

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES PARTNERSHIPS SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Local Children's Services Partnerships Sub Committee held at Swale 2, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 12 March 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen, Mr J Curwood, Mr T Desmoyers-Davies, The Reverend N Genders, Mr I T N Jones, DL, Mr M J Northey and Mr M J Vye.

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr P B Carter and Mr L B Ridings, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement.

OFFICERS: *Representing LCSP Thanet 1*; Ms Claire Barham (Locality Commissioning Manager), Ms Nedine Watson-Cutts (LCSP Manager), Mrs Jackie Kemp (Pep Headteacher); *representing LCSP Thanet 2*; Ms Karen Sharp (LCSP Manager), Ms Sue O'Keefe (Headteacher, St Mildred's Primary Infant School, Broadstairs) and Mr Phil Pittock (Extended School's Development Manager, Thanet); *representing LCSP Deal and Sandwich*; Mr Alan Rogers (Children's Services Partnership Manager), Ms Christine Judge (District Manager Children's Social Services) and Ms Debee Beale (Locality Co-ordinator); and *representing LCSP Dover*; Ms Sally Lees (Headteacher, Dover Boys Grammar School) and Mr James Brown (Extended Schools Development Manager).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Ackroyd (Kent Children's Trust Partnership Manager), Mr D Adams (Area Children's Services Officer Ashford & Shepway), Mrs Sally Morris (Head of Strategic Planning & Review) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chairman

(Item. 1)

Mr J Curwood proposed and Mr M J Northey seconded Mrs A D Allen be elected Chairman.

Carried without votes

(Mrs Allen took the Chair)

2. Welcome

(1) The Chairman welcomed the officers and Members to the inaugural meeting of the Local Children's Service Partnership Sub Committee (LCSP Sub Committee). Members and officers introduced themselves.

(2) Joy Ackroyd gave a brief introduction outlining the role of the Sub Committee to have an overview of the work of the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) and submit Minutes of this meeting to the Children, Families & Education

Policy Overview Committee. It was noted that the 23 LCSPs had been in operation for 6 months and therefore it was very early days to assess their effectiveness. There has, however, been significant progress in establishing the partnership Boards, teams and priorities for the Local Children and Young Peoples Plans.

(3) The Chairman suggested that each area give a brief submission of the successes and challenges from the early LCSP operations followed by questions from Members.

3. Headlines: Successes and Challenges from early LCSP operations (September 2008 – March 2009) & Overview of Local Children and Young Peoples Plans (LCYPP) priorities (Item. 2)

Thanet 1

(1) Nedine Watson-Cutts, gave a brief overview of the work carried out in Thanet which included the following:-

- Thanet has the largest population of 0-19 year olds. In Thanet 1 there are 15,330 and in Thanet 2 16,087.
- The core purpose of the Partnership is to improve the outcomes of health, safety and learning, through planning and integrated services.
- Integrated planning was integral in forming the Partnership. This was done through data collection and consultation.
- There was a strong tradition of excellent partnership working across Thanet which has provided a good foundation for building the LCSP..
- The LCYPP covers three years 2008 - 2011 and has sixteen short, medium and long term outcomes.
- Regular Board meetings are held with representatives from key services including health, early years, youth services, youth justice team and the Police, each with a specific area of responsibility in line with the three year Partnership Plan.
- The aim of the LCYPP is to identify local priorities for Thanet 1 and those that cover all of Thanet.
- The LCSP is looking to improve the skill base in Thanet through the "Poverty Pilot Initiative", which included community mentoring.
- The LCSP is also looking at team and partnership structures and aims to minimise duplication to free up funding.
- A hugely positive step has been the commitment by everyone to the LCSP as being the best way of working. It had been key to have Thanet District Council involved.

(2) Jackie Kemp, added further comments which included the following:-

- The membership of the Partnership Board has meant there are less meetings with individuals to share data.
- The Thanet area has significant numbers of families with no work ethic, poor or no school attendance which means these families have significant literacy problem solving and mathematical difficulties.
- In contrast there are excellent secondary schools in Thanet which OFSTED reports validated.

(3) In response to a Member's question Jackie Kemp advised that it is a significant challenge to break the cycle for families who for generations have not worked and had little or no education. The LCSP is seeking to address this through initiatives such as opportunities for young mums to continue to receive education and work on preventing second pregnancies through raising their aspirations.

In response to a question Members were advised that the Partnership Board Minutes were on the LCSP local websites which can be accessed using the link below:

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Clusters/lcsp_splash_Sept2008.cfm

It was noted that the LCYPPs can also be viewed on the LCSP websites.

(3) In response to a question on whether an audit had been made of all early years providers in the Thanet area especially on the quality of care and what plans the LCSPs had made to improve early years, Nedine Watson-Cutts advised that setting up the Children's Centres had been the focus on early years, which meant excellent integrated working with health visitors. This had received financial input from central government.

(4) In response to a question on what work was being undertaken for boys to have role models and gain social responsibility, Jackie Kemp explained that a lot of work had been carried out by early years with the parents of boys. Parents were also able to benefit from the extended schools programme.

In response to concerns that within grammar schools there were students with additional education needs where teachers did not hold the funding or have the relevant experience of special needs Members were advised that there were opportunities within the Partnership for secondary schools to share best practice and expertise. David Adams suggested that this was a school organisation matter rather than an issue for the Partnerships. Sally Lees added that the schools in Dover had gone beyond looking at issues individually but were moving towards being the leaders all schools across the Dover area as well as their own schools.

(5) David Adams concluded that there was a keen focus to raise standards in Thanet 1 and a need for more to be done in the monitoring of pre-school settings at Board level.

Thanet 2

(6) Karen Sharp gave a brief overview of the LCSP Thanet 2 challenges and successes which included the following:-

- There are 28 schools in Thanet 2 and the LCSP Board includes representation from the infant and junior and secondary schools, the Academy and Thanet College.
- There are high levels of need across Thanet 2 and there has been high levels of investment. Needs are very diverse with pockets of poverty as well as more affluent places such as Broadstairs.

- Schools are requesting more joined up thinking and proper signposting which is being addressed by the LCSP...There is a strong partnership commitment to eradicate duplication and free up resources.
- Referring to fathers and role models Karen Sharp stated there is a high level of violence in certain areas that needs to be addressed. There are also high levels of teenage pregnancy which has received constant focus.
- Karen Sharp quoted that the Chatham House Grammar Headteacher advised that the proportion in his school that went on to university was 1 in 5, which for many grammar schools in Kent was the reverse. It was reported that Thanet 2 is in the “value added” league table as 8th out of 23 in the county
- The LCSP was moving into commissioning and service level agreements at a pace with commitment and optimism.
- Karen Sharp felt it was a wonderful place to work with a highly committed multi-agency workforce.

(7) In response to a question on engagement with the voluntary sector, Members were advised that the picture of the voluntary sector in Thanet was complex. There were representatives on the Boards which was beneficial as the voluntary sector had connections with a vast range of other organisations. It was felt that the engagement would become more challenging with the LCSPs intention to move to a commissioning role with a need for Board members to remain impartial. It was recognised that engagement with the voluntary sector was not only a challenging issue locally but also at county and national levels, central government guidance is awaited.

(8) In answer to how much the budget was a restraint and how needs analysis was approached, Karen Sharp advised that the structure in needs analysis was very good. Parents and children were consulted and professionals’ opinion was sought for deeper analysis rather than relying on statistics alone.

(9) Thanet 2 LCSP recognised improving early intervention was a long term plan and there was a need to grow an evidence base to support this.

Dover, Deal and Sandwich

(10) Alan Rogers gave a brief summary of LCSP successes and challenges in Dover as well as in the LCSP he managed in Deal and Sandwich as Lee-anne Farach was unable to attend the meeting, these included the following:-

- There was real poverty in Dover which had been worsened by the impact of the national economic downturn that had led to recent redundancies in the area. This was being tackled through “Dover District Inclusion” which was linked to the Credit Union. He advised that it was part of Debee Beale’s role as Locality Co-ordinator to advise on how to access this money.
- Alan Rogers felt that developing the LCSP so that it is really working and bringing about cultural change was going to take many years.
- Each member of the LCSP Board had a specific area of responsibility for part of the LCYPP.
- Links were being pursued with Dover District Council.
- The voluntary sector had made a large contribution in Dover although there had been no meetings held previously with the voluntary sector in Dover.

There was work to be done in overcoming the negative views the voluntary sector had regarding LA. .

- There had been successes made with youth homelessness across Deal and Sandwich through links with Rainer and the District Council.
- Alan Rogers felt that information exchange was key to the success of the LCSPs and gave the example of commissioning a piece of work to identify which children were more likely to become homeless in the future.
- He also gave an example of five young men who had been excluded from school but through various strategies were now reinstated with the assistance of various agencies including the Youth Service.
- Early years was vibrant in Dover, Deal and Sandwich.

(11) The Chairman advised that she had attended a Credit Union meeting and KCC were allocating £¼ million to the Credit Union and a £¼ million to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

(12) In response to a question Christine Judge advised that unaccompanied minors (children arriving in Kent seeking asylum) and asylum seekers had a real impact on the resources of children's social services in Dover.

(13) In answer to the concerns that the Youth Centres were picking up the pieces of young people who seemed to be on the fringes of society and how this could be changed, Alan Rogers reflected that 2 out of 5 young people in Dover were destined for prison. There was a need to put resources into early years but this needed to be balanced with the needs of young people already in their teens.

(14) In response to a question on making a change to the urban decay in Dover, Sally Lees felt that it was too easy to get a dark picture of Dover. She felt it was a great place to work, a place where you could make a difference with incremental changes. Sally Lees reported that 8% of students that form her schools were first time university entrants. She spoke of one student who had received GCSEs with straight A* results and was holding an acceptance to Cambridge but needed a reference as his parents had no means of financing his university place. Sally Lees felt that it was about giving students belief in themselves and raising the aspirations of teachers. She felt it was important children were in school, especially for those that witnessed domestic violence at home as school was a place of safety. Reducing exclusions could be achieved through partnership working. Exclusions had already been reduced by 35% to 15%.

(15) In answer to a question on how success was celebrated, David Adams explained that they were looking at capturing exemplary examples of success from the LCSPs to produce a DVD and to set up a rewards system for their achievements. Mr Ridings offered to speak with the Editor in Chief of the Kent Messenger who he was due to meet later in the week about the possibility of press coverage.

(16) Karen Sharp suggested that the Awards Scheme could be linked with Kent Businesses, and "Buddy Schemes". Similar schemes were also mentioned including; the Peterborough Oscars and Triangle awards.

(17) In response to a question Alan Rogers advised that there were many issues regarding transition. Key Stages 2 and 3 had been looked at and discussions had

been held with teachers from both secondary and primary schools to enable teachers to understand the issues faced by children transferring to secondary school.

James Brown, Extended Schools Development Manager, spoke of the achievements in Dover including; work with three schools who gained national accreditation through Christ Church University, one school that had formed a family club through the pastoral care office, "SNAPS" an eight month programme. Year 12 students who had given two hours per week to support younger children in their reading and workshops that had been set up through adult education for parents who had concerns for their children going on to secondary school.

(18) Clare Barham added that the link between deprivation and poor health needed to be more fully understood. Health professionals were a key partner in the LCSPs.

In conclusion David Adams suggested that it was evident reflecting on the four LCSPs that each faced a range of issues as well as serving very diverse localities. The LCSPs were looking to personalise services as a 'one size fits all' approach was now unacceptable. It was the responsibility for those at the centre to ensure that the LCSPs had the tools to do their job with the necessary funding in place. He felt that in these early stages the LCSPs had to be allowed to develop, this required consistent support and opportunities for LCSPs to learn from each other

(19) The Committee agreed that:-

- (a) a method for publicising the successes in the LCSPs be developed;
- (b) all Members of the County Council should act as advocates for the LCSPs through their role in corporate parenting;
- (c) the role of the LCSPs and how it affects the Members role should form part of the Members induction training; and
- (d) Members receive updates on the LCSPs at the local Education briefings.

4. Date of next meeting

(Item. 3)

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 April 2009 in the Pendragon Room, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone.