

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

Notes of Meeting

SANDWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Date: Thursday, 24 July 2008

Venue: Ash Village Hall, Queens Road, Nr Sandwich CT3 2BG

Present:

Local Board Members: Trevor Bartlett, Sue Chandler, Stephen C Manion, Ian Martin, Kit Smith and Leyland Ridings

KCC Officers: Will Farmer (Community Liaison Manager)

A1.	Welcome - Cllr Mrs Sue Chandler
	<p>Cllr Sue Chandler welcomed those attending, including representatives from Ash Parish Council, Sandwich Town Council and Woodnesborough Parish Council, Trevor Skelton, Action for Rural Communities in Kent and two members of the public.</p> <p><i>Apologies:</i></p> <p>Apologies were received from Sholden and Stourmouth Parish Councils, Nigel Whitburn, Bryan Curtis and Joe Trussler.</p> <p><i>Notes of meeting held on 22 May</i> were approved as a correct record.</p> <p><i>Matters arising:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quick fixes for sustainability – plastic and cardboard recycling would be introduced in October under the new waste kerbside collection scheme. Black boxes would be replaced by green ‘hessian’ sacks and all householders would receive an information pack.• Information on climate change issues would be included in a future issue of the Dover District Newsletter.• Wheels to Work project in Sandwich was making good progress• Cllr Kit Smith reported that key issues from Neighbourhood Forums were being reported to DDC and KCC Cabinets. <p><i>Declarations of interest:</i></p> <p>Mr Leyland Ridings stated that he was the Chairman of the KCC Adult Services Policy Overview Committee.</p>
A2.	Older Persons Accommodation Strategy
	<p><i>Janet Walton, Housing Initiatives Manager, Dover District Council was in attendance for this item.</i></p>

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	<p>Janet Walton gave a presentation 'Ageing Well in Dover' covering two strands of the Council's housing function: the Council as landlord and strategies for housing funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• development and delivery strategies; new housing in partnerships; homelessness and private sector housing; grants and loans.• a key priority is a housing strategy for older people; first draft has been run past a senior citizens forum and will go before Council in September then out to public consultation. This Forum's views would be added.• ageing population: forecast increase by 26% of over 65s by 2021 and 22% of over 85s. There was not sufficient housing for these age groups and preferences were changing away from sheltered housing.• expectations were high, people wanted greater choice and to stay in their own homes which dictated the kind of services that were needed now and in the future.
A3.	Strategy for Later Life
	<p><i>Derek Hall, Planning Manager for East Kent Adult Social Services, KCC was in attendance for this item.</i></p> <p>Derek Hall spoke about Kent's Strategy for Later Life and the responsibility for all older people in Kent which brought together all the agencies in delivering services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• priority for the strategy is what people in Kent actually want• older people are often carers and backbone of community• what does 'older' mean anyway; it is difficult to categorise• final strategy to be ready in Autumn 2008 and has 5 themes:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. value later life2. planning for a secure old age3. healthy communities4. learning5. independent living• responses to the draft strategy showed: older people matter as much as children; preparation needed for retirement; specific actions needed on dementia, sensory impairment, advocacy, support for carers, residential/nursing care when necessary.• next steps: Public Health Board take over now with an editorial panel of older people looking at the overarching framework/principle and priority actions.
A4.	INVOKE
	<p><i>Dawn Woodward, INVOKE Project Manager was in attendance for this item.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• INVOKE is only in East Kent with Dover being one of 6 districts

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	<p>involved plus the voluntary sector, PCT and others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• funding of £1.5m over 2 years with 3 new services for East Kent. Round 2 partnership funding was successful.• Care Navigator Ruth Ridley, working since November 2007, is reaching into communities.• services to over 50s already achieved; people can refer themselves to the Care Navigator then meet to work through action plans to find solutions that are right for the individual, are early and timely and help to reduce later dependence.• Community Matron Service (CMS) support worker; services offered by the PCT for those with long term conditions and those with history of unplanned hospital admissions indicating not managing medical conditions very well. CMS workers get notice via the telehealth system with details of conditions by phone. There are 3 CMS in Dover.• Community Information & Liaison Assistants (CILAs) – ‘who can help me’ directory with 7 community hubs to host the directories e.g. libraries, GPs surgeries, Age Concern, Volunteer Bureaux.• CILAs facilitate groups such as housing wardens asking about mobility problems, smoking cessation, salt in the diet. At the end of the 2nd year they are working on a sustainability plan; how to deliver the service and use of websites.
A5.	Group Sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How to input to the strategies regarding funding for social care; wellbeing; and housing choices. There is a £6bn shortfall in funding for older people nationwide.○ Independent and supported living at home: many older people don't feel valued, have a huge wealth of experience, are carers with their own set of values, are frequently dragged into membership of village organisations. DIY superstores employ older people because of their experience○ ‘Lifelong learning’ finishes at 65. Learning is critical in staving off Alzheimer's and dementia by keeping the mind active.○ Many retired people don't want to join clubs and need to be encouraged. Most are run by an active minority; others don't want to join and can become lonely and depressed.○ Short term funding for initiatives does not help because posts are for 1-3 years then everything changes or is re-invented, the scheme folds and the knowledge/good practice/ lessons learned are lost. Where does this information go to? The Forum felt that there should be a minimum length for funding of 5 years with external evaluation so that those in post can get on with the actual job in hand. Evaluation should be based on case studies, examples of the difference made by the scheme, and what has been prevented by the existence of the scheme. <p>Action point: Mr Leyland Ridings and Kit Smith will seek support for longer term funding from KCC and DDC for Projects</p>

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- Government gives Social Care transformational grants e.g. for partnerships for older people projects which are supported by the public, with a national total of £22m and £.5m in Kent.
- Volunteers are vitally important but fewer people are coming forward because of the number the checks (CRB) they have to undergo and the sensitive and intrusive nature of the information required. Why can there not be one comprehensive CRB check?
- Planning for old age: there needs to be an option for people to continue working after retirement age which can help them to keep healthy. Employers need to be more flexible and allow older people to work shorter hours.
- How do people access what is available and keep up with changes? How do they find out about the Care Navigator? Ruth works in the community and is often recommended e.g. by the Polish shop in Dover who now voluntarily work as interpreters and pass on the information. She can direct people to other services. This kind of information takes longer to pass on in rural area so a better way of getting the message out is needed.
- New homes/ special housing: elderly couples living in houses with stairs need to move to bungalows and that often means moving away from their own villages. Bungalows are not in the LDF but 'lifetime housing' is; this is housing which can be adapted later on e.g. widening doorways for wheelchairs, adding chair lifts, ground floor WC/shower. There are 16 separate clauses for lifetime houses. It is a fantastic idea but most houses are already built. Many older people live in unsuitable private sector rented accommodation with a limit on how it can be adapted, e.g. very steep staircases. There must be an alternative. DDC is working towards the Decent Homes standard by 2010; some properties are too expensive to adapt and the solution is to demolish and replace with better. In East Sussex 4 or 5 parishes contributed towards building community housing on donated land which was a success because people moved in with others from their communities.
- When people are left on their own they often want to move to areas where there is companionship and easy access to services such as POs and shops in towns. However villagers may feel lonely in towns. Therefore research is needed on what constitutes ideal housing.
- Having moved to suitable accommodation an older person will not want to move again. KCC and DDC are not building these kinds of homes. Is there a place for a retirement village? The Rural Housing Trust is looking at older people who want to stay in their villages, not just youngsters. The LDF has provision for Rural Exception schemes to provide affordable housing and this needs promoting. Miller Close in Wingham is an excellent example of this type of scheme; they take a long time to come forward. Affordable housing is often a more acceptable form of expansion in villages.

Action point: details of the rural exception scheme circulated to Parishes.

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A6.	Future Discussion Topics and Meeting Dates
	<p>The next meeting will be on 9 October in the Guildhall, Sandwich when Highways and the Street Scene will be discussed and the Small Community Grants.</p> <p>What do Parishes want to talk about at the February meeting? Youth provision had been discussed in December 2007 and an update from that meeting would be helpful.</p>
A7.	Small Community Capital Project Grants
	<p>Will Farmer reminded the meeting of the deadline for applications which was 29 August 2008.</p>