

Agenda Item 14a

Ordinary Council Meeting of: 16 July 2024
Cllr Horton/Cllr Oliver

AGENDA ITEM 14(a) - Notice of Motion - SEN Provision in Portsmouth

Note - the paragraphs in the original motion have been numbered below for ease of reference:

- 1. Portsmouth schools are struggling with an increase in the need for Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision.*
- 2. More children are being failed due to increasing diagnosis and acceptance of conditions, but schools cannot keep up with this increase and funding is hard to allocate due to years of Local Authority cuts from central government.*
- 3. This Council notes the hard work of officers with regard to increasing and improving SEN provision in Portsmouth.*
- 4. This Council notes the inconsistency in SEN provision across the schools in Portsmouth.*
- 5. This Council notes the reduction in Local Authority oversight in schools due to the introduction of the Academy system and reduction in Local Authority education budgets associated with Multi Academy Trusts taking over schools in the city.*
- 6. The Council requests the Cabinet ascertain the feasibility of implementing a SEN Advisory Board, bringing together Members, educators, parents, SMEs and MAT representatives.*
- 7. This Council calls upon the Cabinet Member for Children, Family and Education to write to the Secretary of State for Education to request the government investigate the adequacy of SEN provision nationally.*

Amendment:

- Replace 'SEN' with 'SEND' throughout.
- Replace Paragraph 4 with:

'This Council welcomes the establishment of the Portsmouth Education Partnership in 2018 to strengthen the relationships between schools and the Local Authority in the face of the fragmented educational landscape due to the introduction of the Academy system and reduction in education budgets.'

- Replace paragraph 5 with:

'This council notes the financial impact of academisation and the distancing of the day-to-day management of schools over successive governments. Council welcomes the establishment of the Portsmouth Education Partnership in 2018 to strengthen the relationships between schools and the Local Authority in the face of the fragmented educational landscape due to the introduction of the Academy system and reduction in education budgets.'

- Replace paragraph 6 with:

'The Council notes the work of the Portsmouth SEND and Alternative Provision Board (previously the SEND Board), bringing together Members, educators, parent representatives, MAT representatives, officers, SEN charities, health colleagues, finance, mainstream school representatives and Chair of Schools Forum.'

- Replace paragraph 7 with:

Council requests that an annual update paper on SEND is taken to the Cabinet decision meeting for Children, Families and Education as well as the cross-party Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Add new paragraph 8:

'Council notes the number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receiving support from councils has reached a record high, and the Local Government Association (LGA) said this highlights the urgency of SEND reform. As of January 2024, there are almost 576,000 children and young people with an EHCP. Requests for an assessment have also increased by around 20 per cent since the previous year. The increase in EHCPs is also driving escalating costs of home-to-school transport for children with SEND, with budgets up by 23 per cent in 2023 to 24 compared to the previous year. Budgeted net spend in 2023 to 24 is £1.4 billion – a 137 per cent cash terms increase since 2016 to 17. In Portsmouth the number of EHCPs has increased by 51% since 2017 to 2145 leading to a budget pressure of £2.5m on the High Needs Block from the Designated School Grant (the money given by government to fund SEND).'

- Add this to end of the last paragraph (originally paragraph 7 and now paragraph 9)

'and to make the review, provision and funding of SEND a 'first order issue' for the new government'

The amended motion to therefore read:

1. Portsmouth schools are struggling with an increase in the need for Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) provision.
2. More children are being failed due to increasing diagnosis and acceptance of conditions, but schools cannot keep up with this increase and funding is hard to allocate due to years of Local Authority cuts from central government.
3. This Council notes the hard work of officers with regard to increasing and improving SEND provision in Portsmouth.
4. This Council welcomes the establishment of the Portsmouth Education Partnership in 2018 to strengthen the relationships between schools and the Local Authority in the face of the fragmented educational landscape due to the introduction of the Academy system and reduction in education budgets.
5. This council notes the financial impact of academisation and the distancing of the day-to-day management of schools over successive governments. Council welcomes the establishment of the Portsmouth Education Partnership in 2018 to strengthen the relationships between schools and the Local Authority in the face of the fragmented educational landscape due to the introduction of the Academy system and reduction in education budgets.
6. The Council notes the work of the SEND and Alternative Provision Board (previously the SEND Board), bringing together Members, educators, parent representatives, MAT representatives, officers, SEN charities, health colleagues, finance, mainstream school representatives, Chair of Schools Forum.
7. Council requests that an annual update paper on SEND is taken to the Cabinet decision meeting for Children, Families and Education as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board.

8. Council notes the number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receiving support from councils has reached a record high, and the Local Government Association (LGA) said this highlights urgency of SEND reform. As of January 2024, there are almost 576,000 children and young people with an EHCP. Requests for an assessment have also increased by around 20 per cent since the previous year. The increase in EHCPs is also driving escalating costs of home-to-school transport for children with SEND, with budgets up by 23 per cent in 2023 to 24 compared to the previous year. Budgeted net spend in 2023 to 24 is £1.4 billion – a 137 per cent cash terms increase since 2016 to 17. In Portsmouth the number of EHCPs has increased by 51% since 2017 to 2145 leading to a budget pressure of £2.5m on the High Needs Block from the Designated School Grant (the money given by government to fund SEND).'

9. This Council calls upon the Cabinet Member for Children, Family and Education to write to the Secretary of State for Education to request the government investigate the adequacy of SEND provision nationally and to make the review, provision and funding of SEND a 'first order issue' for the new government.

Proposed by Councillor Suzy Horton

Signed_____

Seconded by Councillor Leonie Oliver

Signed