

SELECT COMMITTEE - EXTENDED SERVICES

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Extended Services held in the Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 12 May 2010.

PRESENT: Mr R B Burgess (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr A R Chell, Mr K H Pugh, Mr K Smith and Mr M J Vye

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss T Grayell (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr G Romagnuolo (Policy Overview Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

12. Interview with Simon Smith, Director of Sport, Castle Community College, Deal *(Item 1)*

Please introduce yourself and outline your role and responsibilities.

I am the Director of Sport at Castle Community College in Deal, and I have taught there for five years. I am the assistant principal and also have responsibility for Health and Safety issues. Castle is a specialist sports college and a hub site for the Dover Sports Partnership. We have advanced status in delivering Extended Services via the MIDES project, working with two local primary schools. Dover Extended Schools (DES) is a successful framework for Extended Services in the Dover area.

In your view, does the provision of Extended Services help improve educational attainment? In your experience, are there any other benefits that Extended Services bring about for pupils and for the local community?

There has been no specific research on this, but Extended Services engages and motivates pupils and keeps them in school, as they are interested in coming to school to take part in their favourite sport. 50% of Castle's pupils have Special Educational Needs, and some of them would be out of school if it weren't for Extended Services. We also host Adult Education on site and at the Treetops nursery. The school is open for use by the community from 8am to 10pm.

Extended Services benefits the local community, reducing crime and disorder and antisocial behaviour. Extended Services also brings employability skills, improves community cohesion by breaking down barriers, and fosters aspirations.

I used to work in a Grammar School, and when we had a sports fixture there we always had a good turnout. At Castle, we have had to work very hard to increase the level of engagement to anything like that of the Grammar School.

In your view, what are the main economic, legal, social and operational challenges – if any – for the College, when providing Extended Services to the local community?

We are lucky in that the Head Teacher at Castle is pro- Extended Services, so staff have to get on board with it. We use DES as a framework for Extended Services for

the local schools, and every school in the Dover and Deal area now does Extended Services.

Costs are an issue, as we have to pay for extra staff and coaches to run sessions. Attendance is also a challenge. We had a new Astroturf facility installed, and built extra changing rooms, but the income generated by hiring these out has covered the cost of the additional caretaker we have had to employ to cover the longer opening hours.

Are there any other specific challenges and how can these be overcome?

Being clear of safeguarding responsibilities is a challenge. We ensure that all third party users provide us with evidence of CRB checks & coaching qualifications of individuals, along with insurance certificates and risk assessments. We also ensure that any coach we use is CRB checked. We have a Child Protection policy. We have an Extended Services policy now, which covers these things, but it would help if there was a KCC model policy that we could use in the future as a basis for our own policy and as a check that we have all the necessary safeguards in place.

If simplified safeguarding literature were made available to schools, setting out dos and don'ts in accessible language, would this help?

Yes, this would help to take away the anxiety that many people have around safeguarding.

In your view, which groups of Kent residents benefit most from the provision of Extended Services? Are there any particular groups of Kent residents who, in your view, find it more difficult to access Extended Services and if so, why?

I think we need to narrow the gap between those who benefit and those who don't. Extended Services benefits mostly the middle class people who tend to access it the most. I think we should angle it at the most vulnerable groups in society and make access easier for them.

What other clubs or activities does this group go to?

Some/Many of them don't [seem to] go anywhere, or they might attend things that we are just not aware of. This could be an issue of funding, although most activities are free and some vulnerable groups would not pay. To engage these groups more, we need to get across the message that Extended Services is worthwhile. Some parents seem to have to decide whether to spend their money on football or fags!

In your view, how can pupil participation in Extended Services activities be increased?

We would need to be able to remove the barriers – costs, transport, parental involvement and support. We would need to emphasise the benefits of Extended Services to young people and raise their aspirations. We ask pupils what they want to do and take account of this. We also have to make the activities attractive. We offer, or have offered, judo, archery and fencing clubs.

In what ways, if any, might the reduction of Government funding for Extended Services in future years affect the Extended Services that Castle Community College provides?

James Brown, the Extended Services Manager (ESM) for Dover, has developed a model of Extended Services delivery [copy given to Select Committee] and, using this, Castle has moved its Extended Services provision through the stages of

'emerged' to 'established' to 'advanced' status. You have to have the school's senior management team on board to make Extended Services work. Funding has been available for 6 or 7 years, but what is needed is lifetime funding.

The restructuring of CFE and funding shortage are realities, but what can KCC do to overcome these?

You need to have a strategic lead. You can't rely on schools to support each other; you need an external body to support them.

In your opinion, in which ways can Kent County Council, together with schools and other providers of Extended Services, ensure the sustainability of Extended Services into the future?

Funding is the crux of it, and the framework, and you need to make schools accountable.

In your view, in which ways, if any, can collaboration between Kent County Council, schools and external partners, such as those in the voluntary and private sectors, be made more effective when providing Extended Services?

Vista Leisure is involved in the model, and they run the leisure centre in Dover. Through their involvement with DES, they generate income for their company and provide local jobs. They run our afterschool clubs and signpost pupils to their leisure centre, and this all increases young people's participation in sports and fitness activities.

No funding comes to Castle from this arrangement. I am not against getting commercial providers involved in Extended Services to make it more sustainable, it is just difficult to find the time to develop the links and set it up.

Can you give the Select Committee some examples of good practice or particular success in Extended Services?

There is the 'Pass the Passion' campaign, aimed at bringing the Olympic torch through Dover on its way to the 2012 London Olympics. This campaign was organised by young people. Local schools designed a torch which was taken around 50 schools in the Dover area. This was a big event with much press coverage, and is a good example of schools working together, motivating and engaging pupils.

Your school has done a lot with Extended Services, you have a very driven Head Teacher and have won a Quality Mark. Your ESM, James Brown, has done a lot of good work on DES and developing Extended Services beyond schools to engage local communities, but how will Extended Services manage beyond September 2010 when some ESM posts are reduced? Could districts be combined?

Two or three districts could perhaps be combined under one ESM, but it would be essential to keep the DES framework. You are right that Extended Services is dependent on a Head Teacher being committed to it.

I like the DES model as it is all about engaging students at clubs, and reducing truancy. But I am concerned that it focuses on engaging students at the expense of engaging communities. How could the model be progressed to engage communities?

Partnership with Parents could help. You engage parents in adult learning at the school site, and once you have them there, you engage them in topics such as

e.safety. Adults who are not parents of pupils at Castle attend to use the sports facilities. Often you find that the parents also attended the school years ago. They remember the school's old reputation, and breaking down this barrier can be a challenge. To optimise community engagement in activity, it is vital to keep the school premises open for as long as possible in the day.

Some schools are less engaged in Extended Services. Why do you think this is?

Schools might see an obstacle in the time and commitment it takes to set up and run Extended Services, and in a small or rural school it might not be a priority task for the limited staff available. Maybe the Head Teacher of a school is just not on board with Extended Services, or they feel they have no-one to run it. In a model of ideal Extended Services provision, every school would have an Extended Services rep on the staff to address these barriers.

Could the private sector, and Independent and Private schools, be involved in Extended Services, perhaps as a part of their contribution to the local community as a charity, as many of them are?

Personally, I don't think they would be. They might have Extended Services in the form of clubs for their own pupils, but I don't think they would run activities in which the community could be involved. We have pressed them in the past to let us use their facilities, but they just don't want us there.

Going back to the choice between spending limited family funds on 'football or fags', are you aware of any evidence that families on low incomes do choose to spend money on sports activities? Does sport have to be provided free to be accessible?

By making sport free, you can devalue it. There is an argument that if parents pay for a service they make more of a commitment to it, whereas if it is free that commitment is not there. If families are paying, you will know that you will get a reliable attendance for your activity and make it worth running.

In terms of adult learning, do you know any strategies to overcome the stigma around parents attending adult literacy classes?

We have academic review days, which are like parents' evenings, and we have literacy and numeracy sessions there. A child takes their parent along to see their homework and what they are doing in their classes, and parents have the opportunity to join in and learn with their child. This does have success, but we find that some parents don't want to go into the class with their child as there is still some stigma about going back to school.

Coming back to the issue of private schools delivering Extended Services, I know one private primary school near you runs a band and art classes which your pupils could attend. Private schools are obliged to involve the community to avoid losing their charitable status. You need an open, two-way dialogue between the KCC and the private sector, and some work needs to be done to assess how big a part the private sector could potentially play, ie what facilities they have and what use other schools could get from them.

Perhaps the approach to link private and KCC schools could be done by a neutral person.

Would you consider using an external management team to manage your Extended Services provision?

We would definitely consider using an external management team to manage an Extended Services framework like that of DES (Dover Extended Schools).

How far do you think your pupils would be willing to travel to take part in Extended Services activities?

Not very far! Good transport provision would help break down barriers.

Would you like to tell the Select Committee anything else?

There is a local football club which has 600 young members, with parents helping out as volunteers. This has encouraged some parents to get involved in their local community for the first time. This club is run on a site which is open to the community, and it is clear that those involved feel a strong sense of ownership of the premises and take good care of them. There is very little vandalism.

Did the introduction of the Freedom Pass have an impact on allowing young people to access Extended Services activities?

We find that, unless an activity - including the transport to get to it - is highly organised for them, many young people just will not attend. You have to spoon feed them! They also need to feel individually, personally invited before they will go to an activity.

13. Interview with Martin Absolom, Principal, Oakley Special School, Tunbridge Wells
(Item 2)

Please introduce yourself and outline your role and responsibilities.

I am the Principal of Oakley Special School in Tunbridge Wells. I have been there for 10 years and have all the usual duties of a Head Teacher. The school has an annual budget of £2.5 million, looks after 150 children on two sites, and employs 75 staff.

Please outline the Extended Services that Oakley Special School offers, and the way in which these services are structured and delivered. Why did the school pursue an Extended Services pilot initiative?

It was a good opportunity for a special school to be involved in Extended Services. I was already running some parts of Extended Services at Oakley, so was keen to expand this. I see it at a 'one stop shop' for clubs, counselling services, etc. Oakley is a full service school, and we signpost pupils to other schools. I have a Community Youth Tutor who works as a part-time teacher and runs after-school clubs for young people. I have a part-time Family Liaison Officer who works as an interface with the parents' forum and organises parents into activities, eg erecting bird boxes in the grounds. This allows us to get to know them better, and them to get know each other better. The appointment of a Transport Director is a great practical help. I buy in art therapy one day a week and counselling services one day a week. We want to build up capacity to be a one stop shop. The network that we have become part of has been very helpful and has been the biggest factor in our growth and in sustaining what we do.

Are the Extended Services offered by Oakley Special School delivered in collaboration with other agencies? If so, who else is involved?

Yes, we collaborate with the Youth Service and use the model partnership, as there are so many overlaps in partners' procedures, like safeguarding. I have people who are experienced at site management, although the site is mainly used by our own school and we don't have many outside lettings. We use voluntary support agencies, through which young volunteers come into the school to meet and support pupils. I feel strongly that the most important point of a pupil's life is their transition from being in the school to being in the community. Via the Youth Service, we get youth workers to work with us and get to know us and the pupils. I think this is a very good model of inclusion, as when young people leave us at 18 to go to college or into employment, there is a club that many of them are happy to come back to, and we can continue to support them. I think it is good that they consider their links with the school to be still there.

How do you rate the level of collaboration?

I think involvement is a two-way thing, and this is important. For instance, a group of our 16+ pupils recently went on a Duke of Edinburgh residential trip to Finland and were stranded there by the volcano ash cloud which prevented them from flying home when planned. Parents of pupils in the group were confident that, as the activity had been organised by the Youth Service through the school, their children would be perfectly safe and would be looked after, and not one parent rang me in a panic about it. The Youth Service sent a minibus to fetch the pupils home. We have a very good relationship with the Youth Service.

When pupils need art therapy or counselling services they often need them very quickly, in a time of crisis, so access to these services needs to be quick.

In your experience, what are the main benefits resulting from the provision of extended services?

Any Head Teacher has a lead role to play in their local community, but the resources of one Head Teacher and the options for one community are limited, but if you can group two communities together they can each benefit from economies of scale. Community cohesion is a benefit of Extended Services. Oakley is a school for children and young people with moderate and severe learning difficulties, with a range of co-morbidity difficulties. Children with those sorts of difficulties are immature and vulnerable and are not confident of joining in, but through the relationships that we can offer them they will build confidence. Last year, we hosted a group from Finland and have been getting to know them over two years. Our pupils were paying a return visit to this group when they became stranded. Ofsted, however, were not impressed by the relationship we have built up via the Finnish exchange, as they do not count it as 'cohesion'.

In your view, what are the main economic, legal, social and operational challenges – if any – for the school, when providing Extended Services (for example, with regard to transport, expansion and equality of access)?

There are a number of these. Every year we spend £40–45,000 on Extended Services (which includes what we spend on the Family Liaison Officer, and therapists) but this is subsidised by the Youth Service for what we spend on a youth worker. This spend allows us to run four clubs a week, with 8-10 pupils attending each club. Some children have medical needs which require the attention of trained support staff. Transport is the biggest barrier. In terms of equality of access, we just cannot provide enough services to go round! Providing equality of access, regardless of pupils' needs and geographic location, is a challenge. Disability discrimination and equality of access are big issues. Through my work as a School Improvement partner, I know that transport is a common issue. Some of the holiday activities we provide charge £5 per day, but clubs are free otherwise.

In your opinion, how can these blockages be resolved?

You need to look strategically at things which will support Extended Services. Funding is not equally and fairly rolled out across special schools. You need to decide if Extended Services is an entitlement. If Extended Services is limited, it should be targeted at the most vulnerable groups. Extended Services is a vital part of the socialisation of young people with significant special needs.

In which ways, if any, might the reduction of Government funding for Extended Services in future years affect the Extended Services Oakley Special School provides?

Oakley's Extended Services provision was part of a pilot, and the pilot money will run out, but this will not stop Extended Services. I could not switch off Extended Services as it is part of running a good school, and if I stopped it my school would not be so good. It is possible to set up sponsorship support, eg for a holiday activity. We had an artist in residence who was funded by Town and Country Housing.

To what extent do you rely on voluntary efforts, and can we increase voluntary input, perhaps by getting District Councils involved?

There are two or three strands to this. Voluntary involvement is an element of some special schools but this isn't the sort of school we are. Extended Services is no longer a special thing; it is part of general school life. Using Direct Payments, we could be training groups of people to support young people with special needs, as there is a shortage of this trained support. Also, we could feasibly charge young people who have a Direct Payment for the services that the school gives them.

In your opinion, how can Kent County Council, together with schools and other providers of Extended Services, ensure the sustainability of Extended Services into the future?

Not everyone is at the same starting point, and some groups' needs are not being met. It takes time to build Extended Services; over 5 years to take time to find a way to provide special services, and you need to be clear about what are the priorities. Extended Services can help break the cycle of underachievement, poverty and deprivation, and can change lives. To help the least advantaged young people, we need to find a way to support the continued development of Extended Services.

How could Extended Services be taken forward through the transition period into adulthood, using Direct Payments?

I was part of the team which put together the Kent Transition Protocol. Many young people have a Statement of Special Educational Needs but do not come to the attention of Children's Social Services so do not have the opportunity to have a Direct Payment. Some conditions and disabilities, like autism, are less visible, and some young people are not 'on the radar' to receive services, and do not meet the criteria, so no plan is made to cater for them. They cannot predict what support they might receive from Adult Social Services as they get older, so cannot plan for their future. In terms of disability discrimination, they are not included.

Yes, I know from the work of the KCC's Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee that people who do not meet the criteria fall through the net. This part of this Select Committee's work links through to the work of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee.

In your view, how can Kent County Council, schools and external partners improve the general provision of Extended Services?

Attention could be focussed on groups where Extended Services is less evolved. There are very few special schools in the 95% of Kent schools who have taken up Extended Services; in special schools, Extended Services is much more patchy.

Is there a method of benchmarking Extended Services provision, by which schools' performance can be compared to each other, and how could evidence be found? Does the core offer fulfil the needs of the community around you?

2011 will be the year of speech, language and communication, as there is a massive issue about how to identify the needs and engage with young people with communication difficulties. Our strategy will be to try to spread our wings even further and ensure that everything we do is a two-way exchange. I can't see any other way that we can easily go forward.

You work with Youth Service youth workers, but is there a back plan if the Youth Service could not continue to deliver this service? Is there a voluntary youth provider?

It's my budget and I will decide how to spend it! I will seek to continue what I do, to give the best possible provision for the children I can help. But I am spending my money on what the KCC thinks I should do. The KCC needs to give schools guidance on what is considered part of a school's core business, and make its expectations clear. I will spend money given to me how I think it best to spend it.

A special school in my area changed the contractor for its school transport and found that some children stopped attending activities as they did not like the new contractor. Have you had any experience of this?

No, for our afterschool clubs we do not use KCC transport, but use our own school minibus to ferry pupils home, or taxis paid for by using some Your Choice funding. The Head Teacher having a degree of control over how they contract and pay for transport is a key issue.

Can you clarify your views about some schools choosing to invest in Extended Services if they want to?

My view is that it is all KCC resources, and I do not see any differentiation. If it were easier to join up the different pots of funding, that would help. The KCC needs some joined-up thinking around this area, and it needs to have an overview of funding to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place to help Extended Services to work.

When I go out to tender for the school transport contract, I have to follow the KCC tendering regulations, but these are aimed at business and I am not a business.

Are you able to show outcomes from Extended Services, to qualify the success of it? Is it difficult to find evidence to justify Extended Services in this political/economic environment? What research is there to back up the value of Extended Services?

We can identify the 'softer' outcomes of it, like every child being 'happy', but how do you measure happiness? Attendance has improved since we have been offering Extended Services; non-attendance has reduced from 9% to 7%. We have noticed increased buy-in of students, and improved behaviour. Outcomes are better, but some outcomes are very difficult to quantify. The school is generally a happy environment, and I am happy that the school reflects the interests of the students. Their sense of belonging is strong, but you only find that out by asking them personally.

Do you feel that you are able to trust your partner agencies, and how sure can you be about safeguarding issues?

I am confident that people employed by KCC are fully and appropriately trained in child protection, health and safety and related issues, and am happy that I can trust such people to be key holders of my school premises. You need to be convinced that your partners are working to the same standards as yourself.

Many schools choose not to engage Extended Services; why do you think this might be?

My view is that all schools belong to all of us and are a community resource, so there is no need to be parochial about each other's premises or resources. There could be a 'kite mark' scheme to ensure that facilities and services offered conform to a common standard. There are some practical barriers to being able to provide Extended Services, also some political reasons to avoid it, and some snobbery around sharing facilities.

To sum up, I would say that, in the difficult future for funding, there is a moral responsibility to continue with Extended Services and to target what money is available to the young people who are most in need of support.

14. Interview with Heather Kemp, Head Teacher, Holy Trinity and St John's Primary School, Margate
(Item 3)

Please introduce yourself and outline your role and responsibilities.

I am the Head Teacher of Holy Trinity and St John's Primary School in Margate. We are a through Primary School with two-form entry plus a nursery, and we have between 400 and 450 pupils. We are in central Margate and our index of multiple deprivation is 2.

Please outline the Extended Services Holy Trinity and St John's Primary School offers, and the ways these services are structured and delivered.

We have what I call the 'traditional' school clubs before and after-school, including chess, table tennis, football and music. We also have a breakfast club which is free and used by 50 pupils. All these activities are staffed by Members of the school staff. A few of the after-school clubs engage parents, and we have a link to Charlton Athletic. We are part of the Quartet Group and we aim our activities at increasing families' quality time to broaden their opportunities. For instance, a group outing to the cinema or a trip to London are big adventures for our pupils. These activities attract a good mix of families. We also have an allotment club, run cooking classes, a holiday club run by the Family Liaison Officer (of which I have 1½!), we host adult learning, coffee mornings and pastoral care.

In your experience, what are the main benefits resulting from the provision of Extended Services?

The main ones are that it plugs gaps and gives opportunities for our pupils to enjoy things that other children enjoy. It offers opportunities that their families might not have thought of. It could mean that school for them isn't just about English and maths but also about animation or table tennis. The breakfast club helps our attendance figures, and the football club in the morning means that pupils arrive for the start of lessons on time! A child being on site before the start of lessons gives them the chance to talk to a member of staff about a problem and resolve an anxiety so they are then able to relax and concentrate on lessons, so increasing their performance in class. Extended Services also increases the level of general engagement with local families.

Does the School offer activities for the local community in the evenings and holidays? If so, how are these activities managed in the school, and by whom?

Yes, a local church uses the school premises for meetings on Sundays, and there are also clubs which do karate and several different types of dancing. A group which looks after a local cemetery also use the school regularly. I feel this is a waste of our resources and it is a pity that the school facilities are not used more but I don't know how to use the school better. We have employed a lettings manager for the past 3 or 4 years, who also does the gardening, as the caretaker does not necessarily want the additional hours to cover lettings. A post covering solely the lettings manager function would be difficult to advertise and would have to be self-funding. The post and the income are mutually dependent, with the club lettings gathering income to fund the post and the presence of the post allowing the clubs to exist.

What are the daily opening hours of your school?

We start pre-school clubs at 8.00 am, then have the main school day up to 4.00 or 4.30 pm, then have evening clubs running from 7.00 until 9.00 pm.

In your view, are there any groups of pupils who find it particularly difficult to access Extended Services? If so, what can be done to help them access these services?

There are no practical difficulties that I can think of, but some parents just do not think it will benefit their child. Some Eastern European pupils were not joining in so were asked what clubs they would like. They chose a multi-sports club as it would be run by a Czech member of staff. We already had a multi-sports club at the time but they had not joined it as they did not feel personally engaged with it.

Was this because of language or cultural problems, do you think?

I don't know, maybe it was because they felt special when they were asked as a group what they wanted.

Some children cannot afford activities which are beyond school, like ballet, for example, but could access subsidised or free school clubs. I have access to Your Choice subsidy but the difficulty is that I have to make a decision about where to allocate it.

In your view, what are the main economic, legal, social and operational challenges for the School – if any – when providing Extended Services?

I feel that anyone who wants to take part in Extended Services should be able to. Operational challenges would include the presence of the caretaker or lettings manager. Practical challenges include security, safeguarding, layout of rooms (ie the hassle of a teacher having to set up their room for class in the morning if the tables have been left in the wrong place by a hirer the night before). Extended Services does rely on the goodwill of staff [and most are happy to do it] but assumes that they will want additional hours, which some might not necessarily. Relying just on goodwill might mean that if a particular teacher was not available one evening, a club could not go ahead. I have an uncertainty sometimes about how to spend my budget, and there are grey areas in which I am not sure if something counts as legitimate expenditure. For instance, something which helps the local community does not increase the maths performance at my school, and Ofsted seems to lack a long-term view of this sort of issue.

Isn't Extended Services funding ring-fenced?

Some is, but it is not clear-cut. For instance, we do not charge for the breakfast club as this helps prepare the children to be ready to learn. Some after-school clubs in the past have ended due to lack of numbers. The set up for getting funding is very bureaucratic, and there are some things which schools might not be aware of. For instance, for after-school clubs we have to have different policies. 'Childcare' and 'school care of a child' are different things and have different regulations. Ofsted came to inspect and asked to see our written policy for 'left and uncollected children', which it turned out we needed to have for our after-schools clubs as we charge for them. If you need funding to set up an activity quickly, which we did, the system makes this very difficult to do, and we started to wonder if it was worth it.

The Ofsted assessment framework looks at community involvement. How far is this taken into account by schools when preparing for assessment?

We do take account of it, but the academic attainment of our pupils is still the key factor in the score that we get. If our Extended Services was brilliant but our

attainment poor, we would score low. Likewise, if our attainment was very good but we did no Extended Services at all, we would be marked down for that.

In which ways, if any, might the reduction of Government funding for Extended Services in future years, and the current restructuring of the KCC CFE Directorate, affect the Extended Services that Holy Trinity and St John's provides?

Without the presence of an Extended Services Development Manager (ESDM), I fear the school will be overstretched to meet the requirements of delivering Extended Services, and I fear that the Quartet project will not be able to carry on. The ESDM helps to co-ordinate and facilitate services and is a big role which is highly valued in the community. Looking ahead at the budget, funding for the Thanet Excellence cluster, which has helped to fund our Extended Services, ends in April 2011, so we will suffer double cuts and I don't know how we could recoup this. We would have to take a decision about possibly charging for some things we give free now, like the breakfast club, or cut back on the Extended Services bits first. Parents come to value these activities and then they are suddenly taken away.

Can you comment on a voluntary or paid lettings manager, perhaps an enhanced role for the Family Liaison Officer (FLO), and the effect on the affordability of services? Would parents take a child away from an after-school club if they could not pay for it?

I sit on a Primary Head Teachers forum, and I know that FLOs are often asked to take on work which might otherwise be done by a Social Worker, so the FLO already has a huge workload and couldn't take on any more. They work with some of the most difficult families, and I think their salary just does not cover what they actually do. The Attendance Officer at my school is also doing some FLO work, so that's why I said at the start that I had 1½ FLOs!

In your view, in which ways, if any, can Kent County Council, schools and external partners, improve the general provision of Extended Services?

- They could clarify some of the grey areas around what the school budget should be used for. With ES, it is important to target resources to the people who most need it, but this is difficult to do. With Your Choice funding I have the scope to make this decision, but I don't like to be the one making it.
- Proper recognition of the FLO role would help.
- Bureaucracy and red tape could be reduced. For example, I have a teaching assistant who has a degree in ceramics and she wanted to set up a ceramics club. She wanted to be paid for it, as she is using her degree, and I wanted to pay her for it, but because she is an existing member of staff it was complicated. It would have been more straightforward to engage an external provider.
- Safeguarding responsibilities need clarification. Parents don't differentiate between an activity at the school which is run by the school and one which is run by an external provider, and if something were to happen at an out of hours club it would be difficult to see clearly, and help parents to understand, who has the responsibility for safeguarding in that situation.

- I feel schools are the driving force and the staff bear the brunt of Extended Services service provision. If there were a team which could set up and guarantee capacity for a minimum of so many club sessions a year, the school could then pay for and add on other sessions if it wished.

Could several schools be linked together for the purpose of paying someone to manage their lettings?

Yes, that would make sense as it would make a viable job for someone, whereas at one school it would not be cost effective.

Would Extended Services implode if the ESDM posts were removed? What if several areas were combined under one ESDM, to save money?

It would give schools peace of mind that someone had an overview of the issue and could give advice about best practice from a broader experience. Without an ESDM, schools would continue to do Extended Services but it would be very difficult on their own.

Do you have a problem engaging parents, and how do you do it?

This is big problem. We have an annual parental questionnaire, and we have to offer a £25 prize to encourage parents to fill it in and return it. Although 80% of parents come to parents' evenings, they do not come to 'Awareness of Maths' sessions. They do come to a card making club which is run by the FLO, and this is helpful as they can chat in a relaxed atmosphere while making cards. They would not come along to a meeting on bullying, for example, but issues like this can be brought up in conversation at an informal setting like a card making club or a football match. You have to try all the options to engage parents.

Is Extended Services take-up related to areas of deprivation?

Yes, I think so. Families get fed up with being preached at, so it is important to put the message across in the right way. They need to see the worth of going to school, and having an interest in the choir or a club helps that.

Some schools have embraced the Extended Services concept and some haven't. Why do you think some don't do it?

Some might be envious of my funding, being in a deprived area (ie the fact that I can have a lettings manager). Some feel that school is not about childcare and clubs, and that families should find activities for themselves.

What is your Governors' commitment to Extended Services?

We do involve our Governors in what we are doing for Extended Services and they are very supportive of it. They are local people who know local needs and want to see benefits for the local area.

What is your view on having volunteers to cover activities if you cannot pay to cover them? Are there any formal voluntary bodies you can turn to, and could their role be extended?

No, I haven't got any formal voluntary bodies that I work with, but we have informal volunteering. We have a volunteer reading group but that is seen as part of the curriculum.

Because people are used to traditional school opening hours being 8.30 to 5.00 and school sites being closed at the weekends and in the school holidays, I think many

people don't think to ask to use the school premises for their club or activity. We have to get people used to a new culture of schools being more open.

Would a simplified safeguarding guidance document, giving do and don'ts, help schools to understand KCC's safeguarding policy and take away some of the anxieties?

Yes, that would help.