

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Education Board

Date: Tuesday, 26th March, 2019

Place: Darwin Room - Tickfield

- Present:** Mr M Sweeting (Chair)
Mrs N Banister, Mr T Barrett, Dr R Bevan, Ms L Clark, Mr J Glazier,
Dr P Hayman, Mr J Johnson, Mr A McGarel, Ms J Mullan,
Mr S Reynolds and Ms V Wright
- In Attendance:** Councillor H Boyd
Ms C Hickey, Mr P Grout, Mr R Harris, Mr B Martin, Mrs C Braun and
Mr G Bloom.
- Start/End Time:** 8.15 - 10.45 am

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from J. Jones, D. Woollard, L. Yelland, A. Turner and S. Leftley.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2018

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th December 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising at this meeting.

4 Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Growth Fund application 2019/20 and Future Years

The Board considered a report from the Senior Finance Officer presenting the proposed and revised funding methodology for the application of growth fund to be awarded to the applicable schools from September 2019 (the start of the 2019/20 academic year).

The Board noted that the change in funding methodology for award of growth funding has been driven by the Department for Education (DfE) DSG future years growth fund announcement in July 2018. Effectively the basis for growth funding allocations awarded to DSG funding allocations from 2019/20 onwards will be part of the National Funding Formulae.

The Board asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Finance Officer.

Resolved:

1. That to remain affordable within Southend's DSG funding allocation, the growth funding awarded to schools from September 2019, will be distributed on the basis of £1,866 per primary place and £2,213 per secondary place for a class size of 30 places, awarding total equivalent funding for a full year of £55,979 per primary class and £66,397 per secondary class.
2. That the delegated power/authority to the Director of Learning and Senior Finance Business Partner (DSG Financial Lead) be approved, that from September 2020, given the volatility in nature of predicting growth funding allocations to future years DSG resources, and therefore to also remain affordable with local DSG allocations, to the local growth rates can be reduced by a maximum 10% from the rates set out in resolution 1 above if required, but also with no upper limit for increased funding to those rates.
3. That it be noted that in relation to both resolutions above, these applied growth funding rates for the following financial year are proposed to be made available in the annual "January DSG Education Board budget setting report" which is then timed with the final DSG school block – mainstream school funding allocations.

5 High Need Block 2019 Detailed Budget Allocation and 2018/19 Outturn

The Board received a verbal update from the Senior Finance Officer and Head of SEND Officer concerning the High Need Block 2019 detailed budget allocation and 2018/19 outturn.

In respect to the High Need Block 2019 and the 2018/19 outturn the officers reported on the reasons for the delay in bringing a report to the Board. The Resources Sub Group will be considering this matter and will bring a report back to the Board in June 2019.

The Board discussed a number of specific issues regarding the capacity and sustainability and emphasised that the level of funding was inadequate to support need/demand, particularly within the special school sector. There were also significant pressures within the independent provider sector. The Board also stressed the need for greater/stronger collaboration with health.

The Director of Learning drew attention to ISOS who have been invited to carry out diagnostic research into high needs costs in the borough.

Resolved:

1. That the verbal update be noted.
2. That a report on the DSG Final Outturn 2018/19 and DSG High Need detailed budget allocations 2019/20 be presented to the Board in June 2019.

6 Public Duties

The Board considered a report from the Director of Learning providing context in respect of the Education Board setting aside de-delegated funding each year to and the option for Academy schools to buy in provide a fund to reimburse all Maintained Schools within the Borough for the cost of allowing staff to have paid absence to undertake Public Duties (i.e. Jury service or sitting as a Magistrate) and Trade Union activities in work time in accordance with the Facilities Agreement for Schools. The report also presented a number of options on the way forward given that the current situation was not sustainable.

The Board asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers. The Board also commented that there was a general lack of understanding amongst Academies concerning the fund for Public Duties activities and what it is for and it would be helpful if the Directors Briefing / SOPHA / SOSHA were provided with a briefing on the subject, including the benefits for both Trade Unions and employers in contributing to the fund.

Resolved:

That the views of SOSHA/SOPHA be sought on the options detailed in the report on the way forward in respect of the Public Duties fund and the outcome be reported back to the next meeting of the Board. In conjunction with this the Vice Chair of the Education Board provides a briefing to SOSHA/SOPHA to clarify the purpose of the Public Duties fund and the associated benefits.

7 Feedback from Operational Review Task and Finish Group (including recommendations)

The Board considered a report of the Clerk presenting the outcomes and recommendations from the Task & Finish Group set-up to review the operational practice of the Board in line with the Education & Skills Funding Agency publication, 'Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guide' and relevant legislation.

The Board noted that in relation to the legislation and good practice the Board was carrying out its functions effectively and appropriate. However, the Board was asked to consider and provide their views on three key areas:

- Direct consultation from the Board with stakeholders on matters of importance;
- Does the Board wish to see MATs represented in any way going forward, and if so, how?
- How do delegates/Board members represent and canvas views of their respective constituencies.

The Board discussed the above matters and suggested that:

- More effective communication with the Chief Executive Officers of MATs (both directly / collectively by the Board and individually as their constituent representatives, particularly in respect of the key decisions taken by the Board;
- Impractical to include the Chief Executive Officers of MATs on the Board – the respective Trusts are represented by their nominated constituent representative;
- Board members actively canvas views on areas of importance;

Resolved:

That the report be noted and nominations be sought to fill the three governor vacancies, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

8 School Matters

The Board received an update on a range of school matters, summarised below:

(a) Vulnerable Secondary Schools Support

The Board noted that one-off funding had been approved by the Council to provide some support to the three vulnerable secondary schools. The Director of Learning will be bringing together the relevant Head teachers and CEOs, along with the Regional Schools Commissioner to determine collectively what support is needed and develop a programme of support with clear outcomes.

The Board suggested that the 'feeder' primary schools for the three vulnerable secondary schools should be involved.

(b) Schools Update

The Board noted the following information:

- The YMCA had recently been inspected and had been judged a 'strong good';
- The delay in the formal handover to the new Trust for Cecil Jones school which will now take place on 1st April 2019; The Director of Learning was in regular discussions with the Regional Schools Commissioner and the incoming Headteacher;
- The SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) had been submitted and feedback would be received shortly;
- Update on the secondary school expansion provided – Shoebury was currently on hold for 2019/20 and expansion plans at St Bernard's and Eastwood were progressing; In terms of primary schools there has been a lower birth-rate in some area and discussions are taking place with two primary schools about putting in place a lower PAN;

The Board asked a number of questions concerning secondary school expansions which were responded to by officers. The officers also provided a brief explanation of the process regarding the PAN London system and some of the complications for forecasting numbers (i.e. changes happen on a daily/weekly basis).

(c) Data-sharing

The Board noted that not all schools have signed up to and/or have adhered to the data-sharing protocol. There were some technical issues with systems not communicating with each other which were being resolved.

The Board noted that there was statutory information which schools must be sharing but also non-statutory information which helps inform actions around safeguarding. It was stressed that without information from schools it puts children at risk of harm.

Resolved:

That the Chair write to those schools who have not signed-up or are adhering to the data-sharing protocol requesting/urging them to comply with the protocol and share information / data on pupils and setting out that the lack of data-sharing significantly puts children at risk of harm.

9 Report back from Sub Groups

The Board received the minutes of the Sub Groups relating to Resources, Vulnerable Learners and School Performance.

The Board discussed the minutes in general and asked that the minutes included an 'actions dashboard' and for the membership of each sub group to be reviewed.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the various Sub Groups be noted and that the membership of each group be reviewed and reported back to the Board in June 2019.

10 Consideration of Annual Plan for Education Board Agenda

The Board received a verbal update on the development of an Education Board Annual Plan for 2019/20.

Resolved:

That a draft Annual Plan be considered by the Board in June 2019.

11 Any other Business

Exclusions and Independent Review Panel Training

The Board was informed that a one-day training session on exclusions and Independent Review Panels (IRP) has been arranged for 23rd September 2019. The detailed programme for the training was being developed and would be provided by an expert external provider. Further details of the training would be provided to all Headteachers (and those responsible for exclusions, including School Governors) and advertised on the schools network.

Resolved:

That the exclusions and IRP training event on 23rd September 2019 be noted.

12 Date and time of future meetings

The following dates for the 2019/20 year were noted as follows (all to start at 8.15am and will be held at the Tickfield Centre):

4th June 2019

22nd October 2019

17th December 2019

21st January 2020

17th March 2020