

Portfolio Holders Report

Housing

A portfolio holder decision has committed £6m from our section 106 affordable housing contribution for the use of Quercus Housing to supplement and complement our housing association partners in providing extra affordable housing across the district. Quercus Housing is working on its first purchase and I hope to update members and this committee at our next meeting if it goes ahead.

Once the council approves its definition of 'key workers' (coming to this committee for approval tonight) Quercus Housing will be able to use that to help decide housing allocations.

The council has commissioned a specific study to assess older people's housing needs in the future and to include the private sector. This will enable us to much better plan for new housing and related services for this specific group. The study will also link and add to housing intelligence from the local housing needs study, which was completed last year.

We celebrated Rural Housing Day in Leigh on 6 July. We highlighted all that the council is doing to support those living in rural areas from home adaptations to supporting Age UK with their 'Pop up Pop ins' project. It provides holistic support and falls prevention advice to older people and a place where they can make new friends and get involved with their local community. It was also an opportunity to promote our dementia-friendly work, and local MP: Tom Tugendhat officially signed the local pub: The Fleur- de-lis as a member of our Shop Safe Stay Safe scheme. The day was supported by the council's chairman and local members.

We met residents from our previous rural exception site and because they all had a local connection to Leigh they all knew each other - showing the importance of rural exception sites in keeping families and communities together that would otherwise be dispersed.

On Friday 31 August the council supported 'Starts at Home' day for the third time. In 2016 we celebrated the role supported housing plays in our community at the Rockdale Housing Scheme in Sevenoaks, where a number of us wore the ageing suit to see for ourselves the need for supported housing to promote independent living.

Last year we celebrated 'Starts at Home' day with local MP: Gary Johnson at Wellfield housing in Longfield. We met in the local community room and saw for ourselves the importance that community facilities play in the overall wellbeing of residents. Local residents were amazing at getting together to support one another and raise funds for local charities.

This year Michael Fallon MP joined us at the West Kent hub in Swanley that pulls together all their Emerald homes as one community. We also showcased all the

support services available to older people in Swanley from Sencio's Prime Time Active, Dementia cafes to local organised walks such as Every Step Counts.

As a result of the 'Starts at Home' campaign that started in 2016 the government has decided to keep housing benefit in place for 'all those living in supported housing' dropping plans to fund short-term accommodation through ring-fenced grants to councils. I am delighted that the government will continue to fund supported housing and proud of the role this council has played, together with our Housing Association partners, in helping to achieve this result.

Health & Leisure

The West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board has been replaced by a new structure (attached) and part of that is the new members forum made up of the portfolio holders from each of the West Kent Districts, the county council, the CCGs and public health. This new body is chaired by me and we are all hopeful that it will provide a decision-making forum for public health across West Kent. Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley CCG area remain with the older structures for the time being.

Our 'One You Your Home' project in partnership with Age UK (that was shown on BBC South East news) has been shortlisted for a Kent Housing Group Excellence Award for the category of 'Excellence in Delivering Services for Vulnerable People'. The award ceremony will be held on 19 September.

On Saturday 3 November the council will co-host a dementia awareness event: 'You, me and Dementia' with the Sevenoaks Dementia friendly community at the Stag Theatre. The event consists of two plays performed by the Riverside Players based in Eynsford. Proceeds from ticket sales will go to the Eynsford and Farningham Dementia café.

The first play starting at 4pm will be performed by the Youth Group. Called, 'Chocolate Muffins' it shows the impact of dementia through the eyes of a child. The performance would be a good place for children to learn about dementia - particularly if they have a relative or friend who has been diagnosed with it.

This will be followed by an interval and second play: 'Bothered and Bewildered' at 5pm. The play follows Irene and her two daughters Louise and Beth as the girls lose their mum in spirit but not in body. It shows through drama the impact that dementia has not only on the person living with it, but to those closest to them.

Ticket prices for both plays will be £10 for adults and £7 for concessions and go on sale from 1 September from the Stag theatre. The two plays will be supported by a market-place event which is free for people to attend to find out about all the dementia support services available across the district from power of attorney, to dementia cafes, home adaptations and Admiral Nurses.

'You, me and Dementia' will give the council another opportunity to promote Dementia Cafés and other support services including the 'Shop Safe Stay Safe' scheme.

The council has been shortlisted to the final three for the Kent Kudos Awards for an effective sporting partnership for our archery project with the South Downs Archery Club and adults with learning disabilities in Edenbridge.

The summer led cycle rides are proving very successful and popular with all full to capacity