

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Executive Director of Children and Public Health
to
Education Board

On
21st June 2022

Report prepared by:

Brin Martin, Director of Education and Early Years
In consultation with
Paul Grout, Senior Finance Business Partner – Financial Management

Agenda
Item No.

Implementing the ambitions of the Green Paper on SEND

1 Purpose of Report

In order to follow up and conclude dialogue that has taken place with various groups including the Director's Briefing and the CEO network, Board will be asked to consider the proposals set out in this paper for a bid for funds to support better inclusion in the city.

2 Recommendations

Education board are asked to agree:

- 2.1 To agree the proposals set out below regarding early implementation of the ambitions set out in the Green Paper. In particular, to support the intention to establish capacity in the city to enable schools to better meet the needs of all learners within a mainstream setting if at all possible.
- 2.2 To agree in principle the allocation of DSG High Needs Funding as set out in the High Needs Budget Allocation Report 2022-23. Namely the ringfencing of up to £1 million pounds to provide additional capacity, services and support for schools and academies, at no cost to schools, to enable them to better meet the needs of all learners alongside their peers.
- 2.3 To agree to the establishment of a small task and finish group made up of members of Education Board and Senior Officers to oversee and commission support, reporting back through Resources Sub Group on a meeting by meeting basis.
- 2.4 To require the Task and Finish Group to propose a series of impact measures that will track the effectiveness of any new provision over time.

3 Background

- 3.1 The pressures on all schools and academies to meet the needs of all learners has been amplified as a result of the pandemic. Evidence from a number of sources suggest that the pressure from the system within mainstream settings is now acute. This is referenced by increasing numbers of requests to assess for EHCP; increasing numbers of EHCP; continuing parental pressure for assessment, diagnosis and specialist support; increasing pressure on special school places and increasing incidents of behaviour and mental health challenges escalating within schools. These issues are evident nationally as well as in the city.
- 3.2 Recent finding evidence these challenges, both at City level, for example through the original ISOS report, the OFSTED/CQC revisit in 2021 and the Peer Review into SEND also in 2021. These sources reflect the similar experiences of a large number of schools that are increasingly facing a range of pupil behaviours and needs that place the system under great strain. Where this becomes unmanageable, or at detriment to the efficient education of the school, it compounds the escalation of low level issues of behaviour into exclusions, attendance and requirement for specialist intervention.
- 3.3 These challenges have been recognised in the recent publication of the governments Green Paper into SEND, Inclusion and Alternative Provision. If these ambitions manifest themselves into policy, it will require mainstream schools and setting to improve their inclusion of such pupils, and to meet their needs within their existing setting without the recourse to assessment, diagnosis and specialist intervention.
- 3.4 This paper broadly welcomes the intention for all schools to become even more inclusive, but also recognises that to do so, they will require effective support and training to enable them to meet the needs of the vast majority of pupils through early identification and implementation of effective measures without the need for an EHCP.
- 3.5 The situation within the HNB in the city is such now that a request for additional support for schools is timely, and will ultimately reduce costs to the system of increasing specialist intervention or placement.

4 Context

- 4.1 Discussion has taken place over a number of months with various groups including the Vulnerable Learners Sub Group, inclusion steering group, the SEND Strategic Partnership Board, the CEO Network of Multi Academy Trust in the city and more recently though the Director's Briefing. The proposal to establish a workforce/services/commission to provide early, effective and sustainable support to meet schools needs has been widely supported in principle.
- 4.2 At the recent Director's Briefing, school and Trust Leaders and senior staff were engaged in a conversation regarding how best could they meet the ambitions

set out in the green paper, and what would they require from the area in order to support them in this task. A brief report followed that meeting.

4.3 The meeting took the views from senior school leaders regarding what they would need to be able to implement the ambitions from the government's green paper. The focus was limited to if schools/settings are going to be expected to meet the needs of learners with additional needs in their mainstream setting, what specific support would they need to meet this ambition. Much of the rich discussion referenced the multi-agency pressures within the system, in particular those from health and social care. However the clear message came through that in order to be able to better define these needs, greater clarity of what was trying to be achieved, and what outcomes would this be measured against would be required.

4.4 Bearing this response in mind, and the caveat expressed, the following themes emerged as gaining support:

- Undertaking a mapping exercise of existing provision and services, specialisms and admission criteria relating to additional and specialist needs already in existence within the city, leading to the identification of any gaps or pressures in provision
- Establishing training/training hub for leaders, SENCO, staff in dealing with a range of additional needs
- Resources to support earlier diagnosis and intervention through triage, specialist assessment centre
- Available additional specialist resource for schools working alongside staff
- Increased registered alternative provision for all age groups (vocational yr9-11 and an AP resource hub for anxiety/school refusers)
- Greater support in early years/preschool
- Trained staff to work directly with parents

4.5 In order to take this opportunity forward, a number of recommendations are set out below for Board to consider.

5 Recommendations

5.1 In order to take this work forwards at pace, it is recommended a small task and finish group be established to firstly define the work further, secondly receive the capacity report referenced in the first bullet above, and thirdly map out and consult on a range of options in line with the initial findings above.

5.2 This work would conclude with a formal report and resource bid back to the next Education Board, indicating the detailed scale of the resource request over time. However, to ensure commitment and momentum, Board are asked to note in principle the request for sustainable funding from the DSG HNB in the region of £1 million, to be defined in the subsequent paper.

5.3 It is hoped that work and commission of addition support once identified by the group could start ahead of the October Education Board, in order that the much needed resource could be commissioned or recruited ahead of that time. The group would be accountable through RSG to the Education Board.

5.4 It is further recommended that the constitution of the group consists of members of Education Board (or its sub groups if necessary) along the lines of:

- A Headteacher from the Primary, Secondary and Special school phase
- A representative from the CEO network
- An early Years Leader/Manager
- A Headteacher from Alternative Providers
- An experienced and representative SENCo
- A member from the Parent Carer Forum
- Representative officers from:
 - Education
 - SEND
 - Inclusion
 - Social Care

6 Consideration

6.1 The group would be accountable to Education Board

6.2 All proposed spending must follow DSG protocols

6.3 The impact of the provision would be measured and reported against a costed and timed implementation plan submitted to the next Board

6.4 Members of the group would be bound by declaration of interests, and if required remove themselves from part/all of any related discussion where they may be seen to have a vested interest

6.5 The spending would be subject to annual review, based upon impact

6.6 The challenges of recruitment at this time are not underestimated.