

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

12 January 2021

Commenced: 2.30pm

Terminated: 4.10pm

Present: Councillors Feeley (Chair), Boyle, Cooper, Fairfoull, Patrick and M Smith, Paul Jacques, Elizabeth Turner

In Attendance

Steven Pleasant	Chief Executive
Richard Hancock	Director of Children's Services
Tim Bowman	Assistant Director, Education
Catherine Moseley	Head of Access Services
Jane Sowerby	Lead Primary School Performance and Standards Officer
Andrew Clarke	Quality and Learning Manager
David Berry	Head of Employment and Skills
Sarah Odor	Head of Adult and Community Education
Amanda Aylward	Headteacher – Virtual School and College

Apologies: Andrea Radcliffe

1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Elizabeth Turner, Headteacher of Millbrook Primary and Nursery School for her attendance. Councillor Feeley recognised the enormous pressures that schools and their staff were under at this time and asked Elizabeth Turner to pass on thanks to all those involved in schools for their continued hard work and dedication during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. These sentiments were echoed by the Members of the Board.

The hard work and flexibility of Education Service staff was also praised and Councillor Feeley expressed particular thanks for the hard work, support and guidance that had been provided to all stakeholders during,, what continued to be, a very fast-moving situation. This was particularly pertinent in light of the latest Government announcements regarding the current lockdown and associated impact on schools and colleges.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Members of the Board.

3 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 20 October 2020.

RESOLVED

That that the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 20 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4 SCHOOLS UPDATE AND RECOVERY PLAN

Consideration was given to a report from Assistant Director of Education and Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage. The report provided updates from schools since the last report, in October, and highlighted progress within the Autumn term.

Members of Education Attainment Improvement Board noted the changes to school opening as a result of the national lockdown, which had been announced since the reports had been written. Furthermore, Members noted that the Assistant Director of Education would prepare a further paper for Board to outline the Tameside response to these changes.

Members were made aware that schools had now been operating for a term under COVID-19 restrictions. It was explained that this had placed a huge strain on schools and communities, in particular senior leaders; many of whom had little or no break since February 2020. It was acknowledged that headteachers and school leaders in Tameside had continued to work tirelessly. The vast majority of schools had remained fully or partially open, with only a small number of total closures due to COVID-19 related staffing difficulties.

Members were informed that, throughout the Autumn term, as of 2 December 2020:

- 579 students confirmed COVID since the start of the academic year
- 364 staff confirmed COVID since the start of the academic year
- Approximately, 2,793 students and 131 staff had isolated in the past two weeks, with approximately 17,839 instances of isolation amongst students and 932 instances of isolation amongst staff in educational settings in Tameside
- 91% of primary schools had been affected (69 of 76)
- 100% of secondary schools had been affected (all 16)

It was stated that disruption to the education of children and young people within the borough had continued and impact assessment had identified that those most affected were disadvantaged children. This was highlighted as a particular concern and it was explained that disadvantage within our region, during the Autumn term, had been disproportionate. It was noted that, during the latter part of the term, the negative impact in the North West remained disproportionate at a staggering 4% differential, albeit down from 10%. It was highlighted that, at some points, the North West had been reporting a 10% differential to the South of England.

Members were made aware that, during the Autumn term, Government had provided additional laptops for use by disadvantaged children, who were isolating due to COVID-19. During the last week, it was stated that there had been a further announcement of an additional 300,000 digital devices. It was stated that schools and academies may apply for these devices directly from the DfE suppliers. This was activated by the DfE's daily attendance return, which was completed by schools. It was further explained that initial concern with regard to the lack of number of digital devices had been rectified, following the writing of this report.

An update was provided to Members with regard to the planning and communication in place via the School Liaison role. Members were made aware that effective two way communication had continued throughout the Autumn term and, following the recent tightening of restrictions, daily calls had been re-introduced to provide the opportunity for daily, direct dialogue with school leaders. In addition, fortnightly Governing Board COVID Committees had continued in order to support safe and sensible decision-making.

Members were informed that weekly scenario planning meetings had also continued, and that these included representatives from schools, colleges, trade union/professional associations and local authority teams. It was stated that these had provided valuable opportunities for review and opportunities to plan, based on issues that had arisen, within the rapidly changing climate. At least weekly emails from the Assistant director, Education had also continued, as had the schools and colleges intranet, which had been successfully introduced during the previous lockdown.

Whilst the information provided relating to free school meals within the report was focussed on the situation at the October half-term break, Members were further informed that, in December, the Government announced the Winter COVID Grant and a large part of this was used to provide each child entitled to free school meals with a £40 supermarket voucher.

It was explained that this scheme reached all children entitled to free school meals in schools (9,554), all children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (436) and all vulnerable two-year-olds who were eligible for Two Year Old funding (1,085). Additional vouchers were also purchased for families in need, who did not meet the set criteria. These had been distributed by the Early Help team.

It was acknowledged that the support and hard work of schools in this programme meant that many more families received the vouchers than had been the case at half-term. Members were informed that the same approach would be taken over the February half-term, with each eligible child receiving a £15 voucher.

Members were informed that COVID Catch-up Premium had been allocated to schools in the Autumn term. It was explained that this funding was not ring fenced and roughly equated to £80 per pupil in mainstream schools, and £240 per pupil for special schools. However, it was acknowledged that COVID costs for schools had been significant.

Members were advised that schools had been able to sign up for the National Tutoring Programme in order to provide additional, targeted support for disadvantaged children. However, it was acknowledged that there had been some delays due to the recent national lockdown. In addition, it was also stated that 18 schools were eligible for Early Language Intervention Training.

It was highlighted that, during the COVID pandemic, considerable financial pressures had been placed on schools. Members were made aware that, during the Summer term, a claims process was launched by Government, which allowed schools to claim back funding for specific purposes, in relation to:

- increased premise costs, due to school opening during Easter and/summer half term holidays;
- support for FSM eligible children not attending schools and costs not covered by national voucher scheme; and
- additional cleaning required during confirmed or suspected COVID 19 cases.

Members were advised that the second round of accessing this funding had been delayed and advice had been provided for schools in order to ensure that robust records of additional spending were maintained.

In addition, it was discussed that the DfE had recently announced a new short-term COVID Workforce fund, with full details on the claims process expected to be published shortly. Members were informed that the following criteria would apply:

- The claim will cover the costs of high levels of staff absences over a minimum threshold, to help ensure schools and colleges can remain open
- The period of claim covers 1 November to Christmas holidays
- Schools will first need to use any existing financial reserves and surplus balances will need to be down to a level at 4% of the annual income
- Mainstream schools must be experiencing a short-term teacher absence rate at or above 20%, and/or a lower long-term teacher absence rate at or above 10% - costs can only be claimed when incurred above this rate
- Special schools and AP's must be experiencing a short-term teacher absence rate at or above 15%, and/or a lower long-term teacher absence rate at or above

Members were informed that DfE had recently launched an exam support service, which schools and colleges were able to use to claim any additional costs. The deadlines for submitting a claim through this service would be 6 April 2021.

With regard to Early Language Development, it was noted that 8 schools had now completed a full cycle of the Making it REAL intervention, with a further 8 schools and 8 PVLs joining the programme in January 2021. Members were informed that feedback from parents and children on the project so far was overwhelmingly positive and showed that families were both engaging with the project and appreciative of the support. In addition, tracking data clearly demonstrated that children were making significant progress through the strands of literacy.

Following on from the success of the GMCA Year Recovery Curriculum research seminars, which had been outlined in the previous meeting, Members were informed that a new series of seminars, led by the GMCA Speech and Language Lead were now being offered. It was stated that this would further support schools and practitioners with easy to access CPD and help them to address the gaps in early language, as a result of missing much of the Reception year.

Schools were praised with regard to their efforts in increasing attendance and managing to sustain this as much as possible throughout the challenging Autumn term. Members were informed that attendance had typically ranged from 85% to 92%, depending on the number of pupils affected by COVID-19. This was consistently around or above the GM average

It was further explained that attendance of pupils with Education Health Care Plans had been consistently around 78% and this had only been significantly impacted when special schools had been forced to close due to COVID-19 related reasons. Attendance of those pupils with a social worker had also been consistently around 78%

It was stated that the number of permanent exclusions was below the number in 2019 for the same time period and that, to date, there had been 14 secondary pupils excluded this academic year, as compared with 28 during the same time period for 2019.

Members were informed that there had been a spike in the number of pupils in Elective Home Education (EHE), in September. At this time, there were 81 pupils in EHE, of which 74 still remain EHE. It was recognised that this had been the case in many local authorities, nationally, and that there were currently 183 pupils in Tameside registered as EHE.

It was acknowledged that this was an important issue and that these numbers would continue to be monitored. It was also anticipated that these numbers were likely to fall back to more usual levels later in the school year, as lockdown restrictions begin to ease. In the meantime, Members were advised that colleagues would continue to assist with, and monitor the education offer, ensuring that any welfare issues would be addressed.

Members were informed that, as the summer 2020 examination series had been cancelled, there was no school-level information available. Due to the way assessments had been carried out and reported, results were not comparable with previous years or, arguably, between regions. However, an outline of Centre Assessment Grades and Attainment 8 information was presented to Members of the Board.

It was stated that, following recent Government announcements, GCSE and A Level examinations for this year had also been cancelled and OFQUAL had been asked to consult with these sectors in order to devise suitable arrangements for assessment. It was discussed that this would likely be based on rigorous teacher assessment and Members were informed that more information would be shared as this becomes available.

Members were also informed that primary statutory assessments and tests had now been cancelled for 2020-21. However, to date, there had been no decision announced with regard to Early Years assessments, which provide data relating to GLD.

With regard to OFSTED, it was stated that full, graded inspections would not resume until the Summer term for maintained schools and academies. Members were made aware that, from January, OFSTED had announced that they would resume monitoring inspections of those schools

previously judged to be inadequate. However, in light of the latest national lockdown, it was likely that there would be further announcements and it was explained that updates would be provided for Members in due course.

It was stated that, during the Autumn term, 2 schools with inadequate judgements had received OFSTED monitoring visits, and 2 schools had received virtual interim inspections. Members were advised that Tameside remained at 89% pupils in good or outstanding primary schools, 67% pupils in good or outstanding secondary schools and 70% pupils in good or outstanding special schools.

In conclusion, it was explained that the impact of COVID-19 on schools and senior leaders had been immeasurable. Concerns remained around the impact on disadvantaged children and about the disproportionate disadvantage faced by students in the North West. Members of the Board were assured that the Council would continue to help schools in a variety of ways to ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children were supported.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

4 VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from Assistant Director of Education. The report provided updates in regard to the education provision of cared for children during the academic year 2019-20, with particular focus on the pandemic response.

It was explained that The Virtual School and College work within the Access Service area of Tameside's Educational Service. Members were informed that this team had been expanded during the year with the appointment of an additional Education Welfare Officer to track attendance, school admissions, Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and progress of cared for children and young people. The team's relentless focus to avoid delays in school admissions was highlighted, as was the effective collaboration with education and social management care teams, SEND and Education Psychology services.

The adaptation of practices was discussed, in light of the current climate. It was noted that, following the lockdown, meetings had begun to be held remotely and that the Virtual School Headteacher had continued to attend weekly legal getaway meetings. The Headteacher had also participated in all placement tracking meetings to ensure cared for children had education as an integral part of their care planning and that school admission and EHCP processes were continuing in a timely and appropriate manner.

Members were informed that, due to the unprecedented challenges throughout the lockdown, the following responses had also been made:

- Revised one page PEP document focussing on emotional well-being and current education provision and goals
- PEPs arranged by Virtual School and College team as opposed to designated teachers and social workers
- Where schools had already committed to commissioned services or staff, the Virtual School honoured all payments despite not necessarily being able to reflect progress in the PEP document
- Schools were advised that Pupil Premium + payments could be carried over to the following term, if required
- A number of laptops were bought directly through Virtual School for young people immediately identified as not having IT equipment to work on
- Virtual School worked with our education colleagues to identify and allocate Government laptops for cared for young people

- Two members of Virtual School team were deployed into the school liaison team to make daily School Link Officer calls and deliver messages to six schools each as part of the Council response to schools
- Reading resource packs were created, in conjunction with school improvement partners, and made available to all schools. This was highlighted on the council website, sent to foster carers and placed on Virtual School website
- Regular emails were sent to Tameside foster carers giving links to different educational resources and opportunities as well as mindfulness activities
- Nisai learning was commissioned and offered to all Tameside secondary schools who wanted to offer to their cared for children or young people at Child Protection
- One to one online tuition was commissioned for young people, where requested, via social workers, residential home or carers due to young person or carers struggling with home schooling
- Power Two, an organisation who work with vulnerable young people, commissioned for young people to engage in a mentoring programme
- Magazine subscriptions and books that had been part of the reading programme continued to be delivered
- Virtual School attendance fact sheet was created and published with other school notifications to give guidance around expectations for cared for children attending school during lockdown
- Weekly attendance at NAVSH webinars which included a briefing from a representative from DFE to ensure all government recommendations and legislation was being adhered to
Children In Care meetings were attended via Skype

It was reported that changes were being embedded to ensure that cared for children were still receiving a prioritised and enhanced education offer throughout their school lives; through targeted monitoring, PEP analysis and interventions wherever necessary.

It was stated that there had been a relentless and successful drive on timely PEPs completed each school term. Members were informed that, as the country went into lockdown meetings inevitably started to be postponed and this was reflected in the Term 2 completion rate. However, as an immediate response to this, PEP processes were quickly adapted and there was a 100% completion rate in term 3, as a result.

In addition, it was detailed that a robust Quality Assurance (QA) system had now been out into place, with a view to this expanding to include Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service, ensuring that a professional, independent view was considered.

Discussion ensued in relation to Pupil Premium Grant funding and Members were made aware that all Pupil Premium grant payments for cared for children would be prioritised around any areas or developing gaps of need due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was highlighted that this would be clearly identified in PEP documents and that schools would be encouraged to highlight any emerging needs.

With regard to attendance, it was noted that, due to the impact of COVID-19, there was not a full attendance data set for this academic year. However, the data until 20 March 2020 was presented to Members of the Board. This highlighted an average attendance of 91.24% for all cared for children. Members were also informed that there had been no permanent exclusions of cared for children this year.

It was further explained that working with the 'Looked After Call' data service had improved the communication with schools, particularly those out of the borough. Members were informed that this relationship would continue to be developed. Closer working with Tameside SEND team was also highlighted, which had improved the timeliness of school placements being named for cared for children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

It was reported that there had been a significant increase in cared for children with EHCPs for Social, Emotional or Mental Health needs (SEMH). It was explained that this could, in part, be due to better identification and quality of applications with evidence for young people with this need. It was also stated that work needed to continue within mainstream settings to identify and support young people with SEMH at the earliest opportunity. With this in mind, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Education Service had been commissioned in order to increase Education Psychology time and support.

It was noted that there was no published attainment data for this academic year due to COVID-19. However, Members were made aware of some academic successes in Year 11 GCSE results, along with a range of superb personal achievements from this cohort of young people. It was acknowledged that many of these young people had complex stories and the grades they achieved were clearly attributable to their determination and hard work.

With regard to Post-16 provision, Members were made aware that there were currently 119 young people in Further Education (FE) and that Virtual School were working alongside Greater Manchester Higher to offer Success for Life programmes for Key Stage 4 students in order to introduce university conversations and ambitions to them.

Members were made aware that future priorities included the following:

- continuing to adapt and respond appropriately to changes in education and needs of young people due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ensuring that no gaps in education are further exacerbated by the pandemic within the cared for children cohort;
- working with Education Psychology service to ensure advice is being offered to support cared for children, regardless of SEND status;
- continuing work with schools around addressing needs of cared for young people and inclusion;
- continued development of post 16 partners working together including Virtual School and College, positive steps, leaving care team and Tameside College; and
- continuing to ensure young people participate and vocalise their experiences and wishes in PEP meetings.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

5 ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Employment and Skills. The report presented was a draft Adult Community Education (ACE), Self-Assessment report (SAR), which provided a comprehensive assessment of performance and areas for development for the academic year 2019-20.

Both Councillor Feeley and Councillor Smith stated that they had recently visited Adult and Community Education (ACE) and expressed their gratitude to staff. Councillor Feeley explained that it had been a valuable opportunity to witness the students learning and praised the dedication and commitment demonstrated from all involved.

Members were informed that ACE was part of an education and skills system that worked for everyone as part of the Greater Manchester Strategy and contributed directly to the priorities in the Tameside Corporate Plan.

It was noted that 74% of all learners were from the top 30% of the most deprived areas in Tameside. With this in mind, Members were made aware that a particular area of strength was the service's ability to engage and support the most hard to reach learners, building self-esteem and supporting them to reach their full potential.

An overview of the main service aims was provided for members, including:

- reducing the proportion of adults who have poor English, maths and ICT skills;
- providing learners with the skills required to support businesses growth;
- supporting residents in the borough in developing a range of skills for everyday life;
- improving the employment rate of the borough.; and
- providing parents and carers with the knowledge and skills to raise the attainment of children in their care and participate in the wider Tameside community.

It was explained that the key strategic objectives were to support a positive lifestyle change for learners; enabling them to lead productive and rewarding lives and to increase their self-sufficiency and resilience. In turn, this would help to reduce dependence upon reactive public services.

In relation to the impact of COVID-19, It was stated that ACE)had 784 enrolments in 2019/20, a decline of 26% compared to 18/19. The March 2020 recruitment window had just been completed with 89 interviews and initial assessment completed for new courses, when Stamford Chambers was closed due to COVID-19. These 89 enrolments would have brought up the 7 month enrolment total for 2019/20 to 98% of the 2018/19 figure.

Members were informed that achievement had decreased from 82.8%% to 74.5%, -8.3% caused by 96 'early leavers' due to COVID-19 (and any related COVID-19 illness or isolation issues) leaving their course, withdrawing from their studies and not asking for a break for learning. A small number of learners initially chose a 'break in learning' and had returned in September 2020. However, they then realised they would be unable to complete their course in the 4 months provided so chose to leave resulting in a fail. This had negatively impacted the achievement data for 2019/20.

However, it was stated that, during this period, an excellent level of contact was provided by tutors and Student Support Officers as 100% of learners were contacted during the lockdown, with a minority (5%) needing ongoing support with social isolation. Contact consisted of tutors engaging on a weekly basis with their learners through a choice of mediums; Social Media, Google classroom, various online assessment tools and by posting out work packs that were returned by learners. All learners were also regularly contacted by the Student Support Officer to check on their mental wellbeing.

A range of improvements, since the last SAR were highlighted for Members, including:

- enhanced planning and monitoring of sustainable curriculum routes for learners returning to education;
- blended delivery available for all regulated courses; and
- introduction of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform to provide sustainable online learning.

Members were informed about the key strengths of the service with particular attention paid to the effective curriculum offer and use of collaboration; aimed at widening participation, addressing barriers and improving confidence, employability skills and life opportunities. Further strengths included the effective use of Continued Professional Development (CPD), the good information, advice and guidance offered to learners and the partnerships with a range of organisations to recruit harder to reach learners.

It was explained that the ACE team set high expectations for learners and that positive behaviour and attitude towards learning were encouraged and expected. In the learner survey, 91% of learners agreed that the teaching and support they received was excellent. Additionally, in the same survey, 96% of learners stated that they felt safe at ACE or in the community venues, whilst 98% stated that they felt more positive about their ability to learn new things.

It was noted that there had been 100% pass rate on all courses. In English, Members were informed that all learners had enrolled on the 'Reading Ahead' programme and one learner had been selected for the prestigious 'Festival of Learning - English Learner of the Year Award 2020'.

In addition, learners who had enrolled on the Life and Living courses also benefitted from work experience in Waterloo Park, where they had completed a range of horticultural units.

Areas for improvement were also discussed, with Members informed that further improvement needed to be made in relation to the retention of learners. However, it was again acknowledged that the impact of COVID-19 had been significant during the academic year 2019-20 and had negatively impacted on retention for this period. In addition, it was highlighted that there was a need to improve the achievement rate on the Certificate in Life and Living course in order for it to be at or above the national rate. It was outlined that further development work would also be continued in developing effective processes to establish destinations up to six months after leaving.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board.

6 HIGH NEEDS DEFICIT RECOVERY PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Education. The report outlined the work streams proposed to address the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs deficit.

It was explained that, under the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) conditions, paragraph 5.2 required that any local authority with an overall deficit on the DSG account at the end of the financial year 2019/20 or whose DSG surplus had substantially reduced during the year, must present a plan to the DfE for managing their future spend.

Members were informed that Schools' Forum had agreed, in September 2020, that due to the available funding and the growth in pupils needing Education Health Care Plans (EHCP's), they would be minded to support a 1% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This was formally agreed 24 November 2020 and this application had been submitted to the Secretary of State.

The plan set out the proposed actions to address the deficit, which, as reported to Executive Cabinet in November 2020 and in the September 2020 meeting of Schools Forum, was forecast to be £3.638m. Details of the plan and an outline of the measures to mitigate this deficit were presented.

With regard to funding, it was proposed that, following the approval of Schools' Forum, a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block be made to the High Needs Block, with a further transfer of 0.5% having been requested to the Secretary of State for approval, assuming that this could be achieved in adherence to the NFF funding bands. The final element of this funding proposal anticipated that future funding from the DfE would be provided, with the removal of the significant cap on funding (£3.1m for Tameside).

In addition, it was stated that a detailed review of services funded from the High Needs Block was underway, which was expected to realise financial savings. Areas under review included Sensory Support Services and Specialist SEND Services. Alongside this, it was also highlighted that there were currently 2 specialist posts, currently funded inappropriately from the High Needs Block. As both of these posts solely supported the Early Years agenda, it was explained that they would be funded from the Council's centrally retained element going forwards.

Members were made aware that a review of Element 3, top-up funding was underway. It was explained that the financial implications of this had not been fully considered at this stage as a banding model was being developed, which focused on the provision needed to support the pupils need rather than funding the type of need. With this in mind, a Matching Provision to Need

(MPTN) document had been developed by the SEND team and would be fully consulted upon moving forwards.

It was explained that a review of resource bases was also underway in order to increase provision in the borough; to meet the needs of young people locally and reduce the need for Out of Borough and Independent settings. It was envisaged that additional places in each of the four localities be established and, whilst it was acknowledged that these proposed changes would require additional funding to establish, it was stated that this would support the LA in avoiding more costly provision elsewhere. It was, therefore, anticipated that this would represent a net saving. Members were also made aware that the LA would look to further develop additional sites and carry out a review of the centrally managed bases. The outcome of this review would, again, be subject to the LA's normal governance and staffing related consultation and decision-making processes.

In relation to Building Contracts and Estates Review, it was explained that one of the special schools had a PFI style contract for which a review would be undertaken in order to assess value for money. It was envisaged that potential savings could be found from this contract. Furthermore, it was stated that a review of the special school estate use of PFI buildings would be considered over the longer term, including its use and whether better use of space could be identified. Members of the Forum were informed that both of these reviews would require appropriate decision making through the LA's normal governance routes and approval before any savings could be realised.

An explanation was provided in relation to Growth and Overcapacity Funding in special schools. This followed an initial discussion during Schools Funding Group in October 2020 and was with regard to the funding of additional special school places outside the annual place review process. It was explained that Schools Funding Group had supported a 5% range of placements and had asked that this be shared with special schools for consideration. This proposal had previously been shared in Summer 2019. However, at that time, the proposal was stalled due to significant increase in growth. It was stated that, as growth had now stabilised and additional provision was being commissioned within the borough, it was appropriate timing to revisit this proposal. This had been considered by Schools' Forum in November 2020 and the next step would be to consult with special school headteachers and report back to School's Forum for decision making

Members were informed that sixth form provision was being established at Cromwell school to provide increased parental choice and expand the provision in the borough, with appropriate LA governance and consultation underpinning this proposal.

In relation to Tameside Pupil Referral Service (TPRS) provision and Inclusive Schools, members were informed that, following the appointment of a new headteacher at TPRS, the post holder would be looking at the rate of exclusions in the borough and appropriate support to schools. It was expected that, with appropriate support over a longer term, exclusions would reduce and, therefore, the number of places needed at TPRS would decrease accordingly. It was also highlighted that funding for targeted interventions would be considered as part of this plan.

It was noted that, in line with current DSG regulations, the LA would be following the guidance that funding for excluded pupils follow the pupil. It was explained that the regulations state this should include all pupil-led funding and pupil premium, where appropriate. A report would be presented to Schools' Forum for approval in relation of the administration of this, which would, in turn, be implemented from April 2021.

In conclusion, it was stated that, without appropriate action, the High Needs DSG Block would continue to overspend and the deficit would be increased. This deficit was currently being cash flowed from LA general funding and reserves. It was highlighted that this was not sustainable. Without the Management Plan, members were informed that the LA would be in breach of the DSG conditions of grant and would be subject to further investigation by the DfE, on behalf of the Secretary of State.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board.

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7 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Access Services setting out the proposed admission arrangements for Tameside community, and voluntary controlled schools for admission in September 2022. There had been no change to these from September 2021. The report highlighted changes proposed by the Department for Education to the School Admissions Code.

Members were reminded that all admission authorities were required to consult on their coordinated admission scheme and on changes to admission arrangements. Where no changes had been proposed to the coordinated admissions scheme or admission arrangements, there was no requirement to consult. Admission authorities should ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2014.

It was reported that for entry to community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools in September 2022, no changes were planned and, therefore, consultation was not necessary. The proposed admission arrangements for entry in September 2022 for community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

School place planning in the borough was reviewed on an annual basis and formed part of the annual report on admission arrangements that was reported to Executive Cabinet in February. Appendix 2 to the report set out the latest information.

It was stated all local authorities had a statutory duty to ensure that there were sufficient school places to meet demand in the area. These could be school places available at provision maintained by the local authority, academies, or other non-maintained schools. In order to carry out this statutory duty, Councils needed to carry out school place planning and forecasting.

In relation to birth rates, it was noted that, nationally, the overall projected trend was down for primary age pupils over the next 5 years, with a 6% decrease in numbers but an increase of 6% for secondary age pupils. A similar pattern was projected in Tameside.

Members were made aware that, by being proactive, the Council had been able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in the face of a 27% increase in birth rate and 24% increase in pupils starting primary schools over the last few years. This had been done whilst also managing to maintain high levels of meeting parental preference and, usually, at a higher level than the national average.

It was explained that whilst there were currently sufficient places to meet expected demand, the school place planning process must continue to be dynamic particularly in view of significant housing development that was predicted within the borough and the impact this would have on demand and travel to learn patterns.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 3.30pm.

CHAIR