

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Education Board

Date: Wednesday, 11th October, 2017

Place: Darwin Room - Tickfield

Present: Mr M Sweeting (Chair)
Dr R Bevan, Ms L Clark, Dr P Hayman, Mr D Parker, Mr J Glazier,
Mr A McGarel, Ms V Wright and Mr S Reynolds – Futures College
Niki Lamont – Milton Hall Primary Governor
Lesley Yelland – Pre-School Learning Alliance
Annette Turner – YMCA
June Mitchell – St Nicholas Special School
Darren Woollard – Blenheim Primary School
Mr J Glazier – Trade Unions

In Attendance: Brin Martin – SBC Director of Education
Christine Hickey – SBC Finance
Elaine Hammans – SBC Early Years
Paul Grout – SBC Finance
Robert Harris – SBC Clerk

Start/End Time: 8.15 - 11.05 am

1 Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions

Apologies for absence were received from T Elbourne, J Johnson, B Lester, J Mullan, J Parsad, L Pryor, M Rimmer, T Barrett, N Houchen, S Leftley and Councillor J Courtenay.

2 Minutes of the meetings held on 7th June and 6th July 2017 and Matters Arising

Matters Arising

Children's Centres

The Board received an update from Elaine Hammans, as requested at the last meeting, regarding Children's Centres, summarised below:

- It had been a challenging year but improvements were taking place;
- Occupancy levels were being monitored and already seeing a steady increase;
- Emphasised that it was the integrated services within the Children's Centres and not solely the occupancy of the building/premises;
- Working with Family Action to maximise occupancy and usage;

The Board asked a number of questions covering a number of issues which were responded to by officers, summarised below:

- How are health services being held to account? It was recognised that health were delivering their statutory duties/requirements but it was about what else can be done in addition and how services come together;
- The capacity / occupancy information needs to be validated;
- Clearer definitions of capacity and occupancy were needed;
- The Board should receive a programme for each Children's Centre and the need to formalise what happens next;
- Important that the Governance is effective and there are lines of accountability.

It was agreed that the Success for All Group (SFAG) validate the occupancy information and formalise the next steps for Children's Centres in terms of integration, etc and the Vulnerable Learners Sub Group receive the information on occupancy, etc.

30 Hour Entitlement

The Board considered a report from Elaine Hammans which provided an update on the progress of the implementation of the 30 Hours entitlement for working parents of 3-4 year olds.

The Board discussed the report and expressed their concerns regarding the financial implications and future sustainability of funding for the additional 15 hours per week and the additional pressures this will bring for providers. The Board also drew attention to the providers' capacity to provide for both types of offer (15 hours or 30 hours entitlement) and agreed that financial modelling will need to be carried out.

Resolved:

1. That the update on 30 hours entitlement be noted.
2. That all schools delivering nursery provision where the children are not registered pupils of the school be required to complete the termly Early Years Headcount and Census Information from January 2018 and that the completion of this information should be a condition of funding.
3. That the criteria for the mandatory deprivation funding be reviewed.
4. That the level of inclusion funding for funded children in light of the extended hours be reviewed and reported back to the next Education Board meeting. This should include financial modelling.

Provision of Secondary School Places

The Board were provided an update in respect to the provision of secondary school places in the borough. The Board noted that a new Free School was still a main consideration unless school places can be secured through other means. It was unclear when the next phase (Wave 13) will be announced.

Further updates will be provided to future meetings.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2017, subject to the inclusion of D Parker and G Glazier in the list of apologies, be confirmed as a correct record.
2. That the minutes of the Special meeting held on 6th July 2017, subject to a minor amendment in Agenda Item 2 (High Needs Revised Budget 2017/18) to clarify that the YMCA had 50 places in the High Needs Block, be confirmed as a correct record.

3 Membership

The Board received an update on Membership and it was noted that Mrs L Yelland (Pre-School Learning Alliance) and Mr D Woollard (Academy Primary) had been nominated to fill the current vacancies in those areas.

The Board also discussed the Membership list and suggested that there were some vacancies which had been filled that were not on the list. The Clerk would review the list and update accordingly.

Resolved:

1. That the current membership situation be noted and a corrected/updated membership list be provided to the next meeting.
2. That the nominations to fill the vacancies in the Pre-School Learning Alliance and Academy Primary sector be endorsed.

4 Schools Budget 2017/18 Forecast Outturn

The Board considered a report from Paul Grout which provided an update on the forecast outturn for the 2017/18 schools budget, high needs, early years and centrally retained funds.

The Board discussed the report and concerns were expressed with the accuracy of the data, specifically in relation to the YMCA which had 50 places and not 40 places as suggested in the report. The officers advised that the difference was likely due to DfE calculations for 43 places funded through the High Needs block.

The Board also emphasised that they were concerned the high needs position was not reflecting the full amount due to the mainstream special units.

Resolved:

1. That the forecast outturn and continual funding pressures in relation to High Needs and the forecast deficit balance of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve by the end of 2017/18, be noted.
2. That the continual need to ensure DSG funding is sustainable for future years, be recognised.

3. That the intensive work the Local Authority has been undertaking to ensure High Needs expenditure is contained within the resources available continues.
4. That any underspend that may occur within a block, will firstly be used to assist with the restoration of depleted DSG reserves, be endorsed.
5. That the first call of any additional funding due to High Needs for 2018/19, will firstly be used to restore the restoration of remaining depleted DSG reserves, after resolution 4 above has been applied, be reaffirmed.
6. That the newly formed "Finance Resources Sub Group" commences work on a medium term financial strategy for DSG funds to ensure financial sustainability within 2 years, which is assisted by the recent National Funding Formulae announcements that each block will receive additional funding over the next 2 years.

5 National Funding Formula - Schools and High Needs Funding Reform

The Board considered a report from Ian Ambrose presented by Paul Grout which provided an overview of the DfE recently announced outcome of the consultations around the Schools National Funding Formula and the High Needs National Funding Formula. These consultations have an impact on mainstream schools, special schools, the PRU and Early Years provision.

The Board discussed the report and commented that in real terms schools were still facing a minimum 0.5% reduction. The Board also emphasised that historically Southend was at the lower end of funding compared to other areas, particularly with regard to its proximity to London.

The Board agreed that the options around "soft" and "hard" implementation should be explored further and requested that a report setting out three alternative models was provided at the next meeting. The options/models to be looked at/developed by the Resources Sub Group and each of the Schools' Finance Committees should also have a view of the models before consideration by the Board at its next meeting in December. The options / models should include the £500,000 transfer from the Schools Block to Early Years Block in 2018/19.

The Board extended its thanks and appreciation to Robin Bevan and Simon Oxenham for their work on the matter of schools funding nationally.

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of the funding consultations be noted, as detailed at paragraphs 2.1.1. to 2.1.5 of the report.
2. That, subject to confirmation of proposed funding levels by the DfE for 2018/19:
 - (a) That the National Funding Formula be implemented in full from 2018/19 (hard implementation) for the schools block, subject to de-delegation arrangements for the remaining maintained schools and **an options appraisal report to the next meeting on alternative models (i.e. modelling of what the effects would be if the Education Board retained a local formula for 2018/19).**

(b) That £500,000 be transferred from the Schools Block (growth funding) to Early Years Block in 2018/19, to fund work to sustain the quality and sufficiency of Early Years Providers.

3. That work be undertaken to create headroom with the Early Years block to fund Early Years quality and sufficiency activity in future years;

4. That strong representations be made to the DfE for increased funding for Early Years.

6 School Performance Outcomes

The Board considered a report from Brin Martin which had been presented to the Council's Cabinet on 19th September 2017 setting out the high level performance outcomes for all Southend schools at all key stages following the summer tests and examinations.

The Board discussed the report and noted that the individual school validated results was expected shortly. The Board recognised that the local authority had no powers to force academies to provide data but emphasised that the data was essential to enable detailed analysis and targeted intervention for those schools requiring support.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and all schools be congratulated on their performance which was in the upper quartile (26th) of the country.

7 Review of Alternative Provision

The Board considered the People Scrutiny in-depth project report 'Alternative Provision – off site education provision for children and young people' which was carried out in 2016/17.

The Board discussed the report and commented that they felt there were a number of inaccuracies in the report and several areas which needed to be reviewed. Some concerns were also expressed about the in-depth scrutiny process.

The Board suggested that future scrutiny projects should go through a sense check and are validated (where they relate to Education Board matters) through the relevant Education Board sub groups. The report will be scrutinised further by the Vulnerable Learners Sub Group which will look at the areas/recommendations which can be taken forwarded.

Resolved:

That the scrutiny in-depth project report be noted, subject to the reservations indicated above.

8 Peer Review

The Board considered the findings report from the Peer Review of SEND support for Southend-on-Sea which was taken place on 12th and 13th July 2017.

The Board briefly discussed the report and requested that for future Board meetings a covering report was provided.

Resolved:

That the findings report from the SEND Peer Review be noted.

9 Operational Review of Education Board and Sub Groups (also covering PwC Audit Recommendations)

The Board considered a report from Brin Martin which sought the views of the Board members on how they wish to progress and implement the proposals set out in paragraph 1.1 of the report.

The Board discussed the report and made the following comments:

- Take forward any 'quick wins' and implement any areas which can be put in place quickly;
- Sub Groups should be timetabled to be in-line with Board meetings (e.g. they should meet at least 2 weeks before the Board);
- The views of SOSHA and SOPHA on the Board's Constitution/ToR should be sought;

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Feedback from Sub Group Chairs

(a) School Performance S.G.

The Board was informed that the interim results data had been discussed and a letter to all Head Teachers offering support, etc either from Council officers or by other Head Teachers. The schools requiring support will be visited. The main purpose is to share good practice and provide support and collaboration.

The outcomes will be reflected in the updated school performance report which will come back to the S.G.

(b) Vulnerable Learners S.G.

The Board was informed that the SEND Peer Review had been discussed and an action plan was developed. The group was also looking at the 'banding' model in terms of funding.

The Board noted that the group had become too focused on SEN and not the wider remit around early years, health, etc.

(c) Resources S.G.

The Board was informed that the group had met once and discussed two principle matters – financial outturn and the NFF. This group had helped shape the recommendations around funding discussed earlier on the agenda.

11 Update on Current Matters

The Board received an update on the following current matters:

(a) Catchment Area/Admissions Arrangements – The Council's Cabinet and People Scrutiny Committee had considered and agreed the proposed model to go out to consultation. The link to the Cabinet report will be sent to Board members.

(b) Free School – this was covered under matters arising and there was nothing further to add;

(c) New Data Protection Regulations – All schools need to be aware of the new regulations coming into force on data protection and breaches could result in a range of sanctions.

The Board expressed their disappointment that no guidance has been issued by the DfE on the new regulations.

12 Any Other Business

No other business was conducted at the meeting.

13 Date and Time of Future Meetings

Tuesday 5th December 2017;
Tuesday 16th January 2018;
Tuesday 13th March 2018;
Tuesday 5th June 2018;

All meetings will be held at the Tickfield Centre unless otherwise indicated.

Chairman: _____