

## **Children and Families Committee**

---

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	20 March 2023
<b>Report Title:</b>	Department for Education, Delivering Better Value Programme
<b>Report of:</b>	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CF/72/22- 23
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All wards

---

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. This report provides a briefing on the Department for Education Delivering Better Value programme, which Cheshire East Council joined in July 2022. The programme is linked to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan.
- 1.2. The purpose of the report is to note the recommendations and agree delegations to the Executive Director of Children's Services to undertake any consultations deemed necessary to facilitate implementation.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. The Department for Education (DfE) in February 2022 announced the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV). The DBV programme is designed to provide dedicated support and funding to help 55 local authorities with substantial deficit issues in their high needs block of the DSG, to reform their high needs systems, with the aim to put more local authorities on a more sustainable footing so that they are better placed to respond to the forthcoming special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms.
- 2.2. The DBV programme consists of three modules and a grant clinic.

- **Module 1:** Baselines and forecasts – Understanding our data, financial forecasts and EHCP numbers. Identifying themes for further diagnostics in module 2.
- **Module 2:** Route cause diagnostics – Deep dives to understand what is driving demand and identifying potential financial opportunities.
- **Module 3:** Implementation planning – Identify workstreams based around the themes and opportunities and an assessment to understand how ‘ready’ the people, processes, and systems are for change.
- **Grant clinic and application:** Preparation of the grant application.

**2.3.** Cheshire East have been awarded £1 million in the form of a grant to support the transformational change programme with the aim of becoming more sustainable in the future, which are described in this report.

**2.4.** Although this is positive for Cheshire East, the opportunities identified via the DBV programme and the current mitigations within the DSG management plan, do not fully address the recurring in-year overspends and deficit position. It highlights that significant changes to funding levels and activity is required.

### **3. Recommendations**

**3.1.** The Children and Families Committee is asked:

**3.1.1.** To note, Cheshire East have been awarded £1 Million in the form of a grant - approved by DfE on 13 February 2023.

**3.1.2.** To note, the profiled spend of the grant over a two-year period 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

**3.1.3.** To note, the workstreams identified during the DBV programme and the intended use of the grant as set out within the report.

**3.1.4.** To note, the next update to the DSG management plan will include DBV findings and opportunities and will be based on up-to-date SEN data and intelligence. This will be presented to the Children & Families Committee in September 2023.

**3.1.5.** To note, the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Children’s Services and the Section 151 Officer will raise the financial issues with the DfE and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

**3.1.6.** Delegate to the Executive Director of Children’s Services authority to undertake any consultations deemed necessary to facilitate implementation.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1. Work commenced on the DBV programme in September 2022, which led to completion of the grant application in February 2023.
- 4.2. The DBV programme has provided a robust evidence base, which has focused the strategic direction, to align our SEND strategy and DSG management plan.
- 4.3. The DSG reserve is in a deficit position of £25.7 million as of 31 March 2022. This is forecast to be £46 million as of 31 March 2023
- 4.4. To inform Children and Families Committee of the workstreams and implementation plans.
- 4.5. A grant of £1.2 million has been included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and has been approved by council on 22 February 2023 as part of the council's budget. The MTFS will be amended by the Section 151 Officer, to reflect the £1 million grant which has been awarded.

## **5. Other Options Considered**

- 5.1. This section is not applicable. The Children and Families Committee noted the invitation to join the DBV programme in May 2022. This paper provides an update on the diagnostic phase of the programme.

## **6. Background**

- 6.1. Supporting outcomes for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has become more challenging due to increase in numbers and complexity of need. Children with an EHCP have their needs met through the council's DSG high needs grant but this has exceeded the funding received for that purpose.
- 6.2. This situation has occurred over the last seven years with several factors contributing to it locally, including a lack of provision, high rates of needs assessments, parental expectations and more generally the high needs funding basis which is not linked to EHCP numbers.
- 6.3. This is a national issue and as a result, the majority of councils are now facing significant deficits on their DSG reserve as recurring overspends are transferred to it each year. Despite this being a national issue, the situation is acute for Cheshire East.
- 6.4. This has prompted the DFE to take a number of actions:
  - 6.4.1. They released a DSG Management Plan template in 2020 to help councils set out their forecast spending pressures, income levels and DSG reserve deficit. In 2022 any council with a deficit DSG reserve (or a significant decrease in their reserve) must produce a management plan.
  - 6.4.2. They also introduced two support schemes for councils:

- Delivering Better Value – for councils with significant DSG deficits. This started in July 2022.
  - The Safety Value - for councils with very high DSG deficits. This started in 2021.
- 6.5.** Cheshire East received an invitation in March 2022 to join the DBV programme. In May 2022, the Children and Families Committee were asked to note the invitation to participate in the programme. In September 2022, the Children and Families Committee, as part of the DSG management plan annual update, were asked to note that engagement had begun with the DBV programme.
- 6.6.** A strategic DBV board has been established, which has provided governance and steering throughout the programme. Members of this board include Director of Children’s Services and S151 Officer.
- 6.7.** The high needs block is one strand of the DSG. This element of the DSG is primarily spent on securing suitable school and post 16 provision for children and young people in line with the 2014 SEND code of practice.
- 6.8.** The DSG management plan is based on a series of assumptions relating to growth in demand, expected costs and the impact of mitigations. This allows medium term forecast expenditure and income levels to be compared to establish the overall funding deficit. The plan assumes the deficit is carried forward each year, into the next financial year and adds to the pressure.
- 6.9.** The DSG management plan will continue to be updated on an annual basis for a rolling period of 5 years, therefore Children and Families Committee will be updated annually. The committee was provided with an updated DSG management plan covering the five-year period 2022/23 to 2026/27 in September 2022. The next update will include DBV findings and be based on up-to-date SEN data and intelligence. This will be presented to the Children and Families Committee in September 2023.
- 6.10.** Plans are in place to develop a series of dashboards to monitor the impact of mitigations included in the DSG management plan. The impact will be regularly assessed and evaluated to inform and continually develop the mitigations. This is to ensure that the mitigations are having the desired impact on the DSG management plan and are achieving ideal outcomes for children and young people.
- 6.11.** The DBV programme does not replace the DSG management plan. The programme has provided a robust evidence base to support and refine mitigations within the DSG management plan.

- 6.12.** As part of the DBV programme, the use of the high needs block has undergone a due diligence and an accounting practice process conducted by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) advisors. No issues have been identified.

### **Delivering Better Value programme**

- 6.13.** The DBV programme is commissioned by the DfE and has been designed to support local authorities:
- To identify sustainable changes that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
  - Place children and young people with SEND at the centre of the approach and decision making.
  - Build an evidence-based grant application to assist the implementation of those changes.
  - Grants will be allocated in a flat rate across all authorities in the first instance. This means each authority will receive £1 million in a lump sum once the grant application has been approved.
- 6.14.** The DfE aims to utilise the insight and knowledge provided by local authorities and their partners to build an objective evidence base across a third of the sector, which can be used to:
- Inform future policy and drive legislative and funding changes.
  - Build a national playbook & share best practice.
  - Inform future national programmes of similar scale and intent.
- 6.15.** As part of participating in the DBV programme, we have received dedicated capacity from Newton, the delivery partner and The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of the diagnostics phase. They have worked with us to bring their experience and skills on identifying opportunities for change.
- 6.16.** Newton specialise in operational improvements and have extensive experience in working with public sector systems. Their experience includes analysing complex processes and systems, as well as working with frontline teams to understand the biggest challenges they are facing so they can create a bespoke solution.
- 6.17.** CIPFA are a professional accountancy body dedicated to public finance. Their team of chartered accountants includes experienced local government finance directors and officers with a deep knowledge of the education funding system.
- 6.18.** As the diagnostics phase and grant submission has now been completed, support from Newton and CIPFA will be withdrawn. However during the implementation phase, DfE SEND advisors are able to support as needed.

## **Module 1 of the DBV Programme: Baselines and Forecasts**

**6.19.** Module 1 involved providing and analysing data to understand the volume and type of support the children and young people (CYP) have been achieving historically, and what that might look like going forward - clarifying our current position, forecasting future trends and understanding patterns of occurrence. This involved the following:

- Reviewing the existing DSG management plan and assessing forecasts, both financial and EHCP numbers.
- Identifying areas of interest based on high levels of spend and high volumes of CYP.
- Due diligence of existing mitigation targets and plans. This was carried out by CIPFA advisors.
- Accounting practice assessment to identify remedial actions for any inconsistencies with DSG accounting regulations.

### **6.20. Findings from module 1:**

- Early years children are the largest driver of EHCP demand in mainstream settings. The associated need of these children is speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).
- The reliance on Independent Special schools and Non-maintained Special schools (INMSS) has increased significantly over the years mainly due to capacity constraints within existing maintained and academy special schools.
- New/first EHCPs in special schools are being issued in early years (age 3-4) and secondary years (age 10-14). The associated needs of these children are SLCN (age 3-4) and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).
- Demand of EHCPs is the main driver of the forecast position, increases in expenditure / unit costs are less of a driver.
- The unmitigated financial and EHCP forecasts within our DSG management plan were reviewed and Newton confirmed that Cheshire East projections resulted in a similar future expenditure as the DBV projections. This was largely due to similarities in projection methods.
- No remedial actions for any inconsistencies with DSG accounting regulations were identified.
- CIPFA advised Cheshire East to take a prudent approach with the existing mitigations during the assessment session. This was to take into account the current progression and existing and/or potential barriers to plans within the DSG management plan.
- Although the mitigations have been revised for DBV purposes, the DSG management plan will be updated to reflect the most recent progress and assessment of barriers in September 2023.

- The unmitigated and revised mitigated forecasts were agreed.

## **Module 2 of the DBV Programme: Route Cause Diagnostics**

**6.21.** Module 2 involved digging deeper into the root cause of why it has been difficult to achieve the high-quality outcomes previously, in terms of resource limitations and system barriers. This involved:

- Conducting 36 recent case reviews with multidisciplinary teams of practitioners to understand whether the outcome of each case was ideal.
- The case reviews were not a review of the performance in systems. We asked practitioners to put aside system barriers and to judge each case based on what would be ideal without taking into consideration any resource limitations in the local authority. This allowed us to identify which system barriers we should address.
- This gave the opportunity to identify recurring themes.
- As a further deep dive to the themes identified from the case reviews, 3 surveys were completed by both educational providers and parents / carers on inclusive practice, the graduated approach and transition.
- The uptake in responses from parent / carers was well received, as a result Cheshire East won a DBV award for stakeholder engagement.
- The identification of potential financial opportunities.

**6.22. Findings from module 2 include:**

The recurring themes that were evident from the case reviews are:

- Lack / limit of inclusive practice within schools and settings.
- No evidence of the graduated approach within schools and settings.
- Lack of transition support.
- From the 3 surveys conducted, the results evidence that educational providers were the most positive around inclusive practice in their settings. Recruitment and training of staff was a key area of concern, particularly in early years settings and therefore will be a key focus for module 3.
- Parent / carers have widely differing views on what degree of inclusion is achieved at schools and settings. Well trained staff, higher staff to pupil ratio, tailored curriculum and smaller class sizes were deemed to be the most important factor for schools/settings to demonstrate inclusivity.
- The results from the graduated approach survey showed that there appeared to be a lack of confidence by schools and setting in discussing the approach with parents. This was confirmed within the parent / carer responses.
- Key barriers in the graduated approach survey highlighted; difficulty recruiting specialist personnel, quality, consistency and access to other services.

- From the transition surveys, the greatest area of concern for parent / carers was related to information regarding the transitions process and awareness of different settings Cheshire East has to offer.
- Schools and settings identified barriers to transition; this included time to implement transition plans, appropriate notice regarding transition and effective communication between settings.

### **Module 3 of the DBV Programme: Implementation Planning**

- 6.23.** The aim of module 3 was to ensure that local authorities can practically implement solutions to the root causes that were discovered from module 2, by understanding how 'ready' the people, processes, and systems are for change.
- 6.24.** Workstream planning began based on the findings of modules 1 and 2, this included scoping the objective and approach of the required workstreams, identification of programme/workstream leads and teams, milestone events, key performance indicators (KPI's) and likely measures, key stakeholders, to support design and implementation and risks and interdependencies.
- 6.25.** Alongside this work, detailed stakeholder analysis/assessment was carried and a supporting readiness for change assessment.

#### **6.25.1. Workstream 1 – Communicating our vision**

- The objective of this workstream is to communicate and embed our vision and strategy for a sustainable future. This includes, reviewing and update our existing SEND Strategy, aligning our existing SEN Workstreams with the overall DSG High Needs Management Plan and producing a clear communication plan.

#### **6.25.2. Workstream 2 – Inclusive Practice**

This workstream has been divided into four sub-workstreams to ensure that there is focus on each element of delivery.

- **2A – Embed the graduated approach universally**
- The objective to this workstream is to embed the graduated approach universally at mainstream and post-16 with specific focus at the early years phase. We will do this by relaunching the Tool Kit so that the principles of the graduated approach are embedded within all settings and amongst parents and SEND colleagues. The aim of this is to increase and improve understanding of SEN support and the graduated approach. This will avoid escalation for a needs assessment, whilst ensuring SEND code compliance.



- **2B – Review and define the decision-making processes, panels and forums**
- The objective to this workstream is to review and define the decision-making processes, panels and forums with a view that all decisions are linked to a graduated approach, for new need's assessment, issuing and approving EHCP requests, change of placements and agreeing the delegation for locality managers outside of panel.
- **2C – Effective SEN support plans**
- The objective to this workstream is to provide quality assurance and interventions, to develop more effective SEN support plans where a decision has been made not to assess or issue an EHCP. We will do this by introducing new/more capacity into the Inclusion Quality Team to support providers/settings to further develop or enhance SEN support plans and to support children and families with advice and next steps when a decision has been made not to assess.
- **2D – Upskilling schools/settings and parents**
- The objective for this workstream is to upskill schools/setting and partners with the relevant training & resources to identify children and young people's needs and how to effectively support them. We will do this by developing and commissioning a universal offer of multi-agency training courses linked to autism, social, emotional, mental health and speech, communication, and language.

A fifth sub-workstream was identified, however this was dependant on additional grant funding being awarded, as Cheshire East were unsuccessful in securing additional grant funding at this time; this sub-workstream is on hold.

- **2E – Programme of support for teaching assistants (TAs)**
- The objective for this workstream is to recruitment, retain and progress TAs, to ensure there is confidence to provide SEN support. We will design a recruitment and retention programme for TAs and commission programme of support for TAs.

### **6.25.3. Workstream 3 – Transition**

- The objective for this workstream is to re-design and enhance the transition process, to reduce the escalation to an EHCP and/or to reduce the escalation of a change of placement to a specialist provision. An interim transformation team, who will have a specific focus on transition will support this change programme and will be funded for two-years through the grant.
- After the two-year period, an impact evaluation of the transformation team will be conducted and the future capacity needs of the SEND team will be established.
- The transformation team will work with schools and settings to review and re-design the transition process at the three main transition points, to enable an earlier start e.g. Nursery 1, Y5 and Y10. The aim of this is to

make decisions around transition earlier. A longer and more detailed transition period for the child or young person will ensure that at transition, the most ideal provision is named in a child's EHCP and therefore will raise confidence levels with children and families.

- Schools and settings will be able to forward plan their requirements to meet the needs and outcomes of children and young people with an EHCP, at the point of transition.
- The transformation team will co-produce and deliver a two-year training programme for all schools and settings, tailored to educational phases (early years, primary/secondary, post-16); to understand the offer in the next phase of education, research and provide best practice, learn from best practice, what does good look like examples and develop clear expectations for schools, partners and parents regarding transition.

### **Grant Clinic and Grant Application – process and timelines**

- 6.26.** During the grant clinic, Cheshire East participated in several peer challenge sessions with other local authorities who were part of the programme. These sessions were undertaken alongside CIPFA and Newton colleagues.
- 6.27.** Question and answer sessions were held to establish use of the grant and grant application processes.
- 6.28.** The final submitted grant application consists of 108 slides, which details the journey and outcomes of the DBV programme.
- 6.29.** Cheshire East received positive feedback on the grant application from Newton, CIPFA and DfE colleagues. They had stated that 'Cheshire East was the only one classified as excellent and that they would like to share our approach with future tranches as a best practice example.'
- 6.30.** Grants to all local authorities within the DBV programme will be allocated a flat rate in the first instance. This means each authority will receive £1m in a lump sum once the grant application has been approved. However, there will be a remaining balance for the DfE/Newton to deploy.
- 6.31.** Cheshire East applied for £1.2 million, however only £1 million has been awarded. We remain hopeful for consideration for any additional deployment of grant, following the completion of the DBV programme, across all 55 local authorities.
- 6.32.** There will be a two year spend profile of the grant, which will be split over the years 2024 and 2025, however it is not restricted to this timeframe under the conditions of the grant.

## 6.33. Grant Allocation

### 6.33.1. Grant Table: £1 million

Workstream & Area	Description	Impact (Which opportunity will this support?)	Total Financial Cost	Spend 2022/23 (Financial Year)	Spend 2023/24 (Financial Year)	Spend 2024/25 (Financial Year)
Inclusion (SEN Support) Workstream 2	Recruitment of Inclusion Support Officers to support the Inclusion and Quality Team (3 FTE)	All opportunities	£ 243,000	£0	£121,500	£121,500
Transition Workstream 3	Recruitment of transformation team to lead on the transition workstream, which supports children and young people and their families and schools at key transition points - 1x Manager/Lead and 6x Advisers (2 at each transition point, early years, primary/secondary and secondary/post-16) (7 FTE)	All opportunities	£ 742,000	£0	£371,000	£371,000
All Areas	Project management and communication costs to cover resources such as, the cost of events, roadshows, training material and communication materials.	All Opportunities	£ 15,000	£0	£10,000	£5,000
		Total delivery cost	£1,000,000		£502,500	£497,500

### 6.33.2. Grant Timeline

- Grant application submission date: 23 January 2023
- Quality Assurance panel – Newton Group, Department for Education SEND Advisor, CIPFA, Department for Education, Vulnerable Children Unit Advisor: 23 January 2023 – 1 February 2023
- Grant submitted to DfE-DBV Programme Board with recommendations from the QA Panel: 1 February 2023
- Approval at DfE-DBV Programme Board: 9 February 2023
- Expected payment date: before 31 March 2023

### Potential Financial Opportunities

**6.34.** The DBV programme has identified potential financial opportunities of cost avoidance, these will help to refine the DSG management plan. The DBV workstreams give an “opportunity” to avoid cost of between £12.6m and £21m over a 5-year period and a reduction of between 290 – 302 EHCPs. Opportunities are not an exact target and our workstreams are focused on the opportunities identified.

**6.35.** As already stated in this report, the DSG management plan is updated annually with up-to-date data and knowledge and intelligence and will incorporate the new workstreams which address the financial opportunities. Therefore, at this point there is no impact on the DSG management plan and the existing deficit reserve position.

## **7. Consultation and Engagement**

- 7.1.** TOGETHER is our shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East, key stakeholders, including parent/carers, young people, our staff, and providers have been and will continue to be involved throughout the process.
- 7.2.** Engagement has taken place throughout our participation in the programme to support the development of the action plan to ensure shared ownership across the SEND sector. The SEND Partnership Board provides a platform to do this.
- 7.3.** Consultation and engagement workshops have been held with parent/carer forum representatives, schools, governors and colleges, our staff and health colleagues.
- 7.4.** Parent/carers and all providers were invited to engage in the completion of module 2 surveys. The survey response rate was well received.
- 7.5.** Case reviews were conducted with multi-disciplinary teams.
- 7.6.** Workstream 1 – communicating our vision includes producing a clear communication plan, which will involve a number of engagement events to all stakeholders, including a briefing session for Committee members.
- 7.7.** Where required, appropriate consultations will take place on the proposals included in the action plan as part of the delivery phase.

## **8. Implications**

### **8.1. Legal**

Legal advice will be required throughout the process, particularly regarding proposed changes and their implementation, to ensure compliance with the council's statutory and other SEND duties.

Legal advice would also be advisable to ensure the terms of grant funding provided, are understood and complied with.

Changes to policy will require appropriate approval and consultation in accordance with the Gunning principles i.e. that proposals consulted upon are formative and no decision has been made, sufficient information is given to consultees, adequate time is given for responses and conscious consideration is given to responses.

## **8.2. Finance**

- 8.2.1.** The DBV Programme and grant funding will assist the council in delivery of the current DSG management plan and additional mitigations.
- 8.2.2.** The council has secured £1m of DBV grant funding. This has been included in the council's medium term financial strategy report going to full council on 22 February 2023 at £1.2m. The council report will allow the Section 151 officer to adjust the final amounts in light of final funding levels.
- 8.2.3.** The grant must be spent on mitigating activity.
- 8.2.4.** The DSG reserve is in a deficit position of £25.7 million as of 31 March 2022. This is forecast to be £46 million as of 31 March 2023.
- 8.2.5.** The council's DSG management plan approved at committee in September 2022 includes DSG reserve forecasts for the medium term for both the mitigated (£146 million deficit) and unmitigated position (£273 million deficit). It highlights that without significant changes to funding levels and activity, the reserve position cannot be recovered in the life of the plan.
- 8.2.6.** DBV has identified opportunities for cost avoidance, however this does not provide a solution to becoming sustainable in the medium term. The next update to the DSG management plan will include DBV findings and opportunities and will be based on up-to-date SEN data and intelligence. This will be presented to the Children and Families Committee in September 2023.
- 8.2.7.** The DSG reserve deficit is being managed by a statutory override put in place by the DLUHC that allows it to be treated as an unusable reserve. This override has recently been extended to March 2026 to allow time for the implementation of SEND reforms.
- 8.2.8.** It is not yet clear what other changes will occur to reduce the deficit by that point or what will happen to existing deficits when the override is removed.
- ## **8.3. Policy**
- 8.3.1.** The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory guidelines and policy for SEND. The SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time sets

out proposed changes to policy which were open for consultation until 1 July 2022. There has been no published response from the DfE to date.

**8.3.2.** This statutory code contains details of the legal requirements that the local authority, health bodies, schools and colleges must follow without exception to provide for those with special educational needs under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

**8.3.3.** The statutory duties include:

- the need to undertake a needs assessment where a child may have additional needs,
- to issue an education, health and care plan within 20 weeks where assessment provides evidence this is required to meet the assessed needs.
- the local authority must then secure an appropriate school place and must consult with parental preference.

## **8.4. Equality**

**8.4.1.** The SEND Code of Practice looks to ensure the assessed additional needs of children with special education needs are provided for to enable them to reach agreed outcomes.

**8.4.2.** The Code of Practice is likely to be changed as a result of the SEND and AP Green paper consultation.

**8.4.3.** In line with the equality act 2010, an equality impact assessment has been completed.

## **8.5. Human Resources**

**8.5.1.** Due to the increased demand for needs assessments the workloads of staff in the SEND assessment and monitoring team and associated support services remain high. This is making the ability to meet legal and statutory requirements remain a challenge. EHCP volumes increased by 63% from January 2019 to January 2022.

**8.5.2.** As a result, further base budget growth has been identified through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 onwards.

**8.5.3.** The workstreams identified through the DBV programme have highlighted the need for recruitment of an interim transformation team, focusing on transition and recruitment of interim inclusion support officers to focus on inclusivity. These roles will be on a fixed term basis and will allow resource capacity to drive and embed the implementation phase of the DBV programme. The additional posts will be funded by the grant over a two-year period.

## **8.6. Risk Management**

- 8.6.1.** An impact on the council's base budget (council tax, national non-domestic rates and general grants) as a contribution may be required to manage the high needs pressures or DSG deficit reserve balance.
- 8.6.2.** There is insufficient capital resources and / or capacity to deliver the additional changes needed to provide more places in the borough. This is a particular challenge if trying to bring the mitigations forward.
- 8.6.3.** Service levels reduce as funding is not sufficient and future Ofsted inspections raise issues which damage reputation and result in the council being required to produce a "written statement of action" to remedy failings.
- 8.6.4.** The council continues to make payments to settings but it is not able to fund them from the overall resources it has available. This is a key issue to discuss with the DfE.
- 8.6.5.** The DSG Management Plan is based on a series of assumptions over EHCP numbers and average costs. These are subject to change and this risk will be mitigated through regular reviews of the plan.
- 8.6.6.** The capacity to deliver the change programme. The expenditure of the grant allows for the recruitment of interim/fixed term staff, which will mitigate the risk of capacity to deliver the change programme. However, there is still a risk of recruitment being unsuccessful and timely.

## **8.7. Rural Communities**

- 8.7.1.** This is a high-level high needs DSG budget issue and does not specifically impact differently on rural communities. In relation to individual school budgets, we have challenged the DfE at every possible point on the negative impact of the national school funding formula on rural schools. This continues to be our approach with the backing and support of the Schools Forum.

## **8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

- 8.8.1.** 20% of our children and young people who are cared for have SEND or are vulnerable and need alternative education packages which are funded through our DSG high needs budget. As corporate parents it is

important we continue to ensure the appropriate additional support is in place to support the educational progress of our cared for children.

**8.8.2.** It is important that ensuring the best outcomes for vulnerable children remain at the heart of any action plan.

**8.9. Public Health**

**8.9.1.** Covid has had an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. This is resulting an increase in the application for an education, health and care plan.

**8.9.2.** In addition, the impact on children’s education progress due to Covid is well documented. This is again leading to an increase in applications for an education, health and care plans.

**8.10. Climate Change**

**8.10.1.** The mitigations in our DSG management plans that will have the greatest impact on reducing the deficit is the creation of additional local provision, whether that be through enhanced provision in mainstream or additional specialist schools. Children and young people attending a more local school will reduce the transport requirements. In addition, any new school builds are designed to be energy efficient. Reduced transport and energy efficient new builds both contribute positively our climate change strategy.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Jacky Forster <a href="mailto:Jacky.forster@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Jacky.forster@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	There is no appendix to this report.
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DBV paper noted at Children and Families Committee as item <a href="#">Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</a> in May 2023</li> <li>• The Council’s DSG Management Plan that was approved by Cabinet in March 2021 as item 95.</li> <li>• The Council’s DSG Management Plan that was approved by Children &amp; Families Committee in September 2022 as item <a href="#">Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• SEND Green Paper: The following link should take you to the full report and consultation response document</li> </ul>



<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time>

- SEND Green Paper: The following link should take you to the summary document

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-ap-green-paper-responding-to-the-consultation/summary-of-the-send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time>