

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER DISTRICT LOCALITY BOARD (PRE-IMPLEMENTATION)** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Tuesday, 27 November 2012 at 2.05 pm

Present:

Chairman: Councillor P A Watkins

Councillors: S S Chandler
N J Collor
B R Cope
G Cowan
S C Manion
L B Ridings
C J Smith

Also Present: Councillor Paul Carter (Leader, Kent County Council)
Councillor Mike Whiting (KCC Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills)
Councillor P M Beresford
Councillor L A Keen
Councillor G Lymer

Officers: James Harman (Kent County Council)
Nigel Baker (Kent County Council)
Rebecca Spore (Kent County Council)
Jackie Taylor-Smith (Kent County Council)
Jackie Ward (Kent County Council)
Marisa White (Kent County Council)
Alternative Service Delivery Manager (Dover District Council)
Leadership Support Officer (Dover District Council)
Democratic Support Officer (Dover District Council)

21 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from County Councillor Julie Rook.

22 NOTES

The Notes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 EXPANSION EAST KENT

Councillor P Carter advised that Expansion East Kent was now working well in Dover with good quality applications being submitted. 12% of the £35 million funding available had already been committed, with approximately 8 applications approved to date and around another 10 in the pipeline. It was anticipated that the successful applications would generate around 3,250 new jobs. Funds were 'recyclable', in that repaid loans would go back into the funding pot. Unsuccessful applicants would receive feedback and an opportunity to submit fresh proposals if these were substantially different. The Board was reassured that most of the successful applicants were indigenous Kent businesses, so jobs were not simply being moved from one part of the country to another.

In response to Councillor G Cowan, Councillor P A Watkins advised that the demolition of buildings at the Discovery Park represented a loss in business rates to the Council of £200,000-£280,000, or 4-6% in Council Tax terms. However, demolition was necessary as the buildings were no longer fit for purpose. The new owners of the Discovery Park had ambitious plans which would generate significant growth to plug the financial gap caused by the loss of business rates.

Councillor Carter advised that KCC had a budget of £500,000 to promote the four east Kent districts for new business and inward investment. It was currently an exciting part of the county, with good progress on bioscience, pharmaceutical and green technologies. Moreover, the region's connectivity to London via the High Speed rail link had not yet been fully recognised by businesses and commuters.

In terms of Locality Boards, Councillor Carter advised that the Dover District Locality Board had proved one of the most successful, with effective working relations being forged between KCC and DDC to look at troubled families, libraries, youth services, etc. Councillor Watkins commented that the Board's work on youth services had been especially challenging and had attracted a good deal of public interest. There was an exercise in progress to rationalise and improve the efficacy of the plethora of boards and groups across the county. In response to comments that the Board should be a decision-making body, Councillor Carter responded that the Board would have to prove it could deliver services at the same or lower cost and provide evidence in the form of a business plan.

AGREED: That the update from Councillor Carter be noted.

24 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL'S COMMISSIONING PLAN FOR EDUCATION PROVISION

Councillor Mike Whiting, KCC Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills, explained that the Board's involvement in reviewing the Commissioning Plan was sought in order to ensure that it accurately reflected local needs and knowledge. 10,000 new places were needed over the next 10 years, with a larger surplus available to increase parental choice. The Board was expected to review the figures annually against new housing developments and migrant population information and make recommendations to KCC in April and September.

In response to Councillor Cowan, Councillor Whiting advised that there was currently 45% surplus primary school capacity at Aylesham and Nonington which would probably need to be reduced unless new housing developments came forward in the short term. Councillor Watkins stated that, with KCC support, the Aylesham development of 1,200 homes could commence quickly. The Sholden development of 200-250 houses was likely to start soonest, in 3-6 months' time. Councillor Whiting advised that it was possible to reduce capacity for a temporary period and increase it as and when homes were built, making schools less vulnerable to closure.

Councillor Carter advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 contributions would not cover the shortfall in government funding provided via the New Homes Bonus and Basic Needs. Councillor Watkins stated that developer contributions should not be sought for services unless a direct correlation with a proposed development had been identified. DDC Cabinet was in the process of considering the CIL charging schedule and, once adopted, it would be relatively straightforward to identify any shortfall in infrastructure provision for future developments.

AGREED: That a sub-group of the Locality Board be established under the chairmanship of Councillor L B Ridings, to meet twice a year with Planning Officers from DDC and KCC to make recommendations annually in April and September to KCC's Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills and KCC's Education Cabinet Committee on KCC's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision.

25 SUB-GROUP UPDATES

(1) Library Services

Ms Taylor-Smith advised that KCC was seeking to make savings from library services of £1 million between 2014 and 2016. KCC's Families and Social Care team had expressed an interest in using the first floor at Deal library. In respect of Dover, the Board was advised that plans were underway to reconfigure the Discovery Centre. Members commented that a comprehensive reconfiguration was necessary, and that DDC officers should be consulted as they were familiar with the building. Ms Spore added that KCC would be reviewing the whole estate to ensure that it was used as effectively as possible, not only for KCC services but others too.

In respect of Ash, Ms Taylor-Smith advised that another meeting would be held with the Parish Council and other groups to discuss the possibility of delivering library services from the village hall. On Aylesham, the Sub-Group would be discussing future library services with the KCC Cabinet Member and the Parish Council. The Alternative Service Delivery Manager commented that the location at Aylesham would be key. In respect of the mobile service at St Margaret's, Councillor Watkins suggested that usage could be increased by better coordination with major events and activities taking place in the village. Ms Taylor-Smith advised that a KCC team would be reviewing the mobile service and agreed that the Sub-Group should be involved. Sandwich Town Council had been approached to see if it was interested in utilising the first floor of Sandwich library, and KCC would be following this up.

(2) Student Progression Working Group

Councillor C J Smith advised that the Student Progression Working Group had been established to look at ways of simplifying the progression route from school through to employment for students, schools and providers.

Councillor L B Ridings informed the Board that there had been two well-attended public consultation meetings at Walmer Science College and Castle Community School regarding the potential closure of Walmer in preparation for a merger with Castle Community. A number of concerns had been raised, including academic outcomes and particularly the ability to offer options at years 9 and 11; existing and future numbers at the school; protecting the maritime section at Walmer and staffing. A school in excess of 700 pupils was needed to generate funds and provide a broad curriculum. The number of primary pupils in Deal was forecast to decrease, and the Sholden development was not expected to generate an increase within 2 years. Dover's primary population was set to increase marginally in 2016, but the Whitfield and Aylesham developments would push that up.

Ms Spore reassured members that KCC would work closely with the academy to ensure that staffing the new school was a fair process. The maritime section would be safe for around 5 years, and it was hoped that it would be retained in order to

maximise job opportunities for local pupils. Castle Community had been successful under the Priority Build Programme, and the Education Funding Agency would have looked at its long-term capacity needs (10-15 years) when making the decision. In response to Councillor Watkins, it was clarified that maintained school buildings would be leased on a short-term basis for a peppercorn rent.

Councillor C J Smith reported the situation with regard to K College. Financial difficulties had emerged one year after the college's merger. The Licensing and Skills Improvement Service had now been brought in and College governors had accepted a proposed recovery plan.

(3) Youth Sub-Group

Mr Baker referred Members to an additional paper which provided an update on the implementation of the new delivery model for youth services. It was evident from the number of youth organisations that had tendered that the voluntary sector was interested in, and capable of, delivering youth services in Kent. The evaluation process had been a long and complex one but was now complete and services had been commissioned.

The new youth centre in Deal would receive £200,000 from Section 106 contributions. KCC would cover the remaining capital cost of £1.1 million. 12 youth centres would be retained across Kent, and uses for those that were surplus to requirements would be discussed with the KCC Cabinet Member. For example, the Kent Children's Fund Network (KCFN) had indicated that it might look at using satellite centres in rural areas.

Councillor Chandler expressed disappointment that the Locality Board assessment group had not been involved in all aspects of the assessment process, for example it had not seen the total offer from each bidder which had made it difficult to make an informed judgement on the price. Another shortcoming in the process had been that local groups were not able to bid for part of a lot. It was evident that a lot of organisations had worked very hard to submit bids and this deserved to be recognised. Councillor Cowan raised concerns that assessment papers had been circulated late, and that the results had not been fed back to members of the group or the Board.

Councillor Chandler added that not all of the £136,000 budget had been allocated. It was hoped that any Dover underspend would be used to provide extra services over the 3-year period in the district. It was also hoped that KCC would take a pragmatic approach to the use of surplus buildings so that they could be utilised by new providers.

Mr Baker accepted that there had been shortcomings in the assessment process and comments had been taken on board. On buildings use, KCC was obliged to operate within the procurement framework and bids could not be changed once accepted. A number of lots in Kent had been awarded to more than one provider where both providers' scores and offers justified this. Some districts had seen a significant overspend in budget allocation. A decision on how the unallocated money would be used would be taken by the KCC Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities.

Overall, rather than the current centre-based provision, there would be greater coverage across the whole district, with increased mobile provision in rural areas. Street-based and mobile providers would be encouraged to make use of local

satellite facilities. Contractors would also be encouraged to liaise with community groups to identify the services that were needed.

In response to Councillor Cowan, Ms Spore advised that a meeting was scheduled to look at the future of Archers Court and Aylesham youth centres. All options would be considered and KCC was happy to hold discussions with community groups. It was stressed that KCC did not want buildings left empty and boarded up. Aylesham Parish Council had already been given information relating to the possible registration of the youth centre as an Asset of Community Value.

- AGREED:
- (a) That the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Student Progression Working Group be agreed.
 - (b) That the updates on Libraries, the Student Progression Working Group and the Youth Sub-Group be noted.
 - (c) That the Head Teachers of Castle Community and Walmer Science College be invited to attend the next meeting of the Locality Board for a presentation from Ms Rebecca Spore.
 - (d) That youth services providers be invited to attend the next Locality Board meeting.
 - (e) That a report be brought to the Board in spring/summer to update members on the delivery of youth services.

26 SOUTH KENT COAST HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD UPDATE

The Health and Well-Being Board had been re-named the South Kent Coast Health and Well-Being Board. There were two voluntary sector vacancies on the Board and it was hoped that Case Kent and Healthwatch would fill these. Plans were also underway to identify a voluntary sector representative for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which had a new chairman in the form of Dr Darren Cocker and was currently undergoing validation.

The Board was advised that evidence had been given to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee on local health and well-being arrangements. A project had been commissioned to look at the issue of intermediate care beds at Buckland Hospital. In response to a request from Councillor C J Smith, the Leadership Support Officer undertook to circulate further information about the Healthy Living pharmacy project.

- AGREED: That the update on the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board be noted.

27 FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next Locality Board meeting would be held on 6 February 2013.

The meeting ended at 5.17 pm.