

Note to Cllr Pratt

12th December 2024

1.0 Purpose

This note is provided in response to the following email from Cllr Pratt.

Hi at Millom Town Council last night the question about HMOs came up on the agenda after the briefing note you gave me was shared with the Town Council, they have asked what housing survey was done and how old is it that was referenced also would Serco hold any consultation with the community if they were to come back. What is happening to the property's that were signed up for asylum dispersal as they were converted but now are standing empty.

Also, the statement that said Millom was not suitable does that now still stand after the motion that went through council that declared Cumberland is an area of sanctuary for irregular asylum seekers

If you could let me have the answers, I will pass them on

2.0 Response

All local authorities have a duty to review housing needs in their area. Typically work to assess housing needs is carried out every 5 years and informs the Housing Strategy. The last housing needs survey for the legacy Copeland area was conducted in 2019 and is now out of date. Cumberland Council has commissioned a new general housing needs survey alongside others around stock condition and specialist housing needs which are in progress and will be used to inform a new Cumberland Housing Strategy.

In terms of demand, Cumbria Choice Based Lettings for Millom and the surrounding area suggests that there is demand for 1 bedroomed property as well as family sized homes and officers know from meeting with residents from Millom earlier this year that there is a strong local opinion that more rented housing is needed.

Communication has taken place around the properties that had been purchased to provide accommodation for asylum seekers through Serco, regarding potential use given the change of position. Those involved have been advised that there is likely to be a market for good quality private rented accommodation in Millom to meet the needs of local people, particularly one bed self-contained or shared amenities, and have encouraged to speak to local lettings agents regarding this so they can be rented out.

It is not within the Councils gift to respond to the request relating to consultation because this is a matter for SERCO and the Home Office. This query would need to be raised with Victoria Dawson, Partnership Manager, Serco, contact details are Victoria.dawson@serco.com.

Regarding the Councils position on Millom following adoption of the Sanctuary status, it remains of the view that the town is an unsuitable location for further dispersed accommodation at this time.