

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

**Report of Deputy Chief Executive - People
and Director of Education and Early Years**

To

Education Board

On

17th December 2019

Report prepared by:

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**Southend 2050 - Opportunity and Prosperity:
Our children are school and life ready, and the workforce is highly skilled.**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To propose to the Education Board the use of the one off funding resources available through the Early Years DSG reserve.

2. Recommendations

Education Board are asked to agree:

2.1 Using the one off funding resource of £224k over a period of two years.

2.2 Use of the funds to support Early Years delivery in:

- Maintaining and expanding development officers' role for two years to include outreach activities to reach parents/ carers of eligible children who are not accessing their entitlement.**
- To ensure marketing and communication are fully developed using all platforms developed with the Communication Team.**
- To maintain dedicated Early Years resource for two years within the Operational, Performance and Intelligence team. (OPI)**
- To develop specific training on inclusive practice, looking at behaviour through a different lens; in line with Southend 2050 outcomes, involving active participation in design and roll out of the programme.**

3. Background/Context

3.1 The DSG early years balance is now in a very favourable and healthy financial position. As shown in the October 2019 DSG paper to the board on 22nd October, where it was highlighted that a formal proposal should come to the board in December 2019 to agree the use of the current one off DSG early reserve fund of £224k.

Funding request:

3.2 Early years identified the lack of resource to support outreach to parents/carers to inform them of their entitlement. The priority is to fully maximise the targeted two year old funding for our most deprived children, and ensure that all children are accessing universal three and four year old entitlement. Parents/carers are able to work through maximising extended entitlement and tax free childcare.

Since April 2019, early years working with PACEY secured a part time outreach officer for a one year fixed period fully funded by the DfE to promote take up children’s entitlement.

This has been extremely successful and early years are keen to extend and maintain this role for the next two years. We know that there is far more to be done to engage eligible parents/carers across Southend.

3.3 Early years was successful in a support bid in 2017/18 to develop one off marketing materials/resources. We aim to further develop this by designing and developing resources with parents/carers and the childcare workforce to become self -sustaining through the use of the self –update provider portal, which in turn will be linked with SHIP directly, and the Southend Learning Network.

3.4 Early years through bids have ensured that all providers including schools with nursery classes have access to the provider portal. This portal provides the opportunity to system manage the early years DSG, sufficiency information and to measure take up from estimate to actual take up. It provides headcount information including the DfE January Census return. The system is also able to identify children entitled to deprivation and EYPP promptly from estimate. Before the system providers were not aware of children entitled to the additional funding until very late in the term. This will support better outcomes for our more vulnerable children. It has become clear that even though we have the system we need dedicated resource from the OPI over the next two years to fully identify, develop and analyse reports which in turn will inform the Education Board of the use of the early years DSG. This enables full use of the system in order that it becomes a self- sustaining management information report system.

3.5 Southend 2050 is aimed at ensuring that our youngest children are school and life ready. Research shows that within early year’s development it is hard to determine when shown behaviour is attributed to ASD or to the child’s social and emotional development and or environment. Providers are often dealing with the consequence of behaviour without looking at the wider possibilities of why such a young child is showing challenging behaviour. Early years would aim to work with providers, professionals and experts to look at behaviour through a different lens, listening to the voice of the child. This funding would provide opportunity to design and develop a programme of training focusing on excellent inclusive practice.

3.6 Proposed estimated use of the available one off funds over two years

Outreach officer FTE	£75,500
Marketing and Communication	£10,000
OPI resource for development	£94,000
Training development and programme	£44,500
Total	£224,000

4. Summary of benefits of the proposal

4.1 Poverty Agenda

The proposal to deliver this one off use of funding will enable the Education Board to:

- Maximise the available budget for Early Years DSG
- Ensure children and families are fully aware of the all entitlements. Targeting those children and families living in the most deprived households

5. Implications of the report

5.1 This funding will further enable maximum use of the Early Years DSG. It will also provide an opportunity for the workforce to upskill, and children better prepared for their transition into school leading to better outcomes.

6. Financial implications

6.1 Agreeing the use of this one off resource, will leave the current early years DSG reserve with a remaining balance of £500k. (£724,000 - £224,000) while also ensuring Early Years DSG remains in a healthy financial position. The remaining balance will allow for the absorption of any one off adverse funding effects for future early years funding caused by funding being received based on the January census alone and early years funding being paid out on the 3 separate funding periods.