

## **Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee**

**29 April 2014**

### **Portfolio Holders Report**

#### **Housing Strategy/Policy and Housing needs**

Attended the CIH South East Conference & Exhibition on 5 March in Brighton; and the Capita Housing Conference in London on 31 March where Pat Smith spoke to try and promote HERO. In line with the Council's priority of being financially self-sufficient within a decade looking at ways to maximise income from the HERO and other housing services.

The Capita Conference made it clear to me just what a good housing service SDC runs: Good working relations with Housing Associations; good housing policies; good working relations between members and officers – from the meeting this seems to be best practice but unique! Congratulations to Carol Clark, Pat Smith and the Housing team.

Focusing policy development on the middle income group (£30,000 to £60,000 household income), who are not entitled to social housing but can not afford to buy in the District.

Looking at options at how to square the circle of housing need with our physical planning constraints (Greenbelt, AONB etc). Suggested the setting up of a joint working group between the committee and Local Planning and Environment with Barbara Ayres and representatives from Local Planning & Environment to also look into this issue and try and find solutions.

#### **Community Safety**

Attended Kent's Police & Crime Plan meeting on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February where the Police & Crime Commissioner and Police explained their vision of how the new community safety policing model will work from April this year.

The April edition of 'In Shape's' community safety section focused on e-safety; family fun days will include e-safety packs and we are/will organise e-safety training with KCC's E-Safety Officer: Rebecca Avery. Producing E-safety mouse mats for primary school ICT suites in the district endorsed by Ant Payne (Silly Billy). Asked Lizzy Yarnold if she would do something similar for secondary schools, I am waiting for a response.

Attended Kent's Troubled Families Conference on Friday 7 February. Focusing on Sevenoaks Troubled Families and looking to see how HERO can dovetail into the FIPs (Family Intervention Person), and how housing and community safety can better work together to achieve results on this issue. Met the District's FIP workers on 7 March and Mike Hill (KCC's Cabinet Member responsible for troubled families on 1 April).

Was unable to attend a Slavery and Human Trafficking Conference on 25 March but Pat Smith attended and we will have to see how SDC and our partners respond to the real possibility that slavery and trafficking is happening in the District and how we can help to prevent it.

## **Challenges facing Housing & Community Safety**

- Reducing expenditure and maximising income to help make the council self-sufficient within a decade
- How we can further support the middle income group of people (£33,000 to £60,000) to step onto the housing ladder
- How we can better work with planning to provide the District's housing needs
- Securing HERO
- Changes to DFG funding: challenges and opportunities
- Further consolidation and shared working in environmental health
- Continue with internet safety improvements
- Troubled families – exploring the links between housing and community safety as well as better joint working with KCC
- Slavery and Human Trafficking