**Draft KHG Asset Management Sub Group 17th March 2023, Microsoft Teams Call**

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**Present**: Neil Diddams, chair and WKHA; Joanna Medley, Maidstone; Jay Amos, consultant; Deborah Hearn, MHS; Brian Horton, SELEP; Elspeth Brown, T&CH; Hayden Schuitemaker, Medway; Navin Down, MHS; Adam Reid, Thanet; Nathan Foley, Canterbury; Kerry Elliman, WKHA; Ollie Garsed-Bennet, Rapport; Lee Gilbert, Dartford; Stuart White, GCHA; Keith Deane, Folkestone and Hythe DC; James Young, Thanet; Richard Barwick (presenter); Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies:** Mark Breathwick, Adam Spokes, Becs Wilcox, Medway; Dipna Pattni, NZH; Ashley Jackson, Thanet; David Green, Ashford; Lucy Breeze, Golding; Owen Goymer, Clarion; Sally O’Sullivan, Thanet; Mike Hale, Folkestone and Hythe DC; Alexis Jobson, Canterbury; Ben McGowan, Moat;

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters Arising from Jan 2023 | HM Thermocill notes circulated. Done  All if you’d like to join group purchase for Thermocill contact Neil. Update; WKHA are purchasing, fitting and looking to train new people to fit. They are willing for others to visit to see how that is going.  ND invite HACT to a meeting around carbon credits. Update; ND has been in touch and that presentation will happen. WKHA have signed up for HACT comments  Dipna Pattni from Net Zero Hub will not be able to attend these meetings in future but is happy for people to contact her if there is anything the Hub can help with. | ND | Let HM know when this presentation is booked. |
| Declaration of interests | None declared. |  |  |
| Roundtable discussions | **How are we addressing repairs?**  ND There have been many conference calls on this including the Housing Ombudsman and a housing pathologist, Michael Parrett, <https://www.michaelparrett.co.uk/> which covered impacts of wall insulation and impacts of behaviours, building fabric and how you know when a building is wet.  WKHA have had 8 disrepair claims in the last 2 years, none from local solicitors. WKHA are struggling with access on disrepair and dampness and mould. Do any partners take legal action to gain access? Some disrepair claim appears to be motivated by a tenants wish to move home.  EB They have begun legal action to gain access when residents have reported problems but won’t give access. Generally the neighbour manager begins the action to gain access then solicitors get involved if needed. The fixed costs they were coming in in April are now not coming in. Some claiming solicitors are using legal executives and they are not very clear on how to administer the claims. T&CH have ensured that their complaints handing process can handle all aspects of the claim. When a tenant mentions disrepair they act quickly and have recruited two additional surveyors to speed the process.  AR In Thanet they have had 10 claims in 1 year. The patterns are around tenants wishing to movem and difficulties getting access to inspect sometimes as residents say their solicitor has advised them not to give access. They have a policy on dampness and mould and are developing a D&M tracker to find vulnerable homes and residents. He also finds the solicitors are not local and some lack expertise in this area of work. TDC’s legal team is good at identifying the unfounded claims. TDC aims to get into the homes as soon as possible to assess and begin works. The Housing Ombudsman conference advice was that D&M is the landlords issue and not a lifestyle issue and this did not appear very nuanced. The main issues are fitting this D&M service in with their existing service. Solicitors are doing letter drops on to encourage claims but though there was a spike in the number of cases after the news coverage that hasn’t remained as high. Their target response time for disrepair is a 48 hours.  WKHA went to a block where they’ve had 2 MP complaints where the design does have some cold bridging. They found some tenants would let them in but some would not.  AR some tenants who claim disrepair will not allow access. There is also an element of embarrassment for some tenants. TDC has some older stock and unusual structures so uses Sempatex for cold bridging and looking at cavity wall insulation and found some saturated insulation so that takes a long time to dry out.  ND asked how are organisations funding this work? ES budget overspend as they are hard to predict. The 7% rent cap creates an additional pressure. Some may need to extend the timescales for planned maintenance programme. ES they are asking the stock conditions surveyors to let them know of all category 1 *and* 2 hazards so works are regularly flagged.  LG of Dartford explained they did see an increase in disrepair claims over the winter. Reports of D&M were about 30% higher than previous winters. There are issues of under heating and overcrowding. They are using Envirovents and temp and humidity sensors (2 months before the installation and 1 month after) and gained data showing that they are reducing the humidity from 70% to nearer 50%. This is based on a small number of homes. Before they were addressing cold spotting around doors and windows and that is helping but also using PIV (Positive Input Ventilation) now. Vericon data is useful as the data comes to the landlord. They will visit all homes that reported D&M this winter this summer to seek any other issues to address. They always do a mould wash for each report of D&M. They also found that D&M seems to be more likely in younger tenants so will consider their communications around this. In the last 18 months they’ve tightened up how they dealt with disrepair and are more likely to insist that the tenants do give access to get the matter resolved and tenants are more likely to give access. He feels legal firms can lean on tenants not to give access and can be pushy with vulnerable tenants.  ND They’ve found some older people cannot cope with the wiping down and cleaning. They can see a big difference in the home between tenants able to wipe it down and those who don’t on the mould growth.  AR TDC are finding that the legal firms are pushing hard on vulnerable tenants and when TDC push back to the firms they often stop. TDC has used enforcement notices when they could not get access.  KE SE benchmarking group also taking zero tolerance on no access for disrepair but also net zero works.  **Pre-action** [**protocol**](https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil/protocol/prot_hou)  HM asked whether organisations stop works if the protocol is enacted. ES we must proceed with work even if legal action has begun. Tenants may say works cannot be done as the matter is with their solicitor but landlords should do the work even if legal claims have begun. The protocol was intended to make the process quick but legal firms may not be working in the right spirit to get the works done. WKHA also carry on with the works if legal claim has begun.  LG many tenants are not using their complaints process and going straight to legal process.  WKHA have also seen people not using repairs or the complaints process and going straight to disrepair claim.  ND We will try to create some kind of KHG best practice guide and ND will give an update on that. | LG  ND | Share info with HM to share with group.  Give an update on the forming best practice guide in May |
| Non tradition archetypes. Heat Pump Ready Programme 2023 | Richard Barwick shared a presentation that will be circulated. This is on the government DESNZ Heat Pump Ready Programme by 2026. He’s being working with EnergieSprong, WKHA and Gravesham on non-traditional archetypes to give a whole house approach and significant reduction energy demand.. These works should address many of the dampness and mould issues.  They are working on the Wimpey, Laing, BISF and Orlit archetypes, sub archetypes exist as many homes have been modified. RB highlighted the 10 step value chain.  The average cost for a whole house retrofit was £55k per home but with the material inflation that is closer to £85k. Over time they want to bring this back down to £55K and develop the supply chain.  JA said the archetypes are so varied that it is hard to scale up and bring costs down. RB more providers and manufacturers are entering the market so the market is progressing and we need larger firms doing that too.  There have been challenges on the comfort plan as landlords are not keen to ask tenants to pay more when the cost of living is so high. Some are charging £5-15 per week for this but some are not charging at all.  RB these works have to be done thoroughly to reduce dampness and mould. It creates a warmer, but air tight, structure but with the right ventilation it works very well.  JA Mineral wool seems more likely to get wet as cavity wall insulation but more recently materials seem to perform better, when installed into properly clear cavities.  ND WKHA has some new built homes with some issues and we need to ensure works are done properly, so cavity must be clear before we fill it. WKHA needed to extract insulation in 70% of the homes checked when having electric heating installed.  RB it is very important that homes are monitored to ensure that the works done are performing as needed.  JA housing data can be patchy and we lack in use performance data and that can be a barrier to plan retrofit.  JA perhaps we need to separate who talking about penetrating the rising damp from talking about condensation and mould growth.  ND thanked RB for an interesting presentation. | HM | Circulate RB’s presentation |
| AOB | Please send any topics you’d like to cover in future meetings to HM  Dates of 2023 meetings; 18 May; 3 July; 20 Sept; 2 Nov. | All | Email HM with any suggestions for topics for future discussions. |