

**Council 26 February**  
**Agenda item 9 (Portfolio Holder reports)**

**1. Report of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy**

**Planning**

At a strategic level, we have become concerned that the Government's housing targets will have a significant impact on our 5 year land supply. We have issued our Call for Sites, which signals to commencement of our local plan process. The call for sites has already stimulated a great deal of interest. The Government has increased housing number targets, in their bid to increase housing delivery. The planning department will be working very hard to balance the Government's demand for more housing against the specific requirements of our local communities. The planning department is currently very busy with the normal work load. We are managing a great variety of applications as well as strategic district wide functions. We are in discussions with Central Government regarding our detailed response to the new Government's Planning Reform consultation. Our submission will be discussed and agreed by Cabinet, all Members of the Council have had the draft document and made comments where appropriate.

As a planning authority we have some concerns regarding the Government's desire to streamline the planning process and the possible reduction in the local democratic process that feeds and informs planning. It is worth mentioning that the Government has an ambitious target to build 1.5M homes during this parliament, this should be applauded because, as a nation we are in a housing crisis, but we do not feel that our planning departments has contributed to the problem, we have consistently met the targets the Government have set.

**Otterpool Park**

The Otterpool team continue to meet regularly with Homes England, we have agreed a Collaboration Agreement, to work with Homes England for 6 months to see if we can agree a strategic partnership and make a joint bid to Treasury for the funding required. We are in communication with the Government at a high level. We continue to update our two new MPs for Otterpool Park, outlining the latest issues and opportunities. We also continue to liaise with the five parishes that make up the Otterpool site.

We are updating and developing our own piece of financial modelling work, on a daily basis, in conjunction with Homes England, to rigorously test the viability of the overall scheme. We now have a draft Heads of Terms to form a Collaboration Agreement, which, subject to final examination and legal advice we will shortly sign.

The Government has set up the New Towns Task Force under the Chairmanship of Sir Michael Lyons. We have responded to a call for information from Sir Michael, we have already made contact with the Task Force and attended a meeting at their offices.

The planning application to build the Waste Water Treatment Works has been submitted to KCC. We are in discussions with our neighbours Ashford and Canterbury with regard to reducing the impact of Phosphates and Nitrates into the River Stour, the

Waste Water Treatment Works will clean the water in the Stour as it passes through Otterpool.

The business case to provide Solar Energy to Otterpool Park has been approved by Cabinet, this is the development's route to Net Zero and we now await a planning application from SYNG.

The next 6 months will be very busy at Otterpool, there is still a great deal of work to do in order to progress Otterpool Park and conclude these negotiations to begin the 21st Century New Town.

## **2. Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance**

February: this is going to be about budgets...

Firstly I want to thank Daniella, Jonathan, Lydia and Monisola (in alphabetical order!) as a Finance Team for their heroic efforts to get this budget together.

There is always a scramble to meet the required timetable to get the budget together. The final Local Government Settlement was only actually published in February, and numbers always "move about a bit" right up to the final agreement.

That said I was delighted that Cabinet passed our budget to go to Full Council at the end of February (with whatever tweaks and amends the world has thrown at us by then). I'm also grateful, as ever, for the scrutiny and thoughts of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub committee who got the first look at that budget before it went to Cabinet.

This is a budget against the backdrop of a difficult local government settlement. For example, despite the government saying they would fully fund the cost of NI increases for local Councils like ours, they did not. Of the extra £450k cost to this Council, the Government has only funded about half, leaving us to find the rest.

That said, despite not cutting services, absorbing inflation increases, pricing in staff salary increases, and not increasing our Council Tax above to 3% cap, this budget again balances. It is not funded by raiding the General reserve. Second year running.

It should be said though that it DOES rely on using much of underspend now forecast from this year to support the budget next year, and also relies on our spending ringfenced reserves – those given to us for specific purposes, like helping the homeless, on those specific purposes. But with that said: we will not be using General Reserves to support next years budget if it passes. And we have reshaped reserves to deal with some of the expected pressures coming our way over the year. We'd love not to spend it on those pressures but instead on services for residents, but you should budget for the worst, and hope for the best.

Thank you to all those involved in inputting into, commenting on, scrutinising and discussing the budget: it really is appreciated!

## **3. Report of Councillor Mike Blakemore, the Cabinet Member for Community and Collaboration**

The latest meeting of Folkestone & Hythe Health Alliance was held at Hub on the Beach in Greatstone to reflect the need to focus on this part of the district and its particular challenges, including deprivation, an older age profile and physical isolation. I am looking forward to joining one of the two task groups to emerge from what was a very productive meeting. This will look at service navigation while the other will focus on transport.

I also took part in the Kent Health & Wellbeing Board, which meets once a year, where the health inequalities prevalent in coastal districts were mentioned. I asked the Director of Public Health for more information about the programme of work led by Professor Sir Michael Marmot via Kent County Council (KCC), which will attempt to address these. I was told that the focus will be on tackling deprivation through creating jobs and the project will work with the education, criminal justice and private sectors. The Board endorsed the Kent County Council Integrated Care Strategy (KCC ICS) Delivery Plan, which recognises that the health and wellbeing of the people of Kent is not improving and, in some areas, shows signs of declining, requiring a focus on the full breadth of wider determinants of health including socioeconomic factors. Staying with health, I was pleased to visit the physiotherapy team at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone, with Cllr Jones, to hear about their work and offer suggestions for strengthening links with the community, across the district.

I was pleased to introduce another successful Networking Event, this time at Hawkinge Community Centre, with a capacity attendance by more than 50 organisations. Other meetings included Folkestone Community Forum, New Folkestone Society's meeting looking at creating a partnership of community organisations, the District Food Network and one of our regular catch-ups with community groups organising electrical recycling schemes. I was impressed to hear that Go Folkestone have collected about 1,500 kilos of electrical items since early October, with 112 items made suitable for re-use and passed to Sunflower House and local charity shops. Go Folkestone are looking for more volunteers to help with their Saturday collections in Folkestone town centre. I attended Folkestone Town Council's Holocaust commemoration on 27 January and, more happily, the launch of this year's Music in May earlier this month, which promises another exciting programme of performances, large and small, together with music workshops in May and later in the year.

I was at County Hall again for a meeting of the Police & Crime Panel, during which we unanimously approved the Commissioner's proposal to increase the police precept by £14 per year (or 5.5%) to £270.15 for an average Band D property, and provided comments on the Commissioner's plan for 2025-29. Prior to this meeting, we had two informal briefings as the precept proposal was developed.

Finally, last week I joined a meeting with KCC and others to discuss how to progress in a timely fashion the community proposal for Folkestone Library which this council supported more than a year ago and the county council last month formally agreed to discuss.

#### **4. Report of Councillor Polly Blakemore, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services & Building Control**

At the end of January I attended the Transport for the South East (TfSE) stakeholder forum in Westminster which was an opportunity to feed into their emerging strategy extending up to 2030. I took part in a couple of workshops, one on Inclusion &

Integration and one on Decarbonisation. There were others on Resilience, Strategic Connectivity and Sustainable Growth with a pooling of ideas at the end of the afternoon. TfSE want individuals as well as public bodies to feed into the process so do go online, have a read and have your say. FHDC will be responding to the consultation which has a closing date of Friday 7th March. The final strategy is due to be agreed in October before being submitted to government.

The CPZ Zone H extension, along Grimston Avenue and surrounding roads in Folkestone, has now been rolled out and is fully operational with the scheme being closely monitored for any teething troubles. My thanks go to Paul Thompson and Fred Miller who worked tirelessly to see that the scheme was implemented despite the weather being against them. The informal consultation for controlled parking in the Castle Hill Avenue, Ingles Road and Cheriton Gardens area closed on Friday 7th February and officers are currently analysing the results before presenting their recommendations. The statutory consultation on a small scheme in Tudor Road, Cheriton, closed on Friday 14th February. The ANPR trial in the Sandgate Road car park is set to continue for another year to give it a chance to bed in before any decision is made on the future of ANPR in the district.

On Tuesday 25th February, bus users will have the opportunity to present their ideas for service improvements in the district at this month's meeting of the District Focus Group. The meeting has been scheduled to give residents an opportunity to feed into KCC's Bus Grant funding decision-making process and local bus users have been working hard to present their input for consideration.

The Food Safety and Health & Safety Team are back up to full strength with two new recruits having recently joined. To build on their much-needed capacity, interviews have recently been held for a third Environmental Health Officer. There are also plans to recruit an additional officer to the Licensing Team. These two teams have been working exceptionally hard under difficult constraints over the past year or so but now look set to thrive under the leadership of Nicola Wilson.

It was fun to spend an afternoon playing with clay at Strange Cargo's workshop in Cheriton on a dreary January afternoon. The White Cliffs Community Rail Partnership, which I am excited to be a part of, is backing a project comprising an expanding collection of artworks on display at Folkestone West station. Together with my fellow Cheriton ward councillors and other local supporters prepared to get their hands dirty (literally), we spent a couple of hours creating our clay models, based on the appropriate theme of Lost Property. Once the bronzes have been cast by foundryman, Andrew Baldwin, there will be a ceremonial unveiling scheduled in the Spring.

The next Joint Transportation Board is on Monday 17th February with both Stagecoach buses and the Active Travel Cheriton to Folkestone scheme on the agenda. More on these issues in my next update.

## **5. Report of Councillor Gary Fuller, the Cabinet Member for Resident Engagement and Accountability**

As you'd expect, this month's update initially focuses on elections. Not only is there a New Romney Town Council by-election on the 27<sup>th</sup> but we also have KCC elections coming up. This will be the first big re-registration exercise for postal voters since the change in electoral registration rules, so please do make sure you're eligible to vote.

There are already a couple of new polling stations this time around, at the Dugout in Folkestone and the Hythe Sports Pavillion. We held off on booking polling stations where we could while we waited for the Government decision on the elections, partly to save KCC potentially having to refund us a lot of money (they offered), hence there may be further changes.

In information governance, we have begun to achieve our targets for successfully providing information to residents that have made FOI requests, EIRs, and SARs. This will need to be monitored, and I'd like to see the team expanded, but it shouldn't be underestimated how much hard work has gone into getting us caught up, and how stressful it can be to gather vast amounts of information in very limited timeframes.

We're due to review various policies as the year progresses. These include, but are not limited to, the data retention policy/schedule, the transparency code, and the publication scheme. I look forward to seeing draft versions of these soon and am keen that they should encourage us to be even more open with our residents, with sharing information being the default not the exception.

On complaints, we are sticking to our expected response times, aided by the fact we have a complaints officer that handles stage one complaints. There are some changes coming in April that will result in us merging our expected response times for housing and other functions. This should result in an improved experience for all residents, though, so the change will be welcome.

In customer services, we've made changes to the security arrangements and opening times of the customer access point which have resulted in a safer environment for everyone and thus will continue for the foreseeable future. We will also be working with Kent Enablement Service on a trial basis in the next few months to offer additional support to residents.

We're exploring the possibility of using AI chatbots and voicebots, with an aim to freeing up officer time for more complex queries. This is very early stages and will need to offer significant benefits before we commit to its use. Any such facility will have to offer the ability to break out of it and speak to a real person, for example.

Last, but not least, we move to ICT. The trend towards using My Account and online forms continues, with us just shy of our 80% target for My Account uptake. We're developing various online systems to replace paper and spreadsheets and make it easier for residents to access our services, with bookings for Hythe Pool being looked at soon.

The team are also exploring the potential benefits of various systems and technologies alongside online forms and My Account, such as Power BI dashboards and Alexa skills. I'm particularly interested to see what the team develop for smart speakers, not just for their usefulness to residents, but also to get my proverbial geek on.

Everyone employed by the council continues to work incredibly hard for residents despite the uncertainty we all face because of local government reorganisation. Despite suggestions from the Government that this is a bottom-up process (it isn't), I think it is important to recognise that this is being done to officers, and to respect the

level of integrity and professionalism they continue to show despite the current circumstance.

## **6. Report of Councillor Rich Holgate, the Cabinet Member for Place Plan, Heritage, Tourism and District Economy**

### **Tourism**

The revamp of <https://www.folkestoneandhythe.co.uk/> has been completed and has gone live to coincide with a tourism campaign aimed at boosting visitors during the shoulder seasons.

The campaign – ‘Extraordinary Experiences Await You’ – will run across print, digital and social channels including bespoke e-newsletters and online advertising during February and early March.

A new Folkestone map has been created to provide inspiration and information to visitors. The map will be printed and distributed to hotels and attractions in Folkestone as well as being available online.

The next Folkestone and Hythe Tourism Board will take place in March and businesses attending will be able to find out and feedback about the various tourism interventions currently ongoing.

### **Heritage Strategy**

At the January Cabinet meeting, Members considered the revised heritage strategy. The draft strategy continues to set out how the districts heritage can play a clear and positive role in the future, but it has been updated to take account of changes in legislation and council policy. It has also been redrafted to make it more accessible. It was agreed at Cabinet that this draft should be subject to a focused consultation to help shape the final document.

### **Folca**

Folca 2 LUF Works - development and design of these initial works to the building continues and it is envisaged that this will start in June 2025 for a 6 month period. Folca 1 - the options for Folca 1 will be brought to Cabinet for a decision on the 26 March.

Folca 2 occupation plan (incl medical centre) - work continues on the occupation plan for Folca 2, with a report presented at the April Cabinet

### **Folkestone – A Brighter Future (FABF)**

KCC as our delivery partner issued a contract award on 10th January and contract signature is imminent. Once signed, communications are planned for the announcement of the contractor appointment. The construction timeline is expected to be 16 months in duration, and we await an updated schedule of works which will provide detail of the sequence of construction activity.

A number of mandatory consultations have taken place or are in progress, including the change of use application for Bouverie Square. This is expected to be considered at the Planning Committee on 18th March.

Once contracted the contractor will appoint a Public Liaison Officer who will work with us to deliver the fourth public engagement, advising the public of the final design and detail of the planned construction activity. We anticipate the public engagement event will take place during April and the team are actively developing an engagement plan. The engagement will once again use the digital twin to help demonstrate what the final design will look like. The team behind the digital twin software have been commissioned to deliver a virtual experience of the area in and around Middelburg Square.

### **Town Centre Activation – Folke About Town**

Following the successful pilot initiatives as part of the Folke About Town series, officers have received and are reviewing the output evaluation that will inform the planned Town Centre Operating Model (TCOM) and decisions required to support implementation of the TCOM will be subject to approval by CLT and then Cabinet. Consideration is being given to what pilot events could happen during 25/26 to maintain momentum but mindful of construction timelines.

### **UKSPF**

Cost of living support - A total of 377 low-income households in the district have received support via UKSPF funding FY year to date. Examples of support provided includes boiler servicing and replacements, oil for off grid homes & white goods. A significant number of beds and mattresses have also been provided, which has been of particular benefit to some residents who had been sleeping on the floor.

Skills – Our partnership with East Kent College continues, with them delivering fully funded courses in the green, construction & retrofit sectors. Having enrolled over 100 individuals on courses to date, they are confident on meeting the target numbers and fully utilising the allocated budget of £220,000 (includes £20K for marketing and promotion) by end of March 2025.

Funding of bespoke skills training for employers has also been awarded to 7 businesses/ organisations, to the total value of £41,122. This almost utilises the £42K that was set aside for this purpose. Businesses benefiting from this include Screen South (Folkestone) and Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (New Romney).

### **Rural England Prosperity Fund**

The scheme is now closed to any further applications, as the full 2 year allocation of £362,868 has been awarded. A broad range of 22 projects have been supported for funding which include, amongst others, expansion of 5G wireless broadband offering on the Romney Marsh where coverage can be poor, and updated facilities for a popular canoe club. Several green projects were also approved, including electric vehicle charging points and several solar PV and battery storage systems. While there are the obvious environmental benefits to this, there is the added benefit of increasing available funds for community organisations to utilise elsewhere due to drastically reduced energy bills. Following a wider UKSPF budget & spend review, a further £28,603 was allocated to top up the grants awarded to successful applicants in the final round of decision panels. These applicants had originally been awarded reduced sums due to the limited amount remaining in the fund. This was very well received by the applicants, and helps ensure that the projects are fully completed.

### **Romney Marsh Work**

The Romney Marsh Officer has now been filled and we are delighted to say that Jo Wyn Carter will officially take up her new role from March 3RD 2025.

The new role will now enable a dedicated resource to work with local key stakeholders and communities to create a economic action plan aimed at enhancing new opportunities within the Romney Marsh area.

## **7. Report of Councillor Stephen Scoffham, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity**

### Green grants scheme

The Green Grants scheme which was recently approved by Cabinet following a review by the Overview and Scrutiny committee is now about to be launched. Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds has been set aside to enable community groups, schools, small businesses, charities and town and parish councils to take a lead in projects which they themselves have initiated. The aim of the scheme is to promote climate resilience, nature recovery and community well-being in line with the emergency declarations that the council has already made.

There will be four award categories:

- 1) Community climate action micro-grants (up to £1,000)
- 2) Social and community grants (up to £10,000)
- 3) Small business, community groups, charity and parish premises grants (up to £20,000)
- 4) Rewilding, replanting and wildflower meadows (up to £10 000)

Please do draw the scheme to the attention of parish councils, local groups and organisations. It would be encouraging to get a wide range of applications from across the district.

### Sustainable Futures Forum

The Sustainable Futures Forums that were organised and delivered by Liu Batchelor in the autumn attracted around 90 participants and were a huge success. The next event will be held in April and will focus on enabling climate action. The programme will start with a question and answer session on how to apply for funding from the 'green grants' scheme. This will be followed by a panel session in which previous grant recipients will talk about how their projects have grown and developed. The underlying principle of the forum is that it should be community-led and responsive to local needs. As such it illustrates how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 17 partnerships) can be applied in practice.

### Eco-champions

A group of around ten local environmental activists have enrolled for an eight-week eco-champions programme that started earlier this month. This provides coaching on public speaking and social media skills. The participants have a wide range of interests but they all want to promote their organisation and activities. The opportunity to network and raise awareness is an additional benefit.

### Elm tree project

I am in the early stages of liaising with Kent Plan tree about replanting elm trees on a section of the Royal Military canal. When the canal was first constructed it was extensively planted with elms to stabilise the banks but these were lost to disease in the 1960s and 1970s. Kent Plan tree are able to source what are believed to be disease

resistant trees and I am hopeful that we can find a way to work together. As well as their heritage significance along the canal, elm trees support a rather rare type of moth – the white letter hairstreak moth - which is of high conservation value.

#### Geopark boards

It's a year since we first started talking with the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB) unit about putting up interpretation panels at some of the Geosites in the district. Geosites are sites of geological interest across the aspiring UNESCO Cross-Channel Global Geopark, where people can visit and interact with our geological heritage. These unique places represent the incredible variety found in our landscape, based on their geological, educational, or cultural importance.

I am now delighted to report that the first two of these will be erected in the spring at Farthing Common on the North Downs and the East Cliff, Folkestone. The East Cliff panel will be of particular interest to local residents as it focuses on the megaflood that cut Britain off from mainland Europe many thousands of years ago. This is a fascinating piece of geological history that has only recently been discovered.

#### Heritage ponds

The Kent Downs National Landscape team is also working on a project to restore heritage ponds (dew and sole ponds) in the National Landscape area. The ponds are important for wildlife and have considerable landscape value but have often fallen into disrepair. I am liaising with the team to see how we can best work together to restore the ponds in our district.

### **8. Report of Councillor Jeremy Speakman, the Cabinet Member for Assets and Operations**

As well as casework and attending meetings relating to my Hythe Rural Ward, I continue to have regular meetings and correspondence with relevant officers and residents on matters specifically relating to my portfolio.

#### Assets

- The Road of Remembrance remains closed until August 2025. KCC have completed the ground investigation works on the area of landslip to identify the subsurface conditions. The design works are currently being undertaken to establish the best way to stabilise the cliff face. Investigation works are continuing for the Coastal Park area above the playground, and engineers are working on possible options to stabilise the cliff face and the Vinery area and the earlier slip above the Cow Path. These works are expected to take place in the autumn of 2025.
- A consultation is underway to ask the public what they would like to see in the replacement Coastal Park Play Area. Over 950 responses have been received to date. Following the close of the consultation officers will present a report to cabinet seeking approval for the project.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team are progressing well with their winter works. The winter servicing of machines has been completed and the teams are preparing for the new season. Arrangements for handing back the highway verge mowing contract to KCC are in hand and KCC will commence the cutting of the district verges in March / April.

- Radnor Park Lodge – East Kent College vacated the premises earlier in the year, dilapidation works have been completed. The Council has selected a new tenant following a marketing exercise. The lease is expected to be finalised in the next month or so to allow the café to be open for the summer.
- Biggins Wood – The sale of the site was completed before Christmas. The scheme will regenerate an old derelict brick works and bring forward 5600sqm of commercial space and 77 affordable homes for residents in our district. Works are expected to commence on site in the next couple of months.
- Ship Street – The planning application is expected to be submitted in the Spring and marketing of the site will run in parallel.
- High View – Legal work is ongoing to finalise the sale of the site which is expected to complete in the next 3 months.
- The Coast Drive scheme continues on target and the development contract has been awarded. Works are expected to commence at the end of February and complete in the Autumn this year when the new beach huts will be available to rent.
- Folca development: Officers are working hard carrying out the agreed actions from the last Cabinet report. An immediate priority is to ensure that the LUF funded works are carried out ensuring the building and roof are watertight. These works will be tendered shortly. The wider business case for FOLCA 2 and Options for FOLCA 1 will be considered by Cabinet in March / April.
- Following Kent Wildlife Trust vacating the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre in July the Council continues to be actively engaged in round table discussions with local organisations and council representatives to gather ideas about how this site could evolve. A survey to canvas the views of the wider local community will be issued shortly. The lease for the café has been advertised and it is hoped that this will bring in a small income to help manage the wider area.

## Waste Management

- Ongoing liaison with the public and the Waste Management Team to ensure that day to day issues and complaints from the public relating to refuse collection and street cleansing are promptly addressed.
- Ongoing review of current waste management and collection arrangements to ensure maximum efficiency and value for money for residents.
- Ongoing liaison with enforcement and Waste Management Team to resolve flytipping issues. Fly tipping in rural areas appears to be on the rise.
- Regular liaison meetings with Hythe Environmental Community Group and other local groups to look at options for the expansion of their e-waste recycling scheme, which has enjoyed much local success.
- The Waste Management Team continues to work on the 'Raise the Rate' campaign, with aim of increasing the district's recycling rate. The most recent project has been the 'food waste sticker campaign'.
- Veolia continue to perform very well in terms of low rates of missed bins, operating well within the contract standard of less than 50 misses per 100,000 collections.
- Management of waste and recycling remains high profile nationally and the team continues to work in anticipation of the changes and additional requirements placed on local authorities by central government.
- A re-route of the garden waste rounds is taking place in February. The purpose of this is to create greater efficiencies to allow for the scheme to grow in terms of subscribers. Letters have gone out but only addresses affected by the changes.

## **9. Report of Councillor Rebecca Shoob, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness**

A huge amount of work has been done on the HRA budget to ensure that we continue to provide an excellent housing service and, crucially, allow us to steadily increase our housing stock.

I'm delighted to confirm that we have now completed on 9 new properties at Arras Way in Folkestone. These are 8 x 2-bed and 1 x 1-bed, with solar panels and air source heat pumps making them highly energy efficient to live in. New tenants should be moving into their brand new homes in the next couple of weeks.

I was very pleased to have the chance to look at the newly restored property at Augusta Gardens in Folkestone, which has brought forward 5 flats for private rent. The before and after pictures are really quite staggering! The work to bring this property back to live was facilitated by a loan from the No Use Empty scheme, which the council operates in partnership with KCC. Before the works, this property was a real eyesore, so not only does this bring a property back into use to provide homes but it makes a huge impact on the surrounding area and beyond.

Work is ongoing towards accreditation with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. Staff have started training and a housing domestic abuse policy has been approved by cabinet. A key aim of the policy and accreditation is to ensure that staff are confident in how to support any domestic abuse survivors with their housing issues.

SWEP continues to be implemented during the very cold weather for anyone not already accommodated through the winter shelter.

Finally, along with officers, I joined a very informative meeting arranged by Cllr Cooper with Liverpool City Council to hear about their experience of implementing selective licensing for the rented private sector. It was eye opening to hear about their particular challenges and the level of criminal exploitation in the local private rented sector. Back at FHDC, work continues on the opposition business passed last October to look at private rented sector enforcement, with a presentation due to be given to Overview and Scrutiny on 18 February.