

Minutes of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**22 October 2018 at 5.00pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Underhill (Chair);
Councillors S Davies and M Y Hussain (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Akhter, Allen, Ashman, Hevican, M Hussain, Phillips and Shaeen.

Apologies: Councillor Rollins and Reverend P French (co-opted member).

In attendance: Chris Ward – Director Education, Skills and Employment;
Paul Hayward - Team Manager, Learning and Culture -School Organisation & Planning

22/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 23 July and 27 September 2018 be approved as a correct record.

23/18 **School Place Planning**

The Board noted a report on how the council was delivering on its statutory responsibilities to ensure there were a sufficient number of school places available for the children of Sandwell. The following headline data was reported:-

- There had been a 26% increase in Sandwell births from 3727 a year in 2001/02 to 5058 in 2012/13. The birth rate had since reduced and was now fluctuating between 4600 and 4800 a year.
- 38 primary schools had been expanded since 2011 to create an additional 5200 new primary places, including 390 “bulge” places.

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- The Council continued to respond to a significant increase in inward migration and retention and there had been a 33% increase in “new to UK” applications in the last two years. The number of mid-year places had increased by 220 in the last four years.
- The Council's policy on expanding schools was to prioritise schools that were rated “good or outstanding”. It was important that a school's Senior Leadership Team was able to manage an expansion without it impacting on pupil performance.
- Shireland Technology Primary, a new free school would open in September 2019 providing an additional 420 places in Smethwick, which was the town under the most significant pressure for places.
- Smethwick, Oldbury, Rowley Regis and West Bromwich were close to capacity in the Primary sector whilst there was some minimal capacity in Tipton and Wednesbury.
- Work had begun to deliver the additional 485 new year 7 places needed from September 2019, to accommodate the first significant increase in projected pupil numbers in the secondary sector.
- West Bromwich Collegiate Academy in West Bromwich would provide 150 Year 7 places each year. For September 2019, the Academy had agreed to admit 175 students to assist with meeting the anticipated demand in the area.
- A number of secondary schools had agreed to take additional pupils in 2019 to assist the Council in managing the delay of a new school to be delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, who were yet to confirm an opening date. Expansions were planned at George Salter Academy and Shireland Collegiate Academy to provide an additional 105 year 7 places from September 2019.
- Future additional provision was also planned at Bristnall Hall Academy, Holly Lodge High School, Wood Green Academy, Q3 Academy Great Barr and new Free School proposal involving the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

In order to fulfil the statutory duty to ensure there were enough school places for the population, local authorities received Basic Need Funding from the Department for Education. Following a change to the way that education services were funded, the Council was one of seven local authorities to receive a £0 Basic Need Funding for 2020/21 and it was anticipated that nil would be received in 2021/22. Applying the same methodology in future

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years it was currently projected that the Council would receive £7million in 2022/23 and £15million in 2023/24. Consequently, the completion of Q3 Academy Langley and West Bromwich Collegiate Academy would be delayed by around three years and the expansion of four other secondary schools would be delayed by at least four years.

The Department for Education had confirmed an additional one off £2.5million towards the cost of delivering West Bromwich Collegiate Academy. However, unless additional longer term funding was allocated the Council was at risk of failing in its statutory duty. Discussions were taking place with the Department for Education on that matter.

24/18

Education Performance – Against National and Regional Comparisons

The Board received a report which summarised school attainment in Sandwell as at 31 September 2018 along with comparisons against national attainment, neighbouring authorities and statistical neighbours.

Overall, Sandwell was ranked 132 out of 150 authorities for those achieving the expected standard or above in reading, writing and maths combined. This was a decline of 1 place on the previous year. 86% of schools were judged by Ofsted to be good or better, matching the national figure. This translated to 84% of primary schools and 72% of secondary schools. All pupil referral units and special schools were judged as good or outstanding.

In Early Years Foundation Stage 66% of pupils had achieved a “good” level of development, compared to 72% nationally, which represented a 2 percentage point improvement on the previous year.

In relation to the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, 79% of pupils were deemed to be working at the required standard in 2018. There was no change from the previous year but nationally there had been an improvement of 2 percentage points in Sandwell, placing us 4 percentage points below the national percentage in 2018.

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At Key Stage 1 the gap to national performance remained at 4 percentage points with 66% of pupils reaching the expected standard or above compared with 70% nationally.

At Key Stage 2 60% of pupils had achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined compared to 64% nationally. This represented an improvement of 2 percentage points from 2017. National performance had also improved by 2 percentage points. Reading attainment at the expected standard or above (71%) was 4 percentage points below the national figure. The gap to national performance had decreased from the previous year by 2 percentage points. However, pupils were making less progress in reading than all other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment.

At Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 scores are not directly comparable to previous years due to continued changes as more GCSE subjects were reformed. Early indications were that the Attainment 8 score had decreased by 2 percentage points to 40.4%.

In relation to Key Stage 5, a high number of students chose to go out of borough for their post-16 education, which reduced performance for Sandwell and increased it for neighbouring boroughs. With the growth of A-level provision at Sandwell College this trend was starting to slow, but it would take some years to have a significant impact on performance.

The Board noted more detailed breakdowns of performance figures set out in the report. It was noted that 2018 data was provisional and subject to change

From the comments and questions by members, the following points were highlighted:-

- The impact of inward migration on performance figures was almost zero.
- Data showed that pupils living in Sandwell who chose to complete their Key Stage 5 education outside of the borough performed well.
- The viability of sixth forms was being looked at.
- One a and two form entry schools, and secondary schools with less than 900 pupils were likely to face sustainability challenges in the future.

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- Multi-academy trusts were responsible for the performance of their schools, however, the Local Authority could offer them support if they were open to it.
- There had been an increase in library use by some children as a result of the Booktastic scheme but more work was needed to encourage and support children and their families to foster a love of reading from an early age.

(Meeting ended at 5.42pm)

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