

Council – 20 November 2019

## Public Questions

### From Mrs Lawes to Councillor David Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Special Projects

1. Could you explain why, in 2017 most private properties especially in Folkestone but not exclusively, were rented by London Boroughs for people on their waiting list?

This reduced vastly private rented housing to local families.

Can you tell me why, other Councils like Thanet are still putting people on their waiting list into private properties in Folkestone? Still reducing local housing for residents.

With the lack of rented housing for locals especially in Folkestone, what plans are in place to improve quality and quantity housing for local families?

### ANSWER

Having regard to the first part of your question we have no evidence to support the suggestion that London Boroughs are accessing private sector accommodation in the district, to house people from their waiting lists in settled accommodation.

We are aware that some other neighbouring councils are placing in the area for use as temporary accommodation, but those clients will be returning to their own areas in order to access long term accommodation.

The council is working to increase the availability and quality for private rented accommodation in the district. In 2017 FHDC introduced Property Solutions, this is a scheme that works on the premise that the local support we can offer to private landlords is far in excess of some of the financial incentives offered by London Boroughs and others. Property Solutions is now the fastest growing of such schemes in Kent and between Property Solutions and ABC Lettings that we jointly run with Ashford Borough Council we now have 150 properties on board growing at a rate of about 10 – 15 per month especially following our successful landlord event last month, these are all private rented sector properties.

In addition to the above we also work with Folkestone clients on a case by case basis for individual properties that clients identify.

Property Solutions is part funded by central government monies in a joint bid by FHDC, Dover and Thanet (Private Rented Sector Access fund) As such both Dover and Thanet are looking to replicate the success of the FHDC Property Solutions Scheme in their own areas.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Following on from this the Council only started recording numbers in 2018 of the people moving into the district from other districts and at the same time moved 250 from Folkestone and Hythe to other districts into temporary accommodation such as the likes of Sittingbourne, having seen the numbers. How many have now been moved back into the district due to work, schools, families and children's friends and is this some sort of engineering with the people of Folkestone?

**ANSWER:**

No numbers to hand, however we do share with neighbouring districts it is a way for us to get people housed. No engineering of sort that I know of.

**From Mrs Sacre to Councillor John Collier, Cabinet Member for Property Management and Grounds Maintenance**

2. In spring this year it was understood our public toilets, located within the bus station, yet owned by the shopping precinct management, in Folkestone, would be reopening shortly, following restoration work. To an onlooker it appears no such work has been undertaken, in the preparation for the reopening.

When will the toilets be reopened for the public's use?

**ANSWER:**

The lease is currently being drawn up between the legal teams of the Council and the Shopping Centre owners.

Quotations have been received for the renovation works. As soon as the lease completes works will commence.

We hope to have the toilets open for Christmas.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

I am in no doubt that the Folkestone Management team are disinclined to open this much needed necessity would the Council therefore consider a compulsory purchase order on the owners of the toilets?

**ANSWER:**

No need to do so it is proceeding.