

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Education Board

Date: Tuesday, 5th December, 2017

Place: Darwin Room - Tickfield

Present: Mr M Sweeting (Chair)
Mr T Barrett, Dr R Bevan, Ms L Clark, Mr J Glazier, Dr P Hayman,
Mr J Johnson, Ms N Lamont, Ms J Mullan, Mr L Pryor, Mr S Reynolds
Ms A Turner, Ms V Wright and Ms L Yelland

In Attendance: Mr P Grout, E Hammans, I Ambrose, B Martin, R Bonner and
C Braun

Start/End Time: 8.15 am - 10.30 am

1 Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions

Apologies for absence were received from

Cllr James Courtenay – Education Portfolio Holder – SBC
David Parker - Shoeburyness High
Rob Harris – Committee Officer - SBC
Simon Leftley – Deputy CEO (People) - SBC
Julia Jones – Barons Court
Jane Youdale - Essex Pre-School Learning Alliance
Christine Hickey – Finance – SBC
Neil Houchen - Eastwood Academy
Anthony McGarel - South Essex College
Karen Willis – Cecil Jones Academy

2 Update on Membership

David Parker has resigned from the Education Board and a replacement will be identified.

Absenteeism from the Education Board meetings to be discussed and non-attendees over a period of time where no apologies were received will be asked if they wish to be continue to be invited.

Regular organiser and minute taker, Rob Harris was on sick leave and Ruth Bonner would be take the minutes for the meeting.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 11th October, 2017

Item 4: Annette Turner pointed out that the 50 places for capacity listed in the minutes is incorrect and not what she stated at the last Education Board meeting. The subsequent report was not accurate was not scrutinized by Vulnerable Learners Sub Group (VLSG).

It was agreed that 'Action Points' could be introduced to the minutes.

4 Dedicated Schools Grant 2017/18 Forecast Outturn and Schools Budget 2018/19

Paul Grout (PG) provided an update to the position presented at the last Education Board Meeting:

£20,000 underspend on forecast;

Early Years block in running very close to its forecast, the run-rates are very close. High Needs block is overspent by £613,000.

Robin Bevan (RB), as Chairman of the Finance Resources Sub Group (FRSG), mentioned that the committee had looked at mathematical scenarios in order to reduce the deficit.

PH mentioned that a report had been produced for the independent, non-maintained schools.

Elaine Hammans (EH) said that Early Years is not included in the Inclusion fund. High Needs has to look at how Early Years will be inclusion fund funded, and she and PG would be producing a report for the March Education Board meeting.

RB said that the way forward for independently provided provision was through the Vulnerable Learners Sub Group (VLSG). He reminded the meeting attendees that they have a duty to make sure how the money is allocated. The Inclusion fund has to fall within existing resource.

Schools Block

Ian Ambrose (IA) stated that the situation is better than it was perceived to be 6 months previously, following the consultation of the Government introduced minimum pupil funding increase.

The three models for distribution of schools block would be debated and voted upon:

Model 1: The NFF, allowing for a guaranteed increase in pupil led funding of 0.5% and guaranteed pupil funding of £3,300 and £4,600 for primary and secondary settings respectively (the NFF 2018/19 transitional arrangements);

Model 2: The NFF resource distributed through the existing local formula arrangements, updating the basic entitlement only; and

Model 3: The NFF, allowing for guaranteed per pupil funding of £3,500 and £4,800 for primary and secondary settings respectively, and scaling back the guaranteed pupil funding to a 0.285% increase accordingly.

JG gave his apologies as he needed to be elsewhere and left the meeting.

RB argued that Model 3 is the only one consistent with what the Local Authority position on the minimum level of funding for schools.

The pattern of decisions made by the Education Board over a period of six years was to divert supplementary funding into deprivation funding, and that this had caused a bigger gap between schools, as the income per pupil had seen a 20% cut in real terms. The viability of some schools, despite being well run with outstanding results, is being questioned by auditors as core curriculum provision was under threat through lack of funding.

Niki Lamont (NL) favoured model 1 as it would favour more deprived schools.

Model 2 was disregarded and there followed debate on the merits of Models 1 and 3.

Tim Barrett (TB) reminded attendees that the amount of money wouldn't get any bigger and that it was time to bite the bullet, indicating a preference for Model 3.

A vote was held of Board members, resulting in support for Model 3 being carried with 6 votes for mode 3, 4 votes for Model 1 and 2 abstentions.

Early Years Block

RB said that decisions for the Early Years Block would be made at the March 2018 Education Board meeting, with the presentation of the report from EH and PG.

High Needs Block

Jackie Mullan (JM) said the VLSG had done no work on this, nor had there been any progression because the new SEN officer would not be in place until February 2018.

BM recognised what JM was saying and agreed to set up this work through the VLSG before Gary Bloom joins on 1st February 2018.

5 Service Level Agreements held by SBC

BM will commission line by line auditing the SLAs with schools, and those contractors without SLA agreements in place, with the aim to bringing all SLAs into best practice.

LC believed this would be a good opportunity to renegotiate supplier deals where there is no SLA in place.

PH suggested that renegotiation for renewal dates should be included in the spreadsheet of Appendix 5 of the Board papers.

AT asked if funding would move with the child, if the child moved schools.

BM said the exercise is a critical look at the LA, not schools or providers.

6 School Performance and Improvement Strategy

A copy of the School Performance and Improvement Strategy operation handbook was enclosed in the Board papers. BM described it as an operation handbook that

is not required to go through Cabinet or Scrutiny, although Cllr Courtenay has approved the document.

RB mentioned that no timeline was included.

The strategy was approved.

7 Feedback from the Sub Groups

Sarah Greaves (SG) joined the meeting to feedback from the SPSG and VLSC meetings.

RB reported from the RFSG meeting.

8 Matters for the moment

The suggestion of a Southend Teaching Award had been raised with BM. It was discussed the Board had concerns that the awards could be seen as being potentially divisive, although a ceremony to recognise service length found favour. BM would feedback the view of the Board.

BM also congratulated schools that had been passed recent inspections.

EH shared the good news that Southend on Sea had been ranked 63rd best in the country for Social Mobility and within that, for Early Years, was ranked 27th.

9 AOB

Schools Forum Matters: Expansion of Secondary School Places

Brin Martin (BM) advised the meeting that the Free School plans are on hold as secondary schools will expand to provide the additional places required. The time line and funding starts in September 2018, and both are very tight.

Cllr Courtenay will write to all schools about this in the next Cabinet cycle.

Paul Hayman (PH) asked if the expansion of secondary schools has been run past planning.

Cathy Braun (CB) said it had but that the Planning Committee make their decisions independently. The breakdown for expansion places at secondary schools for the next two years would be as follows:

2018: Belfairs (2 places), Shoeburyness (2 places, one permanent, one bulge) and St Thomas More (1 place).

2019: Chase (2 places), Cecil Jones (2 places), St Bernard's (1 place), Eastwood (1 place)

2020: Chase (1 place) and Southchurch High (1 place)

Jerry Glazier (JG) expressed the need for political sign up in a speedy manner to make sure the plans do not fall down.

Lisa Clark (LC) asked about mobile solutions.

BM stated that the projection for additional places would spike in 2020 and then plateau; however, future housing development in the town could very well change the forecast.

Maurice Sweeting (MS) clarified that the Planning Committee is completely independent, but suggested that Cllr Courtenay could write to each of the councillors to explain the position.

10 Date of next meetings

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 16th January 2018, 0830h – 1100h. Venue details to be confirmed in due course.

Chairman: _____