

OPEN

Children and Families Committee

29 April 2024

Revised Dedicated Schools grant Management Plan 2024/25 to 2030/31 following the Department of Education Safety Valve Intervention Programme

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Director of Children's Services

Report Reference No: CF/55/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide members with an overview of the challenges in relation to the dedicated schools grant (DSG) in Cheshire East and an overview of the fundamental changes required to achieve an in-year balance on the high needs block of the DSG following work under the department for education's (DfE) Safety Valve intervention programme.
- 2 To provide all members with an overview of the revised dedicated schools grant management plan for the period 2024/25 to 2030/31 which was submitted to DfE on the 12 January 2024.
- 3 To provide an overview of the Safety Valve capital bid which is fundamental to the revised DSG management plan.
- 4 To provide an update on the outcome of the Safety Valve submission.

Executive Summary

Cheshire East DSG Management Plan

- 5 The 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 level 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 The High Needs DSG allocation for 2024/2025 is £57.5 million.
- 7 The overall strategy remains the same, of RIGHT TIME, RIGHT SUPPORT, RIGHT PLACE. This includes
 - The need to continue to increase local specialist provision and become less reliant on the independent sector
 - Embed the graduate approach and inclusion across all schools and settings and strengthen SEN support
 - Strengthening decision making and governance
- 8 For Cheshire East the DSG forecast reserve deficit as of 31 March 2024 is £89.6 million. The forecasts in this report demonstrate that the expected increase in demand and resulting costs is forecast to continue to exceed the funding provided by the DfE, which in turn will increase the deficit reserve.
- 9 However with significant and challenging mitigations we are now forecasting an in year balanced position by year 7. Therefore this is the plan which we will be adopting to ensure that our spend on high needs is sustainable in the future.
- 10 Elements of the plan are subject to available capital funding. Alongside the submission of the Safety Valve DSG management plan, a capital bid has been submitted. If the capital bid is successful, it will enable the growth of specialist placements within Cheshire East. We are awaiting the outcome of this bid.
- 11 The table below shows the forecast of the cumulative deficit position, both unmitigated and mitigated and the impact of mitigations.
- 12 The mitigated cumulative forecast deficit position is £284.8 million, despite mitigations amounting to £916.1 million.
- 13 Without support from the DfE/DLUCH we are unable to address the cumulative deficit position which is currently held in the statutory accountancy override.
- 14 Further detail of the mitigations is outlined later in this report and are shown in detail within appendix A.

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m

In year mitigated deficit	(51.3)	(48.1)	(38.7)	(28.7)	(19.8)	(9.2)	0.6
Unmitigated cumulative deficit	(154.6)	(244.6)	(363.5)	(514.8)	(702.2)	(929.1)	(1,200.9)
Mitigated cumulative deficit	(140.9)	(189.0)	(227.7)	(256.5)	(276.2)	(285.4)	(284.8)
Impact of mitigations	(13.7)	(55.6)	(135.8)	(258.3)	(426.0)	(643.7)	(916.1)

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total UNMITIGATED Expenditure	122.40	149.20	179.80	214.10	252.10	293.50	340.40
Total MITIGATED Expenditure	110.20	109.40	101.80	93.70	86.60	78.00	70.20
Total DSG Income & Block Transfer	58.90	61.30	63.10	64.90	66.80	68.70	70.70

- 15 Further detail of the financial forecasts can be found in Appendix A.
- 16 Cheshire East received a letter on 13 March 2024 from the DfE providing an update on Cheshire Easts Safety Valve negotiations. Cheshire East safety Valve submission included an ask of the Department which is significantly above the level which the Department could reasonably afford in comparison to other agreements.
- 17 Ministers have decided that they are unable to enter into an agreement with Cheshire East at this time.
- 18 However, the DfE recognise that the DSG deficit as forecasted poses a substantial risk to Cheshire East. They therefore propose to work with us over the coming months, alongside colleagues from DLUHC, with the aim of finding an appropriate solution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the revised DSG Management plan for 2024/25 to 2030/31 including the interventions to achieve the mitigated position, which demonstrates:
 - a. an in year balanced position
 - b. forecasts a deficit reserve position of £1.2 billion unmitigated and £285 million mitigated by the end of March 2031
2. To note, the decision of the Secretary of States to NOT enter into a Safety Valve agreement at this time.
3. To note, the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer will continue to work with the DfE and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) with the aim of finding an appropriate solution.
4. To delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services authority to undertake any consultations deemed necessary to facilitate implementation.
5. Agree to receive regular update regarding the progress of this plan and at least 3 times a year.

Background

National Context

- 19 Funding for educational provision and services for children and young people with 'high needs' is allocated to local authorities by central government as part of the overall funding available for education (i.e. the Dedicated Schools Grant or DSG). It pays for additional support for young people with complex and significant needs, aged 0-25 in mainstream schools and settings and for those requiring specialist or alternative provision. In addition, funding can be used for some SEND and inclusion support services.
- 20 Since 2018-19, high needs budgets have been distributed on a formula basis using a number of demographic factors (but with a continuing historical element).
- 21 The increase in numbers and complexity of need for children with Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) that have their needs met

through the council's DSG high needs grant has significantly exceeded the funding received for that purpose.

- 22 As a result many councils are now facing significant deficits on their DSG reserves as recurring overspends are transferred to it each year. Responding to these pressures, the government has significantly increased the high needs funding allocated to all local authority areas. However, a number of authorities are still experiencing annual deficits despite the additional investment.
- 23 This has prompted the DfE to introduced two support schemes for councils:
- Delivering Better Value – for councils with significant DSG deficits. This started in July 2022. 55 local authorities were invited to join the DBV programme in 2022.
 - The Safety Value - for councils with very high DSG deficits. This started in 2021. There are 38 local authorities who have safety valve agreements in place.

DfE Safety Valve Intervention Programme

- 24 The Safety Valve programme is a DfE Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit intervention which recognises the nationwide issues with the funding of special educational needs.
- 25 The aim of the Safety Valve intervention programme is to agree a package of reform to improve the performance of local authorities' high needs systems and to ensure it is delivered in a sustainable way, for the benefit of children and young people, whilst bring DSG deficits under control.
- 26 The programme requires local authorities to develop substantial plans for reform to their high needs systems and associated spending, with support and challenge from the department, to rapidly place them on a sustainable footing. The authorities will be held to account for their reform and deficit reduction targets via regular reporting to the DfE. The DfE will help the local authorities with additional funding over time to contribute to their historic deficits, contingent on delivery of the reforms.
- 27 To be accepted into the programme the local authorities are required to:
1. Produce a detailed plan to re-balance the Special Education Needs system and to reach a balanced DSG in year budget as soon as possible.
 2. Demonstrate how the local authority will contribute to the reduction of the historic deficit.

3. Demonstrate how the local authority will ensure that the plan is deliverable, how it will be managed as it is implemented, and how this plan will improve support for children and young people with SEND. This includes agreeing who will be responsible for the ongoing monitoring of progress towards the agreement.
4. Provide a clear explanation of the financial support Cheshire East needs from the DfE to eliminate the historic deficit over the period of the agreement. This could include, if necessary, a request for some funding to help implement the proposal, as well as funding to eliminate the deficit directly, although it is not expected this will constitute a significant element of the total financial support requested.

- 28 If an agreement is reached, local authorities are held to account for the delivery of their plans via quarterly reporting to the Department.
- 29 There are now 38 local authorities who have safety valve agreements in place. 5 local authorities including Cheshire East were invited to participate in the scheme in 2023.
- 30 Cheshire East confirmed acceptance of the invitation to take part in the DfE Safety valve intervention programme on the 7 August 2023 and submitted the revised DSG management plan on 12 January 2024 along with the following documents:
- 9 x Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) can be found in appendix 1 of this report.
 - Capital bid. Details are provided within this report and if successful will also be incorporated into the Capital Programme scheduled to Children and families Committee in June 2024.
- 31 Cheshire East have NOT been able to demonstrate point 2 above; demonstrate how the local authority will contribute to the reduction of the historic deficit. Due to the scale of the variance between the income and expenditure for High Needs in Cheshire East it is not possible to reduce the cumulative deficit as part of our plan.
- 32 Cheshire East received a letter on 13 March 2024 from the DfE providing an update on Cheshire Easts Safety Valve negotiations. Cheshire East safety Valve submission included an ask of the Department which is significantly above the level which the Department could reasonably afford in comparison to other agreements.
- 33 Ministers have decided that they are unable to enter into an agreement with Cheshire East at this time.

- 34 However, the DfE recognise that the DSG deficit as forecasted poses a substantial risk to Cheshire East. They therefore propose to work with us over the coming months, alongside colleagues from DLUHC, with the aim of finding an appropriate solution.
- 35 In the meantime, their ask is for Cheshire East to continue to develop and implement the plan outlined in this report, to aid a more sustainable high needs system.
- 36 This decision does not include the outcome of the capital bid, which remains under assessment.
- 37 A meeting with the DfE and DLUHC took place on 20 March 2024. The Safety Valve DfE advisors/support team reiterated the scale of the issue is unprecedented but also praised Cheshire East leadership and colleagues who have and continue to work on the plan which they deem to be credible. Both Departments resolved to continue to engage with Cheshire East and were clear that Cheshire East have not been rejected and will be subject to ongoing scrutiny.

Cheshire East Revised DSG Management Plan

- 38 As detailed in the executive summary of this report the DSG management plan provides a forecast for both an unmitigated position and a mitigated position.
- 39 The unmitigated financial forecast is the do-nothing position. Whereas the mitigated financial forecast includes carefully considered interventions. Cumulatively mitigations are forecast to amount to £916 million.
- 40 The unmitigated forecast position for 2030-31 shows total expenditure of £340.4 million against an expected grant of £68.6 million, resulting in an in-year deficit of £271.8 million and a total deficit reserve position of £1.2 billion.
- 41 The mitigated forecast position for 2030-31 shows total expenditure of £70.2 million against an expected grant and school block transfer of £70.7 million, resulting in an in-year surplus of £0.6 million and a total deficit position of £284.8 million.

Mitigations

- 42 All the mitigations within the plan have the strategic aim of RIGHT TIME, RIGHT SUPPORT, RIGHT PLACE, which is the main focus of

the recent DfE Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan.

- 43 There are 9 PIDs which have been developed to address the opportunities identified during the Safety Valve intervention programme and build on the opportunities identified within the DfE Delivering Better Value intervention programme. The key areas of transformation are:
1. Support mainstream schools to adopt inclusive practice to enable more children and young people to remain in mainstream settings where appropriate. Develop a graduated response which sets clear guidance on support that should be available in mainstream settings.
 2. Strengthen the SEN support offer available in mainstream schools to reduce escalation of children and young people's needs and manage demand for EHCPs. This should include targeted investment on effective early intervention.
 3. Strengthen the professional networks across mainstream settings to promote learning and confidence in meeting children and young people's needs, including articulating school level inclusion standards.
 4. Expand specialist provision within the LA appropriately in order to meet the needs of children and young people within the authority.
 5. Secure collaboration and financial commitment from partner agencies where appropriate, ensuring partners make adequate contributions to provision.
 6. Develop and implement a clear planning and decision-making process for placements, in line with the sufficiency strategy.
 7. Strengthen oversight and contracting with independent and non-maintained schools to ensure value for money, including reviewing approval routes of high-cost placements.
 8. Strengthen the EHCP annual review process in order that EHCPs can be stepped down where children and young people's needs have been met appropriately, celebrating success.
 9. Review and develop a clear SEND financial strategy that ensures case level decision making is strategic and appropriate.
- 44 Further detail of the mitigations can be found within Appendix 1.

Safety Valve additional capital bid

- 45 On 13 October 2023, Cheshire East received an invitation from the DfE to apply for additional high needs capital to support the proposals outlined in the Safety Valve DSG management plan.
- 46 Proposals needed to demonstrate how additional capital support can address specific barriers to unlocking savings or support new projects

that can be delivered quickly to help bring spending back into in-year balance.

- 47 Capital proposals are contingent on the successful conclusion of the main Safety Valve agreements (however, the DfE letter dated 13.03.24, advised the Safety Valve decision does not include the outcome of the capital bid, which remains under assessment).
- 48 Any additional capital funding agreed will be provided as a one-off contribution to capital proposals via a top-up to our High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA).
- 49 The capital bid submitted on 4 January 2024 included the following which supports the Safety Valve DSG management plan.
- 3 x special school satellite sites providing in total 140 additional places
 - 1 x 14 place new SEN unit
 - Generic funding to support the refurbishment/adaption of space within mainstream settings which could support the current demand by way of resource provisions and/or SEN units.
- 50 The total capital bid is £18.7 million.
- 51 All proposals within the capital bid will be subject to public consultation and the usual approval processes.
- 52 If successful the capital bid will be incorporated in the Capital programme. The updated capital programme is scheduled to be presented to Children and Families committee 03 June 2024.

Accounting Override – Dedicated Schools Grant adjustment account (England)

- 53 From the 2020/21 financial year the accounting arrangements for the deficit on the DSG grant were changed.
- 54 The council holds usable and unusable reserves on the balance sheet. Usable reserves are cash backed whereas unusable reserves are not. Examples of unusable reserves are pensions and the revaluation of land and buildings.
- 55 In April 2020 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) introduced new legislation to switch the DSG deficit reserve from a usable to an unusable reserve and allowed the creation of an adjustment account on the balance sheet.

- 56 When MHCLG set up the accounting override it prevented local authorities from funding a DSG deficit from General Funds without the permission of the Secretary of State. It was made clear to council treasurers that this override was in place to allow time to find suitable arrangements to address the issue.
- 57 The current override has been extended and will now end on 31 March 2026, unless further extensions are announced. Without the override the size of the negative reserve for council expected as of 31 March 2026 would present a financial stability issue for the 2026/27 financial year. The council does not have sufficient reserves to be able to cover the cost of the cumulative deficit if the override is removed.
- 58 The size of the deficit has negative cash flow implications for the council, as we are spending more money than we receive. This results in revenue interest costs linked to the cost of borrowing.
- 59 The estimated impact on the councils revenue costs is that the cost of interest in 2023/24 will be around £3.1 million, rising to over £6 million in 2024/25. This cost will increase annually as the DSG cumulative deficit continues to increase.

Base Budget Pressures

- 60 The impact of the significant growth in pupils with an EHCP will also be experienced in base budget funded services including the SEN Assessment and Monitoring Team, the Education Psychologists Team, and the home to school and SEN transport team. These areas are seeing additional demands and costs.
- 61 Activity and staffing levels in those teams will be regularly reviewed and growth requested through the MTFS process as required.

Impact on Adult Social Care

- 62 Members are also asked to consider the medium to longer term impact of the significant rise in children with an EHCP on the Adults Social Care Service.
- 63 The potential for additional services to these young adults with associated costs is likely to form a pressure on the council's base budget.
- 64 This is also likely to be a national issue which may need to be raised in due course with central government but noting that resolving the current high needs funding shortfall is the initial priority.

Commitment

- 65 We know that we have developed an ambitious, creative, and innovative, viable plan to reform our high needs systems as quickly as possible to improve the outcomes for our children with SEND, which will ensure we will achieve this by the end of year 7 within our allocated high needs budget.
- 66 This is a fundamental change programme that will affect the whole system and will require all partners to work as one. We know that we must do this for the financial sustainability of the council, but most importantly because our children deserve to have the right education, in the right provision to support them to prepare for adulthood to achieve long terms goals.
- 67 We are working at pace to address the areas we and the programme have identified and have already started to restructure the leadership of SEND and the processes for identification and decision making. Crucially we have started to engage with our schools on the scale the issues and their roles in making Cheshire East an inclusive place to grow up in and learn to ensure that Cheshire East children are educated in Cheshire East.
- 68 We are totally committed to this transformational programme and will be working across the council and with our partners to drive this agenda forward and deliver on our revised plan.

Consultation and Engagement

- 69 The first version of the report was approved by Cabinet on 9 March 2021. As the DSG Management Plan is updated annually, a second version of the report was approved by Children and Families Committee on 23 September 2022. That version was shared with the schools Forum on 20 September 2022 and was also shared with the DfE via the Delivering Better Value programme work during the summer 2022. In September 2023, the report along with a mitigation progress update was approved by Children and Families Committee.
- 70 A strategic DSG Management Plan board has been established, which has provided governance and steering throughout the DBV programme and continues to provide governance concerning the whole of the DSG Management Plan, Members of this board include Executive Director of Children's Services and S151 Officer. This board is being expanded to be a key transformation board. The Chief Executive has agreed to chair this board and there will be member representation, including cross party members from Children and Families Committee and Scrutiny and Finance committees. The terms of reference are being worked up and it is anticipated that the first board will be in June 2024.

- 71 SEND strategy workstreams will drive the implementation of the 9 PIDs and will form part of our monitoring process which will report to the SEND transformation board.
- 72 We have continued to update schools and settings on progress and deliver key updates as part on-going network meetings, such as Schools Forum, head teacher network sessions both primary and secondary, SEND conferences and governor forums.
- 73 The SEND Partnership will ensure partners are aware of the issues and part of the design of any solutions.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 74 In line with the issues being seen nationally, expenditure on pupils with SEND is increasing significantly as a result of higher demand and complexity.
- 75 This increase exceeds the DfE's funding allocations and has led to the council's DSG reserve being in a deficit position of £46.9 million as of 31 March 2023. This is forecast to be £89.6 million by 31 March 2024. The expectation is that the deficit will continue to increase and cannot be recovered in the medium term under current expenditure and income forecasts.
- 76 The DfE management plan guidance advises that:
- 77 "The DSG: conditions of grant 2023 to 2024 paragraph 5.2, requires any local authority that has an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the 2023 to 2024 financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must co-operate with the Department for Education in handling that situation. In particular, the authority must:
- provide information as and when requested by the department about its plans for managing its DSG account in the 2024 to 2025 financial year and subsequently.
 - provide information as and when requested by the department about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget.
 - meet with officials of the department as and when they request to discuss the authority's plans and financial situation.
 - keep the schools forum regularly updated about the authority's DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential savings.

- The Secretary of State reserves the right to impose more specific conditions of grant on individual local authorities that have an overall deficit on their DSG account, where he believes that they are not taking sufficient action to address the situation.

We already share information through various forums and associations so we have good practice on which we can build.

78 The DSG Management Plan will enable Cheshire East to:

- comply with paragraph 5.2 of the DSG: conditions of grant 2022 to 2023, 2024.
- monitor how DSG funding is being spent,
- highlight areas where local authorities may wish to review spending,
- form evidence-based and strategic future plans for the provision of children and young people with SEND,
- present complex funding information simply to schools forums and other external stakeholders.

79 The pressures on the DSG addressed through this management plan will also reduce the risk of future overspend on base budget of the SEND team, the Education Psychologists team and on school transport.

Other Options Considered

80 The table below sets out the issues:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing (not produce a management plan)	This is not acceptable as the DfE has made completion of a DSG management plan compulsory under certain criteria which the council has met.	The council would not be demonstrating commitment to managing the issues.
Subsidise DSG from other local funding sources	This may help to reduce the DSG deficit but increase pressure on other areas which were not intended to fund high needs. This is unlikely to address the extent	The true high needs funding gap is not recognised and there are unaffordable pressures on other budgets or the council's general reserves.

	of the budget pressure.	
Not develop mitigations	The council would be leaving itself in an unacceptable position in terms of overall reserves and not demonstrating a commitment to manage the DSG reserve deficit.	The council would be reliant on the DfE meeting the full ongoing costs of the DSG Deficit which is unlikely to happen.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 81 Under the Local Government Finance Act 1993, the council has a statutory duty to use resources efficiently and effectively against priorities and to achieve a balanced budget. S28 (budget monitoring: general) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to review its calculations from time to time during the year and to take such action, if any, as it considers necessary to deal with any deterioration in its financial position.
- 82 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is paid to the Council by the Secretary of State under the Education Act 2002. S14 (power of Secretary of State to give financial assistance for purposes related to education or children etc.). It is a specific ring-fenced grant given outside the local government finance settlement. The terms of the grant require it to be used to support schools budgets for purposes defined in regulation 6 and schedule 2 of The Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022. Local authorities are responsible for determining the split of the grant between central expenditure and the individual schools budget (ISB) in conjunction with local schools forums. Local authorities are responsible for allocating the ISB to individual schools in accordance with the local schools' funding formula.
- 83 The Education and Skills Funding Agency Guidance on DSG: Conditions of grant 2023-24 require any local authority with an overall deficit on its DSG account to present a Plan to the DfE for managing their future DSG spend and to keep the schools forum regularly updated

about the authority's DSG account and plans for handling it including high needs pressures and potential savings.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 84 The Financial Implications of the DSG management plan are contained within the report. The proposed plan forecasts an unmitigated cumulative DSG deficit of £1.2 billion by the end of 2023/31, reducing to £285 million if the plan is approved and implemented successfully.
- 85 As detailed in the Accounting Override section of this report both the current and forecast deficit balances are creating financial pressures and are unaffordable for the council. Therefore support from the DfE through the Safety Valve program, or support through other avenues, is essential to avoid the need to issue a S114 notice in the future.
- 86 As detailed in the Cheshire East MTFs the council is experiencing financial challenges at a scale that it has not faced before. This makes the approval and delivery of the DSG Management Plan imperative as the council is not in a position to be able to fund DSG pressures.
- 87 The council has applied for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up. This application includes a request to be able to capitalise the estimated cost of interest on the DSG deficit for years 2023/24 and 2024/25, estimated to be £9 million.
- 88 This request has been approved in principle and if supported it will remove the cost of interest for these two years from the revenue costs and allow us to spread the cost over a longer timeframe. However this does not address the ongoing cumulative deficit, or the interest costs which will continue to be a pressure in year 2025/26 and onwards linked to the deficit.

Policy

- 89 Local authorities are under a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places in their area (section 14 of the Education Act 1996).
- 90 The SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations and applies to England.
- 91 The DfE issued the "SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time" - a SEND and AP green paper which is a consultation on the future of SEND services. The SEND Partnership response is in support

of the proposals and promptly making those legal requirements will support the council in delivery of the necessary changes.

92 Following the green paper consultation in March 2023 DFE published their SEND and alternative provision improvement plan which sets out their plans to change the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England. The partnership will ensure we keep up to date with the DFE roadmap and change programme as this is progressed nationally.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan/send-and-alternative-provision-roadmap>

93 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.

94

<p>An open and enabling organisation</p>	<p>A council which empowers and cares about people</p> <p>Support all children to have the best start in life.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs.</p> <p>Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential</p>	<p>A thriving and sustainable place</p> <p>Reduce impact on the environment.</p> <p>Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all</p> <p>Be a carbon neutral council by 2025</p>
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 95 An Equality Inclusion Assessment has been completed previously for the DSG Management Plan, this is available on the website.
- 96 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.

Human Resources

- 97 Additional budget of £500,000 has been secured via the MTFs to provide transformation support for the implementation of the plan.

Risk Management

- 98 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.
- 99 There are 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.
- 100 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.
- 101 The council continues to make payments to settings but it is not able to fund them from the overall resources it has available.
- 102 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.

Rural Communities

- 103 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 104 The council has approved its Children's Vision which contains a priority around children with additional needs.

105 The SEND Partnership Strategy sets out the Partnership vision for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. This strategy was refreshed to include the DBV opportunities and mitigations within the DSG Management Plan in 2023.

Public Health

106 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

107 Many pupils are educated out of borough at high costs and with long travel journeys.

108 Where possible systems that save on energy consumption will be considered, particularly for electricity.

109 Any internal works required to update buildings to make them fit for purpose will include a comprehensive review of the impact on climate factors.

110 Any significant changes that may take place will require full compliance with the latest building regulations relating to such factors as insulation/heat loss and energy efficiencies. Such factors will be key considerations as the scheme is developed through to full handover.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration and SEND Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	There is 1 appendix to this report: Appendix 1 – Safety Valve DSG management plan
Background Papers:	DSG Management Plan 2022-23 – C&F Committee September 2022 - Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

DSG Management Pan 2023-2024 – C&F Committee
September 2023 - [CEC Report Template
\(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Delivering Better Value Update C&F Committee March
2023 - [Decision report template \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

SEND & AP Green Paper - [SEND and alternative
provision improvement plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

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- SEND Strategy [2. SEND Strategy.pdf
\(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)
- SEND Sufficiency Statement [CEC Report
Template \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)
- Capital Programme [CEC Report Template
\(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

This link provides information on Safety Valve
agreements with other local authorities - [Dedicated
schools grant: very high deficit intervention - GOV.UK
\(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)