

Housing & Health Advisory Committee

22 September 2015

Portfolio Holders Report

Housing

I attended the West Kent Housing Association AGM on 11 June, and the new Home of Your Own launch on 15 June. Pat Smith and I met with Frank Czarnowski – Chief Executive of West Kent Housing to discuss anti-social tenants on 16 July.

Home of Your Own is a part rent, part buy scheme for residents of the District that we fund in partnership with Moat Housing from the Affordable Housing Contribution.

I was interviewed on BBC Radio Kent Breakfast on Friday 12 June at 8am about affordable housing in the district and the launch of a Home of Your Own with Moat on Monday 15 June.

Met with Marcus Jones MP Minister at DCLG on 8 September to discuss affordable housing contribution and the negative impact this will have on schemes such as Home of Your Own with Moat if it is reinstated, rural exception site map extensions, exemptions from proposed right-to-buy for rural exemption sites and Help-to-Buy income limits.

Attended the Redwood Place Opening on 17 September.

Health and Leisure

I attended the LGA Sexual Health Conference on 9 June and the Kent County Council health conference on Wednesday 17 June.

Met with Tom Tugendhart MP about making Edenbridge (and the rest of the district: dementia (community) friendly).

Attended the Sencio AGM and Trustees meeting on Tuesday 30 June and met with the Chief Executive of Sencio: Jane Parish earlier in that day.

Attended the KCC Natural Ways to Wellbeing workshop on 9 July – to see how we can get the countryside working harder to keep our residents healthy.

Attended the Mind AGM on 23 July.

Attended the Sports Council Presentation evening on Friday 4 September.

Housing & Health – Think Housing First

It is not possible to separate housing from health. If people are living in poor housing, over crowded housing, cold housing or are in rent or mortgage arrears their health will be impacted.

This is how District Council's and SDC in particular contributes towards keeping the people in our district healthy by focussing on housing issues:

- Homelessness costs the NHS £600million per year. Rough sleepers die in average 30 years before the general population and more likely to access A&E and the Emergency services than a GP. SDC has virtually no homelessness because we are proactive in preventing it with our award winning HERO advice service.
- 55% of falls in Kent happen in the home. Cold people are more likely to fall. Ensuring homes are warm and dry and free from hazards keeps people well and free from injuries. With Switch and Save, warmer homes and other initiatives SDC tries to keep our older population in particular much warmer and our Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) helps to keep people safe from falls in their homes.
- Develop our communities to make them more healthy through the planning and licensing processes.
- The Council with Dartford BC were successful in receiving £4.2 million to undertake retro fit work on housing and local businesses. Work is due to commence in South Darenth in a couple of weeks time. The works will include cladding, insulation and potentially new boilers etc., with some contribution from the landlord or homeowners.
- The Switch and Save scheme is highly successful and was designed to reduce energy costs and fuel poverty. So far there have been 89 switches and £24,000 saved .