

# Southend-on-Sea City Council

Executive Director of Children and Public Health

To

Education Board

On

20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Report prepared by: Chrissy Papas, School Place Planning and Admissions Manager

In consultation with  
Cathy Braun, Head of Access & Inclusion  
Paul Grout, Senior Finance Business Partner  
Resources Sub Group

Agenda  
Item No.

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## EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE FUNDING PROPOSAL: Dedicated Schools Grant – School Block growth funding

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### 1. Purpose of Report

To present a proposal for the provision of funding for the unexpected intake of asylum seeker pupils, as an exceptional circumstance.

### 2. Recommendations

Recommendations Education Board (EB) are asked to specifically agree for 2022/23 and 2023/24 funding years:

2.1 To agree to an exceptional circumstance funding request, through School Block Growth Fund for schools that have admitted/admit pupils that have come into the UK via a Home Office led asylum seeker route (such as the residents of the Skylark Hotel).

#### 2.2 To agree the following funding model:

2.2.1 Funding will be offered for primary schools that admit 3 or more pupils, and for secondary schools that admit 5 or more pupils in any one year. Access to additional financial assistance will be awarded when meeting the below criteria:

2.2.1.1 Admitted on roll any asylum child (recognised by the home office and not already attracting funding covered under any existing government education funding scheme) who take a place at a Southend school post the Oct 22 census.

2.2.1.2 Only for compulsory school age (not Post 16 as not covered by DSG)

2.2.1.3 Payments relate to the number of asylum seeker admissions at the point of reaching the threshold and beyond.

2.2.2 For example, if a primary school admits 5 asylum seeker pupils meeting the above criteria. They will receive a one off payment for the third, fourth and fifth admission (3 payments). If a secondary school admits 7 pupils in years 7-11, they will receive a payment for the fifth, sixth and seventh admission (3 payments in total). A primary school admitting 2 asylum seeker admissions will therefore receive zero payments, due to not meeting the threshold.

2.3 To agree that this is a one off payment for each additional pupil only above the thresholds and therefore up to the point these pupils are then formally funded through their annual School Block allocation.

2.4 To agree that payments will be made whilst the child is on roll at the school.

**2.5 The annual rates of payment must be inline with the annual growth fund rates (As , previously approved through the Education Board):**

2.5.1 Pupils placed on roll after Oct 22 census and before 31 March 2023 paid at £3,923 per primary pupil, and £4,652 Per secondary pupil.

2.5.2 Payments for pupils after April 23 will be paid £3,923 per primary pupil, and £4,652. This is based upon the set growth funding per pupil for 2023/24.

2.5.3 Payments are to be paid out from the School Block Growth Fund and will stop from April 2024 for a maintained school and September 2024 for an academy school, as by those dates provided those pupils remain on roll at the October 2023 census, will then be automatically funded through the Schools annual School Block allocation.

**3. Background**

3.1 The home office is placing asylum seekers in Hotels as the asylum centres have no capacity.

3.2 The home office has not to date placed asylum seekers in Southend however, they have placed families in the Skylark Hotel which is situated on the Essex/Southend border. The closest schools to this hotel are situated in Southend.

3.3 There is no additional funding to support schools/education for asylum seekers as there has been for some refugee schemes.

3.4 There are limited school places in Rochford, where the Skylark is located and where there are school places in Southend families have gained admission to Southend Schools.

3.5 The number of pupils that are currently attending schools in Southend, namely:

- 11 pupils aged 11-18 at Chase High School
- 7 pupils to Heycroft Primary School and
- 2 pupils at Eastwood Primary

3.6 Schools are reporting a high level of deprivation and a significant impact on the school.

3.7 The main challenges reported by schools focus on demand for small group work, meeting needs (access to clubs and trips), engaging teaching, staffing and resources. Resources are stretched and resources are required for intervention planning, including for induction, the early stages of learning English, and supporting more advanced learners. Ensuring that all the different groups of pupils with english as an actional language (EAL) at school make this kind of progress has clear implications for staffing needs. Short-term intervention for EAL learners outside the classroom is focused on learner needs and curriculum content but all of this is a cost on teaching time, staffing and resources.

3.8 Schools report that funding would be used to support small group work, EAL support in lessons, tech support for translation of material, where possible tablets would support learning, where possible funds would support pupils with access to clubs, trips and activities. Funds would be used for literacy intervention packages such as LEXONIC.

- 3.9 Essex County Council took a proposal to the Essex Schools Forum about schools who have admitted a 'significant' number of asylum and refugee children since the October 2022 census, and agreed Growth Funding could be awarded to support schools.
- 3.10 The Essex Threshold for awarding financial assistance is:
- 3.10.1.1 6 or more placed at one primary; and
  - 3.10.1.2 11 or more placed at one secondary
- 3.11 Although the skylark residents are residents under Essex County Council, growth funding can not be allocated to schools outside their local authority.
- 3.12 Southend has also lowered the threshold agreed by Essex, due to the number accessing Southend schools being a lesser number.

#### **4. Other Options**

- 4.1 There are no other avenues for funding support for this group of children for schools, so it simply falls for the schools to fund directly.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 5.1 The children admitted after the October school census do not generate funds for the schools for this year (2022/23).
- 5.2 The children requiring school places are part of the asylum seeker housing strategy by the home office. The initial number of families housed at the Hotel were unexpected and more children are expected in the coming months.
- 5.3 There are no other available school places in Rochford.
- 5.4 The children have a high level of deprivation and need with many having suffered trauma. The funding would support schools with the children's integration into school, identify and support early interventions for additional needs and provide positive learning opportunities including EAL.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Whilst it is not standard practise to offer growth funding for increased Numbers on Roll (NOR) as growth funding is administered for new intake classes. This request is considered because of its exceptional circumstance and whereby no additional funding has been awarded from Government for these particular cohort of pupils. The increased numbers over a threshold will undoubtedly have an impact on a schools existing resource given the background nature of these pupils requiring additional supported integration into a mainstream school environment. As previously explained, in Education Board DSG Growth fund papers, growth funding awarded to DSG blocks is based on a positive increase in Middle Super Output area (MSOA) school pupil census numbers between historic years. It is therefore anticipated, given the numbers on roll will increase for these schools that will in turn award additional fundings to the growth fund to support. There is risk on this approach, given other schools in that MSOA area may decrease NOR, but considering, it is a relatively small cohort effecting a small number of schools, the financial risk will need to be managed and contained within the growth fund over the current continued life of growth for all schools.

MSOA\* - is defined by the office for national statistic, as a small enough geographical area to detect pockets of growth, based on school post codes grouped within a particular area.