

People Scrutiny Committee – 11th April 2017

Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Children & Learning

Question 1

“In the past with the increase pressure of more babies being born there has been pressure on school places as well as more flats being built. Secondary and primary schools have being built upon to capacity.

Will there be another school being built, if so when, where and who will build it and finance it?”

Answer

Thank you for your question Mr Webb. As you may be aware, over the past three years the Council has invested significantly to support the demographic growth within the primary population, with expansions at a number of Southend Primary Schools.

This growth will naturally work through to the secondary phase. Our records indicate that the Council will require five additional forms of entry (approximately 150 year seven places) for September 2018, and additional six forms of entry (180) for 2019 and a further two (60) for 2020. The Council has tracked and planned for this growth for a number of years, although recently communications with Essex Council indicate that the option for Southend pupils to attend an Essex school is likely to decrease given their own increase in primary numbers and housing developments.

For 2018, we anticipate expansion to meet needs at existing “good” (as inspected by Ofsted) Southend schools. However, the capacity for further expansion at these schools is limited, and may be insufficient to meet the projected demand for 2019. A cross party working group has recently recommended that we explore the possibility of an additional “free” school within Southend. The Department for Education is currently preparing guidance on how this application will operate, but currently, a sponsoring trust with a proven track record would submit a bid to the Regional Schools Commissioner, who would then approve and fund the building of the school. The timescale for 2019 will be tight, given that the department has yet to publish its guidance, but we would anticipate meeting the demand in time for the new school opening, all be it possibly a mobile solution in the first instance until the new building is fully operational. The Council has already progressed dialogue with known Academy Trusts in preparation for this possibility. Regarding where the

new building would be situated, the Council is currently exploring possible sites under its own ownership, other commercial land for sale and other sites that may be purchased. No decisions have yet been made.

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Health & Adult Social Care

Question 2

“With the increase in council tax to ring fence on adult social care.

What is the total being spent on the care of the elderly and why has the cost gone up?”

Answer

In 2017/18, the additional funding available to Adult Social Care in the budget is £2.912M, this is made up of £2.084M increase in ASC precept and £0.828m one off grant. However Adult Social Care is not immune to the wider cuts in government funding experienced by the Council. Adult Social Care accounts for some 30% of the Councils net expenditure, it therefore follows that 30% of the lost grant represents a cut in funding for Adult Social Care, this amounts to £2.003M.

The overall change in funding therefore is:

Adult Social Care spend 16/17	£38.214M	
Increase in ASC Precept	£2.084M	
One-off ASC Grant	£0.828M	
Loss in Revenue Support Grant <u>(2.003M)</u>		ASC proportion

Expected ASC spend 17/18 £39.123M

Net change £0.909m

The additional funding is being used to fund:

The impact of the changes in demographics - £1m
The cost of the new living wage - £1m
Enhancements to services to meet complex needs £0.9m

The additional costs are offset by anticipated efficiencies of £2m that enables ASC to manage within the 17/18 budget.