

## **Tewkesbury MP Challenges FirstPort Over Culture as Liberal Democrats Haul Company Bosses to Westminster.**

**The Directors of Residential Property Management company FirstPort were called before Liberal Democrat MPs in Parliament today, to discuss allegations over mis-selling of services, poor communication practices, and lack of industry regulation.**

The Estate Management industry is controversial amongst homeowners, many of whom are unaware of the full terms of the contracts they are made to sign, so that they can purchase a new build property. Support group National Leasehold Campaign (NLC) on Facebook, has 32,000 members, and pressure group Homeowners Rights Network (HorNet) works to end the national scandal known as 'fleecehold'.

Tewkesbury MP Cameron Thomas joined Caroline Voaden, MP for South Devon and 10 other colleagues, to press Managing Director Martin King and department heads on their constituents' concerns.

Cheltenham MP Max Wilkinson raised FirstPort's heavy-handed tactics, in their pursuance of an expensive legal battle with a constituent, and told the company to end it. To an assertion from FirstPort that only 1 in 2000 customers had raised a complaint, it was pointed out by Esher and Walton MP Monica Harding that customers had "given up trying" to find a point of contact at the company. MPs raised the accounts of residents being charged £150 for light bulbs which had never been fitted, with others charged several hundreds of pounds for replacement letterboxes. Acknowledgement from the Managing Director that there had been individual failings were rejected by Cameron Thomas MP, who stated that the breadth of issues was evidence that the company required a significant change of culture.

FirstPort agreed to implement a point of contact specifically for MPs to engage with the company, and to return to Westminster for a follow-up meeting in 12 months.

**Liberal Democrat MP for Tewkesbury, Cameron Thomas said:**

"As representatives for thousands of FirstPort customers, Lib Dem MPs demand a better service for our residents. Many customers do not fully understand the terms, nor the charges related to their Estate Management contracts, and find FirstPort particularly opaque, unavailable, and even threatening in their communication.

"As the industry leader, FirstPort is shockingly poor. I have been assured that a change of culture is being implemented, but that will only occur if FirstPort genuinely accepts the breadth of its failings. Lib Dem MPs look forward to pressing its directors on their progress and will be working in parliament on behalf of FirstPort customers, toward fairness and transparency."