

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Education Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 12 September 2012.

PRESENT: Mr G Cooke (Chairman), Mr L B Ridings, MBE (Vice-Chairman), Mr R B Burgess, Mr A R Chell, Mrs P T Cole, Mr J M Cubitt, Mr J A Davies, Mr P J Homewood (Substitute for Mrs P A V Stockell), Mr K Smith, Mr R Tolputt, Mr L Christie and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M J Whiting, Cabinet Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Leeson (Corporate Director Education, Learning and Skills Directorate), Mr K Abbott (Finance Business Partner, ELS Directorate), Mr B MacQuarrie (Head of Capital and Infrastructure Support), Mr D Adams (Area Education Officer - Mid kent), Mrs A Osborne (Area Education Officer - East Kent), Mr S Webb (Area Education Officer - West Kent) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

24. Declarations of Members' Interest relating to items on today's Agenda *(Item A2)*

RESOLVED that Mr Burgess made a declaration that he was a Governor at Garlinge Primary school, Margate.

25. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2012 *(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

26. Verbal Update by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director, Education Learning and Skills *(Item A5)*

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills)

1. The Chairman invited Mr Whiting and Mr Leeson to give their verbal updates. Mr whiting began by advising Members on the following:

- 100 Kent schools had now converted to academy status and a future 17 Kent school were in the process of converting.
- The approved changes to the school transport arrangements were now in place regarding the denominational schools and 16+ students travel cards.

More detail would be submitted at the November meeting of this Cabinet Committee.

- There was joint working taking place between the Customer and Communities and Education, Learning and Skills Directorates on inspiring future generations to participate in sport. A new Sports Policy would be published at the end of this year.
- Kent Jobs for Kent Young People – There was a first phase awareness campaign encouraging businesses to employ an apprentice. There had been 250 pledges received from employers to date.

2. Mr Leeson gave his verbal update and advised Members on the following:-

- There had been improvement in pupil outcomes in Key Stage 1, 2 and GCSE examination results.
- There had been significant improvement in primary schools in levels 4 and 5.
- There had been a reduction in schools performing under floor level.
- The first Free School, in Kent, “Tiger” opened in September 2012. The DfE had notice for 4 more Free School for Kent; Hadlow coed 180 pupils, Well Free School coed Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks Free School (Christian) and Wye Fee school coed secondary, Ashford (Christian). The development of free schools was welcomed especially where there was a need for places. This gave parents greater choice and provided additional provision.

3. Members were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions which included the following:-

- a) It was considered that following the Olympic Games KCC taking a lead to sustain this momentum was welcomed. Mr Whiting advised that 30,000 pupils in Kent took part in the Kent School Games.
- b) In response to a question, Mr Whiting advised that 31 primary schools had converted to Academy status. Out of the 17 schools planning to convert 14 were primary schools. The conversions would be in place in either January or September.
- c) A request was made for parents to be given the option of paying the annual cost of £520 for 16+ transport in instalments. Mr Whiting advised that the colleges and schools were operating the transactions and were equipped to take staged payments. The Policy would be reviewed in one year.
- d) Disappointment was expressed at the rail networks refusal to participate in the travel pass scheme which would increase the schemes benefits to Kent young people.
- e) A request was made for comparative figures on apprenticeship schemes nationally and how Kent compared. Mr Whiting advised that other local authorities had their own schemes such as Dover, Swale and Medway Kent was unique in scale and its collaboration with Job Centre Plus. He was pleased with the 250 pledges which was moving to the target of 1000. Mr Leeson added that there were 2000 Kent young people following an apprenticeship. He agreed to forward the national figures on apprenticeships to Members outside the meeting.

4. RESOLVED that the responses to comments and questions made by Members and the information given in the verbal update be noted

27. Education Learning and Skills Directorate (Education Portfolio) Financial Monitoring 2012/13 - To Follow

(Item C1)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills, Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr K Abbott, ELS, Finance Business Partner)

(Mr K Abbott, ELS, Finance Business Partner was present for this item)

1. The Education Learning and Skills, Finance Business Partner, Mr Abbott, introduced the quarterly monitoring report on the forecast outturn for Education, Learning and Skills Directorate and highlighted points that included the following:-

- There had been a reduction in the school reserves
- Two schools were projecting a deficit. Both schools would be would be receiving assistance to manage this.
- There is a pressure of £200k for Legal Services due to the legal costs incurred when school converted to academies.
- The overall pressure for the Directorate is £325k, excluding schools but will balance the budget by the end of the year.

2. Members were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions which included the following:-

- a) In response to a question, Mr Abbott advised that KCC as the local authority was not responsible academies however if a school converts to academy status with a deficit that deficit had to be covered by KCC. This was being monitored. An academy was able to roll forward 2% of its budget which was less than maintained schools.
- b) In response to a question, Mr Leeson advised that local Members should be informed if their school was converting to academy status. He took an undertaken to ensure that this was done on a consistent basis.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to comments and questions by Members be noted; and
- b) the revenue and capital forecast variances from budget for 2012/13 for the Education, Learning & Skills Directorate (Education Portfolio) based on the first quarter's full monitoring to Cabinet.

28. Budget Consultation 2013-14

(Item C2)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

(Mr K Abbott, ELS, Finance Business Partner was present for this item)

1. The Chairman invited Education, Learning and Skills, Finance Business Partner, Mr Abbott, to introduce the report. Mr Abbott advised that the consultation on the draft budget proposals for 2013/14 was launched on 6 September. The consultation would end on 1 November. An Informal Member Group for this Cabinet Committee had been established and would meet to discuss the net expenditure. The IMGs findings, with the issues raised in the consultation, would form part of the report to the November meeting.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the launch of the consultation that took place on 6 September be noted; and
- b) the proposed engagement with Cabinet Committees be noted.

29. School Performance 2012 – National Curriculum tests and Public Examinations - Provisional Results

(Item C3)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

1. The Chairman invited the Corporate Director, Mr Leeson to introduce the report. He highlighted the following points:-

- The KS2, KS4 and KS5 attainment results for Kent Schools in the report remained provisional until the national averages were made available in the Autumn.
- There had been good improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2012 in all 13 aspects of learning. The percentage of children now reaching this “good” level of development was 72% which was well above the national average.
- Kent continued for the sixth year in succession to reduce the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and other children which was significant.
- There was continued improvement at KS2. The provisional 2012 combined English and Maths results showed 77.5% of pupils achieved the expected level of attainment at KS2 level 4, an improvement of 5.4 percentage points on 2011. It was anticipated that this would move up with later validation of the results.
- 277 Primary Schools had improved their performance, which was the product of focused work including the quality of teaching. As a result, Kent now has 23 schools performing below floor level, a significant reduction from the 70 schools below floor level in 2011.
- The GCSE 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths) improved by 2.7% bringing the county wide figure to 60.8%.
- Over 64 Kent schools showed improved performance for 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths) with 8 schools increasing by 10% or more.

2. Mr Leeson spoke on the boundaries being changed by the school examination Boards in January to June for English GCSE, which schools considered unfair. In 82% of the cases in schools had lower grades in English and this had affected some

pupils' choice on courses and apprenticeships. This had also affected the schools improving their performance results although some still made improvements. KCC was supportive to those schools and would be writing to support schools cases.

3. Mr Whiting congratulated the Headteachers, teachers and the young people in their KS2 and KS4 results. He commented on the GCSE grade boundaries being changed and advised that the views on this had been shared with the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee Chairman, Graham Stuart.

4. Members were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions which included the following:

- a) A suggestion was made that the Kent Challenge should be celebrated. Members wished their thanks to be passed on to Mrs Sue Rogers and her Team for all their work.
- b) Members extended their congratulations on the examination results.
- c) The huge improvement in boys' attainment should be recognised.
- d) In response to the question, Mr Leeson advised that only a small number of primary schools were compulsorily converted to academies. When a school converted to academy status they lose the previous inspection history. Ofsted inspect within two years and the expectation is that they would have improved to satisfactory or better.
- e) There was support to tackling the GCSE grade drift. A Member commented that the local authority should support regrading the GCSE papers rather than pupils having to resit the exams.
- f) In reply to a comment, Mr Whiting advised that he had written to schools on 23 August for their comments on the changes to the grade boundaries and then wrote to the Chairman of the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, Mr Graham Stuart with those findings. It was the role of KCC to support the Headteachers and the children. He made Members aware that a few Kent schools used the Welsh examination body which threw up questions as Wales had agreed to regrade their GCSE papers.
- g) In response to a question, Mr Leeson reassured Members that they would receive a detailed comprehensive report on the results in November.
- h) In reply to a question, Mr Leeson advised that there was a range of GCSE results in schools that were below floor level. Those schools that were previously below floor level had made improvements.
- i) The Committee asked Mr Leeson to pass on their thanks to the schools on their performances.

5. RESOLVED that the responses to comments and questions by Members and the report be noted, with thanks.

30. Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-17

(Item D1)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

(Mr D Adams, Area Education Officer, Mid Kent, Mr S Webb Area Education Officer, West Kent and Mrs A Osbourne, Area Education Officer, East Kent, were present for this item)

1. The Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills, Mr Whiting, introduced the report advising that 84 responses had been received by 19 June, when the consultation ended, and had been considered as the Commissioning Plan was being amended. The Plan was generally welcomed. Members would have regular engagement on the Plan and the Plan would be revised on an annual basis.
2. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, advised that the local authority, as well as being a provider, had to be an effective Commissioner. The local authority had to ensure sufficient early years provision and had the responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision.
3. The Commissioning Plan had been welcomed widely. Responses on the Plan indicated that people wanted the process to be open and transparent on where additional capacity was needed. It was the duty of the local authority to procure quality provision for the children and families in Kent.
4. The Plan sought to indicate the pressures and issues in the Kent and had clear definite proposals on what could go forward and be funded.
5. Mr Leeson concluded by acknowledging the work undertaken by the 3 Area Educational Officers to produce the Commissioning Plan.
6. Members made comments and asked questions which included the following:
 - a) In response to a question, Mr Leeson advised that increasing the capacity of a school, including an academy, would be a process of joint planning and negotiation. Enlarging a school was a lengthy process. As the Commissioner, the local authority would make a request to the academy to enlarge its capacity.
 - b) In reply to a comment, Mr Leeson suggested that there should be sensitive discussions made on surplus schools. There was 5-7% surplus capacity. The provision needed to be in the right places.
 - c) There was a suggestion that the focus should be on basic need rather than a focus on parental need. Mr Whiting explained that the Plan proposed to expand on the number of surplus spaces to accommodate parental preferences. The local authority was committed to accommodate parental preference where it can.
 - d) In reply to a comment, the Chairman gave Members his assurance that there would be further consultations where Members could express their views. This included the Locality Boards and public meetings within the districts to be held before the Cabinet Member took the decision.
 - e) Mr Christie stated that this was a comprehensive document but he did not accept paragraph 1.6 of the Plan that referred to welcoming free schools. He had concerns that the free schools would be where parents wanted them to be rather than where the local authority wanted them to be. He wanted to see priority given to supporting schools in their locality.

- f) Mr Leeson welcomed comments from Members on the District sections of the Plan to ensure it remained transparent.
- g) In reply to a comment on Bearsted, Maidstone, Mr Adams advised that this was a good example of the Plan not just being about what communities were asking for, data was detailed in the appendices to the Plan, this was also school pattern based and did not take into account the parents preferences. There were pressures in Maidstone it was about where they were addressed. It was a question of do you create places where pupils live or parents preferences.
- h) Mr Christie stated that St Botolph's was in the right position in Northfleet for the expansion, however it was the church criteria which he objected to. Mr Webb advised that for the additional 30 places 30% of them were allocated to non-Christian children..
- i) Mr Christie then referred to Sevenoaks District and questioned the need for grammar schools to expand. The Council was committed to selective education and as such the County Council had endorsed the provision for grammar school provision in Sevenoaks.

7. The Chairman sought Members agreement to note Items E1a to Item E3d and following the public consultations receive a full report in November. Mr Christie was happy to note the Commissioning Plan but not the recommendations in Item E3b.

8. RESOLVED that:

- a) the responses to the comments and questions given by Members and the Plan be noted; and
- b) agenda Items E1a and E3b be noted and following the public consultation a full report be submitted to the November meeting.

31. Priority School Building Programme (PSBP)

(Item D2)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

1. The Chairman invited the Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, to introduce the report. Mr Leeson advised that the level of investment in Kent schools was welcome. There were still discussions to be held with the DfE as there was still no clarity on the figures for each project. Mr Whiting added that he had requested a meeting with the DfE to understand the criteria. He would report his findings back to the Committee when the information was made available.

2. Mr Leeson agreed to forward the appendix to the report that had been omitted from the printed papers.

3. RESOLVED that:

- a) Members noted that there was no information at present regarding future additional funding; and
- b) the lobbying for inclusion of schools that had not been successful in obtaining funding and for reprioritisation would continue be noted.

32. Draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy

(Item D3)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

(Ms S Dunn, Head of Skills and Employability was present for this item)

1. The Cabinet Committee received a report on the Learning and Employment and Skills strategy before it was due to be submitted to Cabinet in late November.
2. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, gave a brief introduction highlighting the ambitions of the Draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy.
3. Members made comments and asked questions which included the following:-
 - a) A Member welcomed the 26 targets and gave the following references to issues he considered should also be included in the strategy including:
 - Enterprise and entrepreneurial skills
 - Internships
 - “Destination”
 - “Wolf” report
 - Who the report was targeted at
 - b) A suggestion was made that a conference on the aims of the Strategy should be considered.
 - c) A suggestion was made that the number of university entrants should be monitored especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - d) It was suggested that students considering studying at university should receive comprehensive advice entering into a student loan agreement.
 - e) It was considered that students would benefit from learning the rudiments of a language to extend their work prospect in Europe.
 - f) Employers should be encouraged to come into schools to discuss employability skills with students.
 - g) Referring to the 5 areas mentioned as hot spots for high youth unemployment, it was suggested that the issues could be referred to the appropriate Locality Boards [Gravesham Locality Board had already started work on this]. It was considered that Maidstone should be included in the list of hot spots.
4. RESOLVED that the views and comments made by Members and the report be noted, with thanks.

33. Re-locatable Classroom/Additional School Places Programme 2012-13

(Item D4)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

(Mr B MacQuarrie, Schools Capital and Premises Development Team Manager was present for this item)

1. The Chairman invited the Schools Capital and Premises Development Team Manager, Mr MacQuarrie to introduce the report. Mr MacQuarrie highlighted the following:-

- This report ties in with the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-17.
- School rolls had been rising over and above predictions and were forecast to rise to 117,797 in 2016.
- The total capital sum for the programme was £5.4m. This would deliver the provision of the re-locatable classrooms, new permanent building and adaptation to existing school accommodation.

2. Members made comments and asked questions which included the following:-
a) The Chairman referred to Item F1 on the agenda a decision on additional classrooms which also tied in with this report.

- b) Reassurance was sought on future funding being available. Mr MacQuarrie advised that the Medium Term Plan made informed assumptions about future funding, however the grant allocations which supported the programme were still confirmed on a year on year basis.

3. RESOLVED that the responses to comments and questions made by Members and the report be noted, with thanks.

34. Amalgamation of Walmer Science College (Community School) and Castle Community College (Academy)

(Item D5)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

(Mrs A Osborne, Area Education Officer, East Kent, was present for this Item)

1. The Area Education Officer, East Kent, Mrs Osborne, introduced the report and highlighted points that included the following:

- This was an important development for Deal. The 2 schools had agreed to combine to become one school as there were not enough pupils at either school to sustain them. There would be a consultation, which would commence this Autumn, and planning a curriculum offer and organising the school.
- The Governors were firmly behind the decision. The governors would be speaking with the parents and students.
- Castle Academy had applied for priority funding and was successful. A rebuild was proposed [It was intended that all children would be in one school by 2014].
- The Headteacher of Castle Academy would be running both schools in the New Year to see this amalgamation through.
- The Schools would be brought together by September 2013.

2. The Local Member, Mr Kit Smith, made an additional comment to his statement detailed in the report as follows:

“The management of Walmer Science College (Community School) had made real progress in the last year in getting the school out of special measures and he fully acknowledged the work done. The amalgamation is right for Deal and Walmer. There was still work to be done.”

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to comments and questions made by Members be noted; and
- b) agreement be given to merge Castle Community College and Walmer Science College to form one Academy from September 2013, and to recommend a public consultation on the proposal.

35. Proposed District Primary Commissioning Plans - East District Mid Kent District and Tonbridge and Malling District

(Item E1)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

RESOLVED that the Chairman sought Members agreement to note Items E1a to Item E3d and following the public consultations receive a full report in November. Mr Christie was happy to note the Commissioning Plan but not the recommendations detailed in Item E3b.

36. Permanent and Temporary Classroom Programme 2012-13 - Decision taken on 9 July 2012

(Item F1)

(Report by Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education, Learning and Skills and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning)

(Mr B MacQuarrie, Schools Capital and Premises Development Team Manager was present for this item)

1. RESOLVED that the report be noted.