

Olea Grove (formerly High View Oast) Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday 10th September 2026, 10am
MS Teams Meeting

Agencies and Services in Attendees
KCC, UAS Children's Service
DDC, Councillor
DDC, Representative

Kent County Council (KCC) – District Dover Council (DDC)- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS Children)

Introduction
Introductions made and agenda shared.
Overview
A KCC Representative provided an update on the home and advised that 235 children had been supported during the previous year, with children staying at the home for an average of nine days. Positive feedback continues to be received regarding the local community, with children reporting feeling welcomed and included. Children have enjoyed participating in football and cricket activities and continue to engage enthusiastically in the greenhouse project. Produce grown within the greenhouse is being used in the home's kitchen, and a display photograph highlighting those who originally planted the crops has generated considerable interest among children. Arts and crafts activities remain particularly popular and continue to be a regular feature of the programme. An update was provided regarding regulatory activity, with confirmation that an Ofsted inspection is due and that preparations are in place. In relation to community tensions, no concerns have been identified locally. Although demonstrations had taken place in Dover, precautionary arrangements were implemented, including organising a visit to a local wildlife park to avoid any potential disruption should groups travel through the area. A KCC Representative advised that the ISP programme continues and that contributions from community partners are always welcomed. Suggestions were sought regarding individuals or organisations that could share knowledge and experiences with the children. Reference was made to previous discussions regarding police engagement, and community projects that the home could participate in were also welcomed. A DDC Representative suggested engagement with a local charity which operates a hub in Dover and works nationally. Information was shared regarding a Community Inclusion Officer who delivers presentations in schools and discusses personal experiences of arriving in the United Kingdom as an asylum seeker after travelling in a lorry. It was suggested that this could provide a valuable opportunity for regular engagement with the children. A DDC Representative agreed to share further details following the meeting. A DBC Councillor suggested involving an individual linked to a local business who employs a workforce including Afghan and Polish staff. It was noted that extensive experience exists in working with asylum-seeking communities and supporting individuals across the Ash area, including through horticultural projects and tomato cultivation. A KCC Representative welcomed the suggestion and details were offered for future contact. Discussion then turned to previous concerns regarding groups of young people being seen within the village. A DBC Councillor noted that concerns had been raised prior to the arrival of the first children at the home, but

no further issues had been reported for a considerable period.

A KCC Representative explained that children do not generally access the community in groups larger than four and that, due to age considerations, independent access to the community is uncommon.

A DBC Councillor reflected that earlier concerns had largely related to ensuring children were accompanied appropriately within the community due to the presence of some anti-social behaviour in the village.

A KCC Representative confirmed that only a small number of children had accessed the community independently. One child had previously become lost; however, assistance was provided by a local young person who helped with a safe return. Feedback from children continues to indicate that they feel safe within the local community.

A DBC Councillor commented on the demonstrations that had taken place in Dover, noting that the main issues related to parking, with behaviour otherwise remaining generally orderly. Concerns regarding face coverings were referenced, and it was noted that events in Portsmouth had generated greater concern. Positive feedback was provided that the home has integrated well within the local area and does not attract negative attention.

A KCC Representative responded by emphasising the importance of maintaining positive relationships with the community and continuing to develop opportunities for engagement. It was noted that ongoing community involvement is valued and that efforts will continue to promote positive understanding of the home and the children it supports.

AOB

None raised.