

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022

### REPRESENTATION FROM COUNCILLOR WILKINSON IN RELATION TO ITEM 6 ON THE AGENDA

#### Coastal deprivation: To discuss issues currently being faced in coastal communities

Deprivation in coastal communities can be seen in many different forms:

- HEALTH:

Professor Chris Whitty clearly outlined the health problems within coastal communities in his CMO Annual Report 2022. They explore the benefits of coastal living. The coast has much to offer with research suggesting that there is a protective effect to health and wellbeing from living on the coast. Running through the report is the fact that coastal communities have multiple, overlapping but addressable health problems. If we are serious about improving the health of the nation, coastal communities are a good place to start.

We have wards in our authority that are amongst the 10 most deprived areas in the country.

- HOUSING:

One of the main problems being faced within the coastal community is the massive disparity between house prices and the average wage packet of the residents. In my home village of Woolacombe, the cheapest residential property is over £500,000 and the average pay for workers is £10 an hour! How can locals afford to buy in the village that they were born? We currently have approximately 50% of the properties owned as second homes. This skews the price of housing with many being well over £1 million.

The knock on effect is that coastal communities are dying.

Regeneration should not just be seen as **financial** but also about **community**. It is vital that we build affordable housing in rural and coastal areas. We have a CLT scheme coming before the planners in November to build 21 dwellings in Woolacombe. It is being welcomed with unanimous support by the local population. The land is being made available by the National Trust as an exception site and they have made a caveat that it will only be for social rent with no open market housing or right to buy.

- **STAFFING:**

There is a massive problem with staff. Many businesses are operating well below capacity as they cannot recruit sufficient staff. This season has seen several restaurants and pubs close on Mondays during the summer and for several weeks during winter. The main reasons for the difficulty are lack of staff accommodation and poor (non-existent!) public transport during the evening. The emergence of Airbnb has practically wiped out affordable accommodation to rent.

- **EXAMPLES OF THE WAY FORWARD:**

1. In Barcelona tighter controls were launched in 2016 in an attempt to control the rapid proliferation of short-term lets, which officials fear are effecting the city's character.
2. In Paris, since 2017 landlords must register with the City Hall before advertising short-term lets.
3. Earlier last month Edinburgh became the first place in Scotland to launch a clampdown on short-term city lets. Residents within a short-term let "control area" must apply to the council to change residential accommodation to a short-term let.
4. Wales has recently tripled the council tax on second homes.

I fully realise that our laws don't allow us to implement some of these measures but I welcome the debate. It is vital that something is done to arrest the decline of a healthy and vibrant coastal community.

Councillor Malcolm Wilkinson