

# Southend-on-Sea Education Board

on  
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Report prepared by: Brin Martin, Director of learning SBC

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## SEND in Southend, An Update

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### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 SEND rarely features as a topic of discussion at Education Board, other than the High Needs Block allocations or EHCP compliance. With significant changes and challenges to SEND provision and outcomes, this is an opportune moment to engage Board in the start of a strategic discussion.

### 2. Recommendations

**2.1 That note the current context of provision for learners with SEND in Southend;**

**2.2 That Board recognises its role in supporting improvements in the area provision for SEND, as will ultimately be tested through OFSTED/CQC inspection;**

**2.3 That Board actively supports the refresh of the three year SEND strategy.**

### 3. Background/Context

3.1 Provision for SEND, by its nature, remains a significant challenge in order to best meet the needs of vulnerable learners.

3.2 This challenge has manifested itself in outcomes below the national and statistical neighbour averages across a range of measures, in terms of compliance, resourcing, learner outcomes and provision. These measures are crudely summarised in the Appendix one, **Southend SEND dashboard**.

3.3 Overall, there remain some anomalous statistics exhibited in Southend that creates a visibly different profile, of the low number of SEND support learners compared to the high number of learners with EHCPs.

3.4 Traditionally specialist provision in Southend Borough was designed to serve the South of Essex County, and, layered with our own demographic pressures, is now at full capacity, both in our special schools and in additional specialist bases.

3.5 SEND in maintained schools is also subject to considerable challenges. This inevitably creates a tension between on the one hand the ambition of each

school to attain well and the pressures that including the needs of very vulnerable learners creates.

3.6 These conflicting tensions will be judged by the Area Inspection of SEND provision within the next few years. This inspection will report upon the collective provision for SEND, by the Local Authority (LA), the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and that of schools and other stakeholders, including the third sector.

3.7 Several contextual and regulatory functions coincide around this time, including the end/reinstatement of the Education Reform Grant; implementation of the act in relation to statements; the requirement refresh the SEND strategy and the arrival key strategic managers within the service. This allows us the opportunity to work with schools to review and realign our strategic and operational support for SEND.

#### **4. Review and refresh**

4.1 Members of Education Board, and their constituent associations are invited participate in the current review of all aspects of SEND provision.

4.2 This review will lead to a refresh of the current three year SEND strategy owned by the Council, recognising that optimistically to address all elements of the refresh will take that period of time.

4.3 This journey has already started, with engagement activity involving the service, the SEND strategic Board and other key stakeholders. The review will move through iterative phases:

4.3.1 An initial activity to identify all aspects of SEND that will be in scope;

4.3.2 Full engagement with stakeholders, including parents, carers, families and learners with SEND;

4.3.3 Prioritisation and focus;

4.3.4 Formalisation of the journey into accessible and succinct strategic documentation and plans;

4.3.5 Implementation of plans (this will start as and when an issue emerges, not wait for the paperwork to be completed);

4.3.6 Formalisation through cabinet

4.4 The first part of this journey is summarised in the **mind map** attached in appendix two

4.5 Through the next few months, it is hoped you will see progressive and iterative versions of this map and the documents that follow it, as well as starting to address the prioritised issues. Out of necessity, this will also entail other matters not being addressed in the first year.

#### **5. Implications of the report**

5.1 Financial implications. Currently, the HNB is overspent. Part of the early review will be activity to bring this back into balance with two years. All activity will be within the allocated staffing and budget by the Council.

**5.2** Consultation. Inherent in the style and scope of the SEND journey. In particular, greater energy and effort will be placed upon hearing the views of parents and families, and the voice of learners with SEND directly.

**5.3** Risk associated with the report. The key risks are that:

5.3.1 Stakeholders, including schools, see this journey as something involving only the Council, and do not recognise their part in providing within the resources they receive for SEND learners at their school;

5.3.2 Demographic or demand create even more pressure on the HNB;

5.3.3 That together, we, the LA, CCG and stakeholders, including schools, are not sufficiently aligned in respect of the Area Inspection.

## **6. Background Papers**

6.1 SEND Dashboard

6.2 SEND mind map