

Draft KHG Private Sector Housing Subgroup 6 Nov 2024, Microsoft Teams Call

Present: Hazel Skinner, chair and TMBC; Clare Reynolds, vice chair and Gravesham; Sheen Graves, Sevenoaks; Tim Lovell, Dover; Marion Money, NRLA; San Nyunt, Swale; Claire Pickering, TWBC; Rachel Evans, Dartford; Richard Hopkins, Thanet; Ross Anslow, Folkestone and Hythe; Donna Ward, T&CH; Helen Miller, Kent Housing Group;

Apologies received before the meeting; Ashley Jackson, Thanet; Kerry Petts, Folkestone and Hythe DC; Sharon Donald, Sevenoaks; Claire Norman, Ashford; Tammy Carroll, Kent Trading Standards;

Reference	Notes/Outcome	Who	Action/Decision
Matters arising from May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HM ask SD about Sevenoaks Park Homes Project – SD to present in Nov 2024 – deferred. SG provided. They did 49 homes with LAD money and 2 with HUG money. Now using the Warm Homes; Local Grant money to insulate walls and floors. The expertise is with Carol Stewart. Done. TWBC and Medway liaise on illegal eviction policies – Rachel Bell to give an update in November <u>Carry Forward</u> RH Seek clarity from DLUHC on their expectations on LHAs for higher risk buildings – Thanet was only LA to be given grant money to identify the relevant buildings. However, the gov appear to expect LAs to identify relevant buildings which is hard with no funding. The lists sent to LAs from MHCLG may be a starting point. KFRS are keen to have a long term plan with the LAs. Thanet has appointed a fire safety auditor who identified many buildings in 11+ range but few of major concern. That may be similar across Kent. Some older buildings have high ceilings. The 11+m is about height of floor of highest level – not the ceiling. Its unlikely that a 4 storey building will be in scope and LAs should prioritise 5 storeys before looking at any taller 4 storey houses. Candice Watson KFRS Arrange a Teams meeting with the LHAs and KFRS around approach to higher risk buildings. Not all these meetings have been held as CW is off sick. <u>CF</u> HM circulate DFG draft protocol to group – DONE KP invite Christy Holden to DFG group –DONE – not going to be adopted by LAs. RA advised that KP that there is no appetite for this document. HM circulate RE's presentation and summary of training on dampness and mould to subgroup – DONE. RE now working at Swale. 	RH	Liaise with Louise at KFRS on this matter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA KP considered landlord training but did not see any appetite from landlords so has been shelved. 		
Trading Standards approach to missing EPCs estate agent fees, etc (HW5)	<p>Deferred due to unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>The group highlighted these areas that they'd want to cover;</p> <p>Useful to have a point of contact for referrals when homes has no EPC</p> <p>Useful to have stats on what happened with homes referred and how Trading Standards follow up and what the outcomes are of cases. Do they carry out enforcement? Will it change with Renters Rights Bill?</p>		
Routes to Competency – Regulatory Compliance Officer Apprenticeship	<p>RE attended an Operation Jigsaw meeting on this. There is a Regulatory Compliance Apprenticeship and RE would like to know if there is a will to run a course in Kent and Medway together? The apprenticeship course is quite wide but when run in another area all the students were from PRS and so got a provider to specialise on PRS. It's a level 4 course over 15-24 months and can be done in person or online. There is funding for the course via the apprenticeship levy. Another area used Bravington to provide it and tailored it to include HHSRS, building constructions, etc. Credit Services Association also tailored the course for PRS.</p> <p>RE has not approached any providers yet as wanted to get an idea on whether other LAs want to work together so can fund an apprenticeship tailored to PSH.</p> <p>SG Sevenoaks may be interested</p> <p>CR GBC are interested.</p> <p>RH Thanet may be interested</p> <p>SN Swale also interested – as will be looking to recruit</p>		

	<p>TL Dover may be interested if they can get funding for the post</p> <p>RA believed Folkestone and Hythe may be interested.</p> <p>PJ Maidstone may also be interested</p> <p>At the end of the course they have a level 4 qualification, so like the foundation level of a degree. We may need a bigger workforce with Renters Rights and Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 work.</p> <p>TL would benefit from running it locally and in person. Getting the timing right would be good.</p> <p>RH apprenticeships can be used by existing staff as well as new staff.</p> <p>Jill Stewart gave a 3 days course but this is for those with at least 1 year's experience. TL attended and agreed that participants found the course very useful but was pitched at those with at least a year's experience.</p>	RE	<p>Research the options on trainers and bring interested parties together to progress</p>
New K&M Housing Strategy	<p>HM explained that the K&M Housing Strategy was due to be refreshed. Aecom has prepared a draft evidence base using publicly available data and that is available online here. KHG are engaging with all 10 subgroups, and external partners including Kent Chief Planners, the Health and Care Partnerships, the K&M Integrated Care Partnership, K&M Economic Partnership, Kent Chiefs and Kent Leaders to seek views on the evidence base and these questions;</p> <p>1. Does the evidence fit with your experience of housing issues in Kent and Medway? Recap:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability – buying and renting remains unaffordable to a substantial proportion of households. Affordable housing needs – far outweigh number of affordable homes delivered each year; private rented sector playing a significant role in meeting needs. 		

- c. Homelessness and use of temporary accommodation remains persistently high with a knock-on impact on health and wellbeing and costs to local authorities.
- d. Housing conditions – likely to be large number of properties with poor conditions, particularly in private rented sector, partly a function of affordability pressures and lack of Affordable Housing.
- e. Health/wellbeing impacts – are very complex but housing factors such as damp and mould/cold homes/fuel poverty, overcrowding and older people in unsuitable accommodation provide clear link between housing and health.
- f. Delivery issues – delivery picked up over last 5 years but still well below planned levels, knock on limit on the amount of Affordable Housing that can be secured.

2. **Can you add any further evidence or insight to support the findings (or challenge the findings)?**

Key data gaps include:

- a. Local data on housing conditions
- b. New build homes built to accessible and adaptable building regulations standards.
- c. Your own/ your organisation's experience (even if qualitative or anecdotal) of the issues/ challenges

3. **Is there anything missing that is key to the evidence base for the Housing Strategy?**

4. **Are the 5 themes still relevant?:**

- a. Affordability
- b. Safety
- c. Health and wellbeing
- d. Accelerating delivery
- e. Infrastructure first

5. **If not, what would you add/ remove or change?**

6. **Are there any actions that you feel the Strategy should promote?**

They can be found in a survey here <https://forms.office.com/e/diz4AKJ86U> Please complete it, or the parts that suit you, by 6th December.

HM highlighted that evidence base on local housing conditions was scarce. They hadn't found good evidence on the number of homes with a Category 1 hazard, or even the number of homes found with a Category 1 hazard. They also hadn't found evidence on the most common hazards found in K&M. Other data had come from LAHS but the data found Category 1 hazards had shown some LAs did not have any so it wasn't a complete data set. If anyone has data on this that can be used please send it to HM.

It would also be useful to identify the kinds of work that this group would like to address in 2025-30 to ensure the right policy 'hooks' are written in to the strategy.

All

If you have evidence on housing standards in your area

If you have any photos that could be used in the strategy document, for example before and after pictures, or those showing DFG work, please send them to HM. The document will be online from 2025-2030, and perhaps longer.

DW – can provide DFG photos, before and after and they get consent to use them. Need to be aware that a customers can withdraw consent. HM email DW for photos.

please share them with HM

All

Please complete the survey by
6th Dec.

			<p>Contact DW to seek photos for the strategy</p> <p>HM</p>
AOB	<p>HM Asked what topics the group would like to hear about at a regional Operation Jigsaw event. The region would be Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Milton Keynes and Bucks, and the London Boroughs, so very broad.</p> <p>RA Landlords and agents have suggested that they are considering withdrawing from the market due to increasing pressures. MM older landlords may have to pay capital gains tax as they've owned the homes for a long term. Student landlords are diversifying. Nationally the demographics of landlords are changing as younger landlords buy the newer homes. Landlords are concerned about Local Housing Allowance not being uplifted regularly and so they seek tenants with rent guarantors. 'Back to bricks' developers are coming in to renovate homes to improve their EPCs. RH in Thanet and Tim in Dover they</p>	All	<p>Let Sue Oliver know what you'd like Op Jigsaw to cover.</p>

see some churn but not a mass landlord exodus.

RH had a meeting with MHCLG who mentioned Renters Rights Bill could be enacted early in 2025. There will be subsequent Regulations. MM also believes it will be in Spring 2025 and that government intend to do it as soon as possible.

RH MHCLG are aware of the shortage of PRS staff.

HM we will discuss the Renters Rights Bill at main KHG meeting on 7th Feb. PRS and KHOG will present and at the main KHG meeting in November we'll be asking other members if they would want to give their perspective, including housing associations.

TL they have served notices on HA homes. Some housing associations are not taking a proactive approach to addressing conditions. They've invited the HA senior staff in to discuss which helps for a while and then the problems come back.

RH advises that TL advises the tenants use their landlords complaint processes. If that does not resolve the issue then tenants could go to the Housing Ombudsman. There is government guidance on how social tenants can raise their concerns with their landlord [How to report a problem or make an individual complaint about your social housing landlord - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/report-problem-social-housing-landlord)

San in Swale they aim to maintain good relationships with the HA. They invite senior managers to meetings to agree who should be the first point of contact for their organisation. They enforce in the same way as they would with other landlords.

San is planning to do a workforce assessment in Kent to help understand. Richard did do this a couple of years ago that he is willing to share.

Swale are planning to run a landlords forum with an emphasis on health.

MM highlights that some landlords are not well informed, including on Renters Rights Bill.

Date for 2025 meetings; 4th March and 8th October 9.30-11.00 on Teams

RH

Share workforce assessment
with SN