

## Appendix 1

### Summary of Cheshire East Council DSG Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

#### Introduction

1. This appendix provides a summary of the council's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan for the period 2024/25 to 2030/31, which has been submitted to the DfE Safety Valve intervention programme. Please note this is a 7-year plan, previous DSG management plans have covered a 5-year period.
2. This appendix also details the project initiation documents (PIDs) which detail the Safety Valve interventions/mitigations and are the key transformation areas
3. Forecast are based on the January 2023 education, health and care plan (EHCP) numbers from the SEN2 statutory return.
4. Findings and opportunities identified from the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme remain. In addition, opportunities/workstream mitigations identified during the intense work with Safety Valve DfE advisors have been built into the revised DSG mgmt. plan.
5. The DSG Management Plan is based on a very detailed spreadsheet template issued by the DfE. This Appendix provides a summary.
6. The DSG management plan provides an unmitigated and mitigated forecast for the period 2024/25 to 2030/31.
7. Where changes to provision are identified they remain subject to necessary consultations, sufficient capital funding where applicable and local approval.
8. The Management Plan is based on average costs for the placement of additional pupils. This has to be used for modelling as the destination of each new child and their needs cannot be determined at this stage.
9. As the special school mitigations looks at the overall expansion programme actual forecast costs of placements have been used rather than the average cost.
10. The average costs of provision ranges from £7,593 for a pupil supported in mainstream to £25,000 for a special school to over £64,000 for independent specialist provision.

11. The High Needs Allocation for 2024-25 is £57.5 million

### **Provision Types**

12. Children and young people with an EHCP are supported in a variety of education setting types:

- Mainstream schools and early years setting
- Further education colleges (FE)
- Enhanced Mainstream Provision (EMP) – within a mainstream school
- Resource Provision (RP) – within a mainstream school
- Special Schools – maintained, academy, free schools, independent both within and outside of Cheshire East
- Non-maintained special schools, Independent special schools and Specialist post 16 institutes (NMSS/ISS/SPIs)
- Alternative provision (AP)

### **EHCP data analysis**

13. The number of EHCPs in the system has increased by 617 during the year, bringing the total of EHCPs as of January 2023 to 4,029. This included 742 first/new EHCPs, 80 transfers into the local authority less 205 which were either ceased or transferred out of the local authority. This represents a growth in the total of EHCPs of 18% (16% the previous year).

14. National growth as at January 2023 is 9%, previous years this level of growth has been approximately 10%.

15. From the spread of EHCPs across different provision types, the provision type of independent special schools, non-maintained special schools and specialist post 16 institutes, has increased by 62%. 32% above the number of EHCPs in this setting type the previous year. This has impacted on the forecast of EHCPs and the overall DSG management plan, as the average financial cost of this type of provision is £64,000 pa.

| All EHCPS by provision type  | Jan 2022     | EHCP Increase | % Increase | Jan 2023     | EHCP Increase | % Increase |
|--|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Mainstream schools inc. Nursery/Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) | 1,830        | 261           | 17%        | 2,084        | 254           | 14%        |
| Resource Provision   | 88           | -6            | -6%        | 132          | 44            | 50%        |
| Special Schools  | 706          | 44            | 7%         | 778          | 72            | 10%        |
| NMSS/ISS/SPIs  | 337          | 78            | 30%        | 545          | 208           | 62%        |
| Alternative Provision (AP) and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)                 | 11           | 2             | 225        | 19           | 8             | 73%        |
| FE college & sixth form  | 440          | 99            | 29%        | 471          | 31            | 7%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>3,412</b> | <b>478</b>    | <b>16%</b> | <b>4,029</b> | <b>617</b>    | <b>18%</b> |

16. New/first EHCPs issued in the calendar year 2022 increased by 13.5% compared with EHCPs issued in 2021 (The increase of first EHCPs in the calendar year 2021 was 2% on the previous year). The table below details the number of new/first plans by provision type. This shows that for the new/first EHCPs issued during calendar year 2022 (shown in column Jan 2023), there is an increase in the number of EHCP in independent special schools, non-maintained special schools and specialist post 16 institutes.

17. National growth as at January 2023 is 7%.

| NEW/FIRST PLANS                     | Jan 22     | % Increase 2022 | Proportion of new plans 2022 | Jan 23     | % Increase 2023 | Proportion of new plans 2023 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Mainstream schools inc. Nursery/PVI | 578        | 3%              | 88%                          | 602        | 4%              | 81%                          |
| RP                                  | 8          | 100%            | 1%                           | 24         | 200%            | 3%                           |
| LA Special                          | 30         | 11%             | 5%                           | 42         | 40%             | 6%                           |
| NMSS/ISS/SPIs                       | 15         | -35%            | 2%                           | 47         | 213%            | 6%                           |
| AP/Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)        | 7          | 75%             | 1%                           | 10         | 43%             | 1%                           |
| FE/Post 16                          | 16         | -24%            | 2%                           | 17         | 6%              | 2%                           |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>654</b> | <b>2%</b>       | <b>100%</b>                  | <b>742</b> | <b>13.5%</b>    | <b>100%</b>                  |

## Forecasting Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

18. The council has to submit a SEN 2 return in January each year setting out the latest information on EHCP numbers. The data from the January 2023 SEN2 return is the basis for forecasting in this plan.
19. In previous versions of the DSG management plan, the unmitigated forecast has been based on a flat rate increase number of more plans each and every year. However, following discussions and seeking advice from DfE Safety Valve colleagues, we have used a reducing percentage increase each year to represent the growth of future EHCPs. The percentage reduces each year until it reaches 10% increase, which is the national level of EHCP growth.
20. The mitigated EHCP forecast, shows that there will inevitably be growth in the first couple of years but the level of EHCPs will decline over the later years of the plan, down to similar levels which we are experiencing now, however the proportions of EHCPs in provision types will differ. Ensuring that children and young people are placed in the right type of provision has a significant impact on the overall affordability and sustainability of the financial forecast and will allow services to be provided with in budget.

**Table of Unmitigated and Mitigated forecast EHCP numbers**

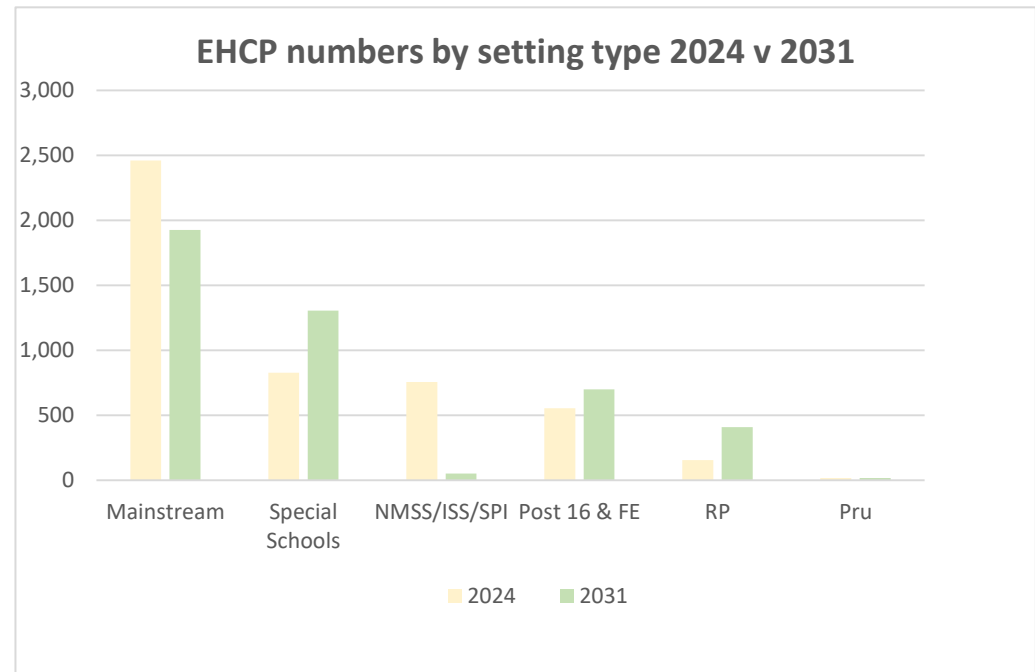
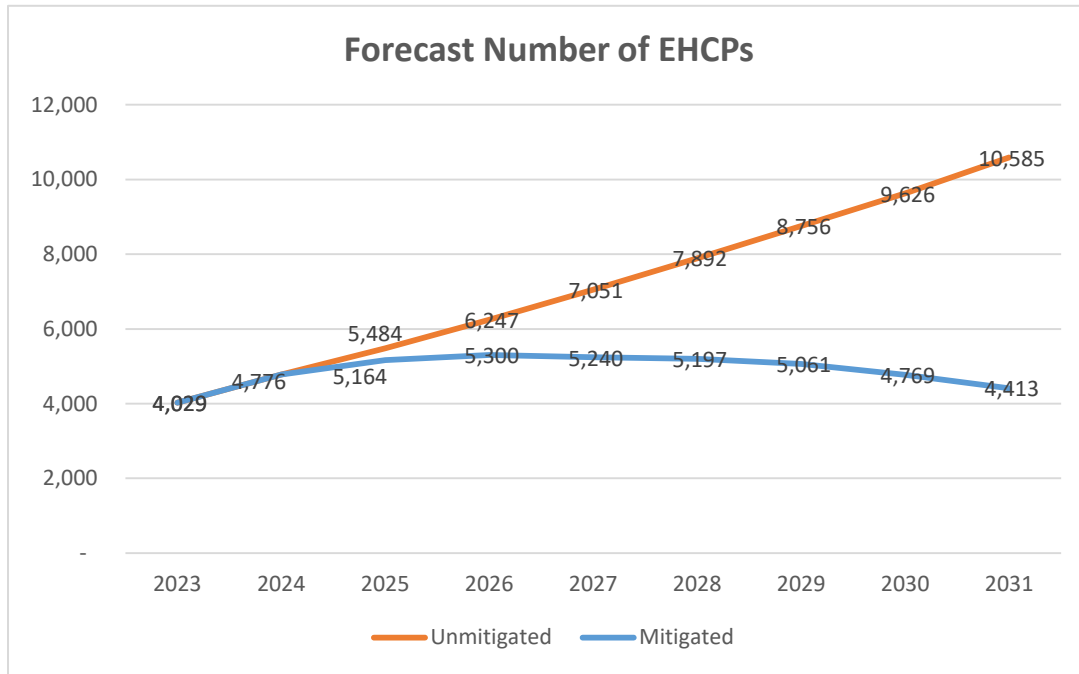
|                               | 2023  | 2024  | 2025  | 2026  | 2027    | 2028    | 2029    | 2030    | 2031    |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Unmitigated                   | 4,029 | 4,776 | 5,484 | 6,247 | 7,051   | 7,892   | 8,756   | 9,626   | 10,585  |
| Mitigated                     | 4,029 | 4,776 | 5,164 | 5,300 | 5,240   | 5,197   | 5,061   | 4,769   | 4,413   |
| % Unmitigated growth of EHCPs |       | 19%   | 15%   | 14%   | 13%     | 12%     | 11%     | 10%     | 10%     |
| % Mitigated growth of EHCPs   |       | 19%   | 8%    | 3%    | -1%     | -1%     | -3%     | -6%     | -7%     |
| Impact of mitigations         |       |       | (320) | (947) | (1,812) | (2,695) | (3,695) | (4,857) | (6,172) |

| Type            | 2023 Actual | 2024 Forecast | Unmitigated Forecast |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                 |             |               | 2025                 | 2026  | 2027  | 2028  | 2029  | 2030  | 2031  |
| Mainstream      | 2,084       | 2,460         | 2,828                | 3,225 | 3,643 | 4,079 | 4,529 | 4,981 | 5,480 |
| Special Schools | 778         | 828           | 828                  | 828   | 828   | 828   | 828   | 828   | 828   |
| NMSS/ISS/SPIs   | 545         | 757           | 1,013                | 1,291 | 1,583 | 1,889 | 2,202 | 2,518 | 2,866 |
| Post 16 & FE    | 471         | 556           | 640                  | 728   | 822   | 921   | 1,022 | 1,124 | 1,236 |
| RP / SEN Units  | 132         | 156           | 156                  | 156   | 156   | 156   | 156   | 156   | 156   |

|                    |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |               |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Hosp Schools / AP  | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19            |
| <b>Total EHCPs</b> | <b>4,029</b> | <b>4,776</b> | <b>5,484</b> | <b>6,247</b> | <b>7,051</b> | <b>7,892</b> | <b>8,756</b> | <b>9,626</b> | <b>10,585</b> |
| Growth             | 617          | 747          | 708          | 763          | 804          | 841          | 864          | 870          | 959           |
| % Growth           | 18%          | 19%          | 15%          | 14%          | 13%          | 12%          | 11%          | 10%          | 10%           |

| Type               | Mitigated Forecast |               |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                    | 2023 Actual        | 2024 Forecast | 2025         | 2026         | 2027         | 2028         | 2029         | 2030         | 2031         |
| Mainstream         | 2,084              | 2,460         | 2,649        | 2,736        | 2,640        | 2,613        | 2,489        | 2,257        | 1,925        |
| Special Schools    | 778                | 828           | 922          | 1,016        | 1,116        | 1,206        | 1,266        | 1,286        | 1,306        |
| NMSS/ISS/SPIs      | 545                | 757           | 814          | 652          | 507          | 354          | 239          | 120          | 53           |
| Post 16 & FE       | 471                | 556           | 588          | 624          | 649          | 671          | 687          | 698          | 701          |
| RP / SEN Units     | 132                | 156           | 172          | 254          | 308          | 335          | 362          | 389          | 409          |
| Hosp Schools / AP  | 19                 | 19            | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           | 19           |
| <b>Total EHCPs</b> | <b>4,029</b>       | <b>4,776</b>  | <b>5,164</b> | <b>5,300</b> | <b>5,240</b> | <b>5,197</b> | <b>5,061</b> | <b>4,769</b> | <b>4,413</b> |
| Growth             | 617                | 747           | 388          | 136          | -61          | -42          | -136         | -292         | -357         |
| % Growth           | 18%                | 19%           | 8%           | 3%           | -1%          | -1%          | -3%          | -6%          | -7%          |

**21.** The charts below demonstrate the forecasts for both unmitigated and mitigated EHCP forecasts and identify the split between provision/setting type. The key mitigation concerning provision type is the need to expand our own specialist provision and become less reliant on the specialist independent sector.



## **Overall Financial Summary of the DSG Management Plan**

### **Starting Point and Income Forecasts**

- 22.** The DSG reserve deficit balance is currently forecast to be £89.6 million at 31 March 2024. This is based on high needs funding for 2023/24 of £56 million and EHCP numbers 4776.
- 23.** The high needs funding has been forecasted using DfE guidance as 3% growth each year.

### **Overall Financial Summary**

- 24.** The tables below summarise the financial forecast in the DSG management plan for both the unmitigated position and the mitigated position along with the difference between the two. The forecasts are broken down over provisions types and detail the expenditure, DSG income, school block transfer, the in year deficit position, the deficit reserve brought forward from the previous year, resulting in the total deficit reserve position.
- 25.** The unmitigated financial forecast is without mitigations, the do-nothing position. Whereas the mitigated financial forecast includes mitigations which are detailed within the Safety Valve Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) Interventions – mitigations section in this appendix. Cumulatively mitigations are forecast to amount to £916 million.
- 26.** 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.
- 27.** 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.

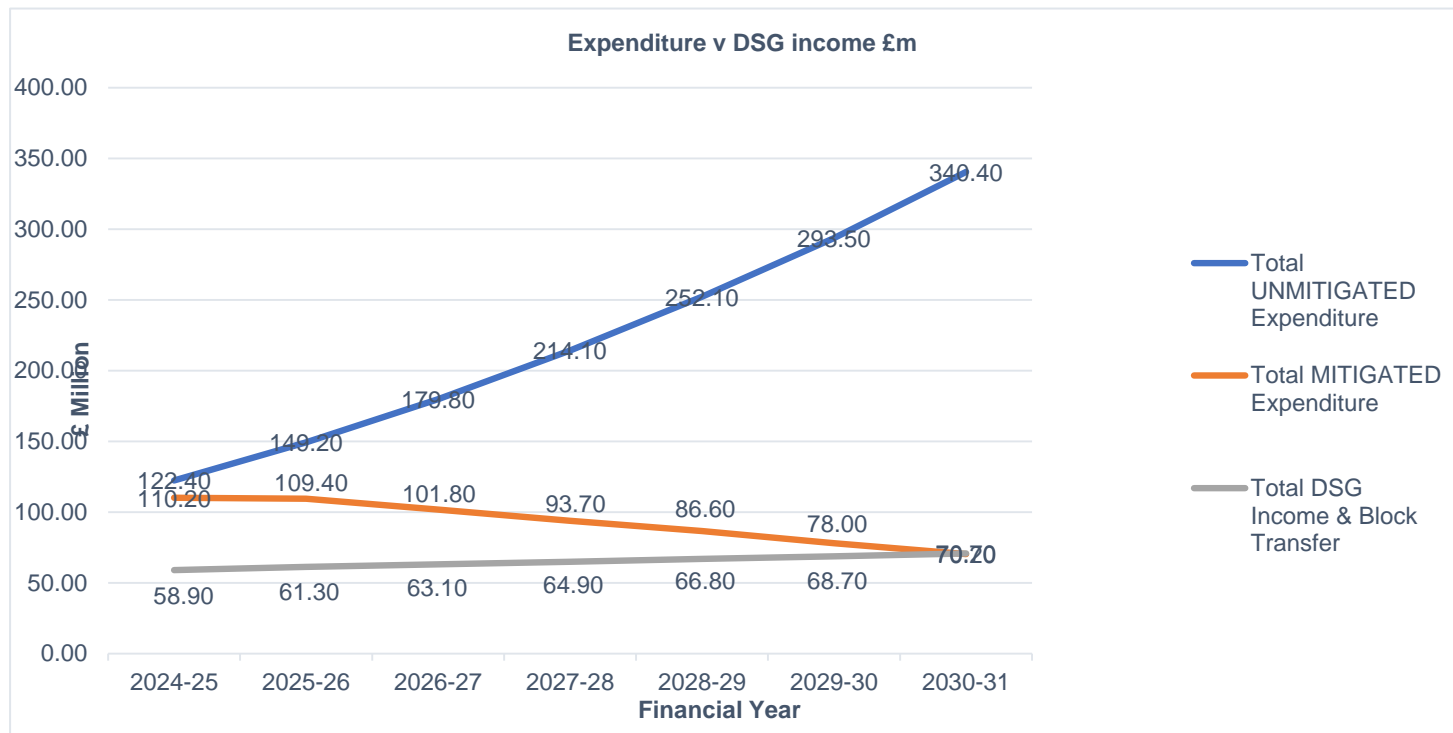
|  | UNMITIGATED FORECAST |               |               |               |               |               |                |
|--|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Provision Type                           | 2024-25              | 2025-26       | 2026-27       | 2027-28       | 2028-29       | 2029-30       | 2030-31        |
|  | £m                   | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m             |
| Mainstream                               | 25.1                 | 28.1          | 31.3          | 34.7          | 38.2          | 41.7          | 45.5           |
| Resource Provision                       | 2.9                  | 2.8           | 2.8           | 2.8           | 2.8           | 2.8           | 2.8            |
| Special Schools                          | 19.5                 | 19.5          | 19.5          | 19.5          | 19.5          | 19.5          | 19.5           |
| NMSS & Independent Special Schools       | 63.3                 | 86.2          | 112.6         | 142.6         | 176.0         | 212.9         | 254.9          |
| FE Colleges                              | 6.1                  | 7.0           | 7.9           | 8.8           | 9.8           | 10.8          | 11.9           |
| Alternative Provision                    | 3.6                  | 3.6           | 3.6           | 3.7           | 3.7           | 3.7           | 3.7            |
| Sensory & SALT                           | 2.0                  | 2.0           | 2.1           | 2.1           | 2.1           | 2.1           | 2.2            |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                 | <b>122.4</b>         | <b>149.2</b>  | <b>179.8</b>  | <b>214.1</b>  | <b>252.1</b>  | <b>293.5</b>  | <b>340.4</b>   |
| <b>Total DSG Income</b>                  | <b>(57.5)</b>        | <b>(59.2)</b> | <b>(61.0)</b> | <b>(62.8)</b> | <b>(64.7)</b> | <b>(66.6)</b> | <b>(68.6)</b>  |
| <b>Block Transfer</b>                    | <b>-</b>             | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>       |
| <b>In Year Surplus -/ Deficit +</b>      | <b>65.0</b>          | <b>90.0</b>   | <b>118.8</b>  | <b>151.3</b>  | <b>187.4</b>  | <b>226.9</b>  | <b>271.8</b>   |
| <b>Surplus / Deficit Brought Forward</b> | <b>89.6</b>          | <b>154.6</b>  | <b>244.6</b>  | <b>363.5</b>  | <b>514.8</b>  | <b>702.2</b>  | <b>929.1</b>   |
| <b>Total Deficit Reserve Balance</b>     | <b>154.6</b>         | <b>244.6</b>  | <b>363.5</b>  | <b>514.8</b>  | <b>702.2</b>  | <b>929.1</b>  | <b>1,200.9</b> |

|  | MITIGATED FORECAST |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Provision Type                           | 2024-25            | 2025-26       | 2026-27       | 2027-28       | 2028-29       | 2029-30       | 2030-31       |
|  | £m                 | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m            | £m            |
| Mainstream                               | 24.0               | 23.3          | 21.4          | 20.4          | 19.8          | 18.7          | 16.9          |
| Resource Provision                       | 3.1                | 4.1           | 5.0           | 5.5           | 6.0           | 6.4           | 6.8           |
| Special Schools                          | 20.7               | 22.5          | 24.3          | 26.0          | 27.6          | 27.9          | 28.1          |
| NMSS & Independent Special Schools       | 51.2               | 48.6          | 40.0          | 30.5          | 21.7          | 13.3          | 6.7           |
| FE Colleges                              | 5.6                | 6.0           | 6.2           | 6.4           | 6.6           | 6.7           | 6.7           |
| Alternative Provision                    | 3.6                | 3.4           | 3.4           | 3.3           | 3.3           | 3.3           | 3.4           |
| Sensory & SALT                           | 1.9                | 1.6           | 1.6           | 1.6           | 1.6           | 1.6           | 1.6           |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                 | <b>110.2</b>       | <b>109.4</b>  | <b>101.8</b>  | <b>93.7</b>   | <b>86.6</b>   | <b>78.0</b>   | <b>70.2</b>   |
| <b>Total DSG Income</b>                  | <b>(57.5)</b>      | <b>(59.2)</b> | <b>(61.0)</b> | <b>(62.8)</b> | <b>(64.7)</b> | <b>(66.6)</b> | <b>(68.6)</b> |
| <b>Block Transfer</b>                    | <b>(1.4)</b>       | <b>(2.1)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>  |
| <b>In Year Surplus -/ Deficit +</b>      | <b>51.3</b>        | <b>48.1</b>   | <b>38.7</b>   | <b>28.7</b>   | <b>19.8</b>   | <b>9.2</b>    | <b>(0.6)</b>  |
| <b>Surplus / Deficit Brought Forward</b> | <b>89.6</b>        | <b>140.9</b>  | <b>189.0</b>  | <b>227.7</b>  | <b>256.5</b>  | <b>276.2</b>  | <b>285.4</b>  |
| <b>Total Deficit Reserve Balance</b>     | <b>140.9</b>       | <b>189.0</b>  | <b>227.7</b>  | <b>256.5</b>  | <b>276.2</b>  | <b>285.4</b>  | <b>284.8</b>  |

|                | VARAINCE BETWEEN UNMITIGATED FORECAST AND MITIGATED FORECAST |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|----------------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Provision Type | 2024-25  | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30 | 2030-31 |



|  | £m            | £m            | £m             | £m             | £m             | £m             | £m             |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Mainstream                               | (1.1)         | (4.8)         | (9.9)          | (14.3)         | (18.3)         | (23.0)         | (28.6)         |
| Resource Provision                       | 0.3           | 1.3           | 2.2            | 2.7            | 3.2            | 3.6            | 4.0            |
| Special Schools                          | 1.3           | 3.0           | 4.8            | 6.5            | 8.1            | 8.4            | 8.7            |
| NMSS & Independent Special Schools       | (12.1)        | (37.6)        | (72.6)         | (112.1)        | (154.4)        | (199.6)        | (248.2)        |
| FE Colleges                              | (0.5)         | (1.0)         | (1.6)          | (2.4)          | (3.2)          | (4.1)          | (5.1)          |
| Alternative Provision                    | -             | (0.2)         | (0.3)          | (0.3)          | (0.3)          | (0.4)          | (0.4)          |
| Sensory & SALT                           | (0.1)         | (0.5)         | (0.5)          | (0.5)          | (0.5)          | (0.6)          | (0.6)          |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                 | <b>(12.3)</b> | <b>(39.8)</b> | <b>(77.9)</b>  | <b>(120.4)</b> | <b>(165.5)</b> | <b>(215.6)</b> | <b>(270.2)</b> |
| <b>Total DSG Income</b>                  | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>      | <b>-</b>       | <b>-</b>       | <b>-</b>       | <b>-</b>       | <b>-</b>       |
| <b>Block Transfer</b>                    | <b>(1.4)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>  | <b>(2.1)</b>   | <b>(2.1)</b>   | <b>(2.1)</b>   | <b>(2.1)</b>   | <b>(2.1)</b>   |
| <b>In Year Surplus -/ Deficit +</b>      | <b>(13.7)</b> | <b>(41.9)</b> | <b>(80.1)</b>  | <b>(122.6)</b> | <b>(167.7)</b> | <b>(217.7)</b> | <b>(272.4)</b> |
| <b>Surplus / Deficit Brought Forward</b> | <b>-</b>      | <b>(13.7)</b> | <b>(55.7)</b>  | <b>(135.7)</b> | <b>(258.3)</b> | <b>(426.0)</b> | <b>(643.7)</b> |
| <b>Total Deficit Reserve Balance</b>     | <b>(13.7)</b> | <b>(55.7)</b> | <b>(135.7)</b> | <b>(258.3)</b> | <b>(426.0)</b> | <b>(643.7)</b> | <b>(916.0)</b> |



**Safety Valve  
Initiation**

**Project**

## **Documents (PIDs) Interventions – mitigations**

**28.** 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.

**29.** There are 9 PIDs which have been developed to address the opportunities identified during the Safety Valve intervention programme. The key areas of transformation are:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Expand specialist provision within the LA appropriately in order to meet the needs of children and young people within the authority;
- Secure collaboration and financial commitment from partner agencies where appropriate, ensuring partners make adequate contributions to provision;
- Develop and implement a clear planning and decision-making process for placements, in line with the sufficiency strategy;
- Strengthen oversight and contracting with independent and non-maintained schools to ensure value for money, including reviewing approval routes of high cost placements;
- 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;
- Review and develop a clear SEND financial strategy that ensures case level decision making is strategic and appropriate.

**30.** Each PID is detailed below within tables below and detail the rationale, purpose and objective of each intervention/mitigation

### 31. Governance and accountability - PID reference: 1.1

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Name: Governance and Accountability</b>  | <b>PID Reference Number: 1.1</b> |
| <b>Rationale</b>  |                                  |
| <p>Governance and accountability have not been robust enough across the local authority and partners to manage and have clear oversight of the SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities) system as a whole, including the statutory processes and procedures. Revised governance arrangements need to be developed to ensure that leaders at the highest levels in the local authority and across the partnership take full responsibility for SEND through increased scrutiny, challenge and full financial oversight.</p> <p>To ensure that resources are being managed as effectively and efficiently as possible to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people, decisions associated with financial impact need to be made at higher tiers of management, with any high-cost placements only being made at assistant director or director level.</p> <p>All decisions relating to support need to be equitable and ensure that children and young people with SEND receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place. All decision-making panels therefore need to be robust and make appropriate decisions in an equitable manner by effectively following the graduated approach. The SEND toolkit needs to be fully embedded across all levels of our collective SEND system to ensure children receive the right level of support in line with their needs, including more children being supported earlier via SEND support plans.</p> <p>Overall baseline (as at January 2023 SEN2 return):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN Support 9.9% vs 12.8% National</li> <li>• EHCP 4.7% vs 4.1% national</li> <li>• Increase in all EHCPs 18% vs 10% national</li> </ul> |                                  |
| <b>Objective/Purpose</b>  |                                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen SEND governance, accountability and oversight arrangements, including stronger financial oversight and authorisation, to ensure scrutiny, challenge and full financial oversight is provided from the leaders at the most senior levels</li> <li>2. Facilitate delivery of transformational changes to improve the local SEND system for children and young people through an increase in dedicated capacity with appropriate skills and knowledge</li> <li>3. Ensure clear, robust and equitable decision-making systems and processes are in place across education, health and care for decisions relating to placements, provision and funding, including specific arrangements for complex cases, to provide accountability across the workforce and a consistent approach that enables all children and young people to have access to the correct provision and levels of support</li> </ol>  |                                  |
| <b>Overall Impact Measures</b>  |                                  |
| % growth of mitigated EHCP forecast   |                                  |
| Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year)   |                                  |

### 32. Rebalancing the profile of plans and strengthening annual reviews - PID Reference: 1.2

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Name: Rebalancing the profile of plans and strengthening annual reviews</b>  | <b>PID Reference Number: 1.2</b> |
| <b>Rationale</b>  |                                  |
| <p>Our profile of plans in mainstream education is showing an imbalance in the levels of support, compared with levels of needs. We need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to providing support to our children and young people to ensure their needs can be met, progress is made and they are achieving outcomes at each age and phase of education.</p> <p>Currently, outcomes are not SMART and preparing for adulthood is not embedded from early years through all age provisions. Preparing for adulthood (PFA) will now be embedded from early years across all ages to ensure that our children and young people are well prepared and are making the desired progress on their outcomes.</p> <p>Our current annual review process is not sufficient and strong enough to celebrate and evidence children and young people’s success. Therefore, we need to undertake a full review of the current process for annual reviews. A robust system then needs to be embedded which includes evaluating children and young people’s progress whilst also celebrating their educational achievements.</p> <p>Baseline (as at January 2023 SEN2 return):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 pre-16 EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans) ceased in 2022 (calendar year)</li> <li>• 141 post-16 EHCPs ceased in 2022 (calendar year), of which - 22 moved to higher education; 43 moved into paid employment; 65 no longer wanted to continue in education, employment or training; 9 needs were met without a plan; 2 were other</li> <li>• SEN Support 9.9% vs 12.8% National</li> <li>• Profile of plans: Hourly support shows peaks at 25 and 32 hours representing two-thirds of all EHCPs in mainstream education (as at December 2023)</li> </ul> |                                  |
| <b>Objective/Purpose</b>  |                                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rebalance the profile and improve the quality of EHC plans for children and young people in pre-16 education to ensure their plan, support and setting is appropriate, aligns with need, and is supporting them to make progress towards their outcomes</li> <li>2. Rebalance the profile and improve the quality of EHC plans for children and young people in post-16 education by embedding preparing for adulthood across the system, and upskilling and raising the confidence of the wider workforce and key stakeholders on preparing for adulthood, SMART outcomes and the offer in adult social care</li> <li>3. Review and refine the process and guidance for EHCP annual reviews and ensure effective processes and training on annual reviews are embedded</li> </ol>  |                                  |
| <b>Overall Impact Measures</b>  |                                  |

|  |
|--|
| % Increase in number of plans ceased “needs met without a plan”  |
| Reduced average cost of top up in a mainstream educational setting (illustrating changing support profile of EHC Plans)              |
| Increase in change of placements from specialist educational provision to mainstream educational provision (measure to be developed) |

### 33. Banding and Top-up Funding – PID Reference 1.3

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Name: Banding and Top-up funding</b>   | <b>PID Reference Number: 1.3</b> |
| <b>Rationale</b>  |                                  |
| <p>We are currently operating an hourly funding model for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in mainstream education. The use of hours as a proxy measure for funding can cause confusion and does not accurately represent the many different ways in which effective support can be provided in practice to meet the individual needs of a child or young person with an EHC Plan. Previous high needs funding work supported the development of a more flexible model.</p> <p>In our special schools, we currently operate a fixed rate for all children and young people. This rate is different for each specialist provision.</p> <p>The intention for Cheshire East is to remove the use of hours for expressing funding associated with EHCPs and implement an equitable banding system that supports access to provision and support for children and young people with EHCPs across all age ranges and setting types (including mainstream and specialist). Our new system will also need to facilitate settings to provide innovative support that enables children and young people’s growing independence and is in line with national research about effective support for children and young people with SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities). Changing from expressing total funding in ‘hours’ to a band with a financial amount will allow more flexibility for schools and settings to provide required support and provision creatively, modernise our systems and remove any confusion for parents/carers, young people, schools/settings and other professionals. The change will also align our systems with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and national intended changes to move to a national banding system for SEND High Needs Funding, as part of the DfE SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. As part of developing and implementing the new banding system, we will review our top-up funding levels to ensure that they match the level of provision required.</p> |                                  |
| <b>Objective/Purpose</b>  |                                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce a banding system for the allocation of funding associated with EHCPs across all age ranges and all institutions, which provides an equitable system for all children and young people, accurately represents children and young people’s needs and is aligned to national plans</li> <li>2. Provide fair and appropriate funding and support to all children and young people with EHCPs that enables them to be effectively supported to make progress towards their individual outcomes</li> <li>3. Provide flexibility to schools and settings to facilitate delivery of effective, high quality and more inclusive provision</li> </ol>   |                                  |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Overall Impact Measure</b>                                     |
| Forecasted overall cost avoidance targets achieved (year on year) |

### 34. Graduated Approach – PID reference: 1.4

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Name: Graduated Approach</b> | <b>PID Reference Number: 1.4</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|

#### Rationale

Currently there is a lower-than-average number of children on SEN support, compared to the national level. Data is evidencing that schools and settings are not consistently utilising the SEND Toolkit and embedding the graduated approach, therefore resulting in an increased number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment requests and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), where needs should be met through SEN support.

Reasonable adjustments are not being made to ensure that most children and young people with special educational needs are able to access and have their needs met within mainstream provision, so they enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and are fully included within their communities.

We will now move to endorse and embed findings from the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, to ensure all children have access to the right support, at the right place, at the right time.

We are not currently embedding the graduated approach across all settings, and this is not consistently being used. All schools now need to embed the Cheshire East SEND Toolkit, to enable more children to be supported at SEN support and have their identified needs supported earlier with co-ordinated support packages to improve their outcomes.

We will enhance and build on the skills of SENCOs and teaching staff within our mainstream schools and settings. We will launch a specialist outreach programme which will provide our schools and settings with early intervention and prevention support, directly in a classroom environment to support children and young people to remain in mainstream provision where appropriate. We will promote and embed the use and application of the SEND Toolkit to embed inclusive practice in mainstream settings.

We will build on the transformation of the early years forum to ensure early identification of children's needs are identified at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure a reduction of the need for EHCPs as children will receive early interventions and support to prevent escalation.

Baseline (as at January 2023 SEN2 return):

- SEN Support 9.9% vs 12.8% National

- EHCP 4.7% vs 4.1% national
- Increase in all EHCPs 18% vs 10% national

### Objective/Purpose

1. Embed a culture of inclusion across the whole of Cheshire East to share good practice, create a coherent education system and enable every child and young person to access the provision they need
2. Build on the newly enhanced SEND Toolkit and embed the graduated approach across all schools and settings
3. Improve quality and efficacy of SEN support plans to ensure children and young people are effectively supported to achieve improved outcomes through supporting as early as possible and preventing escalation of need
4. Upskill schools/setting and partners with strategies and interventions to identify children and young people's needs and how to effectively support them
5. Revision of advice template for Educational Psychologists by EPs and other services to ensure the clear objectives of ordinarily available inclusive provision and quality first teaching are separate to the additional advice being given, thereby ensuring it is clearer for plan writers and parents to see the advice being provided
6. Develop a specialist outreach programme to improve access to early intervention
7. Monitor effectiveness of recently developed early years arrangements to ensure they remain effective around early identification and support

### Overall Impact Measure

% growth of mitigated EHCP forecast

Reduced number of change of placement requests to a specialist provision (measure to be developed)

## 35. Review of Cheshire East Specialist Provision and Capital Programme – PID reference: 1.5

**Project Name: Review of Cheshire East Specialist Provision and Capital Programme**

**PID Reference Number: 1.5**

### Rationale

Data and feedback tell us that too many of our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are required to travel long distances to access appropriate, specialist educational provision. This is a result of the available provision within Cheshire East not matching our current needs. The current shortfall of SEN places across the borough means that we are highly reliant on external specialist provision to fill the gap, which is often outside of the borough and is usually independent or non-maintained provision. This results in children and young people experiencing long, daily journey times and being away from their local communities and support networks. These placements are also often high cost, combined with further high travel costs, and do not always improve outcomes for our young people.

Our 'TOGETHER' vision for children and young people in Cheshire East aims to make Cheshire East a great place to be young, where our families and communities are strong and supportive, and where differences are respected and celebrated. We believe that children are best supported within their families and their communities, and we aim to ensure that our children, young people and families have the right support at the right time from the right people. We therefore want to ensure that children and young people with SEND can access effective support to meet their individual needs from high quality provision within their own communities. We want to improve outcomes for our children and young people whilst ensuring they are local to existing family and friends networks and community provision, thereby enabling continuity of support and care.

To achieve this, we know that we need to develop and further enhance provision within Cheshire East. By increasing the capacity, availability and quality of local provision within our borough, we can increase choice for families, reduce journey times, and increasingly supporting pupils to be part of their local community, whilst also reducing placement and travel costs and making better use of our resources.

To improve the capacity, availability and quality of local provision, we need to understand how current local specialist provision (including special schools, resource provisions and SEN units) is being used, and ensure that the right children are being placed in the right type of provision and that their needs are being met and outcomes achieved. We also want to build on previous extensive work to develop our SEND sufficiency statement and further grow our own local specialist provision through a SEND provision plan which will set out the steps we need to take. This will allow us to drive, track and evaluate our progress. Through the development and expansion of specialist provision within Cheshire East, we will ensure that children and young people's needs can be met within high quality specialist settings locally and support them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Baseline (as at January 2023 SEN2 Return):

- 545 children and young people placed in a non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post-16 institute (14% of all EHCPs)
- 910 children and young people placed in special schools (this includes 203 in other local authority special schools), resource provision or SEN unit (23% of all EHCPs).

#### **Objective/Purpose**

1. Review existing local specialist provision (including special schools, resource provision and SEN units) and their current designations, in order to understand current use, identify potential improvements and gaps, and assess whether children are being placed in the correct placement types to meet their needs
2. Assess opportunities to secure placements in local, in-borough provision for more of our children and young people with SEND
3. Expand, further develop and grow our own local specialist provision to ensure children and young people's needs can be met within their local community
4. Provide further support to address the placements imbalance resulting from the shortfall of SEN places across the borough through the use of creative commissioning and developing and implementing supporting policies



|   |
|---|
| <b>Overall Impact Measure</b>   |
| % of children and young people in a specialist placement (including RP, SEN unit or special school)                         |
| % of children and young people in non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post-16 institute |

### 36. Transition – PID reference: 1.6

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Name: Transition</b>  | <b>PID Reference Number: 1.6</b> |
| <b>Rationale</b>   |                                  |
| <p>We have identified that children, young people and families do not currently feel confident and supported through transition points. Data shows us that we have high levels of Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment requests at transition points for early years, primary to secondary and post-16.</p> <p>We will review the transition processes and procedures and work 2 years ahead to start to identify children at transition points. The review will strengthen each age and phase from early years through to adulthood and develop and embed clear and consistent processes to support young people into adulthood with paid employment, good health, independent living, and friends, relationships and community inclusion.</p> <p>The aim will be to support the majority of children and young people with special educational needs to have their needs met within mainstream provision and further education settings, so they enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and are fully included within their communities.</p> <p>To support children remaining in mainstream provision where appropriate, dedicated work will take place with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and parents/carers to support them to feel more confident and help to evidence the support their children will have in mainstream provision.</p> |                                  |
| <b>Objective/Purpose</b>   |                                  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-design and enhance the transition process and develop clear expectations regarding transition to ensure that children, young people and families are supported and confident at key transition points (from early years through to adulthood) to reduce escalation of need</li> <li>2. Develop resources, information and support for children, young people and families to ensure knowledge and build confidence regarding transition phases of education and provision/pathways</li> <li>3. Co-produce and deliver a two-year tailored training programme for all schools and settings to ensure understanding of the transition process and the offer in the next phase of education</li> </ol>   |                                  |
| <b>Overall Impact Measures</b>   |                                  |
| Reduced number of needs assessments requested at a transition point (measure to be developed)  |                                  |
| Reduced number of decisions to issue EHCP at a transition point (measure to be developed)  |                                  |

Reduced number of change of placements to specialist provisions at transition point (measure to be developed)

### 37. Alternative Provision and EOTAS – PID reference: 1.7

**Project Name: Alternative Provision and EOTAS**

**PID Reference Number: 1.7**

#### **Rationale**

We need to develop and enhance the way in which we deliver alternative provision and arrangements for EOTAS (education other than at school) to ensure that all children and young people can access the right support, at the right place, at the right time.

Currently there is a large cohort of children in Key Stage (KS) 3 and KS4 who attend the secondary pupil referral unit (PRU) following permanent exclusion. Many of these children stay longer than required, particularly if they are in the KS4 cohort. We therefore need to build a stronger offer of alternative provision and develop clear plans to support this cohort of children to return to mainstream provision, so they enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and are fully included within their communities. Work with our pupil referral unit will take place to look at the number of places we commission and give opportunities for schools to buy places which in turn will reduce costs and enable a new funding model to be achieved.

There has been an increase in the number of children educated other than at school (EOTAS). A full review of current EOTAS processes and arrangements will take place to ensure that children's EOTAS arrangements evidence educational outcomes, with clear provision working to support achieving these outcomes, plus clear progression routes into appropriate settings with robust timescales.

A review of existing in-house services, such as the Medical Needs and Sensory Inclusion services, is needed as part of assessing how children and young people can be supported differently to achieve improved outcomes through a strengthened and more connected alternative provision offer whilst also achieving efficiency savings and maximising use of resources.

#### **Baseline:**

- PRU spend £1.4m 2023-24
- Medical Needs and SEN Tuition £0.9m 2023-24

#### **Objective/Purpose**

1. Ensure a strengthened alternative provision offer is in place in Cheshire East that better supports children and young people to make timely progress and reintegration to mainstream education, as appropriate, through a review of existing alternative provision arrangements, including the PRU, and exploration and development of alternative models
2. Ensure clear and robust systems are in place to agree, track, monitor and review children and young people educated other than at school, to support successful progress towards their individual outcomes and progression into settings, as appropriate

3. Review existing in-house services and their future role in a strengthened and more connected offer to support children and young people to achieve improved outcomes

**Overall Impact Measures**

Reduction in average length of placements for children attending the PRU / in alternative provision (measure to be developed)

Reduction in overall spend for alternative provision and EOTAS (measure to be developed)

Reduced number of children with EOTAS arrangements (measure to be developed)

**38. Partnership collaboration and financial sustainability – PID reference: 1.8**

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Name: Partnership collaboration and financial sustainability</b> | <b>PID Reference Number: 1.8</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|

**Rationale**

To effectively improve outcomes for our young people with SEND whilst also achieving and maintaining financial sustainability, it is crucial that all partners across the local SEND system work together to make best use of our shared resources. We need to improve partnership involvement in SEND financial management and oversight, including stronger oversight of the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

We want to further build on the relationship between the local Schools’ Forum and Cheshire East Council colleagues to provide greater understanding of the pressures on the high needs block and work collectively to manage the high needs system. We will establish a new Schools’ Forum subgroup to support shared communication and joint working in this area.

We need to make sure we as a SEND system are using all elements of our DSG allocation effectively and efficiently. Whilst the schools block of the DSG is ring-fenced, local authorities can transfer up to and including 0.5% of their schools block funding into another block, with the approval of their Schools’ Forum. Historically our Schools’ Forum has not supported a block transfer. A disapplication has been submitted each year to the Secretary of State, however this has been declined. We need to ensure that our Schools’ Forum are involved in SEND funding processes and plans and understand the rationale behind such applications. We are seeking a schools block transfer to enable us to provide support and interventions, such as a specialist outreach programme, to schools, as well as contributing to offset the in-year deficit position.

In addition, we also need to improve financial oversight, collaboration and commitments from other local partners, such as health partners.

**Objective/Purpose**

1. Improve joint SEND financial oversight, ownership and related working relationship between Schools’ Forum and Cheshire East Council regarding SEND and high needs block financial management
2. Seek to secure collaboration and financial commitment from partner agencies where appropriate, ensuring health partners make adequate contributions to provision as appropriate

3. Seek to secure appropriate resources for additional support and interventions for schools through schools block disapplication submission

**Overall Impact Measures**

Transfer of projected funds as per disapplication submission

**39. Commissioning – PID reference 1.9**

**Project Name: Commissioning**

**PID Reference Number: 1.9**

**Rationale**

Successful commissioning focuses on the most effective, efficient, sustainable and equitable methods of using all available resources to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Effective commissioning arrangements are therefore a crucial component of a successful system for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

To improve the effectiveness of commissioning arrangements for children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East, dedicated SEND commissioning resource needs to be developed to have full oversight of all commissioning across all areas. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) need to be robust and support providers to be held to account on their delivery, the outcomes we expect to see children making and a reduction of need.

We are not currently meeting demand for speech and language therapy (SALT) services within current systems and via current commissioning arrangements through the Integrated Care Board, thereby creating inconsistency across provision and a lack of value for money across some commissioned services. Partners across Cheshire East will ensure children and young people have access to SALT services across each side of the borough to enable their needs to be met and to support them to achieve their outcomes. A review of the joint commissioning arrangements and SALT contract will ensure that access to this service is equitable for all children and young people.

In addition, many independent and/or non-maintained specialist settings are requesting an uplift to fees on an annual basis. Partners across Cheshire East need to ensure that we have clear, robust and consistent systems for managing fees increases/uplifts, which are also in line with all other arrangements across schools and settings. This will include arrangements to strengthen SLAs/contracts for bulk purchasing arrangements and quality and consistency of provision across the independent sector.

**Objective/Purpose**

1. Strengthen commissioning oversight arrangements through development of dedicated SEND commissioning resource, review of all commissioning contracts and arrangements and use of clear processes and procedures around SLA and contract management arrangements
2. Understand current levels of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and demand for SALT support in Cheshire East

3. Improve access to and delivery of SALT services by jointly reviewing current arrangements and identifying areas for improvement, followed by development of a redesigned model for SALT delivery
4. Consistent and robust system in place for managing fee increase requests
5. Enhance the area's purchasing power through optimised use of bulk purchasing

**Overall Impact Measure**

Reduced contract amount for SALT provision

Reduction in annual fee uplifts (frequency and amounts) for independent and / or non-maintained specialist provision

## 40. Glossary

| Term                | Meaning  |
|---------------------|--|
| DSG Management Plan | Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan  |
| DBV                 | Delivering Better Value programme  |
| EHCP                | Education, Health and Care Plan  |
| SEND                | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities   |
| SEN2                | Special Educational Needs Survey   |
| AY                  | Academic Year  |
| NA                  | Needs Assessment   |
| DfE                 | Department for Education   |
| RP                  | Resource Provision - within a mainstream school  |
| SEN Units           | Special Education Needs Units  |
| Special Schools     | Maintained, academy, free schools, independent both within and outside of Cheshire East        |
| NMSS<br>ISS<br>SPIs | Non-maintained special schools<br>Independent special schools<br>Specialist post 16 institutes |
| AP                  | Alternative provision  |
| PVI                 | Private, Voluntary and Independent   |
| SALT                | Sensory & Speech and Language Therapy  |
| PRU                 | Pupil Referral Unit  |
| EMP                 | Enhanced Mainstream Provision  |
| SI                  | Supported Internships  |
| PID                 | Project Initiation Document  |
| EOTAS               | Educated Other Than At School  |