

Folkestone & Hythe District Council (F&HDC)

*A local authority perspective on the process of self-referral to
Regulator of Social Housing*

Presentation to LGA 21 November 2022

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www.folkestone-hythe.co.uk



Introduction

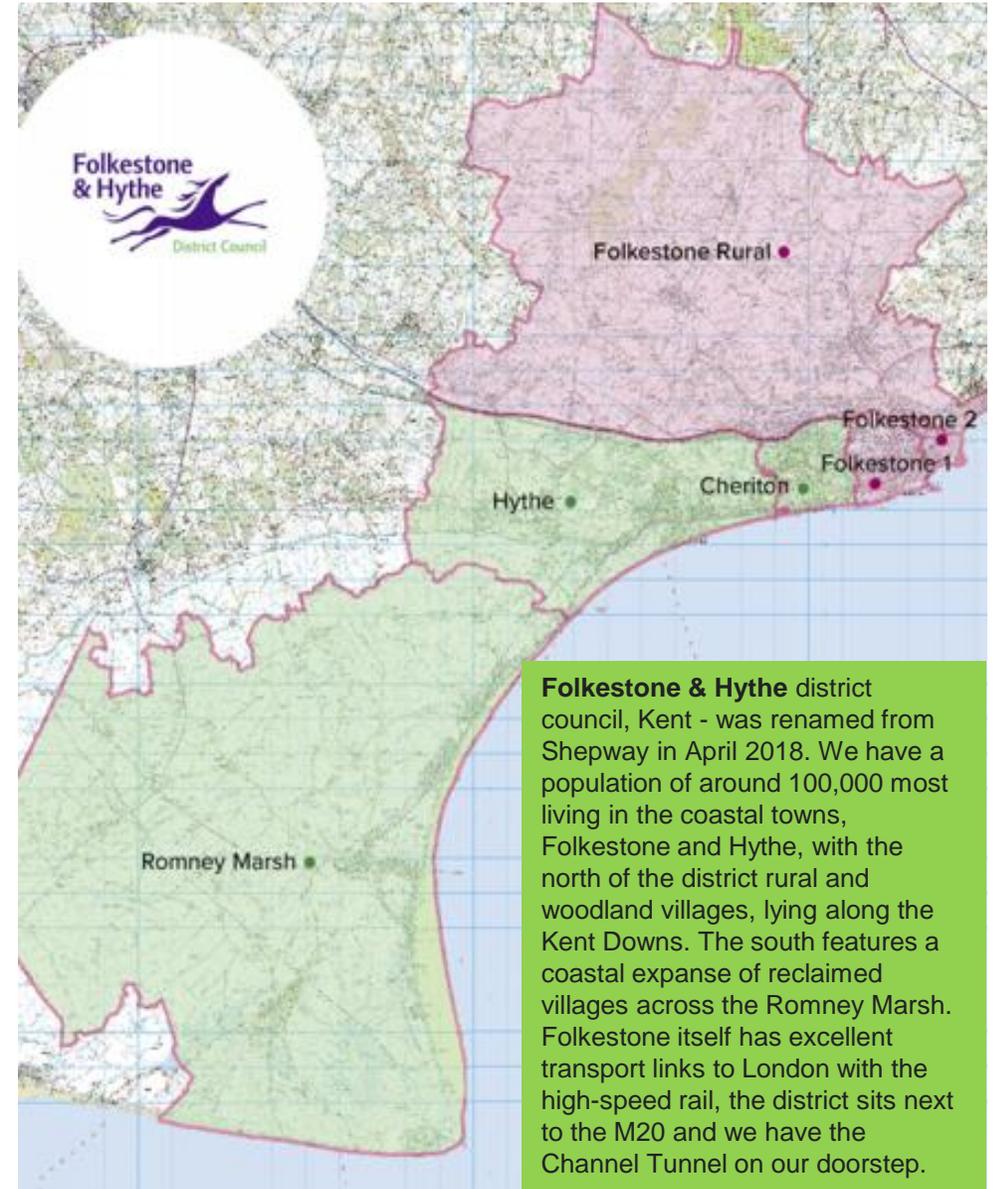
F&HDC Housing Landlord Service Journey

3,400 council managed homes, large geographical area, diverse tenant base, 18% of stock Independent Living (Sheltered Housing)

October 2020 housing service came back in-house from East Kent Housing ALMO - Regulatory notice for H&S non-compliance

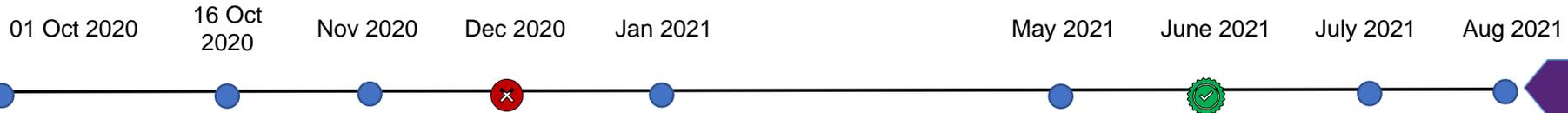
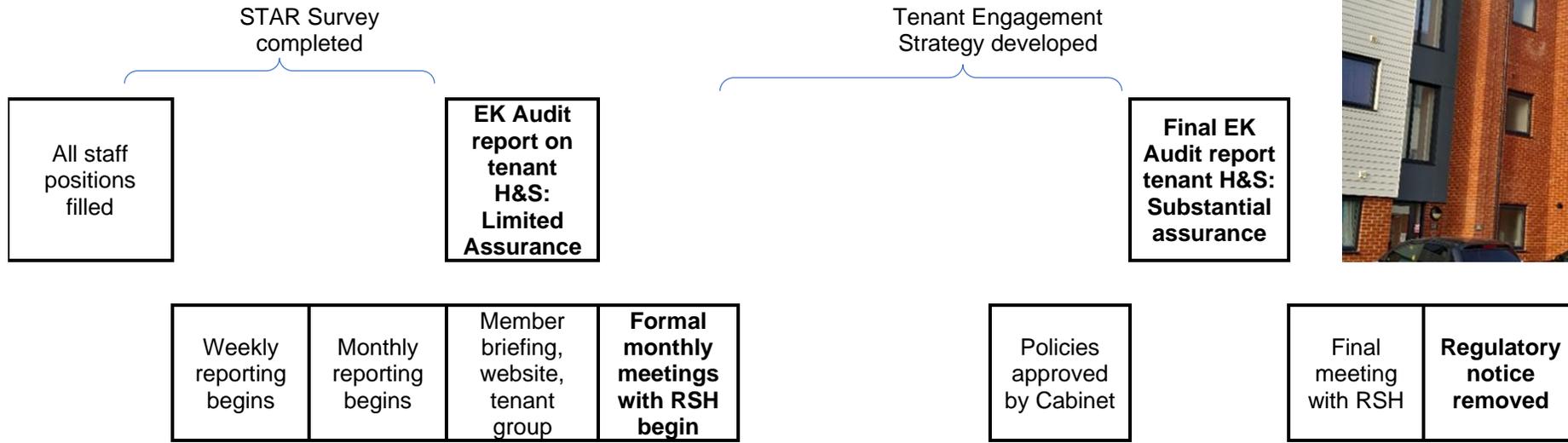
Focus on performance, building a new landlord service, investing in improving our stock - the Vision: -

“To create a world-class housing service - one that is digitally enabled, easy to do business with, and where tenants (customers) are at the heart of everything we do.”



Folkestone & Hythe district council, Kent - was renamed from Shepway in April 2018. We have a population of around 100,000 most living in the coastal towns, Folkestone and Hythe, with the north of the district rural and woodland villages, lying along the Kent Downs. The south features a coastal expanse of reclaimed villages across the Romney Marsh. Folkestone itself has excellent transport links to London with the high-speed rail, the district sits next to the M20 and we have the Channel Tunnel on our doorstep.

Our journey to compliance



Systems/mechanisms in place

EK Audit on tenant H&S

Internal audits: remedial actions, verify stats, test procedures

Development of new H&S Policies and Procedures



Tenant Satisfaction - using the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Your views and our actions

Repairs and maintenance



Monitor contractor performance, set realistic but challenging targets	Ensure repairs contractors act on resident feedback	Improve communication with tenants regarding repairs	Publicise info on repairs and maintenance work and programmes
Publish our standard timescales for routine and urgent works	Keep residents informed if a timescale can't be met	Communicate timescales for planned works and publicise outcomes	Ensure communication to all affected residents is timely

General satisfaction and neighbourhood

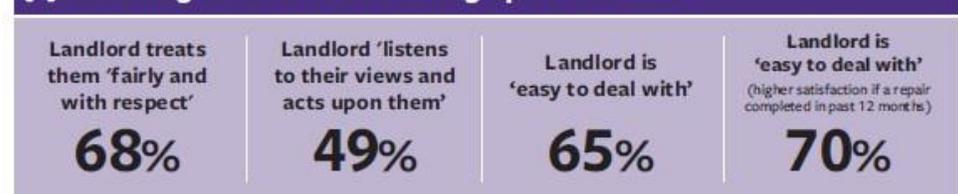


Publicise the results of estate walkabouts	Introduce a rolling programme of tenant perception surveys	Increase digital engagement and digital inclusion	Develop and maintain a good relationship with Police/PCSOs to tackle ASB
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- June 2022 – F&HDC Tenant-wide satisfaction survey using the draft Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
- Developed **Action Plan** in partnership with tenants, to commit to improvements 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Continuously review and improve our communication with tenants	<h4>Join the conversation</h4> <p>We want to hear your views and how you think we can improve the housing service. Visit our website to find out more about how you can help us shape the service you receive.</p> <p>folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/council-tenancy/get-involved</p>
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Listening to tenants and acting upon feedback

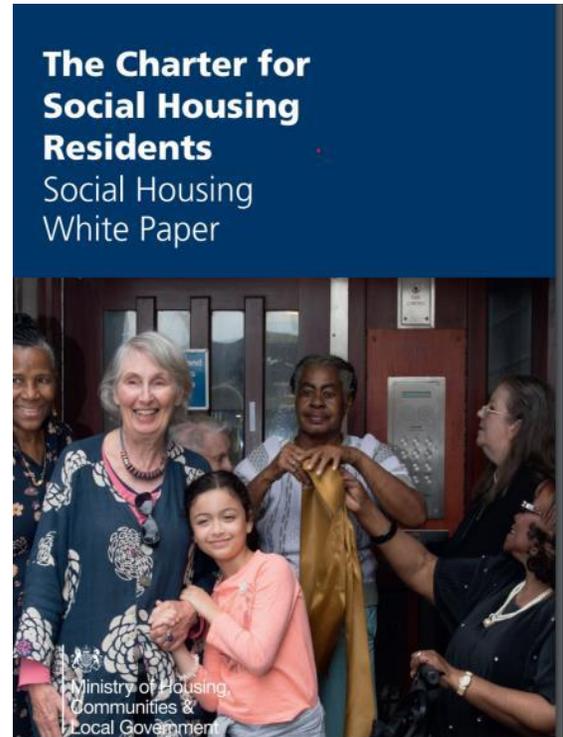


Publicise what services are delivered by the housing service	Raise profile of the housing service at community events	
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New consumer regulation regime

F&HDC Tenant Engagement Strategy - Hearing our Tenants' Voice

- Charter for Social Housing Residents - Social Housing Regulation Bill
- **Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard** will come into effect on **1 April 2023** – the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) will start inspections of local authority housing providers April 2024
- 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) - 10 management information measures / 12 perception measures
- Building Safety Act / Decent Homes Standard - Health & Safety Compliance remains a high priority for everyone
- Tenant perception - more subjective TSMs e.g. ***Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods*** - is this a challenge for local authorities?
- Working ***with*** the RSH to ensure we can demonstrate lasting service outcomes and accountability, to those living in council owned and managed homes and communities.



F&HDC's approach to the new consumer regulation regime

Challenges:

- Tenancy sustainment /Rising rent arrears - maximising income to the Housing Revenue Account
- Tackling climate change – Net Zero Carbon / Retrofitting old stock / rising supply chain and materials costs.

Additional challenges faced by local authority social housing landlords:

- Elected Members – F&HDC's ambitious affordable homes New Build programme
- Wider council remit and performance can impact on tenant satisfaction.

Conclusion:

- Co-regulation - supports local authorities to deliver better landlord services for their tenants
- *Mutual respect and trust!*
- Embrace benchmarking / sharing sector good practice - openness and transparency with tenants, Members, staff *and* RSH
- Involve tenants in your journey..... they live in our homes, so are the true '*experts*'.



Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Q&As

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