

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Education Board

Date: Wednesday, 7th June, 2017

Place: Darwin Room - Tickfield

Present: Maurice Sweeting - Hinguar Primary Governor (Chair)
Jerry Glazier – Trade Unions Representative
Tim Barrett - Temple Sutton Primary
Niki Lanont (previously Bannister) – Milton Hall Primary Governor
Lisa Clark - Hamstel Infant
Elaine Hammans – Group Manager – A Better Start
Jane Youdale - Essex Pre-School Learning Alliance
Vicky Wright – Professional Association for Childcare & Early Years
Margaret Rimmer - Kingsdown
Jackie Mullan - St Christophers
Robin Bevan - Southend Boys (Vice-Chair)
Lionel Pryor - Fairways Primary Governor
Annette Turner - YMCA

In Attendance: Paul Grout – Finance – SBC
Simon Leftley – Deputy Chief Executive (People) - SBC
Brin Martin – Director of Education – SBC
Catherine Braun – Group Manager – Access & Inclusion – SBC
Christine Hickey – Finance – SBC
Ian Ambrose – Finance – SBC

Start/End Time: 8.15 - 11.00 am

1 Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions

Apologies were received from Councillor Courtenay, Mr J Johnson, Mrs S Reynolds, Mr N Houchen and Mr A McGarel.

2 Membership

The Board received an update on membership and it was noted that Ms Nicky Lamont had been nominated to fill the current vacancy in the maintained primary school sector.

Resolved:

1. That the current membership situation be noted.
2. That further request for nominations be sought to fill the vacancies for maintained primary schools, primary academies, secondary academies and the Pupil Referral Unit.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2017, Matters arising and Summary Action Sheet

(a) Minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2017

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

(b) Summary Action Sheet

Action 307

A meeting has not yet been arranged.

Brin Martin explained that this relates to another item later in the agenda, which has delayed the meeting scheduling. There has been some progress in relation to funding, recruitment and retention – but the group has not yet met.

It was expressed that there is some anxiety in schools in relation to recruitment for the coming year.

ACTION: Brin Martin and Amanda Champ to convene this meeting (as per the minutes of the last meeting).

Action 315

Brin Martin discussed the appropriateness of this continuing agenda item – noting that we do not routinely interrogate individual schools in the way we do with Seabrook. He suggested that this item could be removed from this meeting, and instead discussed at sub groups.

There was some challenge from attendees, who noted that this is an issue that impacts on everybody in terms of accessing the support required for children with additional needs.

Attendees also discussed the use of the funding Seabrook have received, and whether this was affecting change. It was noted that the funding review will have a likely impact on the budget that Seabrook receive.

Brin Martin explained that we are working hard to progress conversion for 1st July 2017. There are plans to reposition the Wentworth building, and we are hoping for completion of the transaction as soon as possible. Once this is done, we can progress the conversion of the building.

Lastly, Brin Martin explained that he has commissioned a full review of Seabrook which is being reported back to the IEB.

Robin Bevan, Southend High for Boys, expressed that in his opinion the primary concern needs to be the establishment of viable provision. He added that we need to consider the number of available places too, and whether this number is right.

Brin Martin agreed and noted that this forms part of the agenda.

Cathy Braun noted that there has been difficulty with schools accepting children back after a temporary placement at Seabrook, and also explained that we have been scrutinising permanent exclusions.

Tim Barrett highlighted that Head Teachers are sometimes unclear of what constitutes a child being placed on the waiting list, and this needs to be clearer.

Cathy Braun explained that this will be a key element of SLA meetings moving forwards.

Jerry Glazier suggested the implementation of a panel to look over the need within this local authority, throughout the different years/key stages.

There was further discussion surrounding a lack of resources to meet the needs of inclusion for children with additional or special needs.

Simon Leftley highlighted that there is also a national rise of children accessing early help, on CIN, CP & LAC, which links to this. He suggested that a piece of work is planned to be undertaken, exploring how Southend is changing demographically, which may need to be considered by this group.

Schools suggested they need better information sharing regarding capacity of other schools, so that they can make clear and realistic plans for children.

ACTION: Sarah Greaves – Vulnerable Learners Sub Group to consider the diagnostic of school places/capacity.

Simon Leftley has asked for a meeting with PLT to determine a 'road map' of their progress/plans in future. Simon asked if there are any specific questions/short term measures that anybody requires to be discussed at this meeting.

The Board asked for a simple flowchart of the referral processes.

4 Schools Budget 2016/17 Final Outturn

Paul Grout presented the report.

It was noted that YMCA had 50 places in 2016/17, not 32 as suggested in the report.

Other schools suggested that they are in a similar situation, with over capacity and not enough funding.

The Chair reflected that the report suggests that the current expenditure cannot continue.

5 SEN Funding

Brin Martin explained that we are not in position to present the report fully at this meeting.

We have tested 3 or 4 models, but none have held up to full scrutiny.

We will propose a single item agenda at an extraordinary meeting with a two phased approach; replacement for temporary arrangement and scrutiny of model.

Jackie Mullen explained that we are required to accept a cut in top up funding. We are working on a model to enable schools to continue doing this work, as the need is present.

It was agreed that a standalone meeting needs to be held to consider Southend's position in terms of SEN Funding, to highlight the budget pressures and declare any projected overspend.

Margaret Rimmer, Kingsdown, highlighted that Essex pupils appear to be moving to Southend schools which is also causing budget pressures.

Cathy Braun noted that we now have recordings of managed moves and their success/movement.

ACTION: An Extraordinary meeting to be held – proposed date of Thursday 6th July at 8.15am to present a proposal for a road map to achieve finances up to September 2017 and beyond.

Brin Martin noted that although there are School Performance and Vulnerable Learners sub groups, two other sub groups were initially due to be set up and have not yet been arranged. Brin Martin suggested setting up a sub group to discuss pre-scrutiny for the Education Board regarding finance/budgets, etc.

6 30 Hour Entitlement for Working Parents of 3-4 Year Olds

Elaine Hammans presented the report. She noted that this proposal will bring opportunities for families in poverty, as well as bring professionals back into the workplace – which is something to be celebrated.

She noted that before April 2017, if a school was running Early Years classes there had to be a teacher in the room at a 1 teacher/13 children ratio.

However, they are now able to employ lower qualified staff to teach these classes at a 1/8 ratio. This would lower the qualifications needed but these roles, assisting with recruitment and staffing costs.

After April 2017, schools are now able to consider what model they would like to work under.

Schools are being individually approached to discuss this on a 1:1 basis.

There is not yet a clear understanding of how many schools will get on board. Not one provider, thus far, has said no. We will have a clearer picture of providers by April 2017, and will have a final figure by September 2017.

Although it is said the agreement is for one year, we will be working with schools on a termly basis.

Jerry Glazier expressed concerns that this initiative could cause schools to dismiss qualified teachers.

Elaine Hammans explained that her team will be on hand to help make appropriate decisions and will attempt to sustain the level of qualified staff we have in Southend.

All agreed the recommendations within this report and suggested that one recommendation will go to the Vulnerable Learners Group.

7 Secondary School Pupil Places Update

Cathy Braun presented the report.

Brin Martin shared that in his opinion the biggest risk is if the DFE say they won't fund a basic need school, with the associate link of several displaced year 7's in 2019 due to a current lack of capacity.

However, he noted that we are confident we can move quickly on an announcement to allow us to get in soon.

Cathy Braun noted that we are in correspondence with DFE to discuss our options, and are hoping that they will agree for a free school, especially given that they have not yet met their targets of this.

All attendees accepted the report.

8 SEND Inspection / Peer Review

Brin Martin presented the report. He explained that this inspection will last for 5 days, and we will receive 5 days' notice.

There is an inspection preparation group organising the scheduling and timetables. Our intention is to receive a truthful reflective review of our strengths and challenges to allow us to draw up a plan for future development.

The recommendations were agreed by all attendees.

9 Update on MJ Awards and PwC Proposed Improvements

We submitted a nomination to MJ Awards for Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny and have been selected as a national finalist.

Brin Martin, the Chair and Councillor Courtenay made a presentation and we will find out on 15th June 2017 if we have been successful.

Brin Martin feels that whether we are selected or not, it is a testament to the work of all attendees around the table that we have received a nomination.

Post Meeting Tribute

At the awards on 1st June 2017, Southend Education Board, were singled out as runners up and awarded 'highly commended'.

10 DfE School Improvement Fund Proposals

It was informed that there are significant school improvement funds that we are able to bid into – there is a fund of £140 million for this financial year.

The School Performance Sub Group met recently and scrutinised possible bids.

There is a strict list of eligibility schools that are included, which we will be guided by.

The bids can be submitted in June, September and November 2017. The current plans are as follows:

June

Primary reading, diminishing the difference (reading for disadvantaged children in primary schools) & LAC at KS4 attainment.

September

Targeted vulnerable secondary schools (3 schools not at a 'good' Ofsted rating).

Attendees did not have any queries or comments.

11 Feedback from Sub Group Chairs

(a) School Performance S.G.

In Neil Houchen's absence, Brin Martin explained that we have asked for interim data to be submitted, which has been received and is being formulated.

We have the ability to request data from academies who have not yet submitted.

We continue to update the risk register and act upon that, which is driving commissioning of support to primary schools.

Brin Martin noted two other major projects, as described below:

Primary Pupil Premium

A free pupil premium review will be completed for 24 primary schools in Southend; first come first serve. This is hoped to identify areas of development.

Grammar School Project **(confidential due to Purdah)**

There will be a project implemented to support a greater number of Southend residents to attend a Southend Grammar School.

It is a view of all members across parties that more Southend residents need to benefit from grammar education.

Brin Martin noted that we will initially be using ways of communication to parents through advertising posters etc.

This was challenged as not very ambitious, as schools have been doing this for a number of years.

Brin Martin noted that some particular schools appear to be having a lack of children entered for 11+ exams, and this will be addressed.

It was noted that all grammar schools have increased their intake, which may have affected the numbers of pupils from Southend.

(b) Vulnerable Learners S.G.

Although no detail was provided, Jackie Mullan informed attendees that the sub group is progressing work effectively.

(c) Consideration of SBC Skills Strategy and the Board's role in influencing greater Education linkages

There is a skills sub group that we have not yet started up , but this may be done.

Simon Leftley explained that we are anticipating significant industry and economic growth.

It was said that some employers have difficulty employing young people as they do not have the necessary skills.

Simon Leftley was of the view that we should be creating an integrated skills strategy to look at the likely future of young people and how they can be supported by education experts and local schools.

Brin Martin will be meeting with the team who have drafted this, and sought volunteers to join him to present from a schools perspective.

ACTION: Brin Martin to send an email to all members of this group to ask for volunteers.

12 Any other Business

(a) Education Board Forward Plan

Nothing to add, no changes.

(b) Maintained School Balances 2016/17

The report was presented to attendees.

It was noted that overall balances have reduced slightly, apart from primary, which have increased.

Revenue still required for capital projects, as previously agreed.

Lisa Clark highlighted that Blenheim was not on the academy list.

(c) Volunteers to attend as a representative at the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards

Niki Lamont agreed to do this, pending availability in her diary.

(d) Children's Centres

It was agreed that at the next meeting there will be an update on Children's Centres (this was due to be heard in December 2017, but to be brought forward to an earlier meeting).

13 Date and Time of Future Meetings

Wednesday 11th October 2017 at 08.15am – Tickfield Centre, Darwin Room (front).

Chairman: _____