

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Thanet Local Board

Tuesday, 3 March 2009

Trinity Community Resource Centre, Margate

Present:

Local Board Members: Bill Hayton (Chairman), Elizabeth Green, Clive Hart, Charles Hibberd, Alan Poole, Chris Wells

Apologies: Robert Burgess, John Fullarton

KCC Officers: Anne Charman (Community Liaison Manager Thanet), Emma Carey (Community Liaison Manager Dover)

1.	Welcome to the meeting – Mr Bill Hayton, Chairman
	<p>Mr Hayton welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Anne Charman, who has replaced Emma Carey, as KCC's new Community Liaison Manager for Thanet. Mr Hayton thanked Emma for all her hard work and wished her every success in her role as Community Liaison Manager for Dover.</p> <p>All County Councillors present introduced themselves.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Robert Burgess and John Fullarton</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
2.	Notes of Local Board meeting held on 25 November 2008 and progress on any actions agreed
	<p>The minutes were agreed.</p>
3.	Cliftonville Children's Centre. Presentation by Frances Rehal, Thanet Children's Centres Locality Co-ordinator
	<p>Frances Rehal began her presentation by providing some background on how and why Children's Centres have developed. Since 1997/98 there has been a national review of childcare provision resulting in the development of a Childcare Strategy that aims to improve the quality and provision of childcare services. The Children's Act 2006 now requires all agencies to work in partnership to deliver better outcomes for children and families.</p> <p>Children's Centres are places that provide information and offer access to services for families and young children under five years old. Their aim is to bridge the gap between children least able to achieve and the higher achievers. There are plans to have 3,500 Children's Centres established in the UK by 2010 and 102 of these will be in Kent.</p>

	<p>The Cliftonville Children’s Centre will be located opposite the newly refurbished St Paul’s Community Centre and will cover the wards of Cliftonville West, Cliftonville East and Kingsgate. It is hoped that all improvement works will be completed by summer ’09.</p> <p>Government statistics were provided outlining some of the problems faced in the Cliftonville Children’s Centre catchment area. Cliftonville West has one of the highest indices of deprivation in the country.</p> <p>As one of nine Children’s Centres in Thanet, Cliftonville will provide a variety of services to cater for the needs of the local community including; parent and toddler groups, a health care clinic, play and learn schemes, careers advice, parent focus groups and outreach support. Several staff are in post already, including a Network Manager, a qualified teacher and two community involvement workers.</p> <p>Q. Why is Kingsgate, which is relatively affluent, included within the geographical catchment area of the Cliftonville Children’s Centre? A. There are 9 Children’s Centres in Thanet which provide a variety of excellent services and facilities that everyone should want to access. Children’s Centres are mainstream and, unlike SureStart centres, are not specifically targeted in areas of high deprivation. The aim is for people from all backgrounds to mix together.</p> <p>Q. Will the 3,500 Children’s Centres planned include Scotland? A. Yes.</p> <p>Q. Will the Children’s Centre buildings be used in the evenings? A. The opening hours for all Children’s Centres are 08:00 to 18:00. Some of the earlier buildings are larger and are suitable for evening meetings, but it would be impractical to keep the smaller centres open in the evening as there is little demand.</p> <p>Mr Hayton then congratulated Frances Rehal on recently being awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire).</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Thanet Works. Presentation by Cllr Jo Gideon, Chair of Thanet Works and Colin Maclean, Thanet Works Director and KCC’s Interim Head of Kent Partnership</p>
	<p>Colin Maclean began by describing the origins of Thanet Works. Thanet Works is the new partnership between Kent County Council, Thanet District Council and other organisations from the business, voluntary and community sectors. It is funded through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), a new programme set up by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The WNF is providing £4m over the next three years to deliver a more flexible, creative approach to integrating employment and skills. Thanet is the only area in Kent to have attracted this funding and one of only two areas in the South East.</p>

By focussing its efforts on those people in Thanet with the most need, Thanet Works aims to remove barriers to work, get people off benefits, raise aspirations and prepare individuals with the skills to embrace fully new work opportunities.

Cllr Gideon described how the process of continuous consultation with all sectors will ensure that monies are used to maximum effect, providing long term sustainable solutions to prepare individuals for work opportunities. The first phase of commissioning will begin in April and will create real opportunities for people in Thanet.

Q. Will this programme affect other funding streams, the Learning & Skill Council's for example?

A. There is no definite information on this but Thanet Works is building a good relationship with the LSC.

Q. Qualified people in Thanet are facing difficulties finding employment. Can money be targeted at qualified people also?

A. When this fund was set up the UK economy was not in a recession and hence it specifically targets people with long term employment issues. The normal process of recruitment favours the well qualified and it is important to target people with little or no skills so that when the recession ends, they are on an equal footing.

Q. Will you be targeting key wards during the commissioning process? If certain wards are targeted then people in less favoured wards could develop serious needs if no action is taken.

A. Projects will be put forward and scored against certain criteria. They are likely to be drawn from all eight wards and will not be targeted.

Q. When can the Third Sector expect to be approached?

A. The first commissioning phase begins in April and the projects selected will start rolling out after then. Any organisation can submit a bid from 1 April 2009 but the Third Sector may not be specifically targeted.

Q. What's happening with the China Gateway? This was supposed to be offering jobs for youngsters in Thanet, many of whom are out of work. The Chinese economy is also struggling with exports dropping by 17%.

A. While unable to comment on the China Gateway, the issue of long term unemployment is what this project aims to address.

Q. Steve McVicker from Thanet Earth is on the Thanet Works Board. How many jobs will Thanet Earth provide for local people? It appears that there is no control over the workforce at the moment.

A. Steve McVicker is very committed to working with local people, but the group structure means that much of Thanet Earth is subcontracted out. However Steve McVicker is responsible for putting the business together and is an influential figure as he controls the packing shed. He has been looking at transport barriers to work, particularly for young people working at Thanet Earth, and has provided a 24/7 mini bus

	<p>service.</p> <p>Q. Initially Thanet Earth stated that local people were not well trained enough. With training will Thanet Earth employ more local people? A. With statutory agencies working to provide work-based or volunteering opportunities for young people this will give them the skills to access employment.</p> <p>Q. How much money will be spent on training people to provide goods and services? A. This depends on the business mix from the first commissioning process.</p> <p>Q. Smaller businesses collectively are large employers of people. What help will small businesses be given to employ more people? Will business rates be waived? A. The pooling of resources and a co-ordinated approach by all the agencies working together to provide training schemes through the Thanet Works programme, will help small businesses.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Citizens Advice Bureaux. Presentation by Ian Driver, CAB Manager for Thanet Area.</p>
	<p>Ian Driver is the newly appointed CAB Manager for the Thanet area. He described the work of the CAB and the type of enquiries they deal with. The CAB is not just an advice service, but also runs campaigns, for example on the high cost of credit card interest rates and rent deposit schemes.</p> <p>Plans for the future include new offices for Margate, more outreach sessions using the Thanet Gateway, schools and villages halls and more accessible services. There will be a greater focus on hard to reach groups, working with Mencap and the Children's Centres. More volunteers are being recruited and there are plans for some additional paid staff.</p> <p>Q. Will you need an appointment at the Gateway? A. Currently CAB are in discussion with the Manager of the Gateway to provide confidential interview space. Staff pressures mean that appointments will be necessary at the moment, but it is hoped that a drop-in service can be provided in the future.</p> <p>Q. When recruiting volunteers there are a number of groups with life skills they could bring with them, for example the Senior Citizens Forum. A. Applications from senior citizens would be welcomed. It takes about six months to train a CAB volunteer.</p> <p>Q. How many people will be working for the CAB in Thanet at any one</p>

	<p>time? It can take some time to get an appointment.</p> <p>A. There are currently 3-4 advisors but space and demand does mean that sometimes appointments need to be booked 2-3 weeks in advance. It is hoped that new staff will reduce this although there has been a recent Safer and Stronger Communities Funding cut which hasn't helped.</p> <p>Mr Hart recommended working as a volunteer for the CAB, having been a counsellor and undergone the six months' training. Mr Hart said the training was excellent and provided a springboard to employment opportunities.</p>
6.	Opportunity to ask questions about local public services
	<p>Q. When will Thanet District Council stop blaming Kent County Council for the paper trail left by refuse and waste disposal trucks making their way to Manston Rd?</p> <p>A. If paper is littered en route to the tip then it is Thanet District Council's responsibility. If it blows from the tip to the outside area, then it is KCC's responsibility.</p> <p>Q. What is KCC doing about the bus services? Currently the Thanet Loop misses some areas altogether, or provides a very limited service, particularly on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Events are being organised in Thanet that local people cannot get to.</p> <p>A. This matter has been raised by Mr Hart at the Joint Transport Board. The Quality Bus Partnership has agreed to look at this matter again after recent changes in bus pass provision have increased demand. Hopefully areas such as Westgate, Garlinge and Dane Valley with limited bus services will be better served in the future.</p>
7.	Any Other Business notified to the Chairman prior to the meeting
	None
8.	Close
	<p>Mr Hayton thanked all the speakers for their interesting and informative presentations. As the last of the KCC Thanet Local Boards during this four-year term of office, he remarked that all the meetings had been consistently very informative and had demonstrated that council services are good value for money. After the elections on 4 June another four-year cycle of public meetings would resume.</p> <p>Mr Hayton thanked all those present, particularly those who had attended Thanet Local Boards regularly, and expressed his appreciation for their interest and loyalty.</p>