

# EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

25 June 2019

**Commenced:** 3.30 pm

**Terminated:** 4.55 pm

**Present:** Councillors Feeley, Cooper, Fairfoull, L Boyle, M Smith, Buglass,  
Elizabeth Turner, Andrea Radcliffe, Paul Jacques

**In Attendance:**

Sandra Stewart	Director of Governance and Pensions
Catherine Moseley	Head of Access and Inclusion
Helen Mellor	Head of Pupil Support Service
Jane Sowerby	Lead Primary School Performance and Standards Officer
Tony Shepherd	Head of Improvement and Partnerships
Tom Wilkinson	Assistant Director of Finance
Christine Mullins	Finance Business Partner
Jackie Nurney	Early Education Funding and School Organisation Manager

## 1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended congratulations to Sheldon Logue, Head Teacher at St Damian's Roman Catholic College, who had been nominated for Head Teacher of the Year at the National Teacher Awards.

The Chair informed Board Members that she had visited the Bridgewater Hall that morning for a concert involving children from Tameside Primary Schools and the Halle, which had been excellent.

The Chair also announced that this was the last meeting of Helen Mellor, Head of Pupil Support Service, who would be retiring in the summer. She thanked Helen for all her hard work over the years and wished her well for the future.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

## 3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 26 March 2019 were approved as a correct record.

## 4 SEND UPDATE - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Assistant Director, Learning, submitted a report containing the detailed improvement plan for SEND, which followed on from the report provided to the March 2019 meeting of the Education Attainment Improvement Board.

The Head of Pupil Support Service explained that the improvement plan (Appendix A to the report), gave details of how the key areas for development highlighted in the Self Evaluation (discussed with Board Members in March 2019) would be addressed.

She further explained that a peer review of the SEND Self- Evaluation and Improvement Plan had taken place on 10 and 20 June 2019. This peer review had been led by Warrington and had been organised by the Association of Directors of Children's Services in the North West. Feedback from the peer review would be made known to Board Members when it became available.

The report concluded that Tameside, like many other local areas had found implementing SEND reforms challenging. Implementation had not been consistent and capacity challenges and changes in leadership had negatively impacted upon this. It was believed that a thorough and well considered improvement plan was now in place, targeted to the areas requiring the swiftest improvement. Scrutiny of this had been invited via Peer Review.

Detailed discussion ensued in respect of the information contained in the Improvement Plan and Members made reference to inequalities in schools and asked how this was being addressed. Funding concerns were also raised and Members were informed that meetings with colleagues were ongoing in respect of changing the culture around SEND support and how the cost issues could be addressed.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report and Improvement Plan be noted and the activity detailed be endorsed.**

## **5 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director, Learning, outlining the outcomes of the childcare sufficiency annual report 2018. The report included an analysis of the supply and demand for childcare within the Borough and any changes from the previous year, e.g. whether any new provision had been established or childcare closures. These changes could indicate any change in the stability of the childcare market in the Borough. The report set out how the childcare market was assessed and where there was a need for additional places and detailed any actions recommended or taken for this to be achieved.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report be noted and the following recommendations be endorsed and approved for publication on the Council's website:**

- (i) To continue to work with all childcare providers to improve the quality and content of the data provided to inform on the annual assessment of childcare available for all age ranges;**
- (ii) To look at other ways providers can regularly report on their vacancies and the potential for parents to be able to make enquiries for childcare using the vacancy information provided;**
- (iii) To continue to monitor the number of 2 year places across the Borough to address any identified gaps. To include an annual assessment of sufficiency which will inform any future place creation required;**
- (iv) To progress capital applications for 2 year places creation to address gaps identified;**
- (v) To review place take up of 30 hours and analyse the sufficiency of the number of places required for families who will qualify on an ongoing basis;**
- (vi) To continue to offer a range of support to all providers around the delivery of 30 hours free childcare; and**
- (vii) To continue to identify strategies to enable providers to become more self-sufficient and responsible for improvement of the quality of their childcare and workforce development.**

## 6 EDUCATION FINANCE UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Assistant Director, Finance and the Assistant Director, Learning, providing an overview of the various elements of Education Finance, funded by the Department for Education (DfE) through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

It was explained that the DSG was allocated through a nationally determined formula to local authorities in 4 blocks:

- Central Services Schools Block – to provide funding to Local Authorities to support carrying out statutory duties on behalf of schools;
- Schools Block – intended to fund mainstream (non-special) schools;
- High Needs Block – to fund Special Schools, additional support in mainstream schools for Special Educational Needs (SEND) and other SEND placements/support; and
- Early Years Block – funds the free/extended entitlement and funding of places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in school nurseries and Private, voluntary and Independent (PVI) Sector settings.

The current funding/outturn position for each of the above for 2018/19 and 2019/2020 was detailed in the report.

The high needs block was highlighted as a particular area of concern, with overspending contributed to: an increasing high needs population such as special school places and resourced provision; an increase in Education Health Care Plans being issued; increases in the number of Post 16 placements requiring top up funding; and increased spending in supporting Tameside children in the Independent Sector or Out of Borough Placements.

The financial pressures in the High Needs Block were therefore serious and represented a high risk to the Council. There was an on-going review of SEND services and the SEND Strategy looking at the local offer and ways to address the financial pressures, and to stabilise the position over the following three years. If, as predicted, the High Needs Block entered into deficit by the end of 2019/20, the Council would be expected to produce a 3 year deficit recovery plan and submit this to the DfE.

Board Members were informed that, at the end of each financial year, schools balances were reported to Schools' Forum. The balance was the amount of unspent schools funding that each school held at the end of the financial year. Schools were permitted to hold reasonable balances. Permitted balances at Tameside were defined as balances up to 5% in Secondary Schools and up to 8% in the primary and special sector. Schools Governing bodies holding balances above this limit must submit a plan approved by Governors to the Local Authority outlining the reasons for holding these balances and the plan should demonstrate how they intended to utilise these funds.

An analysis of schools' balances for 2018/19, both surplus and deficit, was provided in the report.

Members were further informed that the schools' finance team would be working with schools to obtain approved plans and review the detail within the plans to try and ensure there was better budget planning in schools. The Schools' Forum were also considering options in respect of addressing excessive balances.

The financial position in respect of receipts for Section 106 Agreements and Developer Contributions was also summarised in the report.

An appendix to the report further outlined the 2018/19 outturn investment for Education. A detailed breakdown of all schemes within Education, including future budgets and re-profiling was also provided.

Detailed discussion ensued with regard to the content of the report and Members raised particular concerns in respect of excessive schools balances, especially given the significant pressures on the

High Needs Block with the predicted deficit at the end of 2019/20. They further expressed a need to think more holistically about needs across the Borough.

It was suggested that a joint meeting with the Schools Forum be considered, going forward, to discuss options in respect of addressing excessive schools' balances.

The Chair thanked officers for a very comprehensive and interesting report.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the content of the report be noted; and**
- (ii) That the possibility of a joint meeting with the Schools' Forum in the future, be explored.**

### **7 FORWARD PLAN**

The Assistant Director, Learning, submitted a forward plan setting out a proposal for a structured approach to the work of the Education Attainment Improvement Board which addressed the strategic priorities for education and lifelong learning in Tameside.

It was explained that the forward plan would need to be developed and amended through the year in response to issues arising.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the Forward Plan, as detailed in the report, be approved, with the opportunity to make further amendments throughout the course of the year including the addition of: Schools' Finance update; and Presentation from School/MAT.**

### **8 URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

### **9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the next meeting of the Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on 22 October 2019 and appropriate authorisation be sought to change the start time of the meeting to 4pm going forward.**

**CHAIR**