

Sheppey Area Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 14th September 2021 at 7pm
Minster Club, Minster in Sheppey

Agenda Item No. 6: Secondary School Provision KCC New Schools for Swale: (Marisa White, MW)

Marisa White referred to the handouts issued ([attached](#)) and talked to the meeting about these

Marisa White informed the meeting that MP Gordon Henderson, Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council are all working together to get the Secondary School Provision sorted, but there are a great deal of dilemmas facing them.

MW stated that she has attended three Area Committee Meetings now and explained that there were dilemmas faced by each of them with regard to schools. She further informed the Meeting that Oasis Academy has enough places for every child living on the Island, however, it is only used to half its capacity by the Island parents and children.

MW informed the meeting that it would be ideal if the Island had a 2nd Secondary School specialising in skills or engineering because not all pupils are academics and others may possess superior manual skills.

KCC has concerns about Sheppey as only 50% of local families choose to attend Oasis Academy in Minster. She also said that the outcome from Oasis is not good for the Island and not a good outcome for the local economy either. They believe that more than one Provider should be provided for the Island as this will give greater opportunities for all pupils on the Island.

She stated that there is a proposed Secondary School scheduled to be built next to the Quinton Housing Estate in Sittingbourne, however, Persimmons (the proposed house developer) has refused to build a secondary school with them UNTIL the road structure works have been completed at Grovehurst. The Landowner is in Agreement with Persimmons for them to purchase his land to build more houses, but they are at stalemate with KCC and due to Persimmons refusing to build houses and a new secondary school until road works have been completed. KCC said they have no control regarding this Landowner and Persimmons agreement.

She said that the Sittingbourne schools are full to capacity but that Borden Grammar School for Boys will be increasing their intake for 2022 by a further 30 places, and Highsted have a funding agreement to take forward plans to increase. KCC monitors those pupils travelling 'in' and 'out' of the Sittingbourne Area every year and also those moving into the area to fill the new housing developments.

She stated that 50% of pupils who live in Sittingbourne attend local non-selective schools with 34.6% of pupils attending Sittingbourne schools from the Island. She

stated that is not as much as what people on the Island think! Further added that just 71 pupils attend grammar school from the Island.

These numbers are changing and their projection is that Sittingbourne required placements are growing, whereas Sheppey required placements will remain static.

FUTURE SITUATION:

She then emphasised, again, how oversubscribed the Sittingbourne schools are and how there are plenty of spaces available at Oasis Academy!

She stated that Westlands are oversubscribed but have another avenue to secure a school place, whereby 10% of places are allocated to those passing the school's mathematics test. Fulston Manor has 10% of places allocated to those who have expertise in sport or performing arts.

She then explained that there are Admission Criteria for admitting pupils to all schools. These are relevant for Westlands School, Fulston Manor School and Sittingbourne School. They do not apply for Oasis as the school is not oversubscribed.

She then explained that in past years when there were plenty of spaces available at the Sittingbourne schools, children living on the Island secured their places at these schools and those family links are still there for siblings to secure a school place at Sittingbourne schools. However, these are now dwindling away.

She then explained again that a new secondary school which is earmarked for Quinton in Sittingbourne is not going to be built until the Grovehurst Roundabout Structure had been completed. Persimmons has refused to buy the land being offered by the Landowner to build a housing get development on with a promised secondary school until this road structure has been completed. That means that the proposed secondary school at Quinton has been pushed back to 2026-2029 before anything starts to happen.

It was then said that DofE/KCC told the Sheppey Secondary School that they should think about reducing their 13 Form Entry down to a 9 Form Entry and give the West Site back to KCC for a Further Education Site. The school has informed KCC that they will stay at a 13 Form Entry as they want to keep the West Site.

She ended by informing the Meeting that before KCC speak with the DofEducation, they were asked that any communication/proposals to the DofEducation be shown to Oasis first to inform Oasis first before they do so. This is so Oasis are aware of what is happening. She stated KCC had agreed to their request.

She finally ending stating that any decision to install a 2nd Provider to deliver Secondary School Education, is not one that will be taken by KCC, but did not say who was!

She said she was available for Questions but promptly left after her Presentation.

