

In Depth Scrutiny meeting on under occupation, Tuesday 3rd April 2012

Questions to the panel of representatives

Alan Dyer – Planning Service Manager, Sevenoaks District Council

1. How can Planners help to improve down sizing of under occupied Social Housing?
2. Can Planning gains be used to supplement the West Kent HA “Small is Beautiful” scheme?
3. Can Planning gains be used to match fund, with say two Housing Associations, a dedicated Under Occupation Support Officer?
4. Can the synergy between Planning and Housing be improved to reduce under occupation in the social sector?

Deborah White – Housing and Communities Director, West Kent Housing Association

1. What percentage of the total stock do West Kent HA tenants under occupy?
2. In your opinion, what are the main solutions to reducing under occupation in West Kent HA's stock?
3. How many tenants do you assist to move from under occupied housing per annum, under the "Small is Beautiful" scheme?
4. Would more SDC funding for the "Small is Beautiful" scheme help to reduce the number of under occupied properties?
5. Would you consider sharing an Under Occupation Support Officer with Moat (with funding shared by West Kent HA, Moat and SDC)?

Sam Jacobs – Housing Options Manager, MOAT

1. What percentage of the stock do Moat tenants currently under occupy in this district?
2. In your opinion, what are the main solutions to reducing under occupation in the Moat stock?
3. Do you have any incentives in place to encourage tenants to move from under occupied properties?
4. Would you consider sharing an Under Occupation Support Officer with WKHA (with funding shared by West Kent HA, Moat and SDC)?

John Clark – Housing Services Manager, Places for People *(Not able to attend meeting in person, answers provided beforehand).*

1. What percentage of the stock do Places For People tenants under occupy in this district?
2. In your opinion, what are the main solutions to reducing under occupation?
3. Do you have any incentives in place to reduce under occupation?

Brian Horton – Strategic Housing Advisor, Kent County Council

1. Are you aware of any concerns from older people, when considering down sizing in Social housing ?
2. Do you think an Under Occupation Support Officer would help address some of these concerns?
3. In your opinion, do you think in the older people client group, that single or couples would rather have 2 bedrooms when downsizing? If so, for what reasons?
4. Do you have any suggestions on how to reduce under occupation in this district?
5. How else could Kent County Council support us?

Liz Crockford – Housing Enabling Officer, Sevenoaks District Council

1. What are the main client groups under occupying?
2. Which tenants will be affected by the welfare reform?
3. What type of housing do we need to build to improve down -sizing options?
4. Are there any schemes for older people being developed to encourage them to downsize?
5. Is there HCA or CLG funding available to assist with the reduction of under occupation in the Social sector?

Lisa Webb – Housing Initiatives Officer, Sevenoaks District Council

1. What Kent wide schemes are in place to reduce under occupation?
2. Can we bid for any funding to reduce Under occupation in the social sector of this district?
3. Do you have the capacity to include "under occupation" work with the Empty Homes work you currently undertake?
4. Would a dedicated Under Occupation Support Officer working with HA tenants in the district, reduce under occupation?
5. Do you see the Empty Homes initiatives assisting to reduce under occupation?