



CREATING SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Helping communities in Kent and Medway to work well

"Our responsibility is to make our communities work well. We must ensure that everyone feels included and valued and can willingly accept their responsibilities and contribute to making their communities a safer and better place. Ultimately, it is the building of self-generating capacity and responsibility from within communities that will create places with a sense of belonging and neighbourhoods that are friendly, safe and attractive."

Statement by the former Leader of Kent County Council, Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart with reference to the importance of "community cohesion", the building blocks to create a balanced community.



Creating Successful Communities Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that future housing developments within Kent and Medway meet the objective of creating long lasting and successful communities. The Kent Housing Group (KHG) recognises a successful community as a place where people want to live and work both now and in the future. KHG consider that to ensure delivery of a successful housing development a new community should include:

- an appropriate mix of tenure and household type
- an appropriate mix of income levels
- appropriate access to community development support & facilities
- high quality and well designed homes

This protocol contains elements that are applicable to developments of all sizes including those that will sit within or alongside communities that contain existing affordable housing. KHG promotes the use of this protocol for all new developments.

KHG recommends that this protocol is used by Local Authorities as a framework for developing their own local lettings plans. A local lettings plan should be used to reflect the need and aspiration of the existing and future community for each individual development

KHG recommends that this protocol is used in conjunction with Local Authorities' Tenancy Strategies.

1. An appropriate mix of tenure

Successful developments should include a mix of tenures, i.e. homes for sale on the open market, homes for sale under shared ownership and homes available to rent under the Affordable Rent Framework. When determining their local lettings plans, Local Authorities need to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of tenure across new development and that this is appropriately integrated.

1.1. The Affordable Rent Framework

Properties let under the Affordable Rent Framework will be rented for a fixed term period and are likely to be re-let on a more frequent basis. The housing provider should have regard to the impact of affordable rent tenancies upon a community, particularly where a large number of tenancies end at the same time. When re-letting properties or deciding on disposals the housing provider should try to ensure that the tenure type across the whole development remains balanced.



1.2 Starter tenancies

The housing provider should consider whether it is appropriate to use starter tenancies, such as probationary or introductory tenancies, on a new development or where properties are re-let. This will allow the landlord to set an expected standard of behaviour.

2. An appropriate mix of household type

2.1. Families

To create stability on a development and to avoid high pressures upon existing or new family services, such as schools and play areas, there needs to be an appropriate mix of child ages on a new development.

The appropriate mix of family size and type to be housed on a new development will be determined by information obtained from the local housing waiting list or local housing needs assessment, and from consideration of the attributes of the development and its location in the community in relation to other facilities and infrastructure.

The housing provider should also have due regard to young adults, those who are 16 years and over, who remain at home. The needs of this group are as important to address as those of young children.

KHG recommends that the local lettings plan should take into account the total number of children and the child to adult ratio on a development and if appropriate consider "under letting" properties rented under the Affordable Rent Framework. If adopted this should be monitored to ensure the aims of sustainability are achieved at no detriment to meeting local housing need.

2.2. Vulnerable people

Recognition needs to be given to the needs of vulnerable people requiring housing across all tenures. There is a need to be particularly mindful of the need for suitable move-on accommodation from supported housing and the level of vulnerable residents that can be effectively sustained given the attributes of the development.

2.3. Older people

With an ageing population, the needs of older people should be taken into consideration within new developments. Properties built to the Lifetime Homes standard enable people to remain in their homes as they age and their needs change. Older people should also be provided with information and access to community facilities to ensure their social needs are met to reduce the risk of them becoming isolated in their own homes.



3. An appropriate mix of income levels

KHG recommend that an appropriate mix of income levels is essential to achieve a successful community. Properties let under the Affordable Rent Framework should be let to those who are working as well as those who are in receipt of benefits. The housing provider should try to ensure that developments do not become single income type communities, for example those on similar income levels do not dominate developments.

All residents who are able to work should be supported and provided with access to all opportunities for finding employment. The housing provider should actively promote employment links through community-led employment or training opportunities.

4. Appropriate access to community development support & facilities

Access to appropriate community infrastructure, such as community halls and play facilities, whether new or existing, is vital in the development of a successful community. The physical elements of a development and access to existing services and facilities alongside housing must be considered at the design stage. Access to community infrastructure is as important as access to social infrastructure such as primary and secondary schools, health and leisure services and public transport.

Wherever possible residents should be able to use existing community facilities. This increases the integration of new and more established households and will help to overcome isolation.

Effective marketing of the development highlighting elements such as community infrastructure prior to letting should enable residents to make a positive choice to live on a development.

4.1. Community development support

The housing provider should make an assessment for the level of community development support required on a new development, appropriate to the size of the development and the residents that will form the new community. KHG recommends this to ensure that new developments are part of and integrate successfully with the existing community.

Although planning guidance will dictate the appropriate level of communal facilities to cater for all residents on the estate, community development should consider engaging with the children and young people moving on to the development. This will ensure the provision of robust play equipment and open space suitable for the potential range in ages and activities that directly meet their needs.



Residents should be encouraged to form Community Forums or Residents Associations dealing with issues that are important to the entire development, for example the best use of communal spaces and engaging residents in landscaping design. Where possible such groups should represent all residents irrespective of tenure.

Housing providers should build effective relationships with local agencies such as schools, police, fire service, health services, and voluntary agencies to make them aware of the influx of new residents. Engagement with these agencies may also assist in developing and supporting the work of a Community Forum or Residents Association.

Community development may also assist in developing employment or training opportunities locally, this could include initiatives where residents are employed or trained by local businesses working on or around the new development.

5. High quality and well-designed homes

Good practice design principles should ensure that externally and internally, developments are tenure neutral. The aim should be to create a visual environment in which it is not possible to identify the tenure of any individual property.

Developments will adhere to the Secure by Design principle, ultimately designing out crime to enhance security for all those who live on the development. Local Authorities should also encourage the building of Lifetime Homes, to enable people to live in their homes when they get older and facilitate easy access for disabled people, families with young children or elderly relatives.

6. Measuring success

Kent Housing Group will try where possible to use existing processes to monitor the success of this Protocol. This will be carried out by the Neighbourhood Management Sub Group of KHG

The sub-group will look at:

1) Local lettings plans

- Whether local lettings plans are being developed in line with the objectives of this Protocol
- If not, why not?

(Question: are LLPs being developed across Kent and are they monitored? If so how and by whom?)

2) Resident satisfaction surveys

- Are residents satisfied with the development?



- Do they feel there is an appropriate mix of people on the development?
- Do they feel that there is a sense of community on the development?
- Has a residents association been formed? Is this effective/representative?
- Have they had any access to employment or training opportunities since moving to the development?

A "Things to Consider" list will be added once people are happy with the main content of the document.

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About Kent Housing Group (KHG)

Kent Housing Group is a forum for housing organisations in Kent amongst the Chief Housing Officers of Local Authorities, Chief Executives of Housing Associations, Kent County Council, the HCA and developers. The group acts as the "Voice of Housing in Kent" representing collective views and a "Kent perspective" when responding to the national and regional housing agenda. KHG is a source of innovation in terms of joint/partnership working to achieve and share best practice in the housing arena.

KHG aims

Provide better and more affordable homes in Kent; Innovate and achieve best value; Share and add to best practice; Create balanced communities in Kent.

What KHG does

Provides strategic leadership; shaping and setting the housing agenda; Builds relationships and influences decisions for the benefit of Kent; Draws in resources from both traditional and alternative sources; Works collectively to improve the supply and quality of affordable homes.

Working together

Affinity Sutton - AmicusHorizon Ltd - Ashford Borough Council - Canterbury City Council - Dartford Borough Council - Dover District Council - English Rural Housing Association - Golding Homes - Gravesham Borough Council - Homes and Communities Agency - Kent County Council - L & Q Group - Maidstone Borough Council - Medway Council - MHS Homes - Moat - Places for People - Orbit South - Riverside South East - Russet Homes (Circle Group) - Sanctuary Housing Association - Sevenoaks District Council - Shepway District Council - Southern Housing Group - Swale Borough Council - Thanet District Council - The Hyde Group - Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council - Town & Country Housing Group - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - West Kent Housing Association -

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