

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 (Trust Development Manager), Mr D Adams (Area Education 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) Mrs Ackroyd gave a brief introduction outlining the role of the Sub Committee to have an overview of the work of the Partnerships and submit Minutes of this meeting to the Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee.

(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, LCSP Manager gave a brief overview of the work carried out in Thanet which included the following:-

- Thanet has the largest population of 0-9 year olds. In Thanet 1 there are 13,000 and in Thanet 2 16,000.
- The core purpose of the Partnership was to improve the outcomes of health and 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 excellent partnership working.
- The Partnership Plan covered three years and had sixteen outcomes. These were short, medium and long term.
- Regular Board meetings were 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 Partnership Plan was to look at the local priorities and those that covered all of Thanet.
- The LCSP was looking to improve the skill base in Thanet through the "Poverty Pilot Initiative", which included community mentoring.
- The LCSP was looking at team structure and eradicating duplication to free up funding.
- A huge positive had been the signing up by everyone of the Partnerships being the best way of working. It had been key to have Thanet District Council involved.

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

- The membership of the Partnership Board meant that there were less meetings with individuals to share data.
- The Thanet area had significant numbers of families with no work ethic, poor or no school attendance which meant that there was significant illiteracy but did not mean that they had problems with problem solving or mathematical skills.
- In contrast there were excellent secondary schools in Thanet which OFSTED reports validated.

(3) In response to a Member's question Jackie Kemp advised that breaking the cycle of families for five generations not working and little or no education would be

managed through initiatives for young mums to continue to receive education and work on preventing second pregnancies through raising their aspirations.

(3) In response to a question Members were advised that the Partnership Board Minutes were on the LCSP local websites. Joy Ackroyd agreed to forward Members the weblinks.

(4) In response to a question on whether an audit had been made on 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 cross working with health visitors. This had received financial input from central government. Information was linked through groups such as the community involvement workers and church groups to engage hard to reach members of the Thanet community.

(5) 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. Those parents who were also made aware of the extended schools programme.

(6) In response to concerns raised 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 was a secondary school meeting that the Partnership used to seek collaboration through potential courses. David Adams suggested that this was a structural matter rather than an issue for the Partnership, as the needs for a grammar school in West Kent may be different from those in East Kent.

(7) Sally Lees added that the schools in Dover had gone beyond looking at the schools individually but were moving towards the leaders of the schools being leaders of all schools across the Dover area.

(8) 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

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

- Thanet 2 covered the largest area of the LCSPs with 28 schools.
- The Board membership included representation from the infant and junior schools, the Academy and Thanet College.
- The high level of need and high levels of investment needed to be joined up as this had been disjointed in the past.
- Schools were requesting more joined up thinking and proper signposting which was being remedied.
- There was commitment to eradicate duplication to freeing up resources.
- Thanet 2 had a totally diverse set of needs with pockets of poverty as well as some of the best places to live such as Broadstairs.

- Referring to fathers and role models Karen Sharp stated there was a high level of violence in certain areas that needed to be addressed.
- There were high levels of teenage pregnancy which received constant focus.
- Thanet 2 was in the “value added” league table as 8th out of 23 in the county.
- Karen Sharp felt it was a wonderful place to work with a highly committed multi-agency workforce.
- 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.
- The LCSP was moving into commissioning and service level agreements at a pace with commitment and optimism.

(10) In response to a question on how far had acceptance to improve aspirations and how far was resistance, Karen Sharp explained that although there were real issues with dependency and domestic violence, it had meant showing alternative ways to behave and changing the culture through parent modelling, attendance at Children’s Centres and extended schools provision.

(11) 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 to remain impartial. In terms of prevention the voluntary sector was the lead on this through early years and SureStart.

(12) In answer to how much was budget a restraint and how needs analysis to action 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 as the professional faced the issues everyday and became resourceful in understanding the needs.

(13) In consultation the LCSP Thanet 2 recognised improving early intervention was a long term plan. There was a need to grow an evidence base. The engagement with the voluntary sector was a huge challenge but this was not a Kent issue but a national one and central government guidance was awaited.

Dover, Deal and Sandwich

(14) Alan Rogers gave a brief summary of the successes and challenges being undertaken by the LCSP in Dover, as Lee-Anne Farach was unable to attend the meeting, and the LCSP he managed in Deal and Sandwich, which included the following:-

- There was real poverty in Dover which had taken a further downturn with the impact of the national economic downturn that had led to recent redundancies in the area.
- Alan Rogers felt that the Board is generally working well although seeing real cultural change was going to take many years.
- Each member of the Board had a specific area of responsibility for part of the LCSP Plan.

- Partnership working has highlighted awareness of the number of meetings colleagues attend raising concerns that while being at meetings colleagues are not always getting on with the day job.
- Good links are being developed 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 LEA. Links also needed to be made with the voluntary service groups and the Board and vice versa.
- The economic downturn was being tackled through the “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 the group on how to signpost families methods of accessing this money through Children’s Centres.
- There had been successes made with the youth homelessness across Deal and Sandwich through links with Rainer and Porchlight
- 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.

(15) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions. 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.

(16) In response to a question Christine Judge advised that unaccompanied minors (children placed by another local authority in Kent) and asylum seekers had a real impact on the resources of children’s social services in Dover.

(17) 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 early intervention was essential and that 2 out of the 5 young people mentioned earlier were possibly at risk of going to prison. There was a need to put resources into early years but this needed to be balanced with the needs of those already further down the line.

(18) 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. A positive figure from a Dover school was 8% of students 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 the belief in themselves and their aspirations and for teachers to believe in them. 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. This could be done by reducing exclusions through partnership working. Exclusions had already been reduced by 35% to 15%.

(19) 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.

(20) 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.

(21) Jackie Kemp suggested that for many students this was step too far to achieve but could be achieved incrementally and that the achievements could be initially placed on the LCSPs website.

(22) 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 for them to make regular visits to each others schools to familiarise themselves with the children and for primary teachers to understand the issues faced by children transferring to secondary school.

(23) 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, Middle Deal Extended Schools (MDES) programme, which had cascaded across Dover.

(24) Clare Barham added that the link of deprivation and poor health needed to be included. Health professionals were a key partner in the LCSPs.

(25) In conclusion David Adams suggested that it was evident reflecting on the four LCSPs that each faced a diversity of issues as well as diverse localities. The LCSPs were looking to personalise the services as the bulk 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 the initially the LCSPs had to be allowed to do their job, this had to be consistent and needed to be mapped, which was being addressed. The library of examples had to be shared and licence be given to the LCSPs to be passionate and have autonomy. The LCSPs needed to own the problem.

(26) 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 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.