

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

NOTES OF MEETING

SWALE LOCAL BOARD

Date: Thursday, 13 March 2008

Venue: Minster College, Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness, Kent ME12 3JQ

Present:

Local Board Members: Adrian Crowther (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Keith Ferrin, Andrew Bowles and Angela Harrison

Apologies for absence: Brenda Simpson, Tom Gates and Roger Truelove

KCC Officers: Bill Ronan, Community Liaison Manager

Attendees: 8

Agenda Items

A1.	Welcome and Introductions	Action
	Following a brief health and safety announcement, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Adrian Crowther, welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Local Members introduced themselves and the districts they represented.	
A1.1	Apologies	
	Cllr K Ferrin Cllr R Truelove Cllr B Simpson	
A2.	Declaration of Interests	
	There were no declarations made.	
A3.	Secondary Education on the Isle of Sheppey	
	<p>Dr Paul Mortimer (Principal Designate) of Sheppey Academy spoke of his vision for the development of education on the Isle of Sheppey.</p> <p>Dr Mortimer had recently taken students from Minster College to London. This had included a meeting at Somerset House with architects who will take forward the proposed Sheppey Academy.</p> <p>It is proposed to hold a meeting on 4 June at the Sheppey Healthy Living Centre. Students and the architects will further discuss the design and format for the proposed Academy.</p> <p>This meeting will feed into a meeting on 7 July in London where a working document will be produced.</p> <p>The students who become involved will look at the changing education trends across the world, and what can be achieved.</p> <p>The OECD report on Teaching and Learning 2004 highlights three scenarios:-</p>	

	<p>1 Things will stay as they are, teacher meltdown, schools not fit for purpose.</p> <p>2 De-schooling – system falls apart, home tuition 100,000 pupils being taught at home. No law requiring children to go to school. Growth of the virtual school – (notschool.com). Skills of students outstrip those of teachers therefore the power base shifts.</p> <p>3 Re-schooling – emergence of private and other providers. “Navigating the networks” – consultation on where students should be at each stage.</p> <p>Growth of Diplomas phased in over the next three years. Key drive to re-skill the workforce across England vocational diplomas. Three academic vocational diplomas.</p> <p>The application of knowledge represents a different skill, and indicates a changing emphasis in teaching and learning.</p> <p>At the proposed new Academy, students will have access to all of the 17 Diplomas. This will be achieved through both hard and soft federations of schools. This may require movement of students and flexible start and finish times.</p> <p>Building Schools for the Future (BSF) will see £46 billion programme to change and equip schools and ensure students can compete on a world stage.</p> <p>Councillor Harrison asked if there is an Academy how many places will there be, and will there be a place for every child on Sheppey?</p> <p>Paul Mortimer replied, preference will be given to those students from the Island, over those from the mainland. There will be oversubscription criteria, and Sheppey residents will have priority. There will be one Academy, but on two sites. Fair banding will be used to select students, including top 10-12% of population, including special educational needs.</p> <p>Sheppey College may come into the mix and enable 17 Diplomas and create a 6th site. They may offer a subject such as heavy engineering.</p> <p>Any oversubscription might lead to an application to expand, but that up to 2015 there are falling school rolls.</p> <p>Theresa Langworthy asked about the issue of admissions and oversubscription. Indicating that the Academy will be</p>	
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<p>oversubscribed, and that this will be an issue for local Members.</p> <p>Paul Mortimer replied, the admission number is tied to the admissions process, and is 390 students in Year 7.</p> <p>Partnerships with schools determine that number. This means some young people who go off the Island will not get into the Academy. This is a KCC admission issue.</p> <p>Cllr Jerry Lewin (Swale Borough Council) indicated that 600 pupils leave the Island, with 25% seeking a faith school, with the others going to Grammar or High schools. Has this been factored in?</p> <p>Rob McMenamin indicated that Partnerships with Schools have taken the Grammar scenario into consideration. We have sought to get a PAN of as large as possible. Dulwich may seek to go back to the DfES to increase the PAN.</p> <p>Theresa Langworthy indicated that parents feel the Academy is a “done deal”, and that the recent adverts in the press indicated that the Academy would be in place by 2009. That politicians need to ask questions about the admissions code and numbers.</p> <p>The recent adverts for staff, and the so called “consultation” reinforce that the Academy is a done deal.</p> <p>Paul Mortimer stated that his contract, originally until March ’08, had been extended to June. If the Academy did not materialise then he would not have a job. There are exciting times ahead, while the new school is being built there would be disruption, but the new schools would offer an enhanced teaching and learning environment. The current buildings are not fit for purpose.</p> <p>The funding agreement for the Academy has not been signed due to the “unknowns” and “abnormals”, ie flood issues at the Chaney site.</p> <p>Mouchel Parkman, as project managers, to be asked to note the concerns regarding adverts from the Swale Local Board.</p> <p>Swale Members raised concerns over the general delivery of this project. Including the communication with Island residents, and the potentially misleading adverts in the papers.</p> <p>Bill Ronan to write to the Cabinet Member and raise the concerns of the Swale Local Board to these matters.</p> <p>Debate took place on the issue of faith re the Church of England sponsorship. The Academy will not be a faith school but will</p>	
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	<p>have a Christian ethos and values.</p> <p>All participants were thanked by Cllr Crowther for their involvement in this debate.</p>	
A4.	<p>Partnership with Parents: Support for parents and young people in schools</p> <p>Gill Montgomery spoke of the service provided by Partnership with Parents.</p> <p>Partnership with Parents offers a service for all parents with children requiring extra educational and/or learning needs. The service is impartial and offers a confidential service for all parents. A large resource base is located in Maidstone offering resources for hire, loan and photocopy.</p> <p>Partnership with Parents works closely with schools, the LEA and voluntary sector agencies to assist the communication between all parties.</p> <p>An important role of Partnership with Parents is to undertake surveys to improve the provision for parents and children.</p> <p>A mediation service is also available for children (not parents).</p> <p>Partnership with Parents also work closely with the Extended Community Schools Service and Local Trusts.</p> <p>Partnership with Parents recently underwent a Joint Area Review (formal inspection process), and the initial outcome is very good.</p> <p>Theresa Langworthy asked about the work with Family Liaison Officers (FLO's).</p> <p>Gill Montgomery indicated that they work in partnership where FLO's exist. Where they are not in place then SENCO/AENCO's are the link role.</p> <p>Cllr Harrison spoke of the Children's Trust like arrangements coming into existence. There is no democratic involvement in these trusts for locally elected Members and Councillors. This represents a missed opportunity as elected councillors are key partners and community leaders.</p> <p>Gill indicated that this was not a function of Partnership with Parents.</p> <p>The issue of "Looked After Children" (LAC's) was discussed with comments on the displacement of local children when LAC are placed into Swale from out of County Authorities.</p>	

	<p>This is a complex issue and is not something Gill was able to comment on.</p> <p>Cllr Jerry Lewin asked about referrals to the team and what was the biggest need being serviced?</p> <p>Gill indicated that Partnership with Parents was an offered service, not a statutory service. That the biggest need was to give parents the support to be empowered and support children to get the best educational outcome. Partnership with Parents is not an advocate service, but does offer informed choices and supports parents in achieving choice.</p>	
A5.	Community Engagement Grants - An update	
	<p>Bill Ronan outlined the current position of the community engagement grants as the Swale Local Board approaches the end of this financial year. A number of Members were finalising their recommendations for grant support.</p> <p>The community engagement grants for the financial year 2008-2009 would be:-</p> <p>Members Community Grant Scheme - £70,000 Local Schemes Grant - £44,700 Small Community Capital Grant - £47,000</p>	
A6.	Questions from the Public	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was total confusion over the placement of the public notice regarding the Isle of Sheppey education changes. Why were parents put through this, with many parents unaware that the public notice had been withdrawn? • There was no notification of the Cabinet Member decision being quashed, and a new process started. Why was this not publicised? <p>Cllr Harrison spoke and outlined the process of scrutiny at County Hall. This process was not followed, and therefore the public notice had to be withdrawn. Cllr Harrison will take this up with the Cabinet Member at County Hall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents were “blocked” from participating in the recent Joint Area Review process. The inspectors email address was only given out at the last minute! Why were these complaints blocked? <p>Cllr Harrison indicated that elected Members were also excluded from the process. This had also given the Elected MP some concerns. The Joint Area Review (JAR) process was though very short.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theresa Langworthy stated that a complaint had been passed to the Area Education Officer (AEO). As the AEO was the cause of the complaint – how can that give confidence in the process, and why were parents prevented and blocked from participating? <p>The Swale Local Board would like to know how JAR is organised and how does accessibility take place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attended audience asserted that they were pleased with the recent consultation booklet. But it does not explain the secondary phase if you don't choose the Academy. What other options are there, and why is there no information on them? Limited information exists for the Building Schools for the Future and the issue of refurbishment of sites, etc. <p>There is no additional money for re-build, and in effect Sittingbourne could actually lose funds.</p> <p>Robina Allum read a prepared statement... and asked who at KCC is going to be held accountable for the complete and utter mess that all schools on the Island find themselves in?</p> <p>First it must be established and acknowledged that this has been a mess. Conversations took place that the Academy consultation was nothing to do with Kent County Council.</p> <p>Theresa Langworthy asserted that someone must be held accountable for this mess. That we all know and hope that Members are aware that the Managing Director and his senior officer have misled people on Sheppey and that justice will prevail in due course.</p> <p>The number of attendees was commented on. People do not trust KCC on this issue. That the whole process, including the three to two tiers consultation has been a foregone conclusion. This has included being lied to and Mouchel Parkman misleading the views of parents on the Island.</p> <p>The Principal Designate has said nothing of substance as to the future of the Academy. There are too many assumptions being made.</p> <p>The consultation on the Island has been a joke.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 9.30 pm.</p>	
A7.	Date of Next Meeting	
	June 2008	