**Draft KHG Housing Strategy and Enabling Sub Group 6 November 2023 Microsoft Teams Call**

DRAFT

**Present**:; Kimba Layton, vice chair and Folkestone and Hythe; Gareth Fitzpatrick, Rentplus; Brian Horton, SELEP; Brandon Lewis, Brian’s intern; Simon Thomas, rep Kent Chief Planning Officers; Perry de Souza, Dover; Lisa Webb and Louise Leggett, Medway; Liz Crockford, Sevenoaks; Helen Whitehead, KCC; Stuart Clifton and Tobi Phillips, TWBC; Sarah Williams, Dartford; Becky Walker, Swale; Lynn Wilders, Maidstone; Sue Phipps, Canterbury; Tim Cooke, Thanet; Sarah Holmes, Gravesham; Richard Hall, Canterbury; Vicky Hodson, Kent HomeChoice; Hayley Bassett, Canterbury; Gillian Aylett, TMBC; Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies received before the meeting:** Jackie Pye, Dartford; Mark Meredith, Southern Housing; Ashley Jackson, Thanet; Sonya Hothi, Gravesham; Laura Atkinson, Rural Community Council of Essex; David Jeffrey, Southern Housing; Mark James, sub group chair and Ashford;

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters arising from Jun 2023 | HM Circulate NL’s share to buy presentation – done  All Contact TO’S if you’d like to join the RACE steering group  HM Circulate BA HE presentation – done  HM Share MJ’s presentation on CAKEDOG – done  HM share IS’s presentation on Westwood Acres – done  Updates from queries posed to the group; Jackie Pye asked a question about subletting for sheltered housing tenants. She received 1 reply where subletting was not permitted as this would cause overcrowding and Dartford have included that in their draft tenancy strategy. |  |  |
| What services do RentPlus Offer | Gareth Fitzgerald from Rent Plus presented as Emma was unavailable. Rentplus is a type of affordable housing that begins with renting and can move to buying. The barriers for first time buyers include difficulties raising a deposit, income too low to be granted a mortgage, not being able to afford the area they want to live in. Young people who are priced out of the market are living with family, in private rented sector or access traditional affordable housing. The rent plus clients are often not going to be offered traditional affordable housing as they have lower levels of needs.  The model charges intermediate rent (80% open market rent), people buy at 5, 10, 15 or 20 years and tenants are gifted 10% deposit by Rent Plus. Homes are sold at market price. Rentplus are a funding platform who buys the housing stock and lease it to the housing provider who rent it to the occupants. Tenants get a rolling 5 year AST.  Annual Rent is increased same as affordable rent. Rent is rebased every 5th years to ensure still 80% of market rent.  Most homes are via s106 agreements. They work with the LA to create a local lettings plan. This could be via Choice Based Lettings.  Tenants must be able to afford the rent and have an aspiration to buying the home at some point. There are windows for buying at the 5, 10, 15 and 20 year timings.  The options are set out on RentPlus Cascade, outright buy; shared ownership option; buy earlier or later if circumstances change. Rentplus could sell the home to an RP partners, but if homes are handed back to Rentplus and the RP does not want it and it cannot be relet then sold on open market and 7.5% given to LA.  Rentplus have no homes in Kent but have some in south east. They don’t have a RP partner in Kent yet. Their subsidiary RentPlus Homes Limited is a housing provider and they directly manage around 100 homes. Rent Plus Homes Limited have applied to become an RP.  When RPs have withdrawn from s106 Rentplus can step in to provide the finance to buy them and then the RPs rent them out.  The s106 can include a clause to allow the LAs to purchase before homes placed on open market. Around 8% of homes were placed on the open market.  The 10% deposit is budgeted in to the purchase and no grant is used.  Rentplus require at least 4 homes on a site.  Rentplus to let HM know when they get RP status.  They have not done land led opportunities yet.  This item ran out of time so KL will send her questions to Gareth direct. Please send your questions to KL by 8th Nov so she can send all the questions together. | HM  All | Circulate GF’s presentation on Rentplus  Send your Rentplus questions to KL by 8th Nov. |
| Value of nomination agreements | Item postponed as Mark not present and previous item had over run |  |  |
| Delivering the [Kent and Medway Housing Strategy](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/kent-medway-housing-strategy-2020-2025-a-place-people-want-to-call-home/) | The actions that Mark and Kimba identified that the group could deliver by 2025.  HW2 is an event that Mark, Kimba, Liz and Simon are working on this. If you’d like to join the group please contact Kimba.  Circulate the document with group to seek buy in for this plan for what this group can deliver by 2025. Also begin to look at what the group may want to see if the next strategy, shorter, more high level strategy, probably from 2025-2030 | All | Look at draft and make any comments on how the objectives could be delivered by 2025 |
| S106 and the changes in RP’s bidding | BH there is an issue with RPs appetite and ability to take on new affordable homes from developers. Thanet recently stepped in the buy homes that no RP would take. BH is working with developer colleagues to inform a message to DLUHC on need on rent policy for at least 10 years, an informed piece of work on the below CPI+1 on business plans. Social housing grant levels are very low and difficult for LAs or RPs to deliver at scale. Balanced with need to net zero and compliance it is hard to RPs to take on new affordable homes. The Local Housing Allowance levels make affordability hard. The issues are all coming together to create a huge strain on RPs buying affordable homes. BH continues to meet with DLUHC on this market failure on s106 and is questioning whether grant should now be available for s106.  If there any new players in this market please let BH know.  KL people need to be able to afford the home to place in affordable housing. They cap at LHA.  LC RentPlus sounds like an intermediate product not affordable. They require RPs to have a local present to be eligible.  BH Rentplus may use a local RP for management. It could be a part of the solution but does not replace affordable housing.  HW the demographic of your area will show whether there is a place for intermediate product or more for affordable homes at LHA level. |  |  |
| Update on RACE | LC the steering group met and will meet again in January. You are welcome to join that board. The surveys are out and there will be surveys to discuss in January.  There is DEFRA funding for rural housing services. RACE has put in a proposal for c£95K for core services and will give an update on that. That could extend the period the time the service could run for.  BH this could help to mainstream the service and give longevity. They will present to rural communities in Kent to promote the service. |  |  |
| SELEP and DLUHC – Brian Horton | The focus of dialogue with DLUHC is around market failure of affordable housing and s106. They also hope to share policy for this and future governments.  SELEP ceases in current form and some functions will be devolved to KCC and Medway Council etc. They are canvassing views on continuing to work larger than county level for housing and development and how that could be resourced. |  |  |
| Update on sessions planned between HSEG, Developers and Planners | No updates as Mark not present. | **MJ, KL, LC & ST** | Update on the sessions with HSEG, Planners and Developers at fib 2024 meeting |
| AOB | Dates of 2024 meetings are; 22nd Feb; 14th May; 22nd Jul; 22nd Oct all 9.30-11.00  Please email Mark, Kimba or Helen with any topics for the next meetings. |  |  |