paper was circulated with the agenda) |  |  |
| **AOB** | Dates of 2023 KHG Board meetings; 11th Oct 9.30-11.30 (longer meeting to allow time for brief feedback from the sub groups), 29th Nov 1.30-2.45.  Tim Woolmer, housing session for Leaders will be on 13th September, in the afternoon, for a face to face session, with the venue to be confirmed. |  |  |

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