

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - EXTENDED SERVICES

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Extended Services held in the Swale 1, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 14 May 2010.

PRESENT: Mr R B Burgess (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, 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

15. Interview with William Cotterell, Principal, and Jan Sellers, Director of Extended Services, Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre, Tenterden
(Item 1)

Please introduce yourselves and outline your roles and responsibilities.

(WC) I am the principal of Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre, which is a comprehensive school of some 2,100 students aged between 11 and 18. The school has a large catchment area of approx 150 km. The curriculum we follow offers opportunities for as wide a range of abilities as possible. It is important to us that the school is not seen as a building which is used just between 9.00am and 3.30pm. We are a '50 week a year' school, and work on the very simple principal that we must not restrict the use of the many resources we have at the school, but must use them for the good of the community. We are already well established with the government's core offer which will come in in September 2010, and our school has won national awards.

(JS) I have been the Director of Extended Services since 1999 and I am responsible for Extended Services provision within school and the delivery of the core offer. I have responsibility for anything outside the classroom, including trips and visits, family liaison, the library and media centre. I am also involved in work on the Children's University and the QES advanced recognition qualification.

In your experience, what are the main advantages and benefits, if any, resulting from the provision of Extended Services? Which of the Extended Services offered by the Centre are proving to have the greatest impact and benefit for the community?

(WC) Learning is at the heart of the community so does not stop. I see benefits in the way students engage as we are able to engage their interests. Learning starts early, in the nursery, and is not necessarily something which happens in the classroom, or leads to a qualification. The 'soft' aspects of learning are very important in generating a commitment to learning. Homewood is a designated Arts college with a theatre facility, and many people come to our site to use it. We also have professional teaching kitchens, and the public can attend for an evening to see a theatre performance and to have a meal. This gives an attractive service to the community as well as training our students.

(JS) We are fortunate to have huge resources on a 45 acre site with many buildings, and we have developed this over the years with community use in mind. We offer

childcare facilities on site 5 days a week, and members of the community can use our library and dance studios or see a show and have a meal. We offer sports activities for the public after school, in the evenings, Saturdays and school holidays. We have a school farm, which is open to our local Primary Schools. Our ethos is to use the resources we have to the best of our ability, from 7.00 am to 10.00 pm, 6 days per week for 51 weeks a year.

Are there any groups of people in the local community who, in your view, find it particularly difficult to access Extended Services? If so, what can be done to help them access these services?

(WC) Our rural location in Tenterden (which has a population of just over 7,000) means that transport is an issue, but we counteract that by taking activities to villages. Our school ethos is to open up everything, but not necessarily on the school site. Finance is a restriction, and we have insufficient resources to do what we really want to do – for instance, we want to do an activity in each of 40 local Primary schools, but our resources inhibit this. Rural transport is always an issue in an area like ours. Also, we work to change the public's understanding of what a school is, and to encourage them to access our resources.

(JS) In 2002, we started offering IT training for our local mums. We offered minibus transport and childcare facilities, but this all has costs. The Freedom Pass has been brilliant as students can travel to take part in activities, or stay at the school after the usual home time.

In your view, what are the main economic, legal, social and operational challenges for the school – if any – when providing Extended Services, and how can these be resolved?

(WC) The economies of scale of being a large school help, but we need to pay overtime for the caretaker, and generate income to pay for the activities. There is no shortage of opportunities but we always have to cover the costs. If money for Extended Services were to run out, we could not draw on our core funding to carry on with Extended Services. This is a real economic concern for us. We are very creative in the way in which we use our resources; we do not seek to make a profit but we do need to break even. Health and Safety issues are a real concern, and people using our premises have expectations over and above what we do day to day. Some people are scared of litigation issues if things go wrong, so do not offer to take on an outing or a class.

Would a simplified version of the KCC safeguarding policy help?

(WC) We do use the KCC safeguarding policy as a basis for our own policy, but this does not necessarily take away people's anxiety.

(JS) Operationally, providing Extended Services means running a second 'school' alongside Homewood school. It is relatively easy to close a school a bad weather, and advertise the closure using the media, but to close an extended school is a nightmare as there are so many more people involved and we do not have the same communication 'links' to them that we have to our students and their parents. Running Extended Services requires a different set of skills – risk assessment, understanding a different set of Health and Safety issues. There is also pressure on school staff to deliver the extra services.

As a large rural school, are there any particular issues Homewood is faced with when providing Extended Services? If so, in your opinion, how can the local authority support the school?

(WC) To address the rural issue, additional resources would be needed. There is willingness and commitment to Extended Services already there, but it is important to recognise that Kent has large rural areas which must be adequately served by transport. It is far better to allow activities to continue in the locations where they have evolved and settled rather than to pull them all together in one place and require people to travel to access them.

In which ways, if any, might the reduction in Government funding for Extended Services in future years, and the current restructuring of the KCC Education Directorate, affect the Extended Services the school provides?

(WC) Most of the Extended Services that we do is achieved from our own resources. There is some local authority money but it is ring-fenced and goes straight out again. I want to see recognition that Extended Services is the way forward for the 21st century, but it is vital that it is properly funded. If it is not adequately funded, it will contract and shrink away. Any reduction in funding must be very carefully managed.

(JS) Our Extended Services Development Manager (ESDM) has known and worked with the school for 8 years, and has an overview of the needs of the schools in her area which are delivering Extended Services, so if the ESDM post were deleted we would lose this vital link and support.

(WC) In the current economic climate, with serious levels of national debt, all parties will seek to protect core provision. However, peripheral grant funding will be reduced and much Extended Services provision will be endangered. My greatest fear is the shrinkage of Extended Services provision, so the KCC would need to assess what is needed and how this can be funded, to help Extended Services to survive.

As a community school in a rural area, how far is Homewood's Extended Services provision affected by the travel patterns of pupils, ie pupils being bussed to school and then home again *en masse*?

(WC) This is a significant restriction on what we can run before or after school. There are some bus services across the rural area, but not serving the smallest and most remote areas, so pupils' ability to stay on to after-school clubs relies on parents being able to pick up their own child and offer others a lift home. Our after-school Extended Services provision relies on a network of parents with their own transport. You cannot encourage pupils to take part in Extended Services unless there is transport available which allows them to take it up.

We have considered the possibility of a three-part day, in which different cohorts of pupils attend school at different times of the day. This would extend the available time in the day for us to run Extended Services activities, but we would need to be able to staff the school at different times of the day. Perhaps if sufficient numbers of pupils were travelling at particular times of day, a local bus company might be persuaded to come on board and run a service to support flexible times, but we would need resources up front to kick-start it.

If government funding were to be restricted to core services only, you would need to be able to demonstrate that Extended Services contributes to the delivery of those core services and should continue to be funded. The trick would be how you measure the effect that Extended Services has on the delivery of core services.

To what extent can voluntary bodies help with Extended Services delivery, and can IT help with the problem of reaching pupils and communities in the most rural areas?

(JS) Voluntary bodies tend to be involved more in Primary Schools. We work with Tenterden Youth Service, which has many resources and much expertise.

Our latest project is the 'Homewood Hairy Bikers'. A local motorbike training school will provide motorcycle maintenance classes for our teenagers and adult learners and students in return for free hire of the school grounds. We now have the resources to accommodate this activity. This will help our students who ride motorbikes to school learn useful motorbike riding skills and safety tips.

This formed a 'bartering' partnership which benefited both the training company and the school and its wider community. Our ESDM was key to setting this up.

Would you say that the key to Extended Services is an attitude - if you want to provide it you will find a way of doing it?

(JS) Yes, it's a belief, we take risks and find the challenges enjoyable.

If a Head Teacher were not enthusiastic about Extended Services and wanted to do the bare minimum, how would you overcome this?

(JS) It has always been our philosophy that, as a community school, we should offer our resources to our community. We have been offering Extended Services for 10 years, before it was even called Extended Services! The school has a very strong philosophy about the value of this, so we couldn't, and wouldn't want to, stop offering Extended Services.

(WC) If a new Head Teacher were being appointed, the Governors at Homewood would not choose anyone who did not embrace Extended Services. Due to the impact of modern society, a learner in the 21st century thinks in a very different way and needs a very different model of tuition, using new and rapidly-changing technology.

What would you say is the overall value of Extended Services? When the Select Committee produces its report, it would like to include some quotes from users who have benefitted from Extended Services, to show the value of it.

(WC) It is a good idea to ask for evidence of the benefits of Extended Services but it is difficult to identify. You could say that a happy learner is an engaged learner, but how do you quantify this?

Can you say more about how the deletion of the ESDM posts would affect your ability to deliver Extended Services?

(WC) If I could afford to, I would employ an ESDM, but I can't fund this. The ESDM has built up expertise over years, and it would be difficult to replicate the relationship and level of understanding that we have with them. The demise of this role would be a great loss to this and other schools. My main concern is that the next generation of learners will miss out on what the ESDM role has been able to contribute. The long term future effect of the change will be felt in 5 to 10 years' time. You'd need to go back to the basic question: 'what is learning about, for young people and the community?'

How could you extend your involvement with commercial partners?

(WC) There are two types of partners; Sport England, SEEDA, etc, who provide pots of funding; and far-sighted commercial enterprises who want to put something back into the local community. These are willing to work with us to build a relationship and develop mutual respect. We have linked to theatre companies and both benefitted. You have to recognise that there are people out there who are willing to go into this sort of deal. However, you need someone to make the initial links and introductions, and this is where the ESDM role helps.

You say you started to deliver the Extended Services core offer years ago. How did you deliver the core offer of Extended Services, before this started to be funded, and how separate was it to your core services?

(WC) The core offer does not relate just to exam results. Exams are a passport to other things, but you need to look beyond that to what other things young people want and need in terms of life skills. We need to address this in whichever way we can – using core services, Extended Services and whatever. Extended Services helps to address this need, and if you let go of Extended Services you do no favours to young people going out into society. There are already enough pressures in society for young people to contend with. Also, young people are not the only learners, and the community needs access to learning too. It's about young and old. We are involved in a wonderful project with the Kent Tenterden Steam Railway, which has engaged some of our pupils alongside older volunteers in renovating an historic truck. You wouldn't think it would appeal to teenagers to work with retired people on vehicles which ran generations before their time, but it does, and they are really enjoying it. If you take away Extended Services, you lose so many ways of linking the community.

Can you suggest any more solutions to improving the provision of Extended Services?

(WC) Don't delete the ESDM posts; recognise that Extended Services is not just about schools, but about the philosophy of learning and how we address this in society; and address the issue of budgets being ring-fenced. Schools would benefit from having flexibility over how they allocate funding.

How would you feel about handing over your facilities and lettings to be managed by an external commercial company?

(WC) We contracted out all our cleaning, which is worth about £200,000 per annum, and while this works with cleaning, I am not sure it would work as well with Extended Services provision. It might work in terms of the practical details, but whoever were doing it would have to be immersed in the philosophy of what we do to be able to deliver the whole service. We don't have profit margins to take into account with what we do, but commercial providers do have.

(JS) Having won a Quality Mark in Extended Services, this shows to our current and future partners that we are rigorous in what we do. We are currently seeking to make Homewood one of the three hubs in Kent for the Children's University, and we will be actively involved in the management of provision

A previous interviewee has told the Committee about the Dover Extended Services (DES) model. Do you think this sort of model would be useful in helping to promote Extended Services to schools which do not yet do it?

(WC/JS) Yes, this would help schools and show future partners that a school using this model is offering a quality service.

(WC) Thinking about the Quality Mark accreditation, I would urge the local authority to consider two questions; are all schools meeting the provision they are due to meet by 2011, and does Extended Services genuinely impact upon the school?

16. Interview with Jeanette Piner, Strategic Director, Every Child Matters, Highworth Grammar School for Girls, Ashford

(Item 2)

Please introduce yourself and outline your role and responsibilities.

I am the Strategic Director of Every Child Matters at Highworth Grammar School, which is largely a girls' school but now has a mixed sixth form. As well as the ECM Director, I am also the school's Child Protection officer, I oversee attendance, the Healthy Schools initiative, Extended Services and I also teach. At the moment we are looking at where we are up to with Extended Services, what is happening and what we can provide.

Please outline the Extended Services that Highworth Grammar School offers, and how these services are structured and delivered.

The school is open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, so we are already providing wrap-around care. Children can attend from 7.30 am and a breakfast service is available from 8.00 to 8.30 am. We do not offer clubs before school but we do have supervised activities. After school clubs, like ICT, dance and drama, run up to 6.00 pm. *A list of clubs available was left with the Select Committee.*

Highworth is part of the Kent Music School, and we run some music activities with the community. The Ashford Orchestral Players meet in our school hall once a week, and we host a choir, a wind band, a folk band (which is run by the community) and a barbershop group. All this is in addition to the regular music teaching and activities that we have in the school.

We also have a number of outside users who hire our premises for activities, including the KUMON maths and English service which runs from 4.00 to 6.00 pm twice a week. Until recently, we had Nepalese adults learning 'English as a Foreign Language', but the participation rates dropped and it was discontinued. Soon we will have 'Understanding Your Teenager', run by an external tutor and arranged by our Extended Services Development Manager. There is a break dancing summer school coming up which will be the culmination of a project to mentor and work with local primary schools to teach them break dancing. It is hoped that this summer school will attract 60 students aged between 10 and 18.

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

Several local schools specialise in particular subjects; Highworth has music, the North School has sports and The Towers has business studies, so that tends to shape the audience which is attracted to each. Some areas of the community would be 'hard to reach' due to language barriers, disability, age and geographical location. We found that the Nepalese community were hard to attract and we did not get as many as we had hoped for the English language classes. We sent home a letter, written in English, with the pupils, but even if the letter had been translated into Nepalese, they might not have come. Some groups don't feel they want, or feel able,

to come into a school, some are already committed to other clubs and activities which suit them, and others want to do something near where they live rather than travel to Highworth.

Are there operational challenges for the school when providing Extended Services (for example, with regard to transport, the availability of staff to run activities and caretaking duties)?

Yes, operational issues are our biggest challenge, the main ones being transport and staffing. We have a large catchment area, and take pupils from 43 feeder schools, spread from Maidstone to Rye. 50% of them are bussed in every day and bussed home again at the end of school, so are not at school to access Extended Services. We have two caretakers who work split shifts, and they do not want any extra hours even when offered, so we might need to take on the expense of a third caretaker to cover the unsocial hours, including the weekends, if we were to do more Extended Services. The whole school site takes two hours to lock up, and if we were running Extended Services we would be limited to accessing only parts of the school. There is no one building which allows us to cut off access to all other parts of the site. Cleaning is another challenge, as our cleaners would have to be available to clean up after an activity, so the premises could be ready to use for teaching the next day. Hirers would also expect the premises they were paying for to be cleaned after school use and be ready for their use at the start of their activity.

Are there legal challenges when offering Extended Services to the local community? Would safety for users and security of equipment and premises be an issue for the school if it was opened in the evenings and during holidays?

We have some very expensive musical instruments and equipment, and our insurance covers that equipment in closed periods. However, if something were lost or damaged in another part of the school while we were open for an activity, this would cause us great problems. We would have to extend our insurance policy and increase the premiums. Security of the site itself is also a problem as we have much building work going on in the school holidays, so if the school opened then for Extended Services activities, there is a the additional risk of someone being injured or the building being damaged, either accidentally by an authorised site user, or maliciously by someone taking advantage of the site being open. We have CCTV cameras on site.

Some people have told the Select Committee that they feel their school belongs to the community and there is a feeling of ownership by the community.

We have had problems in the past with vandalism, as people cut through a fence on the school grounds to use the AstroTurf pitch. Even when we tried leaving the gate un-padlocked so they could get in to use the pitch, the site was still damaged.

Are there economic and social issues for Highworth Grammar School in relation to the funding and sustainability of Extended Services? Could the provision of additional Extended Services by the school have a negative impact on existing services in the local community? Do you charge for your activities, could you increase what you charge, and what impact might this have on low-income families?

We charge the KUMON hirer a modest fee, which is less than she would have to pay to hire the village hall. The 'Understanding Your Teenager' session, to be run by adult

education, will not be charged. For the break dance summer school, we bid for Extended Services money. We didn't get as much as we hoped, but enough to pay for the tutor and the transport and to allow our facilities to be used free of charge. We could charge some people for some activities but I don't know where we would draw the line so that we did not put off people who really wanted to use the facilities but could not afford to pay much.

Do you aspire to put on more activities that you do at present?

The Head Teacher feels happy for the school to be used when it is open, and unless members of staff volunteer to take on extra duties he will not pressure them. However, if more activities could be facilitated by the Extended Services Development Manager he would be happy to charge for them.

Do members of the staff volunteer to run activities? What if a private company were to run the facilities and lettings for you and share the profits?

We would be happy to try this sort of set-up.

Going back to the economic and social issues... Economically, there would be an extra cost for heating and power to keep the site open longer in the winter months, so we would have to charge to cover this. Socially, we are a Grammar school which is attended mainly by pupils from more 'middle class' families, and these pupils tend to go to clubs in their home areas as these attract them more. If we were to extend our Extended Services activities, these other clubs might be forced out of business.

Some families might not be committed to learning. What is your tutoring structure, and could this encourage young people to take on study at home?

I am not sure about this. We would have to do a questionnaire to find out what our pupils do at home, or what clubs they go to when they leave school, so we could identify the gaps. I will take this idea back with me.

In your opinion, how can all these operational, legal, economic and social challenges be resolved?

The building of new premises in two years' time would give us the opportunity to have a part of the school which can be opened up for activities while the rest of the premises are safely locked up. Parts of the building could be alarmed separately, and hirers could be given a key just to the part they are hiring. Gower House, which is part of the Kent Music School, works well now as a stand-alone facility, as the Kent Music School have their own key to the building. We would need a security guard on site up until about 10.00 pm. It would help if there were funding available to cover the cost of an extra caretaker to cover evenings and weekends; some users could be charged something for the use of the premises; and a dedicated admin person to organise all the bookings as their main job would also help. At the moment, I do all this with the help of the school business manager.

If the admin and security could be run by an external company, would that help?

Yes, it would.

How could the school raise funds to keep Extended Services going, if government funding were cut back?

I am not sure how we would go about this; perhaps that's something the Select Committee could tell us! The Head Teacher has asked me to ask about the following;-

- a model of good practice of Extended Services delivery that we could follow, so we do what other Grammar schools are doing;
- some way of identifying which activities give best value for money; and
- whether or not it is possible to bid for a pot of money for each school.

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? What would happen if the Extended Services Development Manager role no longer existed?

It would be very difficult, but some things would still happen. We would still open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, have the music activities and the community clubs that we have now, but extra Extended Services activities which happen outside those hours, and are run by external people, would not be so likely to happen.

Do you rely on your Extended Services Development Manager to advise you on best practice?

Yes. For example, she assessed the financial viability of the break dancing summer school and the 'Understanding Your Teenager' course and advised us on finding the tutor to run it.

As Highworth is a Grammar School, do the Extended Services activities you offer aim to stretch your pupils, in the same way as the academic work of a Grammar School aims to stretch its pupils?

Yes, we offer some free coaching after school hours, so we are encouraging them to stretch themselves. We ran revision sessions through the Easter holidays, run by teachers but offered free to the pupils. But we might have to make a small charge for this sort of session in the future to ensure that the students attend.

Are there particular elements of Grammar School life which affect the Extended Services that you deliver, eg the selective nature of a Grammar School, and the large catchment area, which requires pupils to travel some distance? Once your pupils have all been bussed home, you have lots of facilities but no pupils on site to use them. How far is your ability to deliver Extended Services limited by travel patterns?

I can see that there is an argument for our school to deliver Extended Services for pupils who are travelling home to our area from other schools, rather than just for our own pupils. That's not something we have considered, so I will take that idea away with me.

Some girls who travel here by bus in the morning do stay on after school to play netball or hockey and then have to get home afterwards, and they have to rely on being picked up by parents. But because the school is open until 6.00pm, they are able to wait there safely until their parents arrive. If we were not open until that time, they would not have the option of staying on to do those activities.

Thinking about working with partners, have you thought how you could support your pupils to access external activities, or signpost children to other clubs elsewhere?

In a large school like Highworth, there will be many pupils who are not accessing any activities, and many would have problems getting home afterwards if they were to stay on to after-school clubs. We do not know how many of our 1,200 pupils do not

take part in any activity outside school, so we would have to do a mapping exercise to find this out.

Would you also consider looking into the possibility of liaising with other local schools to use each other's facilities to deliver Extended Services? It might generate some income for both schools.

Yes.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Select Committee?

Some of our 6th form students run activities as part of Extended Services. They put on a summer concert, taking on all the organisation themselves, including many after-school and weekend rehearsals.

Do you have a strong School Council?

Yes, very strong, and we are one of the few schools which have student governors, which works very well.

Are pupils rewarded for this? Do they get a certificate or something similar?

No. Of course, it is a good thing that they can put on their CV but they don't get a reward as such. The pupils who do this are already motivated to do things, so they don't really need to be rewarded further.

The Select Committee keeps being told that it is difficult to quantify the benefits of Extended Services, and in the report we would like to present some case studies of success, with a student or teacher saying how Extended Services has benefitted them. Could you help by providing something, perhaps from the students who organised the concert? That would be a good case study to have.

I will ask the relevant members of staff and forward to you.

17. Interview with Pam Ashworth, Head Teacher, The Foreland School, Broadstairs

(Item 3)

Please introduce yourself and outline your role and responsibilities.

I am the Head Teacher of the Foreland School, where I have taught for 20 years. I oversee Extended Services at the school, although I am not involved in the detail of delivering it. It is an exciting project. One of my teaching staff has a watching brief over our Extended Services provision. I am on the strategic leadership group of Quartet. The Foreland School has links to Margate, and under Building Schools for the Future there are plans to rebuild the school in conjunction with Hartsdown Technical College.

What Extended Services does the Foreland School offer, and how are these services planned and delivered?

As a special school, I feel we are a bit behind the mainstream schools. We were the last one locally to start a breakfast club. We do much liaison and multi-agency working with physiotherapy, OT, etc, and we have speech therapy at the school every day. We also work a lot with parents. My philosophy is to look at the whole child, which is a strength of special schools. Our biggest classes have only 10 or 12

children in them, so we can have a closer relationship with each child and their parents.

We continue forward with joint planning work with the NHS and other partners, and our aim is to support parents as much as possible. We work with the Family Intervention and Support Service (FISS) more each year, at the Smile Centre, which offers outreach services to mainstream schools (50 of our children have Special Educational Needs). My philosophy as a teacher is to support the whole school together. The FISS gives training for teachers and courses for families in behaviour management, and aspects of coping with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. They also give access to sleep clinics, which is a new initiative as good sleep has been identified as an important help to a child's behaviour. We also use Makaton signing.

We run traditional after school and breakfast clubs, which attracted small numbers at first. The age range we cover is 2 to 19, so there is a challenge in how to offer such clubs. We have a wide range of abilities, from profoundly disabled to more able-bodied children, and provision for such a broad range is challenging and expensive. After main school hours, there are fewer staff around to help with those children who have behavioural difficulties. As I have some funding for this via Extended Services, I have tried to open the after-school clubs to the whole school, except the nursery children. We run mixed-age clubs offering sports and crafts, and we also use our sensory room. We ran these clubs to see how they would go, and there have been fewer problems than I had expected. There are 8 children in each club, with 5 staff to run each. We run two clubs per term, each running for four weeks, and we have not yet had to turn away any child who has wanted to take part.

Out of 140 children in the school, most must have benefitted from our Extended Services provision in some way. Parents and children have been keen to stay on after school together.

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, staffing and attendance), and how can these challenges be resolved?

Transport for our children is expensive and needs to be very particular to accommodate their individual needs. Most come to school in taxis and buses. Some of those with very complex needs have their own transport, but most are ferried to and fro by public transport. We have to stipulate that, if they want to stay for a club, their parents must come and collect them afterwards. Some very local children cannot attend after school if their parents do not have their own vehicle and cannot afford a local taxi. Public transport services to the Foreland School are not good. We have used some of our Your Choice funding to fund travel so some children could attend after-school clubs. We have two school minibuses which are unused at the end of the day, so we could pay a driver and use those to run children home after clubs.

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

Our core services will continue but the out-of-hours activities will not be able to. Some of our activities do not actually cost much to run but they take time and energy and need ideas and creativity. The Extended Services Development Manager who works with the Quartet spends time putting together bids and developing links. One of my staff works on our Extended Services provision but we would need more staff time to do more. Having a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) would be good but I would have to sacrifice a teaching assistant post to get one, and they are vital.

Has your Extended Services Development Manager been successful in the past, in the bids she has put forward?

Yes, so this would simply not be possible without her. Her work has brought much benefit to the school, and we have added in a little money ourselves.

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?

It is difficult to see how things would happen if there were no funding. Some projects or clubs could possibly be run on a voluntary basis, but for this we would have to rely so much on goodwill. The level of responsibility one would be taking on with children with specialised needs would put people off taking on this sort of work, and volunteers would still need to go through stringent CRB checks and training, etc.

A parents' support group meets every other week in the school and uses the school's facilities. In the past they have hired a bouncy castle. This sort of activity is easier and cheaper to run as parents are taking on the responsibility for their own children, and I am happy for the facilities in the school to be used in this way.

Weekend activities raise too many difficulties around getting staff to sign up to run them. Some staff are keen to do weekend activities and have set up a scheme in conjunction with the local RNID school. All this takes money to set up, though, so if the money goes away we could not continue.

In your view, in which ways, if any, can Kent County Council, schools and external partners improve the general provision of Extended Services? Might you establish a link like the one which exists between St Nicholas Special School and Canterbury Christ Church University, perhaps with Thanet College?

Yes, we already do have a link, one day a week.

Would you consider developing this further?

I am not sure, as only 20 – 30% of our students have a level of ability that allows them to take advantage of this link. We are not placed in the college site as St Nicholas is. Thanet is one area which is being considered for a Multi-Agency Service Hub (MASH), which will be near Garlinge and Hartsdown. We already share our school site with the NHS as the NHS owns it. Planning services together more in the future would help.

Do you offer courses which are not SEN-orientated, and activities which are open to/attractive to anyone?

Adults with Special Educational Needs (SEN) receive a Direct Payment with which they can purchase services, but they would need to have access to services which they could purchase with it. Other people can use the sensory room when the school

is not using it, and use of this facility could increase. The new school, when built, will be a PFI project, so I expect will have to charge for the use of its premises, but I don't know if this charge will be prohibitive for some potential users. At the moment we make a charge but it is very small. Our after school activities are not geared to SEN *per se*; they are just regular subjects like arts, sports, music, etc.

Do you signpost people to other local services?

Yes, we do a lot of signposting within the Quartet group, and send out fliers for each other's services and activities. I feel our school buildings are under-used.

Do you try to involve adults with SEN in using other schools or facilities in the Quartet?

I would like to but the transport links are really not good. To make more use of our school premises, we would have to cover the cost of the caretaker and the heating, etc. The new school will have better facilities and we will seek to use this more for the community.

Adult literacy in Thanet is a big issue. We have 70 - 80 learning support assistants in our school, and we aim to get them all to level 3 or 4 of the Support When in Schools (SWIS) standard. Some parents struggle with adult literacy but it is a difficult issue to address as such classes are difficult to promote.

If there were no Extended Services Development Managers, what would happen to you Extended Services provision?

Many things would fall apart. I hope some models that we have already established would continue, but we would lose the strategic overview that our Extended Services Development Manager has. We will have to either stop the breakfast clubs when the money ends or start to charge the children for using them, at which point some will not be able to continue attending. I know that many breakfast clubs have stopped when they could no longer be provided free of charge.

In its report, the Select Committee would like to include some quotes from users of Extended Services to illustrate the value and benefits of it. Please could you provide some quotes?

We also need do illustrate the effects that reducing the Extended Services Development Manager level will have on Extended Services provision. Would one Extended Services Development Manager be able to cover two areas, perhaps?

Well, I think having someone will be better than no-one at all, but I would caution against spreading the service too thin. One person covering two or more areas might still be able to maintain the strategic overview that they have now but they would not have time to get practically involved in provision.

Is there a role for voluntary bodies in Extended Services provision? Might this involvement be difficult with SEN?

We work closely with MENCAP locally. They have a representative on our Governing body, and we share ideas and expertise. We signpost people to the local Autistic Society, and they do use our school premises sometimes. But these are not new relationships; we have established these over many years.

Is there pressure on your staff to volunteer more?

I could ask them to volunteer more to help support after-school activities, but they would not stand for it as they have a clear job description and this is not included in it!

Could you share your school minibuses with other schools or the public, to help people access Extended Services events across the Thanet area?

This could work. I would need to look into this sort of resource sharing and the practicalities of doing this. Everything takes time and needs admin support to set up.

What about taking all the Extended Services activity of your and other local schools and handing it all over to be managed by an external lettings company?

This sounds super! The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) school should plan this in from the start!