

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

Notes of a meeting of DARTFORD LOCAL BOARDS

Date: Thursday, 22 March 2012

Venue: St Anselm's Catholic Primary School, Littlebrook Manorway, Temple Hill, Dartford, Kent, DA1 5EA

Present:

Local Board Members: Ann Allen, Penny Cole, Richard Lees and Avtar Sandhu, MBE (Chairman)

Apologies for absence: Jeremy Kite, MBE and Jan Ozog

KCC Officers:

A8.	Introductions and Apologies
	<p>Declarations of interest None given</p> <p>Ann Allen welcomed everyone and handed over to Avtar Sandhu to Chair</p>
A9.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
A10.	Have your say - Future of Library Services in Dartford.
	<p>Libraries Transformation – Sue Sparks, Strategic Manager, KCC Libraries Libraries are continually trying to improve their offer, such as introducing online ebooks. The efficiencies are set against the need to have face to face presence in local libraries but also the statutory duty to have a comprehensive service. KCC are also trying to find huge savings.</p> <p>Libraries have entered a process of engaging with local residents and members to discuss how we can do things differently and with less money. For example, we are looking at options of relocating libraries into partner premises (eg parish councils, schools, doctors surgeries) or partners moving into library premises (eg parish council clerks) who are then able to give out books. Also, local communities can run services on behalf of the Council, only if local people feel they could.</p> <p>We are starting a discussion and want to engage. There is plenty of information online to start. We want to work with elected members in each Locality. Anything that is going to change will come back for consultation.</p> <p>Questions Ann Allen – please could you give the people an idea of the range of different things you do? Sue Sparks –There are 99 libraries across the whole County. We lend many books, which people can reserve; also audio-visual resources, DVDs, CDs etc and public access computers. Libraries offer many activities, can help with bus passes and share spaces with other agencies. There are volunteers to help get people online, to register births and deaths etc. We are expanding the offer in Dartford.</p> <p>Q. What level of savings needs to be made in Dartford?</p>

	<p>A, There's no set amount for each borough. We will look at what can be saved, looking for opportunities across the County.</p> <p>Q. The Local History service has deteriorated but should be maintained in a good state.</p> <p>A. Big savings have been made and the service can't be operated in the same way as before. There are staff allocated to this but they are stretched. The Centre in Maidstone is very important. .</p> <p>Christoph Bull – Volunteers help with the material at Dartford but the service is not as it was, although more fortunate than some places.</p> <p>Q. Concerns raised about the partnerships idea – will it include commercial businesses?</p> <p>A. Don't know. We have had interest from social enterprises. We would be interested in talking to everyone but needs to meet standards that will be acceptable at no greater cost.</p> <p>Q. Is there a chance of a 2 tier service like Bexleyheath – bronze, silver, gold and you have to pay for the silver and gold?</p> <p>A. We would be unhappy with this. Have some charged services such as DVDs. There are no signs from members that this would be the intention.</p> <p>Avtar Sandhu – There is nothing planned on this front. We want to keep universal services.</p> <p>Q. How will partnerships help to save money?</p> <p>A. Every idea will be different so cannot tell at this stage.</p> <p>Q. Is this affecting just the small branches only?</p> <p>A. These might be the ones that work better.</p> <p>Q. What happens if the plans don't come to fruition, are there plans to close any libraries?</p> <p>A. We are not planning to close any at this stage. If KCC doesn't make savings in the Libraries service, those savings will need to be found elsewhere.</p> <p>Avtar Sandhu – Let's make it work. We need to change with the times and no one is planning to close libraries</p>
A11.	Local Policing updates - PC Colin Stroud
	<p>Police update – PC Stroud</p> <p>There have only been 18 crimes in Dartford yesterday. There have been no violent crimes, only 1 burglary. Our aim is to deliver effective local policing, protecting the public from serious harm and enabling the best use of resources. There is now a new Kent policing model, putting resources into one place and making backroom staff savings. There are 3 divisions, Dartford is part of the North Kent division. There are 3 areas of work - reactive investigative CID, proactive investigative CID, and neighbourhood local community policing. Also working closely with the community safety unit in Dartford, with the borough council and other partners. The main concerns in Dartford include antisocial behaviour, criminal damage and theft.</p>

	<p>The police staffing resources available for Dartford include 2 sergeants; a team of police constables and police community support officers (PCSOs); response, first response officer and CID. Each Ward in Dartford has a nominated officer. PCSOs are not always visible on the street as they are sometimes called to issues locally.</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>Q. How do you get hold of the response team? A. The best number for a non-emergency is 101. 999 is still the best number for matters requiring a emergency response.</p> <p>Q. Is Dartford a safe town? Has crime reduced? A. Crime has remained very much the same.</p> <p>Avtar Sandhu – satisfaction with the Police in Dartford is 93%, and 91% in Gravesham. The detection rate is 49%. The police force is now more efficient, slimmed down and not over bloated. Shifts are covering more hours and being more efficient. Need to get the detection rate to over 50%.</p> <p>Q. What about anti-social behaviour in the town centre? Drunks urinating in the town centre, which is an alcohol free zone. It's not nice to see in the park. A. A police constable has been down to the park with the park rangers. Can take alcohol off them and arrest for drinking the alcohol if needed.</p> <p>Q. Can you remove unopened cans/alcohol etc? A. Yes.</p> <p>Q. Are you linking in with other agencies, for example those that can help people who are dependant on alcohol? A long-term solution is needed for them. A. Many of these people don't cause any problems but some are more volatile than others. We are working with other agencies through the community safety unit.</p>
A12.	The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in Temple Hill - Avtar Sandhu
	Avtar Sandhu let the Local Board know about the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. This is a free event, no ticket required.
A13.	Questions from the Public
	Were asked during each item.
A14.	Any Other Business
	Mr Sandhu also outlined the Make Kent Quicker Campaign. The deadline for registrations is the end of June 2012.
	Q. Was there any publicity for the meeting? a. Yes there were flyers that went out to all the children in St Anselms school, posters that were put up locally.
