

Two public consultations have taken place around KCC removing Blackburn Lodge as a care home and asset from the people of Sheppey and both have signaled a resounding NO to KCC. KCC take 73p in every council tax pound paid, residents cannot understand how the building has been taken to this state of disrepair.

- 1- Closure/ removal of residents away from support networks - Ward residents were extremely concerned that long standing residents were removed from their home and forced into accommodation that they neither wanted or was identified on their care plan, families identified that KCC would in fact save money on this accommodation if the water issue had just been fixed. Families were also offered no transport/ compensation for losing the ability to see their family members daily even though this was promised by several different parties. Lots of issues were raised around this new accommodation including inappropriate staffing levels from social services and poor or non-existent communication with officers or councillors except only when pushed by local voice. Including the only public meeting on the subject having to be organized by the town council rather than KCC.
- 2- Local Hospital resources – Sheppey Community Hospital Frailty Ward has identified that their partial role of having Blackburn Lodge as an assessment resource has been taken away and nothing has replaced that provision which means that assessment to return home or on to further care is now more delayed than when the resource was available locally at Blackburn Lodge.
- 3- Blackburn Lodge as an asset – Access has been denied to the building by councillor or independent person (away from KCC) to verify the need to shut off the water. Ex-employees of KCC have identified the figures needed to fix the minor issues with the building are extremely over inflated to suit the needs of KCCS budget rather than the adult social care need of the area which now only has access to private care homes that will cost the tax payer far more money in the long run than providing a decent service out of Blackburn Lodge.
- 4- No partnerships in place at the time of closure – the building itself has got huge opportunity to cover its own costs if partnership and letting agreements were put into place. Many organizations contact myself monthly for stable accommodation to support one of the 50 most deprived wards in the UK. KCC seem to be unable to do little other than sell communities out to fit its self-imposed budget problems rather than to look to how investment in communities providing long term revenue streams already prosperous in other areas of the country. A number of smaller organizations could of easily of been part of this much needed community assets recovery and future starring role in turning issues around in Sheerness and more widely Sheppey. The community covenant on the land is also unresolved.

If statutory services cannot be provided to the people in need in your areas what is the point of KCC?