

Housing & Health Advisory Committee

28 February 2016

Portfolio Holders Report

Housing

We have received the results of our district-wide data and Arc4 will be presenting the ward data at this evening's meeting. The main challenges that we face are:

- The survey has highlighted that the middle income group (£33,000 to £80,000) is in particular need in our district. They don't qualify for social rented accommodation and can not afford to buy on the open market. This group is heavily dependent on the private rented sector – much more so than other districts.
- Our private rented sector is only 12% of the total (compared to the English average of 18%) and it is serving higher income groups than other districts where it is helping to provide housing for people earning less than £33,000.
- The over 65s is our largest growing age group - housing and community challenges to help them live independent lives for as long as possible. Some are asset rich and cash poor living in deteriorating homes.
- House prices remain very high (up to 17 times average wages). LHA (Local Housing Allowance) is too low for this district and needs to be brought in line with London.
- More pressures on temporary accommodation
- Benefit changes and the potential of increasing evictions
- Keeping homelessness low

The SDC HERO bid for the Prime Minister's trailblazer funding for innovative solutions to combat homelessness was successful – and we were granted nearly £100,000 for three years for extra HERO support and to upskill them into Super HEROs with health skills. Sevenoaks was the only successful single district nation-wide.

The DFG team is now working in Pembury, Sevenoaks and Edenbridge hospitals preparing homes for people while they are in hospital so that they can be discharged sooner. We plan a similar scheme at the Darent Valley and Livingstone hospitals.

I attended the South East England's Council meeting on Friday 27 January which focussed on housing issues that face the South East.

On 23 February I attended the West Kent Housing Association and Sevenoaks District Council's annual liaison meeting.

Health & Leisure

As Chairman of the DCN's Healthy Towns and Villages Network I attended the DCN Conference (2 – 3 February) to present at the Health and Wellbeing workshop. Richard Morris and I talked about implementing the King's Fund Report recommendations in Sevenoaks via the Health Integration

Deal. Richard focussed specifically on planning as a major tool in helping to promote good health and wellbeing.

The West Kent Integration Deal should be operational by the Spring, and the CCGs are interested in taking a more active role in the Health Board – To have four local authorities and the CCGs all pulling together in the same direction should yield excellent health results for the district.

The St John's health pilot is now underway. This is a King's Fund pilot scheme to measure the difference a district council can make with health and wellbeing in a particular area. St John's was chosen as it is relatively small, it has a school, it is close to the leisure centre, it has pockets of deprivation and we have an excellent relationship with the local GP surgery.

The MJ magazine published the following article on loneliness:

<http://www.themj.co.uk/article/author/Cllr-Michelle-Lowe>