

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Education Board

Date: Tuesday, 5th June, 2018

Place: Darwin Room - Tickfield

Present: Mr M Sweeting (Chair)
Mr D Woollard, Mrs N Banister, Mrs Julia Jones, Mrs A Turner,
Mr T Barrett, Ms M Palles-Clark, Dr R Bevan, Ms L Clark,
Mr J Glazier, Dr P Hayman, Mr J Johnson, Mr A McGarel,
Ms J Mullan, Mr L Pryor and Mr S Reynolds

In Attendance: Councillors H Boyd
Mrs C Hickey, Mr P Grout, Mrs E Hammans, Mr R Harris, Mr
S Leftley, Mr B Martin, Mrs A Griffin and Mrs C Braun

Start/End Time: 8.15 - 11.00 am

1 Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions

Apologies for absence were received from Vicky Wright, Lesley Yelland, Neil Houchen and Karen Willis.

The Board welcomed Alison Griffin, SBC Chief Executive and Councillor Boyd, the new Cabinet Member for Children and Learning.

2 Membership, Constitution and Terms of Reference

The Board considered the current Membership, the Education Board Protocol and Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

That the membership, Protocol and Terms of Reference, be noted.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th March 2018 and Matters Arising

Matters Arising

Schools Inspection Regime – The Board noted that the Regional Schools Commissioner had provide a written response to the Chair's letter.

The Board was also informed that St Thomas More, Eastwood, Edwards Hall and Milton had all retained/achieved a good rating. Chase High School had received a require improvement rating which shows the improvements made by the school (previously received an inadequate rating).

The Board noted that Barons' Court Primary school had become a teaching school with immediate effect. Congratulations were also extended to Hamstel Infants school on their recent award.

The Board also noted that Futures College would become an academy on 1st July 2018 and that the Catholic schools (St Thomas More, Sacred Heart and Lady of Lourdes) were now part of the CC academy trust. Other Catholic schools in the borough will join the trust at some point in the future.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th March 2018, were confirmed as a correct record.

4 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget Final Outturn 2017/18

The Board considered a report from the Senior Finance Officer providing an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) final outturn for the schools budget, high needs, early years and centrally retained for 2017/18.

The Board sought clarification concerning the direct funding allocations for early years in respect to the 3 and 4 year old free childcare entitlement funding. The officers reported that this related to the 15 hours 'extended entitlement' for free childcare in addition to the core entitlement of 15 hours free childcare (i.e. a total of 30 hours free childcare). The Board noted that as this was the first year that the extended entitlement was in place there had been a lower take-up than originally forecast by the DfE, but this was not unexpected at a local LA level or nationally.

The Board discussed in detail the challenges and pressures within the High Needs block funding. Members emphasised that this was a national issue/concern. The Board asked officers to provide information / comparator data from neighbouring local authorities to better understand the position in terms of high needs funding in the borough.

The Board extended its thanks and appreciation to the finance officers and the Resources Sub Group for the significant work that has been undertaken in this area recognising that the strength on forecasting and all round understanding of the DSG expenditure in 2017/18, is in a significantly better position than it was in 2016/17 and earlier years.

Resolved:

That the final 2017/18 outturn be noted and the subsequent DSG reserve balances for each funding block to be carried forward into 2018/19 be agreed.

5 High Need Detailed Budget Allocation 2018/19

The Board considered a report from the Senior Finance Officer presenting the High Need's Block detailed budget allocations for 2018/19.

The Board discussed the report in detail and emphasised that had Southend been funded at the level it should have been (i.e. there was no cap applied on

funding gains) the local authority would not be in the position that it has been unable to contain current High Need spend levels within its actual funding allocation. The key issue was how the reduced funding will be managed in the future and the nature of the historical deficit. It was stressed that in real terms there was a 6% reduction in funding against rising demand and need – a view to be taken on how the high needs funding was allocated in a fair and equitable way balanced against how the Board can contribute to this process.

How articulate the need to set a balanced budget given that the level of funding is inadequate to support need/demand (particularly within the special school sector).

There were specific issues regarding the capacity and sustainability of special schools and it was noted that officers were meeting with the Regional Schools Officer to discuss a number of issues, including capacity.

Officers advised that the current provision in place will need to be reviewed, particular around the level of top-up funding for special provision.

In respect to independent providers the Board recognised the significant pressures in this area. Officers highlighted that better ways to support SEN/EHCP were being explored.

Resolved:

1. That the detailed High Need budget allocation for 2018/19 as set out in the report be agreed and adopted.
2. That the flexible place funding allocation of £80,000 for Special Schools continues to be adopted in 2018/19 (as set out in Appendix 1 to the report).
3. That the 2018/19 Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) top up funding rates passed over to the 4 special schools who form part of the SEN trust be held at their same rates as 2017/18 (as set out in section 7.4 of the report).
4. That the EHCP top up funding rates for the special school Sutton House be reduced by the maximum allowed minimum funding guarantee from September 2018 (as set out in Section 7.5 of the report).
5. That the EHCP top funding rates awarded to Special base units be amended in 2018/19 to compensate for what would have been a loss to primary schools, by reducing the gain for secondary schools (as set out in Section 7.6 of the report).
6. That the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) top up rate be held to the same funding rate as 2017/18 (as set out in Section 7.8 of the report).
7. That the 2018/19 EHCP hourly top up funding rate passed over to support pupils within mainstream schools be held to the same funding rate as 2017/18 (as set out in Section 8.2 of the report).
8. That, where a Southend child with an EHCP plan is placed in another local authority school, Southend's high needs block will only pay a maximum £50

charged administration fee rather than the administration fee set by that local authority (as set out in Section 8.3 of the report).

9. That the disapplication request of Minimum Funding Guarantee for special school top up funding can be applied for to the Department of Education (DfE) in consultation with those schools. If permission was granted, it would only be acted upon by the subsequent approval of the Education Board (as set out in Section 11.4 of the report).

6 Maintained School Balances as at 31st March 2018

The Board considered a report from Christine Hickey presenting the maintained school balances as at 31st March 2018.

The Board discussed the report in detail and sought clarification in respect to deficit budgets. The officers reported that some schools are setting a deficit budget in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the local authority was working closely with the schools on the sustainability of budgets, etc. The Board was given assurance that the appropriate attention was being given to maintained schools funding and expenditure.

The Board asked officers to provide information on all schools in respect to their reliance on their reserves.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7 Data on current on situation regarding Secondary School Places

The Board received and considered information / data setting out the current position regarding the provision of primary and secondary school places across the borough. The Board also received a supplementary report providing forecast projection data in relation to the development of 10,000 more homes in the borough.

The Board noted that on current data there were sufficient secondary school places based on current birth-rates. However, it was highlighted that from 2021 there was likely to be a need for further expansion to meet the need for school places.

Resolved:

That the data on secondary school places be noted.

8 Progress on SEND 3 Year Journey (in particular notional funding)

The Board received a verbal update in respect to progress on SEND and noted that significant work had been undertaken in this area. The Group Manager for SEND outlined a proposed letter to all schools indicating the 'notional' budget allocation for SEND in their schools. The letter will be sent to all schools shortly.

The Board discussed the governance arrangements and agreed that a specific SEND Task and Finish Group was set-up to take forward this work. This group needs to reflect the different school sectors.

Resolved:

That a letter be sent to all Education Board members seeking nominations to sit on the SEND Task and Finish Group. ACTION: BM/GB

9 Feedback on JTAI

The Board received feedback on the recent JTAI inspection and noted that the inspection report makes for positive reading with significant improvements identified in some areas. There were a number of recommendations which were being followed through. The full report is available from the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/704962/Southend-on-Sea_-_joint_targeted_area_inspection_report.pdf.

Resolved:

That the feedback on the JTAI inspection be noted.

10 Consultation on Ambition Skills Strategy

The Board received an overview of the 'Ambition Southend: Skills and Labour Market Strategy' which would be considered by the Cabinet on 19th June 2018. This was a wide ranging strategy and aims to provide a framework for a cohesive and borough-wide approach to skills and labour market development.

The Board noted that education is a significant component of the strategy and officers were working closely with the Council's Director of Regeneration and Business Development to establish a small group to drive forward the education elements linked to the strategy.

Resolved:

That the overview of the strategy be noted.

11 Feedback from Sub Group Chairs

(a) School Performance S.G.

The Board noted that this sub group had not meet and the last meeting had been cancelled at short notice.

(b) Vulnerable Learners S.G.

The Board noted that this group had looked at the exclusions and the pathways around SEND and the progress of LAC across the borough. The next meeting is scheduled for 20th June 2018.

(c) Resources S.G.

The Board noted that this group had met and had looked in detail at the various budget/finance reports and refined them prior to the Board's consideration.

12 Changes to Portfolio Holders

The Board noted the changes to the make-up of the Council's Cabinet, particularly Councillor Courtenay who is now the Cabinet Member for Growth and Deputy Leader. Councillor Boyd was now the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning.

The Board put on record their thanks and appreciation to Councillor Courtenay for his support and work over the last couple of years as the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning and wished him well in his new role as Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Growth.

Resolved:

That the changes to the Cabinet Members be noted.

13 Any Other Business

(a) Children's Centres Update

The Board asked that an update on Children's Centres was provided to the next meeting of the Board in October. This could focus upon the usage and associated costs and discussion on steps that can be taken in partnership to make full use of the Centres.

Resolved:

That an update on Children's Centres be provided to the October meeting of the Education Board.

(b) Unregistered Schools

The Board discussed in general the issues/concerns around 'unregistered schools' and noted that the local authority had very limited powers in this area in relation to outcome data.

14 Date and time of future meetings

The dates for the next school year (September 2018 to June 2019) would be circulated shortly. The next meeting will take place in October.

Chairman: _____