

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Thanet Local Board

Tuesday, 13 July 2010

Portland Hall, Hopeville Avenue, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2TR

Present: Local Board Members: Bill Hayton (Chairman), Robert Bayford, Robert Burgess, Elizabeth Green, Charles Hibberd, Michael Jarvis, John Kirby, Chris Wells.

KCC Officers: Anne Charman (Community Engagement Manager, Thanet), Heather Batt, Business Support Officer.

Apologies were received from, Ann Goodban, Rex Goodban Arthur King, Kyla Lamb and Roy Wade.

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| 1. | Welcome to the meeting – Mr Bill Hayton, Chairman |
| | <p>Mr Hayton welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>All county councillors present introduced themselves.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> |
| 2. | Notes of Local Board meeting held on 31 March 2010 and progress on any actions agreed |
| | <p>The notes were agreed as a true record.</p> |
| 3. | Kent Youth County Council/Thanet Youth Council |
| | <p>Claire Trainer, Thanet's Youth Participation Co-ordinator sent her apologies and the apologies of the KYCC and TYC representatives who were unable to attend the evening's meeting. They will be present at the next meeting in September.</p> |
| 4. | Tim Woolmer, KCC Corporate Policy – Shaping Later Life |
| | <p>Tim invited the audience to examine their view of later life. How is an older person classified? Quite often an aging population is looked at as a problem, instead of embracing the opportunities it brings. It is not all about providing health and social care. In reality, a good health service and better quality of life has resulted in a large sector of society who are fit, possibly have time on their hands through early retirement and are able to provide a backbone to the community, particularly in terms of volunteering.</p> <p>Nevertheless Kent's aging population is a big issue and one that needs to be addressed and planned for, looking at both the challenges and embracing the opportunities it brings. The '<i>Living Later Life to the Full</i>' Policy Framework was developed over a year ago, based upon widespread workshops and consultations with Kent residents, public agencies and the community and voluntary sector. It identifies cross-cutting issues from stronger and safer communities to transport and has seven strategic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stronger, safer and 'age proof' communities• to improve transport and accessibility |

- enable people to lead healthier lives
- supporting citizenship and learning
- supporting people to live independently
- encourage people to plan for later life
- to promote a positive image of later life.

These are the principles that will be taken into account in any future planning. All agencies in Kent are committed to ensuring that older people's needs are taken into account in their business plans, policy and service design/redesign and to recognise that consultation with older people is vital. Already 10 of the 12 districts have Older People's forums (soon to be 11) and forum representatives in East Kent regularly meet with relevant agencies. The forums focus on transport, benefit take-up promotion, Thanet Gateway Plus, community safety events and generally inform older people of what is available.

The Framework has been endorsed by the Kent Partnership and recently a conference was held inviting a range of organisations, including the older people's forums, to discuss the future for older people living in Kent and to generate ideas on how to improve the later life for those around us.

Other work being undertaken includes fostering intergenerational cohesion by encouraging older and younger people to work together and break down any barriers that may exist, e.g. 'skill slots' where younger people help older people with IT.

Looking ahead there is likely to be a significant reduction in public sector funding. Together with the coalition government's emphasis on 'Big Society', the devolvement of power and more community-led services, there is no doubt that older people will play a pivotal role in the future.

All agencies in Kent have Older People's Champions and Tim encouraged people to contact Mike Angel, KCC's champion with their feedback and any concerns they may have.

Q. Why is life expectancy lower in Kent than Surrey and how does life expectancy in Thanet compare to the rest of Kent?

A. Thanet, together with Shepway and Swale have high levels of deprivation which is closely associated with lower life expectancy. The public sector is addressing this.

Q. How?

A. Initiatives such as the Margate Task Force are looking at the deprivation levels in Margate and Cliftonville, examining the root causes and trying to improve the quality of life for people living in the area.

Q. (Ian Driver, Manager, Citizens Advice Bureau Thanet). The CAB in Thanet depends on older people volunteering and it's good to see this being recognised. However, the Department for Work and Pensions is cutting back on its benefits advice service and we are told there will be staff reductions in KCC. As 40% of the people that visit Thanet CAB are older people with benefit problems, some with disabilities, how will this be managed? The 'Big Society' concept relies on volunteers and CAB is run by volunteers. CAB works across Kent, has experienced staff and there is a common interest. I would welcome the opportunity to work with Kent Adult Social Services (KASS). It makes sense for us to come to an arrangement whereby CAB could help KASS advise older people about their benefits.

A. KASS is promoting information about the benefits that are available and would be interested to discuss this offer further.

- Q. Will bus passes still be available in the future?
 A. Not aware of any changes to bus passes either on a local or a national level.
- Q. What is the take up of bus passes in Thanet? Is it less than imagined?
 A. Will find out the exact numbers and provide details for the next board meeting.
- Q. Why use the description Older People instead of Senior Citizens?
 A. Surveys were undertaken and this description was the most favoured.
- Q. On BBC Radio Four recently they talked about the Bromley by Bow Centre in London. This is a GP practice that has grown over the years to provide an integrated service using arts/crafts/cafes and social enterprise to promote health and well being by raising people's aspirations and quality of life as well as treating them for ailments.
 A. The Margate Task Force are aware of this fantastic project and hope to do something similar in Margate and Cliftonville.
- Q. Will there be exercise playgrounds for older people?
 A. While there is a successful project in Herne Bay, these are not always popular. For example the one planned in Palm Bay Estate, Cliftonville has had some opposition from local residents concerned about the loss of public space.
- Q. Will the government's recent policy to cap housing benefit exacerbate the problem of people being relocated to Thanet?
 A. It is the way housing benefit is structured that is creating poor housing conditions and poverty in the area as it makes it more profitable to be a landlord in Cliftonville than, say, Westminster. Chris Wells is addressing this issue with national government now.

Mr Burgess described some of the intergenerational projects already taking place in Thanet. For example on Saturdays in Garlinge there is an allotment club for the active retired, families and young people. If you would like to find out more, please contact robert.burgess@kent.gov.uk.

The Academy FM (Thanet) radio station is keen to give promotional air time to community groups to talk about their work. Currently there are not enough older groups represented. Please contact David Foley for more information davidfoley@tekc.co.uk

If you would like a copy of the Framework, please email tim.woolmer@kent.gov.uk.

5. Tricia Cole – Chief Executive Officer, Carers' Support, Dover District and Thanet

Carers' Support, Dover District and Thanet (CSDT) has been supporting Carers in the Thanet area since November 2009 (although it has been operating in Dover for several years). It provides support for people over the age of 18 who live in Thanet and have an unpaid responsibility to look after relatives or friends with physical, learning or mental health needs. They may have become a Carer overnight following a road accident, stroke or a child born with a disability or their caring role may have developed over time as a result of a chronic condition such as MS, dementia or as an elderly relative becomes more frail.

Thanet has 13,000 people who consider themselves to be a Carer, which is the largest in the county (Dover has 10,000). Most Carers initially identify themselves as, say, a wife or parent rather than a Carer and it is the recognition of their role that is the first step to them finding support and help.

There are six million Carers in the UK and it is estimated that they save the nation approximately £87bn per year, more than the cost of the NHS. With an increasing older population and a shrinking younger working population, the challenge will be how care needs can be managed in the future. However, this is a global issue, with 100 million Carers in Europe and 50 million in the USA and Carers' organisations in the UK are linking up with countries like Holland to look at the measures they put in place, such as insurance policies, etc., to fund care needs.

Tricia outlined how the role of CSDT has developed since Kent Social Services first asked her to look at the needs of Carers in 2001. It soon became evident that Carers needed someone to talk to for advice and information and as a result, the Dover District Carers Support was formed. Following the closure of Carers Voice in Thanet, Tricia now has responsibility for the Thanet area and CSDT supports over 1400 Carers, mainly by telephone support and information. It handles over 14,500 calls per year and helps with benefit claims and referrals to other agencies, including CAB.

The majority of CSDT's work is with Carers of those with a dementia and three years ago they set up a project for younger people with dementia and their Carers. There are no specific day care places for those in their 50s with dementia and so CSDT has set up coffee drop-in sessions for people to attend as couples. It has also started the 'Young Onset Dementia' gardening project for young people with dementia and their partners. This project helps to sustain daily living skills and helps the Carer look at different ways of managing some of the symptoms of dementia, such as aggression and apathy. Initially the PCT would not help with this project and Pfizers supported this project for two years (they manufacture Aricept, a dementia drug), but now the PCT has taken over the funding.

With the serious impacts of the spending cuts planned, the Voluntary Sector will play an increasingly important role, working with the statutory sector and using more imaginative ways to deliver services. CSDT is in the process of becoming a consortium with two other Carer Support organisations in East Kent which will put it in a stronger bargaining and tendering position and ultimately ensure the sustainability of the locally based work it undertakes.

For anyone who is a Carer, it is important to recognise the need for a break from caring duties. Kent Adult Social Services fund two respite in the home services, Volcare and Crossroads. Both are free. There is also the Kent Carers Emergency Card which again, is a free service and provides an emergency plan and contact details using a secure database should the Carer become unwell and is designed to give extra reassurance. CSDT is working with GP surgeries to identify Carers and offer them the services that are available.

For more information on the help available for Carers please contact support@carers-doverdistrict.org

Q. Is there any link with the Shaping Later Life and the Policy Framework? With all the cuts planned, is there a way money from KASS can be accessed?

A. CSDT has £18,630 to cover the whole of Thanet. We do work closely with KASS and the PCT but can only provide a limited service with such little money.

Q. Is the PCT supporting you?

A. £1.5m has been set aside for Carers by the PCT.

Q. The CAB in Thanet is able to help with completing complex forms for disability and attendance allowance. Recently the CAB in Thanet won a case for £26,000 in back pay.

- A. Older people in particular are often at a disadvantage when trying to access the financial help available. Carers' Support has put together an information booklet for the Dover District and would like to produce something similar for Thanet and hopefully funding will be available shortly to do this.
- Q. Thank you for your interesting presentation. There are Carers with genuine financial difficulties, but it's not all about money. More consultation time is often needed with GPs where there is a multiplicity of issues and it would also be more reassuring for older people to have their GP visit them out of hours.
- A. The need for a 'double' appointment will be passed on to local GPs. It would also help if Carers mentioned this to their GPs so that 'Carer' could be marked on their records. Perhaps it would also help to make notes before you visit your GP.

6. Stephen Meades, Manager, Thanet's Gateway Plus

Stephen briefly outlined the concept of Gateways which is a joint initiative between KCC and the 12 districts across Kent. It works on the belief that what customers want, and where, should directly shape the services they receive locally. These services must then be 'organic' to meet the need of the local community at any given time.

The first Gateway was opened in Ashford four years ago and is soon to be replaced by the Ashford Gateway Plus. Thanet's Gateway Plus opened its doors in January 2008. There are currently seven Gateways in Ashford, Dover, Maidstone, Thanet, Tenterden, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells with three more planned in Gravesend, Sheerness and Herne Bay by Spring 2011.

Gateways have been provided to enable people better access to public services and to a range of community and voluntary services that are tailor-made to their local need as well as minimising the need for multiple journeys.

The Gateway delivers services around a series of 'virtual hubs'; a routine advice hub, a benefits hub, a working and learning hub, a health and independent living hub, a safer communities hub and a greener communities hub. The Benefits Hub has services such as CAB, Housing Associations, and Housing and Council Tax Benefit. In fact the Gateway aims to be able to answer any question and works with over 70 organisations such as The Army, Connexions, Shelter, Thanet Community Support Partnership as well as public agencies such as KASS and the PCT to deliver a programme of weekly and monthly services.

Every Tuesday, CAB runs a dedicated advice service for the over 60s. Carers' Support will shortly also be working from the Gateway.

The Gateway also has IT courses, including Silver Surfers, reading groups, 'Talk Time' for community groups, and has developed a programme of events. The next event is Thanet Vision 2030 working Adult Education, Thanet College, Health Trainers, Manston, Dreamland and Turner which aims to develop ideas and create opportunities for the future.

Gateways use a multi-channel approach with service improvement built upon customer feedback. A recent survey showed that 94.1% of people were satisfied with Gateway's services and 96% were satisfied with the professionalism of its staff.

The Thanet Gateway is constantly evolving, with meeting rooms and services for the deaf. Stephen has spoken on Academy FM to promote the Gateway and will continue to look at ways to reach those people who still don't use the Gateway's services.

- Q. Are community groups able to use the meeting spaces at the Gateway?
A. If an organisation is delivering services direct to the customer then yes. However the Gateway does not provide a closed meeting venue. But it might be worth giving me a call at the Gateway a call to discuss your need.
- Q. Do you run the library?
A. No, I'm the Gateway Manager and work in partnership with libraries. Jackie Taylor-Smith is the Library Manager.
- Q. How do you run a Library next to the noisy environment of the Gateway?
A. Baby Bounce & Rhyme is a service that has run in libraries for a long time as is not quiet. Some library users did prefer a quiet environment, but the Gateway is an integrated service. Gateways don't use the traditional Dewey system used in libraries but a themed one similar to Waterstones, e.g. romance, travel, and youth zones. There has been a 24% increase in new borrowers compared to the stand alone libraries, with a 30% increase in youth borrowing.
- Q. If libraries are closed because of the cuts, does this mean that the Gateway will shut?
A. No, this is a multi-agency funded project with another 10 years to run and there are already plans to turn the Gateway into a charitable trust at the end of this time.
- Q. While a supporter of the Gateway, there is some criticism that this is at the expense of services being provided to the rest of Thanet.
A. This has been recognised and the Gateway is working with Cllr Wiltshire and Madeline Homer at TDC to develop a model of road shows in the five main towns and Minster.
- Q. I notice the Army is one of your partners? Does it fund you?
A. The Gateway acts as a welfare pathway for servicemen who use the services that are already delivered. We are not a recruitment base for the army.

7. Opportunity to ask questions about local public services.

Louise Oldfield from the Reading Rooms arrived after the start of the meeting and requested that her question in the previous Thanet Local Board notes of 31 March 2010 (agenda item 4, Q4) be altered.

Original script:

I run a B&B in Margate and have had couples staying who are looking for homes in the area. But local estate agents say that there are very few entire homes and only small units available. Current renovation schemes do not guarantee that buildings are going to be occupied. Property developers can attract money without providing housing. How can buildings be returned to single occupancy and re-balance the current social in-balance? Will funding be available for homeowners to return converted multi-occupancy dwellings into one home?

Replaced by:

I run a B&B in Margate and have had five couples to stay recently who are looking for homes in the area. But local estate agents say that there are very few large houses and only small units available. Current renovation schemes like the KCC 'No Use Empty', do not guarantee that buildings will be occupied. Some properties are left only partially renovated and standing empty. Property developers can attract money without providing housing. Who is checking that these renovated buildings are now occupied? We already have too many empty properties in the area. Why are developers given money to convert key historical buildings into small flats and bedsits and why isn't more help given to people who want to return these beautiful buildings back to single occupancy? This would attract people to the area who want to settle and help to re-balance the current social in-balance.

It was agreed to make the amendment requested.

Mr Hayton invited Christine Tongue to put a question to the Board.

Q. Our local newspaper reported that the Community Centre in Pierremont Park Broadstairs would begin to be built in stages with the help of KCC money. What exactly is KCC's contribution to this project? How can the project be justified at a time of public spending cuts?

A. Mr Hayton responded that £67,000 has been ring fenced for five years for the use of the Community Centre and cannot be spent elsewhere until the project is discontinued.

Q. How long has this money been ring fenced? What is ring fencing?

A. Money is given over to a particular project from the KCC Village Hall fund and remains there until the Community Centre is built or abandoned.

Q. At the last Board meeting the Margate Partnership said they had all the money in place for Dreamland but shortly after had to look around for more. Why?

A. TDC has pledged to put £4.1m into the Dreamland scheme.

Q. At a stakeholder meeting held in the Margate Media Centre in June we were told that there are millions available to spend on Margate's seafront.

A. We are only aware of £200,000 available for the seafront, with half of this being used to improve the area around Turner Contemporary in preparation for its opening.

Q. Why are companies in the South East and in East Kent in particular, excluded from National Insurance Incentives? (Note: this is a government scheme whereby start-up companies pay no national insurance payments for the first 10 members of staff.) Thanet and East Kent Chamber of Commerce would like this incentive to apply in East Kent to encourage businesses to thrive in Thanet and Dover.

A. Regardless of political party, we all recognise the need to help and support businesses in the East Kent corridor and along the coastline.

Q. What will unemployment in Thanet look like after the cuts have been made?

A. Difficult to say, but unemployment has gone down recently and figures have been as high as 17% in the past.

Q. What contingency plans does KCC have in place?

A. There has been a reduction in government support and at this stage it is difficult to estimate the impact this will have. However employment should not be public sector focussed and all parties recognise the need for spending cuts. Strategic responsibility for this lies with the Department for Work and Pensions. KCC is being encouraged by national government to be more outward thinking, e.g. Total Place, Area Based Budgeting where all services come together to save money. Thanet has much to offer and we need to focus on the positive things happening in Thanet. Our new MP Laura Sandys is working hard for Thanet and has invited the Secretary of State to visit the area. Shortly the 'Top 200' civil servants will be visiting Cliftonville to see first hand the work being done and the problems that still exist. TDC is also working closely with Canterbury, Dover and Shepway as part of a Local Enterprise Partnership.

Q. There is much to be positive about in Thanet with KIA, Thanet Earth, Wind Farms and most recently a report on the seaside resort industry from Sheffield Hallam University described Margate as 'the place to be'.

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| | <p>Q. There is only one woman on the panel. Why is this?</p> <p>A. All parties encourage a diverse representation.</p> |
| 8. | Any Other Business notified to the Chairman prior to the meeting. |
| | None |
| 9. | Close |
| | <p>Mr Hayton thanked all the speakers for their interesting and informative presentations and was particularly impressed with the knowledge the presenters had of each other's services.</p> <p>Mr Hayton announced that all its three funding streams; Member Community Grant, Small Community Capital Projects and Local Schemes Grants were now available in 2010/11 and invited the public to apply to the Board members for their support for projects. For more information on the funding streams available, please contact anne.charman@kent.gov.uk .</p> <p>Mr Hayton thanked the public for attending and closed the meeting.</p> |