

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**15 MARCH 2016**

**REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL**

**HOUSING CRISIS – WHERE ARE THE YOUNG GOING TO LIVE?**

At the meeting of the Council held on 2 March 2016, the following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor McKay:

In the Borough of Maidstone as elsewhere in the UK we face a housing crisis. We are doing the first part to identify sites through the Local Plan suitable for housing development (the 18,560 housing units). Current Council Affordable Housing policy relating to new housing developments, adopted in December 2006, is for sites of 15 units or more to have 40% affordable housing.

However our looming housing crisis is disproportionately affecting the young and vulnerable. Whilst there are people sleeping on the streets in Maidstone, they only represent the easily identified need. Most homelessness is hidden as people are forced to remain at home with their parents, move around people's houses to find a bed, or live in unfit and overcrowded accommodation.

Whilst recognising that the Council has been trying to tackle people sleeping on the streets, and has set up a number of emergency hostel type facilities, as the statutory housing authority for the Borough of Maidstone, this Council has a responsibility to address this.

This Council therefore resolves to do the following during the next few months:

1. Actively work with private landlords to identify empty housing units and work with them to provide bed spaces for the homeless.
2. Engage with young people in the Borough about their housing needs, via a public consultation exercise.
3. Identify over occupied property and develop procedures to work with the relevant occupiers/landlords to address the problem.
4. Organise a Housing Conference around the topic of "Where Are the Young Going to Live" of statutory authorities, local active housing associations and the voluntary sector to propose a multi-sector approach to tackling these issues in the Borough of Maidstone.
5. Request a report back to the next Council meeting on the implementation of measures 1 - 3 above and progress towards the Housing Conference in 4 above.

The motion, having been moved and seconded, was referred to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee for consideration.

**RECOMMENDED: That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee consider the motion entitled "Housing Crisis – Where are the Young Going to Live?"**

**NOTE: A briefing note provided by the Head of Housing and Community Services to assist the Council in its consideration of the motion is attached as Appendix A.**