

# Southend-on-Sea Education Board

on

7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Report prepared by:  
Cathy Braun GM SBC

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**Report Title: The Future Provision of Secondary Places in Southend**  
**Agenda item: 7**

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## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to update Board with a progress report on the strategy for the provision of secondary places as overseen by the School Places Working Party.

## 2. Recommendations

### 2.1 For Board to note the report

The following recommendations are taken from the draft minutes of the school places working party

(To meet immediate needs by September 2018)

- To agree the continuation of expansion discussions with Good and Outstanding Schools

(To meet the additional need for September 2019)

- To agree an initial exploration with a small number of Academy Trusts regarding a secondary free school
- To agree exploring expansion opportunities with schools that currently require improvement  
In addition
- That officers should continue dialogue with faith schools regarding future expansion, where there is excess demand but places should be for Southend children only

## 3. Background/Context

3.1 On 23 June 2015, Cabinet resolved that officers undertake consultations with existing secondary schools regarding expansions to meet increases in pupil population demand.

3.2 Long-term forecasts for secondary schools are reasonably accurate, as the numbers of primary pupils transferring to secondary schools are already known. The increased birth level indicates the continuation of high pupil numbers in primary and subsequently in secondary schools is currently stable with no current indication that numbers will reduce. By comparison, there has been a permanent increase of around 9 forms of entry (FE) and nearly 3FE in bulge years within the primary sector. The total cost for the primary expansion was nearly £25 million.

- 3.3 Over the last four years we have seen an average net loss at secondary transfer (year 7) primarily to Essex schools of 300 pupils for mainstream places and a net gain from Essex, the London Boroughs and other sources of 567 pupils for selective places (those reaching the pass mark for the eleven plus examination and/or entering Southend Catholic faith schools).
- 3.4 Previous attempts to secure Essex County Council (ECC) accurate and reliable school planning data have not always proven successful or helpful. However, more recent communication indicates that their own pupil forecasts identify that due to their own pupil population increase and housing developments surrounding the Essex/Southend boarder, from 2018 they will only be able to offer limited secondary places to Southend children and from 2019 they will have no capacity to offer any secondary places to Southend resident pupils. Whilst this very recent information from ECC is helpful, officers will continue to work using this intelligence as a factor when determining accurate Southend predictions. This factor has increased the number of deficit places to beyond the primary expansions taking the need to 12 FE plus 2 further FE in bulge years. A summary of the latest forecasts is included in Appendix 1
- 3.5 The first shortfall of places appears in 2018 where 4-5 forms of entry are needed followed by a further 6 FE in 2019
- 3.6 Secondary school place offer day was the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Overall there was a 1.7% increase in the number of pupils applying for a school place (32 more pupils, which is just over one form of entry). Southend Borough Council was successful in ensuring that every child who had requested a school place was allocated a school place. However the underlying pressures alluded to in this report have started to manifest themselves, reflected in a slightly lower percentage of places offered to pupils for their first choice of school (76% compared to 79% in 2016). In addition there was a 2% increase in parents not receiving any of their preferences (7% for 2017 compared to 5% in 2016). Officers are currently working with school leaders in those schools where there are particular place pressures.

## **4 Summary of progress so far**

4.1 To meet the initial need in 2018 discussions have progressed with 3 secondary academies graded good or better by Ofsted to expand by 2FE per site. One of these has progressed to planning and one is at feasibility stage. Expansions with 'good' secondary schools are intended to meet the 2018 need. We are currently working with Eastbrook, Shoeburyness High School and Belfairs to secure firm commitments to ensure the required forms of entry for 2018 meet our predicted needs

4.2 The LA is investigating the feasibility of a free school and is in communication with existing and proven academy trusts regarding submitting a bid to the Department for Education (DfE). This would be through a centrally funded route, whereby a trust puts a bid in directly to the DfE. The department, using this route, would fund all capital costs associated but would reduce the basic need grant paid to the Council.

4.2 The DfE expects that schools should not generally expand if they are eligible for intervention by the local Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). This is to safeguard underperforming schools becoming compromised by expansion. It is accepted that there will be exceptional cases where there is no viable alternative to ensuring sufficient school places locally.

4.4 In-depth discussions were also undertaken with secondary faith schools regarding the potential for expansion; however there was insufficient evidence that increasing places at these schools would secure places for Southend children due to their oversubscription criteria for admissions prioritising out of area Catholics, over Southend resident non-practising Catholics. There is little evidence to suggest that the Catholic population has increased for the immediate need (2018/19), however expanding these schools remains an option for 2021 onwards where pupils attending the expanded Catholic primary school will reach secondary age.

## **5 Implications of the report**

### Financial implications

We are currently awaiting the wave 13 Free School application guidance, this is held up as a result of the General Election. SBC will consider closely next steps should that guidance challenge the basic need element of a free school,

### Consultation

Consultation may be required for any school or academy that is considering significant changes to its original funding agreement.

### Risk associated with the report

The capital costs of a new free school is a major risk should the DfE change the criteria for allocation of capital funds under wave 13.

The DfE consider the location and nature of any new school in relation to existing provision.

## **6 Background Papers**

Appendix one



## Appendix 1 – Forecast Numbers including impact of Essex places and Illustrated Forms of Entry Expansions

	Year 7 Forecast	Essex Places pushed back to SBC	Year 7 Forecast + Pushback	Anticipated	Surplus/Deficit	Number of FE Required	Number of Places	Total Places	Surplus/Deficit
				PAN*	(B-A)		(D*28)	(B+E)	(F-A)
	A	Ai	Aii	B	C	D	E	F**	G
2017/18	2265	0	2265	2300	35	0	0	2300	35
2018/19	2361	60	2421	2300	-121	5	140	2440	19
2019/20	2525	75	2600	2320	-280	10	280	2600	0
2020/21	2540	90	2630	2320	-310	12	336	2656	26
2021/22	2583	105	2688	2320	-368	14	392	2712	24
2022/23	2585	105	2690	2320	-370	14	392	2712	22
2023/24	2547	105	2652	2320	-332	12	336	2656	4
2024/25	2476	105	2581	2320	-261	10	280	2600	19
2025/26	2508	105	2613	2320	-293	11	308	2628	15

\*PAN is combined PAN as known for 2017/18. From 2019/20 including additional places at Cecil Jones.

\*\*Column F indicates the anticipated increased combined PANs.