

Presentation to Governors' Meeting on 'Education Kingston'

A Governor's view

King Charles Centre

11 July 2011, 7.30pm

Introduction

- My name is Josephine Willows.
- I am a Governor of Coombe Hill Junior School, and am here instead of our Chair, Christiane Hodson, who was unable to attend.
- Previously, I was Governor and Chair of Governors at Coombe Hill Infants' School.
- My knowledge of Education Kingston is based on the 10 June briefing—which you have all received—and the various detailed discussions in our governing body meetings.
- The views I express have been agreed with our governing body.

Governors' Role

- Clearly, as governors, we all want to ensure that our school is achieving its best, and providing the best schooling and education for every pupil in that school.
- We do that by proper support and scrutiny.

The current situation

- We rely on our local authority to give us information about our school, and to provide educational support for **all** schools in Kingston.
- I think that the quality of the current service is consistently high.

Future changes

- That support will go (in April 2012).
- Each school will 'buy in' services to support the school and to challenge the school.

Concerns

- How will we, as governors, know which services to buy in, and from whom?
- With my work and family commitments, I just have time to cover the current requirements of the governor's role, but I would not have the time to shop around with the other governors for the best service providers to give the governing body the relevant information.
- If I *did* have time, how would I and the other governors know which service to buy in? Inevitably, we would rely on our Heads to advise us.
- While I have the greatest respect for our current Head, in principle I would not want to be at the mercy of *any* Head to ensure that they chose the most appropriate suppliers, who would be assessing the school, providing interpreted data for the governing body, which we would use to scrutinise the school, including the Head.

Education Kingston

- EK would not only keep the local service we rely on, but would have the potential to make it even better.
- EK could personalise its support, while having the larger Kingston picture.
- For example, Coombe Hill Junior School has many pupils with English as an additional language. We could ask that our School Improvement Plan is focussed more on those pupils.
- We, as governors, could choose.

Finances

- The £750,000 per annum contribution from the local authority – in such dire financial times – shows councillors' commitment to education in Kingston.
- Each school would contribute £6,000 per year. I don't know whether we could get the same service for less. All I do know is that companies would take any profit made, whereas EK would plough any profits back into EK.

Who knows what's for the best?

- We are all in unchartered territory.
- All I do know is that we're all here together on a Monday evening, trying to ensure we make the right decision for **all** children in Kingston.
- I think that EK would ensure that we all share our schools' views, expertise, and best practice, so that all Kingston schools are catered for.
- We would keep a unified approach to education in Kingston.

Conclusion: the EK option, I believe, would mean

- less disruption;
- value for money;
- borough-wide service, that could be even better than it is at the moment;
- and the most certainty for all of us in this time of change.