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Children and Families Committee

Agenda

Date:	**Monday, 18th September, 2023**
Time:	**10.00 am**
Venue:	**Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ**

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the top of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

   To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)

   To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July 2023.

For requests for further information
Contact: Josie Lloyd
Tel: 01270 686466
E-Mail: josie.lloyd@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the Constitution, a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

5. **Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28** (Pages 11 - 62)

To consider a report seeking approval of the updated Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

6. **Refreshed SEND Strategy 2021-2025** (Pages 63 - 114)

To consider a report seeking approval of the refreshed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Partnership Strategy.

7. **SEND Sufficiency Statement for Children and Young People with an Education, Health and Care Plan** (Pages 115 - 156)

To receive an overview of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Statement which has been updated to reflect the growing demand for specialist provisions.

8. **Allocation of Additional High Needs Funding and Additional Early Years Funding for 2023/24** (Pages 157 - 170)

To receive an update on the two additional funding streams announced for 2023/24 and approve how the funding streams should be allocated.

9. **Pupil Place Planning Sufficiency Report (SCAP Return)** (Pages 171 - 186)

To note the report on pupil place planning sufficiency.

10. **Annual Youth Justice Plan** (Pages 187 - 224)

To receive the annual Youth Justice Plan.

11. **Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee Annual Report** (Pages 225 - 256)

To receive the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee annual report 2023-23.

12. **Children and Families Scorecard Q1** (Pages 257 - 266)

To note the Children and Families scorecard for quarter 1 of 2023-24.

13. **Transformation of Travel Support for Children and Young People and Review of Available Walking Routes** (Pages 267 - 316)

To consider a report on the transformation of travel support and available walking routes to schools.

14. **Children and Families Capital Programme – Implementation of Capital Schemes (including new and named schemes and School Condition Programme)** (Pages 317 - 338)

To receive an update on progress with the school capital programme for 2023/24 and approve the progression of projects and named schemes as detailed the appendices.

15. **Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund Policy (SENIF)** (Pages 339 - 356)

To consider a report seeking approval to consult on revising the mechanism of support provided to enable children with special educational needs (SEN) to access their early education entitlements.

16. **School Causing Concern - St Gregory's** (Pages 357 - 366)

To consider a report seeking approval to commence the structured process as outlined in the statutory guidance regarding the future viability of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.

17. **Commissioning Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service** (Pages 367 - 400)

To consider a report seeking approval to recommission the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service.

18. **Work Programme** (Pages 401 - 406)

To consider the work programme and determine any required amendments.

19. **Minutes of Sub-Committees** (Pages 407 - 408)

To note the minutes of the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee meeting of 20 June 2023.

Membership: Councillors L Anderson (Vice-Chair), R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, C Bulman (Chair), D Clark, E Gilman, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, G Smith and L Smith

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Monday, 10th July, 2023 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)
Councillor L Anderson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, D Clark, E Gilman, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, G Smith and L Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Mark Bayley, Acting Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Deborah Nickson, Legal Team Manager (People)
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer
Vicky Whiting, Business Development Manager
Laura Rogerson, Head of Service - Inclusion
Gill Betton, Head of Service – Children's Developments and Partnerships
Jill Stenton, Commissioning Manager

ALSO PRESENT

Nicola Wycherley, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB
Richard Hall, Edge Public Solutions

9 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In the interest of openness, the following declarations of interest were made:

Cllr Kain declared that he was a supply teacher working with agencies that operated in Cheshire East.

Cllr G Smith declared that he was a trade union official for NASUWT.

Cllr Bennett-Wake declared that she worked as a teaching assistant for a local school.

11 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

12 **PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

There were no public speakers.

13 **HIGH NEEDS FUNDING CONSULTATION RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS**

The committee received the report which outlined the results of the recently undertaken consultation regarding a potential change in model for the allocation of top-up funding associated with Education, Health and Care Plans.

A query was raised regarding the 12 responses relating to one school and what the differences were in these responses. Officers advised that responses were reviewed to ensure that they were not submitted by the same individual and undertook to provide further detail following the meeting.

It was suggested that consideration be given to undertaking a piece of work around sharing consultation responses in accordance with the Corporate Plan priorities of being open and fair.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the results of the recent consultation regarding the model for allocation of top-up funding associated with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

2. Agree the adoption of the proposed new banding model (as developed by the High Needs Funding Working Group) for funding associated with all Cheshire East EHC Plans for school aged children in mainstream schools

3. Agree the proposed staged implementation of the new banding model

4. Delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services

   a) the implementation of the new banding model and
   b) to undertake any consultations and to make any consequential changes ensure the implementation of banding model.

14 **UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

The committee received the report which provided an update on the partnership's progress against the action plan from the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children in Cheshire East.

The committee noted that colleagues from the police had been unable to attend due to an inspection coinciding with the meeting. A concern regarding cuts to the number of police community support officers available to support young people, for example with online safety, was highlighted as an area to be raised with police colleagues. Officers would take this away to feed back to the police after the meeting.

Members commented that the report focused on the volume of activity carried out and that it would be helpful to understand what impact these actions have had. It was requested that this be incorporated into future reports. A further request was made for future reports to include a greater level of detail; it was noted that there would be a risk in presenting too much detail which could result in individuals being identifiable, and therefore it would require careful consideration as to how this could be done, but that the request would be taken on board.

A query was raised as to arrangements for safeguarding training for members and it was noted that details of this would be shared following the meeting.

It was suggested that the findings of the report be shared with town and parish councils.

Members thanked officers and partners for this work.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the report on the progress to date and impact on outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation.

2. Continue to offer support and scrutiny to the partnership in this important work.

3. Agree to receive a report in early 2024 with a further update on progress made against the JTAI action plan.

15 **CONSULTATION ON THE PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGET OFFER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The committee received the report which provided an overview of progress to date against the plans to transform travel support for children and young people.

A query was raised as to whether personal travel budgets redefine the local authority's statutory responsibility and whether an additional mechanism is required for assurance around business use for insurance where parents are transporting their children to school on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that a written response would be provided by Legal.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the progress to date in relation to the transformation of travel support for children and young people.

2. Approve an increase of the current mileage rate for PTBs from 25p per mile to 45p per mile, effective from the start of the next academic year (September 2023).

3. Approve the proposed changes to the school transport policies and procedures in relation to the process for claiming PTBs, including removing the requirement for parents / carers to provide proof of attendance, arrange regular monthly payments and provide flexibility within the scheme for exceptional cases.

16 **PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2022/23**

The committee received the report which provided an overview of the Cheshire East Council provisional outturn for the financial year 2022/23 and the financial performance of the Council relevant to the committee's remit.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Consider the report of the Corporate Policy Committee (Agenda for Corporate Policy Committee on Tuesday, 11th July, 2023, 10.00 am | Cheshire East Council)

2. Consider the financial performance of the Council in the 2022/23 financial year relevant to their terms of reference.

3. Consider the delegated decisions relating to supplementary revenue estimates for specific grants coded directly to services in accordance

with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Section 2 of each Committee Appendix (Annex 2).

4. Approve supplementary revenue estimates (SRE) over £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000 detailed in Annex 2: Appendix 2, Section 2, Table 2.

5. Consider the update on performance with regard to the MTFS 2023-27 approved budget policy change items, in respect of Services within the remit of the Committee (Annex 3).

17 **PROGRESS ON THE ALL AGE CARERS STRATEGY 2021 - 2025**

The committee received the report which provided an update on progress to further develop Cheshire East All Age Carers Strategy since presenting the strategy to committee in March 2021.

The committee were advised of an opportunity to become Carer Champions and details of this would be circulated following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee note the progress details provided for the All-Age Carers Strategy 2021-2025. The All-Age Carers Strategy was published in September 2021.

18 **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCORECARD QUARTER 4 2022/23**

The committee received the report which provided an overview of performance against the core indicator set within the three directorate areas of Children's Services.

A query was raised regarding case load per social worker and officers confirmed that this could be included in the scorecard going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

Cllr Hayes left the meeting during this item and did not return.

19 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee received the work programme and discussed the upcoming September meeting which had a large number of reports scheduled. Officers would be reviewing this to establish any reports that could be deferred. Due to time sensitivity of many of the items, it was expected that the September meeting would be extended.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

20 **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The committee received the minutes of the following sub-committees:

Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub-Committee – 15 February 2023

Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (formerly Corporate Parenting Committee) – 15 March 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be noted.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 16:55

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)

Agenda Item 5

Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

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

Report Reference No: CF/12/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

1 To request approval of the updated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 by Children and Families Committee.

2 This report and appendix 1 provide Children and Families Committee with an updated DSG Management Plan covering the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28 and requests approval of the plan.

3 Throughout the report and appendix there are several abbreviations. A glossary has been included at the end of appendix 1 for reference.

4 This report should be read alongside the refreshed SEND Strategy and SEND Sufficiency Statement which are both presented at the same committee, 18 September 2023.

Executive Summary

5 **There are six key messages in this report:**

(i) As a result of a national high needs funding shortfall, where funding has not matched demand, the council's DSG reserve deficit is forecast to be one and a half times the annual allocation at the end of 2023/24, £91.2 million based on a grant of £56.1 million. This deficit is forecast

to increase in value and it is not recoverable under current forecasts.

(ii) The council took part in the Department for Education's (DfE) Delivering Better Value programme (DBV) during 2022/23. The external DBV consultants validated the forecasting work done by the council. The programme included the opportunity to bid for funding. As a result, Cheshire East have been awarded £1 million in the form of a grant to support a transformational change programme with the aim of becoming more sustainable in the future.

(iii) However, despite the engagement in the DBV programme opportunities identified within the programme were not sufficient with the current mitigations within the DSG management plan, to address the recurring in-year overspends and deficit position. This report highlights that fundamental changes to funding levels is essential along with additional capital funding to increase specialist places, and changes in culture and activity is required.

(iv) The current position is not sustainable, and the deficit is being managed through a temporary accounting override. The arrangements beyond March 2026 are not confirmed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

(v) There are no current national arrangements for this deficit to be addressed, and use of local funding is not viable. Currently there is insufficient general fund balance (reserves).

(vi) Cheshire East have recently been invited to take part in the Safety Valve intervention programme with the DfE this year and confirmed acceptance back to the DFE on the 7 August. An initial meeting with the DfE will be held by early October 2023 and will build on the work and priority areas identified through the DBV programme. Being part of the Safety Value programme we will need to demonstrate sufficiently that their DSG management plans create lasting sustainability, including reaching an in-year balance as quickly as possible, and will provide improved support for children and young people, then the department will enter into an agreement with the authority, subject to Ministerial approval. This will require a fundamentally rewritten management plan, which will be presented to Full Council on the 11 December for approval.

SEND Strategy

6 The SEND strategy has been refreshed to include priority actions relating to the mitigations with the DSG management plan. The refreshed strategy is to be taken to the Children and Families Committee on 18 September 2023.

SEND Sufficiency Statement

7 SEND sufficiency statement has been updated to reflect the growing demand for specialist SEND provisions and identifies the shortfalls across the borough. This information enables us to:

- Assess the needs of our children and young people in Cheshire East.
- Evaluate how well our current provision meets young people's needs and identify any gaps.
- Support to plan how we will continue to develop our provision over a three-year period starting in 2023-2026 so that we can achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people

8 The SEND Strategy, SEND sufficiency statement and dedicated school's grant are all key drivers in the council's priority to empower and care about people, with a focus on:

• Working together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient

• Reducing health inequalities across the borough

• Supporting all children to have the best start in life

• Increasing opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs

• Ensuring all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

The SEND sufficiency statement is to be taken to the Children and Families committee on the 18 September 2023.

DfE Interventions

9 The increase in numbers and complexity of need for children with Education and Health Care Plan (EHCPs) that have their

identified needs met through the DSG high needs grant has significantly exceeded the funding received for that purpose.

10 This situation has occurred over the last seven years with several factors contributing to it locally including a significant lack of specialist places, high rates of needs assessments, parental expectations and more generally the high needs funding allocation which is not linked to EHCP numbers.

11 This is a national issue and as a result most councils are now facing significant deficits on their DSG reserves as recurring overspends are transferred to it each year.

12 This has prompted the DFE to take a number of actions:

- They released a DSG Management Plan template in 2020 to help councils set out their forecast spending pressures, income levels and DSG reserve deficit. From 2022 any council with a deficit DSG reserve (or a significant decrease in their reserve) must produce a management plan. The first version of the plan was approved by Cheshire East Cabinet on 9 March 2021. A second version of the plan was approved at Children and Families Committee on 23 September 2022.

- They have also 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 34 local authorities who have safety valve agreements in place. There are a further 5 local authorities including Cheshire East who have been invited to participate in the scheme in 2023.

13 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.

Cheshire East DSG Management Plan

14 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.

15 The High Needs DSG allocation for 2023/2024 is £56.1m.

16 The overall strategy will remain to stay focused on key priority areas however we recognise that this is not sufficient to meet need within budget. A revised enhanced plan that will be produced within the Safety Valve programme to address the priority areas whilst working to increase local provision and enhance special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support services to ensure needs are met in the most effective way.

17 For Cheshire East the DSG reserve deficit as of 31 March 2023 is £46.9m. The forecasts in this report demonstrate that, even with a significant number of mitigations factored in, the expected increase in demand and resulting costs is forecast to continue to exceed the funding provided by the DfE. This is illustrated in the table below:

While mitigations make a significant difference, the DSG Deficit Reserve increases over the medium term and is not recoverable

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Unmitigated DSG Deficit	91.2	159.8	255.2	379.6	535.7
Mitigated DSG Deficit	85.9	131.6	186.0	243.5	306.9
Difference	**(5.3)**	**(28.2)**	**(69.2)**	**(136.1)**	**(228.8)**

18 As shown above the Cheshire East DSG reserve deficit will be at £306.9m by 31 March 2028 even with an ambitious level of mitigations being achieved.

While mitigations make a significant difference, in year expenditure increases over the medium term and is not sustainable for the council

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Unmitigated in year Expenditure	100.4	126.5	154.9	185.8	219.3
Mitigated in year Expenditure	95.1	103.5	114.0	118.8	126.7
Difference	**(5.3)**	**(23.0)**	**(40.9)**	**(67.0)**	**(92.6)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the current DSG Management Plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28, which forecasts a deficit reserve position of £536m unmitigated and £307m mitigated by the end of March 2028. There is a full breakdown of the forecast for income and expenditure in appendix 1 paragraph 22. This is a requirement of DfE.

2. Note the need to pursue additional capital funding and review the capital programme to identify additional projects which could be included in DSG management plan as determined by the SEN sufficiency statement.

   The council has updated the SEN sufficiency statement for 2023/24 to 2025/26. This will set out the additional provision needed over the next three years to further mitigate the overspend and require significant capital investment to deliver).

3. To delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services authority to undertake any consultations deemed necessary to facilitate implementation.

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

5. To note, the acceptance of invitation to join the Safety Valve intervention programme.

6. To approve an onward journey for a revised version of the DSG management plan to include Safety Valve to be presented to Council on 11 December 2023.

Background

19 The accounting override (referenced in section 5 above) allows councils to hold the deficit on the council's balance sheet, but it should be noted that there is still an impact on cash flow as a result of needing to pay out more money than we receive. There will be financial impacts of either interest payable, or loss of interest income, which will increase as the deficit increases.

20 Central high needs funding has increased in recent years but not by enough to keep pace with the growth in EHCPs. The DfE apply an increase to local authorities' high needs budget at the same set percentage for every authority. This does not reflect the differences in the rate of increase in EHCPs across authorities. EHCPs in Cheshire East have increased by 122% from 1,812 to 4,029 from 2018 to 2023 and the budget increased by 71% from £33.1m to £56.7m over the same period. These figures include additional high needs funding over the last two years which has been received with specific grant conditions which includes a 3.4% increase on place funding and top up funding for special schools.

21 The DSG High Needs allocation for 2023/24 is £56.7m, £11.8m is allocated for high needs mandatory place funding (funding allocated to planned high needs places within our special schools and further education colleges (FE)), leaving a balance of £44.8m to support the needs of children and young people as stipulated in their EHCP.

22 To illustrate the insufficient funding if we split the £44.8m across the forecasted number of EHCPs for 2023/24, the average available funding per EHCP would be £9,600 per annum.

23 To put this into context, average funding in a mainstream setting is £7,536 per annum which is the lowest cost of possible provision. The average cost of a non-maintained special school/ Independent Special School/Specialist post 16 Institute (NMSS/ISS/SPI) is approx. £60,000.

DSG Management Plan Update

24 The council produced its first DSG Management Plan for 2021/22 to 2024/25 and that was agreed by Cabinet on 9 March 2021.

25 The DSG Management Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27 was agreed by Children and Families Committee on 23 September 2022.

26 The forecasts of demand, costs and mitigating actions have been refined through ongoing review and the council has produced an updated DSG Management Plan covering the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 for approval by Children and Families Committee.

27 While the plan has been subject to refinement the key messages over significant funding deficits remains the same. Unless funding levels, demand and capacity to deliver mitigations (such as new special schools) change it will not be possible to recover the deficit position.

28 The new plan forecasts an unmitigated DSG Reserve deficit of £533m by 31 March 2028 and a mitigated deficit of £304m by 31 March 2028.

29 The plan will form the basis for ongoing engagement with interested parties including the DfE, the Cheshire East Schools Forum and the SEND Partnership Board, over the coming months.

Key Updates to the Plan

30 The table below details any updates to the plan since the Cabinet version and Children and Families Committee version (September 2022) and these are outlined below.

Issue	Cabinet – March 2021	Children and Families Committee – Sept 2022	Children and Families Committee – Sept 2023
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) data	The original plan was based on in year data in late 2020.	The plans are now based on the latest statutory January 2022 SEN2 return.	The plans are now based on the latest statutory January 2023 SEN2 return.
EHCP forecasts	This used percentage increases for each age group.	Changed to a fixed increase each year to reflect trends. A figure of 600 net more plans per annum has been used.	Fixed rate increase of 617 net more plans per annum has been used. The allocation across provision type is based on

Issue	Cabinet – March 2021	Children and Families Committee – Sept 2022	Children and Families Committee – Sept 2023
			actuals for 2022
Outturn information	Latest information was 2019/20.	Latest information is 2021/22.	Latest information is 2022/23
Budget information	Latest information was 2021/22.	Latest information is 2022/23.	Latest information is 2023/24
Average cost information	Based on information during 2020/21.	Based on information for 2021/22.	Based on information for 2022/23.
Annual increases in high needs funding	Local estimates based on indications in DfE documents – and different assumptions for mitigated / unmitigated.	This has been set by the DfE as 5% in 2023/24 followed by 3% per annum after that.	3% increase has been applied each year
High Needs income adjustments	High needs funding has been adjusted for the increased number of special school places, as they form part of the high needs national funding formula, **in addition** to a percentage increase.	Same approach taken.	Same approach taken. A change has been made regarding the national funding formula whereby funding is increased by £4,000 per place rather than £10,000 which was originally used.

31 Further details on the management plan are shown in **Appendix 1** to this report.

The Cheshire East Strategy

32 The overall strategy adopted by the council remains broadly the same as in the initial plan. The two main aims are to increase local provision and enhance SEND support services to reduce the rate of growth of EHCPs to ensure needs are met in the most effective way: right support, right place, right time and were endorsed by the work completed within the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme.

33 These form the basis for the mitigating actions in the plan. Increasing local provision is an invest to save measure with additional costs from local provision being offset by reductions on expenditure with independent specialist providers.

34 The SEND strategy has been refreshed to include priority actions relating to the mitigations with the DSG management plan. The refreshed strategy is to be taken to the Children and Families Committee on 18 September 2023 for approval to start the consultation process.

The Mitigations

35 The plan contains a series of mitigations which are designed to achieve the strategy through managing needs at the necessary level and where necessary ensuring cost effective provision is available to meet those needs. There is a particular emphasis on reducing the rate of growth of EHCPs or escalation of support levels where they are not required and ceasing plans where needs can be met without an EHCP.

36 The mitigations can be broken down into several categories, further information on mitigations can be found in the attached appendix.

Progress Update

37 As part of the DBV programme

- Our unmitigated financial and EHCP forecasts within our DSG management plan were verified, Newton (the DfE's programme delivery partner) confirmed that Cheshire East Council's projections resulted in a similar future expenditure as the DBV projections. This was largely due to similarities in projection methods.

- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) advised Cheshire East to take a prudent approach with the existing mitigations during the assessment session. This was to take into account the current progress and existing and/or potential barriers to plans within the DSG management plan.
- As part of the DBV programme, the use of the high needs block has undergone a due diligence and an accounting practice process conducted by CIPFA. No issues were identified.

38 The intensive engagement and pressure on resource and capacity in the DBV programme did create some delays to mitigations activity, and it was deemed to be beneficial to wait for the findings of the DBV programme to identify if our efforts were targeting the correct areas. One of the recommendations received from the DBV programme is not to try to do too much at the same time, and advice given to us is to focus on a smaller number of mitigations but with the same theme.

39 Further progress of mitigations can be found in Appendix 1 however, below provides a high-level summary on progress since the plan was introduced.

- The creation of 13 enhanced mainstream provisions.
- The creation of 55 additional resource provision places.
- An additional 198 special school places are either in use or in progress.
- 2 new DfE free school special schools, totalling 120 places have been secured through the DfE bidding process.
- The creation of 80 supported internships across the 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years.

40 In terms of forecasting, inevitably the roll out of new provision and new mitigations does take time and the EHCP growth was much higher than predicted in 2022/23, but also the allocation across provision types has had an impact. We saw a higher number of EHCP placements in NMSS/ISS/SPIs. As a result the 2022/23 outturn deficit position was £3.1m above the mitigated forecast. However, the outturn deficit position was £6.1m below the unmitigated position.

41 Other key areas that have progressed across the wider children's directorate include the successful bid application for the Family Hubs Local Transformation Fund, which aims to ensure that our families have the right support at the right time from the right

people. Our partnership principles, priorities and measures for success are monitored by our Family Hub strategic board.

42 Family Hubs are being rolled out across 2 locality areas, split into smaller defined areas known as collaborative areas. Each locality has 4 collaborative areas totalling 8 across the borough. A collaborative is a defined area in which data is analysed, local intelligence is gathered and key stakeholders within an area identify the top priorities and work together as a partnership to have a positive impact on the outcomes of children and families.

43 In Cheshire East we are also having a family hub with a specialist SEND designation. Monks family hub will be our South locality SEND centre of excellence that will lead the way in shaping the delivery of SEND support across our borough through analysing gaps and pressure points within SEND support systems and trailing new ways to overcome.

44 We have restructured our internal strong start teams around the delivery of our family hubs principles the restructure has focused on inclusion being the golden thread through our service delivery and making every contact count, so we reduce the number of times our families have to tell their stories and we adopt a relational approach to our service delivery.

45 We have a newly developed early years workforce who will all be trained as portage practitioners to deliver a portage home visiting service and develop a portage training offer to support our early years providers to enhance inclusive practice by gaining the national portage approval (NPA) stamp of approval scheme.

46 Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with SEND and their families. Portage aims to:

- work with families to help them develop a quality of life and experience, for themselves and their young children, in which they can learn together, play together, participate and be included in their community.

- play a part in minimising the disabling barriers that confront young children and their families.

- support the national and local development of inclusive services for children

47 The NPA stamp of approval scheme is an award given to early year's settings who have demonstrated they deliver inclusive early years education based upon portage principles.

48 The Early Years Forum has been transformed from a health notification panel to a multi-agency panel that assesses and monitors the provision of early years children who are identified as having complex SEND needs. The Early Years forum reforms have been co-produced by a task and finish group involving representatives from health, the local authority, Early Years settings and the Parent Carer Forum. The revised Early Years forum is due to start in September 2023. The Early Years forum will be chaired by our SEND panel managers to ensure there is a seamless process between the Early Years forum and SEND panels when a child is identified as having needs beyond SEND support.

Comparative Data on DSG Reserve Deficits

49 In April 2022 the Society of County Treasurers (SCT) completed a survey of council DSG deficits. An update of this work will be carried out for the end of 2022/23 balances but has not been started by the SCT yet.

50 A recent survey conducted across the Northwest (NW) showed that seventeen LAs were holding combined deficit balances totalling £177m. Five LAs held surplus balances totalling a combined £17m.

51 Of the NW LAs which already held a deficit balance at the end of 2021/22 and reported an in-year deficit again during 2022/23, the average increase in their cumulative deficit position was a further 72% at the end of March 2023. The increase in the deficit balance for CEC between 31 March 2022 (£26m) and 31 March 2023 (£47m) was 82%.

Comparative Data on EHCPs

52 The table below shows the proportion of EHCPs and SEN support (SEN support without an EHCP) per 2–18-year-old population. A SEND Support plan can be drawn up by a class teacher, with the advice of a SENCO where appropriate, to help the parent and the school identify the child's needs and interventions to meet them. It is a teaching and learning plan and should set out goals and actions for the child that are different from or additional to those that are in place for the rest of the class.

53 The proportion of EHCPs across England has increased from 2021/22 to 2022/23. Cheshire East has seen a higher increase than national statistics.

54 Cheshire East has a much lower proportion of SEN support plans, compared with national levels.

		2021/22	2022/23
Cheshire East	EHC plans (%)	4.1	4.7
	SEN support/SEN without an EHC plan (%)	9.4	9.9
England	EHC plans (%)	4.0	4.3
	SEN support/SEN without an EHC plan (%)	12.6	13.0

55 If we apply the national proportions to Cheshire East's population, the number of plans would be 3,686. This is 343 less plans than Cheshire East had in January 2023 (4,029).

Sensitivity Analysis

56 The latest DSG Management Plan is based on a forecast that assumes growth of EHCPs by 617 net more plans per annum.

57 If that turns out to be more or less, then it will change the financial forecasts. However, more importantly the allocation across the different provision types impact on the financial forecast. Mainstream provision on average costs £7,536, whereas NMSS/ISS/SPIs cost on average £60,000 per annum. If more placements are made in NMSS/ISS/SPI, the forecast will be substantially higher.

58 The impact of this became highly evident when comparing the plan from last year 2022/23 to 2026/27 with the new plan 2023/24 to 2027/28, which takes the actual EHCP outturn position at the end of 2022/23 as the baseline starting position for the new forecast. An increase of 208 more EHCPs places in NMSS/ISS/SPIs, on average has increased expenditure by £12.5m. Over 5 years (not taking into account potential fee increases), this amounts to £62.5m

Where Next

59 As previously mentioned in this report, Cheshire East have been invited to take part in the Safety Valve intervention programme. Cheshire East have accepted the invitation. If an agreement is reached, local authorities are held to account for the delivery of their plans via quarterly reporting to the Department. If adequate progress is being made, authorities will receive incremental

funding to eliminate their historic deficits, spread out over the lifetime of the agreement (generally five financial years).

60 Cheshire East will need to demonstrate

- How Cheshire East will control their deficit and reach an in-year balance (as a minimum) on their DSG, and how quickly.
- How Cheshire East will contribute to the reduction of the historic deficit through use of DSG surpluses, in addition to reaching an in-year balance.
- How Cheshire East 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.
- 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.

61 Proposed timeline

- 7 August 2023 confirm intention to participate in the Safety Valve intervention programme
- 31 August 2023- submit Cheshire Easts latest DSG management plan and submit Cheshire East SEND strategy
- September and October 2023 produce a revised DSG management plan
- November 2023 present the revised DSG management plan to children and families committee
- 11 December present the revised DSG management plan to Council
- 15 December submit initial proposals of the DSG management plan to the Safety Valve programme

- 12 January submit final proposals to the Safety Valve programme
- If the proposal is approved by Secretary of State, Cheshire East will enter into an agreement. Agreements will be published in March 2024.

62 It is expected that a key benefit will be learning from other councils on successful strategies to manage demand and expenditure, and from the support of independent experts with some external funding to drive change.

63 The following table details 20 local authorities who have entered agreements under the safety valve intervention programme in 2022-23 and also details of their safety valve funding allocation.

64 There are 14 other local authorities who joined the safety valve programme in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Council	2022-23 (£m)	2023-24 (£m)	2024-35 (£m)	2025-26- (£m)	2026 -27 (£m)	2027-28 (£m)	2028-29 (£m)	Total (£m)
Barnsley MBC	9.16	2.75	2.75	2.75	5.5			22.91
Bath and North East Somerset	7.68	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65	3.29	19.22
Bexley LBC	11.96	2.56	2.56	2.56	2.56	2.56	5.13	29.89
Blackpool Council	1.55	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.93			3.89
Bolton MBC	2.64	0.79	0.79	0.79	1.58			6.59
Cambridgeshire CC	19.6	5.88	5.88	5.88	11.76			49
Croydon LBC	10.96	3.29	3.29	3.29	6.58			27.41
Darlington BC	2.48	0.74	0.74	0.74	1.49			6.19
Haringey LBC	11.96	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99	5.98		29.9
Hounslow LBC	10.72	2.68	2.68	2.68	2.68	6.36		27.8
Isle of Wight Council	5.08	1.52	1.52	1.52	3.05			12.69
Kent CC	56.8	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	28.4		142

Medway Council	5.72	2.15	2.15	4.29				14.31
Norfolk CC	28	6	6	6	6	6	12	70
North Somerset Council	8.44	2.11	2.11	2.11	2.11	4.22		21.1
North Tyneside Council	7.8	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	3.9		19.5
Slough LBC	10.8	3.24	3.24	3.24	6.48			27
Southwark LBC	9.22	2.77	2.77	2.77	5.53			23.06
Torbay Council	6.16	1.55	1.55	1.55	3.1			13.91
Wokingham BC	8.04	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	3.45	20.09

65 The council has continued to discuss the high needs shortfall directly with the DfE at a series of follow up meetings on the first version of the plan, both through meetings held to take part in the DBV programme and indirectly through discussions over the costing override issue with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

66 In addition, the council is also part of a number of special interest groups including: the Society of County Treasures; the Society of Unitary Treasurers, the Northwest schools accountants group, the North West SEND leads group and the F40 Group (the 40 lowest funded education authorities). All these groups are making regular representations or conducting surveys on the issues.

Accounting Override – Dedicated Schools Grant adjustment account (England)

67 From the 2020/21 financial year the accounting arrangements for the deficit on the DSG grant were changed.

68 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.

69 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.

70 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.

71 The current override has been extended and will now end on 31 March 2026. 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.

72 Depending on national progress on this issue and the impact of the support programmes the council may have to fund some high needs costs from other sources. However, this would not be acceptable given the scale of the issue.

73 The size of the deficit is making it potentially impossible to recover and represents a significant cashflow issue, and an unmitigated funding risk for the council.

Base Budget Pressures

74 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, specialist services (such as SALT) and the home to school and SEN transport team.

75 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

76 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.

77 The potential for additional services to these young adults with associated costs is likely to form a pressure on the council's base budget.

78 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.

Consultation and Engagement

79 The first version of the report was approved by Cabinet on 9 March 2021. That version was shared with the schools forum on 10 June 2021 and shared with the DfE.

80 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.

81 The second version of the plan was also shared with the DfE via the DBV program work during the summer 2022.

82 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.

83 SEND management team will be part of our internal monitoring process.

84 We have continued to update Schools Forum on progress and that will continue as part of ongoing refinement.

85 The SEND Partnership will ensure partners are aware of the issues and part of the design of any solutions.

86 DFE consultation on the reform of SEND and Alternative Provision closed in July 2022. The SEND Partnership submitted an extensive response to the proposals. 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. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Reasons for Recommendations

87 In line with the issues being seen nationally, expenditure on pupils with SEND is increasing significantly as a result of higher demand and complexity.

88 This increase exceeds the DfE's funding allocations and has led to the council's DSG reserve being in a deficit position of £46.9m as of 31 March 2023. The expectation is that the deficit will continue to increase and cannot be recovered in the medium term under current expenditure and income forecasts.

89 The DfE management plan guidance advises that:

"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 2022 to 2023 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 2023 to 2024 financial year and subsequent years
- 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 school's 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.

90 The DSG Management Plan will enable Cheshire East to:

- comply with paragraph 5.2 of the DSG: conditions of grant 2022 to 2023,
- 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.

91 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

92 The table below sets out the issues:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing (not produce a DSG 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, proactively introducing mitigations and joining the DBV programme.
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 of the budget pressure.	The true high needs funding gap is not recognised and there are pressures on other budgets or the council's general reserves.
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 council would be reliant on the DfE meeting the full costs of the DSG Deficit which is unlikely to happen.

Option	Impact	Risk
	the DSG reserve deficit.	

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

93 The local authority has a statutory duty under S.42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to secure the special educational needs provision described in a young person's Education, Health and Care plan, including commissioning the required provision to meet those needs.

94 The Secretary of State has power to provide 'financial assistance' for educational purposes under sections 14-18 of the Education Act 2002 ('the 2002 Act') and the standard means of funding is by the Designated Schools Grant which is paid under section 14 of the 2002 Act Section 16 of the 2002 Act allows the Secretary of State to impose conditions of funding. The relevant regulations are The School and Early Finance (England) Regulations 2023 which apply in relation to the financial year beginning on the 1 April 2023.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

95 This is a joint Education and Skills and Finance report. All the Financial implications are contained within the report itself.

Policy

96 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.

97 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.

98 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.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

99 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.

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

101 An Equality Inclusion Assessment has been produced and is available on the website.

Human Resources

102 Due to the increased demand for needs assessments the workloads of staff in the SEND Assessment and Monitoring Team and associated support services remain high. This is making the ability to meet legal and statutory requirements remain a challenge. EHCP volumes increased by 37% from January 2021 to January 2022 and are expected to continue to rise.

103 As a result the Director of Education secured further base budget growth through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 onwards.

104 The DBV grant of £1m is being used to fund several posts to facilitate the transformational change programme associated with the new DBV mitigations within the DSG Management Plan. These posts are on a two-year fixed basis.

Risk Management

105 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.

106 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.

107 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.

108 The council continues to make payments to settings but it is not able to fund them from the overall resources it has available. This is a key issue to discuss with the DfE.

109 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

110 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)

111 It is essential that the council makes best use of resources to ensure that children and young people receive the services they need and those services must be provided.

112 The council has approved its Children’s Vision which contains a priority around children with additional needs.

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

Public Health

114 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

115 Many pupils are educated out of borough at high costs and with long travel journeys. The SEND Provision plan is generating

additional in borough school places, but this is unable to match the increased level of demand. We do however have a high proportion of SEND pupils in our mainstream schools compared to other authorities.

116 All expansions take account of environmental factors for new schools.

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

118 The internal works required to update the building to make it fit for purpose will include a comprehensive review of the impact on climate factors.

119 Significant changes will take place which 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 one Appendix to this report: Appendix 1 – Summary of the DSG Management Plan.
Background Papers:	DSG Management Plan 2022-23 – C&F Committee September 2022 - Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Delivering Better Value Update C&F Committee March 2023 - Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Schools Forum- SB FWG 20.09.22 Minutes FINAL (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

	SEND & AP Green Paper - SEND and alternative provision improvement plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Children and Families Committee 18 September 2023: • SEN Sufficiency Statement • SEND Strategy Refresh • Capital Programme • School Capacity Return (SCAP) This link provides information on Safety Valve agreements with other local authorities - Dedicated schools grant: very high deficit intervention - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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 2023/24 to 2027/28, which has been updated based on the January 2023 education, health and care plan (EHCP) numbers from the SEN2 statutory return and the latest forecasts for the mitigations.

2. The DSG Management Plan is based on a very detailed spreadsheet template issued by the DfE. This Appendix provides an analysis on EHCP numbers and outlines the basis for the calculations within the plan and provides a summary of the results.

3. The DSG management plan provides an unmitigated and mitigated forecast for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

4. Where changes to provision are identified they remain subject to necessary consultations, sufficient capital funding where applicable and local approval.

5. 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.

6. The average costs of provision ranges from £7,536 for a pupil supported in mainstream to £25,000 for a special school to over £60,000 for independent specialist provision.

7. Findings and opportunities from the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme have been built into mitigations within the new DSG mgmt. plan.

8. The High Needs Allocation for 2023-24 is £56.2m

Provision Types

9. 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

10. 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).

11. 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 £60,000 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%
Total	**3,412**	**478**	**16%**	**4,029**	**617**	**18%**

12. 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.

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%
Special Independent schools + SPIs and NMSS (pre & post 16)	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%
Total	**654**	**2%**	**100%**	**742**	**13.5%**	**100%**

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

13. The council has to submit a SEN 2 return in January each year setting out the latest information on EHCP numbers. This return is used as the basis for the DSG management plan. The data from the January 2023 SEN2 return is the basis for forecasting in this plan.

14. The unmitigated forecast is based on a flat rate increase of 617 (net: new less ceased) more plans each and every year. This change reflects local experience of the annual change and a review of needs assessments.

15. The plan assumes that service and placement spend rises accordingly, that new places are filled and other mitigations apply to the increased number.

16. The growth in EHCPs is forecast to reduce from 76.6% to 36.7% after mitigations are applied equating to 5,506 EHCPs by 2027/28. This is set out in the table below.

Number of EHCPs	2023 Actual	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	% change
Unmitigated	4,029	4,646	5,263	5,880	6,497	7,114	76.6%
Mitigated	4,029	4,504	4,852	5,156	5,338	5,506	36.7%
Impact of mitigations	-	(142)	(411)	(724)	(1,159)	(1,608)	

DSG Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

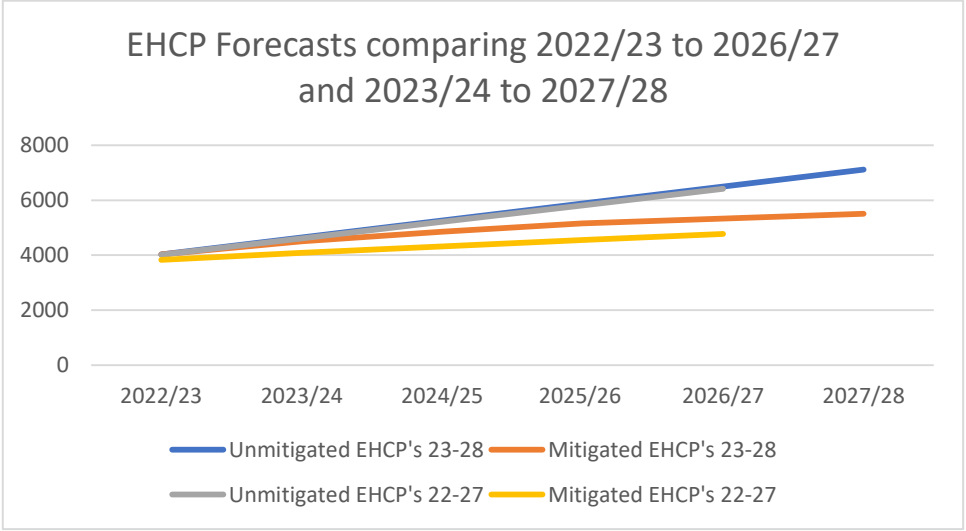
Forecast

		MITIGATED Forecast					UNMITIGATED Forecast				
Type	2023 Actual	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Mainstream	2,084	2,245	2,392	2,457	2,549	2,583	2,339	2,594	2,849	3,104	3,359
RP / SEN Units	132	180	204	211	218	218	132	132	132	132	132
Special Schools	778	848	916	986	1056	1096	778	778	778	778	778
MNSS & Independent	545	718	810	963	972	1067	868	1191	1514	1837	2160

Post 16 & FE	471	486	495	496	492	483	502	533	564	595	626
Hosp Schools / AP	19	27	35	43	51	59	27	35	43	51	59
Total EHCPs	**4,029**	**4,504**	**4,852**	**5,156**	**5,338**	**5,506**	**4,646**	**5,263**	**5,880**	**6,497**	**7,114**

Comparison to last year's forecast EHCPs

17. The graph below compares the EHCP forecast for both the unmitigated and mitigated position for 2022/23 to 2026/27 and 2023/24 to 2027/28. We can see that the unmitigated trajectory in both the old and the new DSG mgmt. plan is similar. However the mitigated position is higher, this is due to the increase in EHCPs in calendar year 2022. The baseline/starting position is higher. We can see that this gap does not increase significantly due to mitigations in place.



18. The table below details the variance from between the actual EHCPs (January 2023), compared with the original unmitigated and mitigated position reported in the DSG management plan 2022/23 to 2026/27.

All EHCPS	Actual EHCP's Jan 2023	DSG mgmt. plan 2022 Forecast MITIGATED	% of ALL plans	Variance to MITIGATED	Variance to MITIGATED	DSG mgmt. plan 2022 Forecast UNMITIGATED	% of ALL plans	Variance to UNMITIGATED	Variance to UNMITIGATED
Mainstream schools inc Nursery/PVI	2084	2074	54%	-10	-0.5%	2225	55%	141	7%
Resource Provision	132	177	5%	45	34.1%	88	2%	-44	-33%
Special Schools	778	741	19%	-37	-4.8%	706	18%	-72	-9%
NMSS/ISS/SPIs	545	330	9%	-215	-39.4%	469	12%	-76	-14%
FE colleges and sixth form	471	495	13%	24	5.1%	513	13%	42	9%
AP	19	11	0%	-8	-42.1%	11	0%	-8	-42%
Total	**4029**	**3828**	100%	**-201**	**-5.0%**	**4012**	**100%**	**-17**	**-0.4%**

Overall Financial Summary of the DSG Management Plan

Starting Point and Income Forecasts

19. The DSG reserve deficit balance is -£46.9m as of 31 March 2023 (this includes £25.7m DSG deficit carried forward from the previous year). This is based on high needs funding for 2022/23 of £50.7 and EHCPs of 4,029

20. The high needs funding for 2023/24 is £56.2m which includes additional high needs funding of £2.3m.

21. The high needs funding has been forecasted using DfE guidance as 3% growth each year. The additional high needs supplement, received in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 has also been included in the baseline.

Overall Financial Summary

22. The tables below summarise the financial forecast in the DSG Management Plan in terms of the unmitigated position, the mitigated position and the difference between the two.

Provision Type	Mitigated forecast					Unmitigated Forecast					Variance between unmitigated and mitigated				
	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Mainstream	20.3	22.3	23.1	23.7	24.1	20.5	22.4	24.3	26.2	28.1	(0.2)	(0.1)	(1.2)	(2.5)	(4.0)
Resource Provision	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0
Special Schools	20.1	21.1	23.0	24.6	26.0	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1	1.0	2.0	3.9	5.5	6.9
NMSS & Independent Special Schools	40.7	45.4	52.8	54.9	60.7	47.2	70.8	96.7	125.0	155.9	(6.6)	(25.4)	(43.9)	(70.1)	(95.2)
FE Colleges	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.8	5.1	5.4	5.7	6.0	(0.1)	(0.4)	(0.6)	(1.0)	(1.4)
Alternative Provision	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.1	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.1	-	-	-	-	-
Sensory & Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.8	-	-	-	-	-
Pay & Pensions	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure	**95.1**	**103.5**	**114.0**	**118.8**	**126.7**	**100.4**	**126.5**	**154.9**	**185.8**	**219.3**	**(5.3)**	**(23.0)**	**(40.9)**	**(67.0)**	**(92.6)**
Total DSG Income	**(56.2)**	**(57.9)**	**(59.6)**	**(61.4)**	**(63.2)**	**(56.2)**	**(57.9)**	**(59.6)**	**(61.4)**	**(63.2)**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	
In Year Surplus -/ Deficit +	**38.9**	**45.7**	**54.4**	**57.4**	**63.5**	**44.2**	**68.7**	**95.4**	**124.4**	**156.1**	**(5.3)**	**(23.0)**	**(40.9)**	**(67.0)**	**(92.6)**
Surplus / Deficit Brought Forward	**46.9**	**85.9**	**131.6**	**186.0**	**243.5**	**46.9**	**91.2**	**159.8**	**255.2**	**379.6**	**-**	**(5.3)**	**(28.3)**	**(69.2)**	**(136.2)**
Total Deficit Reserve Balance	**85.9**	**131.6**	**186.0**	**243.5**	**306.9**	**91.2**	**159.8**	**255.2**	**379.6**	**535.7**	**(5.3)**	**(28.3)**	**(69.2)**	**(136.2)**	**(228.8)**

23. Without mitigations the funding gap is forecast to be £532.8m by March 2028. This reduces to £304m by March 2028 after mitigations are applied.

24. Expenditure is exceeding the funding allocation in both unmitigated and mitigated forecasts, which in turn increases the deficit reserve position.

25. These figures form the deficit balance on the council's DSG reserve that would be carried into 2028/29.

26. To manage that level of expenditure the council is working to introduce a number of mitigations.

27. The following table demonstrates the change of in year expenditure for both the unmitigated position and mitigated position. In year expenditure continues to rise.

Mitigated Expenditure				
2023/24 £m	**2024/25 £m**	**2025/26 £m**	**2026/27 £m**	**2027/28 £m**
24.10	8.40	10.50	4.80	7.90

Unmitigated Expenditure				
2023/24 £m	**2024/25 £m**	**2025/26 £m**	**2026/27 £m**	**2027/28 £m**
29.40	26.10	28.40	30.90	33.50

Comparison of the Financial Summary to Previous Plan

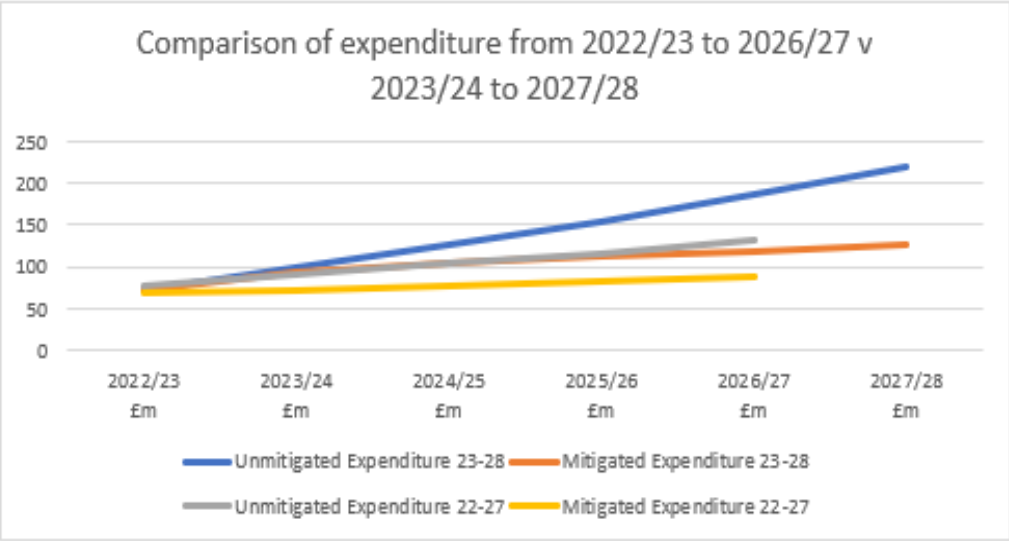
28. The graphs and tables below compare both unmitigated expenditure and mitigated expenditure for 2022/23 to 2026/27 and 2023/24 to 2027/28 by showing the difference between the two plans.

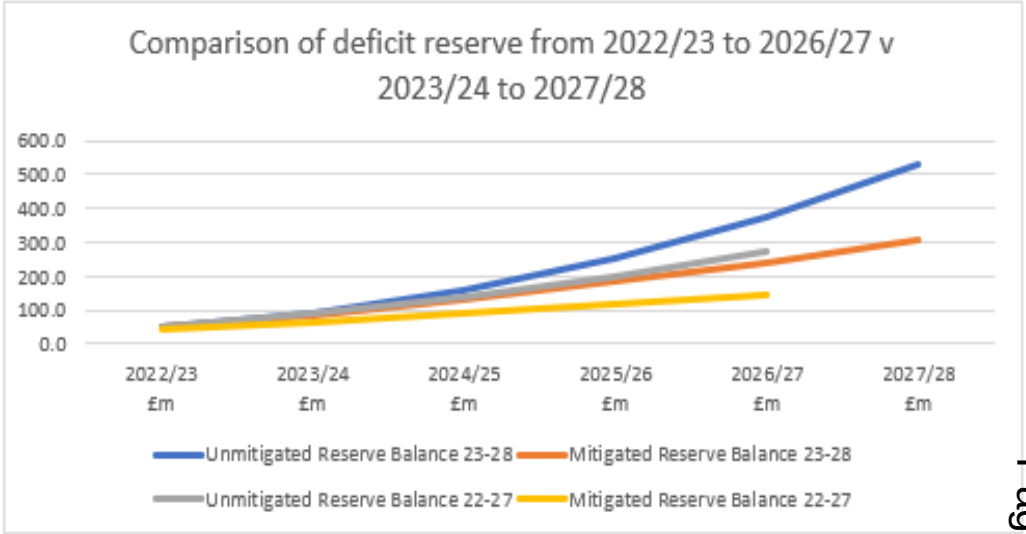
29. In the updated forecast, unmitigated expenditure has risen by £55m by 2026/27. Mitigated expenditure has risen by £29.5m by 2026/27.

30. The main reason for this relates to the NMSS/ISS/SPI provision type. We have seen an increase in the average cost and an increase in the number of children and young people placed in this provision type.

31. The number of placements in NMSS/ISS/SPI has increased by 62%, from 337 to 545 from 2022 to 2023. Therefore the starting point of the forecasts is a higher baseline figure, both in terms of EHCPs and financial amounts.

32. As a result of the increased deficit year on year, the deficit accumulates to an additional £106.8m (unmitigated) and £97.8m (mitigated) by 2026-27 to the previous plan.





Mitigated Variance	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Provision Type	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Mainstream Total Expenditure	0.5	1.9	2.2	2.2
RP Total Expenditure	-	-	0.1	0.2
Special Total Expenditure	1.7	1.8	2.8	3.6
NMSS & Independent Special Schools Total Expenditure	19.9	21.4	25.6	24.0
FE Colleges Total Expenditure	(0.5)	(1.0)	(1.5)	(2.1)
Alternative Provision Total Expenditure	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.9
Sensory & SALT Total Expenditure	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7
Pay & Pensions Total	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Expenditure	**22.20**	**25.00**	**30.30**	**29.50**
Total DSG Income	**(3.00)**	**(3.10)**	**(3.20)**	**(3.30)**
In Year Surplus -/ Deficit +	**19.20**	**22.00**	**27.20**	**26.20**
Surplus / Deficit Brought Forward	**3.00**	**22.30**	**44.30**	**71.40**
Total Deficit Reserve Balance	**22.30**	**44.30**	**71.40**	**97.80**

Unmitigated Variance	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Provision Type	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Mainstream Total Expenditure	(2.8)	(3.7)	(4.5)	(5.4)
RP Total Expenditure	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Special Total Expenditure	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
NMSS & Independent Special Schools Total Expenditure	10.4	24.7	40.9	58.8
FE Colleges Total Expenditure	(1.0)	(1.5)	(2.1)	(2.6)
Alternative Provision Total Expenditure	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.9
Sensory & SALT Total Expenditure	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Pay & Pensions Total	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Expenditure	**10.00**	**23.00**	**37.80**	**54.50**
Total DSG Income	**(3.00)**	**(3.10)**	**(3.20)**	**(3.30)**
In Year Surplus -/ Deficit +	**7.00**	**20.00**	**34.80**	**51.20**
Surplus / Deficit Brought Forward	**(6.10)**	**0.90**	**20.90**	**55.60**
Total Deficit Reserve Balance	**0.90**	**20.90**	**55.60**	**106.80**

The Mitigations

33. 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 green paper.

34. A key element of the above strategic aim is the Graduated approach. This is a model of action and intervention in early education settings, schools and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs. The approach recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and that, where necessary, increasing specialist expertise should be brought to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.

35. Findings from the Delivering Better Value programme have been used to revise, re-define and shape some of the existing mitigations prior to joining the programme.

36. The table below shows a summary of the cumulative impact of mitigations on the growth of EHCPs. In total over the 5 year period mitigations aim to supress the growth of EHCPs by 1,607. Special School places aim to be increase by 318 places. The capacity of Resource Provision includes increase of places by 44 and to utilise all capacity by 42.

		DBV Inclusion, Graduated Approach, Transition	Specialist Outreach Programme	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Resource Provision Places	New Special Places	Supported Internships	Total
	Net Change in EHCPs							
2023-24	2023-24	(25)		(83)	-	-	(34)	**(142)**
2023-24	Mainstream	(25)		-48	(21)			(94)
2023-24	Special Schools					70		70
2023-24	MNSS & Independent			(35)	(27)	(70)	(18)	(150)
2023-24	Post 16 & FE						(16)	(16)
2023-24	RP / SEN Units				48			48
2024-25	2024-25	(146)		(161)	-	-	(84)	**(440)**
2024-25	Mainstream	(126)	(12)	(96)	(28)			(262)
2024-25	Special Schools					138		138
2024-25	MNSS & Independent	(20)	(37)	(65)	(45)	(138)	(46)	(351)
2024-25	Post 16 & FE						(38)	(38)
2024-25	RP / SEN Units				73			73
2025-26	2025-26	(274)		(161)	-	-	(140)	**(723)**
2025-26	Mainstream	(227)	(37)	(96)	(32)			(392)
2025-26	Special Schools					208		208
2025-26	MNSS & Independent	(47)	(111)	(65)	(47)	(208)	(68)	(546)
2025-26	Post 16 & FE						(72)	(72)
2025-26	RP / SEN Units				79			79
2026-27	2026-27	(448)		(161)	-	-	(201)	**(1,158)**
2026-27	Mainstream	(367)	(87)	(96)	(36)			(586)
2026-27	Special Schools					278		278
2026-27	MNSS & Independent	(81)	(261)	(65)	(50)	(278)	(98)	(833)
2026-27	Post 16 & FE						(103)	(103)
2026-27	RP / SEN Units				86			86
2027-28	2027-28	(631)		(161)	-	-	(267)	**(1,607)**
2027-28	Mainstream	(507)	(137)	(96)	(36)			(776)
2027-28	Special Schools					318		318
2027-28	MNSS & Independent	(124)	(411)	(65)	(50)	(318)	(124)	(1,092)
2027-28	Post 16 & FE						(143)	(143)
2027-28	RP / SEN Units				86			86

A. **Mitigation – Inclusivity, Graduated Approach and Transition: Reduce the growth of <u>needs assessments</u> and reducing growth of <u>change of placements</u>– Right Time, Right Support, Right Provision**

Description	Cheshire East joined the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV) in September 2022. The DBV programme has identified potential financial opportunities of cost avoidance. The following workstreams relating to Inclusivity, Graduated Approach and Transition were approved by the DfE and a grant was secured to fund them. • **Embed the graduated approach/ Cheshire East tool kit** • **Reviewing & defining decision-making processes, panels & forums with a view that all decisions are linked to a graduated approach** • **Quality assurance and interventions to develop more effective SEN support plans where a decision has been made not to assess or issue an EHCP.** • **Upskilling schools/setting and partners with the relevant training & resources to identify children and young people's needs and how to effectively support them.** • **Re-design and enhance the transition process to reduce the escalation to an EHCP and/or to reduce the escalation of a change of placement to a specialist provision** • **Co-produce and deliver a two-year transition training programme for all schools and settings**
Cost	Cheshire East have been award **£1m** in grant to fund the implementation of the workstreams/mitigations detailed in the Delivering Better Value programme.
Outcomes / Impact	Children and young people attend local schools within Cheshire East. Children and young people receive the right support at the right time in the right type of provision. Mainstream: • reduction of growth of needs assessments/EHCPs by 2027-28 by 507 (cumulative) • cost avoidance approximately £3.8m in 2027/28 (cumulative £9.4m) NMSS/ISS/SPI: • reduction of growth of a change of placement by 2027-28 by 124 (cumulative)

	• cost avoidance approximately £8.2m in 2027/28 (cumulative £18m)
Progress of mitigation	The existing SEND strategy is being refreshed to incorporate DBV findings and opportunities for mitigations. Work has commenced on the redesign of the panel decision making process along with an update of the Cheshire East Toolkit which is key to embedding the graduated approach.

B. **Mitigation – Specialist Outreach Programme – Reduce the growth of needs assessments and reduce the growth of change of placements – Right Time, Right Support, Right Provision**

Description	Specialist Outreach Programme Initial conversations have taken place with our special schools to scope a programme of specialist outreach which mainstream schools can access. The programme will provide support, guidance, training and interventions which schools and settings can adopt to support children and young people in mainstream settings without the need for escalation to an EHCP or change of placement to a specialist provision. The programme will be subject to a pilot. Please note this is a change to the mitigation which was in the previous management plan. Previously funding was to be provided direct to schools.
Cost	From 2022/23 an extra £500,000 invest to save has been allocated to this area from the high needs supplementary funding 2022/23. Costs of the project have yet to be worked out. If costs are less than £500,000, additional mitigations will be considered. Cost in the first year £0.25m, £0.5m thereafter Cumulative cost over period 2023/24 to 2027/28 £2.25m

Outcomes / impact	Children and young people attend local schools within Cheshire East. Children and young people receive the right support at the right time in the right type of provision. Impact is not anticipated until academic year (AY) 2024-25 Mainstream • reduction of growth of needs assessments/EHCPs by 2027-28 by 137 (cumulative) • cost avoidance £1m in 2027/28 (£2.1m cumulative) NMSS/ISS/SPI • reduction of growth of a change of placement by 2027-28 by 411 (cumulative) • cost avoidance £27.2m in 2027/28 (£54.3m cumulative)
Progress of mitigation	Scoping of the project has commenced.

C. **Mitigation - Enhanced Mainstream Provision (EMP)**

Description	The EMP initiative feature two types of provision where a cohort of pupils is provided with additional support. The expected outcomes are: **Type 1:** to help manage escalation to an EHCP through provision of additional support to pupils who are classed as on SEN support or near to requiring an EHCP. **Type 2:** to help manage the need for a change of placement to a higher level of provision for pupils with an EHCP. The aim is for them to continue in mainstream.
Cost	The aim is to increase EMPs at mainstream schools in the borough. The annual cost of an EMP is £50,732, which is intended to provide the school with funding to implement and run the provision.

	Type 1: The cost incurred will be recovered if at least 8 pupils do not escalate to requiring an EHCP. If it is more than 8 pupils, further savings would be achieved. This is not a cumulative total as the enhanced mainstream provision will be supporting the pupils during their time at school. In addition to reducing the need for an EHCP, this model can support on average 40 pupils across the school, which in turn will improve attendance and permanent exclusion support. **Type 2:** This model does not create any savings from EHCPs in mainstream settings. However, it does increase the costs of funding an EMP with the benefit of significantly reducing the costs incurred in Independent / NMSS (see section below). Cumulative cost over period 2023/24 to 2027/28 £5.7 cumulative £1.2m in 2027/28
Outcomes / impact	Children and young people attend local schools within Cheshire East. Children and young people receive the right support at the right time in the right type of provision. Mainstream: • reduction of growth of needs assessments/EHCPs by 2027-28 by 96 (cumulative) • Cost avoidance £0.7m in 2027/28 (cumulative £3.3m) NMSS/ISS/SPI: • reduction of growth of a change of placement by 2027-28 by 65 • cost avoidance £4.3m in 2027/28 (cumulative £19.6m)
Progress of Mitigation	We are currently supporting 13 EMPs within our mainstream schools. The mitigation still anticipates a further 12 EMPs, remains subject to review.

D. **Mitigation - additional Resource Provision (RP) places and places fully occupied**

Description	Additional RP places to bring the total number of RP places to 218 within the period of the DSG management plan. The mitigation also assumes full occupancy in all RPs. This will provide placements for: - Pupils currently being managed in mainstream – so their top up funding would cease – replaced by RP funding. - Pupils who would otherwise be placed in independent special provision (as CEC special schools are full) – so the cost of independent provision would reduce. The costs associated with RP and also the number of pupils with an EHCP will increase as we will have more places available, however pupils will not need to attend Independent special/NMSS, resulting in a cost avoidance.
Cost	44 additional RP places 42 existing places to be occupied The additional top up cost of filling all unoccupied places would be £3.9m cumulative over the 5-year period The cost of place funding relating to both new and occupying existing places, resulting in cost avoidance of £0.55m cumulative over the 5-year period
Outcomes	Children and young people attend local schools within Cheshire East. Children and young people receive the right support at the right time in the right type of provision. Mainstream • pupils placed in the correct provision type to meet needs by 36 (reducing mainstream top up funding as pupils are placed in the RP) • cost avoidance £0.3 in 2027/28 (cumulative £1.2m) NMSS/ISS/SPI

	• reduction of growth of a change of placement by 2027-28 by 50 • cost avoidance £3.3m in 2027/28 (cumulative £14.4m)
Progress of Mitigations	45 additional places were established in AY 2022/23, Holmes Chapel Comprehensive 14, Macclesfield Academy 14, Wilmslow High School 2 (in addition to existing 20 places), Marlfields Primary 7, Wistaston Academy 8 (SEN unit). Further places are planned for the following years: • 6 places - Wistaston Academy in 2023-24 • 10 places - Wistaston Academy in 2024-25 • 14 places – Shavington Academy in 2024-25 • 7 places – Kingsbourne Academy in 2026-27 • 7 places – Kingsbourne Academy in 2027-28 Total 44 additional places have been built into the plan from 2023/ to 2027-28.

E. **Mitigation – Increase of special school places**

Description	Cheshire East currently has six special schools: Springfield School; Park Lane School; Adelaide School; Adelaide Heath; Church Lawton School and Axis School, supporting 575 pupils with an EHCP. 203 local children with an EHCP attend a special school in other local authorities. The reason for this key mitigation of growing our own provision, is to reduce the demand on Independent / NMSS settings which are of a considerably higher cost. In addition to the cost element, children and young people will not be required to travel as far to attend a specialist provision if more spaces are available within Cheshire East. To increase the capacity in number of places within existing sites and create two new DfE special free schools giving 318 places in total over the 5 year period.

Cost	The cost of place funding is partially accounted for within DSG income adjustments (although on a lagged basis). Place funding costs £10,340 per place, £4,000 of this is accounted for within the DSG income adjustments, therefore the additional cost to CEC is £6,340 per place 318 additional places on average would cost approximately £2.2m in the final year. Cumulative costs for the period £6.1m Top up funding (pupil funding) is an increased cost as there will be more children and young people placed in this type of provision. Top up funding (for new schools and expanding schools) ranges from £12,701 to £20,000. 318 additional pupils on average would cost approximately £4.7m in the final year. Cumulative costs are £13.4m The plan assumes no change to the number of CE pupils in other LA special schools.
Outcomes	Children and young people attend local schools within Cheshire East. Children and young people receive the right support at the right time in the right type of provision. NMSS/ISS/SPI • reduce the growth by 318 (cumulative) • cost avoidance £21.1m in 2027/28 (cumulative £67.1m)
Progress of Mitigation	CEC recently won bids for 2 new free special schools. Sites have been identified. These will be funded by the DfE. Although these schools were included within the plan last year, the bid outcome was not known and sites had not be identified. There have been delays to the progression of both Springfield sites, which has resulted in the timing of available places. This has been reflected in the updated plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28

F. **Mitigation – Supported Internships Programme**

Description	A supported internship is a type of study programme that is specifically aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who have an EHCP and want to move into employment and need extra support to do so. The mitigation to grow the supported Internship (SI) offer provides young people with a clear pathway to adulthood and into employment, which in turn reduces overall EHCP numbers and will positively impact on adult social care budgets. The mitigation assumes supported internships across a number of providers across Cheshire East including special schools, SPI and FE Colleges
Cost	Costs are included within the placement costs within top up funding for both colleges and SPI provisions
Outcomes	Children and young people attend local schools/settings within Cheshire East. Children and young people receive the right support at the right time in the right type of provision. Children and young people have the skills and ability to be employed Children and young people if successful are employed Further Education College • Reduction of number of 143 EHCPs over the 5-year period • Cost avoidance £2.2m over 5-year period (£0.9m in 2027/28) NMSS/ISS/SPI: • Reduction of number of 124 EHCPs over the 5-year period • Cost avoidance £23.5m (£8.2m in 2027/28) The EHCP is expected to cease after one year, therefore education beyond 19 does not continue, resulting in a reduction of EHCP numbers entering the non- maintained and independent sector.

Progress of Mitigation	From AY 2020-21 to AY 2022-23 (despite covid interruptions), 93 SI's have been supported by the programme. The programme is continuing to grow, with new providers coming on board.

G. **Mitigation – Independent Fee Challenge**

Description	In addition to reducing overall numbers, a further mitigation focuses on fee challenge. The mitigated position assumes an increase of 3.4% each year, where the unmitigated position assumes a fee increase of 7.5% in year 1 and 5% thereafter. Average costs in 2022-23 £60k, these rise to £78k in 2027/28 (unmitigated) and £71k (mitigated)
Cost of implementing	No cost implications
Outcomes	If we achieve the mitigated fee increase of 3.4% this will result in cost avoidance of £40.9m cumulative (£16.1m in the final year)
Progress of Mitigations	Commissioning continue to working hard to challenge, but providers are seeing significant increases in costs and therefore passing this on to CEC as the commissioner of places.

Capital

Capital – Resource Provision

37. Setting up of new resource provisions in our mainstream schools has an impact on the capital budget. The table below shows the estimated place numbers, date of completion / opening and the status of capital expenditure.

New Places – Specialist	Places From	Estimated Number of Places	Place To	Estimated Date of build completion	Capital Expenditure Required	Estimated Date of Phased Opening (to from)
Wistaston Primary (RP)	0	24	24	Sept 24	Secured	Sept 23 – Sept 25
Shavington Secondary (RP)	0	14	14	Sept 24	Secured	Sept 24-Sept 25
Kingsbourne Academy (RP)	0	14	14	Sept 24	Secured subject to C&F committee approval September 2023 for additional funding or the contract	Sept 24-Sept 25

Capital – Special School

38. Expansion/new build of special schools has an impact on the capital budget. The table below shows the estimated place numbers, date of completion / opening and the status of capital expenditure.

New Places – Specialist	Places From	Estimated Number of Places	Place To	Estimated Date of build completion	Capital Expenditure Required	Estimated Date of Phased Opening (to from)
Park Lane	86	40	126	Sept 22	Secured	Sept 22 – Sept 24
Park Lane	126	24	150	N/A	N/A	Sept 22- Sept 24
Axis	48	20	68	Sept 22	N/A	Sept 22 – Sept 23

New Places – Specialist	Places From	Estimated Number of Places	Place To	Estimated Date of build completion	Capital Expenditure Required	Estimated Date of Phased Opening (to from)
Springfield Expansion or New Crewe Site	170	80	250	Sept 24	Secured	Sept 24 – Sept 27
Dean Row	0	60	60	Sept 23	Secured	Sept 23 – Sept 26
Free School Bid (age range, primary need, size of school to be determined)	0	48	48	Sept 25	Not Secured (forms part of free school wave)	Sept 25 - Sept 28 (estimate) No dates for work on actual build provided by the DfE
Free school Bid (age range, primary need, size of school to be determined)	0	48	48	Sept 25	Not Secured (assumption this forms part of free school wave)	Sept 25- Sept 28 (estimate) No dates for work on actual build provided by the DfE
Adelaide Heath	67	20	87	Sept 24	Secured subject to C&F committee approval Sept 23	Sept 24- Sept 26

39. Note the council has updated its SEN sufficiency statement which has identified further additional local provision that is needed. This has not been reflected in this plan. It will be necessary to pursue additional capital projects to support the ambition. Proposals for such projects will be subject to the normal approval process.

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 ISS SPIs	Non-maintained special schools Independent special schools 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

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Agenda Item 6

Children and Families Committee

September 2023

Refreshed SEND strategy 2021-2025

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

Report Reference No: CF/18/22-23

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1 This report sets out the details of the refreshed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) partnership strategy and priority areas for the next 12 months aligned to the outcomes of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme.

2 Committee are asked to approve the refreshed strategy which has been developed following coproduction and engagement events with partners including parents and carers.

3 This report should be read alongside the dedicated schools grant (DSG) management plan and SEND sufficiency statement which are presented at the Children and Families Committee on 18 September 2023.

Executive Summary

4 The SEND strategy 2021 – 2024 was approved 8 November 2021. Due to significant changes within the national and local landscape for SEND it has been appropriate to refresh the strategy to reflect these changes.

5 The joint SEND strategy sets out what we want to achieve as a partnership for children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East, and the key actions that we will carry out to achieve our priorities.

6 We are committed to working in partnership when developing and shaping our services.

7 The SEND strategy is a key driver in the council's priority to empower and care about people, with a focus on:

• Working together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.

• Reducing health inequalities across the borough.

• Supporting all children to have the best start in life.

• Increasing opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs.

• Ensuring all children and young people have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

TOGETHER is our shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East.

Our coproduction guide sets out how we will work together as equal partners to improve, develop and deliver services towards a common goal for all our children, young people, families and adults. Our guide has been coproduced together with children, young people, families and adults living in Cheshire East.
https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/send-developments/together-in-cheshire-east/together-in-cheshire-east.aspx

The local authority has been part of the DFE Delivering Better Value programme (DBV). The key aim of this programme is to support local authorities to identify sustainable changes to drive high quality outcomes; and to build an evidence-based grant application to assist the implementation of effective change to improve outcomes for SEND children/young people.

The DBV programme has provided an evidence base, which has focused the strategic direction, to align our SEND strategy and DSG management plan.

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.

Supporting outcomes for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has become more challenging due to increase in numbers and complexity of need. Children with an EHCP have their identified

needs met through funding from the DSG high needs grant received from government but this now exceeds the funding received for that purpose. This situation has occurred over the last seven years with several factors contributing to it locally, including a lack of provision, high rates of needs assessments, parental expectations and more generally the high needs funding basis which is not linked to EHCP numbers.

8 The Department for Education (DfE) issued their response to the green paper: SEND and alternative provision improvement plan in 2023. The refreshed strategy and key areas of focus will better prepare the partnership for implementation as these progresses through the government change programmes as outlined within the DfE roadmap.

DFE have published their roadmap which summarises the actions that will be taken to improve the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England that are set out in the SEND and alternative provision improvement plan.

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

9 Following a series of engagement activities to review and refresh the SEND strategy; we have identified the following 5 priority areas that will be our focus for action over the next 12/18 months:

Workstream 1: Strengthening the quality assurance framework analysis to ensure evidence of continued improvement across the partnership including impact for children, young people and families.

Workstream 2: 0-25 SEND commissioned services and provision to meet the aspirations of children and young people.

Workstream 3: Improve timeliness and transformation of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions.

Workstream 4: Strengthening early identification and intervention through inclusive practice., timely and consistent decision-making processes.

Workstream 5: Alternative Provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee are recommended to:

1. To approve the refreshed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy 2021-2025 attached at Appendix 1
2. To agree that the Children and Families Committee receive an annual report on the progress being made against the vision, values and actions contained in the SEND Strategy
3. To approve for a new strategy to be presented back to committee in September 2025

Background

10 The previous strategy was approved 8 November 2021. Due to significant change in the national and local landscape for SEND it has been appropriate to refresh the strategy to reflect these changes.

11 Appendix 2 provides an update on the progress of each current workstream (as outlined within the current SEND strategy https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/send-developments/the-0-25-send-partnership.aspx)

12 Key amends/changes:

a) The refreshed strategy has revised workstreams, including chairs and co-chairs.

b) A refreshed set of priorities for the next 12/18 months.

c) Sets out our refreshed aims and impact measures that will enable the development of key performance indicators to be identified to support a more robust scorecard for scrutiny within SEND partnership board.

d) Amendments/updates have been made to the data to ensure this is up to date and reflective of the current picture.

13 The refreshed strategy aims to align to the outcomes of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme and incorporate the DfE SEND and Alternative improvement plan (2023) key priorities.

Consultation and Engagement

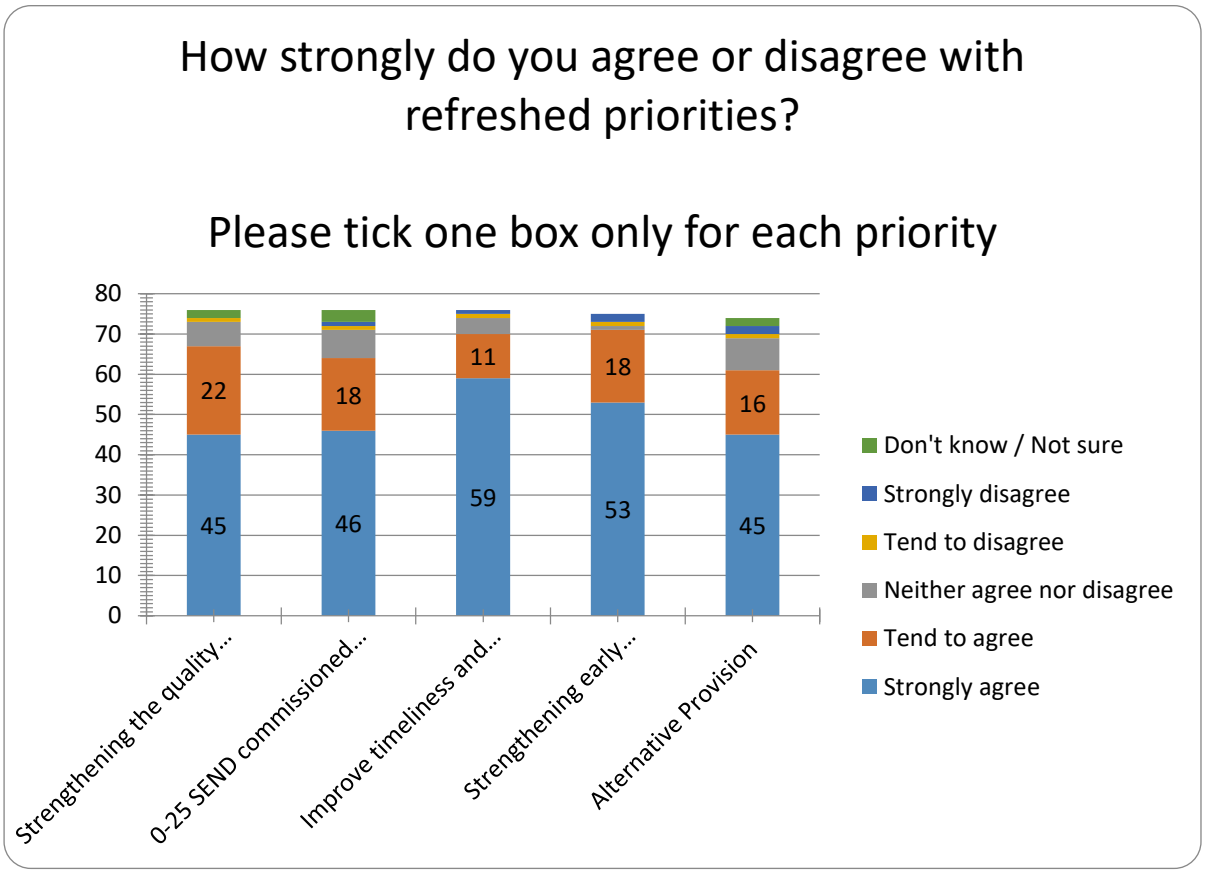
14 Engagement events have taken place across the partnership to ensure clear and transparent communication, workshop activities to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to offer and incorporate feedback in the development of the refreshed strategy. Over 100 representatives across education, health, care, and parents and carers attended 3 sessions held on 25 April and 26 April and provided feedback on the revised strategy.

15 Separate additional health approval will be sought through the Integrated Care Board (ICB) programme delivery group for agreement of the revised strategy.

16 A final draft of the revised strategy was sent out to ensure we gain further feedback and engagement from stakeholders from end of July 2023 to 11 August in the form of an online survey. This survey was open and available to everyone.

17 We received 76 responses in total during the online consultation from across a variety of partners and parents.

18 Below is a summary of the responses from the online consultation activity undertaken.



- 88% either strongly agreed or agreed with the refreshed priority to strengthen the quality assurance framework to ensure evidence of continued improvement across the partnership including impact for children, young people and families.

- 84% either strongly agreed or agreed with a focus on developing 0-25 SEND commissioned services and provision to meet the aspirations of children and young people.

-

- 92% either strongly agreed or agreed with a focus on Improving timeliness and transformation of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans.

-

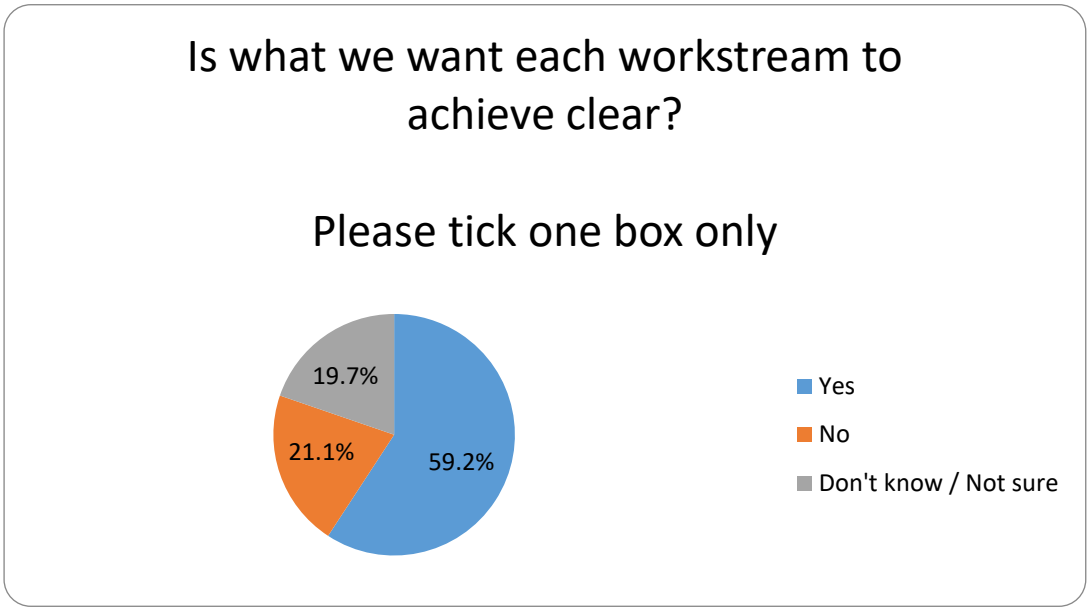
- 93% either strongly agreed or agreed with strengthening early identification and intervention through inclusive practice.

-

- 86% either strongly agreed or agreed with a focus on Alternative Provision.

19 59% of respondents felt that what we want to achieve from the priority areas was clear in the refreshed strategy, however it is acknowledged that given 39% still felt unclear.

20 To address the planned next steps are to develop project initiation documents for each of the workstreams to ensure clear understanding and development of actions plans, key performance indicators and scorecards. This is to support communication and transparency and we will be aiming to publish these documents on our local offer and providing regular updates via chairs reports and through scrutiny at SEND partnership board, following each workstream meeting these will be available to the public and wider stakeholders.



Reasons for Recommendations

21 The two recommendations detailed within this report will ensure that the Children and Families Committee agree the refreshed SEND Strategy for the next two years and have oversight of its delivery.

Other Options Considered

Options would be:

1. Do nothing.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	We would have multiple SEND plans to do align and we would be working on outdated priorities which will impact progress for our SEND children.	Multiple plans which do not align and would cause confusion and duplication

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

22 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 ('EA1996') local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools for primary and secondary education in their areas and must have regard to the need for securing that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs (section 14(6)(b) EA1996). In meeting this duty, a local authority must do so with a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice.

23 The Children and Families Act 2014 ('CFA 2014') made significant changes to the way that educational provision was assessed and provided for children and young people with SEND. Local authorities are also under a duty (Section 27 CFA 2014) to keep under review its educational, training and social care provision for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability and consider the extent to which the provision is sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in its area and for whom it is responsible. In exercising its functions, a local authority must consult with a range of people and bodies, including children, parents and young people on order to comply with these duties.

24 CAF 2014 is accompanied by statutory guidance the special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities – January 2015. Organisations must have regard to the code of practice whenever they are taking decisions.

25 S149 of the Equality Act 2010 with respect to the Public Sector Equality Duty, details the requirement when taking decisions to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate unlawful discrimination. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to identify the impacts of any decisions, policies etc. on certain protected groups to ensure equality is promoted, and inequality minimised.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

26 There are no financial implications or changes required to the MTFS as a result of the recommendations in this report.

SEND is funded through the DSG High Needs grant which is currently insufficient to meet demand and significantly under pressure and in a £47m deficit position as of 31 March 2023.

Policy

23 The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory guidelines and policy for SEND.

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

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.

24 The DfE SEND, and alternative provision improvement plan explains what the DfE will do to make sure more children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision get the support they need.

It follows the SEND and alternative provision green paper which was consulted on in March 2022. From the consultation responses to the feedback we received, and improvements identified as a result of the feedback. A set of proposals has now been agreed that are going to tested and reviewed.

The roadmap summarises the actions that will be taken to improve the SEND and alternative provision system in England that are set out in the improvement plan.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

25 Our Joint SEND strategy sets out what we want to achieve as a partnership for children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East, and the key actions that we will carry out to achieve our priorities is our commitment to children and young people with additional needs and ensures they have appropriate support to aspire to achieve in line with peers.

26 We are committed to working in partnership when developing and shaping our services across education, health and care.

Human Resources

27 Across the partnership there is a commitment to the membership of workstreams to ensure delivery from existing capacity

Risk Management

28 Following the publication of the new local area SEND inspection framework, we have established an improvement board that is chaired by the Director of Strong Start, Family Help, Integration and Education and attended by services from across the partnership. Due to the significant changes within this new framework the local area partnership is working at pace to prepare for inspection. The improvement board partners are working jointly with commitment and shared ownership. A revised self-evaluation (SEF) is currently being reviewed and updated alongside SEND improvement plan which identifies areas of strength and areas for development and actions.

29 The SEND Partnership Board will provide oversight and challenge to the delivery of the SEND Strategy and an annual report detailing the progress being made against the vision, values and actions contained in the SEND Strategy will be presented to Children and Families Committee.

Rural Communities

30 The SEND Strategy covers the sufficiency of provision for children and young people with SEND as we want to ensure that children and young people can attend education and receive support close to their homes.

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

31 The SEND Strategy provides the platform for the SEND Partnership and all relevant organisations in Cheshire East to come together to commit to provide the best quality education and support for children and young people.

32 We want all our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be HAPI:

- Happy and healthy
- Achieving their potential
- Part of their communities
- Independent as possible, making choices about their future

Public Health

Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) steering group is in place alongside public health with representatives from across all key stakeholders. To this end the Local Authority and CCGs are working

together to review current provision within children's services. Current provision will be compared to the needs identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and we will then explore opportunities to commission services jointly.

Health and Wellbeing Boards have a duty to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for their area. The "Statutory Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies" published by the Department of Health in March 2013 outlines the required scope of JSNAs; to identify health and social care needs that can be met or affected by the local authority (Cheshire East Council) in collaboration with the NHS.

One element of the vision contained in the SEND Strategy is to ensure our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities are happy and healthy. There are a range of prioritises within the strategy that focus on mental health and wellbeing and effective access to health services.

Climate Change

33 There are no direct climate change implications to this report, however the planned improvement to the sufficiency of good quality, local SEN school places will ensure that the long travel times to alternative school placements outside of Cheshire East are reduced.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Laura Rogerson Head of Service Inclusion Laura.rogerson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Refreshed SEND Strategy Appendix 2 Update on current strategy priorities and aims.
Background Papers:	DFE SEND and alternative provision improvement plan.

	SEND and alternative provision improvement plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) SEND and alternative provision improvement plan roadmap. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan/send-and-alternative-provision-roadmap SEND Code of practise SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Children and Families Act Children and Families Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk) SEND inspection framework. Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021 – 2025

Refreshed April 2023

Cheshire East SEND Partnership

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We would like to thank everyone who has made, and is continuing to make, this Strategy a reality, including:

- All the children, young people, parents and carers who gave their time and energy, and honestly told us how it is
- Our education professionals, including SEND and specialist support teams, and staff within educational settings
- Early Help and Social Care professionals in Children's and Adults' Services
- Health professionals within the Clinical Commissioning Group and provider services
- All members of the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board and workstream

1. Glossary

Term	Meaning
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, which can cause problems in social interaction and communication.
ASD Pathway	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Pathway describes the expected practice in relation to people whose needs may fall within the Autism Spectrum Disorders.
CAMHS	The name for the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
Child's Electronic Case Record	This refers to the electronic social care case management system used by the Local Authority. It is often referred to as Liquid Logic.
Coproduction	This is an approach whereby professionals, children and young people and their families work together as equal partners to plan services that affect them. In Cheshire East this is committed to our 'TOGETHER' values which support open and clear communication and accountability to all involved in providing support to children and young people with SEND.
EHC	Education, Health and Care
EHCP	An Education, Health and Care Plan is a legal document that sets out a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It describes the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support them to achieve what they want to in their life.
Engagement Session	Sessions where children and young people, parents and carers and members of the SEND partnership come together to share their views and ideas about the strategy.
First Concerns	Children and young people who have been identified as having emerging difficulties.
High Needs Funding Block	The funding allocated and received from central government by Local Authorities for pupils with SEND and high needs
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This is an assessment of how well the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people living in Cheshire East are being met.
Local Offer	The Local Offer lets parents and young people know what special educational needs and disabilities services are available in the borough, and who can access them.
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is responsible for inspecting the effectiveness of local area services for children with SEND.
OT	An Occupational Therapist's role is to help people overcome the effects (physical, psychological, social and environmental) of disability so that they can carry out everyday tasks or occupations.

Parent Carer Forum	The Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum is a voluntary group who work in partnership with professionals within the Cheshire East Local Authority area to ensure the voice of parents and carers with children that have additional needs is heard throughout the decision-making process of service initiatives.
Quality Assurance	The maintenance of a desired level of quality in service delivery by routinely evaluating stages in the process.
Quality First Teaching	A style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class.
Resource provision	A mainstream school receives additional funding to provide extra specialist support or facilities for children with SEND.
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy helps people who have speech and communication difficulties. They also help people with eating, drinking and swallowing problems.
SEN	Special Educational Needs (SEN) covers a wide range of needs. These include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication, hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability and autism
SEN Support	The process by which schools assess the needs of children, and then provide appropriate support.
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The SENCO is responsible for the operation of a school's SEN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plan.
SEND	A child or young person who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support, which is shortened to SEND.
SEND Partnership	A multi-agency partnership arrangement which leads and drives developments around support, processes and provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) aged 0-25 years in Cheshire East.
SEND Partnership Board	A group made up of senior representatives that drive and monitor the work of the Partnership in line with our joint SEND strategy.
SEND Passport	A tool used by the Council to aid and capture the voice of children with SEND through 1:1 and group participation.
SEND Toolkit	Explains the responsibilities, outlines the provision and support that the Local Authority expect to be in place in all educational settings which support Cheshire East children and young people with Special educational needs.
Written Statement of Action	A document which sets out the actions that are needed to address the significant areas of weakness in a local area identified by Ofsted and/or the Care Quality Commission following inspections.
Dedicated Schools Grant management plan	A document which is a requirement from the Department for Education (DFE) where a local authority has a deficit position on their high needs dedicated schools grant (DSG), this provides a financial and EHCP 5-year forecast.
Delivering Better Value programme (DBV)	The DBV programme is designed to provide dedicated support and funding to help 55 local authorities with substantial deficit issues in their high needs block of the DSG, to reform their high needs systems, with the aim to put more local authorities on a more sustainable footing so that they are better placed to respond to the forthcoming special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms.

2. Introduction

This **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy** has been refreshed after taking the views across all partners at three engagement sessions held in April 2023. The previous work undertaken as part of the original Strategy still remains a key focus and is reflected within the priorities. The aim of the refresh is to align the findings from the Delivering Better Values (DBV) programme and the content from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan to ensure the partnership are working collectively towards the same objectives within one plan.

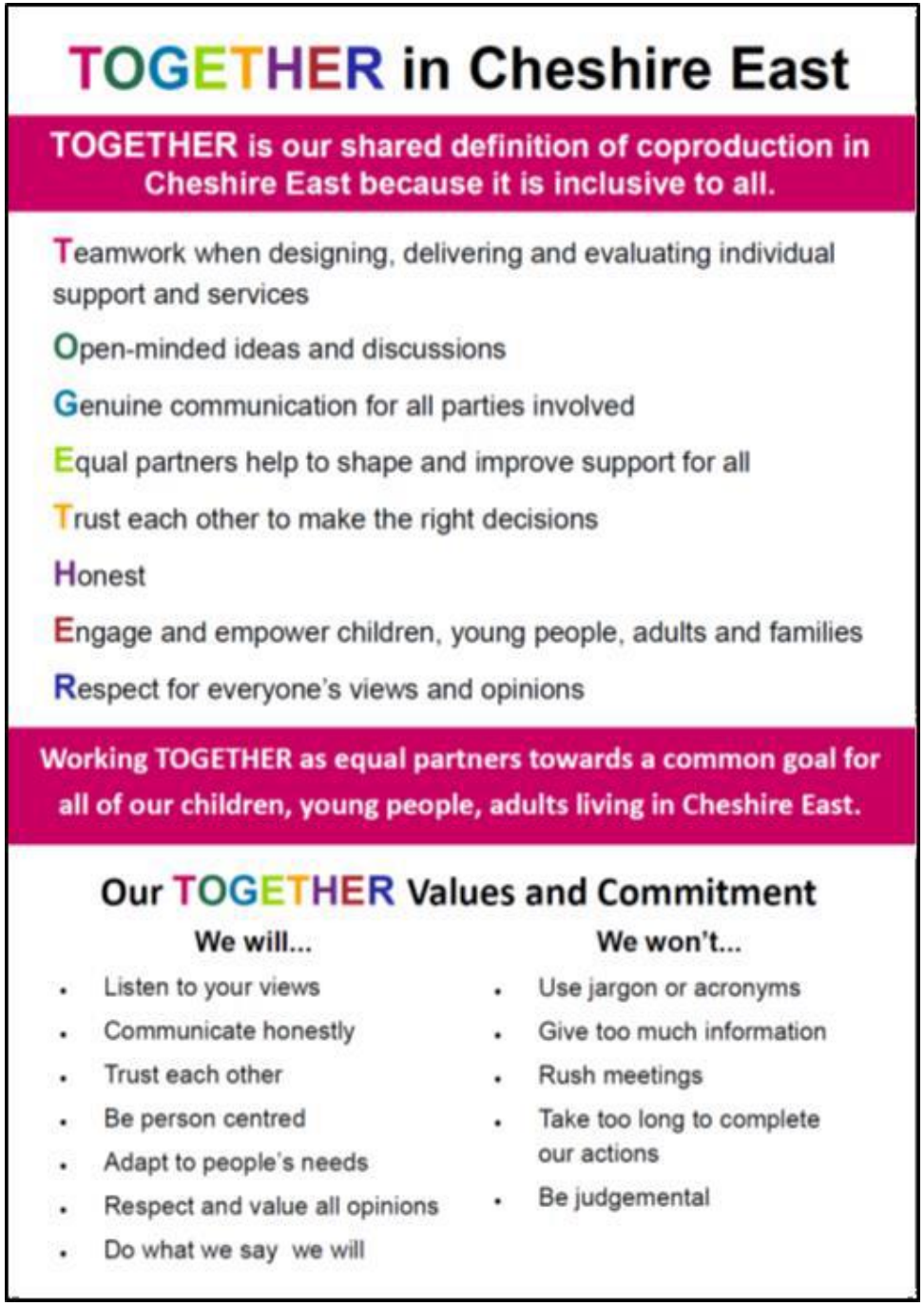
Following the coproduction of the refreshed strategy we have identified the following 5 priority areas:

1. Strengthening the quality assurance framework analysis to ensure evidence of continued improvement across the partnership including impact for children, young people and families
2. 0-25 SEND commissioned services and provision to meet the aspirations of children and young people
3. Improve timeliness and transformation of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions
4. Strengthening early identification and intervention through inclusive practice
5. Alternative Provision

All our engagement to develop the Strategy and our delivery of support for SEND is premised on our TOGETHER principles of co-production. 'TOGETHER' in Cheshire East is outlined in this document and was created by our children and young people, in conjunction with a range of professionals and parent carers, as they didn't understand the word 'co-production'.

Every attempt has been made to write the strategy so that the many people who are interested in how SEND works in Cheshire East can easily understand it. Throughout the strategy the word 'we' has been used many times on purpose because, without us all working TOGETHER, we won't achieve the excellent outcomes that we want for our children and young people with SEND.

In this strategy, 'we' include parents and carers, children and young people, the Local Authority, Health, education settings, providers etc.


TOGETHER in Cheshire East
TOGETHER is our shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East because it is inclusive to all.
Teamwork when designing, delivering and evaluating individual support and services
Open-minded ideas and discussions
Genuine communication for all parties involved
Equal partners help to shape and improve support for all
Trust each other to make the right decisions
Honest
Engage and empower children, young people, adults and families
Respect for everyone's views and opinions
Working TOGETHER as equal partners towards a common goal for all of our children, young people, adults living in Cheshire East.
Our TOGETHER Values and Commitment
We will...
Listen to your views
Communicate honestly
Trust each other
Be person centred
Adapt to people's needs
Respect and value all opinions
Do what we say we will
We won't...
Use jargon or acronyms
Give too much information
Rush meetings
Take too long to complete our actions
Be judgemental

3. Our Vision

"**Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young**". We believe that…

- Children and young people are best supported within their families and their communities.
- All children and young people should enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood.
- Cheshire East families and communities are strong and resilient, with the right help, from the right people, at the earliest opportunity.

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people - that they achieve well in all aspects of their lives and are happy, fulfilled and play an active role in their communities. For children and young people and their parents and carers, this means that their experiences will be of a system which is supportive of everyone and we ensure our resources and energy are applied efficiently. Their special educational needs and disabilities will be picked up at the earliest point with support routinely put in place quickly, and their parents and carers will know what services they can reasonably expect to be provided. Children and young people and their parents and carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve.

4. Our commitment

As a SEND Partnership, all relevant organisations in Cheshire East are committed to providing the best quality education and support for children and young people.

We want all our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be **HAPI**:

Happy and healthy
Achieving their potential
Part of their communities
Independent as possible, making choices about their future.

5. What we face

We are publishing the refresh of our strategy in response to supporting outcomes for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) becoming more challenging due to the increase in numbers and complexity of need. Children with an EHCP have their needs met through the council's DSG high needs grant but this has exceeded the funding received for that purpose.
This situation has occurred over the last seven years with several factors contributing to this locally, and with the high needs funding allocation which is not linked to EHCP numbers.
This is a national issue and as a result, the majority of councils are now facing significant deficits on their DSG reserve as recurring overspends are transferred each year. Despite this being a national issue, the situation is acute for Cheshire East.

Children and young people and their parents/carers expectations quite rightly remain high. This strategy refresh will support us to ensure that we are well placed to meet this changing landscape, whilst supporting to ensure the needs of our children, young people and families are met.

Due to the energy, commitment and dedication of all parties involved in this work, we have already moved a long way towards achieving our aims, but we still have more to do to ensure that children and young people achieve their best possible outcomes. Our SEND revisit in May 2021 by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission scrutinised whether we had made sufficient progress in addressing two areas of significant weaknesses identified at a previous inspection in 2018, which were:

- the timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans; and

- establishing an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and in reducing waiting times.

Inspectors found that, since their last visit, the timeliness, process and quality of EHC plans have been transformed, saying that by early 2020, almost every needs assessment was completed within the 20-week deadline, compared to less than one in six in 2018, as a result the Written Statement of Action was removed.

Regarding support for children and young people with autism, inspectors found that more children are starting nursery and school with their needs understood and met. Families have also been offered support and training, so they can better understand and support their child. In terms of waiting times, in 2018 more than 200 children and young people were waiting more than 12 weeks for their first assessment, but by March 2020, this had reduced to two weeks.

The partnership self-evaluation provides an ongoing picture of our current performance alongside quality assurance activity.

The improvements identified in our revisit and the feedback from inspectors to improve our communication with parents and carers surrounding our improvement journey is captured within this strategy. This will be monitored and scrutinised by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board to ensure we achieve what we have set out in this Strategy.

We will only achieve a stable, creative and personalised offer for children and young people with SEND by maximising our capacity and resources available to support children and their families. Early identification of support needs and strategies to prevent those needs escalating should be a key focus.

6. Local and National drivers

National drivers

- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Care Act (2014)
- DfE SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan
- SEND Ofsted Framework
- The Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- NHS Long Term Plan (2019)
- NHS Mental Health Investment Standard (2020)
- NICE Transition from Children's to Adults' Services for young people using health and social care services (2016)
- Equality Act 2020
- Autism Strategy
- Outcome of the current national SEND Review

Local drivers

- Cheshire East Corporate Plan (2021-2025) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Cheshire East Partnership 5-Year Plan
- Access to SEND Services Framework
- Multi-agency Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Strategy
- Children's Joint Commissioning Strategy (2021-2023)
- SEND Partnership Sufficiency Statement and SEN Provision Plan (2023-2026)
- Cheshire East All-Age Autism Strategy (2020-2023)
- 'My Life, My Choice' Cheshire East Learning Disability Strategy (2019-2022) – Revised plan in place from January 2024
- Cheshire East All-Age Mental Health Strategy (2019-2022) – Revised plan in place from January 2024
- Children and Young People Plan (2022-2026)
- The joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Cheshire East (2023-2028)

7. What our children and young people tell us

Local children and young people with SEND shared their views on what is important for this strategy through the completion of individual SEND Passports with sections on different topics. All of their individual contributions were captured and have been summarised below.

Area	What is working well?	What's not working well?	What would make it better?
Education, Health and Care Plan	• My Plan helps people to understand me, to think about all of my needs, and to know what I need help with. • I feel listened to and that my views are heard, and I am involved in meetings. • The support I get in class/college/my support internship is helpful, and I am enjoying college/my supported internship. • I feel there are people I can talk to.	• The Coronavirus pandemic has made some things more difficult, e.g. finding work experience, starting new support from organisations etc. • Anxiety needs can be a barrier to attending meetings or can be triggered by certain class/course subjects.	• More subject options and work opportunities. • More support around anxiety needs. • More opportunities to do things on my own at an earlier age to make me a little bit more independent. • Recapping what my EHC Plan says and what the next step will be.
My Education and Work	• Having support from different places to prepare for the world of work, including job coaches and organisations being proactive in looking for work experience. • I have a good plan in place for what I what to do when I'm older/after school or college, and how to get there. • I am enjoying my classes/course and am happy to be working towards milestones and targets.	• Some difficulties in finding suitable options and work experience placements, especially due to the Coronavirus pandemic.	• More support for employers to encourage more of them to offer job opportunities, and more options for older young people. • Being able to visit colleges and providers, and access my placement, when Covid-19 restrictions ease. • Improved communication, such as people repeating instructions about tasks or giving me specific dates about when things are going to happen.
Health	• I am able to get the health appointments and treatments that I need and can book appointments fairly quickly and know how to do this. • I have been referred to, or have received, a diagnosis, and appreciate the support I have from different professionals to manage my health needs.	• I may need more support or specialists to meet my health needs fully.	• Easier access to some services, and shorter assessment times.
Care	• I get the support and help I need to meet my care needs. Support is given by different people, including school/college staff, social workers, job coaches, carers, personal assistants and family. I also do self-care.	• I sometimes need more support with practical issues, e.g. to resolve issues with manoeuvring a frame around potholes or being able to hear in noisy places.	• For people to give me more independence. • More deaf awareness in the general population.

Area	What is working well?	What's not working well?	What would make it better?
People who help me	• There are lots of different people who are aware of my needs that I can speak to and ask for help if I need it.	• Some struggles with friendships and being in lockdown during the Covid pandemic.	• People to continue to treat me as a young adult. • Being able to attend social groups and clubs again in person.
Opportunities and Experiences	• I spend time with my friends and family. • I access different activities, such as virtual youth groups, attending a Duke of Edinburgh group, sports clubs, dance lessons etc.	• There are no youth club activities, or activities for people with learning disabilities, where I live. • Covid-19 has stopped me doing things.	• I hope some of the activities that I did before Covid-19 will restart soon, and that we can meet in person when it is safe. • Local groups or opportunities to socialise with people in our area.

8. What parents and carers tell us

"Honest and open communication using clear language with children and young people and their parents"

"A single point of contact who provides support during and after the initial assessment and timely / effective communication"

"Kindness, understanding and empathy demonstrated in all communications"

"Parents, children and young people are central to all discussions and contribute as equal partners"

"Information and support are provided to enable children, young people and parents to engage meaningfully"

"Clear information on the role of the local authority and partners in monitoring provision"

"To truly understand the needs of children and work collaboratively to develop a person-centred plan"

"Understanding of current legislation with regular training to ensure everyone is up to date"

"Children, young people and their parents will proactively be asked to provide feedback"

"Children and young people have the support they need"

"Settings deliver what is in the plan and parents are happy with provision"

"A greater range of provision is available"

9. Need in Cheshire East

There are approximately **84,200** children and young people under 19 in Cheshire East, which is 22% of our population.

There is a comprehensive Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for children and young people with special educational needs and/ or disabilities. Our JSNA, which reviews the health and social care needs of our population, estimates that we should expect around **8,252** children and young people aged between 5 and 18 in Cheshire East to have a special educational need. That equates to 10% of all children and young people – or **one in ten**. This number is based on the prevalence of different needs within the national population and within research literature.

9.1. Needs are increasing and changing

As at January 2023, **5388** children and young people receive SEN Support in Cheshire East (within statutory school age as in School Census 2023) and **4029** children and young people aged 0-25 in Cheshire East have specialist needs and have an Education, Health and Care Plan. A number of children and young people with SEN will have their needs met through universal support within quality first teaching and learning, or first concerns. (Data as per SEN 2 2023)

The SEN team are working with schools and other settings to improve our data on the number of pupils receiving SEN Support to ensure that we are consistently and accurately capturing the number of children and young people we support. As a result of this joint work, we expect to see the number of pupils recorded as receiving SEN Support increase over the next year.

Children and young people with SEND are changing in the range and complexity of need they require support with. Proportionally more children and young people with SEND are eligible for free school meals: in the January 2023 census, 30.3% of children with SEND were eligible for free school meals, as compared to 13.2% of children with no SEND. 29.6% of pupils receiving SEN Support and 31.9% of pupils with an EHCP were eligible for free school meals.

10. Three stages of system confidence

This Strategy sets out the important building blocks to achieve our vision and commitment to children and young people with SEND and their families. We will utilise the analogy of riding a bike to explain the Strategy in a straightforward manner. The principles of riding a bike from a young age are:

Riding a bike	SEND
Good stabilisers and confidence	Our partnership is clear on its priorities, has sufficient resources that are used effectively, and everyone is confident in our work together.
Right frame and servicing	As children show signs of needing support, they are supported early and effectively. As needs grow, a person-centred approach is taken, and this is checked with parents on a regular basis.
Personal touches	Children are at the centre of all we do; regular co-production and personalised communication ensures children and young people's hopes, and aspirations are met.

A group of our parents and partners got together and listed all the important things we should remember when working together (co-producing) on SEND. The results are shown as 'visual minutes' on the following page. Although a strategic discussion with our Parent Carer Forum these minutes can be used as the basis for improving co-production across the wider body of parents and carers.

We will hang this in every office, clinic, school and setting across our partnership, along with our TOGETHER principles, as a constant reminder of putting children and families at the centre of all that we do.

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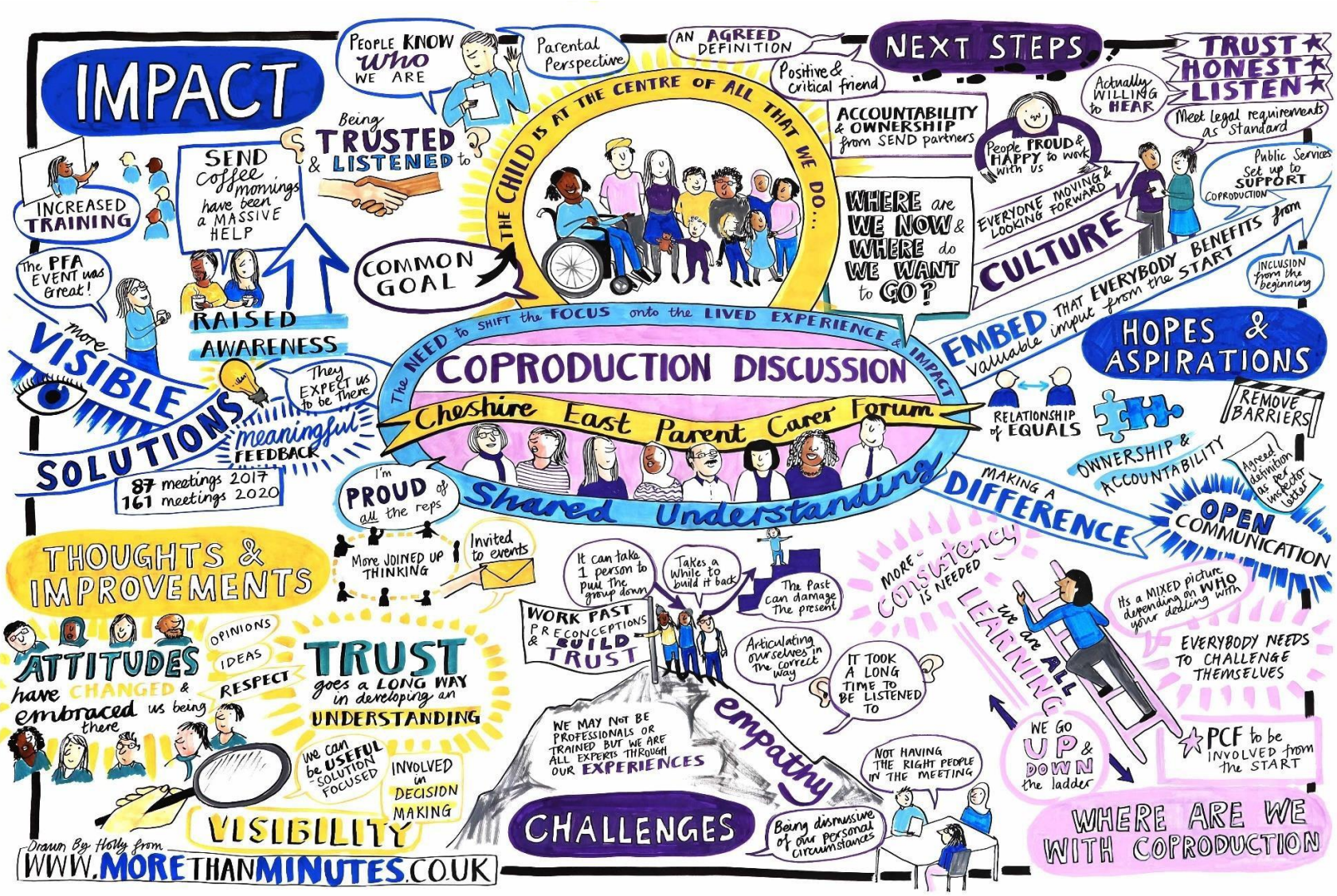


In order to build on this piece of work, a charter for how the SEND Partnership and parents and carers work together will be developed to build on the mantra of 'co-production, co-production, co-production'.

GOOD STABILISERS AND CONFIDENCE
CULTURE – "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" - the culture across our SEND partnership will determine the success of our drive to improve the outcomes and life-chances for children with SEND. By putting children and young people at the heart of all we do and supporting their **individual** needs and what is important to them, both now and in the future, we will achieve success. A positive / transparent culture across the SEND partnership and improved communication with parents and carers will build confidence and trust in all we do.
INCLUSION - children and young people are supported to access the same services, activities, and opportunities as their peers wherever possible.
FLEXIBLE AND WELL-TRAINED WORKFORCE - training the whole workforce and parent and carers **Together** will create a skilled and cohesive force for achieving good outcomes. Given the increase in demand and complexity of needs, it is even more important that our workforce can respond proactively and flexibly to patterns of demand.
Co-production, Co-production, Co-production is embedded and **Together principles applied** to ensure children and young people are always involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Parents and carers are experts on their children's needs and are essential partners in decision making.
SUFFICIENT LOCAL, GOOD QUALITY SEN SCHOOL PLACES - children and young people can access their school place, support and activities within their local area wherever possible, and they are part of their local community.
DEMAND MANAGEMENT AND BEST USE OF RESOURCES - support is planned to meet the needs of children and young people in our area so we have the right types of support, with the right amount of availability, that are delivered effectively through multi-disciplinary teams. We are creative and innovative in meeting children and young people's needs. Needs are met early to prevent escalation.
GOOD INTELLIGENCE - targeting support effectively and efficiently based on comprehensive, good quality, timely data and feedback from as many sources as possible.
SUPPORT - the best quality support is underpinned by good quality, timely, child and young person-centred processes, assessments and plans.
ASSESSMENT - a strong SEN needs assessment enables us to determine what support is needed, and a good quality EHCP ensures all the key parties are involved in developing a solution together. Child-centred support means providing integrated support that meets children and young people's individual needs, across education, health and care, in line with what is important to them, both now and in the future.

OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

How we ensure good stabilisers and confidence is achieved:

- Regular checking in with children and young people, parents/carers & settings and clear routes for constructive feedback that maintains relationships.
- Timely, effective Annual Reviews of EHC Plans.
- Quality Assurance.
- Reflection on feedback and making the necessary changes.

RIGHT FRAME AND SERVICING
SEN SUPPORT - support is tailored to the needs of the individual child. A graduated approach means that we expect reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure that the majority of 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.
A GRADUATED APPROACH - we expect reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure that the majority of 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. Quality First Teaching and Learning, as well as effective health and social care services is the key.
MAINTAINING STABILITY OF SCHOOL PLACE - our support teams are well trained, proactive and flexible to meet the changing profile of needs. Our teams work in a multi-disciplinary way and make best use of our Cheshire East Toolkit for SEND.
DIAGNOSIS AND PATHWAYS (e.g. AUTISM, ADHD) - assessment processes and diagnosis are timely, and communication along the way is effective. It is important that pre and post diagnosis support is person-centred, and evidence based, not based on what support/skills we have available. We should avoid silo pathways as needs commonly co-exist.
JOINT COMMISSIONING - we need to make the most of our resources as a partnership to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children and young people. We utilise all the rich intelligence and feedback to plan the purchase/redesign of support needed, and constantly review that outcomes for children are being achieved.
EARLY EFFECTIVE PLANNING FOR KEY TRANSITION POINTS - from Early Years through to Post-16 preparation for adulthood, each transition point should be carefully thought through for each young person, taking account of the different environment they are moving on to, clear and timely data sharing between settings, and sharing of good practice.
EARLY PLANNING FOR PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD - to ensure young people have time to adjust and feel comfortable with their preparation for adulthood, allowing time to build the right Post-16 offer that recognises the wide range of young people's goals and unique solutions to achieving them.

OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

How we ensure the right framework and servicing is achieved:

- Regular checking in with children and young people, parents/carers & settings and clear routes for constructive feedback that maintains relationships.
- Timely, effective Annual Reviews of EHC Plans.
- Quality Assurance.
- Reflection on feedback and making the necessary changes.

PERSONAL TOUCHES
BESPOKE OUTCOMES THAT ARE ASPIRATIONAL - we aim high for children and young people with SEND, and every plan, review and action to support has the lived experience and outcome for the child at the heart.
PERSONAL BUDGETS - an amount of money to deliver the provision set out in an Education, Health and Care Plan where the parent or young person is involved in securing that provision, increasing personalisation of support and involvement of families in decision making.
EVERYONE FEELING A GENUINE PART OF THE SEND FAMILY - if we let it, SEND can feel complicated and lonely for children/young people and their families. We will look for every opportunity to act as one SEND family working TOGETHER, embracing feedback, views and input from parents. We will welcome it as the useful gift it is and use it effectively to improve support and outcomes.
KNOWING THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD AND PERSONALISED COMMUNICATION - ensure support teams contacting families have familiarised themselves with the young person before engaging. Ensure learning from complaints changes practice and changes are visible to parents.

OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

How we ensure that personal touches are achieved:

- Regular checking in with children and young people, parents/carers &settings and clear routes for constructive feedback that maintains relationships.
- Timely, effective Annual Reviews.
- Quality Assurance.
- Reflection on feedback and making the necessary changes.

11. Potential Risks

The Local Authority and NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group have invested significant financial resources into the SEND teams and support for autism, emotional and mental health over the past two years. This has provided a basis for good improvement across SEND; however, the demands at SEN Support, levels of EHC needs assessments, and Education, Health and Care Plans, continues to put pressure on the whole SEND system.

As with many local authorities across the country, Cheshire East Council's currently has a DSG deficit position of £47 million and is forecast to be £146 Million (mitigated) and £273 Million (unmitigated) by March 2027 (based on the DSG management plan from 2022/2023 to 2026/2027) This plan is updated on a rolling 5-year basis.

In 2023 the government announced the findings of the national SEND review and have published their SEND and alternative provision improvement plan. Our SEND Strategy refresh has reflected some of the suggested changes; however, the improvement plan is still in the early stages of the change programme, and we may need to further reflect within our strategy as the roadmap develops. The next full review of our strategy will take place in 2024.

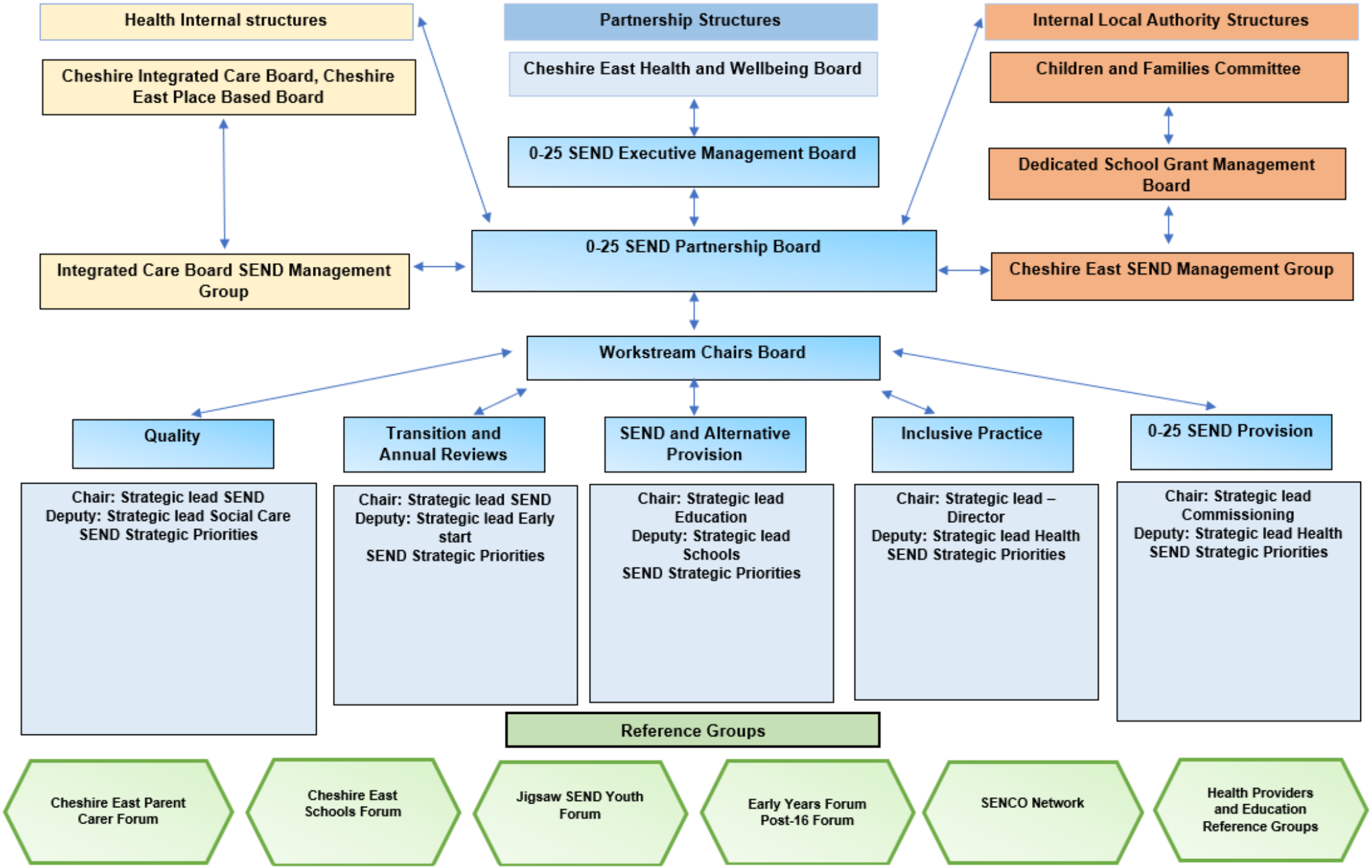
12. Governance

This is an ambitious programme which cannot be achieved without the full commitment from all the key partners at every level, from strategic directors to frontline practitioners within Social Care, Education, and Health across children's and adult services.

The whole SEND system needs to work together effectively in order to improve the support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across Cheshire East. This work is being driven by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board and executive board, since June 2023 the governance arrangements have been strengthened with the Executive Director of Childrens Services nominated as chair.

The board is responsible for developing and delivering our SEND Strategy, in order to maximise life opportunities and positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families. It includes representatives from the local authority, primary and secondary schools, further education providers, CCG and health provider services, early years, and the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum. A governance structure for the SEND Partnership is shown on the following page.

SEND Governance Structure



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13. Impact

13.1. How will we know we have succeeded?

We are committed to working in partnership with our key stakeholders in developing and shaping our services. Children, young people, parents, carers, early years' providers, schools and colleges, health and social care professionals are the people that are best placed to know what is needed and what works well. This strategy has been co-produced with these key stakeholders, and they will continue to be involved in helping us deliver our priorities and in evaluating what difference we are making.

Ultimately, we will evaluate our success against the difference we make to the lives of our children and young people. We will use our Quality Assurance Framework alongside the following sources to inform us on how well we are performing, what's working well, and where we need to take action to achieve change:

13.2. Listening to Feedback

We will monitor and assess quality throughout our local arrangements by seeking views from everyone involved at all points of contact.
The voice of children and young people will be paramount, and will be gathered in a number of formats, and at various points in time.
We will also ensure that we capture the views of parents and carers and utilise opportunities to build positive relationships.

13.3. Assessing practice through audits

Multi-agency audits will be used to evaluate the quality of our work to support families across the partnership. Findings from these audits will be reported to the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board.
Audits will explore the quality of practice, concentrating on the multi-agency footprint across the EHC needs assessment process, and will assess practice against agreed practice standards

13.4 Analysis of data, outcomes and impact

A SEND scorecard is in place which is reported to the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board for scrutiny. This scorecard considers a variety of information, such as the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans by primary need, age group and locality, the number of requests for EHC needs assessments, and the timeliness of completion, and the performance of various health services.

Each SEND workstream will be accountable for a section of the scorecard relevant to their deliverables. This will be scrutinised by the Partnership board.

13.4. Learn and implement improvements in practice

We will embed a culture and structure of listening to families and practitioners to ensure effective recording and monitoring of all feedback and queries. Clear and transparent structures will be in place

to evidence learning from feedback and where this has prompted change and further service developments. Mechanisms for gaining feedback on EHC needs assessments and Plans, and our Local Offer (both our provision and the quality of support) will be further enhanced and embedded.

We will build-in multi-agency opportunities to reflect and learn and celebrate successes and share best practice

14. Action Plan

It is important that the delivery of the priority actions from the previous SEND Strategy, and the momentum that has been achieved, is not lost as we move to a refreshed SEND Strategy. A significant amount of improvement has been achieved over the last three years and as you would expect across SEND, many of the improvements require further ongoing attention to ensure they are fully embedded and monitored to ensure their positive impact is a reality for children, young people and their families.

Each workstream will have a detailed plan and scorecard to ensure that will have oversight and scrutiny through SEND partnership and executive boards.

An overarching improvement plan is also in place as a mechanism to ensure themes and areas of development from our quality assurance practise and self-evaluation are addressed.

1. Strengthening the quality assurance framework analysis to ensure evidence of continued improvement across the partnership including impact for children, young people and families

What we aim to achieve:

- **Ensure there is clear communication when sharing our refreshed strategy with ALL stakeholders following our involvement in the Delivering Better Value programme**
- **An effective quality assurance framework across education, health and care practice and services through implementation of robust monitoring and use of feedback from all stakeholders.**
- **A culture of co-production when planning support and services, which embraces best practice and person-centered work.**
- **A cycle of continuous professional development embedded across the SEND partnership.**
- **Improved communication and improved relationships between families and professionals.**
- **A fully effective Local offer that is relevant, up to date and provides information for all children, young people, families and partners.**
- **Provide clear information for families on all aspects of the SEND system and in particular the range of support and services available**
- **Systems to ensure oversight of the quality monitoring of education, health and care settings and services that ensures continuous improvement of services and proactive use of feedback from all stakeholders**

Impact Measures

- **Confidence survey for parents, children and young people, settings and workforce**
- **Number of complaints**
- **Number of mediations and appeals**
- **Increased take up in multi-agency training**
- **Increased number of compliments**
- **Working together/co-production meetings effectively take place via scorecard**
- **Increase number of 'hits' on local offer pages**
- **Quality assurance audits**

How this will be achieved:

1. **Strengthen governance and embed the quality assurance framework**
2. **Develop, provide oversight and monitor the partnership training programme to include workforce development, annual conference, mandatory training and accredited CPD**

3. **Review and regularly update our local offer pages and align with the family hubs digital offer**
4. **Create and publish an annual survey for parent/carers, children and young people, schools and settings and other key partners.**
5. **Utilise feedback and analysis to support development across each workstream.**
6. **Measure and track education, health and care outcomes through a holistic outcomes' framework**
7. **Implement Parent / Carer access to Child's electronic case record (Liquid Logic)**

2. 0-25 SEND commissioned services and provision to meet the aspirations of children and young people

What we aim to achieve:

- **Children and young people receive better outcomes through improved integrated service delivery**
- **Clear links are demonstrated between population needs and what is procured for children and young people with SEND based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)**
- **Improved coordination of early years support and implementation of a new portage service**
- **Families have access to a range of support through Family Hubs across Cheshire East, including face-to-face, outreach and digital**
- **Children and young people access good quality local schools, settings and services, with appropriate support with travel arrangements**
- **Children, young people and their families have access to a range of services to support families including, equipment, home adaptations and consumables, short breaks, HAP and family information service.**
- **Ensure there is equity in access to provision and services for all children with SEND**
- **Advice and the right support are in place for children and young people to achieve successful outcomes including into adult life**
- **Joint commissioning arrangements enable partners to make best use of resources to improve outcomes for children and young people and form part of an ongoing review and improvement cycle**
- **Effective provision within adult services to meet the needs of 18 – 25-year-olds is available via local offer pages.**
- **Local arrangements are in place, including service level agreements**
- **Pathways exist to paid employment including apprenticeships, traineeships, and support internships**

Impact Measures:

- **Number of EHC plans ceased**
- **Number of supported internships**
- **Number of new specialist school placements**
- **Number of EOTAS/missing education**
- **Reductions in waiting lists for health services**
- **Learning disability annual health checks for young people aged 14+**
- **Number of children and young people on the dynamic support database**
- **Health outcome measures**
- **Education outcomes measures**
- **PFA outcomes**

How will this be achieved:

1. **Relaunch joint commissioning arrangements to enable partners to make best use of resources to improve outcomes for children and young people**
2. **Redesign pathways and services in line with guidance – e.g. the national framework to deliver improved outcomes in all-age autism assessment pathways; mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance and providing guidance for schools**
3. **Review therapy services (SALT, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy) to ensure equitable provision for all children and young people with SEND, including those attending out of area schools**
4. **Produce SEN Sufficiency statement and SEN capital programme**
5. **Reviewing the process of ceasing of plans and what other support is available from adult social services**
6. **Review and increase supported internships and alternative pathways**
7. **Measure the impact of specialist provision through quality assurance arrangements**
8. **Implement the detailed transformation plan for travel support**

3. Improve timeliness and transformation of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions

What we aim to achieve:

- **Timely agreement of transition plans to enable multi agency engagement to support effective transition for children and young people**
- **Effective communication with children, young people, families and all partners regarding annual reviews and the transition processes**
- **Two-year training programme for all schools and settings, tailored to educational phases (best practice, what's on offer in the next phase of education and develop clear expectations for everyone)**
- **Transitions to adult health services and adult social care which are timely, appropriate and well planned**
- **Preparing for adulthood (PFA) offer is a golden thread throughout a child's/young person's journey and EHC plan**
- **Improved quality and timeliness of EHC plans**
- **Annual reviews will accurately reflect the children and young people's current needs and any changes in provision required to meet those current needs**

Impact Measures

- **Timeliness of annual reviews**
- **Multiagency involvement in annual reviews**
- **Transition data, change of placement data and outcomes of annual review data.**
- **Intended destination report (number of named places at nursery 1, nursery 2, reception etc)**
- **Number of needs assessments at transition point**
- **Number of change of placements at transition point**
- **Confidence survey to children and families**
- **Confidence survey to schools, settings and health and social care professionals**
- **Year 9 preparing for adulthood plans are in place for all children/young people**

How will this be achieved:

1. **Review and refresh the process for transition with the aim to strengthen the system for all children and young people within a transition phase of education**
2. **Review and update a coordinated partnership training programme**

3. **Develop and co-produce guidance for parents, children/young people and schools and settings on what to expect and how to maximise effectiveness of annual reviews and the transition process**
4. **Review of the annual review process and procedure using feedback to inform change**
5. **Transition videos for all phases of education linking to the local offer**
6. **Implement a consistent system for quality assurance of existing EHC Plans through the use of the quality assurance framework**

4. Strengthening early identification and intervention through inclusive practice

What we aim to achieve:

- **Strengthened SEN support plans, enhance support to schools and settings from across the partnership**
- **Effective multi agency identification of needs in early years ensures children have the right start and access to early support**
- **The multi-agency approach embeds the graduated approach at all levels and builds on best practice via training programme**
- **Intervention and support are in place through early help and preventative systems**
- **A clear integrated assessment process and pathway is in place for all children and young people with SEND to support effective, timely and consistent decision-making processes**
- **Statutory assessment timescales are met**
- **Children, parents and families have confidence in the graduated approach and SEN support plans**
- **Quality of advice and plans at each stage**
- **Effective use of Personal Budgets, oversight and agreement for joint individual packages to support needs of children and young people**

Impact Measures

- **Number decisions not to assess, where needs can be met at SEN support**
- **Number of change of placements as needs are being met at mainstream**
- **Improvement in satisfaction surveys**
- **Uptake in training sessions delivered**
- **Impact evidenced through workforce surveys**
- **Number of plans processed within timeframe**
- **Number of mediations**

How will this be achieved:

1. **Relaunch, promote, embed and raise awareness of the toolkit with all schools and settings to ensure that there are robust processes for the graduated approach, to support children and young people and to allow them to stay in mainstream education as appropriate**
2. **Increase understanding and application of the graduated approach (SEND toolkit) for all areas and for all staff across the partnership, which will contribute to the overall training plan**
3. **Review and re-design the panel(s) decision-making, to streamline the process from early years to post-16**
4. **Review and refine the statutory assessment process guidance and resources**

5. Alternative Provision

We want to achieve:

- **Quality needs led alternative provision commissioned by schools and local authority at the right time for children and young people.**
- **A consistency of review to ensure alternative provision is supporting children and young people's progress and attainment.**

Impact Measures

- **Children and young people with good attendance in their alternative provision placement**
- **Children and young people with improved attainment as a result of alternative provision intervention**
- **Reduction of permanent exclusion for children and young people receiving alternative education intervention**

How will this be achieved:

1. **Develop and implement an Alternative Provision Strategy**
2. **Provide clear policy and practise guidance for Personal Budgets.**
3. **Development of a flexible purchasing system for alternative provision**
4. **Development of a quality framework for commissioning alternative provision in Cheshire East and commissioned places outside the local authority, ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements are in place**
5. **Develop one register of local authority commissioned alternative provision**
6. **Develop an alternative provision handbook for use by local authority and schools**

Your thoughts matter

If you have any views on this document or how we can improve our services, please do contact us at SENDPartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Strategic Action & Ref:	Sufficiency and Provision Workstream Update
2.1.1 Ensure effective joint commissioning arrangements in place	This action is currently in progress – discussions have begun to review Speech and Language Services (SaLT) and opportunities to jointly commission this service. Process is expected to last 12-18/24 months. This will include a review and agree priority order of specific services to begin to commission together, where this will lead to the greatest level of benefit for children and young people. The aim is to ensure that parents and stakeholders will have access to consistent SaLT offer across Cheshire East.
2.1.3 Ensure sufficient and sustainable pre and post Autism Support	Autism and ADHD update (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Key updates were published through our local offer pages from the ADHD and autism assessment and diagnosis team based in the north of the borough (covering the Congleton, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Poynton areas): The team has now recruited to all the ADHD pathway vacancies and continues to work hard to reduce waiting times A shared care agreement has been made with Stockport SEND services to improve the ADHD pathway for medication for those living on that border The team has merged with West Cheshire autism pathway team. The combined team has expanded and will continue to work to fill remaining vacancies The team has cleared pathway backlogs, so families are no longer waiting for diagnostic reviews and feedback after they have attended for an autism assessment The team is looking to improve its skill mix and will continue to ensure every family has an opportunity to talk about what an autism diagnostic assessment means for them, and to identify best-matched support services locally and nationally Across Cheshire East we have several organisations that provide support and training for families and children and young people with autism. This can be accessed at any point in the pathway - even if you are on the waiting list for a diagnosis you are still able to sign up to services to support your family. In the north of the borough, Space4Autism is commissioned by Cheshire East Council and the NHS to provide training and support for anyone on the autism pathway. Space4Autism offers an array of support services for adults and children, whether diagnosed or not. It provides parent/carer training courses, 1:1 and group support, carer's respite, school holiday clubs and a café where employment is available for people with autism. In the south of the borough, Cheshire Autism Practical Support or ChAPS are commissioned by the council and NHS to provide training and support for anyone on the autism pathway. The Triple P – Positive Parenting Programme - is an evidence-based parenting programme. It gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children's behaviour and prevent problems developing. The Fear-less course is also available for families who experience anxiety. Triple P Steppingstones is an online course to support families with behaviour strategies related to ASD and ADHD . Please note that Triple P online courses are available across Cheshire.

	The NHS has commissioned Peak Sleep to provide holistic family support for neurodiverse children experiencing significant sleep problems across Cheshire East. Referrals are made through your paediatrician, who will be able to explain if you are eligible. Work in underway through a newly established working group led by the ICB Associate Director for quality with an aim to review wider voluntary and third sector opportunities.
2.1.4 Review health provisions to ensure sufficient assessment capacity and provision to meet needs of children and young people. (OT, SALT, ASD, ADHD and CAMHS)	Review of SaLT to be undertaken to develop joint commissioning approach across Cheshire East. This review will include mapping of current offer/ provision including access arrangements and waiting times for OT, Physio, SaLT and CAMHS, including commissioned capacity against referral data over the past 12 months. This year a working group has been established led by health: neurodevelopmental clinical network, the aim of this group is to drive improvements and consistency across ADHD and ASC assessments and pathways
2.1.5 Ensure the SEND Toolkit is embedded to support SEN Support to make interventions more robust, trustworthy and enforceable, with clear escalation routes if Toolkit not being applied. The Toolkit should model the support required to enable children/young people to stay in mainstream as appropriate (SEMH should be a focus).	The Cheshire East Toolkit for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is aimed at all educational providers and settings supporting Cheshire East children and young people aged 0-25 years. In it we outline the provision and support that we expect to be in place in all educational settings which support Cheshire East children and young people with SEN , and forms an important part of the Cheshire East Local Offer for SEND. Our purpose is to provide detailed guidance on how educational settings can identify children and young people with different types and levels of need, and information on appropriate steps and strategies to support them.We provide clear information about when a request for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment, or specialist services, may be required. The toolkit is intended to assist educational settings in supporting children and young people with SEN . We developed the toolkit in co-production with local Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO), Post-16 representatives, parent/carers and a wide range of specialist education, care and health services. SEND toolkit (cheshireeast.gov.uk)
2.1.6 Ensure sufficient SEN school capacity and wrap around services are in place to meet the increased demand through rising EHCPs. 4.1.3. Tailored intervention and intensive support for individual settings based on data/intelligence collation.	Our inclusion quality team have developed a tool to ensure we are able to collect and use date to identify those schools with the greatest level of need/demand for EHCPs based on referral rates and ensure support is targeted more effectively. The information is used to inform the annual training programme for all key partners to access alongside targeted support for individual schools and settings.

2.1.7 Implement the Multi-Agency Preparing for Adulthood Strategy	The Cheshire East SEND Partnership multi-agency Preparing for Adulthood Strategy 2021-2023 outlines our Vision and Principles for Preparing for Adulthood (PfA), along with the challenges we need to understand and our priorities to ensure that young people with SEND in Cheshire East are prepared for adulthood, as early as possible, to achieve their individual aspirations. Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Current review is being undertaken via a PFA strategic working group being led jointly across adults and childrens.
2.1.8 Review and make improvements to the early signposting of families with children with disabilities to the full range of support across community settings and provision.	In May 2022 Cheshire East Council has been successful in its bid for a share of the government's Family Hubs Transformation Fund announced this week. Family hubs are a way of joining up services locally, improving the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and put relationships at the heart of family support. Up to £1 million will be awarded to the council to develop family hubs across Cheshire East, supporting children and young people from birth until they reach the age of 19 (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities). The council is one of only 12 local authorities to receive the funding in the government's announcement and will have until March 2024 to implement the new way of working. The hubs aim to bring council, health and community services together to provide help to families ensuring they have access to the right support at the right time. Issues such as debt, poor mental health or threat of homelessness can happen to families at any point in a child or young person's life. Some of the services that are planned to be delivered from family hubs include: Midwifery appointments, health checks, weaning and nutrition advice, early years play education and sensory development; Intensive support to reduce family problems that result in family breakdown, working with the child and family to make positive changes; Family help and support for children with disabilities or additional needs; Practical support around finance, housing and supported learning; Youth support services, including youth justice; and Mental health support for children, young people, families and new parents. The plans to develop existing centres to create the hubs for parents/carers of children of all ages, to ensure that they can walk in and access support across a range of services. A digital service will also be developed to provide advice and guidance.
2.1.9 Recommission care at home to broaden the offer to families of children with disabilities.	The care at home framework has now been re commissioned and is called Children and families support service (framework). There are 10 providers on the new framework, with further market engagement due to take place during 2023 to increase the number of providers signed up to the framework. We aim to include a specific focus on providers who deliver to children with disabilities.

2.2.1 Provide clear guidance on Education other than at School (EOTAS) and Personal Budgets. 2.2.2 Ensure Personal Budgets are offered to parents where this may be a preference.	We have worked with legal services to recruit interim legal support specifically for SEND to offer further guidance and support to review our policies and guidance. As this is an area of increase demand across Cheshire East and regionally this is an area of focus over the next 6 months to review current policies in relation to personal budgets and direct payments to align across all areas and update as required.
2.2.3 Develop a system of quality audits - ensuring settings deliver the provision in the SEN Plan and EHCP and checking out the lived experienced of children and families.	We have a multi agency quality assurance group with representatives from across the partnership including parent carers is in place; which have included attendance and support from parent/carers who have volunteered to support a deep dive audit review into their child/young person's EHC plan. Following the publication of the new area inspection framework we are currently working across the partnership to review and redesign our audit tool to reflect the requirements and measures within the framework and are developing our planning to establish an audit timetable of activity across the partnership.
2.2.4 Review the process for school staff and parents to flag up concerns about meeting the needs of children in schools and delivery of provision in the plan.	As a result of a restructure and growth across the SEND assessment and monitoring teams over the past 2 years, we have expanded the resource and now have established locality and dedicated post 16 teams. Structures are in place through locality teams to ensure that both schools/settings and parent carers have access to a direct keyworker to offer support, advice and guidance where required. A significant piece of work was undertaken to coproduce and develop the information and resources in relation to annual reviews, this ensures that there is a clear mechanism in place for a child/young person's EHC plan to be reviewed and ensure that the views of parent/carers, children and schools/settings are captured. We have worked in co-production to provide a more detailed and informative parent/carer advice template for Annual Reviews so that we gather meaningful information and provide a chance for parents to voice their opinions and concerns prior to review meetings. Annual reviews of EHC Plans (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Strategic Action & Ref:	Assessment, Monitoring and Quality Workstream update
1.1.4. Develop a mechanism to capture and share best practice and person-centred work.	Multiagency deep dive quality assurance meetings are being held regularly to capture and share best practice and person-centred work. This is being fed back through this workstream meeting and via practice champions to disseminate across teams.
1.2.1. Implement Parent / Carer access to Child's electronic case record (Liquid Logic).	We have undertaken a pilot of Liquid Logic Parent Portal, following the test and trial of the system we have developed a phased implementation plan and have delivered training across teams.
3.1.1. Increase capacity to process annual reviews following review meetings, through increasing capacity in EHC Plan Writers.	Following the agreement for growth within the SEN assessment and monitoring locality teams we have increased the capacity and successfully recruited into additional annual review plan writer positions across each locality.
3.1.3. Introduce non-negotiables for settings to support the annual review process. 3.1.4. Develop and share guidance for parents on what to expect and how to maximise effectiveness of an annual review 3.1.5. Ensure that proactive forward planning is in place for all transition stages. 3.1.6. Ensure annual reviews are holistic and that health, social care and other specialist services or providers contribute to	A significant piece of dedicated work was undertaken to review and coproduce guidance and resources in relation to annual reviews. We have worked to deliver this new webpage to make all information available for everyone. Annual reviews of EHC Plans (cheshireeast.gov.uk) We set up an Annual Review Working Group to work in co-production with our Parent Carer Forum, Health, Social Care and the Inclusion Quality Team on the new forms and information. We have worked in co-production to develop a set of participation forms to cater for a range of abilities and needs so that we can capture the voice of the child/young person through the EHC needs assessment and annual review process. We keep the child/young person at the heart of our work when producing EHC Plans. We have worked in co-production to provide a more detailed and informative Parent/Carer Advice Template for Annual Reviews so that we gather meaningful information and provide a chance for parents to voice their opinions and concerns prior to review meetings. Work was undertaken alongside National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) to strengthen annual reviews to be more person centred and follow PFA outcomes. We have developed resources, guidance and videos which are accessible via the local offer. The Preparing for Adulthood planning process (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

reviews where appropriate.	

Strategic Action & Ref:	Practice Champions workstream Update
4.1.7 Develop a forward plan of joint training opportunities for parents and carers to up-skill together with support teams. 4.2.1 Co-produce and deliver joint sessions for parents and professionals to explore and develop understanding of a 'day in the life of' each other and improve early identification of SEND and support parents with new issues seen at home. 4.1.2 Deliver our multi-agency Workforce Development and Training Programme, responding to the needs of the workforce and learning from feedback from children, young people, parents, and carers.	We have developed an extensive training programme which includes joint training opportunities for schools/settings, health and social care, and local authority officers; training is planned annually. We have recently successfully recruited into the post of a dedicated Training Coordinator who is due to start in post August 2023, which will allow us to further develop our offer across all partners and stakeholders. Elearning modules have also been developed for specific areas such as preparing for adulthood and customer experience. In 2021/22 our parent carer steering group delivered a workshop training session alongside Ruby's fund to focus on parental perspectives on SEND.
4.1.1 Introduce the Designated Social Care Officer role to further improve the assessment of wider social needs of children and young people and	Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) is in post and has completed a review and analysis of areas of strengths and development opportunities. The DSCO is currently working to develop practice guides and training to ensure needs are identified early and to improve outcomes for children and young people.

appropriate provision.	
4.1.4. Create an Autism aware workforce and provider infrastructure through the implementation of the Autism Education Trust (AET) Training hub.	An AET delivery plan for 2022-23 is in place. Engagement of schools is monitored and those who haven't signed up are encouraged to do so. Future plans are to expand the training programme into post-16 colleges (Cheshire South and West College have accessed training so far). 125 schools have accessed training so a total of 916 delegates (since Sep 22 to date) Impact of this training is measured through evaluations. Recent 'post evaluation training' questionnaire has been sent out and case studies report that the impact has been: 92 per cent said that their knowledge of autism had improved following the training. 95% said the training would have an impact on their practice in the classroom. Update on our Cheshire East Autism Education Trust Training Hub Autism (cheshireeast.gov.uk)
4.1.5. Establish more early intervention strategies for behaviour support through Education Psychologists and SEND partners.	Established and developed a bespoke early intervention and behaviour specialist provision. This has included dedicated educational psychologist support. Educational Psychologist support and capacity has expanded over the past 12 months to include dedicated support from early years. This has also ensured that we have developed our traded offer and support such as Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA intervention) The educational psychologist works closely with parent carers and the staff at a child's school to plan a programme of support. Programmes of support may include: Visiting schools on a regular basis using a problem-solving approach called 'consultation' Special training for teachers and other staff/professionals Providing strategies and research to support teaching and learning Working with parents/carers to help minimise difficulties at home and at school Working with schools and partner organisations to provide guidance and support Working with other key professionals (e.g. Social Care, Speech and Language Therapy, Cheshire East Autism Team) Educational Psychology Service (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Cheshire East – ELSA Network

Strategic Action & Ref:	**Communication and Engagement workstream Update**
1.1.1 Refresh the communication strategy to promote the work of the 0-25 SEND Partnership and engage and update key stakeholders on progress.	The Cheshire East SEND Communications and Engagement Strategy was coproduced with the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum and agreed by SEND partnership board in September 2021.

1.1.2 Refresh the SEND communication promise between professionals, parents/carers and young people with SEND.	The communications promise has been reviewed and revised following coproduction sessions with the Parent Carer Forum. We are currently agreeing the final version with a view to publishing during the summer (2023).
1.1.3 Develop a co-production charter with families to support working TOGETHER across the partnership.	A session with young people was held in November 2022 to test our TOGETHER principles. Our annual survey is in place to capture the feedback from across all children and young people to establish their experiences with a view to review and analyse feedback during Summer 2023.
1.1.5 Develop a termly e-newsletter for distribution to all parents and carers of children/young people with SEND through education and health settings.	Our newsletter called SENDing you the news is distributed to over 2,300 emails. More information can be found at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/SENDingyouthenews We are intending to measure parental satisfaction around communications in our next annual survey, with intention to analyse and review results summer 2023.
1.1.6 Simplify key communications into 'at a glance' one-page summaries.	www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/SENDingyouthenews is fully accessible and summarises the key messages with a 300-word limit We will review and use the annual survey that is due for collation and analysis in Summer 2023 to measure parental satisfaction and ensure we use feedback to focus next steps and areas of learning alongside sharing best practise.
1.1.9 Replicate Local Offer 'quick links' webpage on the Parent Carer Forum website.	Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum website is currently being redesigned. We are sharing the information found on the quick links web page via a drip email campaign. A Livewell marketing campaign is due to commence which will promote the Local Offer

Agenda Item 7

Children and Families Committee
18 September 2023

SEND Sufficiency Statement for children and young people with an education, health, care plan (EHCP)

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children and Families

Report Reference No: CF/21/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1 This report is to provide committee members with an overview of the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) sufficiency statement which has been updated to reflect the growing demand for specialist SEND provisions and identifies the shortfalls across the borough.

2 Appendix 1 of this report provides our SEND Sufficiency Statement which details educational provision for children and young people with special educational needs.

3 This report should be read alongside the SEND Strategy and SEND Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan.

Executive Summary

4 Since 2017 Cheshire East have produced and published a SEND sufficiency statement of our educational provision for children and young people with special educational needs.

5 The information provided within the sufficiency statement is used to co-produce (with the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board), a SEND Provision Plan for 2023-2028. This will be used in conjunction with the SEND strategy and the DSG management plan to develop our proposals to mitigate the overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High needs budget and help to address the increasing number of education,

health and care plans (EHCPs) and growing demand for specialist SEND provisions.

The SEND Strategy

6 The SEND Strategy is a key driver in the council's priority to empower and care about people, with a focus on:

• Working together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient

• Reducing health inequalities across the borough

• Supporting all children to have the best start in life

• Increasing opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs

• Ensuring all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

7 Supporting outcomes for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has become more challenging due to increase in numbers and complexity of need. Children with an EHCP have their identified needs met through funding from the DSG high needs grant received from government but this now exceeds the funding received for that purpose. This situation has occurred over the last seven years with several factors contributing to it locally, including a lack of provision, high rates of needs assessments, parental expectations and more generally the high needs funding basis which is not linked to EHCP numbers.

8 The SEND strategy has been refreshed to include priority actions relating to the mitigations with the DSG management plan. The refreshed strategy is to be taken to committee on the 18 September 2023.

The DSG management plan

9 The DSG management plan is based on a series of assumptions relating to growth in demand, expected costs and the impact of mitigations. This allows medium term forecast expenditure and income 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.

10 The DSG management plan concept was introduced by the DfE in 2020 as a mechanism to help councils present their DSG pressures. It is now compulsory where there is a DSG deficit.

11 The overall strategy remains the same; to continue to increase local provision and enhance SEND support services to ensure needs are met in the most effective way.

DfE Intervention programmes

12 Cheshire East took part in the Department of Education's (DfE) Delivering Better Value programme (DBV). The DBV programme is designed to provide dedicated support and funding to help 55 local authorities with substantial deficit issues in their high needs block of the DSG, to reform their high needs systems, with the aim to put more local authorities on a more sustainable footing so that they are better placed to respond to the forthcoming special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms.

13 The DBV programme has provided a robust evidence base, which has focused the strategic direction, to align our SEND strategy and DSG management plan. However, the opportunities identified via the DBV programme and the current mitigations within the DSG management plan, do not address the recurring in-year overspends and deficit position. It highlights that significant changes to funding levels and activity is required.

14 Cheshire East have recently been invited to take part in the Safety Valve intervention programme with the DfE this year. We have confirmed acceptance on the 7 August 2023. An initial meeting with the DfE will be held by early October 2023. This will build on the work already completed through the DBV programme. Local authorities are told that they need to demonstrate that their DSG management plans create lasting sustainability, including reaching an in-year balance as quickly as possible, and will provide improved support for children and young people, then the department will enter into an agreement with the authority, subject to Ministerial approval. This agreement should include funding to be provided to the local authority by central government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Review the information as presented within the updated SEND Sufficiency Statement 2023-2024.
2. Recognise the work already undertaken, and/or planned which has resulted in the increase of places within our maintained schools, resource provision, SEND units and special schools to support our children and young people with special educational needs.
3. Recognise the challenges ahead in addressing our reliance on placements within non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and specialist post 16 institutes.
4. Recognise the support that will be required from the wider council with regards to the identification of potential sites for the provision of new SEND schools and additional SEND places.

Background

15 Wherever possible, children and young people should be supported to have their needs met within their local mainstream provision. All educational settings are expected to have an inclusive approach and are required by law to make reasonable adaptations or adjustments to the premises and provision to ensure pupil's needs are met.

16 However, for some children and young people, specialist provisions are required to cater and support them through their educational life. Special schools and provisions are specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide appropriate special education for children and young people with additional needs whose needs cannot be met in mainstream provision.

17 In 2017 we produced and published our initial SEND sufficiency statement of our educational provision for children and young people with special educational needs, this document was then updated and republished in 2020.

18 In response to the needs and provision gaps identified in our SEND Sufficiency Statement, a SEND provision plan was produced which outlined our plans to increase the number of SEND places.

19 Over the last three years significant work to provide additional places has already been completed, is in progress or is planned, this includes over 230 new places in our special schools and resource provisions (RP) with proposals for further places planned over the next five years including the two new free special schools. These two new schools will be funded and built by the DfE following Cheshire East Council's two successful bids which were submitted in autumn 2022. Appendix 1 provides more detail.

20 Appendix 1 of this report provides our updated SEND sufficiency statement to cover the period 2023 to 2026.This document sets out our updated position regarding the number of SEND places we have in our RPs, SEND units and special schools.

21 Appendix 1 of this report highlights that, due to capacity constraints within our RPs, SEND units and special schools, the reliance on placements within non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and specialist post 16 institutes (NMSS/ISS/SPIs) is growing considerably, from 545 placements in 2023 is forecast up to 963 by 2026 and 1,067 by 2028 (mitigated forecast).

22 In the calendar year 2022, 742 first or new Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) were issued. 113 of these were deemed to require specialist provision. 42% of children and young people requiring specialist provision were placed within a NMSS/ISS/SPI. 25 of these are in the secondary phase of education of which 70% have a primary need of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH).

23 The SEND sufficiency statement has been produced alongside the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan, which is to be presented to Children and Families Committee in September 2023.

24 A key mitigation of the DSG management plan is to grow specialist provision within Cheshire East and as a result, reduce the reliance on NMSS/ISS/SPIs.

25 In March 2023 the Department for Education (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 focus for this plan is **RIGHT time, RIGHT support, RIGHT place**, which we have embedded within the Cheshire East SEND Strategy, Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan and SEND Sufficiency Statement.

26 The aims of developing Cheshire East provision are to:

- Achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure there are the right number and type of places to meet children and young people's needs.
- Ensure that children and young people can have their needs met within their local community wherever possible.
- Make the best use of our resources.

27 From this work, we will develop a SEND provision plan in September which will set out the steps we need to take, and this will allow us to drive, track and evaluate our progress. This plan will be led and delivered by both our SEND team and School Organisation and Capital team. These teams will ensure that the special educational needs of pupils are considered within all placement planning activity.

28 We will be developing our provision over a three-year period. Achieving better outcomes for children and young people is dependent upon having the right services available, but also ensuring services fit seamlessly together, have an inclusive culture, and the right structures that support them. We have taken a whole system approach to improving support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Cheshire East.

29 This work will continue to be driven by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board. Due to the energy, commitment and dedication of all parties involved in this work, we have already moved a long way towards achieving our aims, but we still have more to do to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.

Consultation and Engagement

30 No consultation or engagement has taken place directly relating to the SEND Sufficiency Statement.

31 The SEND provision plan which will detail the provision required to meet the needs of children and young people, will be co-produced by the 0-25 SEND Partnership and associated workstreams.

Reasons for Recommendations

32 To assess the needs of our children and young people in Cheshire East and to evaluate how well our current provision meets young people's needs and identify any gaps, which will support us to **plan** how we will continue to develop our provision over a three-year period starting in

2023-2026 so that we can achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people.

33 To achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people by ensuring there are the right number and type of places to meet children and young people's needs and having their needs met within their local community wherever possible.

34 To ensure the right decision are made to make the best use of our resources.

Other Options Considered

35

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Lack of understanding of data and of SEND provision requirements. Lack of information to inform the SEND provision plan to address the gaps in specialist provision in Cheshire East.	Continued over reliance on Independent/Non-maintained specialist providers, resulting in increased expenditure of placements, impacting on the overall DSG deficit reserve position

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

36 Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty upon a local authority to secure sufficient schools to provide primary and secondary education in their area and they should have particular regard to securing special education provision.

37 Under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 ('CAF 2014') the local authority and its partner commissioning bodies retain responsibility for commissioning services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities. The local authority is required to keep the provision for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability under review, including its sufficiency (section 27 (2)CAF 2014), and to promote wellbeing and improve quality of special

educational provision, working in conjunction with parents, young people and providers. This Act and its associated guidance special educational needs and disability code of practice :0-25 years (January 2015) ('the Statutory Guidance') is clear that, when considering any re-organisation of provision, decision makers must be clear how they are satisfied that the proposed alternative arrangements will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEN or a disability

38 In order to minimise the risk of legal challenge, the local authority should ensure that it is fully compliant with all relevant legislation in this area and that it continues to satisfy its statutory duties through its decision making. *Paragraph 3.8 of the Statutory Guidance states as follows-*

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010), public bodies (including CCGs, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools) must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people when carrying out their functions. They must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and must prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives must be specific and measurable.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

39 SEND service continues to see a significant increase in the number of pupils with Educational and Health Care Plans, and the associated school placement costs.

40 This has placed pressure on the grant used to provide funding for children with SEND in various settings and led to a £21.2m overspend in 2022/23. This adds on to the brought forward deficit of £25.7m to take the DSG Reserve to a £46.9m deficit position.

41 This is in line with the budget gap as determined by the council's DSG Management Plan that was reported to Children and Families Committee in September 2022 and set out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term.

42 The deficit is currently being managed by an accounting override until 2026 which allows it to be treated as an un-usable reserve. At this stage the position is not recoverable unless there are significant changes to funding or demand or both.

43 The council is working to deliver the mitigations set out in the DSG Management Plan but demand exceeds the current rate of local expansion. Additional key projects are being developed over the next 6 – 9 months including expansion of Springfield Special School in Crewe and the need for a centrally located special school. The service will be seeking to secure additional capital investment over the medium term.

44 The forecasts in this report demonstrate that, even with a significant number of mitigations factored in, the expected increase in demand and resulting costs is forecast to continue to exceed the funding provided by the DfE.

Policy

45 Local authorities are under a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places in their area (section 14 of the Education Act 1996).

46 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.

47 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.

48 DFE have published their roadmap which summarises the actions that will be taken to improve the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision system in England that are set out in the SEND and alternative provision improvement plan.

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

49 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.

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

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

50 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.

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

In line with the equality act 2010, an overarching equality impact assessment for the SEND Strategy and DSG management plan has been completed.

Human Resources

52 There are no direct human resource implications for the council, but if any additional school provision forms part of a current maintained school, the local authority will work with the school in the appointment of additional specialist staffing to ensure high quality staffing is achieved, both teaching and non-teaching.

Risk Management

53 There is an overall risk that the council does not meet its statutory requirements to best support SEND learners due to a lack of specialist SEND placements.

54 Due to capacity constraints within our RPs, SEND units and special schools, the reliance on placements within non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and specialist post 16 institutes is growing considerably, from 545 placements in 2023 is forecast up to 963 by 2026 and 1067 by 2028 (mitigated forecast). This is an unsustainable position and urgent action is needed to manage this situation.

55 Once specific schemes are identified, approved to feasibility stage and then beyond, all risks will be monitored as part of the staged process utilising the agreed Project Management Office (PMO) mythology.

Rural Communities

56 The creation of additional places across the borough will potentially bring benefits to rural communities by providing settings within more reasonable travel distances if a local school place cannot be met.

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

57 It is essential that the council makes best use of resources to ensure that children and young people receive the services they need, and those services must be provided.

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

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

Public Health

60 Any increase in SEND provision will require strategic joint commissioning of specialist health services to ensure resources for such services as physiotherapy and speech language and communication therapy are sufficient to meet increased demand as more localised school places are generated. This will be done through the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board and associated workstreams.

61 By providing local school places and reducing the distances which some children may have to travel to attend school will help to reduce e congestion on the roads and therefore reduce emissions, improving the air quality and making a better environment to live in.

62 Climate Change

63 Providing additional school places will enable Cheshire East Children and Young People the ability to secure at place at their local school thus reducing the need to travel outside of the area which will reduce energy consumption.

64 Cheshire East Council are very aware of their environmental education and stewardship role and are very interested in promoting sustainability in general.

65 Cheshire East Council is committed to being carbon neutral by 2025 and in future capital build schemes are required to align with this expectation.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration and SEND Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – SEND Sufficiency Statement 2023-26
Background Papers:	DSG Management Plan 2022-23 – C&F Committee September 2022 - Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Delivering Better Value Update C&F Committee March 2023 - Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk) SEND & AP Green Paper - SEND and alternative provision improvement plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) DFE roadmap for the SEND and alternative provision improvement plan. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan/send-and-alternative-provision-roadmap Children and Families Committee 18 September 2023: • SEND Strategy Refresh • Capital Programme School Capacity Return (SCAP)

SEND Sufficiency Statement for children and young people with an education, health, care plan (EHCP)

2023-2026

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Introduction

As a partnership, Cheshire East is committed to supporting our children and young people to access the best education to meet their needs and to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes. Having the right educational placement is key to supporting children and young people to achieve their potential and to develop the range of skills and experiences they need to equip them for adulthood. We have completed this Sufficiency Statement of our educational provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to:

- **Assess** the needs of our children and young people in Cheshire East
- **Evaluate** how well our current provision meets young people's needs and identify any gaps.
- Support us to **plan** how we will continue to develop our provision over a three-year period starting in 2023-2026 so that we can achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people.

Through developing our provision, we want to:

- Enable children to achieve the **best possible outcomes** for children and young people.
- Ensure there are the **right number and type of places** to meet children and young people's needs.
- Ensure that children and young people can have their needs met within their **local community** wherever possible.
- Make the best use of our **resources.**

The 0-25 SEND Partnership and Cheshire East Council are committed to providing the best quality education and support for all our children and young people to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes. Having the right educational placement is key to supporting children and young people to achieve their potential and to develop the range of skills and experiences they need to equip them for adulthood.

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 focus for this plan is **RIGHT time, RIGHT support, RIGHT place**, which we have embedded within our SEND Strategy and our Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan.

Some data within this document has been suppressed for data protection reasons.

A glossary of abbreviations is provided at the end of this document.

Cheshire East – Current SEND provision

Our provision

There are four main types of educational provision for children and young people with special education needs:

- **Mainstream provision** (including private nurseries, schools and further education colleges)
- **Resource provision** (attached to a mainstream school/setting)
- **SEND Unit** (attached to mainstream school/setting)
- **Special provision** (school, academy, free)

For the purposes of this report, we refer to non-specialist and specialist provision. Specialist provision includes resource provisions, SEND units, special schools (including local authority special schools, special academies, special free schools, independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, specialist post 16 institutes). Non-specialist provision includes mainstream schools, academies, free schools, private nurseries, independent mainstream schools and further education colleges.

- **Mainstream Provision**

Wherever possible, children and young people should be supported to have their needs met within their local mainstream provision. All educational settings are expected to have an inclusive approach and are required by law to make reasonable adaptations or adjustments to the premises and provision to ensure pupil's needs are met. In Cheshire East we have 124 mainstream primary schools, 23 mainstream secondary schools and we have 3 further education settings. Within a small proportion of our mainstream schools, we have introduced **Enhanced Mainstream Provision** (EMP). This was following a small pilot carried out in 2018. We have expanded to 13 EMPs over 2020 and 2021. There are two types of EMPs, one is to provide additional support for children and young people who are on the cusp of requiring an EHCP and the other provides additional support for children and young people who are on the cusp of requiring a more specialist placement. The locations and specialisms of these are shown in table 1 in the additional tables section.

- **Resource Provision**

Resource provision is a specialist education provision within a mainstream setting. Resource provisions have one or more dedicated classrooms for pupils with SEND, and provide specialist individual learning packages for pupils, considering their whole life needs. A key advantage of resource provision is that pupils attend mainstream classes as well and therefore can spend time with their mainstream peers. This approach better enables pupils to experience a full and typical life in their community, whilst also meeting their specialist needs. We have 11 primary resource provisions offering 96 planned places and 7 secondary resource provisions offering 84 planned places. The specialisms and capacity of these are shown in table 1 in the additional tables section.

- **Special Provision**

A Special School or provision is a setting catering for students who have special educational needs due to severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities, or social emotional and mental health problems. Special schools/ provisions are specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide appropriate special education for children and young people with additional needs who's needs cannot be met in mainstream provision. We have 6 special schools across the borough, the capacities of these are shown in table 1 in the additional tables section.

- **SEND Unit**

SEND units are special provisions within a mainstream school where the children are taught mainly within separate classes. Cheshire East are in the process of delivering a new SEND unit at Wistaston Academy in Crewe. This new provision will provide up to 24 places, and these places will be offered to children with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)/Communication and Interaction (C&I) across EYFS, KS1 and KS2. We are looking to provide a number of these dedicated special units across Cheshire East which will provide a more localised setting in mainstream schools for our children and young people. We currently have 1 SEND unit offering 14 places and is due to increase to a 24-place provision.

Capital Programme

In response to the needs and provision gaps identified in our SEND Sufficiency Statement, we will be updating our three-year plan to develop our specialist SEND Provision in Cheshire East. To support the development of existing and new specialist provisions to provide additional places capital grant is allocated to local authorities, this includes Basic Need capital grant and High Needs Provision capital allocation, both are grants funded by the DfE. In addition to this the council claims section 106 contributions from developers to support the provision of both mainstream and SEND places as a result of new housing and where a shortfall of places as a result of the housing can be clearly evidenced.

- **Basic Need Capital Grant**

The Basic Need capital grant is used to support mainstream and SEND additional places, this includes schemes at maintained, voluntary aided, foundation and academy schools. This Basic Need capital grant is provided by the DfE to local authorities to support them to meet their statutory responsibility to ensure there are enough school places available in their area for every child aged 5 to 16, as set out under section 14 of the 1996 Education Act. The annual 'School Capacity Survey' return (SCAP) as submitted to DfE in July provides the summary of priority areas where additional places are needed, and this is used to generate basic need allocations. For July 2023 all authorities were requested to provide SEND data as part of the SCAP return.

- **High Needs Provision Capital**

In March 2022 the DfE announced 2 years of High Needs Provision Capital allocations funding covering financial years 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024, for Cheshire East this amounted to £8.83m of additional grant funding. The DfE have provided High Needs Provision Capital Allocation to meet the capital costs associated with providing new places and improving existing provision for children and young people with complex needs, who have Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs), and where appropriate, other children and young people with SEND who do not have an EHCP.

- **Section 106**

To date Cheshire East Council has secured contributions from developers to support an additional 105 additional places for CYP with SEND and will provide £3.6m of capital funding. This funding has been used to support the provision of SEND places across the borough including the recent expansions at Springfield, Park Lane, Adelaide, Puss Bank and the setting up of new resource provisions at Holmes Chapel Comprehensive, Macclesfield Academy, Shavington Academy.

- **What we have achieved so far**

The last few years have seen considerable capital investment into our Cheshire East Schools to increase both the places for children and young people with SEND, but also to improve resources in our specialist settings. For pupils with SEND, we have provided over 230 new places in our Special Schools and Resource Provisions with proposals with further places planned for the next 5 years including the 2 new free schools that will be funded and built by the DfE following Cheshire East Councils 2 successful bids which were submitted in autumn 2022.

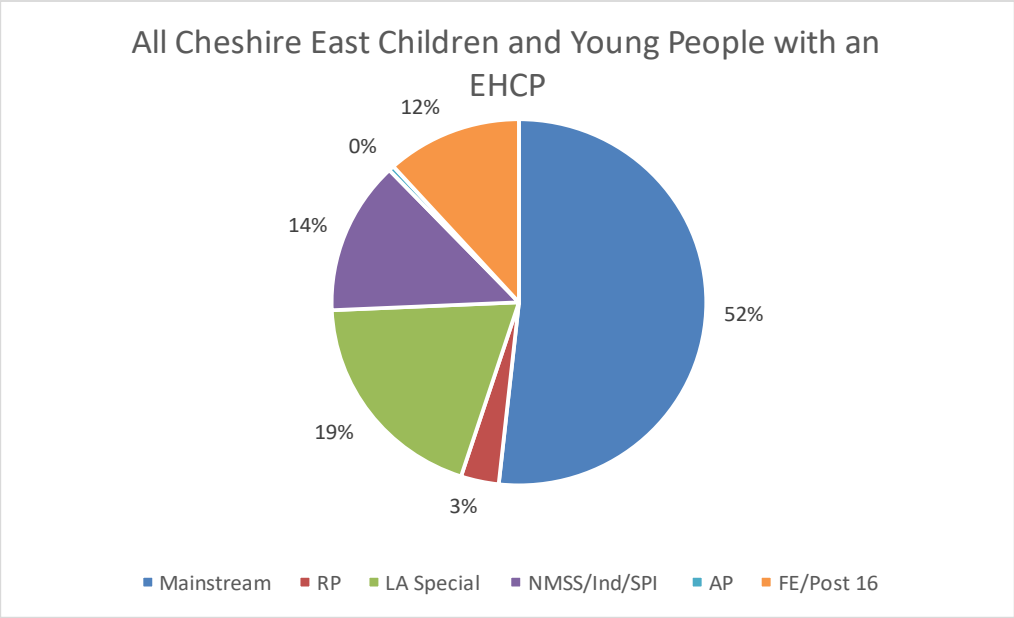
The following table provides an overview by area of our successful delivery of additional new places and provisions to support of Children and Young persons with SEND:

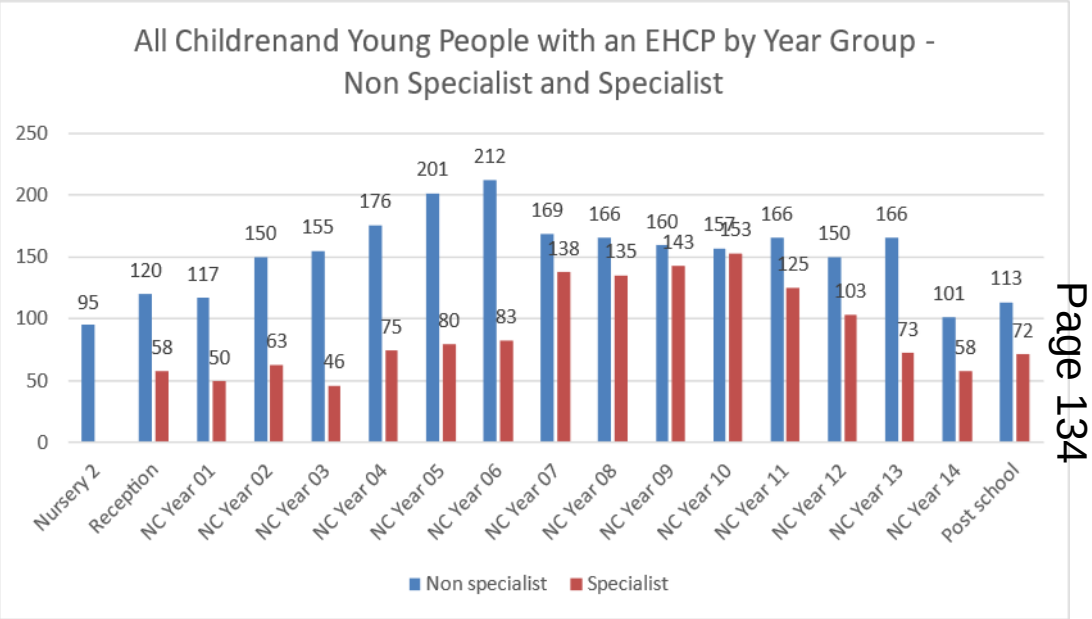
Planning Area - North/Central/South	School	Type of Provision	Stage of Work	Number of places provided	Number of places proposed
North	Park Lane School	Special School - Expansion	Completed	40	
North	Macclesfield Academy	New Resource Provision	Completed	14	
North	Pussbank Primary	Increase Resource Provision	Completed	7	
North	Ivy Bank Primary	Reprovision of accommodation to address suitability/fit for purpose	Completed		
North	All Hallows	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
North	Fallibroome School	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
North	Springfield Satellite Handforth	Special School Expansion -2023	Construction		80
North	Tytherington	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
North	Ash Grove Primary	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
Central	Holmes Chapel Secondary	New Resource Provision	Completed	14	
Central	Marlfields Primary	New Resource Provision	Completed	7	
Central	Middlewich High School	Reprovision of accommodation to address suitability/fit for purpose	Completed		
Central	Adelaide Heath	Special School Expansion	Outline Design	30	
Central	Eaton Bank	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
Central	Sandbach School	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
Central	New Free School Bid - DfE funded scheme	New Free Special school	Concept		60
South	Axis Academy	New Special School (DfE Funded Free School)	Completed	68	
South	Oakfield Lodge	PRU	Completed	40	
South	Springfield Crewe	Special School - Expansion - 2019	Completed	24	
South	Shavington Primary	New Resource Provision	Completed	12	
South	Monks Coppenhall	New Resource Provision	Completed	7	
South	Mablins Lane	Enhanced Mainstream Provision	Completed		
South	Shavington Academy (Secondary)	New Resource Provision	Detailed Design		14
South	Springfield Crewe	Special School Expansion -2023	Detailed Design		80
South	Wistaston Academy	New SEND Unit	Outline Design		24
South	Adelaide Crewe	Special School Expansion	Outline Design		12
South	New Free School – DfE funded scheme	New Free Special school	Concept		60
	Total			**172**	**250**

EHCP data analysis

Overview –All EHCPs

The tables and charts shown on this page and the page after, look at all Cheshire East children and young people with an EHCP.





- In January 2023, Cheshire East were supporting 4,029 children and young people with an EHCP, 1,455 (36%) requiring support in a specialist provision.
- The need for specialist provision in the secondary phase of education is 48% (694), which is much higher when compared with the primary phase of education 31% (455) and post 16 21% (306)

Provision Type	Non specialist		Specialist		Total	
Cheshire East	**2418**	**73%**	**914**	**27%**	**3332**	**83%**
Mainstream	1994	82%	0	0%	1994	60%
RP	0	0%	129	14%	129	4%
LA Special	0	0%	575	63%	575	17%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	210	23%	210	6%
AP	18	1%	0	0%	18	1%
FE/Post 16	406	17%	0	0%	406	12%
Out of Borough	**156**	**22%**	**541**	**78%**	**697**	**17%**
Mainstream	90	58%	0	0%	90	13%
RP	0	0%	X	1%	X	0%
LA Special	0	0%	203	38%	203	29%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	335	62%	335	48%
AP	X	1%	0	0%	X	0%
FE/Post 16	65	42%	0	0%	65	9%
Total	**2574**	**64%**	**1455**	**36%**	**4029**	**100%**

- SEMH, SLCN and ASC are the largest areas of need, representing 73% of all children and young people with an EHCP.
- SEMH – 66% of children and young people are supported in a mainstream setting.
- SLCN – 72% of children and young people are supported in a mainstream setting.
- ASC – 54% of children and young people are supported in a mainstream setting.

- 83% of our children and young people with an EHCP are receiving education and support within a school/setting within Cheshire East. However, 6% of these children and young people are placed within a non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post 16 institute.
- 17% of our children and young people with an EHCP are receiving education outside of Cheshire East. 48% of these are placed within a non-maintained special school, independent special school or specialist post 16 institute. 29% are placed within other local authority special schools (mainly neighbouring local authorities - Cheshire West, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire).
- 64% of our children and young people with an EHCP have their needs met within a mainstream provision.

	All Cheshire East Children and Young People with an EHCP					
Primary Need	**Non Specialist Provision**		**Specialist Provision**		**Total**	
ASC	369	54%	312	46%	681	17%
HI	34	65%	18	35%	52	1%
MLD	281	71%	114	29%	395	10%
MSI	8	53%	7	47%	15	0%
OTH	51	77%	15	23%	66	2%
PD	105	71%	42	29%	147	4%
PMLD	10	36%	18	64%	28	1%
SEMH	728	66%	382	34%	1110	28%
SLCN	806	72%	307	28%	1113	28%
SLD	65	25%	193	75%	258	6%
SPLD	78	79%	21	21%	99	2%
VI	35	59%	24	41%	59	1%
Unspecified	X	67%	X	33%	X	0%
Total	**2574**	**64%**	**1455**	**36%**	**4029**	**100%**

Overview by Locality - South Locality

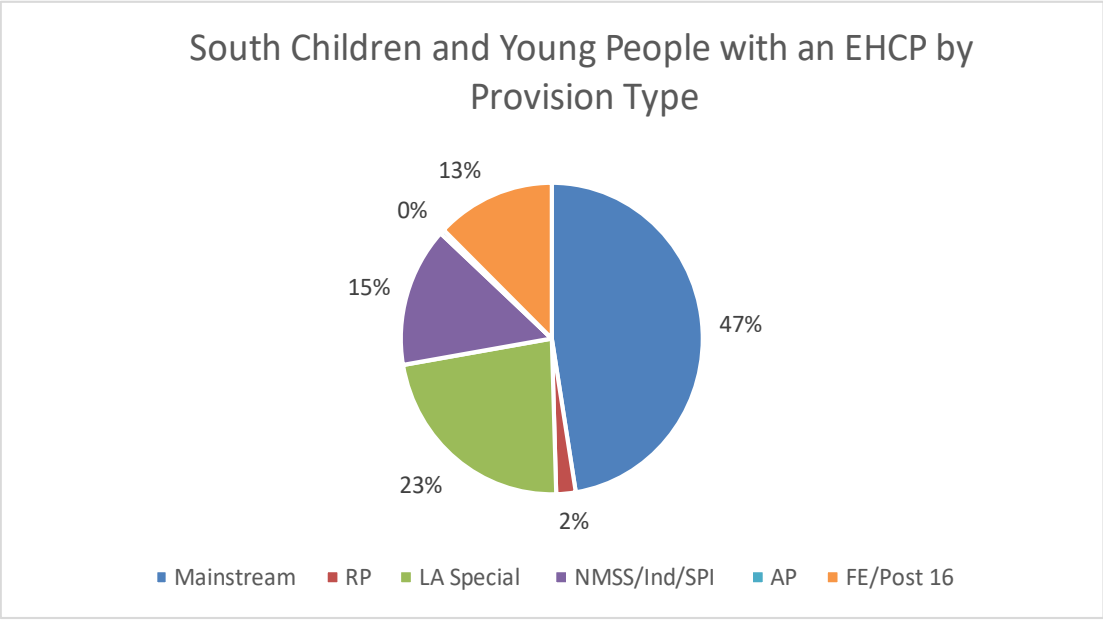
Cheshire East Provision in the South Locality

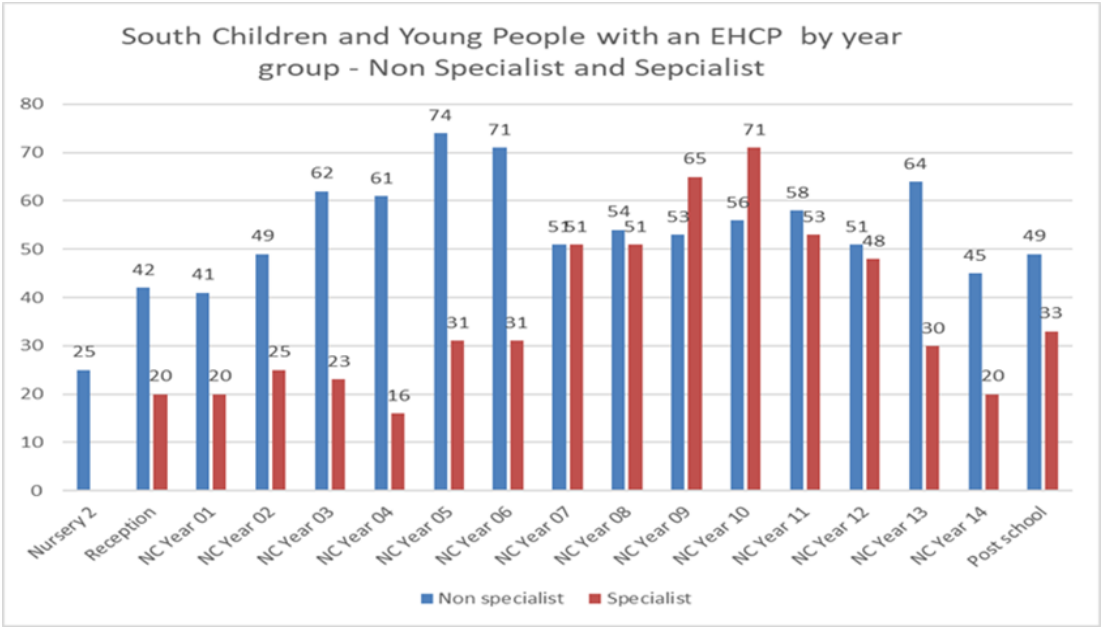
Special Schools: Springfield, Adelaide, Axis
Resource Provisions – Primary: Hungerford, Shavington, Monks Coppenhall
Resource Provisions – Secondary: Shavington
SEND units – Primary: Wistaston Academy
Enhanced Mainstream Provisions – Primary: Mablins Lane
Enhanced Mainstream Provisions – Secondary: Brine Leas

South Children and Young People with an EHCP						
Primary Need	Non Specialist Provision		Specialist Provision		Total	
ASC	99	49%	105	51%	204	14%
HI	9	50%	9	50%	18	1%
MLD	115	76%	37	24%	152	10%
MSI	X	44%	X	56%	9	1%
OTH	24	83%	X	17%	29	2%
PD	36	69%	16	31%	52	3%
PMLD	X	40%	X	60%	X	0%
SEMH	262	60%	177	40%	439	29%
SLCN	289	70%	121	30%	410	27%
SLD	24	22%	84	78%	108	7%
SPLD	32	71%	13	29%	45	3%
VI	8	40%	12	60%	20	1%
Unspecified	X	67%	X	33%	X	0%
Total	**906**	**61%**	**588**	**39%**	**1494**	**100%**

The tables and charts shown on this, and the next page are specifically related to the south locality and are telling us the following:

- There are 1,494 children and young people who live in the south locality who have an EHCP. 72% (1078) of these children and young people attend a school or setting within the south locality.
- 61% (906) of children and young people with an EHCP, have their needs met within a mainstream setting (school or FE). 39% (588) of children and young people attend a specialist setting (LA special, NMSS/IND/SPI, RP)
- 16% (242) of children and young people who live in the south attend a provision outside of Cheshire East, 82% (200) of this group attend specialist provision.
- In the primary phase (reception to year 6), there is less demand for specialist provision. 71% (400) of children are being supported in mainstream settings, 29% (166) of children require specialist settings to meet their needs.
- In the secondary phase of education (year 7 to year 11), the demand for specialist provision is much higher than in the primary phase. 52% (291) of children require a specialist setting. In both year 9 and year 10, the total number of children with an EHCP being supported in a specialist setting is higher than those being supported with an EHCP in a mainstream setting.
- SEMH is the highest area of need, representing 29% of children and young people living in the south locality. 40% of these children and young people require specialist provision to meet their needs.





Provision Location	Non Specialist provision		Specialist Provision		Total EHCP	
South	**808**	**75%**	**270**	**25%**	**1078**	**72%**
Mainstream	629	78%	0	0%	629	58%
RP	0	0%	23	9%	23	2%
LA Special	0	0%	236	87%	236	22%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	11	4%	11	1%
AP	6	1%	0	0%	6	1%
FE/Post 16	173	21%	0	0%	173	16%
Central	**53**	**34%**	**104**	**66%**	**157**	**11%**
Mainstream	53	100%	0	0%	53	34%
RP	0	0%	6	6%	6	4%
LA Special	0	0%	23	22%	23	15%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	75	72%	75	48%
North	**X**	**18%**	**14**	**82%**	**17**	**1%**
Mainstream	X	33%	0	0%	X	6%
LA Special	0	0%	X	36%	X	29%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	9	64%	9	53%
AP	X	33%	0	0%	X	6%
FE/Post 16	X	33%	0	0%	X	6%
Out of Borough	**42**	**17%**	**200**	**83%**	**242**	**16%**
Mainstream	26	62%	0	0%	26	11%
RP	0	0%	X	1%	X	1%
LA Special	0	0%	76	38%	76	31%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	122	61%	122	50%
FE/Post 16	16	38%	0	0%	16	7%
Total	**906**	**61%**	**588**	**39%**	**1494**	**100%**

South Children and Young People with an EHCP

Overview by Locality - Central Locality

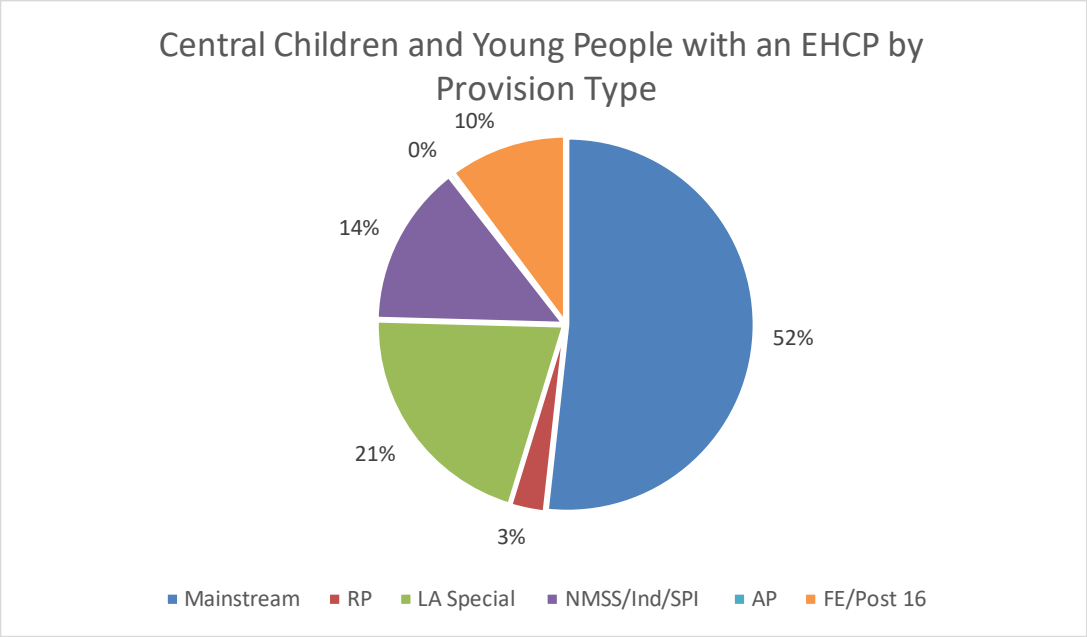
Cheshire East Provision in the Central Locality

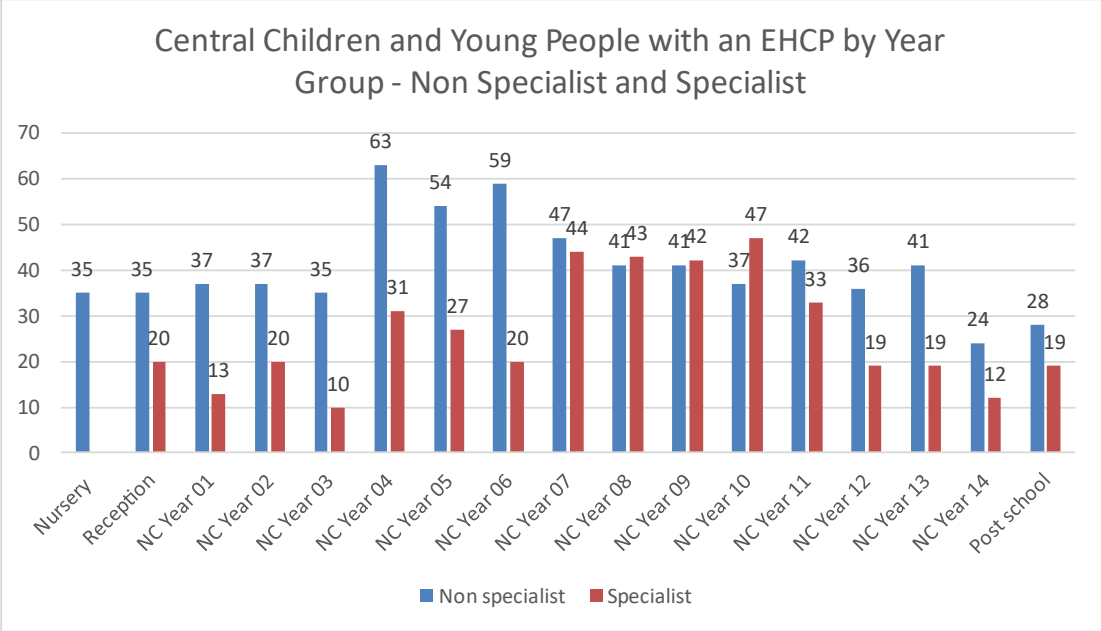
Special Schools: Church Lawton
Resource Provisions – Primary – Hermitage, Marlfields, Middlewich
Resource Provisions – Secondary – Middlewich, Holmes Chapel
Enhanced Mainstream Provisions – Secondary – Eaton Bank, Middlewich High, Sandbach School

The tables and charts shown on this, and the next page are specifically related to the central locality and are telling us the following:

- There are 1,111 children and young people who live in the central locality who have an EHCP. 56% (622) of these children and young people attend a school or setting within the central locality.
- 62% (692) of children and young people with an EHCP, have their needs met within a mainstream setting (school or FE). 38% (419) of children and young people attend a specialist setting (LA special, NMSS/IND/SPI, RP)
- 19% (214) of children and young people who live in the central locality attend a provision outside of Cheshire East, 82% (176) of this group attend specialist provision.
- In the primary phase (reception to year 6), there is less demand for specialist provision. 69% (320) of children are being supported in mainstream settings, 31% (141) of children require specialist settings to meet their needs. The data indicates a spike in the number of children requiring specialist provision at year 4 and year 5.
- In the secondary phase of education (year 7 to year 11), the demand for specialist provision is much higher than in the primary phase. The need for specialist provision and non-specialist provision within the secondary phase of education is split equally 50% (407). These levels remain consist across all year groups.
- SLCN is the highest area of need, representing 29% (322) of children and young people living in the central locality. 32% (104) of these children and young people require specialist provision to meet their needs.
- SEMH is the second highest area of need, representing 27% (301). 36% (107) children and young people require specialist provision to meet their needs. The proportion requiring specialist provision is much lower than the south locality.

Central Children and Young People with an EHCP						
Primary Need	Non Specialist Provision		Specialist Provision		Total	
ASD	97	54%	81	46%	178	16%
HI	15	83%	X	17%	18	2%
MLD	79	66%	41	34%	120	11%
MSI	X	50%	X	50%	X	0%
OTH	10	83%	X	17%	12	1%
PD	28	72%	11	28%	39	4%
PMLD	X	20%	8	80%	10	1%
SEMH	194	64%	107	36%	301	27%
SLCN	218	68%	104	32%	322	29%
SLD	19	27%	52	73%	71	6%
SPLD	20	83%	X	17%	24	2%
VI	9	64%	X	36%	14	1%
Total	**692**	**62%**	**419**	**38%**	**1111**	**100%**





Provision Location	Central Children and Young People with an EHCP					
	Non Specialist provision		Specialist Provision		Total EHCP	
South	**86**	**47%**	**97**	**53%**	**183**	**16%**
Mainstream	14	16%	0	0%	14	8%
RP	0	0%	X	3%	X	2%
LA Special	0	0%	92	95%	92	50%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	X	2%	X	1%
AP	X	3%	0	0%	X	2%
FE/Post 16	69	80%	0	0%	69	38%
Central	**517**	**83%**	**105**	**17%**	**622**	**56%**
Mainstream	504	97%	0	0%	504	81%
RP	0	0%	20	19%	20	3%
LA Special	0	0%	48	46%	48	8%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	37	35%	37	6%
FE/Post 16	13	3%	0	0%	13	2%
North	**51**	**55%**	**41**	**45%**	**92**	**8%**
Mainstream	32	63%	0	0%	32	35%
RP	0	0%	10	24%	10	11%
LA Special	0	0%	22	54%	22	24%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	9	22%	9	10%
AP	X	2%	0	0%	X	1%
FE/Post 16	18	35%	0	0%	18	20%
Out of Borough	**38**	**18%**	**176**	**82%**	**214**	**19%**
Mainstream	25	66%	0	0%	25	12%
LA Special	0	0%	68	39%	68	32%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	108	61%	108	50%
FE/Post 16	13	34%	0	0%	13	6%
Total	**692**	**62%**	**419**	**38%**	**1111**	**100%**

Overview by Locality - North Locality

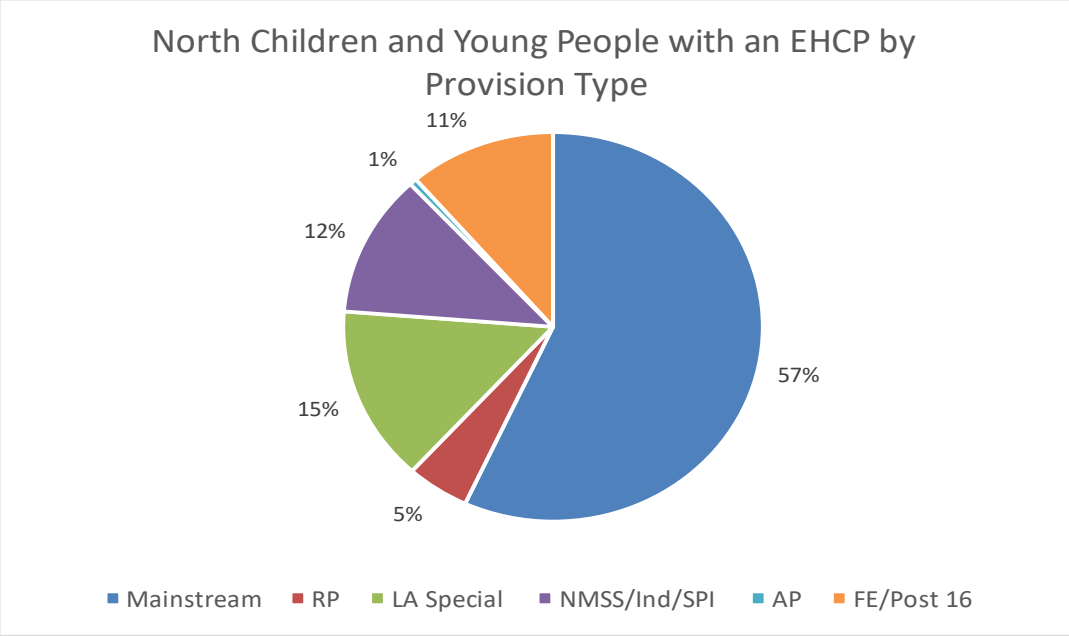
Cheshire East Provision in the North Locality

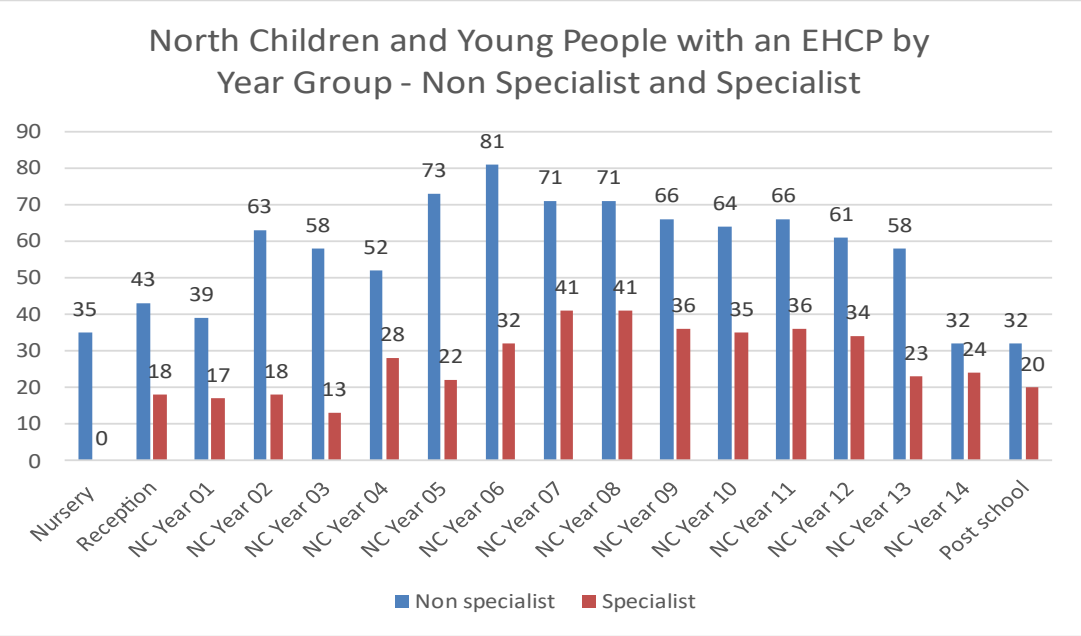
Special Schools: Adelaide Heath, Park Lane
Resource Provisions – Primary – Bexton, Ivy Bank, Puss Bank, Handforth Grange, Lindow
Resource Provisions – Secondary – Wilmslow High, Macclesfield Academy
Enhanced Mainstream Provisions – Primary – Broken Cross, Ash Grove
Enhanced Mainstream Provisions - Secondary – All Hallows, Wilmslow High, Fallibroome, Macclesfield Academy, Tytherington

The tables and charts shown on this, and the next page are specifically related to the north locality and are telling us the following:

- There are 1,403 children and young people who live in the north locality who have an EHCP. 76% (1064) of these children and young people attend a school or setting within the north locality.
- 69% (965) of children and young people with an EHCP, have their needs met within a mainstream setting (non-specialist) 31% (438) of children and young people attend a specialist setting.
- 17% (236) of children and young people who live in the north locality attend a provision outside of Cheshire East, 69% (163) of this group attend specialist provision.
- In the primary phase (reception to year 6), there is less demand for specialist provision. 73% (409) of children are being supported in mainstream settings, 27% (148) of children require specialist settings to meet their needs. The data indicates a spike in the number of children requiring specialist provision at year 4.
- In the secondary phase of education (year 7 to year 11), the demand for specialist provision is higher than in the primary phase. The need for specialist provision within the secondary phase of education is 36% (189). These levels remain consist across all year groups. This is lower than what we have seen in other localities.
- SEMH, SLCN and ASC are the highest areas of primary need. This is reflected across all the localities within Cheshire East. However, in the north locality, the number of children and young people requiring specialist provision to support these needs appears to be lower than in other localities in Cheshire East

North Children and Young People with an EHCP						
Primary Need	**Non Specialist**		**Specialist Provision**		**Total**	
ASD	172	58%	124	42%	296	21%
HI	10	63%	6	38%	16	1%
MLD	85	71%	35	29%	120	9%
MSI	X	75%	X	25%	X	0%
OTH	17	71%	7	29%	24	2%
PD	41	73%	15	27%	56	4%
PMLD	6	46%	7	54%	13	1%
SEMH	267	74%	92	26%	359	26%
SLCN	298	78%	82	22%	380	27%
SLD	22	28%	57	72%	79	6%
SPLD	26	87%	X	13%	30	2%
VI	18	72%	7	28%	25	2%
Unspecified		0%	X	100%	X	0%
Grand Total	**965**	**69%**	**438**	**31%**	**1403**	**100%**



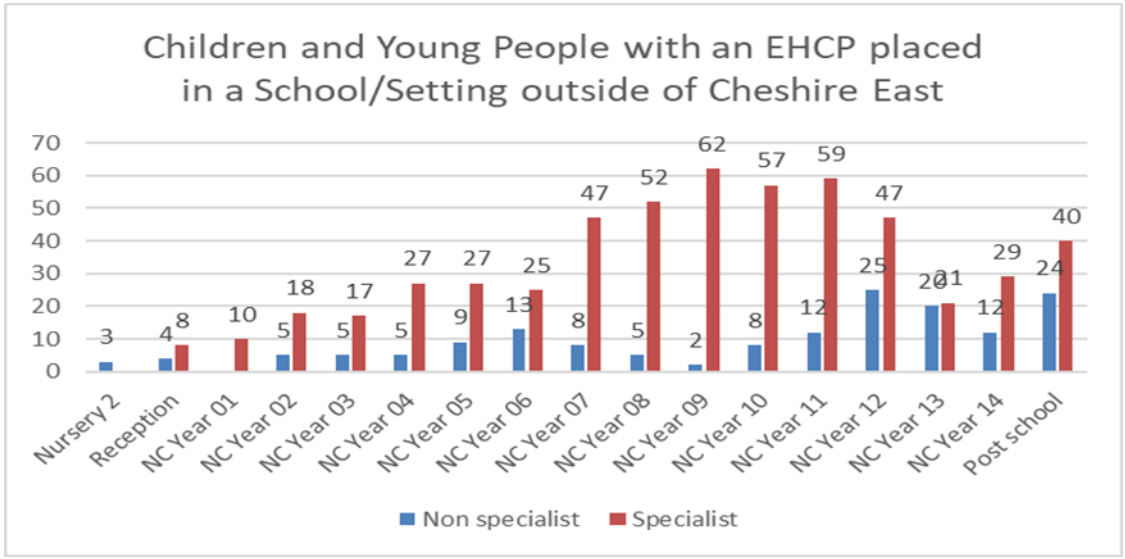


Provision Location	North Children and Young People with an EHCP					
	Non specialist		Specialist		Total	
South	**23**	**55%**	**19**	**45%**	**42**	**3%**
Mainstream	X	9%	0	0%	2	5%
LA Special	0	0%	18	95%	18	43%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	X	5%	X	2%
AP	X	13%	0	0%	X	7%
FE/Post 16	18	78%	0	0%	18	43%
Central	**15**	**25%**	**46**	**75%**	**61**	**4%**
Mainstream	15	100%	0	0%	15	25%
RP	0	0%	X	7%	X	5%
LA Special	0	0%	28	61%	28	46%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	15	33%	15	25%
North	**854**	**80%**	**210**	**20%**	**1064**	**76%**
Mainstream	719	84%	0	0%	719	68%
PVI	24	3%	0	0%	24	2%
RP	0	0%	64	30%	64	6%
LA Special	0	0%	101	48%	101	9%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	45	21%	45	4%
AP	X	0%	0	0%	X	0%
FE/Post 16	107	13%	0	0%	107	10%
Out of borough	**73**	**31%**	**163**	**69%**	**236**	**17%**
Mainstream	36	49%	0	0%	36	15%
PVI	X	3%	0	0%	X	1%
RP	0	0%	X	1%	X	0%
LA Special	0	0%	57	35%	57	24%
NMSS/ISS/SPI	0	0%	105	64%	105	44%
AP	X	1%	0	0%	X	0%
FE/Post 16	34	47%	0	0%	34	14%
Total	**965**	**69%**	**438**	**31%**	**1403**	**1403**

Overview of placements outside of Cheshire East – Out of Borough

The tables and charts shown below are specifically related to placements outside of Cheshire East and are telling us the following:

- 77% of pupils with an EHCP who are placed outside of Cheshire East, require specialist provision. 37% of which are placed within other LA special schools and 62% of are placed within non-maintained special schools/independent special schools or specialist post 16 institutes. This is due to capacity constraints within our existing provisions.
- 50% of children and young people attending a provision outside of Cheshire East are in the secondary phase of education, 25% are in the primary phase and 25% are in the post 16 phase of education.



Children attending settings outside of Cheshire East

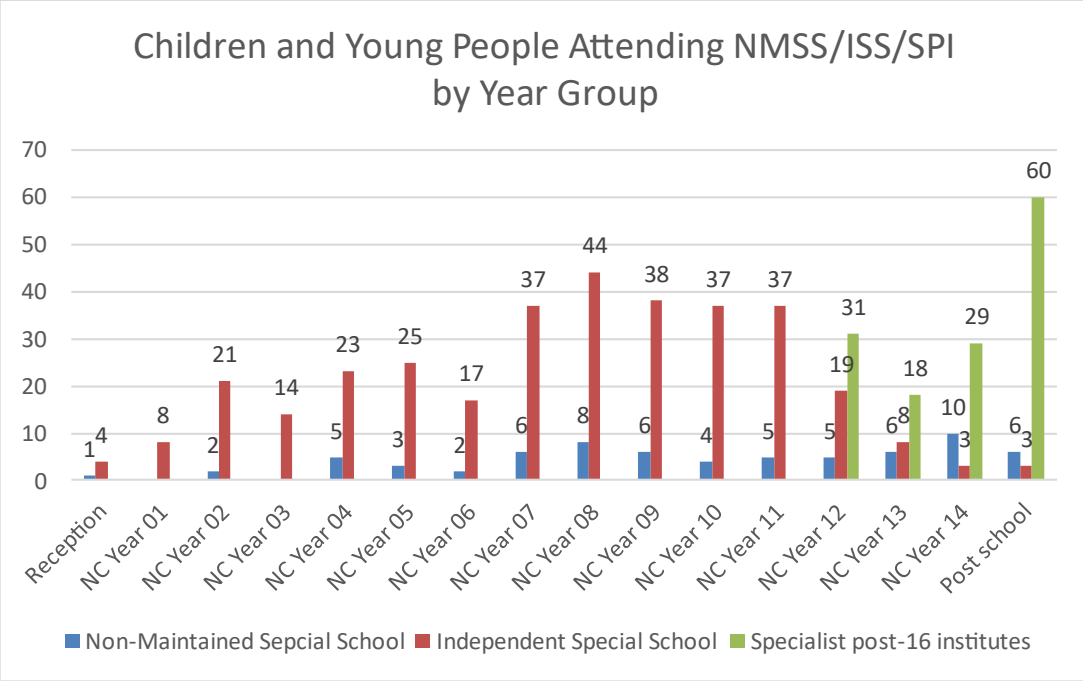
Provision Type	Non specialist		Specialist		Total	
Mainstream	90	56%		0%	90	13%
RP		0%	X	1%	X	0%
LA Special		0%	203	37%	203	29%
NMSS/ISS/SPI		0%	340	62%	340	48%
AP	X	1%		0%	X	0%
FE/Post 16	69	43%		0%	69	10%
Total	**160**	**23%**	**546**	**77%**	**706**	**100%**

Overview of placements within non-maintained special schools, Independent Special Schools and Specialist post 6 institutes

The tables and charts shown below are specifically related to placements within non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and specialist post 16 institutes and are telling us the following:

- 545 children and young people are attending this type of provision. Through the analysis and case reviews undertaken as part of the Delivering Better Value programme, it is assumed that most children and young people placed in this type of provision could have their needs met within a Cheshire East special school or setting if there were available spaces. However, it is important to note our special schools do not cater for aged 19 + (post school).
- 41% of all children and young people attending this type of provision are in the secondary phase of their education. 36% represent the post 16 cohort and 22% are primary aged children.
- SEMH is the largest are of need, followed by ASC and SLCN.

Primary Need	Number of EHCPS	% of EHCPs
ASC	130	24%
HI	X	1%
MLD	40	7%
MSI	X	0%
OTH	7	1%
PD	16	3%
PMLD	6	1%
SEMH	187	34%
SLCN	108	20%
SLD	33	6%
SPLD	7	1%
VI	X	1%
Unspecified	X	0%
Total	**545**	**100%**



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

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 represents a growth in the total of EHCPs of 18% (16% the previous year).

By analysing the spread of EHCPs across different provision types, we can see that 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.

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%
Total	**3,412**	**478**	**16%**	**4,029**	**617**	**18%**

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). 742 first/new EHCPs were issued. 113 of these were deemed to require specialist provision. 42% (47) of children and young people requiring specialist provision were placed within a NMSS/ISS/SPI. 53% of these are in the secondary phase of education and 70% of these have a primary need of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH).

NEW/FIRST PLANS	Jan 22	% Increase 2022	Proportion of new plans 2022	Jan 23	% Increase 2023	Proportion of new plans 2023
Mainstream	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%
Total	**654**	**2%**	**100%**	**742**	**13.5%**	**100%**

The council is required to submit a SEN2 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. The unmitigated forecast is based on a flat rate increase of 617 (net: new less ceased) more plans every year. This change reflects local experience of the annual change and a review of needs assessments. The mitigated forecast is based on the unmitigated forecast less any mitigations in place which are aimed at providing the RIGHT SUPPORT, in the RIGHT PLACE, at the RIGHT TIME.

		MITIGATED Forecast					UNMITIGATED Forecast				
Type	**2023 Actual**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**
Mainstream	2,084	2,245	2,392	2,457	2,549	2,583	2,339	2,594	2,849	3,104	3,359
RP / SEN Units	132	180	204	211	218	218	132	132	132	132	132
Special Schools	778	848	916	986	1056	1096	778	778	778	778	778
NMSS/ISS/SPIs	545	718	810	963	972	1067	868	1191	1514	1837	2160
Post 16 & FE	471	486	495	496	492	483	502	533	564	595	626
AP/Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	19	27	35	43	51	59	27	35	43	51	59
Total EHCPs	**4,029**	**4,504**	**4,852**	**5,156**	**5,338**	**5,506**	**4,646**	**5,263**	**5,880**	**6,497**	**7,114**

The growth in EHCPs is forecast to reduce from 76.6% to 36.7% after mitigations are applied equating to 5,506 EHCPs by 2027/28. This is set out in the table below.

Number of EHCPs	2023 Actual	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	% change
Unmitigated	4,029	4,646	5,263	5,880	6,497	7,114	76.6%
Mitigated	4,029	4,504	4,852	5,156	5,338	5,506	36.7%
Impact of mitigations	-	(142)	(411)	(724)	(1,159)	(1,608)	

What does this mean?

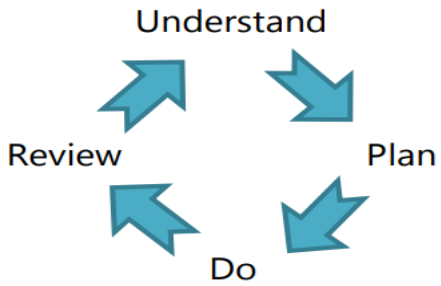
We can see that, due to capacity constraints within our RPs, SEND units and special schools, the reliance on placements within non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and specialist post 16 institutes is growing considerably, from 545 placements in 2023 up to **963 by 2026** and **1067 by 2028** (mitigated forecast).

We need to increase specialist provision in our borough as the amount of provision we have doesn't match our needs. All our children and young people who attend independent schools or non-maintained schools are attending specialist provision, so by increasing the capacity within our borough we can **reduce placement and travel costs** and make **better use of our resources**, as well as **increasing choice** for families, **reducing journey times**, and increasingly supporting pupils to be part of their **local community**.

As the demand for specialist provision is significantly higher than the places we have available or planned, and as we look to develop our future proposals we need to ensure that any new and expanded existing provision offers value for money in terms of build costs and the places provided, settings need to be designed so that the accommodation is future proofed and flexible in order provide suitable settings to meet the future needs of CYP with differing and complex needs.

As part of our strategic planning, we will be looking to review what specialist provision should look like, in terms of size, educational phase (nursery, primary, secondary, all through), location, and how we commission these in terms of constructing the actual building or securing of placements, this information will inform our action plan for the next 3/5 years.

Developing our provision and next steps



To ensure that we continually evaluate what we need and what difference our plans, changes and increased capacity is making. Children, young people, parents, carers, schools, colleges and other settings are the people that are best placed to know what is needed and what works well and will be involved at all stages of the process. We are committed to being transparent, equitable, and inclusive in our approach and planning in order to develop our provision so we can meet pupils' needs within their local community, make the best use of our resources, and deliver the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Understand

This needs analysis along with the work involved via the DBV programme, has helped us to gain a clear picture of our needs which will form the basis of our conversations with our key stakeholders to support us to develop our services for the future.

Plan

Over the next 3 months we will develop our SENDprovision plan which will set out the steps we need to take, and this will allow us drive, track and evaluate our progress. This plan will be led and delivered by the SEND and School Organisation teams, alongside the Corporate Assets team. These teams will ensure that the special educational needs of pupils are considered within all placement planning activity.

Through developing our provision, we want to:

- Enable children to achieve the **best possible outcomes** for children and young people.
- Ensure there are the **right number and type of places** to meet children and young people's needs.
- Ensure that children and young people can have their needs met within their **local community** wherever possible.
- Make the best use of our **resources**

DO

We will be developing our provision over a three-year period. Achieving better outcomes for children and young people is dependent upon having the right services available, but also ensuring services fit seamlessly together, have an inclusive culture, and the right structures that support them. We have taken a whole system approach to improving support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across Cheshire East. This work will continue to be driven by the **0-25 SEND Partnership Board**. Due to the energy, commitment and

dedication of all parties involved in this work, we have already moved a long way towards achieving our aims, but we still have more to do to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.

Review

We will revisit and review this needs analysis next year to ensure we have an accurate and up to date understanding of our pupils' needs, and that we continue to evaluate our provision against what our pupils need. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is currently being updated. This document will also be used to inform future plans.

Additional Tables

Table 1 – Specialist Provision in Cheshire East (maintained, academies, free schools)

Cheshire East Resource Provision (within Mainstream)	Age Range of School (not provision)	Locality	Specialism	Capacity (September 2023)
Bexton Primary	2-11	North	Complex Learning Needs (Speech, language and communication)	10
Hermitage Primary	4-11	Central	Autistic Spectrum Condition	7
Hungerford Primary	3-11	South	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	7
Lindow Community Primary	4-11	North	Hearing Impairment	6
Middlewich Primary	4-11	Central	Hearing Impairment	5
Ivy Bank Primary	2-11	North	Autistic Spectrum Condition	14
Puss Bank Primary	2-11	North	Autistic Spectrum Condition	14
Shavington Primary	3-11	South	Autistic Spectrum Condition	12
Handforth Grange primary	3-11	North	Autistic Spectrum Condition	7
Middlewich High	11-16	Central	Autistic Spectrum Condition	17
			Hearing Impairment	3
Wilmslow High	11-18	North	Autistic Spectrum Condition	14
		North	Hearing Impairment	8

Macclesfield Academy	11-16	North	Autistic Spectrum Condition and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs	14
Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School	11-18	Central	Autistic Spectrum Condition and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs	14
Marfields Primary School	4-11	Central	Autistic Spectrum Condition and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs	7
Monks Coppenhall Academy	2-11	South	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	7
Shavington Academy	11-16	South	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	14
Cheshire East Special Schools	**Age Range of School (not provision)**	**Locality**	**Specialism**	**Capacity (September 2023)**
Adelaide	9-18	South	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	84
Adelaide Heath	8-18	North	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	87
Park Lane	2-19	North	Severe Learning Difficulties, and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	126
Springfield	4-19	South	Severe Learning Difficulties, and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	170
Church Lawton	4-19	Central	Autistic Spectrum Condition	70
Axis	4-18	South	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	68

Cheshire East SEND Unit (within mainstream)	Age Range of School (not provision)	Locality	Specialism	Capacity (September 2023)
Wistaston Academy	3-11	South	Autistic Spectrum Condition & Communication and Interaction	14

Cheshire East Enhanced Mainstream Provision (within mainstream)	Age Range of School (not provision)	Locality	Specialism
Ash Grove Primary	3 to 11	North	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Broken Cross Primary	2 to 11	North	Complex Learning Needs (Speech, language, and communication)
Mablins Lane Primary	4 to 11	South	All
All Hallows	11 to 18	North	All
Brine Leas	11 to 18	South	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Eaton Bank	11 to 18	Central	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Fallibroome	11 to 18	North	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Macclesfield Academy	11 to 16	North	Social, Emotional and Mental Health/ Autistic Spectrum Condition
Middlewich High	11 to 16	Central	Social, Emotional and Mental Health/ Autistic Spectrum Condition
Sandbach School	11 to 19	Central	Social, Emotional and Mental Health/ Autistic Spectrum Condition
Tytherington	11 to 18	Central	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Wilmslow High School (x 2 provisions)	11 to 18	North	Moderate Learning Difficulties

Table 2 - Diversity of need supported by our special schools.

The table below shows the range of needs each special school within Cheshire East is providing and supporting our children and young people.

Data source: core data used to create the DFE SEN2 return January 2023

Primary Need	Adelaide School		Adelaide Heath		Axis		NAS Church Lawton School		Park Lane School		Springfield School		Grand Total	
	%	Pupils	%	Pupils	%	Pupils	%	Pupils	%	Pupils	%	Pupils	%	Pupils
Autistic Spectrum Condition	22%	18	17%	10	11%	6	46%	23	17%	20	15%	31	19%	**108**
Moderate Learning Difficulty	6%	X	5%	X	5%	X	4%	X	6%	7	8%	17	7%	**37**
Multi-Sensory Impairment		-		-		-		-		-	1%	X	1%	**X**
Other		-		-		-	2%	X	1%	X	1%	X	1%	**X**
Physical Disability		-		-		-		-	3%	X	2%	X	1%	**8**
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty		-		-		-		-	1%	X	1%	X	1%	**X**
Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs	54%	45	65%	39	62%	34	22%	11	3%	X	4%	8	25%	**140**
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	14%	12	8%	X	18%	10	24%	12	26%	30	22%	45	20%	**114**
Severe Learning Difficulty	1%	X		-		-		-	41%	47	39%	80	22%	**127**
Specific Learning Difficulty	1%	X	5%	X	2%	X	2%	X		-	2%	X	2%	**10**
Visual Impairment	1%	X		-	2%	X		-	3%	X	4%	9	2%	**14**
Grand Total	**100%**	**83**	**100%**	**60**	**100%**	**55**	**100%**	**50**	**100%**	**116**	**100%**	**206**	**100%**	**569**

Table 3 - Age range of our special schools

The table below shows the age range of children and young people supported within Cheshire East special schools.

All schools offer 16–19-year-old provision (Axis will be excepting pupils for academic year 2023-2024)

We have no nursery provision within our current special schools.

Data source: core data used to create the DFE SEN2 return January 2023

CEC Special School	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Y14	Total
Adelaide Heath				X	X	X	6	9	X	8	12	6	X	X		**60**
Adelaide School						X	X	12	10	9	18	12	8	7		**83**
NAS Church Lawton School	X		X		X	6	X	X	7	6	11	6	X		X	**50**
Park Lane School	16	10	X	X	9	X	10	10	11	11	8	X	X	9	X	**116**
Springfield School	15	15	19	10	12	13	14	13	10	17	22	10	12	18	X	**205**
The Axis							X	6	17	10	9	8				**55**
Grand Total	**32**	**25**	**23**	**14**	**26**	**31**	**41**	**52**	**59**	**61**	**80**	**46**	**33**	**36**	**10**	**569**

Glossary

Term	Meaning
AP	Alternative Provision
RP	Resource Provision
DfE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
DBV	Delivering Better Value
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EMP	Enhanced Mainstream Provision
NC	National Curriculum
FE	Further Education
LA	Local Authority
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NMSS	Non-maintained special school
ISS	Independent special schools
SPI	Specialist post 16 institutes
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PVI	Private, voluntary and independent
SEN2 Special Educational Needs Survey	Special Educational Needs Survey
SEND	Special Educational Needs and/or Disability
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
SLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
HI	Hearing Impairment
VI	Visual Impairment
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
OTH	Other
PD	Physical Disability
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Your thoughts matter.

If you have any views on this document or how we can improve our services, please do contact us at

SENDPartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 8

Cheshire East Council

Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

Allocation of Additional High Needs Funding and Additional Early Years Funding for 2023/24

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director Children and Families

Report Reference No: CF/25/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an update on the two additional funding streams announced for 2023/24 and recommendations over how the funding streams should be allocated for approval by committee.

2. The two additional funding allocations are:

- Additional high needs funding of £2.3m.
- Additional early years funding of £1.3m (exact allocation to be confirmed).

3. The report is supporting the council's Corporate Plan objectives as follows:

An open and enabling organisation	Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.

Additional High Needs Funding

4. To advise committee on:

- Changes to the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant and the conditions of the grant for financial year 2023/24.
- The approach to Cheshire East maintained special schools, special academies, special free schools, alternative provision (AP) maintained schools and alternative provision free schools.

- The approach to fee increases for independent special schools and non-maintained special schools.
- The proposed use of the remainder of the additional high needs funding.
- The delegations to the Executive Director of Children's Services to undertake any consultations deemed necessary to facilitate implementation.

Additional Early Years Funding

5. To advise committee on:

- The announcements in relation to early years funding.
- Expected timescales for payment and approval routes.
- The proposed allocation of the funds for approval.

Executive Summary

6. This paper sets out proposals for allocating the additional high needs grant (DSG) of £2.3m and recommends the allocation of the funding in accordance with the DfE guidance High Needs Funding: 2023 to 2024 Operational Guidance and local market conditions. This is in acknowledgement of the high needs brought forward deficit of £46.9m on 31 March 2023.

7. The paper details the expected additional early years funding (non-DSG) and recommends the allocation of that funding to providers through a flat rate formula.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. To approve 3.4% increase on both place and top up funding, representing the allocation £0.4m to Cheshire East maintained special schools, special academies and special free schools.
2. To approve 3.4% increase on both place and top up funding, representing the allocation £0.05m to Cheshire East alternative provision schools.
3. To approve 3.4% increase of top up funding, representing the allocation of £0.6m for those independent schools and non-maintained special schools that have requested a fee increase in line with contractual arrangements.
4. To approve the proposal to use the remainder of the additional funding to support SEN support and to offset against in year pressures.

5. To approve the allocation of the early years supplement using a flat rate for all providers subject to approval of the supplementary revenue estimate at council on 18 October 2023.

Background

Additional High Needs Funding

8. High needs funding is provided to local authorities through the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), enabling them to meet their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.

9. The financial allocations from the high needs funding block provide local authorities with resources for place funding and top-up funding for schools and colleges, funding for high needs services delivered directly by the local authority, or under a separate funding agreement with a school or college (including funding devolved to schools and colleges).

10. The council is facing increasing levels of pressure from expenditure on pupils with SEND. This exceeds the increases in the DfE's funding allocations and has led to the council's DSG reserve being in a deficit position of £46.9m at 31 March 2023.

11. Against the above context the local authority needs to make decisions on how to allocate an additional £2.3m of High Needs Grant which has been allocated.

12. Annex 2 of the High Needs Funding: 2023 to 2024 Operational Guidance issued by the Department for Education on how the additional funding may be used, which states:

- "maintained special schools and special academies and free schools, local authorities must allocate 3.4% per place, based on the place funding of £10,000 per place plus the average top-up funding they pay for a pupil placement in financial year 2022 to 2023, using the total number of places being funded in academic year 2022 to 2023".
- "Pupil referral units and AP academies and free schools, local authorities must allocate 3.4% per place, based on the place and top-up funding these schools receive. As the top-up funding AP schools receive is more variable and includes funding directly from schools commissioning placements, the calculation must be based on data provided through schools' income and expenditure returns".
- "Local authorities must allocate this funding for the period April 2023 to March 2024".

13. The guidance does not specifically make reference to independent special schools or non-maintained special schools.

14. The sections below set out the proposed use of the funding.

Determining the number of places

15. The October census information has been used from 2022 plus any change in numbers at September 2023 has been reflected.

Special schools, special academies and special free schools

16. The table below details the 3.4% increase on both place funding and top up funding for CEC special schools, special academies and special free schools.

School Name	Total places (5/12ths 2022-23 + 7/12ths 2023-24)	Impact of 3.4% on place funding	Impact of 3.4% on pupil funding	Total impact
Adelaide Heath	74.5	25,330	30,348	55,678
Adelaide School	84.0	28,560	29,302	57,862
Axis Academy	59.7	20,287	19,556	39,843
Church Lawton	70.0	23,800	36,227	60,027
Park Lane	107.7	36,607	28,259	64,866
Springfield	210.0	71,400	51,159	122,559
Total	**606**	**205,984**	**194,851**	**400,835**

Alternative Provision

17. The table below details the 3.4% increase on both place funding and top up funding for CEC special schools, special academies and special free schools.

School Name	Total places (5/12ths 2022-23 + 7/12ths 2023-24)	Impact of 3.4% on place funding	Impact of 3.4% on pupil funding	Total impact
Oakfield Lodge	60.0	20,400	26,141	46,541

Cheshire East Children in other local authorities

18. There are a number of CEC residents who attend other local authority special schools. CEC are responsible for funding the top up funding associated with these placements. The top up funding will also be subject to a 3.4% increase. It is estimated that the cost will be approximately £95,000.

Independent and non-maintained special schools

19. The impact of a maximum 3.4% rise on existing placements across all Independent Sector education placements providers (or lower where the uplift requested was lower than this) is summarised in the table below:

	Current yearly Commitment	Maximum *additional* Cost per annum if maximum 3.4% uplift agreed for all existing placements	New yearly commitment	Additional cost if maximum uplift of 3.4% was agreed with only those providers (16 in total) who challenged the 'no-uplift' stance adopted previously (i.e. no uplifts to be offered where none requested)	Additional costs if *requested* increase was agreed in full (average uplift request was 10.8% across the Independent sector; range from 3.8% - 23.72%)
Total across all settings	£25,674,718.67	£872,940.43	£26,547,659.10	£592,228	£1,214,470.18

20. The local authorities current DSG management plan includes a key mitigation in relation to fee increase requests from independent special school and non-maintained special school providers. The DSG management plan allows for a 3.4% increase in 2023-2024 and 1.5% increase on fees thereafter.

21. If the SEND team are unable to source placements within internal special schools or in other local authority special schools, Children's Commissioning search for a placement via the SEND Flexible Purchasing System (SEND FPS). As of 1st June 2023, there have been approx. 300 referrals sent to the Commissioning team since April 2021, the average costs of a placement via the SEND FPS are stated below:

- Communication and interaction - £54,244
- Cognition and learning - £53,178
- Social, Emotional, Mental Health - £48,777
- Sensory and physical - £48,903

22. For the 2023-24 financial year, 16 independent non maintained special school providers have requested a fee increase on current fees. These requests range from 3.4% to 23.72% and the average request is 10.08%.

23. If Cheshire East were to agree all requested fee increases at the level requested there would be an additional cost pressure of £1,214,479 (see note 1).

24. If providers who have challenged the 'no fee increase' decision were to agree a 3.4% increase in line with the additional allocation, it would cost the local authority £592,228 (see note 1).

25. If all independent and non-maintained schools, including those that have not yet challenged the 'no fee increase' decision were to be provided with a 3.4% increase to current fees, it would cost the local authority £872,940 (see note 1).

*Note 1 figures stated represent current expenditure levels for each provider at 23 May 2023.

26. Cheshire East has taken a 'no fee increase' stance with regards to SEND placements in recent years. Any fee increase requests received from providers in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 have been declined.

27. Three main risks have been highlighted during meetings between Children's Commissioning and the above providers:

- Providers are not prioritising Cheshire East referrals although demand is still there, this is due to fear of not receiving an increase in future years.
- Providers are considering front loading costs when offering on Cheshire East placements, meaning Cheshire East are charged more than other local authorities.
- Providers are considering whether they can still meet the needs of the placements they have due to the costs pressures of placements made in the last 3 years with no increase. This would mean handing back placements to Cheshire East that would cause further demand on the system.

28. For context the standard uplift percentage to be applied to new placements for Cared for Children on all Placements Northwest Frameworks from April 2023 is 7.3%.

29. Other Local Authorities across the northwest have been agreeing fee increase requests for existing placements. Cheshire East have continued to decline all fee increase requests, which has caused reputational damage amongst providers and the 23 local authorities across the northwest.

Summary of Proposed Allocations

30. The table below sets out a summary of the proposed allocations:

	£m
Academy, free and maintained special schools	0.4
Alternative Provision	0.1
Cheshire East Children in other local authorities' special schools	0.1
Independent and non-maintained special schools (this could rise to £0.9m if applied to all existing placements)	0.6
Investment in SEN support services or off-set against in year pressures (this could reduce depending on the amount applied to independent and non-maintained special schools	1.1
Total	**2.3**
Total allocation	**2.3**

DSG Management Plan

31. The council has a significant DSG Reserve deficit and whilst a proactive approach has already been adopted through the DSG Management Plan and the Department of Education Delivering Better Value programme, this plan continues to forecast a significant high needs deficit which continues to increase each year.

Accounting Override

32. The DSG Reserve deficit is being managed through a temporary accounting override put in place by the DLUHC which allows the reserve to be treated as an unusable reserve. This override has been extended to March 2026. It is not clear what arrangements will be made nationally when the override expires.

Additional Early Years Allocation

33. The 2023 Spring Budget announced additional funding for the existing early years entitlements for disadvantaged 2-year-old children and 3 and 4-year-old

children for the 2023 to 2024 financial year. There is also additional funding for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and Disability Access Fund (DAF).

34. The supplementary funding provided to local authorities by the EYSG is separate to the funding provided for the existing entitlements in the 2023 to 2024 financial year. The DfE expect to publish local authorities' EYSG allocations and the conditions of grant in September 2023.

35. The DfE intends that local authorities must pass on the EYSG, in full, to early years providers for each of the funding streams. For the main entitlements, they expect this will be through additional payments to providers calculated on an hourly basis.

36. Payments for 2-year-olds, EYPP and DAF are paid at a flat rate for all sectors. The EYSG can be directly passed through.

37. Payments for 3–4-year-olds are paid to providers via a formula. EYSG could be passed through via the formula or directly passed through as a flat rate. Payment via the formula creates a risk of not meeting the 100% pass through requirement.

38. All EYSG payments at a flat rate is the preferred option to ensure 100% pass through. This approach is supported by the Early Years Reference Group, a subgroup of Schools Forum.

39. It is anticipated that, following receipt of the conditions of grant and confirmation of the funding allocation from the DfE during September, the additional payments for autumn term will be made to providers in the final payment for autumn term in November. The additional payments for spring term will be paid within the usual interim and final payments cycle.

40. The additional rates are:

2-year-olds	£1.83 per hour
3–4-year-olds	£0.33 per hour
EYPP	£0.04 per hour
DAF	£30.92 for the period September 2023 to March 2024

The funding allocations have not been confirmed as yet. However, based on the confirmed rates and numbers of hours previously delivered, the anticipated EYSG allocations are:

2-year-olds	£342,006
3–4-year-olds	£908,430

EYPP	£4,970
DAF	£5,967
Total EYSG	£1,261,373

Consultation and Engagement

41. The high needs proposals for 2023/24 were shared with schools forum at their June 2022 meeting and the feedback from that meeting has again been used to inform the allocation of the supplement for 2023/24.

42. The early years proposal was discussed with the Early Years Reference Group on 19 July 2023 and a flat rate approach was the preferred option.

Reasons for Recommendations

43. The council's overall High Needs DSG allocation for 2023/24 is made up of two elements:

- The standard high needs block of £54.1m.
- The additional high needs allocation of £2.3m.

44. Under the conditions of the DSG:

- local authorities must use part of this funding to make allocations to all those special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) that they maintain, all special and alternative provision (AP) academies that they previously maintained, and all special and AP academies and free schools that were not previously maintained but are located in their area.
- Local authorities must make an allocation that is equivalent to 3.4% of the estimated total grant funding (place and top up funding) of the school

Other Options Considered

45. Do not offer parity for Independent and non-maintained special schools and continue with the 'no fee increase' stance.

46. An options appraisal must be completed for:

1. each option considered,
2. the Committee not approving the recommendation (resolving to do nothing),

Option	Impact	Risk
Offer Independent and non-maintained special schools the uplift to fees they have requested in full	Significant additional cost to High Needs Budget and increase in the deficit	- Would worsen the budget deficit by a further £1.2 million. - Weakens Cheshire East's hand in future

	Independent and non-maintained special schools would be happy with their settlement for 2023-24	negotiations if we are seen to be easily deterred by provider demands, and may embolden the sectors approach to future negotiations over fees
Do nothing for Independent and non-maintained special schools	Use funds to offset against the deficit position	- Providers will front load costs and charge more for Cheshire East placements - Providers will start to hand back placements as they can no longer meet need within fees agreed prior to April 2023 as a result of significant rises in staffing and premises costs during 2022-23. - Providers will not consider Cheshire East referrals - It should be noted that the two risks above are already manifesting themselves in other areas of Children's support provision.

Early Years Additional Grant

Option	Impact	Risk
Allocate the supplement through the Early years funding formula.		- The council may not achieve the pass-through rates.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

47. The Operational Guidance states that High needs funding is provided to local authorities through the high needs block of the DSG, enabling them to

meet their statutory duties under the Children's and Families Act 2014. The funding must be spent in line with DSG: conditions of grant and School and early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

48. The financial implications are contained within the report.

49. The high needs supplementary funding is part of the high needs block that has been approved at Children and Families Committee in February 2023 and through the council's budget approval in February 2023.

50. The early years supplement is a separate grant allocation and will require approval through council.

51. The DSG Reserve deficit balance is a major issue nationally and for Cheshire East Council.

52. The removal of the Accounting Override and where next represents a major challenge for all local authorities with a DSG reserve deficit as there are no announcements over resolving the issue.

Policy

53. The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory guidelines and policy for SEND. The SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time sets out proposed changes to policy which are open for consultation until 22 July 2022.

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

55. 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.

56. Corporate Plan

An open and enabling organisation Ensure that there is transparency in all	**A council which empowers and cares about people**	**A thriving and sustainable place**

aspects of council decision making	Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential	A great place for people to live, work and visit

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

57. 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 and therefore address inequality in outcomes.

Human Resources

58. There are no direct implications on human resources.

Risk Management

59. The council's approved DSG management plan reflects deficit balances over the medium term. External support and access to evidence-based practice may help us to reduce this forecast through additional capacity and invest to save funding. However, the position is not recoverable under current assumptions.

60. The council needs to consider all options to reduce the deficit DSG reserve. This could be through invest to save type measures or direct use of any additional funding to off-set the deficit.

61. The use of the additional funding considers the DfE guidance, issues over reputational risk and relationships with settings and the need to reduce the deficit.

Rural Communities

62. 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)

63. It is essential that the council makes best use of resources to ensure that children and young people receive the services they need and must be provided.

64. The council has approved its Children's Vision which contains a priority to support children with additional needs to achieve their aspirations.

Public Health

65. There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

51. There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	DSG: conditions of grant 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Annex B High needs funding: 2023 to 2024 operational guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Annex 2 Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk) – additional HN Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk) – DSG mgmt. plan Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan - Appendix 1.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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Agenda Item 9

Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

Pupil Place Planning Sufficiency Report (SCAP Return)

Report of: Deborah Woodcock Executive Director Children's Services

Report Reference No: CF/23/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

1.1. This paper reports on the outcome of the 2023 primary and secondary mainstream forecasts which will be submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The forecasts will ultimately inform the amount of Basic Need grant awarded to the authority for the 2026/2027 academic year. Notification of any award is usually received around April / May of the following year.

Executive Summary

2.1 Each year local authorities have a statutory duty to submit information relating to individual schools and planning areas. This return is called the SCAP (**S**chools **CAP**acity) return and is submitted to the ESFA in June and July, closing date for 2023 submission was Friday 28 July.

2.2 The SCAP return consists of 6 different pieces of data with the main emphasis on the pupil forecasts, 5 years for primary (2023 to 2027) – 7 years for secondary schools (2023 to 2029). The forecasts submitted will determine the amount of Basic Need monies that the authority receives from the ESFA to provide any additional pupil places required and which are not covered by section 106 monies received from developers.

2.3 Due to the lead in time needed to facilitate school expansions the Basic Need allocations are always notified in advance. Following last year's SCAP submission Cheshire East Basic Need Allocation for 2025/26 was £2,442,238.

2.4 For the 2023 SCAP submission the authority is required to submit forecasts for Special Education Needs pupils in both Special Schools and Resource Provision. The forecasting periods are the same 5 years for primary and 7 years for secondary.

2.5 However, as previously mentioned this report will only summarise the mainstream primary and secondary outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Note that the SCAP return was completed and submitted prior to the deadline of 28 July.

Background

3.1 Local authorities are required to plan for pupil places by Planning Areas that have been agreed with the DfE. Cheshire East has 29 planning areas for primary and 12 planning areas for secondary. Generally, these planning areas are centred around main towns but due to the geographical nature of Cheshire East some of the rural primary schools form a planning area of their own. i.e., Disley, Kettleshulme, Wincle and Bosley.

3.2 As mentioned the SCAP return consists of 6 different pieces of data:-

- Published Admission Numbers (PAN) – This is reported by school and is the number of children usually admitted to each year group.

- Schools Net Capacity – This is reported by school and is a calculation of the total number of children that a school can reasonably be expected to accommodate.

- Planned Places – This is reported by school and is any local plans to add or remove places from a schools Net Capacity over the next 3 academic years.

- Pupil Forecasts – This is reported by planning area but split into 2 sections the pupil forecasts and Section 106 contributions from developers.

1 Pupil Forecasts are prepared in two parts. First part is referred to as the Basic Need and these figures are calculated using a variety of data including, birth rates, GP Data, average pupil intakes, transfer rates for secondary schools and migration of pupils between neighbouring authorities. The second part is referred to as With Housing and these figures include the additional pupils anticipated from new housing developments. New developments are only included in the forecasts once planning permission has been granted and any section 106 agreement has been signed. The anticipated additional pupils are added to the basic need element to produce the final anticipated numbers on roll for each school which are then reported to the ESFA by planning area.

2 The SCAP return also requires the authority to separate out the number of pupils that have been included in the forecasts but have been funded by section 106 contributions even though those contributions may not have been received yet.

- Commentary - A written report on the planning areas, detailing any current projects or any plans which impact on the availability of places overall. This can include school expansions, new free schools, reduction in schools' capacity or school closures.

- Forecast Methodology - A written statement detailing the forecasting model and data used to produce the forecasts.

3.3 It should be noted that pupil forecasting required on the SCAP submission relates to all primary and secondary schools regardless of status, including the Studio School at Knutsford Academy and Crewe UTC. Although two sets of forecasts are produced, Basic Need and With Housing, it is the with housing figures that are submitted to the ESFA.

3.4 **Appendix 1** summarises the anticipated position for the primary planning areas over the next 5 years. The summary shows that of the 29 planning areas are indicating a shortfall in places either immediately or within the next 5 years. A couple of these areas the shortfall is due to previous admissions over the Published Admission Number (PAN) by schools. The planning areas showing the highest shortfalls expansions are already underway which will remove any anticipated shortfall, all these expansions are anticipated to be completed by September 2024. It should be noted that whilst a planning area may not indicate an overall shortfall there could be an individual school within the area with

a shortfall, but the shortfall is offset by neighbouring schools having surplus places.

3.5 **Appendix 2** summaries the anticipated position for the secondary planning areas for years 7 to 11 only. The summary shows more planning areas indicating an immediate shortfall. However, expansions are already underway at all these areas which will provide an additional 900 places across the borough when they are all completed. It should also be noted that the large surplus places shown at Crewe and Knutsford are in part due to surplus places within the UTC and Cheshire Studio School. For instance, the UTC has a capacity of 400 for years 9 - 11 but only has 161 on roll and Cheshire Studio School has a capacity of 150 for years 9 to 11 but only has 54 on roll.

3.6 **Appendix 3** summaries the anticipated position for the secondary planning areas for years 7 to 13. Although the shortfall is higher than the overall totals shown for years 7 to 11, the 900 additional places being provided are still relevant which will remove the shortfall shown. Schools do end to admit more into their sixth form than the official net capacity figures allow for but because pupils utilise the same spaces as the other year groups this doesn't seem to impact greatly on the schools. Again, the large surplus places shown at Crewe and Knutsford are in part due to surplus places within the UTC and Cheshire Studio School. For instance, the UTC has a capacity of 800 for years 9 -13 but only has 218 on roll and Cheshire Studio School has a capacity of 300 for years 9 to13 but only has 120 on roll.

3.7 Apart from being a statutory requirement to submit forecast information to the EFSA the forecasts inform the 5 -year forward plan for pupil place planning purposes. The 5-year plan, attached as **Appendix 4**, shows the expansions that are underway and when they are due to complete together with potential future needs.

3.8 The SCAP Submission portal, COLLECT, opened to local authorities on Monday 5 June 2023 and deadline for submission was Friday 28 July 2023. Once the closing date has passed the ESFA review all the data submitted and will come back to the authority with any queries. Once the ESFA are satisfied that all the information is correct the Executive Director of Children's Services is asked to sign off a form to attest to the accuracy of the final SCAP data submitted by the local authority, this is usually late November.

Consultation and Engagement

4.1 The SCAP return is based on data produced annually by the School Organisation and Capital Strategy Team and no consultation on the outcomes is necessary.

Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 Submission of the annual SCAP return is a statutory duty required of the Local Authority.

Other Options Considered

6.1 No other options available. The SCAP return is a mandatory duty based on very specific data sets that are submitted in a form laid down by the DfE.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

7.1.1 The Local Authority as the Strategic Commissioner for school places has a statutory duty (under section 14 of the Education Act 1996) to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the demands of its residents in the area. The DFE have issued guidance for local authorities in May 2023 School capacity (SCAP) Survey 2023 as to how the SCAP return should be submitted.

7.1.2 The requirement to submit the SCAP return by the deadline of 28 July is mandatory. Failure to submit by the deadline will risk the Authority's entitlement to Basic Need Allocation. SCAP is a statutory collection under the Information as to Provision of Education (England) Regulations 2016.

7.1.3 The information contained within the SCAP return should form part of the overall picture from a suite of reports that include the SEN provision and should align with the capital programme.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

7.2.1 Combined Basic Need Allocation and Section 106 contributions from developers may be insufficient to provide the additional places to ensure sufficient places for pupil's resident in Cheshire East.

7.2.2 Any shortfall in funding would have to found within the existing capital programme that has been approved in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/27.

7.2.3 If further funding is required and there is no existing budget available, then schemes would need to be prioritised and decisions made by committee as to which schemes can be removed/delayed within the Children & Families capital programme and/or the wider capital programme to allow certain schemes to proceed.

Policy

7.3 Local Authorities are under a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places in their area (section 14 of the Education Act 1996). Submission of the mandatory SCAP return by the given deadline will support the Council in meetings its duty to provide sufficient school places.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment is not necessary as pupil forecasting is a statistics exercise used to assess the provision of sufficient school places across the borough regardless of pupil characteristics.

Human Resources

7.5 There are no increased human resource implications for the Council.

Risk Management

7.6 The requirement to submit the SCAP return by the deadline of 28 July is mandatory. Failure to submit by the deadline will risk the Authority's entitlement to Basic Need Allocation, and in consequence, its ability to meet this statutory duty.

Rural Communities

7.7 There are no direct implications for rural communities although providing sufficient places in rural schools will ensure that pupils can stay in their local community.

Children and Young People / Cared for Children

7.8 Providing sufficient school places for all children and young people resident in our area is a statutory duty.

Public Health

7.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health, however providing sufficient places in their local community could improve the child's social and emotional wellbeing.

7.9.2 By providing local school places the distances which some children may have to travel to attend school should be reduced thus reduce congestion on the roads and therefore reduce emissions improving the air quality and making a better environment to live in.

Climate Change

7.10 Forecasting future pupil numbers helps ensure that sufficient pupil places are available in the correct places across the borough to meet demand. Providing adequate places means that more pupils can attend their local school and reduce the need to travel.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Joanne Prophet, School Organisation and Capital Manager joanne.prophet@cheshireeast,gov.uk Mobile 07890 321801
Appendices:	**Appendix 1** - 2023 Primary Shortfall/ Surplus by Planning Area **Appendix 2** – 2023 Secondary Shortfall/Surplus for years 7-11 by Planning Area **Appendix 3** – 2023 Secondary Shortfall/ Surplus for years 7-13 by Planning Area **Appendix 4** – 5-Year Forward Plan
Background Papers:	n/a

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APPENDIX 1

2023 PRIMARY FORECASTS INCLUDING HOUSING		2023 FORECASTS NOR (Years Reception to year 7)						SHORTFALL / SURPLUS					
PlanningArea	**NET CAP**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**		**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**Comments**
Adlington	105	88	87	85	86	84		17	18	20	19	21	
Alsager	1575	1458	1455	1451	1450	1450		117	120	124	125	125	
Bollington	672	554	548	538	530	513		118	124	134	142	159	
Bosley St Mary's	56	42	45	40	41	40		14	11	16	15	16	
Congleton Central	1260	1107	1144	1146	1154	1165		153	116	114	106	95	
Congleton East	416	424	435	438	438	433		-8	-19	-22	-22	-17	There are vacancies in alternative nearby schools within Congleton Central and Congleton West
Congleton West	1043	971	1005	1023	1044	1042		72	38	20	-1	1	
Crewe North	3739	3296	3325	3393	3402	3475		443	414	346	337	264	
Crewe South	2205	1989	1995	1968	1938	1895		216	210	237	267	310	
Disley	315	281	280	286	283	278		34	35	29	32	37	
Haslington	651	653	681	716	723	720		-2	-30	-65	-72	-69	Expansion at The Dingle will provide additional 70 places. In addition to this there are a number of pupils coming from the Crewe area for these schools
Holmes Chapel	1244	1229	1228	1238	1245	1250		15	16	6	-1	-6	
Kettleshulme	63	55	50	47	36	37		8	13	16	27	26	
Knutsford Rural	315	231	218	213	197	180		84	97	102	71	71	
Knutsford Village	1365	1227	1225	1224	1232	1237		138	140	141	133	128	
Macclesfield North	2467	2013	1997	1996	1976	1938		454	470	471	491	529	
Macclesfield Rural	483	483	480	480	483	484		0	3	3	-0	-1	Shortfall in places is due to admissions over PAN by the 2 schools in this planning area
Macclesfield South	2200	1909	1897	1920	1938	1927		291	303	280	262	273	
Middlewich	1157	971	971	965	965	975		186	186	192	192	182	
Nantwich Rural North	560	503	502	487	486	487		57	58	73	74	73	
Nantwich Rural South	601	530	536	535	528	529		71	65	66	73	72	
Nantwich Town	1858	1819	1833	1856	1835	1799		39	25	2	23	59	Additional places will be created by the new school on the Kingsley Field development . This will open with Reception places from 2024
Poynton Village	1144	1174	1167	1173	1167	1154		-30	-23	-29	-23	-10	One of the local schools is increasing it's PAN to 30 from Sep 2024. This will address the immediate need in this planning area
Sandbach	1680	1677	1756	1812	1850	1868		3	-76	-132	-170	-188	Expansion of Wheelock Primary and proposed expansion of Sandbach Primary Academy will provide 210 additional places.
Scholar Green & Woodcock's Well	315	302	298	298	295	286		13	17	17	20	29	
Shavington	1735	1646	1670	1690	1689	1670		89	65	45	46	65	
Wilmslow North	1484	1436	1439	1435	1427	1407		48	45	49	57	77	
Wilmslow South	1490	1430	1407	1390	1380	1349		60	83	100	110	141	
Wincle	52	61	61	62	65	65		-9	-9	-10	-13	-13	Shortfall in places is due to admissions over PAN by the school in this planning area
TOTAL	**32250**	**29,560**	**29,736**	**29,904**	**29,883**	**29,736**		**2,690**	**2,514**	**2,346**	**2,321**	**2,451**	

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APPENDIX 2

2023 FORECASTS INCLUDING HOUSING		Forecast NOR (Year 7 to Year 11 Only) Includes University Technical College and Cheshire Studio School							Shortfall or Surplus Places							
Planning Area	**Net Capacity (year 7-11)**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	
Alsager	1,405	1,343	1,362	1,372	1,372	1,381	1,378	1,379	62	43	33	33	24	27	26	
Congleton	1,847	2,020	2,068	2,139	2,169	2,149	2,148	2,186	-173	-221	-292	-322	-302	-301	-339	Schemes currently in progress in this planning area to provide 300 additionl places at the 2 Congleton seconday schools
Crewe	3,538	2,843	2,868	2,924	2,969	2,978	2,996	3,065	695	670	614	570	560	542	473	Includes University Technical Colleges with a capcaity of 400 for year groups 10 and 11
Holmes Chapel	1,050	1,156	1,149	1,136	1,133	1,122	1,116	1,109	-106	-99	-86	-83	-72	-66	-59	Scheme currently in progress in this planning area to provide 150 additionl places.
Knutsford	1,450	1,154	1,180	1,177	1,205	1,217	1,232	1,220	296	270	273	245	233	218	230	Includes Cheshire Studio School with a capacity of 150 for year groups 10 and 11
Macclesfield	4,103	4,070	4,102	4,119	4,129	4,163	4,080	4,008	33	1	-16	-26	-60	23	95	Places for Phase 1 Tytherington School expansion have been included in the forecasts which provided an additional 150 places. Further works are plannedat this school to address the infrastructure shortfall. Further expansions in this planning area may be needed subject to housing and will be monitored.
Middlewich	700	716	729	755	765	773	787	791	-16	-29	-55	-65	-73	-87	-91	Shortfall shown relates to housing development which is not yet under construction
Nantwich	2,386	2,276	2,314	2,339	2,338	2,307	2,257	2,236	110	72	47	48	79	129	150	
Poynton	1,230	1,186	1,211	1,215	1,217	1,233	1,213	1,204	44	19	15	13	-3	17	26	
Sandbach	2,400	2,495	2,496	2,489	2,467	2,464	2,471	2,477	-95	-96	-89	-67	-64	-71	-77	Expansions at both schools have been completed to provide an additional 300 places. Shortfall shown due to previous admissions over PAN - Both schools have now capped their intake at 240.
Shavington	850	901	934	968	989	1,031	1,046	1,063	-51	-84	-118	-139	-181	-196	-213	Scheme currently in progress in this planning area to provide 150 additionl places.
Wilmslow	1,500	1,763	1,799	1,843	1,825	1,851	1,842	1,817	-263	-299	-343	-325	-351	-342	-317	Scheme currently in progress in this planning area to provide 300 additionl places.
TOTAL's	**22,459**	**21,923**	**22,212**	**22,475**	**22,577**	**22,670**	**22,566**	**22,554**	**536**	**247**	**-16**	**-118**	**-211**	**-107**	**-95**	

Total of 900 additional places underway.

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APPENDIX 3

2023 FORECASTS INCLUDING HOUSING		Forecast NOR (Year 7 to Year 13) Includes University Technical College and Cheshire Studio School							Shortfall or Surplus Places							
Planning Area	**Net Capacity (year 7-13)**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	
Alsager	1,607	1,630	1,687	1,709	1,714	1,726	1,731	1,739	-23	-80	-102	-107	-119	-124	-132	Previous expansion scheme to increase capacity for years 7-11, this is expected to increase sixth form numbers going forward. Also the school admits a number of pupils from neighbouring Local Authorities.
Congleton	2,284	2,422	2,506	2,599	2,649	2,679	2,714	2,725	-138	-222	-315	-365	-395	-430	-441	Schemes currently in progress in this planning area to provide 300 additionl places at the 2 Congleton seconday schools
Crewe	3,938	2,920	2,960	3,013	3,094	3,128	3,166	3,251	1,018	978	925	844	810	772	687	Includes University Technical College with a capcaity of 800 for year groups 10 and 13
Holmes Chapel	1,250	1,323	1,348	1,346	1,339	1,329	1,329	1,322	-73	-98	-96	-89	-79	-79	-72	Scheme currently in progress in this planning area to provide 150 additionl places.
Knutsford	1,906	1,441	1,496	1,526	1,554	1,563	1,588	1,582	465	410	380	352	343	318	324	Includes Cheshire Studio School with a capacity of 300 for year groups 10 and 13
Macclesfield	4,924	4,879	4,965	5,001	5,012	5,050	4,980	4,917	45	-41	-77	-88	-126	-56	7	Places for Phase 1 Tytherington School expansion have been included in the forecasts which provided an additional 150 places. Further works are plannedat this school to address the infrastructure shortfall. Further expansions in this planning area may be needed subject to housing and will be monitored.
Middlewich	700	716	729	755	765	773	787	791	-16	-29	-55	-65	-73	-87	-91	Shortfall shown relates to housing development which is not yet under construction
Nantwich	2,934	2,685	2,748	2,804	2,821	2,810	2,769	2,737	249	186	130	113	124	165	197	
Poynton	1,552	1,491	1,504	1,525	1,543	1,569	1,552	1,545	61	48	27	9	-17	0	7	
Sandbach	2,876	3,008	3,056	3,082	3,072	3,069	3,063	3,067	-132	-180	-206	-196	-193	-187	-191	Expansions at both schools have been completed to provide an additional 300 places. Shortfall shown due to previous admissions over PAN - Both schools have now capped their intake at 240.
Shavington	850	901	934	968	989	1,031	1,046	1,063	-51	-84	-118	-139	-181	-196	-213	Scheme currently in progress in this planning area to provide 150 additionl places.
Wilmslow	1,977	2,211	2,274	2,331	2,335	2,371	2,358	2,344	-234	-297	-354	-358	-394	-381	-367	Scheme currently in progress in this planning area to provide 300 additionl places.
TOTAL's	**26,798**	**25,627**	**26,206**	**26,659**	**26,888**	**27,097**	**27,082**	**27,083**	**1,171**	**592**	**139**	**-90**	**-299**	**-284**	**-285**	

Total of 900 additional places underway.

Notes

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BASIC NEED AND APPROVED HOUSING ONLY

Planning Area	Expansion Schemes previous 5 year period only.	PRIOITY AREAS BASED ON APPROVED HOUSING - 5 year forecasting period for primary, 7 years for secondary (additional places are in line with pupil places/need not net capacity.)														PRIMARY	SECONDARY
		2023		2024		2025		2026		2027		2028		2029		COMMENTS	COMMENTS
		Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec		
Adlington																No housing in the area, no need identified. Any shortfall shown is due to admissions over PAN	
Alsager	Expansion Scheme at Alsager High School completed in2019, this provided 150 additional places. Expansion scheme at Cranberry Primary Academy, this provided an additional 105 places.															Following expansion of Cranberry no immedaite further need identified	Following expansion of Alsager school no further immediate need shown but area being monitored due to ongoing housing also school admits pupils from neighbouring LA's
Bollington																No housing in the area, no need identified.	
Bosley St Mary's																No housing in the area, no need identified.	
Congleton Central					300											Proposed new school on Giantswood (potential 1FE) but more a consideration on when the new school is needed based on housing and surplus in neighbouring schools. Not showing any immediate need.	Expansion schemes to provide 150 places at each secondary schools are progressing . Construction has started at both Eaton Bank and Congleton High to provide 150 additional places at both schools (300 in total for the planning area). Further places may be required but will very much depend on future housing.
Congleton East																There is a small need of up to 33 places but these may be accommodated by the surplus in Congleton West/Congleton Central planning areas	
Congleton West	Expansion scheme at The Quinta Primary Academy completed in 2018, this provided an additional 70 places.							105								Project at black firs is now complete to formalise the capacity of the school at 315. No shortfall showing at this school over 5 years. Further expansions may be required, we will continue to monitor the situation.	
Crewe North	Expansions at Hungerford Primary Academy - 210 places, Monks Coppenhal Primary Academy 210 places, Mablins Lane Primary 105 places all completed in readiness for September 2017.															Due to previous expansions no further need identified	No need identified. Expansion of neighbouring schools could have impact. Sir William Stanier (SWS) have reduced PAN but could increase again if needed.
Crewe South																No need identified	
Disley	Expansion scheme at Disley Primary School completed in 2018, this provided 70 additional places.															Following expansion any shortfall shown is due to admissions over PAN.	
Haslington		70														Expansion underway to increase The Dingle to full 2FE providing an additional 70 places.	
Holmes Chapel	Expansion scheme at Chelford Primary was completed in 2019, this provided an additional classroom allowing their PAN to increase from 9 to 13.				150											Shortfall across the area but more so between the 2 village schools, shortfall is not enough to require expansion, possibility of providing extra space at 1 or 2 schools to allow admission over PAN	Proposal to expand by 150 places has been agreed following consultation. Construction has commenced to provide the additional places.
Kettleshulme																No housing in the area, no need identified. Any shortfall shown is due to admissions over PAN which will decrease as the larger years move through	
Knutsford Rural																No need identified	
Knutsford Village																No overall need identified , although Egerton is over subscribed there are places available in other schools within the planning area	No need identified
Macclesfield North	In 2019 there was investment at Hurdsfield Primary School to remodel their ICT area to create an additional teaching space for year 6 pupils.															No need identified	
Macclesfield Rural																No need identified	
Macclesfield South			150				150								150	No immediate need indicated but there is a New school proposed for SMDA site. Maybe more a consideration of when we want a new school on the site, currently the SMDA development has not progressed	Phase 1 of expansion at Tytherington to provide 150 additional places (6 extra classrooms) completed for Sep 2022. Phase 2 for further works regarding school infrastructure such as Dining facilities etc is proposed. Further expansions in this planning area may be required, ongoing discussions with schools but need to review housing impact and in particular commencement of SMDA site.
Middlewich																No need identified	Shortfall shown relates to housing development which is not yet under construction. Also the school admits a number of pupils from neighbouring Local Authorities. We will continue to closely monitor the situation but site constraints limit the development of the site.
Nantwich Rural North																No need identified	
Nantwich Rural South	In 2019 there was investment at Sound and District Primary School to create an additional teaching space for KS2 pupils.															No need identified	
Nantwich Town	Expansion Scheme at Malbank School completed in2020, this provided 150 additional places. Expansion scheme at Brine Leas School, this provided an additional 50 places.					210										Free School Presumption Process for a new school on Kingsley Field is progressing Places to be available for Sep 2024, admissions to the school will be on a phased basis with the school opening with a reception class of 30 pupils	Expansions at Brine Leas and Malbank now completed. No further immediate need indicated, in terms of actual additional places although there is a requirement for further works at Brine Leas regarding school infrastructure such as WC's and Dining facilities.
Poynton				35												Small need identified but in the first instance any shortfall will be mitigated by increasing the PAN and capacity by 35 places at Lostock Hall.	No need identified and all housing to date already taken into account.
Sandbach	Expansion scheme at St Johns CE primary completed in 2020, to provide an additional 35 places which brought the PAN up to 30. Expansion scheme at Elworth CE completed Sep 21 to provide an additional 105 places. Expansions to provide 150 places at each secondary schools completed 2020/2021.			105 (W) 105 (S)												Expansion currently progressing at Wheelock Primary to provide an additional 105 places . In addition currently consulting on additional 105 places at Sandbach Primary Academy.	Ongoing shortfall shown is due to admissions over PAN in previous years. Any further expansions will be very dependent on housing and impact on neighbouring schools.
Scholar Green & Woodcocks Well	In 2017 there was investment at Scholar Green Primary School to create an additional teaching space for KS2 pupils.															Small shortfall shown in forecasts is due to admissions over PAN and also small development of 31 houses (yielding 6 primary pupils)	
Shavington	Expansion scheme at Shavington Primary Academy completed in 2018, to provide 210 additional places.				150	210										Free School Presumptionfor new school for Basford is progressing.	Expansion of 150 additional places underway should be available for 2024. Further expansion may be required but dependent on housing and impact of neighbouring schools. But there is also the issue of access to Shavington from some of the housing developments. Discussions taking place with school to progress this.
Wilmslow North	In 2016 there was investment at St Benedicts Catholic Primary to extend existing teaching spaces which provided the additional space to increase the schools PAN from 26 to 30.				300					315	450					HFGV Outline permission approved. Proposing to provide an 'all through' school on HFGV for pupils aged 4 to 16, this will include 210 primary places. Also possibility of 0.5 FE expansion at neighbouring schools, this will provide a further 105 primary places.	Expansion of Wilmslow High underway to provide 300 additional places. HFGV outline permission granted but no reserved matters received so may have to review time scales for the proposed 'all through' school and bring it forward as there are no secondary places in the area. Proposed 'all through' school would provide approx. 450 secondary age places
Wilmslow South																Talks previously taken place regarding the pupils from the Alderley Park development, this included a possible expansion at Nether Alderley Primary for an additional 105 places, but based on current projections this level of expansion is not needed. Possible additional classroom and toilets may be required which would increase the capacity to 150 places.	
Wincle																No housing in the area, no need identified.	
Total:		70	150	35	900	420	150	105	0	315	450	0	0	0	150		
Data Source -2022 Forecasts													Total Places		2745		
EXPANSIONS ALREADY AGREED AND UNDERWAY																	
EXPANSIONS IN DISCUSSION/PROPOSED BUDGET INCLUDED IN MTFS																	
Figures Shown in Red will be dependent on housing at the time and any need identified by future forecasts.																	

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Children & Families Committee

18 September 2023

Annual Youth Justice Plan

Report of: Tom Dooks (Head of Cheshire Youth Justice Services)

Report Reference No: CF/22/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services (YJS). Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out. The guidance also states that youth justice plans, in England only, must be signed off by the full council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'. This regulation does not apply to Wales.

2 Cheshire East have a shared service arrangement for Youth Justice Services with the other three local authorities in the sub-region and as such the governance arrangements for Youth Justice are overseen by a pan Cheshire Partnership Management Board. The 2023-24 YJ Plan has been drafted in partnership with Cheshire Police and other statutory partners and was approved by Cheshire Youth Justice Management Board on the 15June 2023.

3 This report will brief committee on the content of the 2023-24 Youth Justice Plan for Cheshire and seek delegation for sign off for the 2023-24 and subsequent Youth Justice Plans to the Chair of the Pan Cheshire YJ Management Board.

Executive Summary

4 The Cheshire sub-region is a large complex area and the Youth Justice partnership between and across the four local authorities provides a strong base to meet the various complexities and challenges faced by the county's children, families and victims.

5 Despite the scale, Cheshire YJS is a comparatively small organisation comprising 76 WTE staff, including seconded workers and 45 volunteers. The human resource arrangements for the entire workforce involve 11 different employing organisations (of which Cheshire East is the third largest after CWaC and Warrington Council) but also includes police, probation, three different NHS Trusts and two independent providers (speech and language and substance misuse specialists).

6 The national body responsible for inspecting Youth Justice Services are His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMiP) with national oversight provided by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Both HMiP and the YJB recognise Cheshire YJS as of a high standard. The former rated Cheshire YJS as 'Good' in a 2021 full joint inspection (Governance and leadership were rated as 'Outstanding') and the latter granted 2-year pathfinder status for Cheshire's successful youth diversion programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Be sighted on the Annual Plan of the Young Justice Service
2. Note paragraph 17 of this report and the requirement for the report to be considered and adopted at full council.
3. Delegate authority to Executive Director of children's services to approve the report at the pan Cheshire youth justice board.

Background

7 Annual youth justice plans are an opportunity to review performance and developments over a single year period and plan for the next year. This allows services to be able to respond to any changes that have taken place in the previous year, including new legislation, demographic changes, delivery of key performance indicators, and developments in service delivery. The production of a youth justice plan is beneficial to

partnership working and service delivery to ensure the best outcomes for children.

8 The plan has been produced in accordance with the Youth Justice Board guidance to include, Introduction, vision and strategy, the Child First principle, provision for the voice of the child, governance, leadership and partnership arrangements, Board development matters, progress on the previous plan, resources and services, performance including national key performance indicators, priorities, information on children from groups which are over-represented, prevention, diversion, Education, Restorative approaches and victims, Serious violence and exploitation, Detention in police custody, Remands, Use of custody, Constructive resettlement, Standards for children in the justice system, Workforce Development, Evidence-based practice and innovation, Evaluation, Service development plan and Service Challenges, risks and issues.

9 Performance figures submitted to the YJB and those cited in the HMIP report show that Cheshire YJS continue to achieve high performance against the three main performance indicators: First Time Entrants to the criminal justice system (FTEs), Custody rates and re-offending rates (detailed within the YJ Plan)

10 In 2022-23 there were just 34 Cheshire East first time entrants to the justice system, only four children sentenced to custody among a caseload of eighty-four children on out of court disposals and forty-eight children on sentences imposed by the courts.

11 Data shows Cheshire East is like the other three local authority areas in terms of the type of offences committed by children and young people. Violence against the person is the most frequent offence type representing 42% of all offences committed by children. Mostly this is common assault or assault occasioning actual bodily harm with victims typically family members, carers or other children and young people. Cheshire east has comparatively low rates of serious youth violence. The next most frequent offence types are criminal damage (10%) Public Order (7%) Drugs (7%) with small numbers of sexual (4%) robbery (4%) and Burglary offences (3%).

12 The priorities for Youth Justice in Cheshire are described fully in the YJ Plan but include; 1) ensure the findings of the health needs analysis are considered by relevant strategic partners 2) continue to develop anti-exploitation strategies in partnership with the Police, local authorities and other partners and 3) embed the Ministry of Justice funded ‘Turnaround’ project within an expanded Youth Justice Diversion Service to work with a broader cohort of children on the cusp of the youth justice system.

Consultation and Engagement

13 The Youth Justice Service have consulted with children, young people, parents, carers, and stakeholders in the development of the Youth Justice Plan 2023-24

Reasons for Recommendations

14 There is provision within the national YJB guidance for the Chair of the local Youth Justice Management Board to sign off the Youth Justice Plan and for retrospective approval to be sought from Full Council. Given the timescales available this is the approach that has been taken this year. It is also recommended that Cheshire East council (along with the other three councils in the partnership) delegate sign-off of the annual Youth Justice Plan to the Chair of the pan Cheshire Management Board so it can be submitted by the end of June each year and then be presented to cabinet.

Other Options Considered

15 The only other option is for the annual Youth Justice Plan to be presented to full council in four local authority areas prior to the deadline for submission at the end of June. Given the timelines and different processes across four separate councils this would be logistically challenging hence the recommendation for councils to delegate authority for sign-off to the Chair of the pan Cheshire Board which is permissible within the guidance.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

16 Production of an annual Youth Justice Plan follows section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and with the refreshed guidance published by the Youth Justice Board in March 2023.

17 In order to comply with Regulation 4(1) and Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 the Plan must be referred to Full Council for consideration and adoption.

18 The Youth Justice plan is subject to an annual review to ensure the plan is up to date and relevant, and partner agencies have had the opportunity to comment on the review of the strategy.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

19 Cheshire Youth Justice Service is a shared service partnership arrangement and is funded by the four Local Authorities, with contributions from statutory partner agencies (Police, Health, National Probation Service) with the largest amount of funding coming from the Youth Justice Board as a ring-fenced national grant.

20 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

Policy

21 No policy implications

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

22 The Youth Justice Plan has been produced with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equalities Act 2010 and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Human Resources

23 None

Risk Management

24 No risks identified.

Rural Communities

25 No specific implications identified.

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

26 The Youth Justice plan takes full consideration of and makes and explicit reference to Cared for Children and those with SEND – both of whom are over-represented in the Criminal Justice System.

Public Health

27 No specific public health implications of this report other than to state the strategy for Youth Justice partnership is to minimise the volume of children with previously unmet health needs that are criminalised for offences/behaviour that is symptomatic of previously unidentified health needs.

Climate Change

28 No specific or relevant implications

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Tom Dooks Head of Cheshire Youth Justice Service tom.dooks@youthjusticeservices.org.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Annual Youth Justice Plan 2023-24 (Cheshire YJS)

Cheshire Youth Justice Services (inc Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington)

Youth Justice Plan

2023-2024

Foreword

Welcome to the Cheshire Youth Justice Services annual plan for 2023-24. We are proud of the achievements we have made as a partnership over the last ten years but also recognise there is still much to do to further improve the quality of life for our children, families, communities and those who visit or work across our large and geo-politically complex region.

We have a strong track record of collaborative working in Cheshire with four local authorities working together with other agencies such as Police, Probation and Health colleagues on a wide range of issues including crime, safeguarding and public protection.

As we go forward, we intend to improve the governance structures by way of a review of the partnership agreement and hosting arrangements as well as continue our Child First journey.

We are confident that we will deliver tangible outcomes for our communities and look forward to the challenges ahead.

Helen Brackenbury
Chair of YJS Management Board
Director of Children's Services, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Introduction, vision and strategy

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act states that each local authority area must have a multi-agency youth offending team or service and annually they should produce a youth justice plan. This document outlines the intentions regarding Cheshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) for 2023-2024, as well as reviewing the outcomes from the previous year's plan.

The plan links to, complements and supports the plans of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), the four Community Safety Partnerships and local safeguarding arrangements in the four local authority areas of Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington. In addition to the children's strategies and plans in each individual local authority, it also links to the developing Combating Drugs Partnerships in those areas. Cheshire YJS is also a partner in the Serious Violence Strategy being co-ordinated locally by the OPCC.

The primary purpose of the youth justice system is to prevent offending in children and young people. In the Cheshire sub-region, the wider youth justice partnership will continue to work collaboratively and in an evidential and intelligence-led manner in order to protect the wider public and safeguard children and vulnerable adults, including those at risk and this includes governance oversight of the shared youth justice service.

The service underwent a full HMIP joint inspection in 2021 and inspectors found YJS to be a Child-First, trauma-informed organisation. We will continue to build on this foundation, by striving to become even more participatory, whilst embedding a relationship-based practice approach. YJS will continue to work collaboratively with partners and systemically with our children, families and communities in order to reduce youth crime. We will simultaneously continue to improve the experiences of victims and those affected by youth crime in Cheshire – the majority of whom are also children.

The YJS Management Board oversaw the Inspection action plan with all six recommendations having been addressed and approved by the Board.

Local context

The Cheshire sub-region is a large and complex area and the partnership across the four local authorities provides a strong base to meet the various complexities and challenges faced by the county's children, families and victims.

The area is one of approximately 1,000 miles sq with a population of 1.1M, 250,000 of whom are below the age of 18. Across the four local authorities there are around 1000 children in care. Cheshire can be viewed as a largely affluent and rural county with pockets of urban deprivation. Although highly diverse in terms of age, the county is not as diverse compared to other areas of England, with around 96% of residents identifying as 'White British'. The traveller community also has a presence in some areas.

The region has a complex geo-political landscape, neighbouring 15 other local authority areas, with excellent road and rail links to the three closest cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. Although these provide improved economic and lifestyle experiences, they also enable organised criminal activity such as County Lines and other forms of child exploitation. The number of county lines fluctuate throughout the year, however in 2022/2023, Cheshire Police identified an average of 44 (range: 32-63).

Despite the scale, YJS is a comparatively small organisation comprising 76 WTE staff, including seconded workers and 45 volunteers. The human resource arrangements for the entire workforce involve 11 different employing organisations, including local authority, police, probation, three different NHS Trusts and two private providers.

Child First

Both HMIP and the YJB recognised YJS as a child first organisation. The former within the 2021 joint inspection and the latter by granting 2-year pathfinder status for its successful Diversion programme. Throughout 2020-2022, YJS managers delivered training events and individually bespoke consultation to support other youth offending services in improving their Diversion programmes. Cheshire's point of arrest Divert scheme is well embedded within Cheshire Police and other partners and is funded through the OPCC and health funding streams. This ensures the assessment for unmet health needs informs decision making on out of court disposals. From January-December 2022, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) FTE figures for 10-17-year-olds in Cheshire were 124, which is lower than the regional and national average for England & Wales of 166 and 148 per 100,000 respectively.

It is important to note that the Divert Project seeks to assess and utilise appropriate universal and specialist services to ensure children are able to access the appropriate professional support for their needs.

YJS has developed a collaborative commissioning network across the sub-region that brings together several health commissioners and providers to ensure services appropriately meet the needs of children in or on the cusp of the justice system. The Health Sub-group of the YJS Management Board commissioned an update of the Health Needs Analysis (HNA) undertaken in 2015. A more in-depth review was carried out in 2022 by the Public Health Institute at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), led by Professor Zara Quigg. A link to the full report will be available on LJMU's website in the coming weeks.

HMIP noted in their report that the Child First ethos was present not only in YJS but also across the wider partnership, with Cheshire Police being particularly cited. The development agreement and implementation of the Child in Care protocol to prevent unnecessary over-criminalisation is a good example of the Child First philosophy being adopted across Cheshire strategic partnerships. This has resulted in reductions in the numbers of children in care appearing in court for trivial offences. The YJS operates upon a policy of 'Is this good enough for my child or one close to me?' and this was evidenced in the report.

The new Child First on-line learning material developed by Unitas in partnership with the YJB has been included in this year's YJS Workforce Development Plan and places have been purchased for front line practitioners and managers.

Voice of the child

The child and their lived experience is a primary requirement for all dealings with children in the youth justice system in Cheshire and is integral to the model. Capturing the voice of the child, their parent/carer but crucially also the voice of the harmed person (often another child) occurs as part of the initial Divert assessment and is also sought at the end of the programme via Survey Monkey. HMIP found clear evidence of this in practice but we need to develop further innovative methods to promote more active participation of children.

In 2022, a spoken word artist worked with a group of children and young people from YJS, on the power of language and creative expression and YJS has also formed a partnership with Theatre in Prisons Project (TiPP) to put on participatory music making groups. These creative initiatives are examples of *'socially prescribed'* relationship-based, psychosocial therapeutic activities for children in the justice system and exemplify the relational child-first approach YJS will be embedding over the next few years (see section on performance priorities).

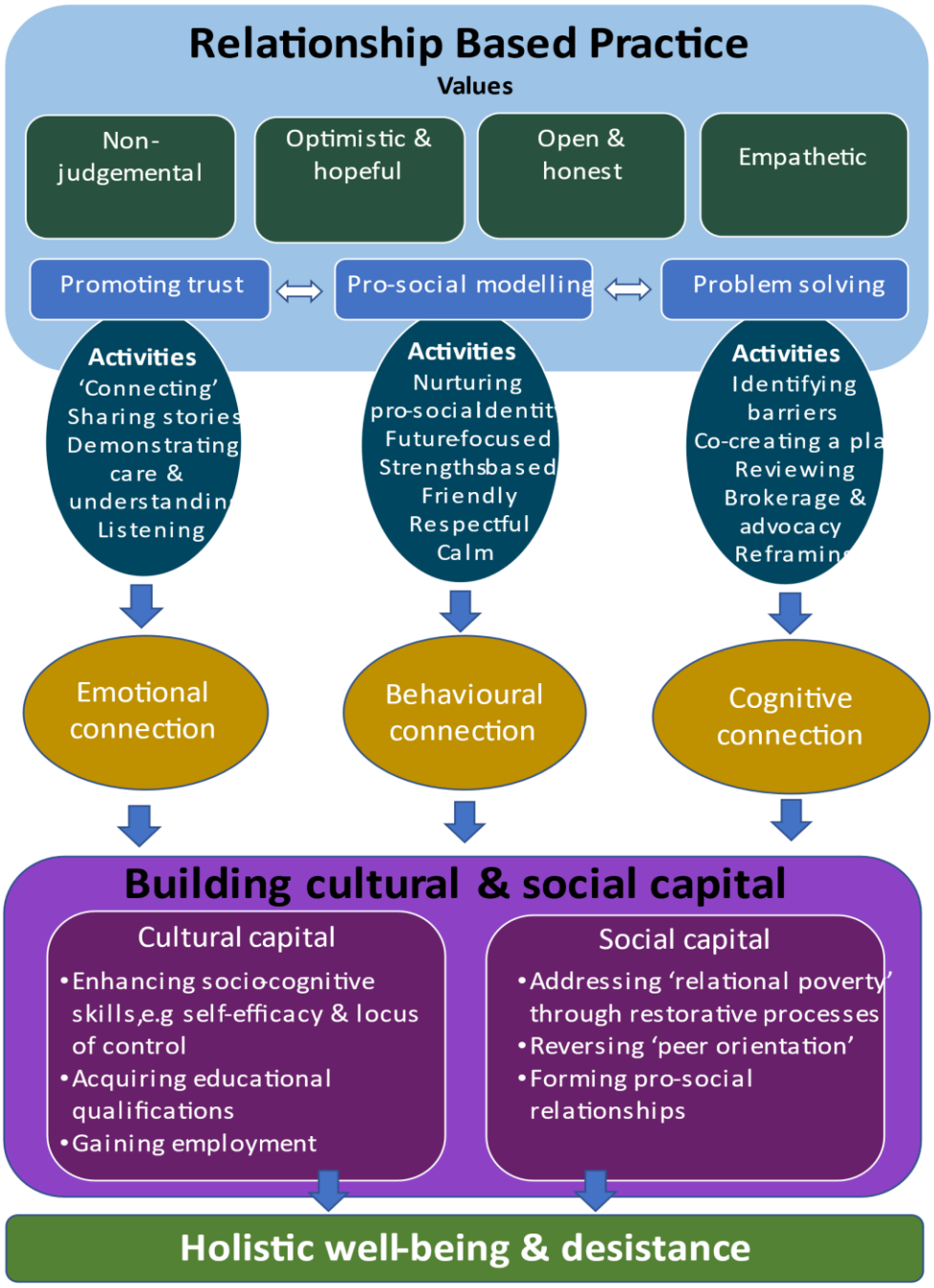
Relationship-Based Practice

YJS have adopted the Relationship-Based Practice Model as shown in Figure 1.

We partnered with lived-experience expert and author Andi Brierley and leading academic on participation (and Board member) Dr Sean Creaney to launch the model at a YJS whole service development day in November 2022. In addition, researchers from the University of Limerick have been invited by the YJS Research Group to give a virtual talk in June 2023 on their findings from a meta-analysis on relationship-based practice.

The Cheshire YJS Workforce Development Plan for 2023-24 will continue to focus heavily on relationship-based practice.

Figure 1. The relationship based model



Conversational audits

The management team now undertake 'Conversational audits' as routine, having piloted the approach in 2022. This methodology provides a richer three-dimensional perspective on YJS practice and service delivery. Some of the direct feedback from children has resulted in changes to service delivery, for example improvements around issuing SMS text reminders and seeing children and young people in different (less corporate) venues. This conversational approach to quality assurance has been well received by the Board and YJS Senior Manager and is being considered by local Children's Safeguarding Partnerships as a new methodology for undertaking multi-agency audits.

The HNA carried out by LJMU, mentioned in the previous section, included direct input from children and families, with current or previous lived experience of the youth justice system (see section 'Progress on previous plan for some headline findings).

We are seeking to extend the user-voice concept and conversational auditing to capture more direct feedback from people harmed by youth crime. We are currently investigating a complaint by the mother of a harmed person, though early indications are the service acted in accordance with the Victims' Code of Practice.

The YJS enjoys a close relationship with the OPCC, particularly regarding the early interventions and diversion process. The OPCC also has a youth advisory panel, which over the last 5 years has had representation from YJS service users, in an effort to ensure users of the wider youth justice system can feed back directly to those responsible for commissioning and service delivery.

Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

A major strength of YJS is the strong strategic and professional links with colleagues in the public, private and voluntary sectors (Figure 2). Whilst this plan specifically refers to the YJS, the wider ambition to improve outcomes for children, adults, residents and visitors to Cheshire, requires the collective input from the wider partnership. Timelines for approval at full council are complicated given the sub-regional arrangement. However, there is commitment from the four Directors of Children's Services to take this Youth Justice plan through their respective council governance channels.

Figure 2: Youth Justice System Strategic Partnership

DCS Director of Childrens Services. CSP Children's Safeguarding Partnership, PDU Probation Delivery Unit, ICB Integrated Care Board, SRO AACC Senior Responsibility Officer, All Age Continuing Care

Safeguarding arrangements

Safeguarding partnerships are well established and YJS is an integral element of all four arrangements, participating in multi-agency audits of safeguarding practice and independently chaired learning reviews when necessary. YJS senior managers are also active participants in several Pan-Cheshire safeguarding collaborations including a Contextual Safeguarding Strategic group. The interface between the sub-regional strategy and variable local contextual safeguarding approaches was recently reviewed with the help of an independent consultant and a new Pan-Cheshire 'all-age' contextual safeguarding strategy. HMIP noted strong assessment and identification of potential criminal exploitation in the region but a less well-developed disruption and prevention strategy. Disruption of organised criminal activity and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from criminal exploitation is a collective ambition and is a huge challenge and future focus for all partners. Contextual safeguarding will remain a key strategic priority for YJS and the following was quoted from the 2022 Joint Areas Thematic Inspection in Cheshire East as an element of good practice from staff around positive partnership approaches to disruption and support for children ensnared in criminal exploitation.

"Recognition of the links between exploited children's poor mental health, sexual health and substance misuse has resulted in effective commissioning and collaboration across the health networks between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), youth justice services, young person's recovery service and children in care teams."

YJS is a core member of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) as well as having significant operational and strategic links to the Cheshire Integrated Offender Management model. These links have been enhanced by the adoption of a more youth justice focussed role for the police officers as recommended by HMIP with three officers now fully embedded within the service.

YJS has links at both strategic and operational levels with all four Early Help offers as well as the Police-led Complex Youths programme. The latter seeks to identify and intervene earlier with children at risk of becoming the recipients of more formal, court-ordered criminal justice services in the future. Police partners provide Board members with data on number of and reasons why young people are detained overnight, are stopped and searched and released under investigation (see Appendix E) and from these a collective approach can be reached to address any increases or trends. We intend to increase this oversight to include reviews of court process times i.e. delays, as well as excessive bail periods in order to limit the negative impacts on children in the Youth Justice system.

The HMIP report in 2021 noted the complexity of the arrangements within the Cheshire sub-region and judged Governance and Leadership to be 'Outstanding'. The Board were found to be engaged, knowledgeable and of the appropriate level within their own organisations to drive forward the Child First youth justice model.

Board membership and leadership

The Management Board Chair rotates bi-annually between the four local authorities with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Director of Children's Services taking over from Halton for the period April 2022 to March 2024. Board membership is fully constituted with membership at a sufficiently senior level from all statutory partners, supplemented by other key members including a leading academic advisor, an independent safeguarding advisor and a magistrate. Job descriptions and induction processes are in place for new Board members but the over-arching partnership agreement is under review with a group led by the new Chair of the Board (Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester Council).

The health sub-group, the only sub-group of the Board, oversaw and addressed the recommendations from the 2015 HNA, which impressed the Inspectorate, as this was a rare achievement. Health provision in the YJS was similarly commended and this was more impressive considering the plethora of health commissioners and providers in the region. The changes to health and social care commissioning with the abolition of CCGs and creation of a single Integrated Care System across Cheshire and Merseyside will create fresh challenges. The sub-group continues to be led by a senior health colleague so is well placed to navigate the roads ahead.

Leadership was also commended in the report with staff understanding the vision of the Board and supported into translating this into practice. HMIP recognised this was not something that simply occurred but was a result of many years of hard work and commitment by the Management team. The challenge is, obviously, to maintain current levels of performance and quality whilst seeking to improve further within an ever-precarious funding and resourcing environment.

YJS Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team was reduced to two posts in March 2022, which for an area as complex and large as Cheshire, dealing with four local authority partners continues to be challenging.

Notably, the current Head of Service will be retiring in summer 2023 after 18 years at the helm. This will require a transitionary strategy to maintain the current high-performance levels and develop the service to be as 'future proof' as possible.

Board Development

Board development continued in 2022-2023 through attendance at the all-staff development day in November 2022. Here direct feedback and dialogue occurred between front line staff and three of the four Directors of Children's Services including the Chair and also Chair of health subgroup. Following a review and update of the partnership agreement, it was noted by the Board that the multiple governance structures for staff with three separate employers for non-seconded staff created inequity, duplication and complexity in management processes. This was an identified legacy from the previous amalgamations of the youth justice arrangements in Cheshire from 2012 onwards and the Board recognised this was an opportune time to correct these anomalies and will explore the potential for a single hosted service in 2023-24. This will also require alignments of IT, HR, Finance and legal and as such represents a major programme of organisational change. A review of the existing partnership agreement was conducted in 2022-23 and adopted by the Board in December 2022. However, a change to a hosted arrangement will necessitate a further review of the partnership agreement along with increased transparency of the funding responsibilities of the four local authority partners. This review will be led by the Chair of the Management Board with dedicated project management support and will seek to resolve the various issues by March 2025.

Resources and services

Over the last 13 years, the partnership has suffered considerable reductions in funding from the YJB. The amalgamation in 2016, of two Youth Offending Services in the Cheshire sub-region, to form the current YJS, was partly in response to approximately £1M per annum reductions.

Local authority and other partners in Cheshire are continuing to face considerable reductions in funding. This poses a significant risk to the partnership's ability to continue to provide high quality, creative, appropriate interventions and services, which reflect existing and emerging local needs. The increased identification of pernicious criminal exploitation along County Lines, as well as other forms of criminal abuse within the localities, is recognised across the region as well as nationally. Whilst YJS is only one of the partners, the ability to identify potential victims of such abuse is hindered by the lack of secure and sustainable investments in the 'Divert' intervention, which is the primary YJS pre-court early intervention.

The uncertainty of funding for Divert was one of the six recommendation areas in the HMIP report and despite the nationally recognised success of Divert as a YJB pathfinder model, it is a non-statutory work-stream. The largest single financial contributor to Divert is the OPCC but that contribution has remained static since 2017. Divert receives no additional funding from the YJB, local authorities or any other partners (other than indirectly from our collaborative health commissioning, which funds pre-court health assessments). With the possible implementation of a deferred prosecution scheme and use of Outcome 22

disposals with youths, it is anticipated that referrals from Cheshire Police will increase in volume. Therefore, a good example of a good use of resources is the extension of the Divert offer previously limited to OPCC funding, as mentioned above. The welcome additional investment in early intervention, offered by the MoJ's Turnaround programme has led to an ability to extend YJS' Divert team to become a full 'Prevention and Diversion' Service. The service has been able to shift some of its human resource upstream from post-court to pre-court to meet the continued demand for out of court assessments.

The Zero-based review from 2018/2019 concluded the current service model is appropriate and effective in the region and that this should continue with improvements of an evolutionary nature, whilst acknowledging the high-quality baseline. No suggested significant reductions emerged from the review but a desire to implement a fair and more transparent funding formula locally was identified. This was undertaken in 2020-21 by the Director of Public Sector Transformation on behalf of the partnership and with the participation of partners, YJS Managers, staff, volunteers, victims and children and parents/carers involved in the service.

Resulting discussions regarding an equitable and sustainable funding regime for the four significant partners, the local authorities, have occurred. A further review in February 2021 led to a review of Governance arrangements in the forthcoming years and as mentioned under the previous section, the proposal to improve efficiencies by moving to a single host organisation. The intent is for one local authority to assume responsibility for YJS and a new partnership agreement be in place by March 2024. This is an ambitious but achievable timeline with the full co-operation of all partners.

The YJS Management Board will continue to oversee the pooled budget from all multiple financial stakeholders to ensure effective use of resources.

Progress on previous plan

Last year's plan focussed primarily on the outcomes of the HMIP inspection and all recommendations were overseen and approved by the Board.

Trauma-informed practice

The journey towards being a trauma-informed service continued, and in some ways accelerated during the pandemic due to a greater awareness of issues of trauma across the nation, as well as in the youth justice partnership. The positive health input to the organisation, particularly from CAMHS professionals, has assisted in this journey and following a comprehensive 3-year workforce development strategy, professionals now routinely view risk and behaviour through a trauma-informed lens. In the 2021 inspection, HMIP and the other inspectorates described YJS as a trauma-informed service and while senior managers are not complacent, they are sufficiently confident to re-focus energy towards delivering a cultural shift towards relational, participatory and systemic practice.

Disproportionality

Whilst the data does not indicate an issue in respect of racial disproportionality in the Cheshire YJS cohort, it is recognised that further work needs to be done both locally and beyond to ensure that an 'explain or reform' model continues to be uppermost in strategic thinking and operational delivery. The Criminal Justice Board review into the Lammy report on over representation of BAME groups in the Criminal Justice system was presented in March 2023 and recommended all criminal justice agencies in Cheshire to agree a methodology for annual deliberations. The YJS Head of Service led the review group on

behalf of the Cheshire Criminal Justice Board and following his retirement, the Probation Service will take over the lead for the 2023-2024 group, with representation from YJS.

Reflecting on the HMIP thematic inspection on the experiences of black children in the justice system, it was acknowledged that coming from a predominantly white area where 95% of service users are white, staff can lack the confidence to speak with (and relate to) young people who may experience racism. Therefore in 2023/2024, Cheshire YJS have commissioned some bespoke equality and diversity training for the YJS workforce.

Health Needs Analysis

The HNA undertaken by LJMU and completed in December 2022 was a significant piece of work. The dataset represented over 70% of all children YJS had worked with in 2022, making it the most contemporary and statistically valid research into the health needs of justice involved children, anywhere in the UK. A workshop of influential stakeholders was convened in December 2022 to share the findings and help inform the recommendations. The YJS senior manager and Chair of the Health sub-group will be promoting the HNA via regional Health and Wellbeing and other relevant boards throughout 2023. Some of the headline findings were:-

- 72.9% of the statutory cohort and 59.5% of the Divert cohort had experienced violent victimisation, prior to their own involvement in offending
- Children with speech and language needs had a higher mean number of offences (2.7 offences) than those without (1.7 offences; $p<0.05$)
- 50.4% of the statutory cohort had experienced some form of school exclusion. A higher proportion of those with speech and language difficulties had been excluded (58.9%), compared to those without (37.0%; $p<0.05$)
- Neurodiverse diagnosed: statutory cohort = 46.2%; Divert = 36.3%. Awaiting diagnosis or referral: statutory = 13.4%; Divert = 18.8%
- 55% of statutory cohort and 22.9% of Divert cohort had experienced four or more adverse childhood experiences (compared with 9% in the general population)
- 56.5% of young people who currently used drugs used multiple substances and the mean age at which young people started to use drugs was 13.3 years.

These stark findings will greatly assist intelligent commissioning and service design for the growing cohort of children that YJS quite rightly divert away from the criminal justice system but have a complex set of needs and exhibit risky behaviour.

Partly off the back of the HNA and the work YJS has led around Diversion and SEND, the service achieved Quality Lead status with a ‘Child-first’ commendation in November 2022 (accredited via MicroLink plc).

Performance and priorities

Performance figures submitted to the YJB and those cited in the HMIP report suggest that YJS continues to achieve high performance against the three main performance indicators set:-

- First Time Entrants (FTEs)
- Custody rates
- Rates of re-offending (binary rates)

Audit

Safeguarding and risk of harm audits conducted over the last 12 months also indicate consistently good practice. The only area identified as requiring improvement in the HMIP inspection (contingency planning to mitigate risk of reasonably predictable future harm) was the focus of an audit in December 2022 where 80% of the 16 cases audited were deemed to be good or outstanding. This report was presented to the YJS Management Board and to local CSP learning and improvement boards.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The requirement by the YJB for local YJS' to report on an additional 10 Key Performance indicators represents a particular challenge for Cheshire YJS such is the complexity of the partnership arrangements across four 'Places'. Cheshire YJS have only had one Performance and Information Manager to coordinate data and performance returns so we have had to create a new Performance and Information Officer post to assist.

Cheshire YJS covers four different 'Places' each with different early help and children's social care databases and varying arrangements for SEND, ETE, Substance Misuse and Mental Health, therefore collating data for the new KPI return is resource intensive. YJS also provide performance returns to the Management Board, OPCC (who joint fund the Diversion scheme), MoJ (for Turnaround) and NHSE, as well as providing Youth Justice specific data to a wide range of SEND, Early Help, Community Safety, Contextual Safeguarding and Serious Organised Crime Boards.

FTEs continue to be significantly lower than regional and national averages and out of court disposals are also reviewed by a multi-agency group led by the local Magistracy on an annual basis. This post-decision scrutiny panel reports approval ratings for out of court decisions in over 90% of youth cases. This is largely attributable to the quality of Divert assessments undertaken by YJS staff and effective Diversionary process with Cheshire Constabulary.

Pan-Cheshire Children's Partnerships are constantly evolving with, for instance, complex needs hub developments in Warrington and Family Hubs in Cheshire East. YJS will lean in and align as far as possible while retaining the integrity of specialist multi-disciplinary teams focusing on the risk and needs of children in the justice system.

Appendix C details the most up to date performance data according to YJS figures. Appendix D gives numbers of FTEs, reoffending rates, number of young people sentences to custody, pre-court and post court case loads and offence types within the four local authority areas.

NB In both Appendix C and D, YJB figures may vary slightly due to additional data not currently being available to YJS.

Education

The education and inclusion specialist, appointed to the Management Board in 2020, continues to be supportive in removing barriers to inclusion and participation in ETE. A small Education team within YJS comprising officers, linked to each of the four local authorities has experienced some gaps in the service recently due to two maternity leaves and only having a half time post in Cheshire East. Despite this, the team works well to achieve good outcomes having an average performance of 65% children and young people in ETE placements at the end of their court orders.

Over-represented children

As previously noted, Cheshire YJS Head of Service led a task and finish group on behalf of the Criminal Justice Board and the YJS Board on local CJS responses to the Lammy report. The review findings and those of the HMIP inspection suggest there is little or no racial disproportionality in relation to community or custodial sentences. The majority of disposals reflected the actual demographic of children in Cheshire.

The findings were reported to the Cheshire Criminal Justice Board, which proposed each criminal justice agency, including YJS should produce an annual review to reflect on any areas of disproportionality, maintaining the reform or explain agenda. This was agreed in March 2023.

In 2022-2023, the protocol preventing unnecessary criminalisation of cared for children was further refined to include more overtly the needs of care leavers entering the adult systems. The review was compiled by a successful multi-agency collaboration across the sub-region and has been signed by the Chief Constable, Chief Crown Prosecutor, OPCC, DCS from all four local authorities, YJS and Probation Service. The protocol was also endorsed by Cheshire Criminal Justice and YJS Management Boards in December 2022.

The YJS Management Board are also requiring an annual review of outcomes for children in care in relation to the protocol. Early indications in 2022 show there has been a reduction in children in care appearing in court of in excess of 30%. The report will reflect the ‘so what’ test in terms of policy and procedures delivering in real life outcomes.

Prevention and Diversion

Cheshire’s award-winning Diversion project has been referenced elsewhere in this plan. It continues to maintain low rates of FTE across all four local authorities. The number of FTE entering the youth justice system for the YJS area has decreased considerably by 32% over the past five years (Dec 2018 = 184 v Dec 2022 = 126 FTE). YJS operates a more purist Diversionary scheme and does not have its own funded Prevention team. Instead, it aligns to the four local authority Early Help offers by diverting children away from the criminal justice system and supporting them to access universal or targeted support services in their local community. The MOJ ‘Turnaround’ funding has been very welcome and enabled Cheshire YJS to broaden the referral criteria and refine the pathway for preventative support to work with children for longer (where necessary) and with children who were previously ineligible for Divert. We expect improved identification of children vulnerable to exploitation at an earlier stage of the youth justice system. YJS was swift to respond to utilising the Turnaround funding by adapting the Divert model. Year 1 funding was largely used to mobilise and recruit additional staff but has also been used as match funding to pump prime projects with local voluntary, community or social enterprise (e.g. the Rage Fitness project in the west of the county).

Serious violence and exploitation

The Serious Youth Violence analysis from the OPCC shows Cheshire has a relatively low incidence. Several multi-agency applications to the Youth Endowment Fund to support work around serious youth violence have been unsuccessful and have been awarded to areas with higher levels. Single incidents of violence cause considerable impact on communities and families, so this area of work continues to be monitored by the Management Board.

Exploitation has been referenced elsewhere in the plan and remains a key strategic priority for the service and the wider partnership.

Constructive resettlement and use of custody

Use of custody is extremely low across Cheshire (typically fewer than 10 children across the whole of the county are on remand or sentenced at any one time). Close scrutiny of Cheshire children in custody, in particular their safety and wellbeing and resettlement plans is ensured through a mix of in-house Multi-Agency High Risk Meetings, circulation of a custody tracker directly to all four Directors of Children's Services, which includes resettlement and release plans and flags any gaps.

A monthly report on those children in custody is shared with DCS to ensure any CSC issues regarding release plans are addressed prior to release.

Restorative Justice and Victims

HMIP commented favourably on the Cheshire restorative justice (RJ) offer, which adheres strictly with the Victim's Code of Practice. All victims are contacted by YJS and offered a service irrespective of whether the child who harmed them is dealt with by Diversion or charged. RJ performance is reported quarterly on a scorecard to the OPCC. In 2022-2023, the fully training RJ Team, contacted 226 harmed persons and completed 16 direct RJ Conferences.

National standards

The YJS Management Team undertake comprehensive internal Risk of Harm and Safeguarding quality assurance audits every year. These are now conducted routinely as 'conversational audits' whereby direct feedback from parents, young people and in some cases, victims, is included to inform the quality of youth justice delivery. As a Pan-Cheshire service, YJS also participate in regular multi-agency practice audits coordinated by the four children's safeguarding partnerships according to their priority themes (typically neglect, exploitation and domestic abuse).

Youth justice self-assessment shows good adherence to national standards with any over-rides appropriately authorised and recorded in case files by managers. In 2019-2020, the Management Board undertook a strategic self-assessment with individual Board members working with a named youth justice manager to self-assess against each of the five National Standards. In 2023/2024, a refresh of National standards will again be led by Board members.

The schedule of reporting on Quality Assurance audits to Board and thematic areas of focus will be discussed at the June Board. One thematic on Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding currently underway is likely to be suggested for September and Diversion at a later date.

Challenges, risks and issues

Cheshire YJS always faces a set of challenges based on the large and complex socio-political and geographical footprint we serve. Change is the only constant and this is exacerbated by the inherent difficulties in a service, which has four local authority partners, four separate Children's IT database and recording models, 11 different employers of staff working in co-located or seconded to YJS. The re-emergence of a single Probation Service, which has resulted in three distinct delivery units within Cheshire, brings both challenges and opportunities. This is particularly seen around transition cases, public protection and early intervention processes in terms of transitional safeguarding and criminal exploitation.

The long-term funding and resource allocation for the early intervention work, including Divert, remain an issue with financial austerity still in place. Continued investment in a high quality and well performing youth justice service will continue to compete against other worthy resourcing needs. At the other end of the continuum, safe, suitable accommodation for the small number of children on the cusp of custody, who have very complex needs and display risky, sometimes, violent behaviour, remains a challenge.

However, the single biggest challenge for the organisation is how to maintain and improve high quality services in the post-pandemic world. Our strong links to academia, amongst the best ever seen by the Inspectorates, will assist us in ensuring that interventions are based on sound academic evidence to achieve the desired outcomes of an ever evolving local and national youth justice agenda.

The health offer to children in the justice system across Cheshire has been a particular strength in recent years and the refresh of HNA is timely. However, the changes in the commissioning landscape with the abolition of CCGs, creation of a Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System means there is some uncertainty over what will be commissioned at *system* level versus *place* level. The Health sub-group to the YJS Management Board has been pivotal in driving forward investment and overseeing improvement in the health offer to children in or on the cusp of the criminal justice system.

The current Chair of the sub-group is a passionate advocate of addressing the health needs of children in YJS and has agreed to continue to lead the group in 2023-24. The findings of the HNA will guide the subgroup, health commissioners and providers around drawing up an action plan.

Service improvement plan

The HMIP report in 2021 has essentially indicated a very positive outlook for YJS and indicated the highest scores of any youth offending service, subject to a full joint Inspection. This is the most intensive level of scrutiny any youth justice service can be subjected to by five differing Inspectorates and was assessed as Good overall.

The Chief Inspector of Probation noted

> *This joint inspection, assessing the quality of work by the Youth Justice Service, highlights a clear ambition for children, sustained and effective partnerships, and generally sound operational delivery. Cheshire has achieved the highest score of any of the joint inspections undertaken with colleague inspectors from the police, health, social care and education that we have completed to date.*

The Inspection action plan was fully implemented in 2022-23 and places YJS in an even stronger position to further improve our delivery in terms of outcomes for children, communities and victims in Cheshire.

Workforce development

For many years, Cheshire YJS have been part of a well-established and coordinated pan-Merseyside Collaborative Training Group (CTG) which commissions bespoke and specialist youth justice training for staff in YJS and neighbouring youth justice services. The focus on the previous two years has been the embedding of trauma-informed practice. CTG also offer annual updates of AIMS 3 assessment and intervention training as well as Restorative Justice training.

The focus on 2023/24 will be equality and diversity training for all staff to increase confidence of working with young people who may be subject to racial and other discrimination.

We will continue to promote training and events which explore the cultural approach to relationship-based practice.

YJS have a grow your own philosophy and are able to support unqualified practitioners through the youth justice degree programme.

There is also an expectation for all front-line staff to carry out the Unitas Child-First module. This is a new national Child-First qualification and the content features several resources contributed by YJS.

Evidence-based practice and innovation

Social prescribing

One innovation begun in 2022 that will be further developed in 2023-24 and beyond is *'Social Prescribing'.* This initiative has been cited by LGA as an example of innovative practice with vulnerable children. Essentially YJS prescribe psychosocial therapy for children in the form of an activity that a young person is interested in that aims to have a positive impact on their physical or mental health and in turn reduce their likelihood of offending. Cheshire YJS will be undertaking asset mapping of potential projects and partnerships with VCSE across Cheshire with a view to developing a variety of socially prescribed projects for children and young people. Examples in the pipeline include Rage Fitness and Edsential in Cheshire West, Lets Go Fishing in central Cheshire, Livewire in Warrington and R.O.A.R in Cheshire East.

Social prescribing is also an integral part of the relationship-based practice model. For example, one child was linked to a mature volunteer who initially assisted him to learn how to play chess. Out of this developed a well-valued inter-generational relationship, which has assisted the child move forward with various issues in his life. This approach, as well as person centric is also relatively resource neutral – using existing resources differently to assist children to develop the resilience required to face issues beyond their time-limited interactions with the formal youth justice system.

YJS Research group

The Inspection noted the strong ethos of research-led by practice and an organisational commitment to develop research at both academic and local strategic level. The staff-led research group which received input during the year from such well-respected academics as Professor Neal Hazel, Dr Tim Bateman, Dr Ali Wigzell and others, is an example of this commitment. The research group will seek to extend its remit and attendance to beyond Cheshire with the culture of 'remote' attendance enhancing this prospect, an unexpected benefit of the pandemic.

Links to academia

Links to Edge Hill University and Chester University are well established. These have led to shared research projects such as a study of Covid resilience in staff and children by Chester University and student placements, which are now resuming following the pandemic restrictions. The Head of Service also acts as a visiting lecturer at both universities to further the experience of students at both undergraduate and post graduate level. He also sits on the Master's Degree Criminology Advisory Board at Edge Hill University.

In addition, a book from the knowledge transfer conference in 2022, co-hosted by YJS and Chester and Edgehill Universities, has been accepted for publication in late 2024.

Conversational audits

A conversational audit was carried around safeguarding in 2022 and this was extremely successful at gaining the voice of the child and parents/carers and reflect their real-life experiences. Seventeen cases were audited and 70% were rated as good. Five out of 17 cases required improvement due to case planning and case formulation as opposed to concerns for children's safety or wellbeing not being identified, shared and addressed. The audit sample revealed a very high prevalence of self-harm and substance misuse, with history of drug overdose noted in several children – frequently as a feature of children choosing to self-medicate rather than take prescribed medication (e.g. for ADHD).

The approach and findings were shared with the safeguarding partnerships and this has inspired at least two of the local authority areas to seek to develop the same methodology within their own quality assurance and participation approaches. YJS will continue to carry out safeguarding audits with a conversational element within the methodology.

Prevention and Diversion

Prevention and diversion continues to maintain the low FTE trajectory in Cheshire and was a YJB pathfinder project sharing good practice to the sector and cited on the YJB good practice research hub. In addition, as part of the pathfinder project, we offered bespoke review, development assistance to several Youth Offending Services and partnerships, which were well received.

Trauma informed and relationship-based practice

Trauma-informed and relationship-based interventions form the heart of 'business as usual' for YJS staff but are also elements of a creative, Child First culture that was noted as strong not only in YJS but across the wider partnership.

IT innovation

YJS is a Centre for Excellence as designated by CACI, the software supplier of the YJS database Childview. In conjunction with a data analytics company, we are exploring the potential of the development of a predictive analytics tool to assist in the case management of active cases and early identification of potential entrants to the youth justice system in order that targeted preventive work can be utilised in a more efficient and focussed manner. This development will be ongoing during 2023-24 and we will actively seek engagement and partnership from other youth offending services and relevant partners.

Looking forward

YJS continues its journey of improvement but the following priority areas have been identified for 2023-24

- Ensure transitionary arrangements are in place following change of Head of Service in summer 2023
- Ensure the findings of the health needs analysis are considered by relevant strategic partners to improve access to services for children in the youth justice system or at risk of becoming so
- Explore with an aspiration to move to a single host arrangement to reduce inefficiency, inequity of employment and clarify partnership responsibilities, whilst also improving local Place based delivery and reporting models
- Child-first, trauma-informed and relationship-based practice will continue to be embedded as routine
- Embed turnaround project with an expanding Prevention and Diversion Service to work with a broader cohort of children on the cusp of the youth justice system
- Continue to develop anti-exploitation strategies in partnership with the Police, local authorities and other partners such as health and education
- Disproportionality review to be completed in line with the Cheshire Criminal Justice Board subgroup methodology
- Explore potential of an early safeguarding diagnostic tool with CACI

Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board - name	**Helen Brackenbury** Director of Children's Social Care Cheshire West and Chester Council
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C

Review of Performance for 2022-23

Introduction

The Youth Justice Service Performance report continues to be presented to the YJS Management Board on a quarterly basis and includes the national performance measures as outlined below.

The report is accompanied by Scorecards as a breakdown for each of the Performance Measures by Local Authority so that performance can be monitored on a local basis and YJ Management Board reps are encouraged to share this performance information within their own local forums and agencies.

YJS submits quarterly information to the Board in the following areas:

1. **Reduction in First Time Entrants:** young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time, either before the court or receiving a caution

2. **Reduction in Youth Re-Offending:** monitoring a select cohort of young people already in the youth justice system to determine if they re-offend, and if so, with what frequency and seriousness

3. **Reduction in the Use of Custody:** reducing the numbers of young people who receive a custodial sentence in a Young Offenders Institution, Secure Training Centre or Secure Children's Home

Although there is no specific target attached to each of the above, Youth Offending partnerships need to show that they are working towards achieving a continued reduction against each measure and this is closely monitored by the YJB/Ministry of Justice (MoJ). It is a condition of the YJB Grant that is issued to achieve positive reductions in the three performance areas. The data is publicly available and published on a quarterly basis by the MoJ.

First Time Entrants[1] and Prevention and Diversion

The official data for this indicator comes from the Police National Computer (PNC) and is published by the MoJ and is shown in rolling full years for the 12 months to March, July, September, and December of each year but always 6 months behind real time. The YJS Performance Report includes this data to show how we compare both regionally and nationally.

Locally for scorecards, we will continue to use local, real-time data in relation to the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice System, including anyone who receives a Youth Caution or above.

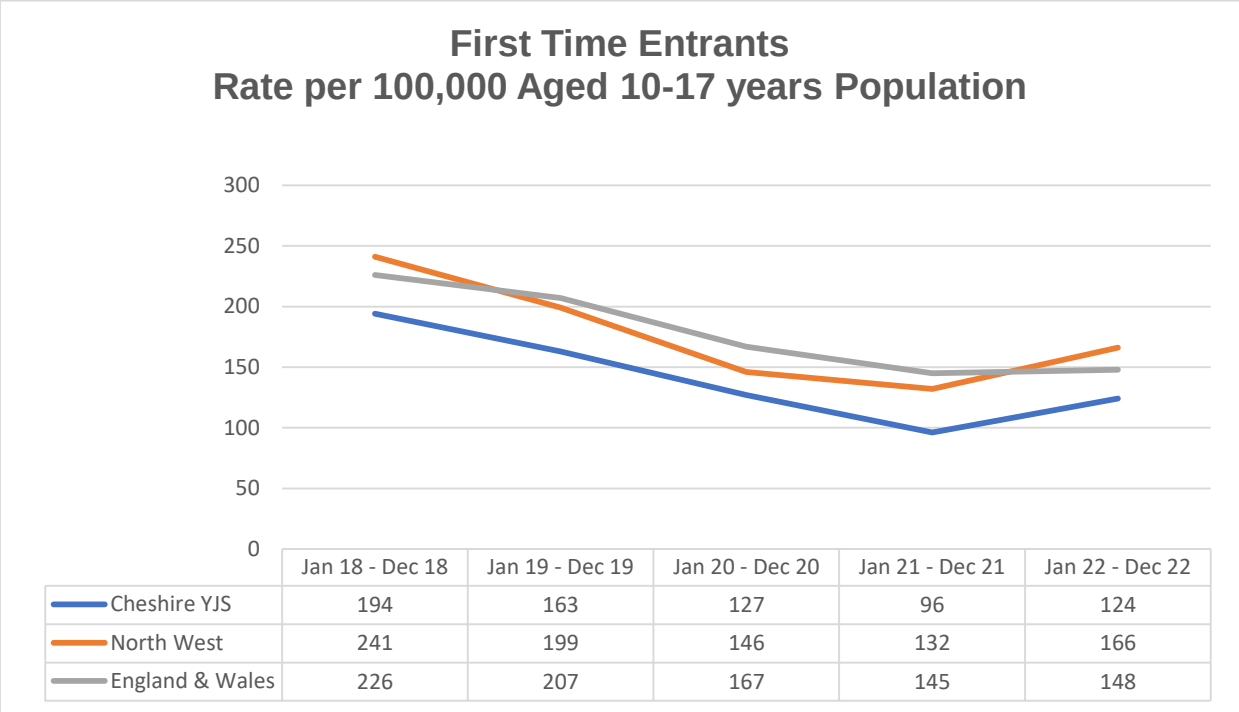
The Prevention and Diversion (pre-court) cohort will also continue to be tracked over a 12-month period and reported on quarterly, with both quantitative and qualitative analysis including case studies and service user feedback.

The number of FTE entering the youth justice system for the YJS area has decreased considerably by 32% over the past five years (Dec 2018 = 184 v Dec 2022 = 126 FTE).

[1] Ministry of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics (December 2022)

Across the board, during the same period there has also been a decrease in the "Rate of FTE per 100,000 aged 10-17 population" as shown in the table below. YJS has seen a greater overall percentage reduction (36.1%) compared to both regional (31.1%) and national (34.5%) figures.

As the current number and rate is extremely low, the opportunities to further reduce this rate are minimal.



	Jan 18 - Dec 18	Jan 19 - Dec 19	Jan 20 - Dec 20	Jan 21 - Dec 21	Jan 22 - Dec 22
Cheshire YJS	194	163	127	96	124
North West	241	199	146	132	166
England & Wales	226	207	167	145	148

Re-offending[ii]

The official data for this indicator, like FTEs, comes from the PNC and is 2 years behind real-time information. The YJS Performance Report uses this data to show how we compare both regionally and nationally for both the Binary Rate (% of young people reoffending from the overall cohort) and the Frequency Rate (a measure of the total number of offences committed by those reoffending divided by the number of young people in the cohort who reoffended).

The MoJ changed the methodology for measuring reoffending in October 2017 to align the measure with that used for adult reoffending. Under the new methodology, a 3-month rather than a 12-month cohort is used. The cohort is still tracked over 12 months.

Changing from 12-month to 3-month cohorts tends to mean a greater proportion of prolific offenders within the cohort and hence higher reoffending rates, though both measures show similar trends over time.

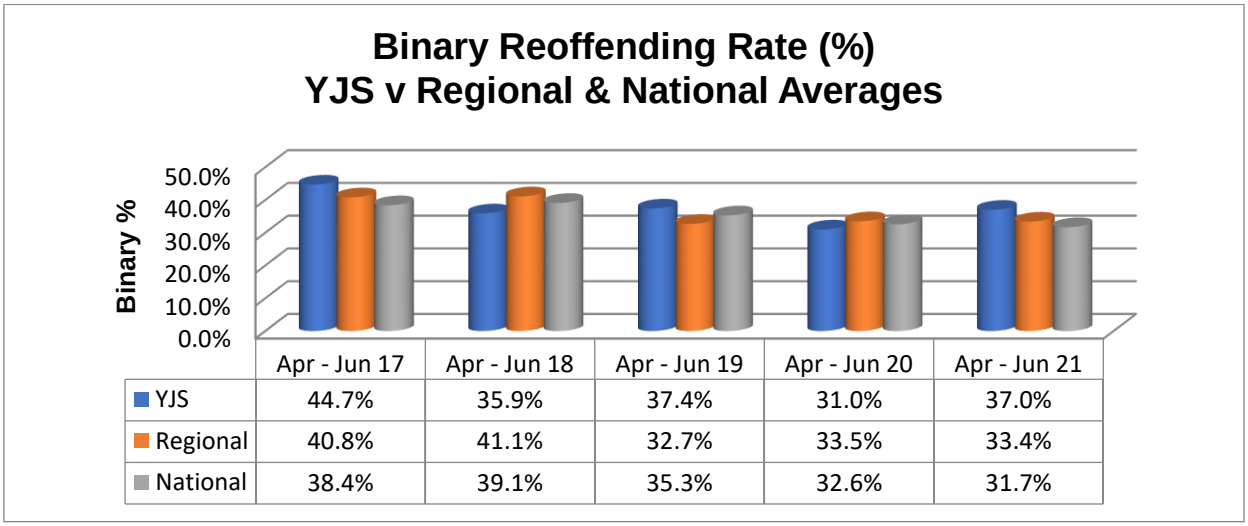
Locally it was agreed that the YJS would build its own cohort, consisting of all young people who received a pre-court or court disposal or were released from custody between 1 January 2022 and 31 March 2022. Reoffending activity will be monitored over a 12-month tracking period and this is the data shown in the local scorecards. It is proposed that in Cheshire we also continue to track offending by cared for children and report on their reoffending as a distinct cohort given we have collective corporate parenting responsibility for this group of children.

The latest MoJ published data shows the April–June 2021 cohort monitored for 12 months. The result of having a smaller cohort of young people is that it only takes a small increase in offending to significantly impact on the percentage change.

The reduction in the overall cohort numbers shows the positive impact and success of the YJS Prevention and Diversion Project, which enables young people to be offered a number of opportunities to receive alternative options to formal justice disposals. This has significantly reduced the number of FTEs into the criminal justice system.

The cohort of young people that do re-offend, remain the most challenging, complex and hard to engage young people within the YJS area and we continue to increase our efforts to target and address this.

The YJS, Regional and National binary rates for the last five yearly cohorts are presented below.

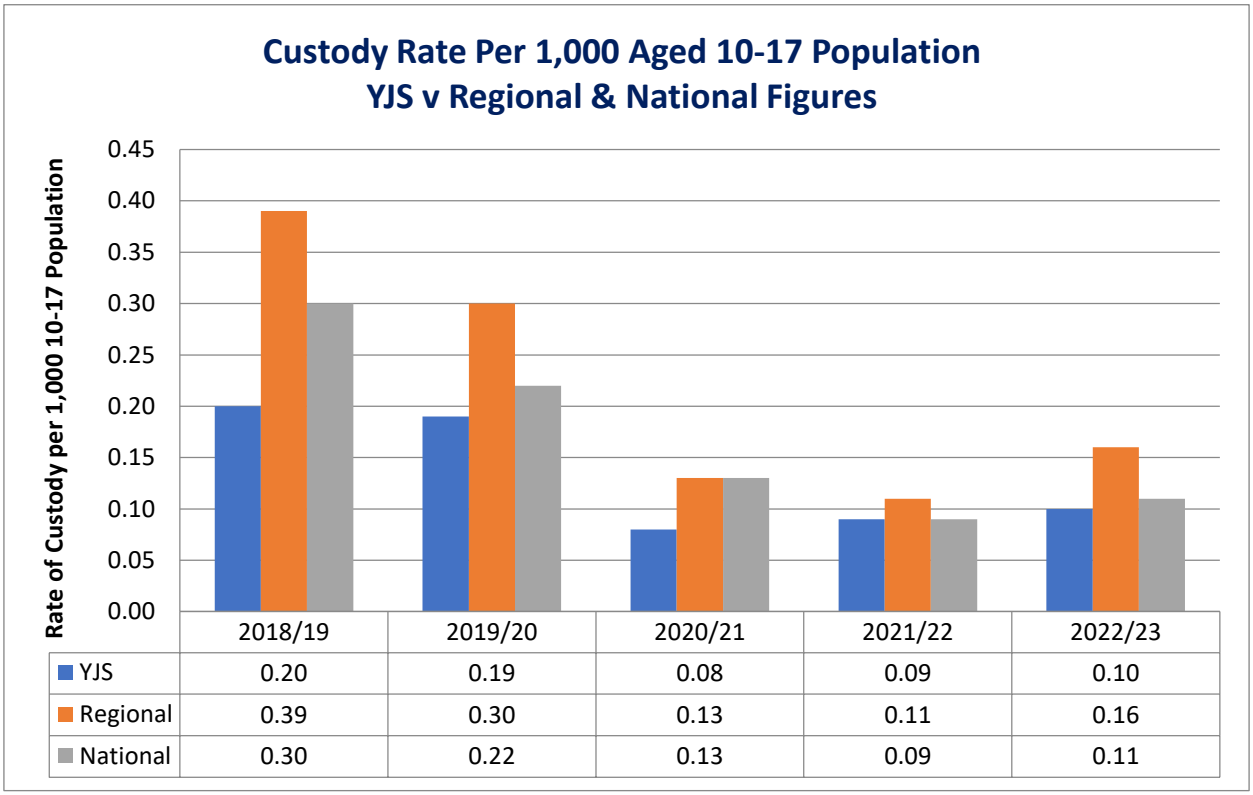


	Apr - Jun 17	Apr - Jun 18	Apr - Jun 19	Apr - Jun 20	Apr - Jun 21
YJS	44.7%	35.9%	37.4%	31.0%	37.0%
Regional	40.8%	41.1%	32.7%	33.5%	33.4%
National	38.4%	39.1%	35.3%	32.6%	31.7%

Rate of Custody[ii]

The latest data issued from the YJB for the Use of Custody shows that nine YJS young people received custodial sentences in the year ending March 2022, which remains static from the year prior.

The following graph outlines the "custody rate per 1,000 of the 10-17 population" showing YJS performance exceeds both regional and national rates.



	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
YJS	0.20	0.19	0.08	0.09	0.10
Regional	0.39	0.30	0.13	0.11	0.16
National	0.30	0.22	0.13	0.09	0.11

Remand Bed Nights

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 introduced a new remand framework for 10- to 17-year-olds in December 2012. The key changes made by the legislation were as follows:

- 10-17-year-olds are treated according to the same remand framework (including remands to local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation) regardless of their age and gender;
- 12-17-year-olds can only be remanded to youth detention accommodation if their offending is serious enough to warrant a custodial sentence including murder, attempted murder, rape, firearms offences, drugs and aggravated robbery or there is a history of failing to attend court;
- Every child or young person remanded to youth detention accommodation are now treated as "looked after" by their designated local authority;
- Placement of children and young people remanded to youth detention accommodation is a function of the Secretary of State for Justice but this power is exercised concurrently and in practice by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB).

A remand to youth detention accommodation is currently to either a secure children's home (SCH), a secure training centre (STC) or a young offender institution (YOI).

Young people remanded to custody are more likely to display entrenched patterns of offending behaviour and/or are more likely to have committed serious offences. Many of these young people have suffered trauma, lived in households affected by domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse, suffered loss, been excluded from school, experienced drug or alcohol-related dependencies and have mental health or special educational needs. Some of the young people will be influenced by others or have got mixed up with criminal group activities.

Establishment Type	No. Bed Nights 2021/22	No. Bed Nights 2022/23	Difference 2021/22 v 2022/23
SCH	12	45	-33
STC	0	0	0
YOI	507	361	146
Total	519	406	113

Education, Training and Employment (ETE)[2]

These figures represent the most up to date MoJ view of those young people in full time education or employment.

In the 2022/23 reporting period, 146 young people completed their Intervention with YJS, of which 81 (55%) were in full time ETE provision. This is a more than a 30% improvement on the comparative data for Regional and National, which both stands at 38%.

[2] Youth Justice Management Information System, Final YOT Data Summary (114) April 2022 – March 2023

Appendix D

Performance data by local authority April 2022-March 2023

Cheshire East

No. of First Time Entrants	34
Reoffending Binary Rate	38.5%
No. Sentenced to Custody	4
Caseload Pre-court	84
Caseload Statutory	48

Offence Type	Number of Offences
Arson	0
Breach Conditional Discharge	1
Breach of Statutory Order	2
Criminal Damage	14
Domestic Burglary	2
Drugs	9
Fraud & Forgery	2
Motoring	8
Non-Domestic Burglary	2
Other	6
Public Order	10
Racially Aggravated	0
Robbery	5
Sexual Offences	6
Theft & Handling	7
Vehicle Theft/Unauthorised Taking	5
Violence Against a Person	57
Total	**136**

Cheshire West and Chester

No. of First Time Entrants	55
Reoffending Binary Rate	15.4%
No. Sentenced to Custody	2
Caseload Pre-court	129
Caseload Statutory	44

Offence Type	No of Offences
Arson	2
Breach Conditional Discharge	0
Breach of Statutory Order	1
Criminal Damage	12
Domestic Burglary	0
Drugs	11
Fraud & Forgery	0
Motoring	13
Non-Domestic Burglary	3
Other	1
Public Order	9
Racially Aggravated	0
Robbery	1
Sexual Offences	21
Theft & Handling	8
Vehicle Theft/Unauthorised Taking	3
Violence Against a Person	58
Total	**143**

Halton

No. of First Time Entrants	39
Reoffending Binary Rate	40%
No. Sentenced to Custody	0
Caseload Pre-court	45
Caseload Statutory	48

Offence Type	Number of Offences
Arson	0
Breach Conditional Discharge	1
Breach of Statutory Order	1
Criminal Damage	30
Domestic Burglary	0
Drugs	16
Fraud & Forgery	1
Motoring	7
Non-Domestic Burglary	5
Other	3
Public Order	14
Racially Aggravated	0
Robbery	4
Sexual Offences	2
Theft & Handling	15
Vehicle Theft/Unauthorised Taking	1
Violence Against a Person	60
Total	**160**

Warrington

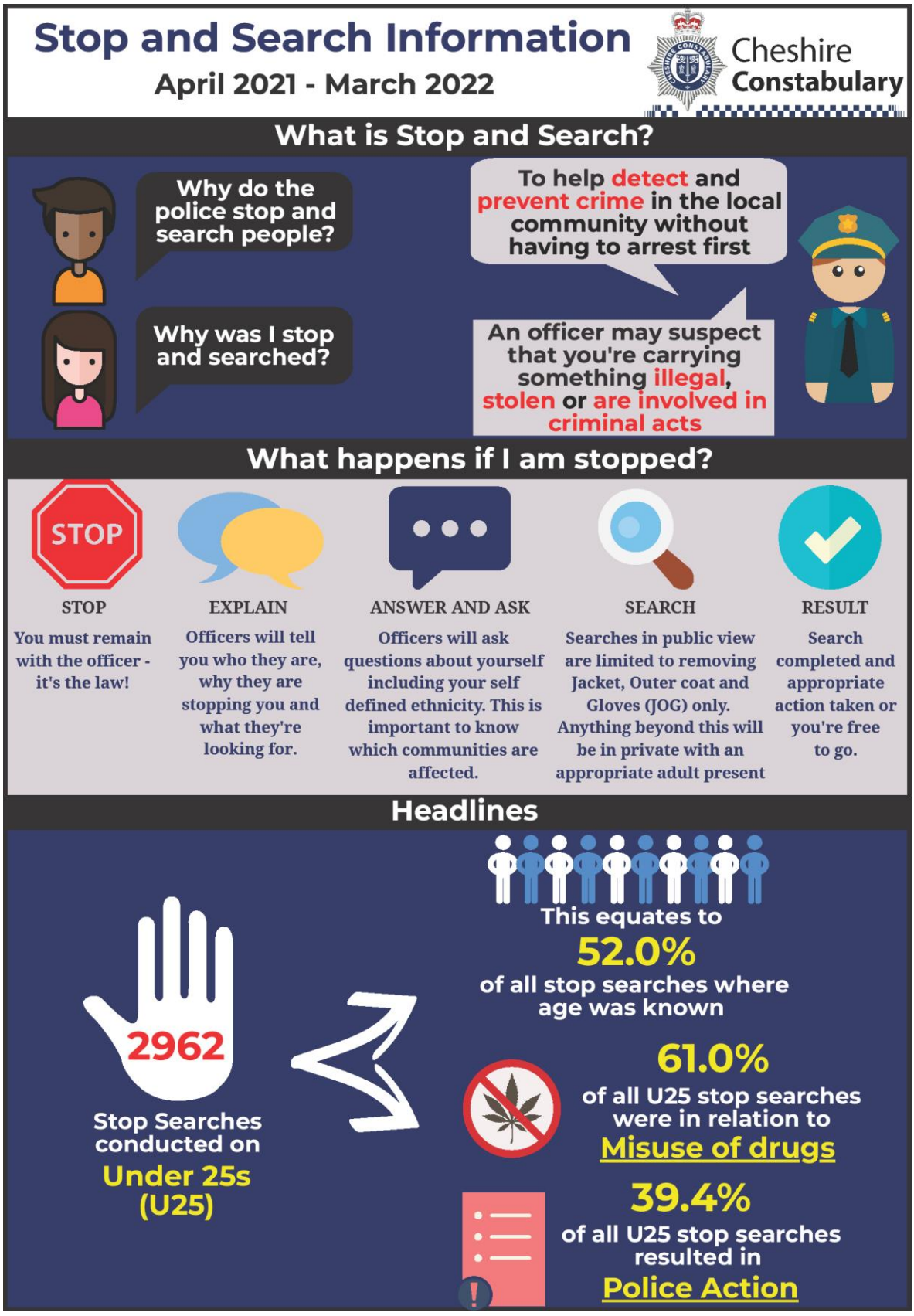
No. of First Time Entrants	31
Reoffending Binary Rate	62.5%
No. Sentenced to Custody	3
Caseload Pre-court	49
Caseload Statutory	30

Offence Type	Number of Offences
Arson	1
Breach Conditional Discharge	0
Breach of Statutory Order	2
Criminal Damage	11
Domestic Burglary	0
Drugs	6
Fraud & Forgery	0
Motoring	13
Non-Domestic Burglary	1
Other	2
Public Order	9
Racially Aggravated	1
Robbery	5
Sexual Offences	8
Theft & Handling	3
Vehicle Theft/Unauthorised Taking	3
Violence Against a Person	57
Total	**122**

Appendix E

Overnight detentions, stop and search and released under investigation

Date source: Cheshire Police



Who was searched?

Gender

Male	Female	Unknown
87.8%	10.7%	1.5%

Age Range

10-17	18-24
42.8%	57.2%

Self Defined Ethnicity

White	Ethnic Minorities	Not Stated
79.4%	4.5%	16.0%

Self Defined Ethnicity information does not have to be provided

Where did searches occur?

Areas below refer to Local Policing Units (LPU)

Crewe 472 15.9%	Warrington 412 13.9%	Widnes 361 12.2%
Northwich 348 11.7%	Macclesfield 339 11.4%	Chester 313 10.6%
Runcorn 263 8.9%	Ellesmere Port 262 8.8%	Congleton 60 2.0%

132 stop searches (4.5%) had a search location recorded as Other. These are comprised of no search location, out of force and motorways.

What legislation was used?

The most common legislation used for stop searches conducted was

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (section 23)

accounting for **61.0%** of stop searches

followed by

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (section 1)

accounting for **37.4%** of stop searches

*1.5% of stop searches were conducted under other legislation

What happened?

Searches resulted in:

- **39.4%** Police action taken
  - Arrest
  - Community Resolution
  - Warning/ Caution
- **60.3%** No further action

*0.3% of stop searches conducted had no outcome at the time of data collation

Remember!

- The Stop and Search will take place immediately, without a parent/guardian present
- Stop Searches will be recorded on body worn video cameras
- Ask for a receipt afterwards - it's your right!

Want to give feedback?

- Go online to Cheshire.Police.uk
- Call 101 and talk to us
- Follow the Police.UK Instagram page

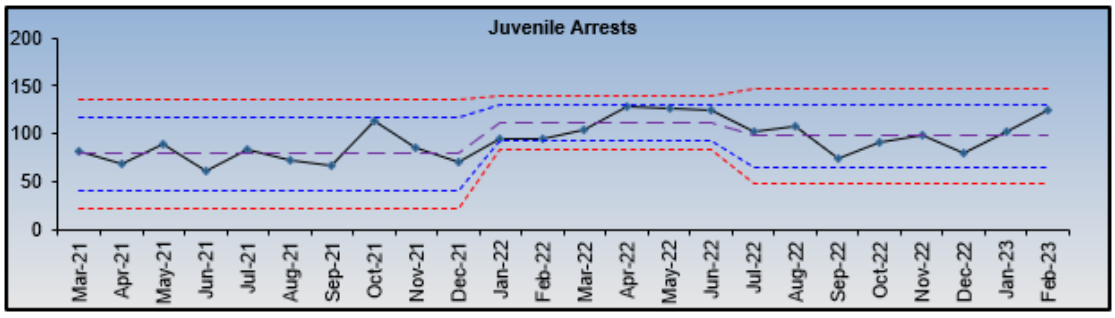
Number of young people released under investigation in May 2023

Investigation Team or Unit	Count of Custody number
AIT East	18
AIT North	15
AIT West	15
Crime operations	6
Custody / criminal justice	4
Local Policing Unit (LPU) Chester	21
LPU Congleton	5
LPU Crewe	15
LPU Ellesmere port	9
LPU Macclesfield	9
LPU Northwich	6
LPU Runcorn	12
LPU Warrington	11
LPU Widnes	8
Online Child Abuse Investigation Team	3
Other	22
RCU	3
Unknown	3
Grand Total	**185**

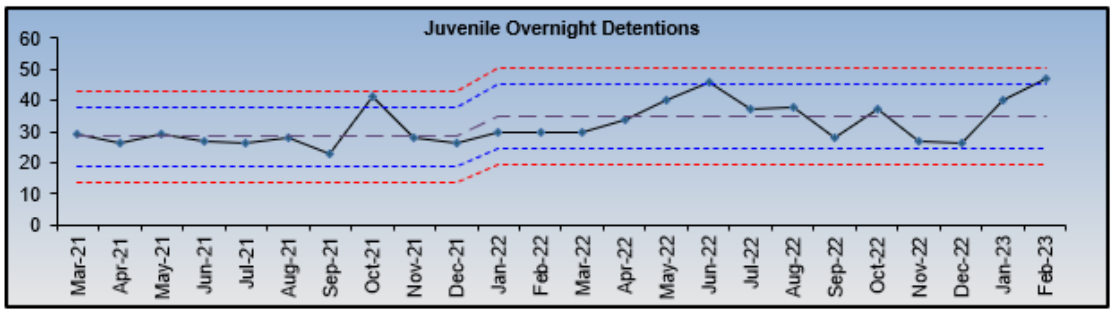
Arrests and Overnight detentions (March 2021-February 2023)

**Overnight detention = detained for any 4 hours between 00:00 and 08:00*

All Arrests

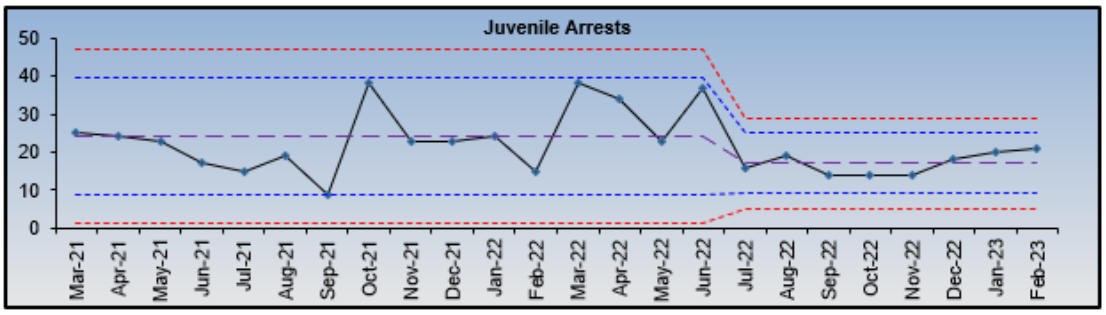


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
1161	Feb-23	125	Jul-22	Decreasing

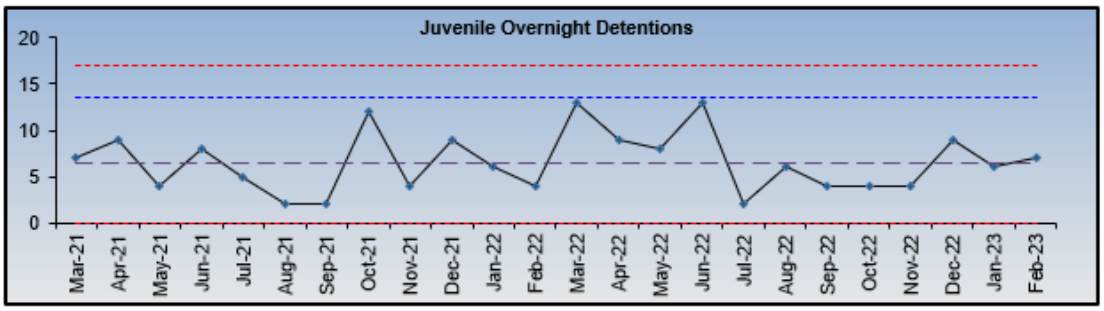


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
400	Feb-23	47	Jan-22	Increasing

- Juvenile arrest volumes show an increase for Halton and Warrington at the end of February resulting in an increase at Force level.

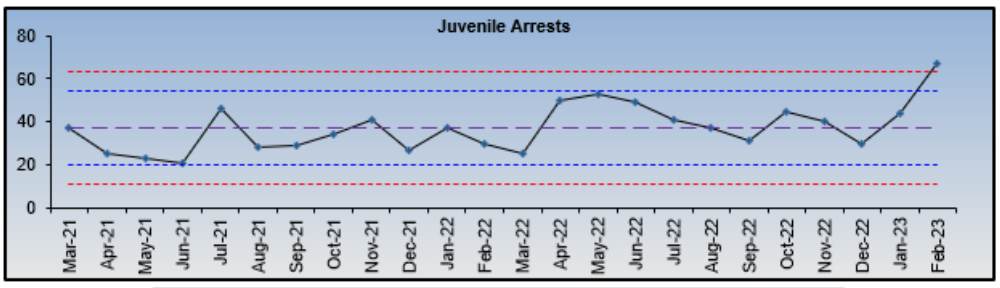


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
230	Feb-23	21	Jul-22	Decreasing

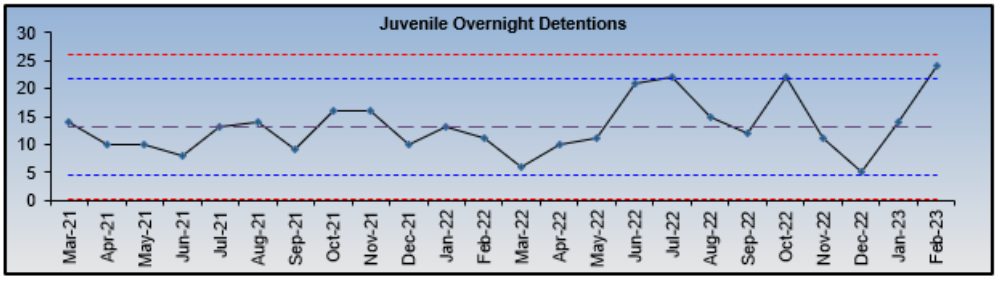


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
72	Feb-23	7	N/A	N/A

NORTHERN Custody Suite

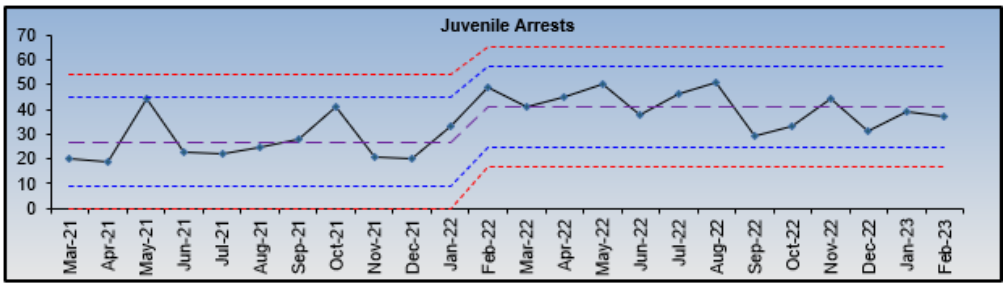


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
487	Feb-23	67	N/A	N/A

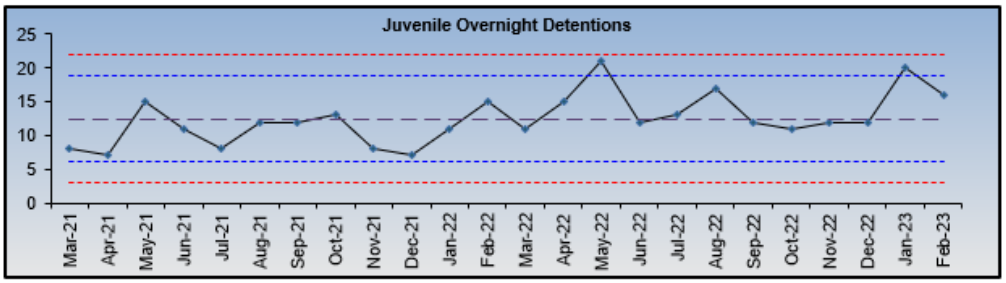


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
167	Feb-23	24	N/A	N/A

EASTERN Custody Suite

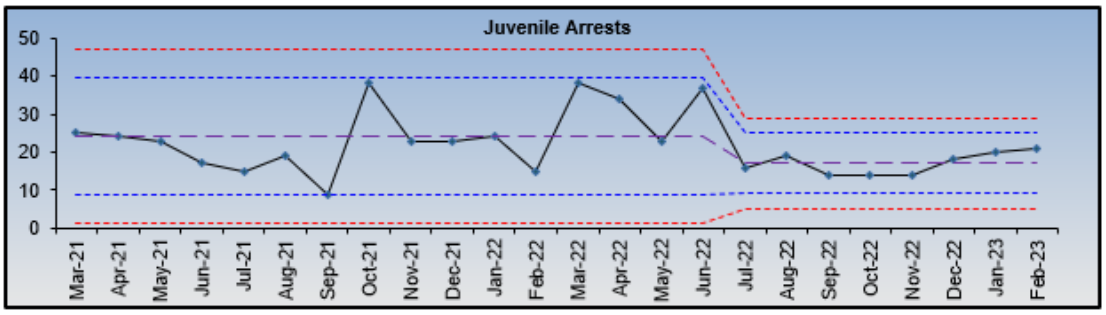


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
443	Feb-23	37	Feb-22	Increasing

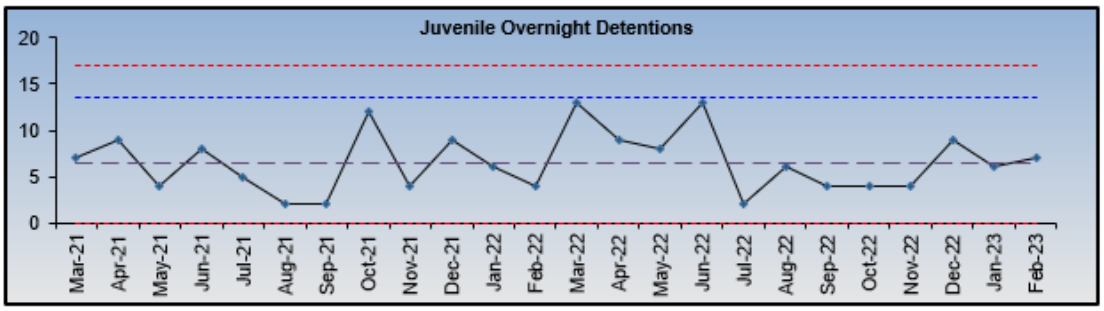


Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
161	Feb-23	16	N/A	N/A

WESTERN Custody Suite



Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
230	Feb-23	21	Jul-22	Decreasing



Total FYTD	Data complete to end of	Total last month	Date of last calibration	Direction at last calibration
72	Feb-23	7	N/A	N/A

Agenda Item 11

Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee Annual Report 2022-23

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

Report Reference No: CF/03/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1 The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report 2022-23 (April 2022 – March 2023) at Appendix 1 sets out the work of the committee and progress against the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy over the past year.

2 This report supports the work of the committee in achieving the aim in the council's Corporate Plan to 'be the best corporate parents to our children in care.'

Executive Summary

3 The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report details the progress and achievements over 2022-23 against the six pledges the Council has made to cared for children and care leavers in the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report 2022-23 as set out at Appendix 1.

Background

4 The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee was established in May 2016 as the Corporate Parenting Committee. The name of the committee was changed to the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee in February this year in response to feedback from care experienced children and young people. It is a cross-party advisory committee, comprised of twelve cross-party councillors. Councillors were appointed on a politically proportionate basis and nominated by the political groups.

5 The purpose of the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee as an advisory committee to the Children and Families Committee is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0-25 years of age and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.

6 The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report 2022-23 at Appendix 1 sets out the work of the committee and progress against the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy over the past year (April 2022 – March 2023).

Consultation and Engagement

7 Key stakeholders, including cared for children and young people and care leavers, are regularly consulted on the work of the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee and Council and partner services. The six pledges within the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy are based on what young people told us matters most to them.

Reasons for Recommendations

8 As an advisory committee to the Children and Families Committee, one of the roles of the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee is to act as advocate for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council and its commissioned services.

9 The terms of reference for the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee included within the constitution set out a requirement for the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee to report to the Children and Families Committee on at least an annual basis.

Other Options Considered

10 It could be decided that the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee no longer needs to produce an annual report, but the annual report provides an opportunity for the Children and Families Committee

to review the effectiveness of this advisory committee and the impact on outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The committee would not be sighted on progress against the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy. This includes information on how services are supporting cared for children, young people and care-experienced adults, and the committee would not be able to provide external scrutiny and evaluate if the service that is being delivered is effectively meeting children and young people's needs.	The council is not effectively discharging its role as corporate parent for all children and young people in care, and care leavers from 0-25 years of age. Partners would not be held to account for the discharge of their responsibilities. Children and young people's needs are not being met.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

11 There is a range of legislation and statutory guidance that sets out the role of the local authority in respect of cared for children and care leavers. There are statutory obligations and guidance in relation to the local authority's role as corporate parent in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Children and Young People Act 2008; the Children and Families Act 2014; and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

12 In particular, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines, for the first time in law, the role of corporate parents, in addition to expanding and extending support for care leavers.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

13 There are no financial implications or changes required to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as a result of the recommendation in this report. Services which support and deliver the Local Authority's corporate parenting role will continue to work to ensure that they operate within the MTFS approved budgets.

14 Bringing children into the care of the local authority represents a significant cost for the Council, and growth in the MTFS has been approved in recent years based on the increasing levels of demand and complexity of need, as well as the priority of achieving appropriate outcomes.

15 However, the childrens care budget continues to see financial pressures as demand and costs increase.

Policy

16 As a corporate parent, all Council policies should consider the impact on cared for children and care leavers.

17 This report supports the following priority within the Corporate Plan:

A council which empowers and cares about people Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

18 All children and young people have a right to be treated equally and have their disability, gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs met. As corporate parents for children and young people in care and care leavers, it is essential that the Council is able to demonstrate that it considers equality implications in all decisions made in relation to cared for children and care leavers. Cared for children and care leavers can be a vulnerable group because of their experiences so we need to ensure they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers as they can experience disadvantages and are at risk of poorer outcomes.

Human Resources

19 The number of children in care and care leavers has implications for staffing, both within children's social care and enabling services.

Risk Management

20 Cared for children and care leavers are a vulnerable group for whom there are a number of risks, including poor outcomes in education and training, health, safeguarding and transition into adulthood. The Cared

for Children and Care Leavers Strategy outlines plans to mitigate these risks.

Rural Communities

21 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)

22 The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report, aligned to the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy, sets out implications for cared for children and young people and priorities for 2022-23.

Public Health

23 Cared for children and care leavers are more at risk of poor health outcomes. Health services need to be targeted to ensure that they meet the needs of this group of children and young people.

Climate Change

24 There are no climate change implications.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers Annemarie.Parker@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report 2022-23
Background Papers:	The Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26 and pledges can be found on the following link:https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-children/services-from-childrens-social-care/cared-for-children/cared-for-children.aspx

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Cheshire East
TOGETHER for Children and Young People

Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report

April 2022 – March 2023

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Foreword

As elected members, we feel both privileged and challenged by our role as corporate parents. It is a huge responsibility to take on the welfare of other people's children and I know that all those who sit on Children and Families Committee and on Cared For and Care Leavers Committee are grateful to our dedicated teams of officers and social workers. They are passionate about delivering the best possible childhood for our children. The six pledges, launched in June 2022, remain the core of our commitment to Cheshire East Council's cared for and care leavers community. The role of the elected member is to be a critical friend to the professionals who work in children's services, to support them in every way possible and to make those pledges to our children a reality.

I think we all know what we want for our Cared for and Care Leaver children and young adults because it is what we want for our own children. They need security and love and that depends on permanence. This requires a coordinated effort not just from CEC's children's services, the Virtual School, the Family Hubs, the Housing department but also from our partners in the police and NHS. Last year's report referenced the 'joint targeted area inspection' which looked closely at children at risk of exploitation, and it was found that we needed to improve in some aspects of our partner working. I am proud of the excellent work done since then and to have received a report that assures the council that we now have robust, efficient partner working practices that ensure the safety of our cared for children. Our journey of improvement goes on into next year and with regards to children's safeguarding, we will always be vigilant. Committee members will continue to make regular 'frontline visits' to all areas of children's services.

One of the many challenges for children's services is to train, attract and retain more social workers against the background of a national shortage. We are also working energetically to encourage more foster carers to join the already amazing cohort in Cheshire East. Our priorities do not change greatly from year to year because the needs remain the same. What does change is the way that our teams work to support each other in providing 'wrap around' care to vulnerable children and young people who are care experienced. They are constantly innovating to find even better ways to fulfil those 6 pledges. Our ambitious strategy is outlined in Together for Children and Young People.

As a Committee, we celebrate the achievements of the past year and we are excited about the new projects and new ways of working which will benefit our Cared for and Care Leaver children.

On a personal level, I feel it is a great privilege to sit on this Committee. As a retired teacher, I have enjoyed reconnecting with young people, making a podcast about free school meals with our highly articulate, well- informed volunteers to the Youth Parliament, chatting over a jigsaw puzzle at the My Voice Centre or visiting the brilliant Holiday Activities again.

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Cllr Carol Bulman, Chair Cared For and Care Leavers Committee. July 2023.

Councillor Carol Bulman, Chair of Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee and Lead Member for Children and Families

The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee

Having the right values, beliefs and culture around prioritising and championing the needs of cared for children and young care-experienced adults is essential to achieving excellent outcomes for children and young people. Our corporate parenting responsibility is a shared one that requires a high level of commitment from the leadership of the council, as well as the support and ambition of all council employees and partners.

The name of the Corporate Parenting Committee has been changed to the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee in response to feedback from care experienced children and young people. This was agreed in the meeting on 10 January 2023 and endorsed by the Children and Families Committee in February.

The purpose of the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee, in its role as an advisory committee to the Children and Families Committee, is to ensure that the council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent for all children and young people in care, and care leavers from 0-25 years of age, and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities. The terms of reference are included within the council's constitution, and these are reviewed annually.

The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee is comprised of twelve cross-party members, with council officers in attendance to support agenda items as required. The committee is administered by officers from democratic services. The committee has met on five occasions in 2022-23.

In preparation for the discussion and challenge at committee, our Shadow Committee of young people meets in advance with the chair of the committee and the head of service for cared for children and care leavers to comment on the matters that are to be presented to committee. They share their lived experience of how services are designed and delivered and ultimately what it feels like to be a cared for child or care-experienced adult in Cheshire East.

Officers and partners present information to the committee. This includes information on how services are supporting cared for children, young people and care-experienced adults, and provides feedback from external scrutiny, so that members can evaluate the service that is being delivered to ensure we are effectively meeting children and young people's needs. Performance reporting and impact is scrutinised by the committee, along with issues and risks.

The committee oversees the delivery of our Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy and the pledges that we made in June 2022.

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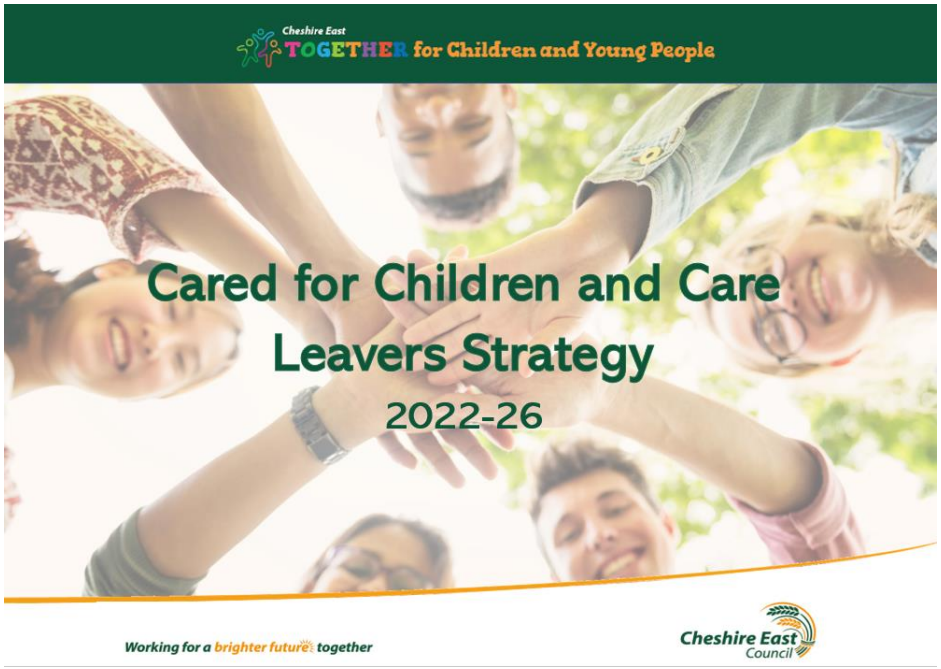
Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Pledges

The **Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26** was co-produced with children and young people and launched in July 2022.



The strategy sets out a number of pledges we are making to our cared for children and young people and those who are care experienced. These are based on what these children and young people have told us will make the most difference to their lives:

Pledge One
We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would

Pledge Two
We will improve education, employment, and training outcomes

Pledge Three
We will be truly aspirational to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe

Pledge Four
We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes

Pledge Five
We will prepare young people for adulthood

Pledge Six
We will work TOGETHER with children and young people

Committee meetings during 2022-23 received quarterly performance reports alongside the Cared for Children and Care Leavers scorecard. Workstream groups aligned to the pledges are in place to ensure that the strategy is delivered effectively.

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Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy Progress

Pledge One

We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would
Staff and elected members will understand their responsibilities and be **ambitious in their roles and they will advocate and champion** the needs of cared for children and care leavers in everything they do.
We will **know ourselves and the needs of our cared for children and care leavers well,** and design and deliver services that meet these needs.
Decisions about children and young people's lives, and the services that support them, **will be made with them and for them**. We will always value their views.

Key achievements this year

- The new Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy for 2022-26 has been co-produced with children and young people based on what is most important to them. It sets out our ambitions as corporate parents and what actions we will take to continue to develop our support.
- Our cared for children and care leavers told us that some of the language used in the previous strategy was too clinical and not meaningful to them. We therefore worked together to rename the new strategy. A new governance structure to deliver the strategy and actions is in place.
- The name of the Corporate Parenting Committee was also changed to reflect children and young people's wishes regarding the language we use.
- Initial training around corporate parenting responsibilities and championing cared for children has been undertaken with councillors.
- The timeliness of cared for children's reviews continues to be good, this was 80% at the end of Quarter 4 (Q4) and 96% of children were involved in their reviews.
- The views of children and young people were captured in 97% of all reviews completed in the year, with 60% of those aged 4 years and over attending in person. It is important that children and young people are involved in their plan, and we are always looking at how we can develop and improve their participation.
- Young people's views inform service development. My Voice have been involved in a range of service development activity and frontline recruitment, and the views of cared for children,

young people and care leavers are sought through a biannual survey. Youth Council are active members of the Children and Young People's Trust.

- There has been continued regional participation around understanding the needs and voice of care experienced young people and care leavers.
- A care leavers diagnostic took place in October 2022 to evaluate the quality of support offered and areas for development. 46% of care leavers rated their support as being 10 out of 10, with 80% rating a 7 or higher. 98% said they felt listened to by their Personal Advisor (PA).
- Several activities for November Children's Rights Month were run with the Participation Team and the Care Leavers' service. This included young people 'taking over' part of the Children and Families Committee, as well taking over the role of the Director of Children's Services for a day.

- We have established a new role – Apprenticeship Coordinator – to support cared for young people and care leavers.

Next steps

- Continue to work with cared for children and care leavers to change the language we use.
- Develop a directory of resources and support that is accessible for our young people and families.
- Champion and progress towards becoming a fostering friendly authority.
- Stabilise the workforce so that children and young people benefit from enduring relationships with their social worker.
- Provide ongoing training and support to councillors, stakeholders and employees about being the best parents to our cared for children and care leavers.
- Embed support for care leavers across whole council decision making. Cheshire East are considering making 'care leaver' a protected characteristic as recommended in the national review of children's services.
- Review our strategy on an annual basis to ensure progress is monitored and actions and priorities remain relevant.
- Establish councillor frontline visits to cared for services, aligned to the cared for children and care leavers outcomes.
- Work together to ensure that the right children become cared for and deliver our strategy on Creating a Sustainable Future for Children's Social Care.

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- Regularly celebrate the achievements of our cared for children through events, such as the Star Awards and National Care Leaver Week, and ensure individual achievements, such as exam results and settling at a new home, are also celebrated.

Pictured above: Cared for children and young people displayed their artwork at an art exhibition

Pledge Two

We will improve education, employment and training outcomes
We will have **high aspirations** for every child and young person and will **help them to achieve their ambitions**, using opportunities in the 'family business' and our contacts so that they can be **happy and successful** in their education, training and employment.
Every child and young person will have an **education plan that is targeted to enable them to reach their full potential.**
We will strive to ensure that every child and young person will have **access to consistent, high quality, well-matched, opportunities in education, training, and employment.**

Key achievements this year

- The Virtual School headteachers' report for 2021-22 was presented in the November 2022 committee meeting, providing full details of the previous academic year with an outline of the impact and achievements of our children and young people. This is updated and published annually.
- All cared for children have a designated Virtual School (VS) advisor who monitors and tracks each child and ensures timely

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support is in place for areas such as intervention, and challenge fixed term exclusions.

- As of the end of Q4, 73% of cared for children were in good/ outstanding schools. 20% of schools are without an updated OFSTED rating due to academy conversion. Where children are placed in schools below good, this is often as a result of maintaining current school placements when children enter care to preserve relationships and links with home. Within these cases, the VS advisor will ensure robust support and oversight is in place, such as undertaking additional visits.
- Robust live attendance tracking and a specialist attendance officer are in place to monitor daily attendance and offer timely support to children, schools and settings, parents/carers.
- The number of 16-18-year-old young people in care who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is low (12 in March 2023). We have a dedicated 16 plus advisor within the VS, and this reflects the proactive work to keep our young people in education or support them into employment and training.
- The post-16 team consists of a VS advisor, learning mentor and post-16 tutor, to track and monitor 16- and 17-year-old cared for children ensuring targeted support is in place, in particular for those at risk of becoming NEET. There is a bespoke offer for post-16 cared for children, including our 'venture with confidence' programme, to promote education, employment and training for young people.
- We have also developed a partnership challenge panel where we will consider what support we can provide to our young people on an individual basis. Supporting clear intervention and actions to re-engage in education, employment and training.
- Our 'venture with confidence' programme has enabled young people to re-engage with education, training and peer support. This continues to be planned for the 2023-2024 cohort. There have been 26 referrals over the two programmes, with 23 young people successfully completing the course, many securing places at college or work experience. This is a good way of engaging our young people and it is successful as a pathway to get young people involved in a range of activities and into education, employment, or training.

Pictured above: One of our young people taking part in the 'venture with confidence' programme

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- We have three learning mentors offering support for social, emotional and mental health, and ensuring enhanced transition for children and young people for identified phases of education.
- VS Deputy Headteacher in place to oversee further developments and to include extended duties.
- Development of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) content to ensure more robust recording of pupil premium, SMART targets and measuring impact/outcomes.
- VS designated training for all schools/settings: including workshops delivered by a range of multi-agency services.
- The VS are supporting our children to have access to books and reading through funding Letterbox Trust parcels. This year we have had a specific focus on signing up all our children moving into Reception, Year 1 and Year 5 to receive the parcels to support them with their transition into their assessment years.
- School-led tutoring funding has been fully used and allocated to pay for additional tutoring for cared for children.
- The Virtual School Governing Board has been embedded to provide challenge, scrutiny and support, with representatives from across all key stakeholders including education, health, social care and foster carers.
- The number of fixed term exclusions for our cared for children continues to be below both our statistical neighbours and North West recorded data. We have had no permanent exclusions of cared for children for over four years.
- Primary exclusions continue to remain low with some areas of focus needed for fixed term exclusions within secondary, although in line with national figures. We are currently working with wider partners to continue to develop alternative strategies to exclusion.
- 73% of PEPs were judged ‘good’ after designated teacher training sessions.
- 21.3% of Cheshire East cared for children achieved a grade 4+ in English and Maths, compared to 22.1% nationally (data from the local authority interactive tool (LAIT). 32.7% of our cared for children achieved a grade 5+ in GCSE English.
- 93% of our Year 11 students in July 2022 had a clear pathway plan for post-16 study.
- 78.7% of Year 13 students were either in education, employment, or training.
- In Year 14, seven students are enrolled on an apprenticeship course and four are attending higher education this year.
- More cared for young people than ever are going to university as a result of our aspirational culture and joined up working.
- The Virtual School has supported children to access recreational activities – supported with additional funding for swimming

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lessons, horse riding lessons, music lessons, performing arts and forest school.

- We know that our increasing population of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are not always able to access English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses as many colleges are full. Our Virtual School are providing creative ways of ensuring that these young people are receiving an education whilst they await a college place.
- National Apprenticeship Week was celebrated in February 2023, and we used a variety of methods to increase apprenticeship awareness for our care leavers across the council.

Next steps

- Develop opportunities for apprenticeships within the council and local businesses. Offer support to care leavers in preparing for and undertaking apprenticeships from our Apprenticeship Coordinator.
- Share success stories across the council and local community, promoting the benefits for all.
- Continue to improve the completion rate and quality of PEPs across all years from early years to post-16.
- Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes (narrow the gap and lost learning) and attendance, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of pupil premium.
- Strengthen children and young people's voice to support the strategic development across all areas of the Virtual School.
- Ensure that agencies providing opportunities for our children and young people are supported and equipped to understand and meet their needs.
- Continue to implement a robust action plan to reduce NEET and encourage re-engagement opportunities for our care leavers.

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Pledge Three

We will be truly aspirational to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe
We will strive to ensure that every child and young person will have the **opportunity to live in a good, safe home locally**, either with their family or in another long-term home. All decisions will be made and reviewed with them, without delay.
We will **respect those people who are important to our children and young people** and make sure that these safe relationships are sustained.
We will **keep children and young people safe**.

Key achievements this year

- We are constantly monitoring the numbers of cared for children and looking at ways to ensure that we are reviewing plans for children to achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity.
- Dedicated resource for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) – two social workers currently, which we are increasing to three, resulting in timely specialist support.
- Care proceedings work has been transitioned into the cared for service, for earlier consideration of permanence options.
- Discharge of care orders to ensure children rehabilitated home do not remain subject to court orders longer than necessary; this continues to increase, and practice is embedded.
- Secured dedicated venues for family time, so families can access a venue that is close to where they live. Our dedicated Family Time Coordinator has kept children connected to their families.
- Step down panel – all residential placements are agreed by the Director, ensuring only the right children are in residential care, including very exceptional use of unregistered arrangements and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). We have developed a policy around the use of unregistered provision. This policy ensures that should such arrangements be necessary that there is robust senior management oversight.
- Re-development of the resource and accommodation panel, chaired by the heads of service to ensure consistent management oversight, challenge and scrutiny of support for families, financial implications and ensuring robust planning and timescales around accomodation and resources.
- We have continued developing sufficiency options including redeveloping our residential care offer and two Mockingbird constellations. Bespoke packages and edge of care support have enabled children to remain within their extended families/networks.

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- 77% (Q4) of cared for children and young people are living within a 20-mile radius of their home address. Many of those placed furthest are living within their family networks or have/are achieving permanence. Arrangements for any child who lives at a distance are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure this remains appropriate.
- We are continuing to work to reduce the number of children who live in residential care; this number does fluctuate due to their needs and the availability of foster placements. As of end of Q4 we had 43 individuals in either a Cheshire East or independent home, this is 19.3% compared to England at 16% and the Northwest at 14%. We remain committed to ensuring that children have the opportunity to live within a family wherever possible and continue to review children's placements to see if there are alternatives.
- We currently have 56 children (9.7%) placed with parents – this is a significant drop from 17% last year and much closer to latest available national picture of 7%, lower than the North West at 12%. This is consistent progress and demonstrates a commitment to exiting children's lives when intervention is not required and ensuring children remain within their birth family where possible.
- The number of children where care orders have been discharged is increasing; in total during 2022/23 we have discharged care orders for 20 children and there are several applications before the court. We have a designated legal advisor who is ensuring that discharges can be made quickly and effectively within the court arena.
- A small but well-regarded Special Guardianship Order (SGO) team supports an increasing number of children/families where permanence is achieved through the making of this order.
- We have improved communication and engagement with foster carers – regular newsletters, forums, surveys and attendance at gatherings. Foster carers are also involved in service developments. There has been the development of a specific fostering Facebook page and increased social media presence.

- We have engaged in sector-led improvement around fostering which is proving to be beneficial, and we are also working towards recognition as a 'fostering friendly' organisation.

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- Q4 data shows an increase in children placed with in-house foster carers (122 in Q4 compared to 117 in Q3). The number of children placed with connected carers remains relatively consistent. This means that children are living with someone they have an existing relationship with. There are plans in place to increase recruitment of foster carers, which will mean that we can place more of our children with Cheshire East foster carers.
- We remain ambitious for securing adoption for children – 11 children have been adopted so far this year, and another 19 are living in their adoption placements. We also have three children who are placed in foster to adopt placements.

Next steps

- Continue our focus on achieving consistently good quality assessments and plans.
- Placement stability for cared for children still needs to improve, however in Q4 we have seen some improvement in this. We know that due to a shortage of foster placements, some children experience several moves. A new Head of Service for

Provider Services commenced employment in January 2023 and is working to develop the service to improve stability for children.

- Develop our in-house residential provision and continue to increase the number of foster carers to improve opportunities for children and young people to live closer to home.
- Improve concurrent and early permanence planning through the Resource and Accommodation Panel (RAPP). Utilise this as a forum for senior leaders to support the service to achieve permanence plans and ensure progress is reviewed regularly. Clear actions to be set to hold the service to account.
- Build upon family networking meetings and inclusion of families and reduce the number of children needing to enter court and/or remain within care.
- Further strengthen our communication and engagement with foster carers and involve them in service development.
- Secure family-based living for cared for disabled children – we are working to expand our number of in-house short break and specialist foster carers through a targeted recruitment campaign.
- Continue to ensure that cared for children and young people can live in good, safe homes locally, as early as possible.
- Development of the No Wrong Door model principles within Cheshire East which will provide support to young people who are within or on the edge of the care system.
- Increase support to cases where there is a possibility of adoption disruption.
- Review and enhance the offer for special guardianship, considering bespoke support offers.
- Improve our decision making regarding Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs). Develop a clear process and policy around entitlements and support for SGO's.
- We will ensure children and young people have opportunities to stay connected to their families and friends in the least restrictive way possible.

Pledge Four

We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes

We are committed to **understanding the health needs** of our children and young people **as early as possible** and to ensure they are **given the highest priority** in every service.

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We will ensure that **practitioners understand and meet the diverse health needs** of our children and young people, **including those with health inequalities** faced by race, ethnicity, ability and disability and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
We have **ambition to ensure that we further improve responses** to children and young people in relation to having their **health needs met**.
We will **equip** our children and young people to have **high aspirations for their own health and wellbeing.**

Key achievements this year

- Health colleagues have access to the case record system to improve the timeliness of health assessments. They will automatically be notified when a child enters care.
- There is a good emotional wellbeing offer through Pure Insight, which is supporting over 300 young people.
- 100% of young people that consent to a health passport have received one by their 18th birthday. Work has been undertaken to strengthen the understanding of health passports and consent with young people.
- Most initial health assessments are being requested within 48 hours of children entering care. Overall, for the year, 76% were requested within timescales and 59% were completed within timescales.
- We know that our increase of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) cared for children has resulted in some delays because of additional complexities such as ensuring an interpreter is present. An additional increase in children coming into care has also added to the complexity and impacted timeliness; in 2021-22 157 children entered care, this number increased to 218 in 2022-23.
- The percentage of children who had their annual health assessment was 89.3%; this is an improvement on last year's figure of 80% and in line with the England average of 89%. The figure is slightly higher than our statistical neighbours' average of 86%.
- 96.6% of children aged five and under had their developmental checks completed within timescales.
- 92.6% of routine childhood immunisations were completed.
- Our dedicated emotional wellbeing service delivers support for young people and their carers.
- 74.5% of children had their teeth checked by a dentist, this is a significant improvement on last year's figure of 51%. The NHS England dental referral scheme across Cheshire and

Merseyside provides an opportunity for all our children and young people to access a dentist more easily. The scheme will continue for 2023/24, and children who are struggling to access a dentist locally can be referred in for emergency treatment or a routine dental examination.

Next steps

- More children and young people have seen a dentist than is recorded on our system. We are building into children's reviews a mandatory question to increase the accuracy of the data.
- Continue to promote the NHS England dental referral programme to ensure cared for children have access to timely dental health services.
- Raise awareness across our workforce and promote and monitor access to a range of services and agencies available to support the health needs of our children and young people.
- Track and monitor the health needs of our children and young people, including those who are currently living outside of Cheshire East, ensuring their needs are met.
- Support children and young people in care to have improving emotional mental health and wellbeing.
- We will ensure cared for children and care leavers have their health assessed in a timely way and that assessments are of a good quality and used to inform the care plan.
- Improve access and timeliness of full health-screening for all UASC.
- Develop an effective tool that can be used to measure health outcomes for cared for children.
- We will support timely and effective transitions from children's services to adult services.

Pledge Five

We will prepare young people for adulthood

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We will **support young people early with the skills needed** to prepare for their future through access to a range of good quality services.
We will be a **consistent guide** for our young people. We will **celebrate their successes** and **support them when things don't go well.**
We will **respect our care leavers as young adults** and adapt our relationships to their needs.

Key achievements this year

- We are currently working with 315 young people in the care leavers service, of whom just over 30 are open to us formally under the 21+ offer. A further 140 young adults know that they can also access support and advice from us at any time via this provision, and an additional 71 cared for children are supported jointly via a social worker and PA to prepare for adulthood.
- Connections between the cared for and care leavers service have improved, resulting in better preparation for adulthood.
- The local offer has been reviewed together with our care leavers and we will be using their feedback to enhance our offer further.
- We have a strong financial offer for care leavers, including a £2,500 setting-up grant, dedicated financial support for young people at university, financial support while young people wait to receive Universal Credit, and financial incentives for those who are not ready for work but can volunteer. This will increase this year due to national guidance for young people turning 18 years after April 2023.
- At the end of Q4, 20 young adults aged 21 and over have been allocated personal advisors (PAs).
- The monthly Ignition Panel helps young people make informed choices about where they might live in the future. All 16-year-olds are now considered at Ignition to strengthen early planning and support for independence.
- 75 young people are residing in independent living.
- The successful tenancy ready course has an average of two young people per month completing to secure their B status.
- The number of ignition taster flats has increased from 14 to 16 to support young people to be tenancy ready.
- Two 16+ flats have been commissioned to offer short break or shared care independence living experiences to young people transitioning to adult services. We have submitted a short break innovation bid to the Department for Education (DfE) to secure two additional flats.

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- We are in touch with 98.5% of care leavers aged 19-21 compared to 97% last year. The average for England and for our statistical neighbours is 92%. In the North West it is 95%.
- The Care Leavers Survey found that 46% of care leavers rated their support as being 10 out of 10 (on a scale of 1-10 where 10 is very good). 80% rated it as 7 or higher. 98% said they felt listened to by their PA.
- One care leaver gave the following feedback about their PA: "*He is very lovely to talk to, he makes me laugh all the time and I am not scared to talk to him or ask for his help*."
- There are good links in place with local Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) centres. A reduction in benefit sanctions has been seen in the past 12 months.
- Effective mentoring and wellbeing support, including support for young parents, is in place through Pure Insight which supports over 300 young people. Provision increased in April 2022 ensuring no young person was on a waiting list. Feedback from young people on the support is overwhelmingly positive.
- Q4 data shows that 97% of care leavers aged 19-21 are in appropriate accommodation compared to 88% nationally (in the Northwest this rate is 90%, and for our statistical neighbours it is 88%). The rate is not 100% because we have a small number of young people who are in prison, and this is never recorded as being appropriate. This is currently less than five and as such the number is suppressed in line with DfE guidelines. Nationally the latest available data reported 88% of care leavers as being in suitable accommodation with 3% being in custody. The other main reasons for accommodation being classed as unsuitable is emergency accommodation or homelessness. We monitor our use of emergency accommodation alongside housing colleagues; our use of emergency accommodation is minimal.
- As of the end of Q4, 93% of care leavers had up-to-date pathway plans. Pathway plan reviews have now transferred to the safeguarding service to ensure that they are reviewed in a timelier way and to allow for external scrutiny. We have recently been working with Stockport Council and have engaged in some sector-led improvement work around our care leavers. This work has been beneficial, and we have implemented some ideas to ensure that our care leavers have the very best opportunities.
- 55.4% of our 19 to 21-year-olds are in education, employment or training (EET), in line with the national picture. Our latest 'venture with confidence' course for young people who have experienced specific difficulties in accessing work or training has been a great success. We continue to be aspirational that the course and support from our apprenticeship coordinator will increase the number of 19- to 21-year-olds in EET over the next year.

- We have strengthened our practice in relation to 16 and 17-year-old homeless young people and updated the 16/17-Year-Old Homeless Joint Working Protocol.

Next steps

- Enhance our local offer in line with feedback from care leavers, including support around the cost of living.
- Explore developing an app for the local offer to support improved communication and meaningful ways of keeping in touch, offer digital peer support groups, and gain young people's feedback.
- Communicate with children and young people what our relationship and contact with them will look like, so they understand what to expect and know how to raise any worries they have around this.
- Understand how children and young people want us to communicate with them and look at ways to develop our digital offer in line with their views.
- Publish and publicise the care leaver offer in accessible ways, in line with statutory guidance. Ensure that care leavers know what they are legally entitled to and are helped to access support after they leave care. Review the care leaver offer in partnership with care leavers when there is an annual review.
- Ensure that all children in care and care leavers know how to make a complaint and have access to advocacy services.
- Allocate cared for children a PA as close to age 16 as possible, in line with statutory guidance.
- Involve children in care and care leavers in developing their plans for after care. Plans should take account of young people's wishes and concerns, when possible, including those related to feeling safe, where young people want to live, and what they want to do with their future.
- In order to increase the range of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) accommodation within the Cheshire East boundary, we will be tendering for regulated 16+ accommodation in summer/autumn 2023.

Pictured above: here's a great photo of some of the young UASC we've supported, photographed with the Mayor at last year's Star Awards

- Celebrate the achievements of our care leavers, during National Care Leavers Week.
- Ensure care leavers are supported to make decisions that affect their lives e.g., housing, jobs, etc.
- Embed family networking and safety planning to reduce 16/17-year-old homelessness and support young people to return to live at home sooner.
- Ensure that care leavers who become parents are well supported and have prioritisation of access to services.
- Make links with providers around bespoke accommodation provision for young people to provide more choices outside of Crewe.
- We have been successful in a bid to the DfE for Staying Close funding and will be developing our project plan to ensure young people leaving residential care have bespoke accomodation and care support.

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Pledge Six

We will work TOGETHER with children and young people
We will work **TOGETHER with children and young people** in all that we do.
We will work to make sure that **participation is at the heart** of everything that our staff, partners, and elected members do.
Cared for children and care leavers will be **empowered to make decisions that affect their lives**.

Key achievements this year

- We have continued to deliver on our TOGETHER vision – children, young people and parents/carers are actively involved in shaping services and support for cared for children and care leavers. A number of our key strategies have been coproduced with children and young people, including our Children and Young People's Plan, Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy and Participation Strategy.
- Children and young people have told us that the most important thing we can do is listen to them and take what they say seriously. We have developed an additional pledge in the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy to focus solely

on participation (working together with children and young people) to ensure that children and young people are always at the heart of everything we do and are involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

- My VOICE (Voices of in Care Experience) have been involved in a range of projects including:
  - co-producing our new Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy and pledges to cared for children and care leavers
  - making cards for all our cared for children to celebrate International Care Day 2022
  - an art exhibition sharing experiences of being cared for
  - developing a 'coming into care' guide
  - being involved in recruitment and selection of new staff
  - taking part in 'Take Over Days' with the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Participation Team
  - celebrating cared for children's achievements through our annual STAR awards and November Take Over
  - attending the Shadow Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee
  - attending and being a part of Cared4NorthWest (the regional Children in Care Council)
  - the recommission of the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's Service
- Cared for children delivered a reading at the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Service at Chester Cathedral in June 2022. This opportunity was ringfenced to cared for children, again demonstrating Cheshire East's commitment to corporate parenting. One young person who took part felt that the experience would help strengthen their future prospects, such as employment and university applications.

- Care experienced young people were involved in recruitment for the roles of Head of Service for Provider Services and Head of Service for Safeguarding, as well as positions within the Virtual School. Their insight, professionalism and probing questions were impressive. Involving cared for children and care leavers ensures that there is a balanced view, and this helps to strengthen relationships with professionals. It also helps them to gain transferable skills such as interview preparation, empowerment, and communication.

- Care leavers attended full council to speak about why the pledges of the strategy are important. Full council adopted the pledges, voted unanimously and demonstrated their commitment to corporate parenting.

- Care leavers were involved in developing a training resource for professionals working with care experienced children and young people who have experience of domestic violence and domestic abuse. Training that is co-produced by young people ensures that it is shaped by their lived experiences.
- Cared for children attended and helped to plan Table Turners, an event aimed at having open discussions and offering recommendations to decision makers about issues connected to health and wellbeing.
- Children and young people have worked to improve the language that is used across services for cared for children and care leavers. This includes changing the name of the strategy and committee from “Corporate Parenting Strategy/Committee” to “Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy/Committee”. Care leavers presented these recommendations at committee in November 2022.

Next steps

- Continue to work together with children and young people to enable children to participate in a meaningful way to develop our services and inform practice.
- Embed the TOGETHER approach with our children and young people, making sure that all staff, partners, and elected members are working to listen to and act on what children and young people tell us.
- Increase the range of opportunities and the number of children and young people engaging in activities in ways that are helpful to them.

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- Ensure there are opportunities for senior managers and councillors to hear direct from children and young people about their experiences and ideas.
- Following the annual survey of cared for children and care leavers, all services to evidence actions based on recommendations by children and young people.
- Ensure that children and young people are involved in the recruitment of all key posts in Children's Services.
- Ensure that the child's voice and their lived experience is evident in decision making when commissioning services.
- Improve and develop the language we use when working with and writing about our cared for children and young people, "writing to the child".

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Agenda Item 12

OPEN

Children and Families Committee

18th Sept 2023

Children and Families Q1 scorecard 2023/24

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

Report Reference No: CF/01/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

1 To provide Children and Families Committee with an overview of performance against the core indicator set within the 3 service areas of children's services. This report covers a range of the corporate objectives under the overarching corporate priority of a fair authority.

Executive Summary

2 This report provides an overview of quarter 1 performance for children and families services for the relevant indicators for the reporting year of 2023-24. It also provides where applicable the outturn position for the reporting year end.

3 The committee will note that the format has changed in line with their request and now includes information around the acronyms used and the alignment with the Corporate Plan Aim of a Fair Council. The report now also reflects a rolling 4 quarter activity with the latest quarter reported highlighted in blue.

4 The committee will note that work is underway to commence reporting workforce data including caseloads as requested from quarter 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Childrens and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the performance of children's services for quarter 1 and the finalised performance for the full reporting year.

Background

5 This quarterly report provides the committee with an overview of performance across Children's Services. This report relates to quarter 1 of 2023-24 (1 April 2023 – 30 June 2023).

6 The outcomes framework scorecard contains 52 indicators across children's services and provides a strategic overview of the core activity with the service areas that demonstrate how we support the children and young people in Cheshire East.

7 The following indicators have been highlighted for consideration – please note the numbers relate to the corresponding indicator in the attached appendix outcomes framework scorecard.

Social Care

- **1.15 - % of assessments completed within 45 days**. Quarter 1 has maintained the improvement in performance and there remains a focus to bring this closer to national average performance. This is seen as an early indicator that when needed individuals are receiving support in a timely fashion.

- **1.18 – 1.21 Rate of S47 and ICPCs.** The rate of S47 activity has increased with the 22–23-year outturn higher than the latest statistical neighbour average albeit in line with the latest available national picture. An annualised position based on Q1 would suggest that 2023-24 will be a similar picture. Given the reduction in those progressing to an Initial Child Protection Conference and the number of Child Protection cases, a detailed audit of cases has been completed to ensure that we are appropriately undertaking S47 activity, and that decision making is clear. This included analysis, where applicable, of individuals on a Child in need plan for over 12months. This activity found that decision making was sound and that individuals were being supported at the right level of need.

- **1.24 - % of ICPC within 15 days of S47 enquiry.** Following an isolated drop in performance in Q4, there was a significant improvement in Q1. Holding the initial conference in a timely fashion, following the decision that one is required, is an indicator that the multi-agency partnership is working effectively to reduce risks and support families that require a more specialist intervention.

- **1.27-1.28 – number and rate of Children in Care.** This remains higher than statistical neighbours and national averages and continues to be influenced by Cheshire East's support for the National Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) scheme. Due to this almost 1 in 3 young people in care is aged 16-17 currently. This knowledge is being used to inform the updated sufficiency strategy for placements together with the services that will be needed for an increasing cohort of care leavers.

- **1.29 – Children looked after who had their teeth checked by a dentist in the last 12 months**. Following work with our NHS colleagues to ensure that all cared for children are registered and have access to a dentist we have reported a significant improvement in the % with an annual dental check at 75% for 22-23 up from 51% in 21-22. We are working alongside health partners to ensure more robust in year reporting so we can improve this further.

Education

- **2.1 – 2.12** – The % of primary and secondary schools judged **good or outstanding** has improved throughout the year and now stands at 94% and 91% respectively. This ensures that for most of our pupils they experience a high-quality education. Work continues with those schools that haven't been judged at that level or are yet to be inspected to ensure that they have the appropriate tools and support to improve.

- **2.16 - % attendance for special school pupils**. There was a slight improvement in Q1 and remains a priority of our ongoing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) improvement journey to ensure that our more vulnerable pupils receive a full education experience.

- 2**.18 – Elective Home Education.** Q1 has shown a continued upward trend which appears to be due to an increase in the number of parents deregistering their children to electively home educate them as a result of their child's mental health and anxiety about attending school. A focused session was delivered at the schools' senior mental lead network meeting in April, with peer challenge and support around children experiencing emotionally based school non-attendance. The team continues to complete pre-deregistration meetings with children, parents and professionals to help inform their decision.

- **2.19 – Children Missing Education.** From January, the attendance and children out of school team have been delivering webinars about children missing education and commenced termly targeted support meetings with all schools. This increased awareness and support with pupil level data has initially led an increase in reporting children missing education. There is a national process for schools to inform local authorities where young people present in their area, and we work closely alongside national departments where individuals move abroad.

- **2.26 – 2.27 - New Education and Health Care plans completed within 20 weeks**. This continues a steady improvement journey together with considerable progress with the average plan now taking around 20.1 weeks. This is in part due to the continued improvement in advice from Educational Psychologists being received within 6 weeks from request which, for many young people, is an integral part of the assessment process.

Strong Start, Family Help and Integration

- **3.14 – 2-year-old offer.** We continue to promote maximum take up of the 2-year-old offer which can fluctuate from term to term. 92% of this cohort are attending good/ outstanding provision.
- **3.15 – 3–4-year-old offer.** The local authority has always been outstanding in ensuring that most of those eligible access the full offer available. Importantly 96% of individuals are attending good/ outstanding provision which is higher than the national average of 93%.
- **3.16 – Supporting Families.** The local authority had a target of 480 families with successful outcomes in 2023-24. We currently have over 1,000 families being supported either at Early Help or Child in need level and it quarter 1 we had 50 successful claims.
- **3.18-3.19** –**Not in Education, Employment or Training** - Although still slightly lower than the national picture it has increased slightly this quarter. This does however relate to only 207 individuals, with only 156 available to the labour market. Of these 16 have already secured work with an agreed start date or engaged in voluntary work with the rest actively being supported to find education/ employment or training. In July we held our first ever supported internship graduation event to celebrate the achievements of 34 graduates alongside friends, family, job coaches and employers.

Consultation and Engagement

8 Not applicable

Reasons for Recommendations

9 One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Committee is to review performance and scrutinise the effectiveness of services for children and young people. This is in alignment with the strategic aims of a Fair Council.

Other Options Considered

10 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

11 There are no direct legal implications.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

12 Although there are no direct financial implications or changes to the MTFS as a result of this briefing paper, performance measures may be used as an indicator of budget pressures at a service level.

Policy

13 There are no direct policy implications.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

14 Members may want to use the information from the performance indicators to ensure that services are targeted at more vulnerable children and young people.

Human Resources

15 There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

There are risks associated with some performance measures, e.g., increases in demand and timeliness of services.

Rural Communities

16 There are no direct implications to rural.

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

17 Performance reports enable members to identify areas of good performance and areas for improvement in relation to children and young people, including cared for children.

Public Health

- There are no direct public health implications.

Climate Change

18 This report does not impact on climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Bev Harding, Business Intelligence Manager Bev.Harding@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Children and Families Outcomes Framework Score Card June 2023
Background Papers:	None

June 2023 - Children and Families Outcomes Framework Scorecard - This contains a rolling 4 quarters for comparison

Notes: The boxes that are grayed out are where national data is not applicable or data isn't available, for example the schools data is available termly which doesn't always coincide with quarterly reporting

Notes: The column highlighted in blue reflects the most recent quarter being reported on

Notes: Rates are calculated using the 2020 ONS mid year population estimate 0-17 of 78,068 (Office of National Statistics) and are calculated as a rate per 10,000 children aged 0-17. This enables the local authority to be compared on a like for like basis with different local authorities or groups of authorities. The exception is the EHCP rate which we have shown as the rate of 0-25 yr olds in line with the number

Directorate	Indicator	Indicator name	Polarity	22/23 outturn	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	23/24 outturn	Benchmark National (most recent available)	Benchmark Stat N'bour (most recent available)	Corporate Plan Aim	Acronym
Childrens Social Care	1.1	Number of referrals		2397	615	609	653	602				Fair	
	1.12	Number of referrals (cumulative)		2397	1139	1748	2397	602				Fair	
	1.13	Rate of referrals (cumulative)		307.0	145.9	223.9	307.6	77.1		538	440	Fair	
	1.14	Percentage of repeat referrals	Low is Good	14%	12%	13%	20%	18%		22%	21%	Fair	
	1.15	Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days	High is Good	63%	56%	49%	63%	63%		84%	90%	Fair	
	1.16	Number of children in need (CIN definition to aid comparison so includes CP/Cared for and some Care leavers)		2230	2166	2168	2230	2031				Fair	CIN - Child in need collection CP - Child Protection
	1.17	Rate of children in need		285.6	277.5	277.7	285.6	260.2		334	278	Fair	
	1.18	Number of S47 enquiries (cumulative)	Low is Good	1339	684	989	1339	351				Fair	
	1.19	Rate of Children subject to section 47 enquiries (cumulative)	Low is Good	171.5	87.6	126.7	171.5	45		180	146	Fair	
	1.2	Number of Children subject to an ICPC (cumulative)	Low is Good	356	181	250	356	53				Fair	ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
	1.21	Rate of Children subject to an ICPC (cummulative)	Low is Good	45.6	23.2	32.0	45.6	6.8		60	53	Fair	ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
	1.22	Number of children with a child protection plan		218	262	215	218	190				Fair	
	1.23	Rate of children with a child protection plan		27.9	33.6	27.5	27.9	24.3		42	37	Fair	
	1.24	% of ICPC within 15 days of S47 enquiry	High is Good	74%	74%	74%	58%	87%		79%	78%	Fair	ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
	1.25	Percentage of children with a second or subsequent child protection (CP) plan (rolling yr)	Low is Good	20%	20%	18%	20%	17%		23%	23%	Fair	
	1.26	% of children on CP plans reviewed within timescales	High is Good	88%	82%	90%	86%	87%		89%	87%	Fair	CP - Child Protection
	1.27	Number of cared for children		580	540	557	580	576				Fair	
	1.28	Rate of cared for children		74.3	69.2	71.3	74.3	73.8		70	60	Fair	

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Directorate	Indicator	Indicator name	Polarity	22/23 outturn	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	23/24 outturn	Benchmark National (most recent available)	Benchmark Stat N'bour (most recent available)	Corporate Plan Aim	Acronym
	1.29	Children looked after who had their teeth checked by a dentist in the last 12 months (%)	High is Good	75%	44%	49%	75%	62%		70%	65%	Fair	
	1.30	Children looked after who had their annual health assessment (%)	High is Good	89%	75%	83%	89%	79%		89%	86%	Fair	
	1.31	% of cared for children placed out of borough and over 20 miles from home address	Low is Good	20.5%	16%	17%	21%	17%		16%	19%	Fair	
	1.32	% of cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	Low is Good	24%	23%	20%	22%	22%				Fair	
	1.33	% Children who ceased to be looked after in the period who were adopted (YTD)	High is Good	7%	8%	8%	7%	8%		10%	11%	Fair	YTD - Year to Date
	1.34	% Children who ceased to be looked after in the period due to a Special Guardianship Order (YTD)	High is Good	10%	6%	9%	10%	5%		13%	12%	Fair	YTD - Year to Date
	1.35	% of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (aged 19-21) (NEET)	Low is Good	44%	46%	48%	44%	45%		38%	37%	Fair	NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training
	1.36	% of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation (aged 19-21)	High is Good	97%	95%	97%	97%	94%		88%	88%	Fair	
Education and 14-19 Skills	2.1	Percentage good or outstanding primary schools	High is Good	93%	94%	94%	93%	94%		92%	92%	Fair	
	2.12	Percentage good or outstanding secondary schools	High is Good	91%	90%	91%	91%	91%		83%	81%	Fair	
	2.13	Percentage good or outstanding special schools	High is Good	75%	75%	75%	75%	80%		94%	95%	Fair	
	2.14	Percentage attendance for primary pupils year to date	High is Good		Not available in Sept	94%	95%	95%		96%	96%	Fair	
	2.15	Percentage attendance for secondary pupils year to date	High is Good		Not available in Sept	91%	91%	91%		95%	95%	Fair	
	2.16	Percentage attendance for special school pupils year to date	High is Good		Not available in Sept	86%	85%	86%		91%	92%	Fair	
	2.17	Number of permanent exclusions from Cheshire East Schools (latest term available)	Low is Good		Not available in Sept	19	16	27				Fair	
	2.18	Current Number of pupils educated at home	Low is Good	567	446	482	567	606				Fair	
	2.19	Current number of children missing from education.	Low is Good	64	199	151	172	197				Fair	
	2.2	Total number with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) aged 0-25		3521	3879	4011	4160	4337				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan
	2.21	Rate of children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) NB as rate of 0-25 yr old (105,819)		3.9%	3.7%	3.8%	3.9%	4.1%				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan

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Directorate	Indicator	Indicator name	Polarity	22/23 outturn	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	23/24 outturn	Benchmark National (most recent available)	Benchmark Stat N'bour (most recent available)	Corporate Plan Aim	Acronym
Ed	2.22	Total % Pupils in CEC Maintained/State-funded with SEN Support. DfE / census measure from Jan census		9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	9.9%		12.6%	12.1%	Fair	SEN - Special Educational Needs DFE - Department for Education
	2.23	Number of children and young people with an EHCP open to social care (NB includes care leavers)		372	338	324	372	372				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan
	2.24	Number of children with an EHCP with an EHA		250	299	253	250	278				Fair	EHA - Early Help Assessment
	2.25	% of requests for Educational Psychologists (EP) advice completed within 6 weeks	High is Good	74%	72%	84%	85%	89%				Fair	
	2.26	Special Educational Needs – Education, Health and Care Plans completion within 20 weeks including exceptions (cummulative yr)	High is Good	65.3%	39%	40%	49%	62%		58%	66%	Fair	
	2.27	Average number of weeks for EHC Plans to be issued (snap shot at quarter end to which it relates)	Low is Good	21.7	23.5	23.2	21.7	20.1				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan
Strong Start, Family Help and Int	3.12	% of all open Early Help Assessments led by Cheshire East Prevention service staff		55%	53%	59%	55%	48%				Fair	
	3.13	% 0-2 yrs engaged at children centres (most vulnerable i.e. CIN/CP/Cared for that have attended 3 or more times in the last 12 months)	High is Good		36%	36%	33%	38%				Fair	CIN - Child In Need, CP - Child Protection
	3.14	% eligible children taking up 2 year old offer (termly figure only)	High is Good	73%	77%	79%	75%	72%		74%		Fair	
	3.15	% children taking up 3 and 4 year old offer (termly figure only)	High is Good	99%	96%	99%	99%	99%		94%		Fair	
	3.16	Number of Families meeting the Supporting Families (previously family focus) criteria where outcomes have been successfully concluded (accumulative fig)	High is Good	297	240	297	297	50				Fair	
	3.17	Number of young people accessing the youth support service	High is Good		2932	2148	2176	2393				Fair	
	3.18	Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	Low is Good	200	117	190	200	207				Fair	NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training
	3.19	% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	Low is Good	2.60%	1.50%	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%		2.80%		Fair	NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training

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Agenda Item 13

Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

Transformation of travel support for children and young people and review of available walking routes.

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children and Families

Report Reference No: CF/27/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All wards.

Purpose of Report

1 In November 2022, the children and families committee considered a report setting out the findings and recommendations from an independent review of travel support for children and young people. The committee agreed a number of recommendations to progress the transformation of travel support over the next three years to ensure that the service can be sustained.

2 A subsequent report, presented in March 2023, provided more detail and the children and families committee resolved to:

(a) Note the progress to date on implementation of the transformation programme, including the imminent appointment of specialist professional capacity, funded from the school transport budget.

(b) Consider and approve the proposed arrangements in relation to the post-16 home-to-school transport policy statement for 2023-24.

(c) Approve the proposals to go out to consultation and the results of the consultation will be brought back to committee, including:

(i) the revised payments in relation to cash grants/personal budgets for the 2023-24 academic year.

(ii) the proposed changes to the existing school transport policies in line with the Edge review recommendations, including the review

of transport charges (the post-16, spare seat and Poynton High School scheme).

(d) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place, to make decisions in relation to progressing the milestones and activity listed in the report, with any specific actions requiring a decision by committee to be subject of a further report.

3 In July 2023, members approved changes in relation to personal travel budgets (PTBs), including the increase of the current mileage rate for PTBs from 25p per mile to 45p per mile, effective from the start of the next academic year (September 2023) and changes to the procedures in relation to the process for claiming PTBs.

4 This report provides an overview of progress to date against the plans to transform travel support for children and young people and seeks approval from committee on the proposed redesignation of two routes to two schools making them ‘Available walking routes’ (AWR) from their current designation as ‘Unavailable walking routes’.

5 Additionally, this paper seeks approval to go out to consultation on changes to the school transport policies (as noted within the November 2022 report and report to committee in March 2023) to include the charging policy for post-16 transport and spare seats and to return to committee with the results from the consultation and subsequent recommendations for approval.

6 As detailed within the March 2023 report the policy consultation will be based upon:

(a) the post-16 home-to-school transport policy statement for 2024-25.

(b) the proposed changes to the existing school transport policies in line with the Edge review recommendations, including the review of transport charges (post-16, spare seat and Poynton High School scheme). The existing policies being:

(i) Compulsory School Age Travel Policy

(ii) Post-16 Education Travel Policy

(iii) Education Travel Behaviour Code

(iv) Education Travel Payment Policy

(v) Education Travel - Appeals and Complaints Policy

Executive Summary

7 Significant progress has been made in relation to the transformation of travel support for children and young people since March 2023 in the areas of creation of a new dynamic purchasing system for our suppliers, new arrangements for personal travel budgets and a review of walking routes to

school currently designated as unavailable. An update on progress as of August 2023 is set out at Appendix 1.

8 Following approval at the children and families committee in March 2023, a review of routes deemed unavailable to walk (and thereby making effected pupils eligible for free school transport regardless of distance from school) has been started. This work develops further the work undertaken in 2017 where several 'schemes' (roads, crossings, footway improvements) were implemented in order to allow the designation of those routes to be deemed as AWR.

9 Whilst further work will be undertaken to identify any new schemes which can be put in place in the coming months, this paper is concerned with routes to two schools in particular:

(i) From Willaston to Brine Leas Academy – the area which was originally deemed as making this route unavailable to walk was an inadequate crossing point at the Cheerbrook roundabout. A traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on the Nantwich bypass at Cheerbrook roundabout has been in place since 14 October 2008 and as such this route should have been redesignated several years ago.

(ii) From Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy – a scheme to put a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on the B5087 Prestbury Road was completed on 6 January 2020 and as such the redesignation of this route is also overdue.

10 This paper sets out the detail of the walking routes and the numbers of pupils at each setting who will no longer be eligible for free home to school transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The children and families committee are recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the progress to date in relation to the transformation of travel support for children and young people.
2. Approve the redesignation of the Willaston to Brine Leas Academy and Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy routes as 'Available Walking Routes'.
3. Approve the pupil eligibility changes that will be necessary as a result of the redesignation in line with the Councils 'Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy' to remove school transport from 75 pupils, following a 12 week notice period.
4. Approve the review of other sites across the borough which are currently designated as 'unavailable walking routes' for any financially viable improvement schemes which could make those routes 'available walking routes' to be brought back to committee for future approval.
5. Approve the proposal to go out to consultation on the current school transport policies, including the review of charging for post-16, spare seats and the Poynton

High School scheme and for the results of the consultation to be brought back to committee.

Background

11 In November 2022, the children and families committee considered a report setting out the findings and recommendations from an independent review by Edge Public Solutions in relation to travel support for children and young people. The committee endorsed the underlying principles and cultural change set out in the review and delegated decision making to the Executive Director of Children and Families, in consultation with the Executive Director of Place, to make a number of decisions in relation to progressing the transformation of travel support for children and young people. The report also committed to providing interim reports around specific actions that require committee approval, along with an initial update report within six months and annually thereafter.

12 A detailed update report was presented to the Children and Families Committee in March 2023 and delegated authority was approved to make decisions in relation to progressing the milestones and activity within the implementation plan.

13 In July 2023, members approved changes in relation to personal travel budgets (PTBs), including the increase of the current mileage rate for PTBs from 25p per mile to 45p per mile, effective from the start of the next academic year (September 2023) and changes to the procedures in relation to the process for claiming PTBs.

14 In summary, good progress has been made in the first quarter of the project and the key achievements are outlined below and at Appendix 1.

- Edge Public Solutions were appointed as the providers of specialist professional capacity to implement the transformation plan and started work in March 2023.
- The establishment of a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) is well underway with the framework being made live on the council's procurement portal, ProContract. Supplier engagement events were held in July. Around 950 suppliers have been contacted to join the DPS (current approved supplier list is approximately 140) to address the shortage of drivers/vehicles and stimulate competition to reduce the cost of transport.
- A consultation on the current offer for personal travel budgets (PTBs) was completed in May 2023 and changes approved by committee in July 2023.
- Work is well progressed to redesignate routes as available and thereby allow removal of entitlement to free transport.
- A review of independent travel training initiatives within the council, schools and neighbouring councils is underway to gather information to shape the future offer. A consultation will take place with parent/carers

to gather their comments and will be reported to a future committee meeting.

- The financial improvement plan has been established and tracking mechanisms put in place to monitor performance and sign-off improvements.

15 The March 2023 report sought approval to review all routes in the borough currently badged as 'unavailable walking routes' (UWR). An UWR is a route which is deemed to be not available to be used when calculating a pupils potential walking route to school for the purposes of distance measurement which is a major component of whether a pupil is eligible for free school transport or not, the distance criteria are 2 miles below 8 years old and 3 miles for 8 years old and above.

16 The council has an adopted policy for assessing whether a route is available to walk and this is based upon the Department for Education's home to school travel guidance 2014 and Road safety GB – assessment of walked routes to school guidance. Currently some 80+ contracted routes / arrangements transporting around 750 pupils receive free school transport because of unavailable walking routes across the borough.

17 This report covers only two initial routes, both of which have been made available to walk for some time:

(a) The walking route from the Prestbury area to Fallibroome Academy where a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing is now available on Prestbury Road which replaces the previous road island and makes the whole route to the school 'available' for walking.

(b) The walking route from Willaston to Brine Leas Academy where a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing is available at the intersection of the Nantwich bypass and The Old Newcastle Road again making the whole route to the school 'available' for walking.

18 It is intended to do additional and more detailed work within the overall programme of activity to understand whether there are any other viable schemes elsewhere within the borough where there is a financial business case to undertake works which could allow other UWRs to be made in to AWRs.

Activity completed to date in respect of the two UWRs.

19 Both routes have been assessed by the council's professionals in the Highways team with refreshed traffic counts where applicable and the results of this are shown in the attached technical documents, at Appendix 2 and 3, which set out why the routes are assessed as now AWRs.

20 Both school headteachers have been written to as a first communication to say that this process is underway.

21 A suggested communications plan has been developed by our comms team and centres around communications when committee papers are in the public domain and when a decision is made to proceed. Communications are with schools, parents and suppliers, channels of communication are around the school transport website landing page, briefings and letters to affected parents.

22 An invite to ward members and to the children and families committee was extended to view and walk through the routes involved and this was taken up for both routes. The walk throughs were completed on the 11 and 12 July 2023.

(a) Willaston to Brine Leas Academy – three committee members accepted the invite, however two members had to offer apologies on the day and only one member was able to attend.

(b) Prestbury to Fallibroome – three committee members attended,

23 Feedback received from members who attended is shown below:

Route	Comments on route
Willaston to Brine Leas Academy	• No issues with the availability of this walk route.

Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy	• One member supports the inclusion of the route but commented that the white slow lines should be repainted and the bollard at Castle Hill should be cleaned.
	• One member suggested that the following be considered:
	  ○ The "Slow" road markings on Heybridge Lane.
	  ○ The paths up to Heybridge Lane were disintegrating and leaf covered.
	  ○ Many hedges were overgrown and needed trimming.
	  ○ Bollards needed cleaning.
	  ○ Bus stops advertised especially if the paying passengers are not being picked up on a route.
	• One member had safety concerns in relation to Bridge End Lane:
	  ○ Initially the lane is very steep, and it is not gritted. There is also no clear path for the children to walk.
	  ○ The lane has a sign for ‘no cycling’. Is the expectation that anyone on a bike should stay on the main road? Or will the path be redesignated to allow Cycles? Or is it not safe to cycle along the lane.

	○ Other parts of the lane are not lit. ○ The lane is also very uneven. ○ The path appears to be about 420m, while walking round on the pavement is approx. 756m. Would the extra 336m take it above the 3-mile distance? ○ My preference would be to take the pavement as the safer walking option and if the child takes the shortcut along Bridge End Lane, then that would be down to parental responsibility.

24 No adverse commentary regarding the route from Willaston to Brine Leas Academy was received, it should be noted that the suggested walking route to school is also a marked cycle route.

25 In response to the comments received Prestbury to Brine Leas Academy route it should be noted that:

(a) A number of the highway's jobs mentioned above are accepted and already in hand where these can be completed. Others such as the overgrown hedgerows are being taken forward, however, some will be under restriction from the time of year for hedge trimming and others where the hedge is owned privately may take a little longer.

(b) The comments in relation to Bridge End Lane does not make the route unavailable for walking to school in line with local and national guidance. The alternative route suggested adds only around 0.15 miles to the overall route. Therefore, whilst distances will continue to be calculated based upon the shortest available distance (the Bridge End Lane route), the slightly longer walk along the main road remains an option if pupils / parents choose to use that.

(c) It should also be noted that the council will not be mandating how pupils get to school or whether they have to walk, the AWR rules are in place to provide a method of understanding for our adopted set of rules 'Available routes to school' policy 2018 whether any particular route can be used in the calculation of **distance from school** and therefore **eligibility for free school transport.**

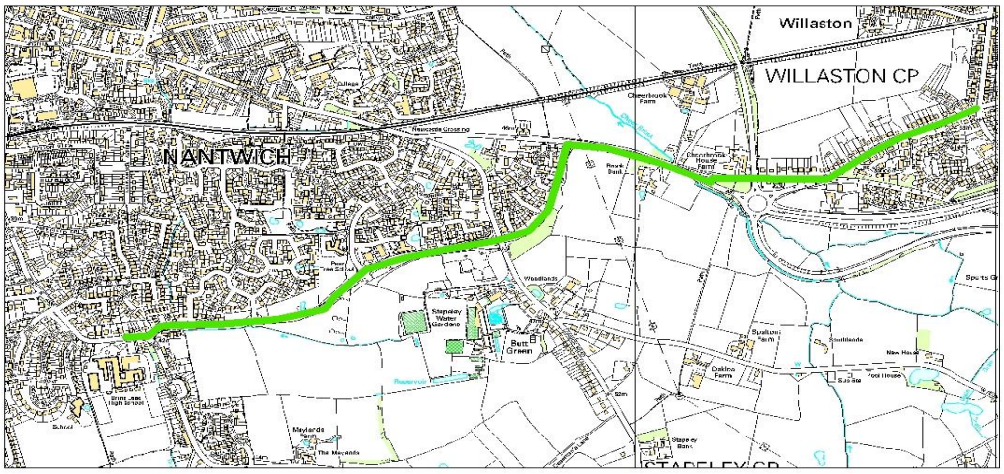
26 Communication with parents has not yet been undertaken but will be completed in line with current policy (with explanation and 12 weeks written notice) once permission to proceed is agreed. Appendix 4 sets out the potential questions and answers in relation to the proposed changes.

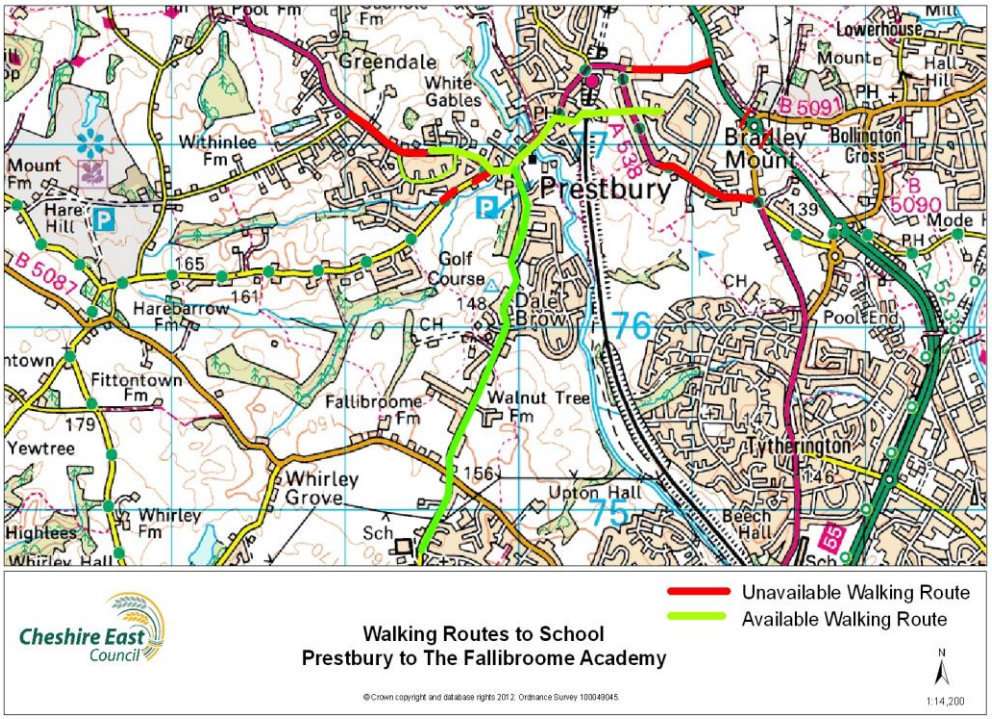
27 Options to mitigate potential traffic increases at the Fallibroome Academy and to provide facility for ticketed bus travel for pupils affected have also been discussed as follows.

(a) The number 19 bus serves the route between Prestbury and Fallibroome Academy with a 27-seater bus. Currently 13 pupils use this bus, alongside a larger number of students relying of contracted school buses. These include a cohort who will lose eligibility under this proposal. These pupils are accommodated on the 8am run from Lees Lane and the return 3.40pm journey in the afternoon. Pupils can purchase a child day ticket at £3.90 per day or £15.50 per week. The current contract for this service is due for renewal in March 2024, dependent upon demand there may be opportunity to increase the size of the vehicle utilised.

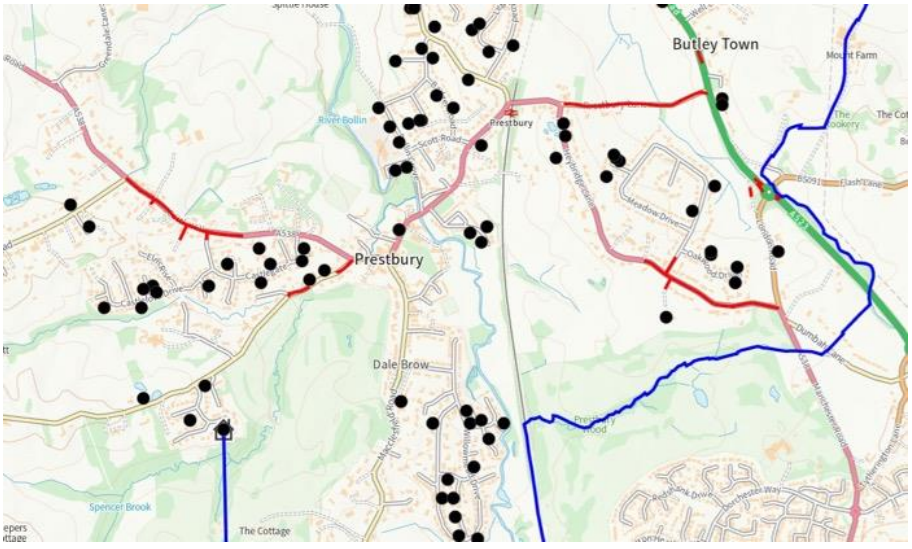
(b) Discussions will take place with the current supplier to understand whether there is a commercial opportunity they would like to take up for that supplier to provide a fare paying service to those pupils who lose eligibility for free school transport, this can be easily accommodated within the 12 weeks notice period required regarding withdrawal of eligibility.

28 Route maps for both schemes are shown in the attached technical paperwork and reproduced below:





29 A current scattered dot map of all Fallibroome Academy pupils potentially effected is attached, it should be noted that not every pupil will become ineligible for pupil transport. Each case will need to be assessed to understand the detailed reason why eligibility was given initially in order to decide whether the pupil will become ineligible or not. Additionally, some of the dots on the diagram will remain eligible because their route will remain an UWR.



30 We have not included a dot map for the Willaston to Brine Leas Academy as there are currently only 5 pupils effected.

31 Technical route paperwork for both schemes are attached.

Reasons for Recommendations

32 As previously stated, these routes have been available as walking routes for some considerable time and as such represent an anomaly against current School travel policy, furthermore, they represent an inequity against other pupils in the borough who either have previously had eligibility for free school transport removed in the past for this very reason or who have never received free school transport because they live on or near a route that is deemed available.

33 The current arrangements for providing travel support for children and young people are unsustainable as the budget is under increasing pressure. The removal of travel support to ineligible pupils is one of the ways in which members have agreed to reduce this pressure. The removal of these two routes is estimated to lead to a reduction in the annual school transport budget of £79.5k. As such these routes should be redesignated at the earliest opportunity.

Other Options Considered

34 There is an option to retain both or one of these routes and continue to supply free school transport for all identified children, however this would mean:

(a) Pupils at these schools are receiving preferable treatment than other pupils across the borough.

(b) Savings of c.£79.5k would not be achieved.

(c) This would go against the current and agreed school transport policies.

35 It is not considered an option to apply this change only to new applicants because this would embed an inequity in the treatment of pupils across the borough and would have an impact on the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) savings target.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

36 The local authority is required by the Education Act 1996 as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make suitable travel arrangements for eligible children to attend school. This includes the duty to promote sustainable modes of travel for children and young people of compulsory school age. The government has also issued statutory guidance called Home-to-school travel and transport guidance 2014.

37 This means that a local authority is under a duty to have regard to it when performing their duties in relation to home to school travel and transport and sustainable travel.

38 The local authority's transport duties apply in respect of arrangements for young people aged 16-18 years and those continuing learners up to 19 years. Under Section 509(AA) Education Act 1996 the local authority has a duty to set its own transport policy, details of transport arrangements and financial assistance in respect of reasonable travelling expenses that the local authority considers it necessary to ensure access to education or training for learners of sixth form age. The local authority must publish the statement before the 31 May and publishing by that date would demonstrate adherence with the law.

39 Section 509 (AB) (1) Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to set out how their transport statement facilitates the attendance of young people with SEND.

40 Local authorities should publish their transport policies on their "local offer" as required under s30 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

41 The local authority has a legal duty to ensure that any decision it makes is transparent and as the details in this paper are simply about enforcing existing policies no consultation is required.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

42 The current arrangements for providing travel support for children and young people are unsustainable. The transport budget accounts for almost 20% of the budget for children's services. Any savings made against this budget will be reinvested into children's services and used to target those children and young people most in need.

43 Budget proposals relating to the transformation of travel support form part of the council's medium term financial strategy 2023-27 (MTFS 24). This included a funding increase for home to school transport costs of £5.4m over the next four years but changing eligibility criteria to maintain a sustainable service. These proposals around PTBs are a key part of this change and would help realise a proportion of savings that are included in the £2.1m proposed savings, included within the +£5.4m MTFS, over the next four years.

44 A breakdown of the school transport budget is set out below:

Budget Area	**£'000**
Direct Transport - Home to School Contracts	15,237
Commissioning Budget - School Crossing Patrol & Flexi link	395
Staffing	525
Spare Seat and Post 16 Income	-57
Further Mitigation - Challenge process SEND	-500
Estimated savings put forward by Edge	-545
Total Budget	**15,055**

45 These proposals form part of the 'estimated savings put forward by Edge' line of the budget.

46 The table below sets out the potential savings from these proposals, it should be noted that detailed work will need to be undertaken on each and every pupil to determine if eligibility needs to be removed, in addition the exact number of pupils involved is currently changing as pupils apply for the new school year, however the table below is seen as a good estimate of annual savings available from the implementation of this initiative, being £79.5k per year:

	Willaston to Brine Leas Academy route	Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy routes
How may routes	1	4
Cost of routes	£42,176.20 per annum	£87,097.90 per annum
How many pupils transported in total	9	122
How many pupils will now be on an AWR	5	70
Estimated savings	£24,000 per year	£55,558 per year

Policy

47 The available walking route changes do not require a change to current policy.

48 This paper requests approval to consult on the current school transport policies, including the review of charging for post-16, spare seats and the Poynton High School scheme and for the results of the consultation to be brought back to committee.

49 Consultation will be undertaken in line with 'The Gunning Principles' which will state that:

a) Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage.

b) Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response.

c) Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.

d) The product of consultation must be conscientiously considered.

50 These proposals support the following council's priorities and aims.

An open and enabling organisation.	**A council which empowers and cares about people**	**A thriving and sustainable place**
Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council. decision making	Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables	A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel including walking

Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation	them to achieve their full potential	

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

51 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed in relation to the proposed changes to AWRs and is attached at Appendix 5.

52 An EIA will also be completed in relation to the proposed policy changes.

Human Resources

53 The current recommendations have no HR implications.

Risk Management

54 A risk management framework has been established as part of the transformation programme for travel support.

55 This change is taking place within the rules of the current school transport policy, however, there will be a number of parents / carers who will lose free school transport because of these changes, and it is likely that there will be complaints about this and scrutiny of the process.

Rural Communities

56 Children and young people across all areas of Cheshire East access travel support. However, as the statutory provision of free home-to-school transport is based on distance to school, residents in rural areas of the borough are more likely to be eligible for travel support and therefore affected by any changes. Children living in rural communities often rely on travel support to access their learning and any proposals to improve the delivery and customer experience for these services supports these rural communities.

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

57 Children, young people, and their parents are key stakeholders in the transformation programme, and this proposal looks to improve travel options for eligible students.

Public Health

58 The provision of walking and cycling routes to school and promoting active travel, including safer walking routes to school is in line with our Public Health priorities. Extending and improving the travel options available to eligible

students could encourage more active and healthy methods of getting students to school.

Climate Change

59 These proposals will mean that more pupils will have an available walking route to school than was previously the case. There is potential for increased traffic from parental cars arriving at school, however we are reviewing the availability of route 19 to and from school and we will have active discussions with the current supplier in terms of ticketing opportunities for paying passengers in the morning and the afternoon, patronage numbers will be kept under review.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Richard Hibbert, Head of Strategic Transport & Parking Richard.Hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Update on progress Appendix 2 – AWR technical paperwork for Willaston to Brine Leas Appendix 3 – AWR technical paperwork for Prestbury to Fallibroome Appendix 4 - Frequently asked questions Appendix 5 - Equality impact assessment
Background Papers:	The current school transport policies can be found at: School transport policies (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

SCHOOL TRANSPORT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

August 2023 Update

- Transport Systems (milestone 15) - Slightly behind (no impact on savings)
  - Initial review of data undertaken and cleansing exercise to commence following the start of term in September
  - Management information dashboard being developed using Power BI
- Dynamic Purcasing System (DPS) (milestones 9-14) – On track
  - DPS launched on 7 July and 151 applications received to date
  - Evaluation of responses in progress with some responses needing clarification
  - Portal being updated to include guidance for some questions
  - On track to go live in September
- Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) (milestone 6) – On track
  - In July 2023 the children and families committee approved the increase in the mileage rate from 25p to 45p from September 2023
  - Criteria agreed for non-standard PTBs and processes have been updated
  - Increase will be applied to existing PTBs from September
  - Review of single occupier journeys has identified 23 cases where a child can be added to a shared journey and 7 where the child may no longer eligible for transport
  - PTBs are being offered to parents of new eligible children, where appropriate
- Available Walking Routes (milestone 8) – On track
  - Assessments completed on two routes and paper being considered by the children and families committee in September for approval to redesignate these routes as 'available walking routes' with the removal of transport for 75 children
  - Further work being undertaken to identify improvements required (and costs) to other routes currently designated as 'unsafe walking routes'
- Independent Travel Training (milestone 7) - Slghtly behind (minimal impact on savings)
  - Review of current initiatives in schools and discussions with one external provider have taken place
  - Currently working on potential demand and cost benefit model to justify ongoing work
- Travel Policy (milestones 2,4,5) – On track
  - Review of all travel related policies has commenced
  - Request to the children and families committee in September for approval to consult on proposed changes between October and December
- Transport Team Structure (milestone 3) – rescheduled (no impact on savings)
  - Review of team structure to commence once existing priority work has been complete. This will need to be aligned to the review of policy and procedures
- Financial Improvements (milestone 1) – On track
  - The financial improvement plan has been established and proposed savings fed into the budget forecasts. The financial impact of changes are being monitored against the financial improvement plan.

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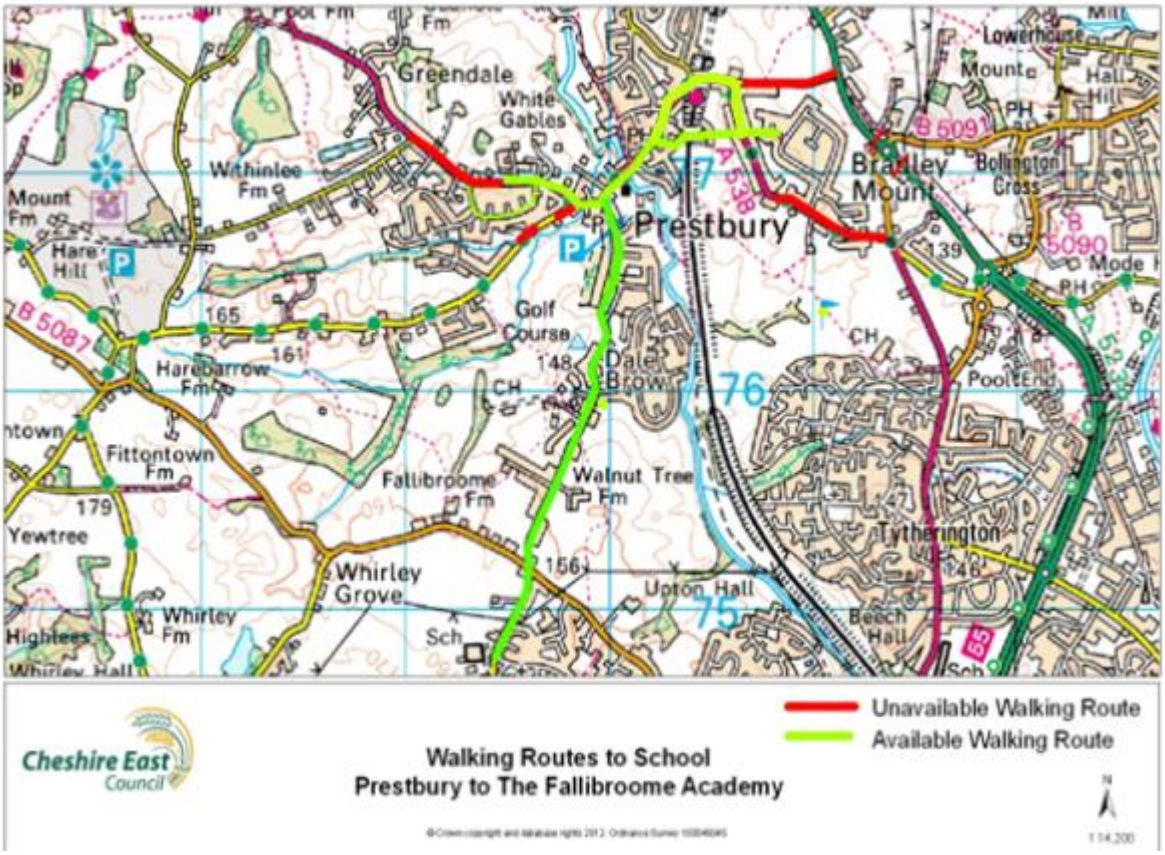
Walking Route to School Assessment
Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy

Overall Route Assessment Outcome: Available		
Dates and Times of Full Route Assessment:		
Location:	**Dates**	**Weather**
Full Route	9th May 2023	Sunny
Full Route	12th June 2023	Sunny
Full Route	12th July 2023	Cloudy



Strategic Transport
Delamere House, Delamere Street,
Crewe, CW1 2LL

Document Control Sheet

- **Walking Route to School Assessment – Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy**
- **Route assessment – Available**

Site Safety Assessor:

This assessment is undertaken in accordance with Cheshire East Council's Available Routes to School Policy, which reflects guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB in 2021 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education in June 2023 'Travel to school for children of compulsory school age'.

Any opinions expressed by the reviewing officer / safety assessor are based on the above guidelines and the experienced professional judgement of the safety assessor.

	Officer Initials and Job Title	Date Approved
Originated by	JM – Transport Officer	17th July 2023
Checked by	AT – Senior Road Safety Engineer	19th July 2023
Reviewed by	GM – Contract Manager, Cheshire East Highways	20th July 2023
Approved by	PD – Contract Operations Manager, CEC Highway Service Commissioning Client Team	28th July 2023

Route Information

1. Route Overview

This assessment relates to children of compulsory school age in years 7 to 11, (aged 11 to 16) walking to Fallibroome Academy. The assessor has not identified any factors in the assessment below which would affect the availability of the route for a young person in these age ranges. The assessment has assumed that pupils are accompanied by a responsible person in line with national guidance.

The assessor has considered how the availability of this route might be affected at different times of the year, such as flooding, and finds that there are no variations on the route.

The assessor has also considered that pupils of the ages noted above would be expected to travel to and from school between 0750 and 0850 in the morning and 1530 and 1630 in the afternoon (1515 – 1615 on Tuesday afternoon).

The assessor noted that this route had previously been assessed as unavailable because of the lack of controlled crossing point on Prestbury Road. However, due to the development of the Kings School adjacent to Macclesfield Road, two new puffin crossings were installed on Macclesfield Road and Prestbury Road which became operational 6th January 2020. The installation of the light-controlled crossing on Prestbury Road has given a safer crossing point for pedestrians travelling to Fallibroome Academy from Prestbury.

The assessor noted that there are a further 4 routes which have previously been assessed as unavailable and are not subject to this route review / assessment and therefore remain unavailable as a walking route to school. The routes are marked in red on a map and are in the following locations:

- Heybridge Lane (lack of pavement from 41 Heybridge Lane to A538)
- Prestbury Lane (lack of pavements)
- Chelford Road (lack of pavements on two sections)
- Castle Hill (lack of pavements from 12 Castle Hill to Withinlee Road)

Pupils are expected to use any alternative available route that is within statutory walking distance to walk to school.

The assessor noted that there was overgrown shrubbery on the route, this has been reported, however, this does not affect the availability of the route. In future, users should note that if there are any concerns that may prevent or impede pedestrians then, it should be reported to Cheshire East Council on 0300 123 5020 or https://fixmystreet.cheshireeast.gov.uk/

Important Notes:

- The distances shown in this report should not be used in measuring a child's distance from home to school.

- Each side road is assessed for sight lines, traffic flow and visibility; where there is low traffic volume and good visibility a traffic count is not required.
- The assessor noted that the crossings of Heybridge Lane and Castle Hill were both assessed in 2013 and 2015 as available. Both sites were reviewed during this site assessment and further traffic counts were carried out on the mornings of 12/07/23 and 17/07/23 to refresh the data and confirm the availability of the route.

2. Route Sections

Section	Description	Distance
1	Shortest route – start Heybridge Lane and follow Bridge End Lane and The Village Road to Prestbury village centre on mini roundabout. Alternative route – start Heybridge Lane and follow road around the railway station to New Road and The Village Road to Prestbury Village centre and mini roundabout.	800 m 0.5 mile 1130 m 0.7 mile

Section	Description	Distance
2	Start at Castle Hill on Castle Gate and follow route via The Village Road to the mini roundabout on The Village Road.	320 m 0.2 mile

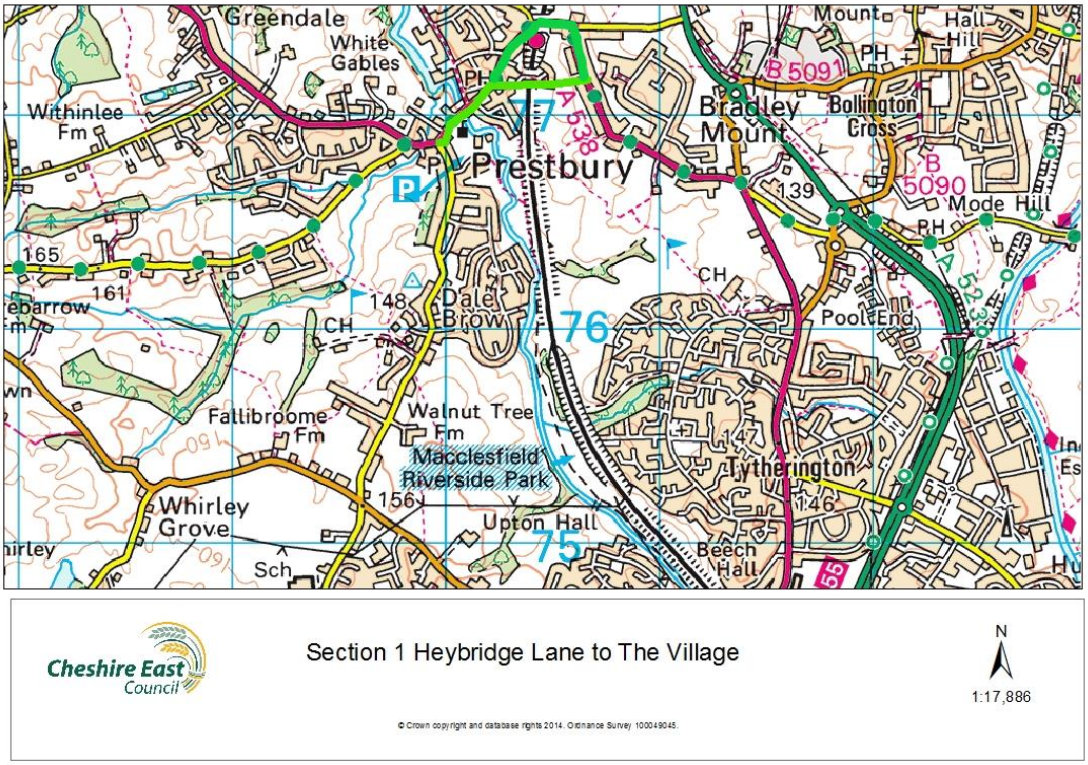
Section	Description	Distance
3	Start in the village centre at the mini roundabout crossing and follow route down Macclesfield Road across Prestbury Road into Priory Lane to Fallibroome Academy using the existing toucan crossing	2350 m 1.46 mile
Total		3470 m 2.37 miles

3. Recorded Collision Data

In the 3-year period between 1st May 2020 and 30th April 2023, there were 8 recorded collisions of all types involving personal injury on the route. None of these collisions involved a pedestrian. 1 collision was classified as serious and 7 as slight and no fatalities.

- Section 1 – there was 1 recorded collision with no pedestrians involved
- Section 2 – there were 6 recorded collisions with no pedestrians involved
- Section 3 – there was 1 recorded collision with no pedestrians involved.

Section 1 - Assessment



Section Characteristics

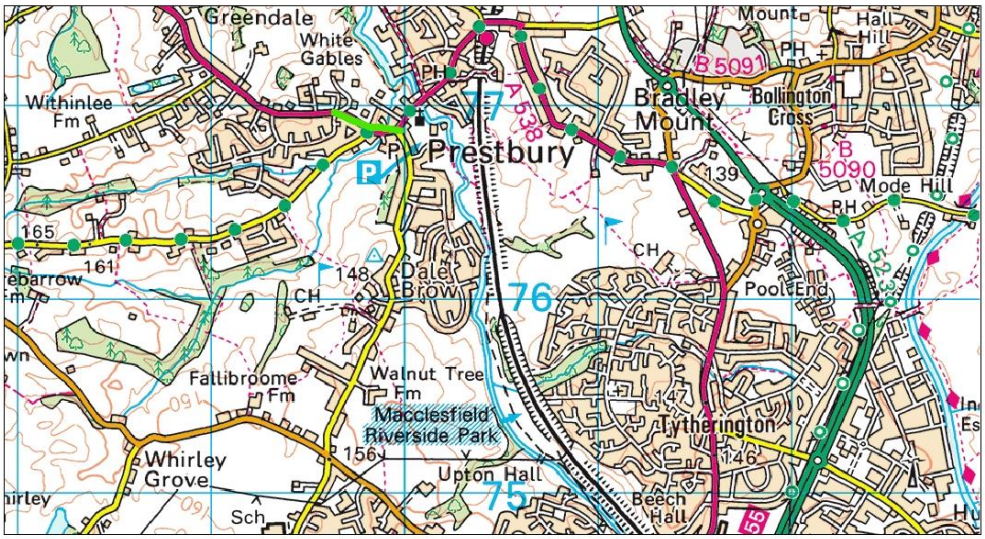
- Pupils in Meadow Drive, Oakwood Drive, Yew Tree Way, Little Meadow Close and Yew Tree Close can use the alleyway which is classified as a Public Right of Way (FP Prestbury 34) between Yew Tree Close and Bridge End Lane. The route then follows The Village to Macclesfield Road.
- Pupils need to cross Heybridge Lane (A538), which is classified as a wide 2 lane single carriageway with a speed limit of 30 mph.
- The crossing of Heybridge Lane has twice previously been assessed as available in 2013 and 2015. This data was renewed and refreshed as part of this assessment and traffic data collected on Heybridge Lane.
- Bridge End Lane is classified as a Public Right of Way (FP Prestbury 4) but is also the access to a small number of houses and is a no-through road. The public right of way is steep and it may be necessary to take care in certain conditions, e.g. frost and ice. There is no pavement and no lighting on this section, but vehicles only use this road to access the houses and traffic volumes are very low.
- Alternatively, pupils may wish to walk on Heybridge Lane and follow the route adjacent to the railway station onto New Lane. There is some low-level lighting adjacent to the pavement on New Lane.
- The Village is the main road that runs through Prestbury and is classified as the A538. There is a traffic management scheme on this road and is subject to a 20mph zone
- There is no street lighting on Heybridge Lane.

Footway Assessment:	
Is there a pavement/ footway segregated from traffic?	Yes
	Pavements are in good condition and are of adequate width and segregated from traffic. The section of pavement over the railway line is 0.75m in width (minimum requirement is 0.5m).
Is there a need to walk on the carriageway?	On Bridge End Lane pupils need to walk on the carriageway, but this road has a very low traffic volume and vehicles only use this road to access the 6 houses along this road.

Crossing Assessment:	
Does the road require crossing?	Yes
	Heybridge Lane
Sighting time	There is more than 4 seconds sighting time at this location.
Traffic and gap count	A traffic and gap count were carried out on12/07/23 between 0745 and 0845. Based on the width of Heybridge Lane, 9 seconds is used to assess the gap in traffic needed to cross the road. During the hour there were 550 passenger car units and an average of 18 crossing opportunities every 5 minutes. Crossing opportunities were least between 0825 and 0830 with 16 within the 5 minute period.

Comments on Section 1
This section of the route is in a village setting, it follows 2 footpaths for a short section, the remainder of the route is through Prestbury Village which is in a 20 mph zone. The assessor noted that this is a route for pedestrians walking to the village centre and for primary school children travelling to school. Pedestrians may wish to use the alternative route which follows Heybridge Lane and New Lane. There is a narrow section over the railway line and pedestrians will need to walk in single file.

Section 2 - Assessment



Section Characteristics

- Access from Castlegate is across the pedestrian refuge on Castle Hill, this route then follows The Village and crosses at the zebra crossing towards Macclesfield Road.
- The section of road is classified as the A538 and is in a village setting.
- The pedestrian refuge has a street light but there is no other street lighting on this section of road.
- Castle Hill is a wide single 2 lane carriageway with a 30 mph speed limit.
- There are walking bus warning signs in advance of the pedestrian crossing

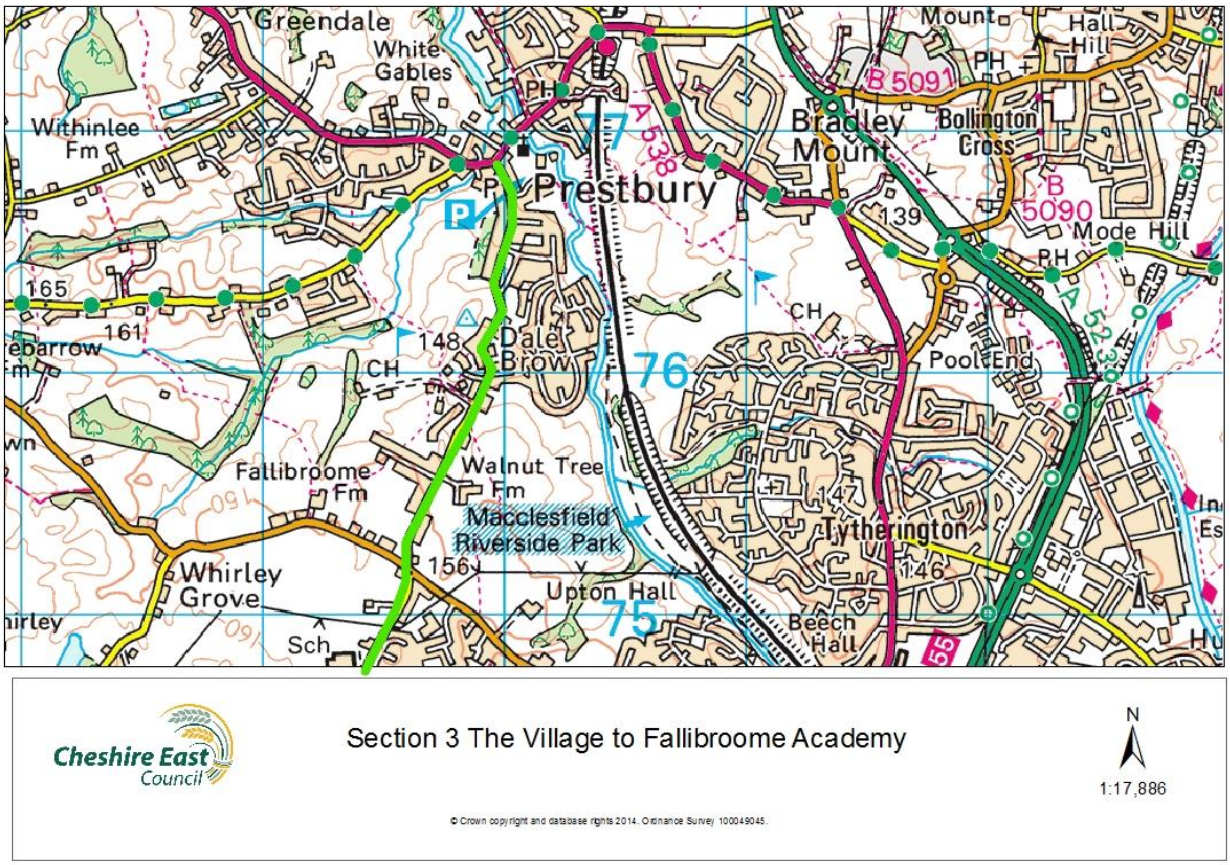
Footway Assessment:	
Is there a pavement/ footway segregated from traffic?	Yes
	Pavements are of adequate condition and width and are segregated from traffic.
Is there a need to walk on the carriageway?	No

Crossing Assessment:	
Does the road require crossing?	Yes
	Castle Hill
Sighting time	There is more than 4 seconds sighting time at this location.

Traffic and gap count	A traffic and gap count were carried out on17/07/23 between 0745 and 0845. Based on the width of Castle Hill, 10 seconds is used to assess the gap in traffic needed to cross the road. During the hour there were 679 passenger car units and an average of 10 crossing opportunities every 5 minutes for the full road width. Crossing opportunities were least between 0825 and 0830 with 7 within the 5 minute period. Gap counts were also taken using the pedestrian refuge to divide the road. On the southern leg of the refuge, there were on average 32 crossing opportunities, and on the northern leg, there was an average of 19 crossing opportunities every 5 minutes. 4 seconds were allocated to assess the gap in traffic either side of the pedestrian refuge.

Comments on Section 2
The assessor noted that this is a well used route for pedestrians walking to the village centre and for primary school children. The crossing of Castle Hill has been used by a walking bus to the primary school. The route assessment has assumed that pedestrians cross The Village using the zebra crossing and not cross directly at the mini roundabout on Macclesfield Road.

Section 3 - Assessment



Section Characteristics

- Junction of Macclesfield Road with A538, The Village, Prestbury to Macclesfield Road / Prestbury Road crossing Prestbury Road to Priory Lane.
- Macclesfield Road is a single 2 lane carriageway. There are houses on either side of the road, but there are also sections of this route adjacent to woodland or open spaces (playing fields and golf club).
- Macclesfield Road is classed as a 'c' road with a speed limit of 30 mph. There is some street lighting at the start and finishing points of this section, but the main part of the route is not lit.
- There is a puffin crossing on Prestbury Road which was installed in January 2020 and provides a signal controlled crossing for pupils to Priory Lane.
- Prestbury Road is classified as the B5087 and is a single 2 lane carriageway with a speed limit of 30 mph.
- There is a traffic management scheme on Priory Lane with several refuges sited along the road. These refuges are generally designed as a speed management device.
- There is a toucan crossing outside Fallibroome Academy.
- Priory Lane is a single 2 lane carriageway with a speed limit of 30 mph.
- There is street lighting on Priory Lane.

Footway Assessment:	
Is there a pavement/ footway segregated from traffic?	Yes
	Good quality pavement with adequate width for the full length of the route and segregated from the traffic. On Priory Lane the pavement converts to a shared cycle way at Stafford Close up to the school entrance.
Is there a need to walk on the carriageway?	No

Crossing Assessment:	
Does the road require crossing?	Yes
	• Shirleys Drive minor road • Ashbrook Drive minor road • Broadwalk minor road • Squirrels Chase minor road • Dale Head Rd minor road • Prestbury Road puffin crossing • Churchway minor road • Priory Lane toucan crossing
Sighting time	There are at least 4 seconds sighting time at each crossing point.
Traffic and gap count	Not required as crossing either on minor road due to low traffic and good visibility or with a light-controlled crossing.

Comments on section 3
The route follows Macclesfield Road which passes by houses but there are also sections of this route that are adjacent to wooded areas and a golf club. There is no street lighting on this section of the route. The pavements are generally wide and in good condition. There is a puffin crossing on Prestbury Road which was installed in January 2020. The assessor noted that there was overgrown shrubbery adjacent to the crossing on Prestbury Road and this has been reported.

Comments on whole route
The route between The Village and Fallibroome Academy had previously been assessed as unavailable due to the lack of light-controlled crossing facilities on Prestbury Road. However, since the installation of the puffin crossing in January 2020, the route is now an available route to school. The assessor noted that the routes are in a village setting and are well used routes by pedestrians. Further information on available walking routes can be found at: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school_transport/available-walking-routes/walking_routes_to_schools.aspx

The Puffin Crossing on Prestbury Road (installed January 2020)

The crossing on Castle Hill

Pavement on Heybridge Lane over

Railway bridge (width 0.75m)

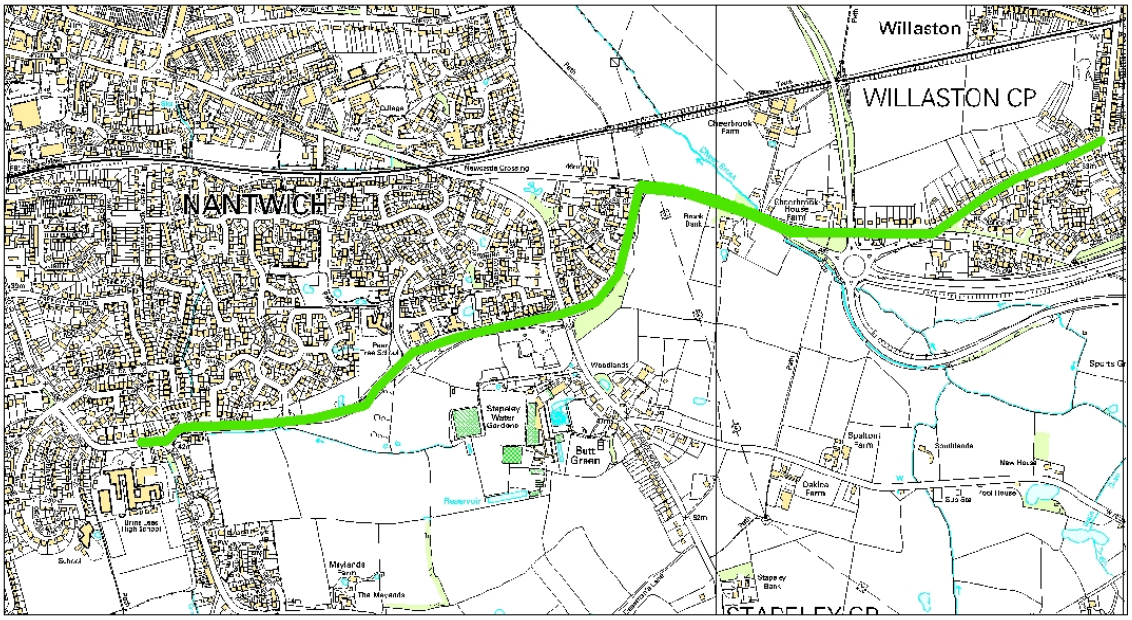
The route can be viewed on the below link

https://www.google.com/maps/@53.2782849,-2.1564497,14z?entry=ttu

Walking Route to School Assessment

Willaston to Brine Leas School

Overall Route Assessment Outcome: Available		
Dates and Times of Assessment:		
Location	**Dates/ Times**	**Weather**
Cheerbrook Road to Brine Leas School	9th May 2023	Fine
Cheerbrook Road to Brine Leas School	12th June 2023	Hot and sunny
Cheerbrook Road to Brine Leas School	11th July 2023	Rainy



Cheshire East Council

Walking route from Willaston to Brine Leas School

N

1:9,802

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Strategic Transport
Delamere House, Delamere Street
Crewe CW1 2LL

Document Control Sheet

- **Willaston to Brine Leas School, Nantwich**
- **Route assessment – Available**

Site Safety Assessor:

This assessment is undertaken in accordance with Cheshire East Council's Available Routes to School Policy, which reflects guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB in 2021 'Assessment of Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education in June 2023 'Travel to school for children of compulsory school age'.

Any opinions expressed by the reviewing officer / safety assessor are based on the above guidelines and the experienced professional judgement of the safety assessor.

	Officer Initials and Job Title	Date Approved
Originated by	JM – Transport Officer	18th July 2023
Checked by	AT – Senior Road Safety Engineer	19th July 2023
Reviewed by	GM – Contract Manager, Cheshire East Highways	20th July 2023
Approved by	PD – Contract Operations Manager, CEC Highway Service Commissioning Client Team	28th July 2023

Route Information

1. Route Overview

This assessment relates to children of compulsory school age in years 7 to 11 (aged 11 to 16) attending Brine Leas School. The assessor has not identified any factors in the assessment below which would affect the availability of the route for a young person in these age ranges. The assessment has assumed that pupils are accompanied by a responsible person in line with national guidance.

The assessor has considered how the availability of this route might be affected at different times of the year, such as flooding, and finds that there are no variations on the route.

The assessor has also considered that pupils of the ages noted above would be expected to travel to Brine Leas School between 07.50 and 08.50 and 15.15 and 16.15.

The assessor noted that this route had previously been assessed as unavailable due to the lack of a controlled crossing point on A51 at the Cheerbrook Roundabout. Although a toucan crossing became operational 14th October 2008, the route had not been re-assessed for pupils travelling to Brine Leas School.

The assessor noted that there was overgrown shrubbery on the route, this has been reported, however, this does not affect the availability of the route. In future, users should note that if there are any concerns that may prevent or impede pedestrians, they should report to Cheshire East Council on 0300 123 5020 or https://fixmystreet.cheshireeast.gov.uk/

Important Notes:

- The distances shown in this report should not be used in measuring a child's distance from home to school.
- Each road is assessed for sight lines, traffic flow and visibility; where there is low traffic volume and good visibility a traffic count is not required.

2. Route Sections

Section	Description	Distance
1	Old Newcastle Road including the crossing of Cheerbrook Road and Cheerbrook Road from its junction with Wybunbury Road across the A500 to Newcastle Road and its junction with the A51 at Elwood Way.	0.74 miles 1.19 km
2	A51 Elwood Way, A530 Peter Destapleigh Way and A530 (Audlem Road) to Brine Leas School	0.95 miles 1.5 km
	Total Distance	**1.69 miles** **2.70 km**

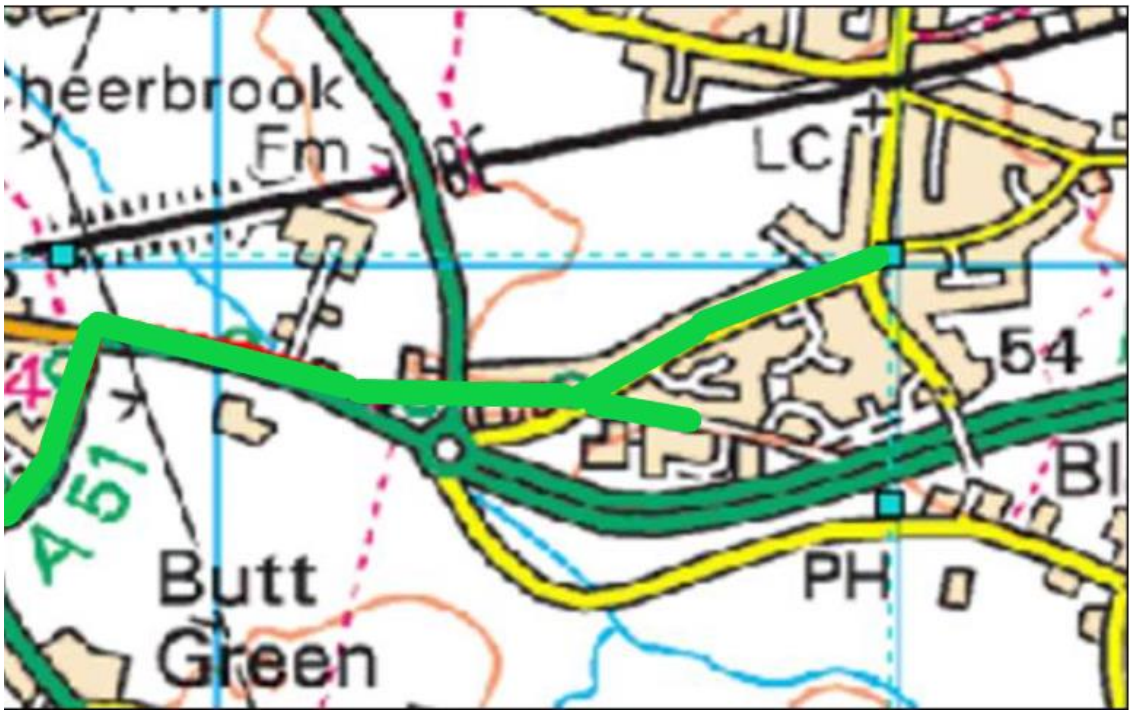
3. Recorded Collision Data

In the 3-year period between 1st May 2020 and 30th April 2023, there were 9 recorded collisions of all types involving personal injury on the route. 3 of these collisions involved a pedestrian. All collisions were classified as slight with no serious or fatal.

- Section 1 – there were 6 recorded collisions of which 1 involved a pedestrian. The pedestrian collision occurred at school arrival times but was not at one of the suggested crossing points and the pedestrian was not of secondary school age.

- Section 2 – there were 3 recorded collisions of which 2 involved pedestrians. Both collisions occurred on the suggested route but did not occur during school arrival or dispersal times and pedestrians were not of school age.

Section 1 – Old Newcastle Road and Cheerbrook Road to Elwood Way



Section Characteristics

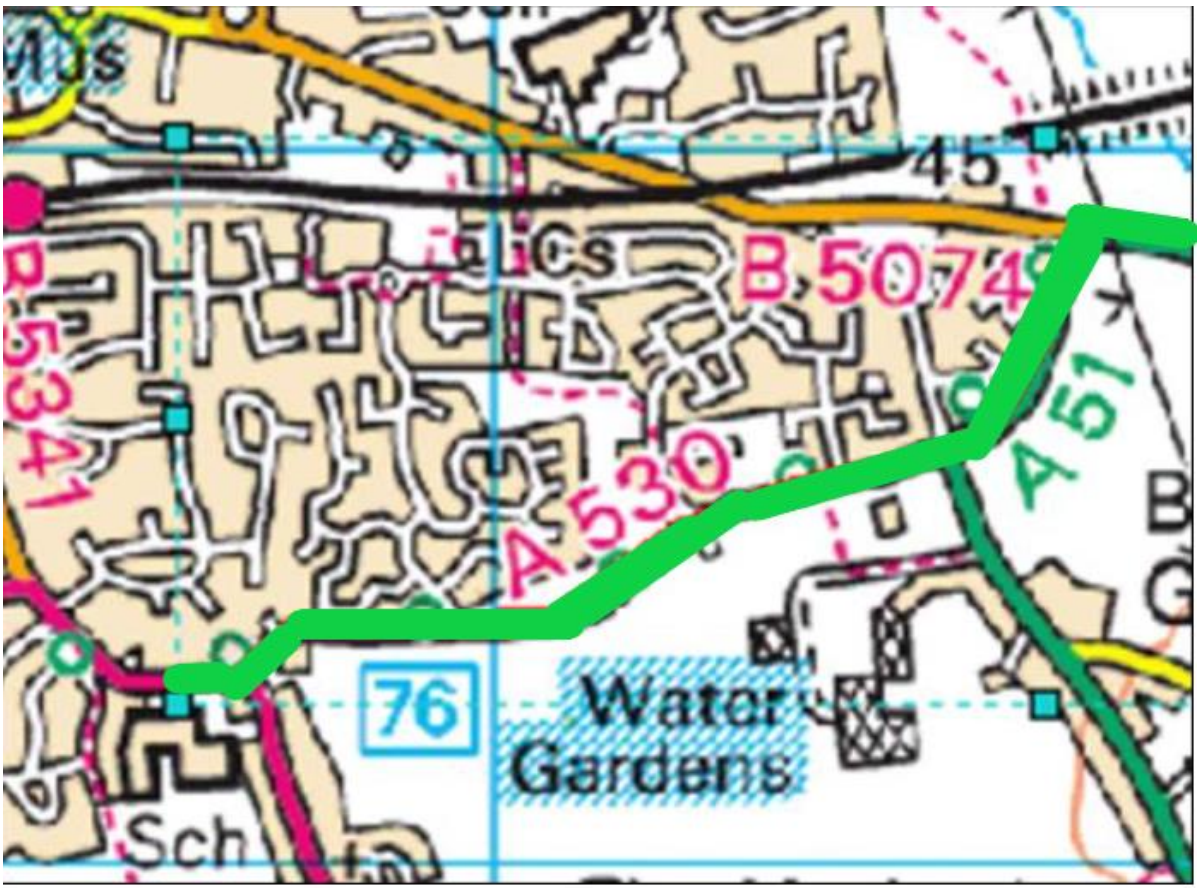
- The route assessment includes Old Newcastle Road, Cheerbrook Road, Newcastle Road and Elwood Way. The route includes two controlled pedestrian crossings on the A500 at Cheerbrook Roundabout and the A51 Newcastle Road at its junction with Elwood Way.
- Old Newcastle Road and Cheerbrook Road are both roads with houses on either side of the road with good pavements and street lighting.
- Old Newcastle Road has street lighting for some of the road and a speed limit of 30 mph.
- The A51 Newcastle Road is single lane carriageway with a high volume of traffic. There is a pavement/ cycleway on the north side of the carriageway.
- On the A51 there is street lighting and the speed limit is 40 mph.
- There is a cycle route from Old Newcastle Road to Elwood Way.

Footway Assessment:	
Is there a pavement/ footway segregated from traffic?	**Yes** Pavements are in good condition and are of adequate width and segregated from traffic.
Is there a need to walk on the carriageway?	**No**

Crossing Assessment:	
Is a crossing required?	**Yes** Cheerbrook Road — Traffic and gap count completed Nantwich By-pass — Toucan crossing Newcastle Road — Pedestrian phase in traffic lights
Sighting times	There are at least 4 seconds sighting time at each crossing point.
Traffic volume and gap times	A traffic and gap count were carried out on Cheerbrook Road between Old Newcastle Road and Newcastle Road on18/07/23 between 0745 and 0845. Based on the width of Cheerbrook Road, 10 seconds is used to assess the gap in traffic needed to cross the road. During the hour there were 265 passenger car units and an average of 14 crossing opportunities every 5 minutes. Crossing opportunities were least between 0825 and 0830 with 11 within the 5 minute period. Traffic volume on Cheerbrook Road is classified as low. Traffic and gap counts are not required with light-controlled crossings.

Comments on Section 1
This route starts with houses on both sides of the road and then crosses the A51 using a light controlled (toucan) crossing. Some pupils may need to cross Cheerbrook Road, but this is classed as low traffic. Newcastle Road is in a more rural area with a farm shop and fields adjacent to the pavement. The route is also a cycle way which links Willaston and Nantwich. There are pavements for pedestrians to use along the entire length of the route. The assessor noted that this is a well-used route by cyclists and pedestrians.

Section 2 – Elwood Way to Brine Leas School



Section Characteristics

- The route assessment is from Elwood Way to Brine Leas School via Peter Destapleigh Way to the A530 Audlem Road.
- Elwood Way and Peter Destapleigh Way are wide single 2 lane carriageway with footway on the northern side for the whole section of this route, which is of adequate width and condition and is shared with a cycle way.
- The speed limit is 40 mph on Elwood Way reducing to 30 mph on Peter Destapleigh Way as the road approaches its junction with Hawsley Drive. The speed limit remains at 30 mph for the rest of the route to Brine Leas School.
- There is street lighting for the full length of this section.
- There are school wig-wags and a speed reduction to 20 mph on Peter Destapleigh Way in advance of Pear Tree Field which operate during the local primary school opening and closing times.
- Pedestrians are required to cross a number of junctions whilst walking along Elwood Way and Peter Destapleigh Way: Pollard Close is a Cul-de-sac; London Road is controlled by a pedestrian phase in the traffic lights as is Pear Tree Field; Hawksey Drive has a pedestrian refuge; Burnell Close is a Cul-de-sac. The junction with the A530 (Audlem Road) is controlled by a pedestrian phase in the traffic lights.

Footway Assessment:	
Is there a pavement/ footway segregated from traffic?	Yes Pavements are in good condition and are of adequate width and segregated from traffic.
Is there a need to walk on the carriageway?	No

Crossing Assessment:	
Is a crossing required?	Yes Pollard Close minor road and cul-de-sac; London Road pedestrian phase in the traffic lights Pear Tree Field pedestrian phase in traffic lights Hawksey Drive pedestrian refuge; Burnell Close minor road and cul-de-sac. A530 (Audlem Road) pedestrian phase in the traffic lights.
Sighting times	There are at least 4 seconds sighting time at each crossing point.
Traffic volume and gap times	Not required as controlled crossings are available for pedestrians to use at major or busy road junctions. Other road have low traffic and good visibility.

Comments on Section 2
This section of the route has houses on one side of the pavement and a new housing development is being constructed on the other side of the road. There are pavements for pedestrians to use along the entire length of the route. There are also cycle routes along the route and is well used by pedestrians and cyclists. The assessor noted that there was overgrown shrubbery adjacent on Peter Destapleigh way and this has been reported.

Comments on whole route
The route between Willaston and Brine Leas School had previously been assessed as unavailable due to the lack of light-controlled crossing facilities on the Nantwich by-pass. However, since the installation of the Toucan crossing in October 2008 the route had become an available route to school. The assessor noted that the route is along roads that are well used by pedestrians and cyclists. Further information on available walking routes can be found at: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school_transport/available-walking-routes/walking_routes_to_schools.aspx

Peter Destapleigh Way

Toucan Crossing on Cheerbrook Road

Access to Newcastle Road

The full route can be viewed at

https://www.google.com/maps/@53.061917,-2.5040336,15z?entry=ttu

Potential Questions & Answers

	Question	Answer
1.	The route hazard has been made good for some time now, so why are you proposing to implement it now?	We are aware that the schemes have been in place for some time now. In the case of the Fallibroome Academy walking route, this was made available in early 2020. However, with the upheaval surrounding Covid we were unable to progress the process to formally make the routes available. We are now in a position to do this. In the case of the crossing at Cheerbrook roundabout this has been in place for many years and as such should have been deemed available as a walking route previously, we are now correcting this omission.
2.	When were the schemes formally signed off as completed?	• B5087 Prestbury Road was signed off as completed on 6th January 2020 • Nantwich By-pass Cheerbrook Roundabout was signed off as completed on 14th October 2008
3.	Will there still be a bus available that we can pay a fare on?	Those pupils who are deemed as still eligible will receive free transport which will be arranged as normal via our transport team. The provision of a paid for bus service will be a commercial decision by any potential supplier. The Council will approach the existing supplier to understand the viability of such a scheme
4.	Some parts of the walking route do not have lighting are pupils required to walk in the dark?	Generally school start and finish times are such that pupils can walk to school in daylight. There will be a limited number of times when this is before sunrise and after the sun sets i.e. in twilight hours. In these cases it is the parents' responsibility to accompany their child if they feel it is appropriate. A parent may decide that a child can walk unaccompanied but the legal responsibility remains with parents to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that their child attends school. If a continuous suitable footway exists then street lighting is desirable but may not be required for a route to be assessed as available

5.	What is the process you will follow to notify us if we are affected?	We will be implementing as detailed within the school transport policy which requires the Council to provide 12 weeks notice of withdrawal of free transport where a walking route becomes available.
6.	What about personal safety issues for my child	In accordance with the law, all routes are assessed with the assumption that pupils are accompanied as necessary by a responsible person. Routes are not classed as unavailable solely due to the fact that they are a lonely route. An extract from the Councils policy on Available Walking Routes, is shown below: *6.5 In accordance with the law, the council assumes that children are accompanied by an adult as necessary. Routes are not classed as unavailable solely due to any or all of the following factors. They are, however, used to assess risks and hazards that a child may face that can be avoided if the child were to be accompanied as necessary in assessing the availability of a route:* • *Lonely routes.* • *Moral danger.* • *Routes that pass close to canals, rivers, ditches, lakes, ponds etc.* • *Routes that require railway crossings if a suitable, authorised crossing is present.*

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Available walking routes in Prestbury and Willaston
Date of Assessment	5 June 2023
Assessment Lead Officer Name	Richard Hibbert
Directorate/Service	Place Directorate
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	Cheshire East Council provides travel support (also known as school transport) for nearly 3800 children and young people. This vital service enables eligible children to attend a school or college that meets their needs as close as possible to where they live. Travel support may be provided to those who live some distance away from their nearest school or college, where the route for them to walk is unsafe or who have to travel further to have their needs met, for example, in a special school. An independent review of travel support carried out in 2022/23 identified a number of changes to meet the pressures of existing demand and transform the way that travel support is provided to children and families. One of the proposed changes is that, where appropriate, transport provided because a portion of the walking route has been labelled as 'Unavailable' based upon the Councils adopted 'Available routes to school' policy 2018 should be reviewed and where it is possible (and financially viable) work should be undertaken to make those portions of the route 'Available' such that the overall requirement for provided transport can be reduced. *This assessment is undertaken in accordance with Cheshire East Council's Available Routes to School Policy, which reflects guidance notes issued by Road Safety GB in 2021 'Assessment of*

	Walked Routes to School' and the Department for Education and Skills in 2014 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance'. A comprehensive review of opportunities to enhance walking routes will be undertaken and where financially viable proposed schemes will be brought forward. This immediate proposal is to amend two existing areas where the walking route has already been made 'Available' some time ago but this has not been communicated to parents / carers and the Council has continued to provide free travel assistance despite this. The two routes in question are: • From Willaston to Brine Leas Academy – the area which was originally deemed as making this route unavailable to walk was an inadequate crossing point at the Cheerbrook roundabout. A traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on the Nantwich bypass at Cheerbrook roundabout has been in place since 14 October 2008 and as such this route should have been redesignated a number of years ago. • From Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy – a scheme to put a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing on the B5087 Prestbury Road was completed on 6 January 2020 and as such the redesignation of this route is also overdue. Current pupils receiving free school transport from Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy is 122 of which c.70 will no longer be eligible for free school transport following this change. Current pupils receiving free school transport from Willaston to Brine Leas Academy is 9 of which 5 will no longer be eligible for free school transport following this change. Both of these enhancements mean that walking routes for pupils are now available and that those deemed eligible for free transport because of a lack of 'Available' walking route can now be reclassified as not eligible as laid out in the Councils policies: Cheshire East school transport policies
Who is Affected?	• Children & young people who are currently classified as eligible for free school transport because of the unavailability of a walking route to school.

	• Parents and carers of those students • Fallibroome Academy and Brine Leas Academy • The School Transport Team • Current transport providers to these schools
Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.	Cheshire East Council's medium term financial strategy 2023-27 (reference 24, school transport pressures) Cheshire East school transport policies
How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?	These initial proposals will affect two schools only and those pupils and parents / carers who will no longer have an entitlement to free school transport. This proposal once completed will mean that the Council is adhering to its current school transport policies and treating all pupils in an equitable manner, currently those who receive free school transport are an anomaly as the walking route has been 'Available' for some time and therefore pupil entitlement to free provided transport should have been removed some time ago. Upon implementation and therefore removal of eligibility for free provided school transport, in line with the Councils policy a 12 week notice period will be given and transport arrangements / contracts will be reviewed and vehicle sizes altered to accommodate only those pupils who remain eligible due to their distance from school. Discussions will be held with existing suppliers to assess whether they would wish to provide a paid for service but this will be a commercial decision for that operator, the scheduled route 19 is available on this route albeit with limited capacity.

Section 2- Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	**What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?**
Information you used	An independent review of travel support was carried out in 2022/23 which identified a number of changes, but also recognised that the current budget would not meet demand in the short term. The proposed growth of £5.2

	million over the next three years (£4 million in 2023/24) will meet the pressures of existing demand, whilst we transform the way that travel support is provided to children and families. Over the next three years we propose to: • Where appropriate, shift the offer to provide travel support for children and young people, including the increased and easier use of personal travel budgets and independent travel training. • Work together with parents and carers to introduce a customer charter that sets clear expectations between parents, the council and transport providers. • Create an integrated travel team within the council to provide a joined-up travel offer, consistent and fair policy and strategic direction. • Greater use of software to provide effective routes to meet children's needs and best use of transport. Improve the way we procure transport for children to make it more effective and to minimise change. Implementation of the transformation plan will require significant input from corporate services. The transformation will require policy changes that will be subject to formal consultation and subject to approval from the children and families committee. This proposal forms part of these plans. In addition to the findings of the independent review we have also: • Reviewed the walking routes for hazards including reviewing the latest traffic data on the routes. • Walked the full routes to understand the actual walking experience. • Reviewed the routes at busy school times to understand traffic conditions. • Arranged site visits for relevant Ward and Committee members.
Gaps in your Information	The review of these 2 routes has been thorough and based upon the Councils available routes policy which in turn is based upon guidance notes from Road Safety GB and the DfE. We have not undertaken any specific consultation because this is simply an application of existing policy. We will major on communications with stakeholders – parents / carers, schools, suppliers etc.

3. What did people tell you?

What did people tell you	What consultation and engagement activities have you already undertaken and what did people tell you? Is there any feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations that could be included in your assessment?
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	We have not undertaken any specific consultation because this is simply an application of the Councils Current School Travel policies. As such we have ensured that our communications plan is clear for parents / carers.
Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback	We have not undertaken any specific consultation regarding these proposals.

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4. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	**What do you know?** Summary of information used to inform the proposal	**What did people tell you?** Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	**What does this mean?** Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
Age	Implementation of the recommendations will affect children and young people aged 11-18 and their families who attend Brine Leas Academy and Fallibroome Academy and are currently eligible for free provided school transport.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*Positive impact – Walking routes to school will now be available for all pupils where there was not a viable walking route previously*
Disability	Pupils eligible for free provided transport due to disability under the current policy will not be affected.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*
Gender reassignment	It is not expected that this proposal will have a greater impact for those who have experienced gender reassignment. Each young person's application is assessed based upon gender neutral criteria.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*
Pregnancy and maternity	Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*

Race/ethnicity	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children or parents of a particular race. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*
Religion or belief	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children or parents of a particular religion or belief. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*
Sex	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children or parents of a particular sex. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*
Sexual orientation	It is not expected that the proposals will have a greater impact on children of a particular sexual orientation. Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*
Marriage and civil partnership	Each young person's application is assessed on an individual basis against current policy.	*No consultation undertaken, this is an implementation of existing policy*	*No impact*

5. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	**What can you do?** Actions to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts
Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified? Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts? Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered? Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?	No negative impacts have been identified, the proposal implements the current policy and seeks to provide equity of treatment (as defined in the policy) across all school aged children and within current statute. Further work will be undertaken with suppliers to understand whether commercial services will be offered, this is unlikely in the case of the Prestbury as service route 19 already provides morning and afternoon services between the school and the village, it is also unlikely in the case of the Willaston to Brine Leas route as the numbers of pupils effected is so low.

6. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review	**How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EIA**
Details of monitoring activities	We have not detailed any negative impacts. The service change will be brought forward to September 2023 committee and will thereafter follow the agreed process in the School transport policy meaning that service will be removed in January 2024. A review of impacts of the change will be scheduled for 1st March 2024.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	1st March 2024, Head of Service

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7. Sign Off

When you have completed your EIA, it should be sent to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox for review. If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer to be published on the website. For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Name	Richard Hibbert
Signature	
Date	

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Agenda Item 14

Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

Children and Families Capital Programme – Implementation of Capital schemes (including new and named schemes and School Condition Programme)

Report of: Claire Williamson - Director of Strong Start, Family Help, and Integration

Report Reference No: CF/28/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on progress with the school capital programme for 2023/24 and approve progression of the projects and named schemes that are detailed the appendices.
2. To ask committee to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to enable the delivery the Childrens and Families capital programme in a timely manner and ensure that the council meets its Statutory Responsibility to ensure sufficiency of school places.
3. To ask the Committee to delegate authority to the Director of Childrens Services to enable the allocation of uncommitted funds to projects for the purpose of supporting additional pupil places and SEN schemes, to approve any Virements and enter into any grant agreements as necessary to deliver these projects. Where necessary such decisions to be made in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules.

4. Significant work is undertaken closely with corporate finance leads to effectively manage capital expenditure, ensure value for money against available funding streams and make appropriate variations to MTFS block funding as schemes progress to fully costed schemes. The current economic climate and demands to meet carbon reductions are adding to funding pressures as schemes progress and such factors are outlined in detail in section 18 of this report.

5. This report builds upon the significant work undertaken via the 'Strategic Programme Board' (SPB) which is chaired by the Executive Director and includes leads from key Council services. This Board acts as a key monitoring forum for capital schemes.

Executive Summary

6. As the strategic commissioner of school places, Cheshire East Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places in our schools to meet the needs of residents. Having the right educational placement for all children and young people is key to supporting children and young people achieve their potential and to develop the range of skills and experiences they need to equip them for adulthood.

7. As strategic commissioner we are also required to ensure we have sufficient provision for pupils with special educational needs. Due to the increasing level of complexities of children and young people identified through assessment, the demand for specialist SEN places continues to increase and is most acute in SEN special schools. We are currently over-reliant on high cost out of borough independent schools to meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs which can also include long travel journeys. Therefore, the need to increase local specialist provisions is essential to enable us to deliver high quality local schools for our children and young people and at the same time, reduce revenue costs.

8. Appendix 1 – Medium Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) – Capital Programme 2023/24

   This Appendix sets out the detailed programme of the identified schemes and future proposals which were included in the MTFS and highlights the following: -

   - Changes to the 2023/24 programmes
   - New schemes included from July 2023 and fully funded from approved grant funding.
   - A funding allocation identified to allow for small works/adaptations to support pupils with Special Educational Needs

- A funding allocation identified to support feasibility schemes for future projects and help determine viability and indicative costings.
- Where applicable, details of schemes within block allocations that have now been detailed as named schemes.
- Stage of works currently being progressed (July 2023)
- Rational for any changes since the report to Children and Families Committee on the 20 March 2023
- Budget uplifts
- Details of unallocated funding (July 2023)

9. Appendix 2 provides a detailed overview of the changes to the capital programme including the new, named and amended schemes and the proposed works to be instructed from the block funding allocations.

10. Appendix 3 – School Condition Allocation

This Appendix outlines the schemes included in the 2023/24 School Condition Programme and highlights the following: -

- Details of individual schemes
- Details of block allocation for in-year emerging priorities to address urgent Health and Safety issues and/or to prevent school closures.
- Details of a block allocation for School Catering Equipment, this is to address urgent priorities to avoid kitchen closure and is included to gain approval to setting aside this funding to proceed with small works/purchases as and when they may arise.
- Details of a block allocation to progress with feasibility assessments for a programme to replace oil fired boilers.
- Details of a block allocation to undertake surveys to establish the presence or otherwise of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete in school premises where CEC is the responsible body.
- Details of a block allocation to undertake condition surveys at maintained schools (Year 3 of a 3-year programme)
- Details of unallocated condition funding (July 2023)

The school condition allocation can only be used for maintained, foundation and voluntary controlled schools. Academies have access to Condition Improvement Fund and Voluntary Aided settings are funded via LCVAP, both

grants are distributed by the Department for Education direct to Academy Trusts and the Diocesan Authorities.

11. It is very much hoped that committee can recognise the significant work undertaken by officers to effectively manage this capital investment in our schools and work within existing financial processes linked to the MTFS. There is much to celebrate in achieving a comprehensive programme of capital investment in Cheshire East schools to allow families to attend a successful and local school of their choice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. To agree the allocation of the Children and Families Capital funding as approved in the budget by full council on 22 February 2023 to the schools and projects as set out in Appendix 1.

2. To approve the new, named and amended schemes as detailed in Appendix 2.

3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to determine the school sites and works to be instructed from the block funding allocations set out in Appendix 2 and take all steps to deliver those works.

4. To approve the school condition programme of schemes as detailed in Appendix 3.

5. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to determine the school sites and works to be instructed from the block funding allocations set out in Appendix 3 and take all steps to deliver those works.

6. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to approve uplifts to project costs of individual schemes approved in the Capital Programme to a maximum of 20% of the approved capital budget or £500,000 whichever is the lesser sum.

7. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to allocate uncommitted funds to enable the progression of feasibility studies, design development and project delivery, where projects will be for the purpose of supporting additional pupil places and SEN schemes.

8. Delegate to the Executive Director of Childrens Services the authority to approve Virements and where necessary enter into grant agreements with Academies and Diocesan bodies to facilitate the delivery of the projects identified in the Children and Families Capital Programme.

9. To note that the Executive Director of Childrens Services will provide a six-monthly update to committee on the implementation of the Children and Families Capital Programme and the exercise of the delegations set out in this report.

Background

12. The various funding streams which are utilised to support the capital investment into our schools include Basic Need Grant (DfE funded), Schools Condition Allocation Grant (DfE funded), SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation (DfE funded), Special Provision Fund Capital Grant (DfE funded), developer contributions under s106 Town and County Planning Act 1990 and Approved Council Prudential Borrowing. Many of the grant allocations received from the DfE are based upon annual returns which the Council completes outlining our levels of need.

13. The position regarding uncommitted grant funding as per the MTFS approved at full council on the 22 February 2023 is set out below. This information is provided to reassure the Committee that where changes are required to financial allocations to agreed schemes, there are available budgets to fully fund such changes.

Table 1

Uncommitted Funding (Grant Allocation) profiled spent as per MTFS approved February 2023	**Total Approved Budget**
	£000
Basic Need Grant Allocation	**7,319**
Schools Condition Capital Grant	**2,868**
SEN/High Needs Provision Capital Allocation	**2,483**
Total	**12,670**

14. The DfE provides basic need capital grant funding to local authorities to support them to meet their statutory responsibility to ensure there are enough school places available in their area for every child aged 5 to 16, as set out under section 14 of the 1996 Education Act. The annual ‘School Capacity Survey’ return (SCAP) as submitted to DfE in July provides the summary of priority areas where additional places are needed, and this is used to generate basic need allocations.

15. The DfE provides School Condition Allocations (SCA) on an annual basis for local authority-maintained schools only which provides the Council with the mechanism to maintain/improve school building infrastructures. In line with DfE guidance, investment should be prioritised on keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, safeguarding concerns as well as health and safety issues. An indicative budget for the anticipated 2023-24 School Condition Allocation (SCA) grant of £2m was included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-27, which was approved at full council in February 2023. Following the announcement from the DfE on 28 March 2023, the 2023/24 School Condition Allocation was confirmed as £1.925m.

16. The DfE have provided High Needs Provision Capital Allocation to meet the capital costs associated with providing new places and improving existing provision for children and young people with complex needs, who have Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs), and where appropriate, other children and young people with SEND who do not have an EHCP.

17. Over the last 5 years we have provided over 1700 new mainstream places, with proposals for a further 3000+ places in the next 5 years. For pupils with SEN, we have provided over 230 new places in our Special Schools and Resource Provisions with proposals for a further 330 places planned for the next 5 years.

18. The critical themes which combine to potentially result in an increase any budget envelope for our named capital schemes is outlined below.

    a. Inflation – whilst it is recognised that the overall inflation rate is in the region of 10%, some building associated costs are showing higher rates than this which is impacting on overall costs. As an example, costs of glass are showing significant increase.
    b. Planning requirement – during the planning process, there are often conditions included in the grant of a planning permission that must be complied with and result in additional costs being added to the overall budget.
    c. Design and development – as schemes progress from an initial feasibility stage, associated costs may change because of more detailed investigations due to the outcomes of required surveys and ground conditions/stability.
    d. Carbon Neutral – the Council is committed to being carbon neutral by 2025 which results in capital build schemes being required to modify buildings to align with this expectation.
    e. School infrastructure/condition – any scheme will attempt to improve certain conditions of existing buildings and/or to ensure existing

infrastructure has the capacity to cope with the increase of school places. Meeting catering /dining hall requirements or additional toilets are examples of common infrastructure changes.

19. The delivery of a growing number of SEN schemes will support the Council's ambitions to provide more in borough specialist school placements to support its residents whilst helping the Directorate with its management plan in reducing the overall deficit within its dedicated schools grant budget.

Consultation and Engagement

20. Prior to and during the scoping and progression of capital programmes of work, engagement events, both formal and informal take place to seek views and feedback from key stakeholders on proposed schemes. Such events involve meetings with Headteachers/Governors individually and across planning areas, briefings for local members as well as structured consultations.

21. In accordance with the guidance issued by the Department for Education, making significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools, formal consultation is undertaken as required on all schemes where specific criteria are met. Similar national guidance applies to academies; Department for Education, making significant changes to an open academy.

22. Detailed records of consultations are kept for all schemes where formal consultation is required, and the feedback received is carefully considered as part of the finalisation of a scheme to ensure community views are considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

23. The necessity to commit to the significant capital investment in our schools set out in Appendices 1,2 and 3, is fundamentally in response to our statutory requirement to provide sufficiency of school places for Cheshire East families. Failure to meet this requirement would result in increased anxieties in families being unable to attend a local school and added competition between schools many of whom set their own admission arrangements. The recommendations seek approval from Committee to progress with these priority schemes and allocate funding accordingly and to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children Services to take decisions to deliver the schemes which allows for the effective management of each of these programmes of work.

24. The delegated authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to approve uplifts to project costs of individual schemes approved in the Capital Programme to a maximum of 20% of the approved capital budget or £500,000 whichever is the lesser sum, will ensure that schemes are progressed in a timely way and to provide updates to committee as required. Where the

decision process includes financials or contracts, this will be done in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

25. Committee have been previously informed about the current pressures on funding which are resulting in costs of scheduled schemes increasing due to a range of factors.

Other Options Considered

26. The option to do nothing and not increase mainstream and special school provisions across the borough would result in a failure to meet our statutory duties as a commissioner of school places and occur increasing costs for out to borough SEN places.

27. There is an option that officers continue to provide individual committee reports and seek individual decisions or delegations for each scheme within Appendices 1, 2and 3. This does not allow for flexible working to deliver schemes or to react to individual emergencies or needs. It is also time consuming for Officers Committee.

28. In each of the schemes in Appendix 1, detailed consultations are planned or will have taken place with school leaders, local ward members and local school communities to ensure that feedback and option appraisals are thorough and consider local views. These processes will identify a range of options in terms of identifying schools to expand. Consultation responses are available as required to show that there is a robustness and openness in the process.

29. In terms of SEN programmes of works, the option to continue to place SEN learners in placements out of borough or in independent specialist provisions is not considered appropriate as this will result in a continuation of financial pressures on the High Needs DSG budget. This approach aligns with the detailed work undertaken as part of the 'Developing Better Value' (DBV) programme to increase local provisions which reduce travel costs and time and offers increased value for money.

30. There is an option to consider further alternative sites for the increasing SEN demand. The service works closely with colleagues in the assets team to identify other potential local sites to address the forecast need for specialist school places across the borough and the provision of funding to undertake feasibilities for future schemes is requested as per the recommendation detailed in appendix 2, item 12.

31.

Option	Impact	Risk
The option to do nothing and not increase mainstream and special school	This would result in a failure to meet our statutory duties as a commissioner of school	High Risk

provisions across the borough	places and occur increasing costs for out to borough SEN places	
The option not to do nothing and not progress the school condition programme	This could result in the closure of schools and/or failure to address health and safety risks and safeguarding issues	High Risk

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

32. The committee terms of reference state:

    "2.3 discharging the Council's functions and powers in relation to the provision of education and Schools Forum.

    2.6 discharging the Council's functions in relation to Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)."

33. The report provides assurance that the school capital programme is an accurate reflection of and gives effect to the Council's obligation to provide sufficient education provision in our area the details are usually encapsulated in the schools sufficiently plan. The capital programme should give effect to the sufficiency plan and must be assessed against that plan. The committee should satisfy itself of the need by reference to the sufficiency plan.

34. The report seeks delegations to provide flexibility for officers to access funds to respond to immediate needs and progress projects at Executive Director level with a commitment to report back to Committee on use of delegations at regular intervals.

35. The Committee must satisfy itself that the proposed increases in budget are justified, proportionate, and represent value for money for the taxpayer.

36. If additional cost is incurred on any project it must impact on other proposals, the committee must satisfy itself that it has a clear understanding of the impact of authorising additional funding and the potential impact on the wider programme.

37. The budget set by full council provided for a capital programme by planning area. Page 258-259 MTFS 2023-27 - app C.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Full Council has set the budget allocation for each planning area. This is the budgetary framework set by full council. The committee must be satisfied that the cumulative increases and changes in costs do not infringe or alter the planning area limits set out in the budgetary framework.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

38. Funding for Children and Families capital programme is through a range of routes with the main ones relating to the use of the 'Basic Need' grant along with agreed Section 106 developer funding for education to mitigate the need for additional school places due to the impact of new housing. In addition to this external DFE grant was allocated in March 2022 that supported SEN/High Needs schemes including provision of additional places. There is an annual allocation of School Condition funding, but this can only be used for local authority-maintained schools.

39. The Authority receives differing allocations of Basic Need grant which is based upon our submitted annual SCAP return. This funding is used to meet the additional places required in priority planning areas as referenced in the SCAP. Following the announcement from the DfE on 28 March 2023, the 2023/24 Basic Need allocation was confirmed as £2.442m.

40. The School Condition Grant allocation is based on the number of maintained schools within the authority and can change subject to the number of schools that have converting to an academy or an academy order has been submitted.

41. The DfE provides School Condition Allocations (SCA) on an annual basis for local authority-maintained schools only and provides the council with the mechanism to maintain/improve school building infrastructures. In line with DfE guidance, investment should be prioritised on keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, safeguarding concerns as well as health and safety issues.

42. An indicative budget for the anticipated 2023-24 School Condition Allocation (SCA) grant of £2m was included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-27, which was approved at full council in February 2023. Following the announcement from the DfE on 28 March 2023, the 2023/24 School Condition Allocation was confirmed as £1.925m. The reduction of the budget was reported as part of the Provisional Outturn report for 2022/23 that was presented at Corporate Policy Committee on the 11th of July 2023.

43. The new schemes detailed in the appendix 2 will be funded from the uncommitted Basic Need and SEN/High Needs Provision Capital funding.

44. The named schemes detailed in the appendix 2 are already funded as part of the Block funding for planning areas, these were included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-27, which was approved at full council in February 2023.

45. The schemes with budget uplifts detailed in appendix 2 will be funded from the uncommitted Basic Need and SEN/High Needs Provision Capital funding.

46. The schemes and block allocations named in Appendix 3, are fully funded from the School Condition Block allocation, also approved at council in February 2023 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023-27.

47. Capital grants have conditions that specify what they can be used for. If a scheme does not go ahead any spend incurred on that scheme would need to be written off to revenue.

Policy

48. Local authorities are under a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places in their area (section 14 of the Education Act 1996) and over the last 5 years, the percentage of parents receiving one of their three preferences has remained strong and above the national average.

49. The programme of works for additional SEN special school provision would support the council in meeting its duty to provide sufficient school places. The SEND Code of Practice requires us to consult with parental preference schools and parents have a right to appeal where we are unable to name their preference school through the tribunal process.

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

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

50. Equality Impact Assessments are completed informally and formally to determine the varying needs of learners and their families to be able to access schools. Such factors are built into all stages of the progression of a scheme.

Human Resources

51. There are no direct human resource implications for the council, but if any additional school provision forms part of a current maintained school, the local authority will work with the school in the appointment of additional specialist

staffing to ensure high quality staffing is achieved, both teaching and non-teaching. Levels of support will be dependent upon buy back of certain services including Hr and payroll.

Risk Management

52. As outlined in the finance section, the DfE have confirmed capital funding grants which allows for the virement of funding. This funding is already available and therefore is not reliant on future funding allocations.

53. Appendix 1 outlines the availability of unallocated funding. This does reduce levels of risk where scheme costs are increasing. However, we often have no ability to predict future grant allocations.

54. Force Majeure – The global Covid pandemic has identified that there can be some risks that on impact cannot be mitigated against and will inevitably cause some delay, disruption, and any additional costs.

Rural Communities

55. The creation of additional school places would potentially bring benefit to rural communities in that it will result in residents having a more reasonable travel distances to transport pupils if a local school place cannot be identified.

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

56. In accordance with the programme to provide additional school places within Cheshire East, the schemes as outlined will provide more spaces for young people to learn and develop friendships with other local children within a local school thus promoting local community cohesion.

57. The school organisation service wherever possible will directly involve the young people in some of the design elements of schools as well as decision making with the appointment of sponsors for new schools.

Public Health

58. There are no direct implications for public health however, some children and young people currently travel significant distances to access the specialist provision they may require. This can have an impact on their emotional wellbeing and can significantly lengthen the school day. The successful applications for new SEN free schools will mean more vulnerable children getting a placement in their local area thus keeping supporting their needs within their local community.

59. By reducing the distances which children are having to make to attend school the programme of works as outlined will also help reduce congestion on the roads and therefore reduce emissions improving the air quality and making a better local environment to live in.

- Any increase in SEND provision will require strategic joint commissioning of specialist health services to ensure resources for such services as physiotherapy are sufficient to meet increased demand as more localised school places are generated.

Climate Change

60. Providing additional school places will enable Cheshire East children the ability to secure at place at their local school thus reducing the need to travel outside of the area which will reduce energy consumption.

61. Cheshire East Council are very aware of their environmental education and stewardship role and are interested in promoting sustainability in general.

62. Cheshire East Council is committed to being carbon neutral by 2025 and our capital build schemes are required to align with this expectation.

63. It is noted that any funding is for a capital project and not for the ongoing revenue costs. Therefore, as part of the detailed design process, the design team will be exploring how the expansion could be designed to minimize future running costs. Systems that save on energy consumption will be considered, particularly for electricity, with absence detection being the preferred lighting strategy.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Joanne Prophet Joanne.prophet@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Children and Families Capital Programme Appendix 2 – Summary of changes to Children and Families Capital Programme Appendix 3 – School Condition Programme 2023-24 Programme of Works
Background Papers:	1. Full Council, 22 February 2022 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPROATE POLICY COMMITTEE: MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-27 http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s101379/CPC%20minute%20extract.pdf 2. Children and Families Committee, 20 March 2023

	School Organisation – Overview of planned schemes including funding revisions. http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s102114/1.%20Covering%20report.pdf

				Details of Changes 2023/24				Approved MTFS February 2023							Funding/Changes required	
See Appendix 2 - Sept Committee Report - item number	Changes Sept 23 - Bold text	Scheme Description	Scheme details for block allocation schemes	Stage of Work - May 2023	Number of Places being created	Changes	Changes Funded	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2023/24	Forecast Budget 2024/25	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Total Forecast Budget	Funding/Changes required September 2023	Scheme Totals
								£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
1	**Increased costs - Sept23**	Adelaide Academy	Expansion Scheme - Additional places	Detailed design	20	Budget uplift due to rising costs and amends to design to address the wider needs of pupils attending	Yes	**700**	39	550	195	0	0	**784**	66	**850**
2	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Adelaide Heath Academy	Additional Places - Internal remodelling works	Detailed Design	10	New Scheme to create 10 additional places. £120K funded from Basic Need	Yes								**120**	**120**
	Funding Line	Basic Need Grant Allocation		Grant allocation												0
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Congleton Planning Area	Congleton High School - 150 places, Eaton Bank School - 150 places and funding to support EMP	Construction	300		Yes	**5,034**	94	3,940	1,000	0	0	**5,034**		**5,034**
	Funding Line	Devolved Formula Grant		Grant funding (schools)												0
3	Approved MTFS 20/02/23. **Scheme description changed to reflect named scheme**	Holmes Chapel Planning Area - **Holmes Chapel Secondary School**	Holmes Chapel Secondary School - 150 places and 14 place RP	Construction	150	Scheme description changed to reflect named scheme	Yes	**3,625**	780	2,845	0	0	0	**3,625**		**3,625**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary	Tytherington and support for other Macc school (TBC) for additional places	Concept		Previously Block funding for Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary - Budget Split to name Tytherington Expansion Scheme - Remainder yet to be agreed	Yes	**4,084**	1,106	1,500	1,478	0	0	**4,084**	**-2500**	**1,584**
4	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary - **Tytherington High School**	150 additional places	Outline design	150	Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary - Budget Split to name Tytherington Scheme	Yes								**2500**	**2,500**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Middlewich Planning Area		On hold			N/A	**2**	2	0	0	0	0	**2**		**2**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Monks Coppenhall SEN Expansion		Complete	7		Yes	**127**	127	0	0	0	0	**127**		**127**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23 -	Nantwich Planning Area - Primary - Kingsley Fields New Primary School	Kingsley Fileds new primary school - 210 places	Detailed Design	210		Yes	**7,780**	304	4,800	2,676	0	0	**7,780**		**7,780**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Nantwich Planning Area - Secondary					Yes	**700**	0	700	0	0	0	**700**	**-700**	**0**
5	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Nantwich Planning Area - Secondary - **Brine Leas School**	Phase 2 of expansion scheme to address accommodation shortfalls	Feasibility		Previously Block funding for Nantwich Planning Area - Secondary - Budget used to name Brine Leas Scheme	Yes								**700**	**700**
	Funding line	Schools Condition Capital Grant		Grant allocation												0
	Funding Line	SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation		Grant allocation												0
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Shavington Planning Area - Secondary - Shavington Secondary	Shavington Secondary School - 150 places plus 14 place RP	Construction	150		Yes	**3,500**	170	1,773	1,557	0	0	**3,500**		**3,500**
	Funding Line	Special Provision Fund Capital Grant		Grant allocation												0
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Springfield Satellite Site		Construction	80		Yes	**6,100**	141	5,459	500	0	0	**6,100**		**6,100**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Wilmslow High School		Construction	300		Yes	**13,944**	2,708	7,950	3,286	0	0	**13,944**		**13,944**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Wilmslow Primary Planning Area	400k of funding developer contribution which is assigned to NAPs	Concept	45		Yes	**626**	1	625	0	0	0	**626**		**626**
																0
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Congleton Plannng Area - Primary (1)	Scheme to be determined	Concept	105		Yes	**2,200**	0	500	1,700	0	0	**2,200**		**2,200**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Congleton Planning Area - Primary (2)	Buglawton Primary School	Construction			Yes	**625**	100	525	0	0	0	**625**		**625**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Congleton Planning Area - New School (3)	Giants wood new primary school - 210 places	Concept	210		Yes	**7,500**	0	250	1,500	5,750	0	**7,500**		**7,500**
6	Approved MTFS 20/02/23. **Named Scheme. Budget uplift Sept 23**	Sandbach Planning Area - Primary - **Wheelock Primary School**	Wheelock Primary School - Additional 105 places	Detailed design	105	Previously Block funding for Sandbach Planning area now 2 named schemes - Budget split to fund both Sandbach Primaries Expansion Schemes (Wheelock Primary and Sandbach Primary Academy) - Budget uplift following detailed design work	Yes	**3,683**	0	2,300	1,383	0	0	**3,683**	**-1283**	**2,400**

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

7	**New/Named Scheme June 23**	Sandbach Planning Area - Primary - **Sandbach Primary Academy**	Sandbach Primary School - Additional 105 Places	Feasibility	105	Named Scheme - Budget split to fund both Sandbach Primaries Expansion Schemes (Wheelock Primary and Sandbach Primary Academy) plus £300k additional from unallocated basic need to fund scheme as per costs provided by the academies design team	Yes							**0**		**1583**	**1,583**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Handforth Planning Area - New school - HFGV	HFGV - potential all through school - Budget figure will need to be amended once timeline for HFGV is agreed	Concept				**13,000**	0		500	8,500	4,000	**13,000**			**13,000**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Haslington Planning Area - Primary (The Dingle)	Additional 70- Places at the Dingle Primary	Detailed Design	70		Yes	**1,385**	10	990	385	0	0	**1,385**			**1,385**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Macclesfield Planning Area - New School	SMDA new primary school - Budget figure will need to be updated once a timeline for SMDA is agreed	Concept				**4,000**	0	0	0	2,000	2,000	**4,000**			**4,000**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary	SMDA - scheme to be agreed	Concept				**500**	0	500	0	0	0	**500**			**500**
8	**Uplift Sept 2023**	Mobberley Primary School		Outline Design		Budget Uplift due to inflation/ Rising Costs/Design Development/Impact of restrictive site - £50K additional funding from Basic Need	Yes	**900**	50	850	0	0	0	**900**		**50**	**950**
	Approved at C&F Ctte 20/03/23	Provision of Sufficient School Places - SEND - Spingfield Crewe	Springfield Crewe	Detailed Desgn	80	Capital virement of £1.13m from uncommitted SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation. Approved at C&F committee on the 20/03/23	Yes	**6,044**	16	5,028	1,000	0	0	**6,044**		**1130**	**7,174**
9	Approved MTFS 20/02/23 - **Sept 23 Scheme description changed to reflect named scheme - Budget uplift**	Provision of SEN Unit - **Wistaston Academy, Crewe**	Wistaston Academy - Specialist Resource Unit for upto 24 pupils	Outline Design	21	Approved MTFS 20/02/23 - Sept 23 Scheme description changed to reflect named scheme - Budget uplifted by £100K to reflect the cost information provided by the academies consultants and funded from unallocated High needs	Yes	**1,400**	0	1,400	0	0	0	**1,400**		**100**	**1,500**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Shavington Planning Area - New Primary School	Basford East new primary school - 210 places	Feasibility	210		Yes	**8,000**	10	500	5,114	2,376	0	**8,000**			**8,000**
	Approved MTFS 20/02/23	Poynton Planning Area	Scheme to be determined	Feasibility	100		Yes	**1500**		750	750			**1500**			**1,500**
	Approved at C&F Ctte 20/03/23	Middlewich (Cledford House site) New Free SEN School - Funding for abnormal costs	2 New Free SEN Schools - Funding for abnormal costs - 2 sites Middlewich (Cledford House site) and Congleton (Giants wood site)	Concept	60	Funding to support any abnormal costs arising from the 2 New Free SEN Schools , these are located at Middlewich (Cledford House site) and Congleton (Giants wood site) - Director of Childrens Services to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements for abnormal costs upto a maximum of £500K per site - Funded from unallocated Basic Need - **Approved at C&F committee on the 20th March 2023**	Yes									**500**	**500**
	Approved at C&F Ctte 20/03/23	Congleton (Giantswood site) New Free SEN School - Funding for abnormal costs	2 New Free SEN Schools - Funding for abnormal costs - 2 sites Middlewich (Cledford House site) and Congleton (Giants wood site)	Concept	60	Funding to support any abnormal costs arising from the 2 New Free SEN Schools , these are located at Middlewich (Cledford House site) and Congleton (Giants wood site) - Director of Childrens Services to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements for abnormal costs upto a maximum of £500K per site - Funded from unallocated Basic Need - **Approved at C&F committee on the 20th March 2023**	Yes									**500**	**500**
10	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Sandbach School (Boys)		Construction		New Scheme to to provide funding for refurbishment of spaces to create EMP to support SEN learners at the school funded from unallocated High Needs allocation	Yes									**20**	**20**
11	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Cledford House	Temp works for SEN provision	To be determined		Funding to allow for works/adaptations to support pupils with SEN at Cledford School - Director of Childrens Services to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements to progress urgent works and provide updates to committee as required - Funded from unallocated Special Provision Capital Fund Grant	Yes									**100**	**100**
12	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Future Schemes - Feasibility	Schemes to be determined	Feasibility		Funding to allow for feasibilty studies to be undertaken - Schools to be determined - Director of Childrens Services to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements for feasibility and provide updates to committee as required - Funded from unallocated Basic Need	Yes									**250**	**250**
13	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	SEN Small works/adaptations to support pupils with SEN	Schemes to be determined	To be determined		Funding to allow for SEN Small works/adaptations to support pupils with SEN - Schools to be determined - Director of Childrens Services to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements for feasibility and provide updates to committee as required - Funded from unallocated Specisl Provsion Capital Fund Grant	Yes									**150**	**150**
14	**New/Named Scheme Sept 23**	Oakfield Lodge	Safety works following completion of build	Detailed design		Additional funding to address outstanding safety works including firestopping and adaptations to vehicular access	Yes									**40**	**40**
		Total			**2548**			**96,960**	**5,659**	**43,735**	**23,024**	**18,626**	**6,000**	**97,044**	**3,326**		**100,370**

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Unallocated Funding (Grant Allocation) profiled spent as per MTFS approved February 2023	Total Forecast Budget	Sept 2023 Changes	Notes
	£000	£000	
Basic Need Grant Allocation	7,319	5,559	June 23 - Middlewich new free SEN school £500K, Congleton new free SEN schoo £500K. Adelaide Heath £120K. Mobberley £50K. Feasibility Schemes £250K. July 23 Sandbach Primary Academy £300K, Sept 23 Oakfield lodge £40K
Schools Condition Capital Grant	2,794	2,794	Figure Adjusted following allocation of grant, please see appendix 2 for details of schemes
SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	2,483	917	Sept 23 - SEN Small works £150K, Cledford House £100K, March 2023 - Springfield Crewe Committee approved virement from SEN/High Needs Capital £1.13m, Sept 23 £20K funding for Sandbach School (EMP), Sept 23 2023 Adelaide Academy increased costs £66K, Sept 23 £100K funding for Wistaston Academy
Special Provision Capital Fund Grant	0	0	
Total	12,596	9,270	

NB - Section 106 developer contributions are in addition to the above grant funding from the DfE and will be applied to the funding of individual schemes relevant to the s106 agreement. This will be detailed against the individual schemes as part of the reporting process

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

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Appendix 2

Item	Change to be Approved	School	Detail	Funding	Cost
1.	Budget Uplift	Adelaide Academy (Crewe)	Budget uplift due to rising costs and amends to design to address the wider needs of pupils attending	Budget uplift fully funded from unallocated SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	£66,000
2	New Scheme	Adelaide Heath Academy (Knutsford)	Scheme to provide 10 additional places - Internal remodelling works – SEN Sufficiency	Fully funded from unallocated Basic Need	£120,000
3.	Scheme description changed to reflect named scheme	Holmes Chapel Planning Area - **Holmes Chapel Secondary School**	Holmes Chapel Secondary School - 150 places and 14 place RP	Fully funded in MTFS	£3,625,000
4.	Named Scheme from Block funding	Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary - **Tytherington High School**	Previously Block funding for Macclesfield Planning Area, MTFS approved - Budget Split to name Tytherington Expansion Scheme – to provide 150 places	Fully funded in MTFS	£2,500,000
5.	Named Scheme from Block funding	Nantwich Planning Area - Secondary - **Brine Leas School**	Previously Block funding for Nantwich Planning Area - Secondary - Budget allocated Brine Leas Scheme	Fully funded in MTFS	£700,000
6.	Named Scheme from Block funding and Budget uplift	Sandbach Planning Area – **Wheelock Primary Academy**	Previously Block funding for Sandbach Planning area now 2 named schemes - Budget split – Expansion scheme to provide 105 places	Fully funded in MTFS	£2,400,000
7.	Named Scheme from Block funding	Sandbach Planning Area - **Sandbach Primary School**	Previously Block funding for Sandbach Planning area now 2 named schemes - Budget split – Expansion scheme to provide 105 places	Fully funded in MTFS	£1,583,000
8.	Amended Scheme	**Mobberley Primary School**	Increase in funding to allow progression of design development of scheme	Budget Uplift of £50K fully funded from unallocated Basic Need	£950,000
9.	Scheme description changed to reflect named scheme - Budget uplift	**Wistaston Academy, Crewe**	Specialist Resource Unit for up to 24 pupils	Budget Uplift of £100K fully funded from unallocated SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	£1,500,000
10.	New Scheme	**Sandbach School (Boys)**	Funding to support scheme to for internal	Fully funded from unallocated	£20,000

			adaptations to support pupils with SEN	SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	
11.	New Scheme	**Cledford House**	Funding to allow for temporary works/adaptations to support pupils with SEN at Cledford House School, to progress urgent works	Fully funded from unallocated SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	£100,000
12.	New Scheme(s)	**Various sites - Future Schemes – Feasibility Studies**	Funding to allow for feasibility studies to be undertaken - Executive Director of Childrens Services to determine the school sites and instruct feasibility works with completion of officer decision record (ODR)	Fully funded from unallocated Basic Need	£250,000
13.	New Scheme(s)	**Various sites -SEN Small works/adaptations to support pupils with SEN**	Funding to allow for SEN Small works/adaptations to support pupils with SEN - Executive Director of Childrens Services to determine the school sites and instruct works with completion of officer decision record (ODR)	Fully funded from unallocated SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	£150,000
14.	New Scheme	**Oakfield Lodge and The Stables**	Funding to support scheme to address safety issues and safeguarding	Fully funded from unallocated Basic Need	£50,000

Appendix 3

2023-24 Schools Condition Programme (Maintained Schools Only)	
Unspent 2022-23 Allocation	**£868,000.00**
Confirmed 2023-24 School Condition Allocation grant	**£1,925,840.00**
Total Available Funding	**£2,793,840.00**

Condition priorities recommended for approval		Total Estimate	Previous year approved allocation	Schools Contribution 10%	Current Year Allocation 23/24	Notes
Rode Heath Primary School	Roof replacment	£432,602.54	£225,000.00	£25,000.00	£182,602.54	Scheme included in previous condition programme. Following detailed surveys it was found that the whole school requires reroofing and it is more cost efficient to complete as 1 scheme
Vernon Primary	Demolition of Horsa Hut and Playground works	£275,000.00	£180,000.00	£20,000.00	£75,000.00	Scheme included in previous years programme, this is to address the demolision of the Horsa hut which is a H&S issue within the site. School contribtion requested.
Weaver Primary School	Electrical works	£50,000.00		£5,000.00	£45,000.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Lindow Primary School	Essential works to address Drainage issues and improvements to Fire alarm	£50,000.00		£5,000.00	£45,000.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Lindow Primary School	Safeguarding works	£50,000.00		£5,000.00	£45,000.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Ashdene Primary School	Potential roof works	£170,000.00		£17,000.00	£153,000.00	
Various Schools	Contribution to Public Sector Decarbonisation Schemes	£750,000.00		£75,000.00	£675,000.00	Max contribution required from condition grant funding
Wilmslow High School	Additional roofing condition works - identified during expansion scheme	£225,000.00		£25,000.00	£200,000.00	Part of bigger scheme, additional condition works identified during expansion scheme
Elworth CE Primary	Asbestos Removal Works to Ceiling Void	£25,000.00		£2,500.00	£22,500.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Alderley Edge Primary School	Replacement Boiler and Water Heater	£20,000.00		£2,000.00	£18,000.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Styal Primary	Address Damp/Flooring issues H&S	£30,000.00		£3,000.00	£27,000.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Edleston Primary	Emergency works as a result of storm damage	£30,000.00			£30,000.00	Works have been instructed as a result of the storm and flood damage on Monday 12th July, final costs to be confirmed
Gainsborough Primary	Structural repairs to floors and replacement of underfloor heating as a result of these works	£60,000.00		£6,000.00	£54,000.00	Scheme costs to be confirmed - indicative school contribution at this stage
Scholar Green Primary	Asbestos Removal Works	£157,000.00		£15,700.00	£141,300.00	School Contribution to be confirmed
Malbank School	Safeguarding works	£30,000.00		£3,000.00	£27,000.00	School Contribution to be agreed
		£2,354,602.54	**£405,000.00**	**£209,200.00**	**£1,740,402.54**	

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2023-24 School Condition Allocation grant element funding - Schemes detailed above recommended for approval	***Recommended for approval***	**£1,740,402.54**
Condition Assessments for Year 3 (2023/24) - recommended for approval to proceed with surveys	***Recommended for approval***	**£61,674.35**
Project Management fee's - recommended for approval	***Recommended for approval***	**£30,000.00**
Surveys to establish the presence or otherwise of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete in school premises where CEC is the responsible body	***Approved at Strategic Programme Board 2nd February 2023 and surveys have been completed***	**£20,000.00**
School Catering Equipment Budget - Essential to avoid kitchen closure etc - Various Schools - approval to proceed with works/purchases- Small Values - Head of Service to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements and provide updates to committee as required	***Recommneded for approval***	**£25,000.00**
Total Schemes		**£1,877,076.89**
Unallocated		**£48,763.11**
Total 2023/24 Allocation	***Recommended for approval***	**£1,925,840.00**
2022/23 Carried Forward funding - unspent to be used to support in year emerging priorities 2023/24, recommended for approval (Emergency H&S, statutory compliance, avoidance of school closures etc. Surveys and feasibilities to establish future years priorities etc) - Director of Childrens Services/Head of Service to determine and approve ODR's and grant agreements and provide updates to committee as required	***To be used to support in year emerging priorities***	**£868,000.00**
Total		**£2,793,840.00**

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Children & families Committee

18 September 2023

Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund Policy (SENIF)

Report of: Danielle Holdcroft, Head of Service Early Years, Family Help & Prevention

Report Reference No: CF/31/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1 To request approval to consult on revising the mechanism of support provided to enable children with special educational needs (SEN) to access their early education entitlements.

2 This is supporting the council's Corporate Plan objectives as follows:

An open and enabling organisation	Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.
A council which empowers and cares about people	Support all children to have the best start in life. Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

Executive Summary

3 This report sets out the statutory duty to support children aged 3 and 4 with SEN to access their early education entitlements.

4 Support is currently provided for 2, 3 and 4 years olds with SEN via a grant to childcare providers to assist them to make adjustments to their provision. The grant is by application and is linked to the number of hours the child attends the provision and the level of support required.

5 This report sets out the limitations of the current process and proposed revisions to refocus SEND support on high quality provision using the graduated approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children & Families Committee is recommended to:

1. To consider and approve the consultation on the policy set out in appendix 1 from 18th September 2023 and to report back to Committee with the outcome from the consultation process for a final decision.

Background

6 SEN Inclusion Funding currently provides support for children through the graduated approach from SEN Support (based on the number of hours early education entitlement) up to receipt of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for children who meet this criteria. This includes 2, 3 and 4 year-olds.

7 The Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2 year olds is top sliced by 1.9% to create a budget to enable 2 year olds with additional needs to be supported in the settings, following approval of the overall DSG budget at Children and Families Committee on 13 February 2023. The same percentage top slice will continue to be required in 2024-25.

8 An allocation is made from High Needs DSG to create the SEN Inclusion Fund for 3 and 4 year olds and a budget for early years EHCPs of £1,106,545 was agreed in 2023-24 will continue to be required in 2024-25.

9 A Settling in Grant is available to support the transition of children with complex / specialist needs into childcare.

10 Specialist equipment may be requested, based on a health professionals' recommendation to enable a child to access their early education. This is paid from the Early Years supplies and services budget. Actual spend last financial year 2022-23 was £37,686.

11 Under the current procedures, grants are based on a funding formula of £9 per hour. This is less than the National Living Wage and does not take account of employers on costs. Payment in hours is not a statutory requirement and takes the focus off provision and directs it towards one-to-one support which is not relevant for the majority of children at a SEND support level.

12 Financial support is provided for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) as set out in the plan.

13 Current SEN Inclusion funding arrangements are being reviewed and alternative options considered due to:

(a) A growing number of children with additional needs attending settings in Cheshire East, some of which have severe complex/specialist needs who may start to access provision as early as 6 months of age. Increasing numbers of families are experiencing settings reporting that they cannot meet their child's needs.

(b) Insufficient budget - SEN Funding is paid via the SEN Inclusion Fund. This fund is to support 'low and emerging needs' and is paid linked to the child's access to their Free Early Educational Entitlement. However, in Cheshire East this budget supports all children with SEND in early years, including those who are accessing an Education, Health and Care plan. This has been in place since April 2017. This is reflected in budgets from 2023/24.

(c) Childcare providers are raising concerns that the current levels of funding are not sufficient to cover the cost of additional staffing hours and are often focused on additional hours rather than the quality of provision.

(d) The inclusion funding supports children to access their early education entitlement, including the 30 hours entitlement, but children may be in settings for more than their early education entitlement hours each week.

(e) A small number of parents defer their child's entry to school. This creates an increased pressure on the budget as the children are funded for longer.

(f) The Early Years Supplies and Services budget, in addition to part funding the shortfall in the SEN Inclusion Fund, also provides specialist equipment to enable a child to attend their childcare provision. In the attached draft SENIF policy specialist equipment is factored into the bands and will be paid from the SENIF fund and not out of base budget.

14 The recommended model is set out in appendix 1. The revised methodology focuses on an incremental approach to support, concentrating on flexible provision to support childrens needs, such as training to upskill practitioners, additional equipment, and resources or for children with the most complex needs additional staff support at times they may require it to effectively meet their needs. The revised draft policy moves us away from a set hours formula to a banding system which will fund additional provision above and beyond what a setting is expected to have "ordinarily available" to all children. The banding system is an "up to" amount that can be applied for termly so will only cover the cost or contribute towards the cost of what is required.

15 As an example, a child may be assessed as meeting the Tier 4 banding, an occupation therapist recommends that they need a specialist walking frame to access provision in the setting, no other equipment or support is required and the walking frame costs £2,500. We would pay the £2,500. If the equipment was £6,000 we would contribute the maximum banding amount of £5,500. Paying an "up to" amount per band will enable us to distribute the SENIF fund in a much more precise and equitable way to meet childrens individual needs.

16 Assessment of the bands will be based on the settings application as before, the applications will be assessed on a monthly schedule by the early years quality and inclusion coordinators in consultations with officers. A recommendations report is prepared for final approval by the Head of Service for Early years. Where an organisation makes an appeal that cannot be addressed by the early year's coordinator. The appeal will escalate to the early years forum for a decision who may request additional supporting information.

17 Crucially, the Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) is targeted support for childcare providers to meet individual needs. Support is not provided directly to the child / family.

18 The proposed SENIF policy would not include children with EHCPs. A Separate budget would be created to fund EHCPS. The proposed SENIF policy focuses on 2, 3 and 4 year olds with emerging needs, pre EHCP.

19 Consultation will be targeted at Ofsted registered childcare providers delivering the early education entitlements and parents via the Parent Carer Forum. The draft report set out in appendix 1 will be provided and responses collected and analysed.

20 The policy will be finalised following consultation and approval to implement will be sought with the final decision resting with the committee

Consultation and Engagement

21 Pre-consultation with a multi-agency team of professionals and parent carer former representatives who are part of the early years SEND reforms task & finish group and the Early Years Reference Group, a sub group of Schools Forum.

22 Consultation on the draft policy will take place for 4 weeks from 25th September to the 20th October 2023 through autumn 2023 with the aim to implement the policy for new applications from January 2024, and all funding via the new policy from September 2024.

Reasons for Recommendations

23 The Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2023 to 2024, Education and Skills Funding Agency (" the operational guidance") sets out what local authorities must have regard to when discharging their duties to secure free early years provision and should be read alongside the statutory guidance from the DFE "Early education and childcare April 2023".

25 , Para 5.3 of the operational guidance under the heading 'Allocation of funding' provides *as part of the preparation and review of their 'local offer' ,local authorities must consult with early years providers ,parents and SEN specialists on how the SEN inclusion fund will be allocated .Under this 'local offer', local authorities should publish details on how the SENIF will be used to support their early years SEN cohort . These details should include the eligibility criteria for the fund, the planned value of the fund at the start of the year and the process for allocating the fund to providers.'*
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2023-to-2024/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2023-to-2024

Other Options Considered

26 No alternatives - Local authorities must consult with early years providers to set the value of their local SENIF.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Failure to meet statutory duty	Very high
Consult	Meet statutory duty and develop policy that meets need	Very low

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

24 The Council is under a number of statutory duties under the Childcare Act 2006 including but not limited to - section 6 the local authority's duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents; section 7 a duty to secure early years provision free of charge.

28 Local authorities are required to have Special Educational needs inclusion fund (SENIF) for all 3 and 4 year olds with special educational needs (SEN) who are taking up the free entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken. The funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN. The fund also supports local authorities to undertake their responsibilities to strategically commission SEN services as required under the Children and families Act 2014.

29 In order for the consultation to be fair there are guidance principles that must be followed and these are known as the "Gunning Principles"

- The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage
- Sufficient reasons must be given for the proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response.
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.

- The product of the consultation must be taken into account when finalising any proposals.

30 Legal services will continue to provide support as and when required.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

31 The SENIF schemes are funded through the council's DSG allocation.

32 As reported to committee the council's DSG reserve deficit is at £46.9m at 31/3/2023 due to the pressures on high needs budget.

33 The council's DSG Management Plan (approved at September 2022 Children and Families Committee) sets out the approach to the deficit.

34 The next version of the management plan will consider the impact of an improved SENIF offer.

Policy

35

An open and enabling organisation	**A council which empowers and cares about people**	**A thriving and sustainable place**
Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making – **We are seeking approval to consult on a new draft policy.** Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation – **We are proposing to change the way we support early years providers to improve inclusive**	Support all children to have the best start in life – **Our revised policy focuses on provision for individual children to meet their additional needs.** Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential – **Through providing bespoke additional funding we can ensure early years children get**	**(Include which aim and priority)**

practice by refocusing on quality provision and upskilling the workforce.	**the best support from the offset of their education journey, removing barriers early and supporting independence.**	

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

36 An Equality Impact Assessment is in draft and will conclude alongside the final report following consultation.

Human Resources

37 None. Consultation and policy to be implemented by existing resources.

Risk Management

38 The consultation will be overseen by Head of Service Early Years, Family Help & Prevention and Childcare Development Manager.

Rural Communities

39 No specific implications for rural communities.

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

40 This report has direct implications for children and young people, and cared for children with SEND aged 2-4 years.

Public Health

41 The resulting policy following consultation will have a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents, with the greatest impact on 2, 3 and 4 year olds with SEND and their families.

Climate Change

42 The existing statutory requirement to maintain a SENIF policy already helps the council to reduce energy consumption and promote healthy lifestyles through localised service delivery.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Danielle Holdcroft, Head of Service Early Years, Family Help & Prevention danielle.holdcroft@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft SENIF policy
Background Papers:	Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2023 to 2024, Education and Skills Funding Agency, para 5.3: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2023-to-2024/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2023-to-2024

Appendix 1

Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF)

Policy for the

Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities accessing the early education entitlements

DRAFT 5th September 2023

Cheshire East Council

Working for a brighter future together

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Cheshire East Council has a statutory duty to deliver an Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to support early years providers in meeting the needs of individual children with SEN.

1.2. Support from the government for children to access early education and childcare:

1.2.1. funding 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds
1.2.2. funding 30 hours a week of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds in households where both parents work
1.2.3. funding 15 hours a week of free childcare for all disadvantaged 2 year olds – for 40% of all 2 year olds
1.2.4. tax free childcare
1.2.5. child tax credit entitlement.

1.3. This policy takes account of the increasing government support for children to access early education and childcare:

1.3.1. April 2024 – 15 hours for working parents of 2 year olds
1.3.2. September 2024 - 15 hours for working parents of children 9 months plus
1.3.3. September 2025 - 30 hours for all working parents from 9 months to primary school age
1.3.4. Increased access to wrap around childcare for school aged children.

1.4. Approximately 80% of the free early education entitlement in Cheshire East is delivered by the private / voluntary / independent sector, and 20% in schools.

1.5. SENIF supports the following corporate objectives:

1.5.1. Support all children to have the best start in life
1.5.2. Increase the opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs
1.5.3. Ensure all children to have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
1.5.4. Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all.

1.6. An application for SENIF may be made for children accessing the Free Early Education Entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in Cheshire East. The child does not need to be resident in Cheshire East but must access the Free Early Education Entitlement in Cheshire East.

1.7. **Early Years SEND Offer - Levels of support**

1.7.1. **Tier 1** – **Universal Help** - First Concerns – "Ordinarily Available Provision". A provider would be expected to meet the needs of a child in this category using their own responses. Under exceptional circumstances where the provider demonstrates a need for support with their practice, support may be provided to enable practitioners to deliver Quality First Teaching and inclusive practice. This may be in the form of an assessment conversation carried out by a Portage, Quality and Inclusion Practitioner. Grant funding would not be provided.

1.7.2. **Tier 2** – **Extra Help** - SEND Support – children with low and emerging needs where practitioners require support and training to meet those needs. This may be in the form of an assessment conversation carried out by a Portage, Quality and Inclusion Practitioner. Grant funding would not be provided.

1.7.3. **Tier 3** – **Targeted Help**

1.7.3.1. Band A – **Transition support** – *for up to 10 weeks – SEND Notification from Health / Transferring Setting / Portage.* These children have special educational needs which require enhanced support so that they can access early education opportunities whilst their needs are being fully assessed for any further longer term support. Maximum Funding £1,000 per term.

1.7.3.2. Band B – **Targeted Support** – These children will have special educational needs that will have an effect on their ability to actively engage with the nursery session without some support. Maximum Funding £1,500 per term.

1.7.3.3. Band C – **Enhanced Support** – These children will have complex and special educational needs that will have an effect on their ability to actively engage with the majority of the nursery session without enhanced support. Maximum Funding £2,700 per term.

1.7.3.4. Band D – **Resources and Equipment** - Some children with special educational needs may require specialist equipment to enable them to have full access to the Early Years
Foundation Stage within their early years setting. Providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of all children. Funding is available in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be endorsed by the child's physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Maximum Funding £2,000 (£5,000 by exception for complex and specialist help at Tier 4) per term.

1.7.4. **Tier 4** - **Complex and Specialist Help** – Exceptional bespoke support. These children will require a totally individually designed curriculum in order to make expected progress and access all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their complex and special educational needs will have an effect on their ability to actively engage with all aspects of the nursery session without enhanced support. Maximum funding £5,500 per term.

1.8. Funding should be used to amend and adapt provision, enhancing the early years offer of inclusion. This may be for continuous professional development, purchase of identified resources, and enhanced ratios.

2. LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

2.1. All grant decisions will be made based on the set of principles, set out in this Policy, and within the agreed budget approved by Council each year. The budget for the grants is managed carefully and flexibly to ensure that the Council has money available throughout the year. As far as possible the Council tries to ensure that no one is disadvantaged due to the time of year they apply.

2.2. Where financial support is provided by the Council, a contract will be issued to the childcare provider to confirm the grant funding to be made available for a specific child and support to be delivered by the childcare provider.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1. Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities accessing early education provision operates within set criteria, agreed by the Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration and relevant Council Officers in line with the Council's Corporate Outcomes.

How to apply

3.2. Applications for Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities accessing the Free Early Education Entitlement must be made by the childcare provider, not the child's parent / carer, using the Council's application form and associated guidance notes that are available on the Council's website.

3.3. The application form must be completed in full. Incomplete application forms will not be considered, which could cause a delay or defer to your application. Supporting documentation (listed on the application form) may also be requested prior to the application being fully considered. Failure to supply all required documentation will result in the application being treated as incomplete.

3.4. The closing dates for receipt and acceptance of complete applications are published on the Cheshire East council website.

3.5. Grants cannot be paid retrospectively. Any work commenced prior to acceptance of the grant offer will not be eligible for funding.

3.6. All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as set out in section 5.0 of this Policy.

What can be funded

3.7. Where a child is eligible for funding as set out in 1.7 and subject to any specific requirements set out in the funding agreement for an individual child, grant spend may include transition support, enhancing staff ratios, key person time to engage with specialist support from outside agencies, developmentally appropriate resources, training and upskilling the workforce.

3.8. **What cannot be grant funded**

3.8.1. Funding of a childcare place
3.8.2. 1:1 support unless specified in an EHCP or has the most complex and enhanced support requirements confirmed in the contract
3.8.3. Standard inclusive practice

3.9. **Who can apply**

3.10. To qualify for a grant organisations must meet the criteria listed below:

3.10.1. Must be an early education and childcare provider[1] within the Cheshire East area;
3.10.2. Provide value for money;
3.10.3. Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and are able to provide such information as the Council reasonably requires in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisation's financial position;
3.10.4. If a voluntary sector organisation, have a management committee with an up-to-date Governing Document which must be signed by at least two members of the committee who are unrelated to each other;
3.10.5. Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation;
3.10.6. Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation applying;
3.10.7. Complete the current application form in full, providing all required information.

3.11. **Criteria for Funding / support**

3.11.1. Providers are required to demonstrate that the provision required for the child is significantly beyond high-quality inclusive practice and will be measured against incremental descriptors.

[1] 'Provider' means; an early years provider registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register, a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register, a childminder registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted, or schools taking children aged two and over which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider.

3.11.2. SENIF is a contribution towards meeting the needs identified in the application and should be used in conjunction with other funding streams such as the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Early Years Pupil Premium.

3.11.3. Consideration for funding may be triggered by SEND notification from Health, evidence of graduated response, Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle, child presenting difficulties in at least one of the four broad areas of need, and significant and persistent delay in meeting milestones.

3.12. **General Conditions**

3.16.1. All grants will be subject to a contract.
3.16.2. Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding;
3.16.3. Grants are valid for a period set out in the contract and will be paid in advance of completion of the project;
3.16.4. Organisations must be able to participate in a monitoring process and provide monitoring information to evidence how the grant money has been spent and adherence to the conditions of the grant. This must include receipts or invoices and a written report of the project;
3.16.5. Organisations must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used;
3.16.6. The grant must only be used for the purposes specifically stated in the application form and agreed in the contract. Should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may be asked to return some or all of the monies paid;
3.16.7. If a successful application is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, some or all of the grant may be recovered by the Council;
3.16.8. All conditions under which the grant has been awarded, including any Special Conditions, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the organisation being asked to repay the grant monies to the Council.

4. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

4.1. The grant applications will be assessed on a monthly schedule by the Early Years Quality and Inclusion Coordinator, in consultation with officers from other council departments as appropriate, against a scoring criteria based on the priorities outlined in 1.7.

4.2. Having assessed all applications a Recommendations Report is prepared by the Early Years Quality & Inclusion Lead for final approval by the Head of Service for Early Years, Family Help and Prevention in line with the Council's financial scheme of delegation.

4.3. Organisations will be notified to inform them of whether they have been recommended for approval or not. The outcome of the decision will be notified to organisations within 3 weeks of the application.

4.4. Appeals –

4.4.1. In the first instance, appeals should be addressed to earlyyearssenhelpline@cheshireeast.gov.uk for consideration by the Early Years Quality and Inclusion Coordinator and Early Years Quality & Inclusion Lead.

4.4.2. Where an organisation or parent continues to disagree with the award decision, concerns will be considered by the Cheshire East Early Years Forumwho may request additional supporting information. The appeal will be determined by the Head of Service for Early Years, Family Help and Prevention. A response will be provided within 8 weeks of receiving the official appeal.

4.5. Complaints and compliments about any aspect of the grant process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy is available from the Council's website.

5. MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

5.1. Following a successful application and in order to ensure that monies are used in an appropriate manner, a monitoring report will be required following project completion. This report shall include, but shall not be limited to, how the grant money was used and what difference the funding made.

5.2. Invoices, receipts and photographs must be made available to the Council on request.

5.3. Invoices or receipts dated prior to the date of the funding contract will not be accepted or reimbursed.

5.4. The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.

5.5. The organisation must allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.

5.6. Organisations must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be confirmed in the contract).

5.7. If organisations do not supply satisfactory monitoring reports and supporting information in full and within the set time scale they may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council. Failure to comply with the conditions of this grant may be taken into account when considering any further applications for grant funding made by the same organisation in the future.

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Children and Families Committee

18 September 2023

School Causing Concern, St Gregory's

Report of: **Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help, and Integration**

Report Reference No: CF/32/23-24

Ward (s) Affected: Bollington

Purpose of Report

1 St Gregory's Catholic Primary School in Bollington is a small 0.5 form of entry primary school (105 pupil capacity if full), which, for many years the school has struggled with pupil numbers and therefore has operated with a challenging 3-year deficit budget.

2 The school received an inadequate Ofsted judgement in February 2022, this resulted in the need to seek a sponsored academy solution for the school and find a suitable academy trust for the school to join. This solution has not been secured as consulted trusts do assess the school as viable in the longer term.

3 Since the Ofsted judgement, numbers in the school have continued to fall resulting in the position that at the end of the academic year 2023, around thirty pupils were attending the school giving surplus places of around 70%.

4 The local authority, in conjunction with the Department for Education, Northwest Regional Director, is therefore required to consider formal statutory processes regarding the future of the school which includes potential school closure. This reports formally requests that Committee approves commencing this process.

Executive Summary

5 The local authority, through its officers within education services, has regarded St Gregory's Catholic primary school as a 'school causing concern' for a considerable period, this has been due to its challenges

in securing sufficient pupils on roll to allow for a sustainable and affordable budget to be set. Added to these concerns were the quality of leadership in the school and the resulting outcomes for children attending the school.

6 In early February 2022, based upon the concerns over the school, the local authority initiated one of its intervention powers linked to 'schools causing concern', and issued a pre-warning letter to the governing board of the school. Unrelated to this, in February 2022 the school also received a full Section 5 inspection by Ofsted which judged overall that the school provided an inadequate quality of education for the pupils attending.

7 The local authority is required to complete a 'statement of action' following an inadequate Ofsted judgement and this was approved by Ofsted in terms of a rapid improvement plan. This plan was based upon the national expectation that the school would now join an academy trust as a sponsored school which would assist in providing the appropriate levels of support to improve the quality of education. Being a Diocesan school, such a trust would need to meet the requirements of the Diocesan of Shrewsbury.

8 Following extensive meetings with Diocesan officers and members of the Northwest Regional Director's team, it has become clear that the preferred local Diocesan academy trust does not consider this school a viable option in terms of its financial position; this is primarily due to the ongoing fall in pupil numbers.

9 At the ongoing meetings referred to above, the position was reached that as no suitable trust option was available, that careful consideration needed to be given to the sustainability of this school and that structured consultation would need to be considered which could include the option to close the school. This is a formal staged process using Department of Education statutory guidance. Opening and closing maintained schools' Statutory guidance for proposer and decision makers (January 2023) ('the statutory guidance')– see below.

Opening, closing and making changes to schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

9. Children and Families Committee would be the overall decision maker using this guidance.

10 A parents' meeting was held at the school on 10 July 23 to inform the local community that this structured process was to be considered by committee in September. A letter was also sent to all parents and carers

of pupils attending the school before the end of term to again provide information on this theme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Children and Families is recommended to:

1. Consider the evidence of information as presented within the report and appendices.
2. Approve the commencement of the structured process as outlined in the statutory guidance 'Opening, closing, and making changes to schools' regarding the future viability of St Gregory's Catholic primary school.
3. To consider the responses to the pre-publication consultation at a future committee and to formally consider the next steps as outlined in the statutory guidance.

Background

10 Appendix 1 provides a summary of events and actions relating to this school which has caused this school to become increasing vulnerable in terms of its long-term sustainability. The appendix outlines the significant events over the last 15 months which has required significant local authority support to be initiated to respond to the inadequate Ofsted inspection particularly in terms of securing leadership for the school to drive short term improvements in the quality of education for pupils attending the school.

11 There has been significant work undertaken in association with the Northwest Regional Director's team and Diocese to consider the future of this school. The Regional Commissioner- wrote to the local authority in early March seeking responses to a series of themes to which the local authority responded in a timely way relating to the challenges of pupil numbers.

12 It must be stated that there has been significant debate during meetings with the Northwest Regional Director's team and Diocese around the interpretation of national guidance and the national process to seek an academy solution for this school. Whilst these meetings have been prolonged the resulting position at the school has been pupil numbers have continued to decline as local parents have sort available school places in other schools across the Bollington planning area. This has required planning of the school class organisation as from September 2023, which will see the number of classes in school reduce from 3 to 2 having integrated years groups. Staffing has been secured for the start

of the new term and parents have been informed of such changes. The position as of the 7 September 2023 is that numbers for the start of the new academic year 2023/2024 are extremely low with only six pupils at the school.

13 The parents meeting held on 10 July, which local authority and Diocesan officers attended, was challenging but tried to offer support to existing families who are clearly and understandably very concerned for the future of the school and being able to secure appropriate local education for their child. It was reiterated to parents that the school will be open for the new academic year as there has to be formal processes followed if the long-term position for the school is that it is needed to close.

Reasons for Recommendations

14 The ongoing discussions with the Regional Director's team and Diocese have resulted in the position that as no viable academy trust solution is available, that there is a requirement for the local authority to commence consultation on the future of the school.

15 Parents, carers, staff, and committee members have been briefed on the next stages for the school which will require the commencement of structured processes as outlined in the statutory guidance as referred to earlier in this report.

Other Options Considered

16 The information below sets out a series of options: -

17

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The numbers in the school are too small to allow the school to be financially sustainable and therefore the deficit budget position for the school would continue grow,	The local authority could not sustain a school which had a three-year deficit budget without a viable solution and therefore financial risk would continue to increase. Small numbers in the school impacts significantly on the risk to provide a good quality education for attending pupils.

To seek a sponsored academy solution for the school.	A due diligence process has been followed with two Diocesan trusts which has not seen this school as sustainable in the longer term due primarily to a fall in pupil numbers.	Increasing risks due to the preferred national solution for the school not being available.
To consider alternative uses for the site or alternative educational provisions such as a SEND school.	Such options will be considered as part of the formal consultation process – opening and closing schools.	Each risk will need to be considered by committee following consultation

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

18 *18* – A local authority is under a statutory duty to ensure the sufficiency of school places in their area which includes ensuring that good quality school places are provided where they are needed.

19 Under section 15 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 ('the Act'), a local authority can propose the closure of a community, voluntary, community special or maintained nursery school. The statutory process is set out in The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and in the statutory process section of the statutory guidance.

20 It is a statutory requirement to consult any parties the proposer thinks appropriate before publishing proposals under s15 of the Act to close a maintained school. The proposer may use the consultation to consider a range of options for the future of a school. It is for the proposer to determine the nature and length of the pre – publication consultation. However, the proposer must then publish specific proposals. It is these specific proposals setting out details of the school to be closed which can be commented on or objected to during the statutory representation period.

21 The local authority in the exercise of all its functions, must have due regard (section 149 Equality Act 2010) to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, (b) to advance equality of opportunity and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. Any future equalities analysis will need to be considered in consideration of this duty.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

19 – Below is a table which summarises the estimated financial position for the school, based on the pupil numbers set out in the table underneath. It is not possible to forecast the exact impact of six pupils at this stage given that much of the high needs and pupil premium funding will also stop and staffing levels will reduce but this provides an indication.

Medium Term Plan:	**Outturn 2022/23**	**YEAR 1 2023/24**	**YEAR 2 2024/25**
	£	**£**	**£**
Balance Brought Forward	**-69,826**	**-132,411**	**-112,373**
Projected Funding/Income	331,293	385,653	211,179
Projected Expenditure	393,877	365,614	266,624
Budget Shortfall/surplus	-62,585	20,039	-55,445
Projected Carry Forward	**-132,411**	**-112,373**	**-167,818**

Pupil Numbers				
Key Stage	**Age**	**Actual Oct-22**	**Actual Oct-23**	**Forecast Oct-24**
Reception	4	3	0	0
KS1	5 to 6	9	3	1
KS2	7 to 11	40	3	4
		52	**6**	**5**
Change			*-46*	*-1*

If the school does progress to closure, then the deficit balance at the time of closure may need to be funded through the council's DSG schools' block.

Guidance from the DfE will need to be sought on this matter to ensure that we adhere with relevant guidance.

Policy

20 This process impacting on this school relates to two key educational guidance documents which are outlined below:

Schools Causing Concern

Schools causing concern - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Opening, closing, and making changes to schools

Opening, closing and making changes to schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

An open and enabling organisation. **(Include which aim and priority)**	**A council which empowers and cares about people** **(Include which aim and priority)**	**A thriving and sustainable place** **(Include which aim and priority)**

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

21 This will need to be considered as part of the formal consultation process.

Human Resources

22 HR officers have been regularly involved in actions taken to date regarding staffing decisions within the school.

Risk Management

23 Risks will be monitored as part of the staged process as outlined in the national guidance.

Rural Communities

23 This school is not classed as a rural school.

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

24 Significant implications for children and their families who may require changing schools because of a school closure.

Public Health

25 Parents and carers at the recent meeting expressed their concerns at the emotional impact the situation is having on their children when friends and peers leave the school, and the children are having difficulties with developing friendship groups within school.

26 Climate Change

27 Not applicable

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson – Director of Strong Start, Family Help, and Integration Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	One appendix with this report
Background Papers:	See appendices.

APPENDIX 1 : September C&F Committee –St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

St Gregory's Catholic Primary school is located in Bollington near Macclesfield. It is a half form entry primary (PAN 105 when full) and is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury group of schools.

Legislative DfE documentation: Schools Causing Concern guidance – October 2022
Opening & closing maintained schools – January 2023

Summary of key events leading to the current position

- In February 2022, the School received an Ofsted Inadequate judgement – the local authority had very recently to this date issued the school with a warning notice due to growing concerns. The substantive headteacher had also recently moved from the school resulting in an interim leader being identified.

- An adequate Ofsted judgement requires the local authority to produce a 'Statement of Action' which was approved by Ofsted. The solution for an inadequate Ofsted judgement is a sponsored academy route and as a Diocesan school, would require alignment to Diocesan policies in seeking an appropriate trust for the school to join.

- As of March 22, the school had 72 pupils in school showing that it had vacancies of 32% across all age ranges. Forecasting data for the school showed that full/close to full year groups were to be found in Key Stage 2 classes but numbers joining the school in reception classes had struggled for many years – around 5 compared to an intake of 15. There were also places in other local schools across the Bollington planning area as well as in Macclesfield primary schools.

- A parents' forum was established and meetings stated that the focus of the local authority support was to address those areas identified as inadequate by Ofsted – this focussed on developing a stronger curriculum offer.

- As from September 2022, a new interim leader was identified as the previous Head was required to return to her substantive post. In December 2022, an Ofsted monitoring visit took place which resulted in 'insufficient progress' being seen across the school – the Interim Headteacher during this visit stated that he did not want to continue to lead the school and therefore there was a requirement to source a further leader. The local authority approached a successful local trust who agreed to provide interim leadership and packages of support to accelerate progress across the school.

- Ongoing meetings were taking place between the Diocese, local authority and the Northwest Regional Commissioner's team to seek an appropriate trust for the school to join. The local Diocesan arrangements are that there is an identified trust to join – this is the Holy Family of Nazareth which at this point has 5-6 schools, the majority of which are primary. Following extensive dialogue and this trust undertaking 'due diligence' on the school in terms of its long-term viability. Fundamentally, this work centred upon the financial viability of the school due to its decreasing numbers of pupils.

- During this academic year as from September 2022, pupil numbers have continued to decrease. The school has operated this year in three classes but as numbers have fallen, the structure as from September 2023 will be in two classes with an estimated school population of around 22.

- Parental feedback has been that whilst there has been significant support for the current interim leader and the curriculum work which has been undertaken, due to the falling numbers and the ability to maintain friendship groups and pastoral/peer support, parents have sourced alternative school places in other local schools.

- The local authority has sought clarity from the Regional Commissioner around the status of the current academy order and the option to revoke this order due to the view of the Secretary of State (SOS) that the school is not viable as an academy.

- The consideration and methodology for closing a school is based upon DfE guidance. Identified reasons for closing a school include:

  a. There are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium to long term.
  b. It has been judged inadequate by Ofsted and the SOS has revoked the academy order.
  c. It is no longer considered viable.

- There is a formal statutory process which must be followed for closing a maintained school. The key stages which need to be followed include:

  a. Stage 1: consultation – to consult any parties the proposer thinks appropriate before publishing proposals. This consultation is to consider a range of options for the future of the school.
  b. Stage 2: publication – a statutory proposal should be published based upon the initial consultation period.
  c. Stage 3: representation – to consult organisations, groups and individuals – minimum 4 weeks.
  d. Stage 4: Decision – the local authority will be the decision maker on a school closure.
  e. Stage 5: Implementation of decision.

- The status of the school site is that the playing fields and a very small part of the school buildings are owned by the local authority which the vast majority of the buildings being under Diocesan control/ownership.

OPEN/NOT FOR PUBLICATION
By virtue of paragraph(s) X of Part 1 Schedule 1of the Local Government Act 1972.

Children and Families Committee

18th September 2023

Commissioning Children and Young Peoples Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service

Report of: Shelley Brough, Acting Director of Commissioning

Report Reference No: CF/06/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1 The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service (EHCYP) was commissioned in 2019 to deliver early help support, training and interventions to children, young people their families and professionals. This service is currently being recommissioned with a new contract start date of 1st April 2024. This report details the engagement and coproduction that underpins commissioning intentions and provides evidence to demonstrate the need to invest in early help emotional wellbeing support services for children and young people (CYP).

2 The commissioning work undertaken aligns with the priority within Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan: 'a Council which empowers and cares about people'. It also aligns with the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023/2028: 'our children and young people experience good physical and emotional health and wellbeing'. The model presented is underpinned by the outcomes detailed in Cheshire East Children and Young People's Plan (2022 – 26), which focus on providing CYP access to help when they need it, to prevent problems from getting worse.

Executive Summary

3 Cheshire East Council has commissioned the EHCYP service since 2019. The service aims to equip educational settings with the tools and knowledge required to prevent CYP emotional health needs escalating and allow them access to support at the earliest opportunity. The

service has trailblazed significant advances in terms of detection and management of CYP mental health in schools, but there remains a lack of capacity in early help therapeutic services.

4 Since the original EHCYP commission in 2019, there has been evidence of increasing levels of mental health need and demand in CYP across Cheshire East. Furthermore, there is growing body of evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted not only on mental health in some of our younger residents, but also on the risk factors that lead to mental health problems if not addressed early.

5 This report details the journey of coproduction and explores current need and demand for services, upon which commissioning intentions will be based. The report highlights key findings from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and couples this with qualitative feedback gathered during an extensive engagement exercise, which ensures that the resulting service model creates system change to accurately reflect need and significantly improve outcomes for CYP and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families / Adults and Health committee is recommended to:

1. To approve recommission the EHCYP programme with a focus on early help and prevention for children and young people, to ultimately reduce demand on statutory social care and mental health services
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Commissioning to award the contract(s)

Background

6 The EHCYP service was commissioned in 2019 for 4 years following the success of the Emotionally Healthy Schools (EHS) Programme, its predecessor. The aim of the service was to achieve efficiencies by integrating education settings with children's specialist mental health providers, to create a clearly defined universal and targeted offer. Additionally, the EHCYP service extended its reach into early years education and primary care, as well as providing a digital offer and parenting support.

7 In 2019, the EHCYP service was awarded to Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP) who subcontracted to locality-based therapeutic support providers: Just Drop In (north), Visyon (central) and CLASP (south). Additionally, Kooth were commissioned to deliver borough-wide digital access to online counselling and support.

8 The contract was awarded with an initial 2-year term, with two possible 1 year extensions. Funding was enhanced for the first two years to focus resource on training and development in education settings to embed an infrastructure which empowers professionals to recognise and respond to emotional harm or mental health concerns. In years 3 and 4, funding was lower as the service shifted focus to providing therapeutic interventions for CYP and their families, including counselling and group-based support.

9 The EHCYP service model used a 'train the trainer' approach to develop sustainable structures within education settings, where the emotional health of CYP is front and centre commissioned. The service aimed to provide schools with improved access to early support and specialist mental health advice, in addition to access to a menu of evidence-based policies, procedures and tools to increase CYP resilience. The service also pioneers a whole-school approach to creating emotionally healthy environments and facilitated multi-agency working to encourage a system-approach to early help. Work in schools was significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic whilst referrals for CYP individual support rose exponentially during lockdown, so extra resource was provided to therapeutic support providers.

10 In 2017, the government outlined its ambitious plans to address CYP mental health in 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper'. The EHCYP model was designed to complement two main commitments within the programme:

- Establishing Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in education settings, including Educational Mental Health Practitioners who deliver evidence-based interventions onsite and provide a link to other CYP mental health services

- Provide Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) training for every eligible educational setting in England by 2025

11 In Cheshire East, we have 34 MHST's situated in Crewe and Macclesfield settings (areas experiencing the highest levels of deprivation) with another three waves planned. 66% of Cheshire East schools have a trained SMHL and a network has been established to share best practice and create a sustainable model for improving wellbeing in education.

12 Despite this investment, the increase in demand and complexity in CYP presentations has resulted in long waiting lists for preventative therapeutic interventions, resulting in a domino effect into specialist and crisis services. Between April and June 2021, the EHCYP service provided therapeutic support to 220 CYP. Within the same quarter in

2022, this figure rose to 294. Providers are seeing increased complexity in presentations, with one provider commenting that over 50% of referrals contained a 'cause for concern'.

13 Whilst many CYP across England experience good mental wellbeing, in 2022, an estimated 18% of children aged 7 to 16 years and 22% of young people aged 17 to 24 years had a probable mental disorder (the 2021 census shows there are 85,292 children aged 0-19 years living in Cheshire East). Overall prevalence rates for children and young people aged 7-19 increased from 11.8% in 2017 to 19.8% in 2022, meaning that in 2022, there was somewhere between 8,606 to 13,525 CYP in Cheshire East with a probable mental health disorder[1].

14 Data supplied internally shows that mental wellbeing is a key factor within assessments for CYP and families presenting to social care. 25% of children in need present with mental health issues, rising to 28% for CYP on a Child Protection Plan. Similarly, 44% of parents with a child in need cite mental health concerns, rising to 59% of parents involved in child protection arrangements. During 2021/22, emotional wellbeing was a cause for concern in 36% of children in care across Cheshire East, which is higher than recorded in 2014/15[2]. Addressing CYP and familial emotional wellbeing at the earliest opportunity will have a long-term effect of reducing demand on statutory services.

15 The legacy created by the covid-19 pandemic should not be underestimated, with research showing that 80% of CYP with existing mental health needs agree that their condition has worsened since lockdown (YoungMinds, 2022). The most significant impact was felt by CYP who were transitioning between schooling stages. Since returning to 'normality', CYP feel pressured to "go back to the way things were", but state they have lost their "identity", with this especially felt in migrant communities.

16 Good education is an important protective factor for emotional and mental wellbeing; however, mental health is the leading cause for school absence and medical needs tuition. In the academic year 21/22, Cheshire East's Medical Needs Tuition Team supported 106 CYP, of which 76% were referred due to poor mental health[3]. CYP told us that social isolation and disjointed transitions have increased their anxiety

[1] Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2022 - wave 3 follow up to the 2017 survey. Official statistics, Survey. 29 November 2022. Available from: https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey#:~:text=Key%20findings,between%202020%2C%202021%20and%202022 (Accessed 22 December 2022)

[2] *Department for Education* 'Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [26/07/23] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk © Crown copyright [2022]

[3] Email correspondence (Tuition Team Manager, 09/02/23)

around school, but there is a distinct lack of support for emotionally based school non-attenders.

17 As of January 2022, there were 3,412 CYP in Cheshire East with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), of which 23.7% were attributed to social, emotional and mental health[4]. The NHS Long Term Plan promises additional resource for mental health and wellbeing in schools, but the scale and speed of the planned improvements is simply not sufficient, so we must take steps locally to create clear pathways for schools to access bespoke support.

18 School staff report that screening tools and resources for addressing CYP emotional health are in abundance, but there is a lack of repository for evidence-based, tried and tested tools. Similarly, they told us that there is a lack of support for risk management and safety planning for CYP exhibiting self-harm and suicide ideation. According to Labour Force Survey estimates, across Great Britain education staff have a significantly higher than average rate of work-related stress, depression or anxiety[5]. To reduce future demand on services, school staff need to be provided with the tools needed to support themselves and the children in their care.

19 Between 2012/13 and 2021/22 across Cheshire East, there has been an increase in the proportion of adults reporting a 'high anxiety score' (23.3%). As of 2021/22 the proportion of adults thought to be diagnosed as having depression by their GP is approximately 14%. Rates have increased since 2012/13[6]. Parents/carers tell us that their own mental health struggles are often dismissed when addressing their children's emotional wellbeing, so we plan to create a service that takes a 'whole family approach'. There is limited support to empower and build confidence in parents/carers, with missed opportunities to provide coping mechanisms that could transform the familial dynamic and improve emotional wellbeing without therapeutic interventions.

20 Poverty can be associated with poor emotional wellbeing in CYP and their families. Wards in Crewe and Macclesfield have a high proportion of children eligible for free school meals, however, there has been an increase in eligibility for other wards, including Wrenbury, Audlem and Handforth over the past 4 years[7].

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[4] Cheshire East Council (2022) Single SEND Forecast Data document. May 2022. Available from: single-send-forecast-data-document-v1.0-final-may-2022.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)
[5] Source: HSE (2022) Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2022. Available from: https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf(Accessed 2 February 2023).
[6] Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics (ONS). Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [30th June 2023] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk © Crown copyright [2023
[7] Spring (January) School Census, Public Health Intelligence Team © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey 100049045

21 Since 2015/16, Cheshire East has seen higher rates of children under 18 years admitted to hospital for mental health conditions than the England average[8]. The current rate of admissions for a mental health condition in CYP in Cheshire East is 133.9 per 100,000. There has also been an increase in rates of substance misuse hospital admissions, with the Cheshire East rate significantly worse than the England average[9].

22 In Cheshire East, hospital admission rates for self-harm in CYP aged 10-24 years have been increasing since 2013/14 and are worse than the England average. During 21/22, there were 450 admissions for self-harm in CYP aged between 10 and 24, which is 130 more admission than the previous year. Compared to our statistical neighbours, Cheshire East has the highest rate (725.3 per 100,000) of 10–24-year-olds being admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm[10]. Without increased resource and investment upstream to address issues early and prevent escalation, the demand on hospitals will continue to increase. There is a lack of preventative advice and health promotion available in schools and the community, so this service will seek to shift the balance and increase capacity in vital upstream support.

23 CYP were clear about the factors impinging on their mental health, which include bullying, social media, domestic abuse and lack of physical activity. 58% of CYP respondents to Our Visyon survey[11] had either experienced or witnessed bullying (Visyon, 2021) and 12.6% of 11- to 16-year-olds reported they had been bullied via social media (NHS Digital, 2022). Despite this, only 8 out of 144 Cheshire East schools are currently engaged with the KiVa programme and only 14 calls were received by the SCiEs team during an 11-month period[12]. CYP identifying as LGBTQ+ highlighted challenges of not getting support until in crisis, being at risk of bullying and feeling expected to fit in. Only 45.1% of children aged 5-16 years old are "active" and meeting the Chief Medical Officer recommendations for physical activity[13].

24 Access issues are felt by service users and professionals alike, with general feedback during our engagement including the words “confusion”, “inequality” and “overwhelming”. 1 in 5 children with a probable mental disorder wait more than 6 months for contact with a

[8] Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [20/09/22] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk © Crown copyright [2022]
[9] Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [20/09/22] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles/data#page/0/gid/1938133228/pat/6/par/E12000002/ati/402/are/E06000049 © Crown copyright [2022]
[10] Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [18/3/22] https://fingertips.phe.org.uk © Crown copyright [2022]
[11] Survey conducted with CYP living in Sandbach, Middlewich, Congleton, Holmes Chapel and Alsager
[12] Email Correspondence Education COVID response and Project Manager (31/01/23 & 02/02/23)
[13] Sport England. Active Lives Survey. Children and Young People data. Available from: https://activelives.sportengland.org/Home/ActivityData (Accessed 12 January 2023) © Sport England 2023

specialist (Public Health England, 2019), which is compounded by the inconsistency in eligibility thresholds across the system. We know that 5.5% of children aged 0 to 5 have a probable mental disorder and anecdotally our partners are telling us that children presenting for support since the pandemic are getting younger and more complex, so we need to create an equitable service which provides a clear pathway to support for CYP of all ages. Parents/carers of CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) we engaged with expressed frustration about unnavigable pathways and silo working.

25 To deliver sustainable improvements to outcomes for CYP, we should adopt a whole-system, preventative, public health approach that span's all departments and takes a holistic approach to addressing CYP mental health and emotional wellbeing. Respondents during our engagement told us that services operate in isolation, are fragmented with their own agenda and there is often a requirement to tell their 'story' more than once. We intend to create transformational change across the system by inspiring a shared vision and encouraging services to work as an alliance to reduce duplication and increase partnership working.

Consultation and Engagement

26 The proposed model for the new EHCYP service has been entirely coproduced with a large range of stakeholders, including parent/carers, education providers, professionals (including health, social care, police) and most importantly CYP. The commissioning activity is underpinned by 'Together in Cheshire East' and Cheshire East's 'Live Well for Longer Plan'. Highlights of our journey of coproduction are detailed below, with further detail and an overview of the proposed service model available in appendix A:

Sept 22 – Jan 23	**Engagement**	
36 focus groups were held, with 346 participants. Insight-based discussion focussed on the following questions, seeking a breadth of intelligence from a wide range of stakeholders: 'Children & young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing is like what?' 'At its best, what does children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing look like?		
Children and young people	**Stakeholders**	
Primary School Secondary School Further Education Alternative Education Young Carers Youth Clubs Children in Care LGBTQ+ Migrants	Children and Families Service Commissioned Providers Early Years Education Further Education Providers Headteachers	Primary / Secondary School staff Health (GPs & 0 – 19 Service) LGBTQ+ SEND VCFSE Sector Out of School / Tuition team

SEND	Police Youth Justice

January 2023	**Design event**
25 key stakeholders, including parents/carers attended an in-person event where engagement findings were presented, and key service priorities were agreed	

February 2023	**Elected Member workshop**
20 Councillors in attendance, discussed intelligence gathered from focus groups and allowed opportunity for members to feed back	

March – June 2023	**Task and finish groups (reflective of key service priorities)**
6 task and finish were established, including 57 participants, consisting of professionals, parent/carers and young people. Groups identified key commissioning questions and took part in solution generation activities.	

July 2023	**Children & young people vision setting and naming competition**
Children and young people are invited to form the vision for the service. They will also be asked to generate ideas for a service name and a vote will take place to select a winner	

July – August 2023	**Market engagement**
Soft market testing questionnaire: draft model presented to market and opportunity to provide informal feedback Market engagement event: interactive online event allowing the market and key stakeholders further opportunity to influence specification development	

July – Sept 2023	**Check and test**
Feedback will be sought from key stakeholders (including CYP and parents/carers) to 'check' proposed delivery model meets need and allow opportunity to further shape specification	

27 Feedback from CYP, parents/carers and stakeholders during the coproduction journey has been very valuable, and they have been offered the opportunity to remain engaged in this process into procurement and contract management. We have worked with the Cheshire East Participation Team and other forums throughout the

recommissioning process, so relationships have been developed and will remain through the lifetime of the contract.

Reasons for Recommendations

28 This recommission will allow us to improve emotional health support available to CYP and create an innovative, flexible service that embodies true early intervention. This meets strategic priorities by aligning with Cheshire East Corporate Plan (2021 – 2025), Cheshire East's Children and Young People's Plan (2022 – 26) and The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East (2023 – 2028).

29 Data gathered as part of the CYP Emotional and Mental Wellbeing deep dive JSNA clearly demonstrates a significant need amongst CYP for this service. This need has intensified in recent years due to the pandemic, which has resulted in an increase in risk factors and erosion of protective factors in CYP mental health. The evidence strongly highlights the increasing pressure this creates on other children and families' services including social care, school absenteeism and SEND. The service would help address these issues through an evidence-based early intervention approach, aligned to the i-Thrive Model[14] (developed by Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families and Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust in 2014). This will ensure that resource is targeted toward CYP who need advice, signposting and focused goal-based input:

[14] i-THRIVE | Implementing the THRIVE Framework (implementingthrive.org)

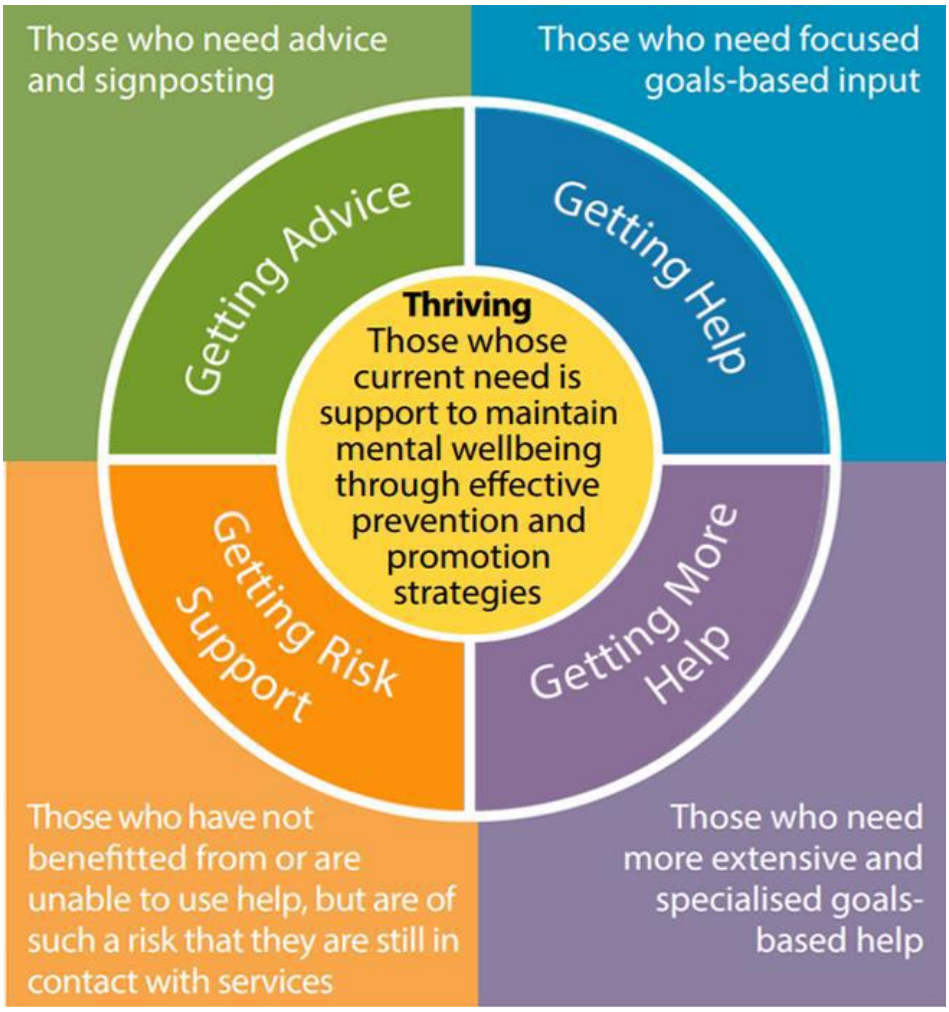

Figure 1: Thrive framework for system change, 2019

30 CYP, their families and professionals have been engaged extensively throughout the commissioning process, resulting a coproduced model which accurately reflects need and demand, and addresses gaps in services.

Other Options Considered

31 Decommissioning the service (do nothing): this would decrease resource and capacity in early intervention and prevention CYP mental health and emotional wellbeing service, which would lead to increase pressure on secondary and crisis mental health services. By providing less therapeutic interventions and support to schools and professionals upstream, the complexity of presentations will continue to increase, and demand will increase for NHS services.

Option	Impact	Risk
Decommissioning the service (do nothing)	Lack of resource for early intervention and preventative mental health and emotional wellbeing support for CYP	Complexity and risk in CYP mental health will continue to increase and crisis service will be come overwhelmed

Implications and Comments

Legal

32 EHCYP services are classified as health and social care services for the purposes of Schedule 3 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015. If the value of the proposed contract over it's entire term exceeds the applicable threshold for services of this nature (£663,540K) the contract will be awarded in accordance with the "Light Touch Regime" procedure as set out under Regulations 74 to 76 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

33 Above threshold, light touch contracts are advertised using either a contract notice or a Prior Information Notice (PIN) and both notices must be submitted to the Find a Tender (FTS) website. The Council should also ensure that all of the procurement documents are made available to interested bidders on the online procurement portal at the time that the contract notice is published. If the Council publishes a contract notice, the opportunity should be published on Contracts Finder.

34 There are no specific procurement procedures for above threshold Schedule 3 services and therefore Contracting Authorities are free to exercise their discretion and create their own rules provided that these rules

(a) Ensure that the contracting authority complies with the principles of transparency and equal treatment of of all potential bidders

(b) Allows the contracting authority to take into account the need to ensure quality, continuity, accessibility, affordability, availability comprehensiveness of services and the specific needs of different categories of service users.

35 The contract award rules used by the contracting authority may also be based on the tender representing the best price-quality ratio.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

36 The EHCYP service is detailed within the Peoples Commissioning Team Plan and currently has an annual budget of £527,655.98.

37 The proposals recommended within this report will not directly impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as the service is fully funded via the Public Health grant. However, efficiencies made through an early intervention and prevention model will impact upon wider Council spend on specialist CYP mental health services.

38 We are currently exploring additional external funding streams to enhance the value of the contract and increase therapeutic delivery, which will again reduce spend on specialist mental health services.

Policy

39 At this stage there are no policy implications identified.

An open and enabling organisation	**A council which empowers and cares about people**	**A thriving and sustainable place**
Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents	Support all children to have the best start in life Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential	Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

40 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in parallel with the extensive consultation and engagement exercise (Appendix B)

Human Resources

41 It is likely that TUPE would apply for staff from the existing provider dependent on the outcome of the procurement exercise, so support will be sought from Legal when required.

Risk Management

42 Recommissioning of the service follows a project management approach which includes the identification of risks. Any significant risk will be controlled and escalated for action where appropriate.

Rural Communities

43 CYP, parents/carers and professionals from rural communities were key contributors throughout our engagement and coproduction journey. Our findings showed inequality in service availability and accessibility in our rural areas, so the new service will work alongside Cheshire East Rural Action Plan to ensure equitability across the borough.

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

44 Time was invested into speaking with cared for, care leavers and CYP with SEND (plus their parents/carers). They told us that having a trusted adult and a space to feel safe is important in supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing. We learned that complicated pathways and long waiting lists leave many CYP in 'limbo' for extended periods of time. A conference led by Cheshire East Youth Council (Taboo Conference, 2021) found that careful planning of the school environment and training staff to understand how to respond to any young person who is struggling to cope with their emotional wellbeing are of paramount importance. This service will encompass recommendations from those with lived experience as a golden thread to increase inclusivity and equality.

Public Health

45 Commissioning intentions for the new EHCYP service will be underpinned by early help and prevention. The service is aligned to the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy Cheshire East 2023-2028 and performance management will be guided by the Joint Outcomes Framework. Service design will be informed by the JSNA (Tartan Rug) and wider Marmot Communities developments in Cheshire East.

Climate Change

46 The design and delivery of the EHCYP service will be underpinned environmental and sustainability considerations. The service specification will contain specific requirements for providers to work collaboratively to generate efficiencies and use innovative solutions to minimise the environmental impact of delivery. The tender process will include social value questions, including one specific to the environment.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Katy Ellison, Project Manager (Thriving and Prevention) Katy.ellison@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A – Engagement findings in detail Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	Cheshire East Corporate Plan The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East (2023 – 2028) Cheshire East's Children and Young People's Plan (2022 – 26) Together in Cheshire East Cheshire East Live Well for Longer Plan Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper

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Engagement Findings

Children and Young People

We spoke to over 100 children and young people about their experiences of school, mental health services and generally what it is like to be young.

What's good…

Independence and not much responsibility
Friends & family, playing with pets, feeling safe
Excited for the future, having a goal in sight
My voice is heard and I don't care about standing out
Meeting new people, experiencing new things and not scared of change
Digital social media – entertaining, keeps me connected and helps me be myself
Smiling and laughing
Being outdoors and exploring, travelling to new places
Hugs, kindness and compliments

What's not so good…

Complexity – isolation, overload, pressure, self-harm, suicide ideation
School – non-attendance, academically overwhelming, stressful, MH issues not acknowledged, conflict between teachers and parents/carers
Covid legacy – mental health, domestic abuse, missing out, social isolation, disruption to education, poor management of transitions
Communication – unaware of what support is available
Service accessibility – transport issues, waiting lists, lack of follow-up, 'square peg & round hole'
Aspirations – anxious about future, National / International crisis
Trust – takes time, don't want to burden
Bullying & social media – no escape, lack of support, hide behind screen, judgement, FOMO, unrealistic body image

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Engagement Findings

Stakeholders

We spoke to over 250 key stakeholders, including parents/carers and professionals about their experience of CYP mental health and emotional wellbeing, including the services available to support them

CYP mental health and services available are like what?

Complex – stretched, crisis, younger children, too much resource in safeguarding so no EI&P

Self-Harm & suicide ideation – numbers increasing, grey area for risk management

School avoidance – increasing, no outreach support

School – performance over wellbeing, resource stretched, emergency service, inconsistency, 'what next?'

Collaboration – isolation, silos, duplication, firefighting, no communication

Navigation – Onerous referral processes, overwhelming, no outreach, geographical inequality, not inclusive

Service capacity – waiting lists, red tape, eligibility restrictions

Fear – stigma, let down in the past, 'threat'

Parenting – trauma, lack of support, anxiety, dismissed, not listened to, poor family environment

Aspirations – anxiety (cost of living, war, covid), low parental aspirations, lack of resilience

Resource – knowledge gaps, high staff turnover, recruitment issues

Media – creates anxiety, no safety planning, bullying, catastrophising

SEND – undiagnosed conditions, lack of specialist support, increase in assessments

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Themes presented at Design Event on 26th January

1. **Complex** – stretched, crisis, younger children, overload, pressure
2. **Social Isolation** – covid legacy, anxiety
3. **Early Intervention & Prevention** – not enough resource up stream
4. **Self-Harm & suicide ideation** – numbers increasing, grey area for risk management
5. **School** – non-attendance, performance over wellbeing, stressful, inconsistency, MH issues undetected
6. **Collaboration** – silos, duplication, firefighting
7. **Navigation** – Referrals onerous, no outreach, geographical inequality, not inclusive
8. **Communication** – services, amongst professionals
9. **Service accessibility** – transport, waiting lists, 'square peg & round hole'
10. **Service capacity** – waiting lists, red tape, eligibility restriction
11. **Fear** – stigma, let down in the past, 'threat'
12. **Parenting** – lack of support, anxiety, dismissed
13. **Aspirations** – anxiety (cost of living, war, covid), low parental aspirations, lack of resilience
14. **Resource** – knowledge gaps, high staff turnover, recruitment issues
15. **Media** – creates anxiety, catastrophising
16. **SEND** – undiagnosed conditions, lack of specialist support
17. **Trust –** takes time, don't want to burden
18. **Bullying & social media** – no escape, lack of support, judgement, FOMO, negativity, unrealistic

Coproduced Service Priorities (what are we hoping to solve?)

Parenting support

- How do we create an **accessible, well communicated menu** of parenting support options?
- How do we ensure that parents feel safe, supported and are equipped with the ability to **embed strategies** to improve **family resilience**?
- How do we empower parents to work as **equal partners** within the wider system in decision making forums about their children?
- How do we support parents to identify and access the support they need to address **their own MH issues**?

Collaboration

- How do we create **system change** to enable collaborative service delivery?
- How do we encourage professionals to **work together** in early intervention to prevent crisis?
- How do we ensure that children & young people only have to **tell their story once**?

Bullying and social media

- How do we educate parents/carers about **online safety**?
- How do we create a sense of **shared responsibility** in schools for addressing bullying and abuse online?
- How do we educate CYP in their **rights and legal protection** in the way they are treated by peers?
- How do we increase **protective factors** to mitigate long term effects of bullying and abuse online?

Service access and navigation

- How can we **work as a system** to identify gaps in service and position resource where needed?
- How do we ensure that support is available in the **right place at the right time**?
- How do we help CYP and their families to **understand the journey** they will be taken on?
- How do we **simplify** service accessibility / eligibility?
- How do we **empower** CYP and their families to become more resilient (rather than chasing a diagnosis)?

Self-harm & suicide ideation

- How do we equip EVERYONE with the ability to **react appropriately** to concerns around self-harm and suicide ideation?
- How do we work as a system to create **supportive environments** that are accessible to all CYP?
- How do we ensure that CYP can access a **'trusted adult'** who is confident in having challenging conversations?

School

- How do we create a **shared understanding** of what 'good' (support/intervention) looks like?
- How do we ensure there is a **trusted adult** and **safe space** available to CYP in every setting?
- How do we ensure every member of staff in school is **equipped to respond** and support CYP?
- How do we provide equality in support for those CYP **not attending** school?

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Proposed Model (subject to consultation and further coproduction)

- 0 – 19 (25) offer
- Early intervention & health promotion
- Focus on developing resilience
- Whole-family approach
- Delivery-led model
- MECC
- Consortium / alliance
- Proportionate universalism
- Equality of offer – geographically & school non-attenders
- Data flow to NHS England
- Trusted adult / safe space
- Asset-based
- Targeted social value

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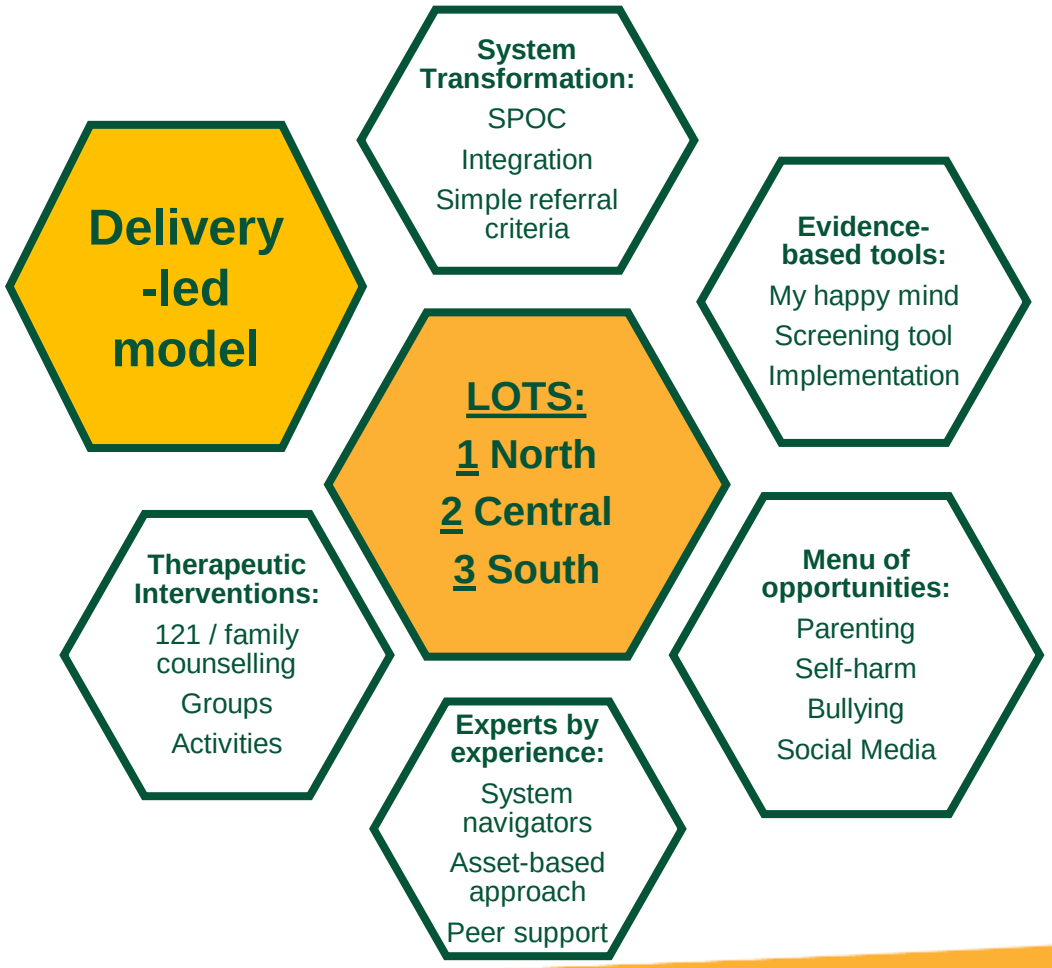
The detail



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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Engagement and our equality duty

Whilst the Gunning Principles set out the rules for consulting 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

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The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement. People with protected characteristics are often described as 'hard to reach' but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Contacting the Equality and Diversity mailbox will help you to understand how you can gain insight as to the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Emotionally Healthy Children & Young People service
Date of Assessment	28th June 2023
Assessment Lead Officer Name	Trevor Smith
Directorate/Service	People Directorate/Thriving & Prevention
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	**Description of the service:** The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's (EHCYP) service aims to offer secure, sustainable support to all children and young people who may need help or advice in order to achieve good emotional wellbeing. The service brings together colleagues from early years, education, health and the voluntary sector to support children, families and professionals in Cheshire East in their efforts to improve mental health outcomes. **The purpose or aim:** To improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people across Cheshire East. **Why is the service being commissioned and what evidence has been used to reach this decision?** The existing EHCYP service contract naturally expires on 31st March 2024 and a new service will commence on 1st April 2024. The proposal for the new service is to adopt a new delivery model which will see a mental health alliance created and the removal of the lead provider. A robust series of engagement/consultation sessions have been undertaken over a period of 3 months which has enabled the co-production of a plan/model for the new service going forward into the future.
Who is Affected?	The new service model proposal will affect the following • Children and young people (CYP) • Families • Service providers • Partners & stakeholders

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	CYP may be affected by the service recommissioning (in the short term) as the new service model may take a short period to mobilise, however in the longer term the service model intends to be more inclusive and easier accessed, so the impact on CYP and their families will be positive in nature. CYP and their families have helped to co-produce the new service design through active engagement and consultation so the proposed model has been formulated based on their feedback. Key partners and stakeholders will not be adversely affected as many of them have been on the journey of coproduction and are on-board with the new service model.
Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.	The proposed model does not adversely impact upon delivery of other Council services, functions or procedures. The proposal does link into the following strategies and policies: • Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025 • Cheshire East Live Well for Longer Plan 2022 – 2027 • Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership Interim Strategy 2023 – 2028 • Cheshire East Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2028 • All Age Mental Health Strategy (draft) • Children and Young People's Plan 2022-2026 The proposed service fits into the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan as it supports all children to have the best start in life, increases opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs and ensures all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

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How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?	The proposed service helps the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty by: • The proposed service delivery model was coproduced with CYP, their families and relevant professional partners • The proposed service is inclusive to CYP and their families of all cultures, religions and nationality. Workshops and engagement events were held with hard-to-reach groups including migrants and asylum seekers to ensure their voice contributed to the design of the new service • The engagement and consultation process actively included CYP who consider themselves to have a disability and those from the LGBTQIA+ community • The new service proposal is inclusive to all, it does not distinguish between genders or sexual orientation as the principles and commitments benefit everyone

Section 2- Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	**What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to commission/change/decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?** There has been a blend of information, both qualitative and quantitative which has provided the foundation to the new service proposal. Public Health colleagues have conducted a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) deep dive review on emotional and mental wellbeing in CYP and the resulting data and recommendations have provided a foundation for commissioning intentions. 36 focus groups have been conducted with over 300 participants, including CYP and their families, and a host of other stakeholders such as Children and Families Service, commissioned Providers, early years, education, further education providers, Headteachers, Police, Primary / Secondary School staff, Health (GPs & 0 – 19 Service), the LGBTQ+ community, SEND, the VCFSE Sector, the Out of School / Tuition team and Youth Justice.
Information you used	Cheshire East Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (cheshireeast.gov.uk) Together in Cheshire East (our shared definition of coproduction): TOGETHER in Cheshire East Equality and Human Rights Commission: Protected characteristics | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)

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	Jigsaw for young people with additional needs: Jigsaw for young people with additional needs | CheshireEast MarketPlace Utopia LGBTQ+ Youth Group: Utopia LGBTQ+ Youth Group - Crewe | CheshireEast MarketPlace
Gaps in your Information	There are no gaps in information as the engagement/consultations were so thorough.

3. What did people tell you?

What did people tell you	**What consultation and engagement activities have you already undertaken and what did people tell you? Is there any feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations that could be included in your assessment?**
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	Between September 2022 to December 2022 there were 36 focus groups held both face to face and online and 346 participants engaged, including children and young people in Primary School, Secondary School, Further Education, Alternative Education and Youth Clubs. Young Carers, Children in Care, LGBTQ+, Migrants and SEND were specifically engaged. A number of stakeholders were also engaged. These included Children and Families Service, commissioned Providers, early years, education, further education providers, Headteachers, Police, Primary / Secondary School staff, Health (GPs & 0 – 19 Service), the LGBTQ+ community, SEND, the VCFSE Sector, the Out of School / Tuition team and Youth Justice. From the focus groups we learnt that the current challenges are as follows: • There is a lack of early intervention and increased complexity • Covid has left a legacy • Self-harm and suicide ideation is increasing, younger people are presenting with issues and there is a grey area • Organisations and partners are often working in silo's • There are increasing academic pressures facing children and young people currently • There are system navigation issues for partners and referrals are 'bouncing' around the system • There is a geographical inequality across Cheshire East

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	• There is a lack of therapeutic support for under 11s • There is a distinct lack of parenting support • Pathways are unclear • There is a lack of emotionally available trusted adults • There is a lack of support for bullying and online abuse • There is a lack of knowledge from children and young people around online safety • Support in schools is inconsistent • Emotional needs have risen exponentially, and resilience is down Following the focus groups a specific design event took place in January 2023. From that design event which was attended by a number of key stakeholders and partners 6 key themes emerged which form the basis on the new service model. These were: • Collaboration • System access and navigation • Parenting • Bullying and social media • Suicide and self-harm • School In March 2023 6 multi-agency task and finish groups were set up and a total of 57 people participated in these groups. The purpose of the groups was to generate solutions to the issues raised in the focus groups, specifically around the 6 key identified themes.
Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback	There are no identified gaps in knowledge given the comprehensive feedback received from children, young people, partners and stakeholders.

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4. Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	**What do you know?** Summary of information used to inform the proposal	**What did people tell you?** Summary of customer and/or staff feedback	**What does this mean?** Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential). These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.
Age	The co-production process was inclusive of all ages. Children and young people contributed to the insights because it was important to hear their intentions and wishes for their future.	The new service proposal should focus on children and young people aged between 0 to 19 years (up to 25 for SEND). There is a current inequality of service offer relating to age.	Positive impact
Disability	The engagement and consultation process actively included children and young people who consider themselves to have a disability so the proposed service model will be inclusive to this community.	**What's it like to be a young person?** • Long waiting lists • Pressure to achieve from schools – all about academic results • I love my independence • Obsessed with social media, addiction, fear of missing out, • Pressures from social media, route for bullying, bullies can reach me at home • Impact of lockdown – mental health, domestic abuse, missing out • transitions without preparation • lack of social interaction • Stopped leaving the house due to OCD (germs) **What needs to be in place to pick you up when you're feeling down?** • Support from school / college • Cut down waiting lists for mental health services • Talk to someone I trust – parents / family, youth support service, teacher, peers	Positive impact

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		• A place to go to where there's support available – face to the service, rather than just a phone number • Communication about support services as they are often hidden **Barriers to services** • Waiting lists • Not knowing they exist • Referral process and fear of not meeting criteria / thresholds • Inaccessibility due to transport and physical health difficulties • Not feeling confident • Don't access help because they don't think they're bad enough – let it get to crisis point before they seek help	
Gender reassignment	The proposed service model is inclusive to all, it does not distinguish between genders as the principles and commitments benefits children and young people and their families.	CYP told us that advice and support around gender reassignment is predominantly only available for adults, so they feel dismissed. Hormone treatment therapies are also not readily available for CYP.	Positive impact
Pregnancy and maternity	The proposed service model is inclusive to all	Prospective parents told us that they would benefit from parenting support as early as possible to equip them with the knowledge and confident needed to address problems with their children early and to prevent escalation	Positive impact
Race/ethnicity	The proposed service model is inclusive to all cultures, religions and nationalities. Workshops and engagement events were held with hard to reach groups including migrants and asylum seekers to ensure their insights contributed to the Plan.	**What's tough about being a Young Person & from another race or religion?** • Adults can be judgmental about young people • School work can be tough and homework too frequent • Difficult to motivate yourself to attend school • People being fake – also fake profiles online and abuse • Covid was really tough – it messed up options at School • Language is different at home than it is at School – so harder to transition back and forth (most parents could only speak broken English at best so had to revert to non-English language) • The pandemic did affect language as we got sent home in lockdown which affected our development and time was lost	Positive impact

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		• Pandemic meant we had to stay in a bubble which was ok but limited social interaction • We kind of lost our identity (within School) during Covid lockdowns due to the disruption • Could not travel back to native Country due to the increased costs – so could not see wider family in person	
Religion or belief	The co-production process involved engaging with children and young people of various religions and beliefs.	See comments in race/ethnicity	Positive impact
Sex	The co-production process involved engaging with children and young people of all genders.	There was no disparity in feedback across all genders, with all CYP highlighting the same gaps in service.	Positive impact
Sexual orientation	22 representatives from Vibrance and Utopia LGBTQ+ focus group engaged with during consultation process.	**What's good about being a young person** • Attending Utopia youth group • I get confidence from looking confident and I don't care about standing out • NHS are there for me – they don't know everything, but they help me • Phones / social media – be myself, more social, anonymity **What's bad about being a young person?** • There's an unrealistic expectation to fit in • You can be a bit different, but not too much, but only if you're popular • Bullied for being different, bullied for being fake • Schools don't always follow up on bullying complaints and take a punishment rather than supportive approach • Scared of talking about my feelings to close family as I don't want to be a burden • Mental health issues are overlooked in young people • Prejudice towards sexuality – especially in school	Positive impact

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		• Lack of confidence in teachers to address behavioural issues (e.g. homophobia) • Help is more accessible for older people (e.g. hormone therapy) • I'm only taken seriously if I reach crisis point • Social media – hate, death threats, lack of security • Poor experience of crisis MH services (CAMHS, A&E)	
Marriage and civil partnership	The service proposal is inclusive to all.	CYP and their families told us that taking a 'whole family' approach to support provision is vital for addressing their mental health and emotional wellbeing.	Positive

5. Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	**What can you do?** Actions to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts
Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified? Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts? Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered? Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?	There are no negative impacts identified. The proposed service model is entirely coproduced by CYP, their families and professional stakeholders so there will be no negative impact on service delivery, only positive as the proposed service will go further to accurately meet needs. The proposed model creates an 'alliance' of agencies working in partnership to take a systematic approach toward achieving a shared goal. The current model has a lead provider and several sub-contractors, which is an option that has been explored. However, this requires additional funding for the lead provider for contract management oversight, which takes resource away from delivery, so the preferred model is proposed as an alliance of providers with an infrastructure development lead to encourage collaboration and create sustainability.

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6. Monitoring and Review -

Monitoring and review	**How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EIA**
Details of monitoring activities	The impact of the new proposal will be monitored through regular meetings, quarterly reviews, feedback from service users, feedback from providers, partners and stakeholders.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	Review September 2024, Trevor Smith – Project Support Officer, Thriving & Prevention, People Directorate

7. Sign Off

When you have completed your EIA, it should be sent to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox for review. If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer to be published on the website. For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

8. Help and Support

For support and advice please contact EqualityandInclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
CF/20/23-24	13/11/2023	Speech and Language Therapy	The Paediatric Speech and Language service (SALT) – The Council has a duty to provide speech, language and communication (SLCN) services to children under the Children's and Families Act 2014 Part 3. This is for children with a EHCP Part F (Education), but also with a need for early identification, prevention and support. The service pathways are linked to the health provision including access to health clinics and a need for service continuity within education and community settings. The Council needs to review and recommission this service, preferably in-conjunction with our health partners to provide a service that will be fit for the future and that rises to the increasing demands for better identification of children's needs within the community.	SMITH, Liz	Yes	Yes	Fair	Yes	No
CF/31/22-23	13/11/2023	School Catering Review Outcomes	To consider the options appraisal for school catering	WILLIAMSON, Claire	No	Yes	Open;#Fair	No	Yes
CF/29/22-23	13/11/2023	Update report on progress against the Mental Health Spotlight Review	To receive an update on progress against the Mental Health Spotlight Review	WILLIAMSON, Claire	No	No	Fair	Yes	No
CF/57/22-23	13/11/2023	Development of Family Hubs Update Report	To provide Children and Families Committee with an update on the development of family hubs in Cheshire East, review progress of the transformation so far, and next steps.	WILLIAMSON, Claire	No	No	Fair	Yes	No
AH/24/2022-23 & CF/41/22-23	13/11/2023	Cheshire East Place - Learning Disability and Mental Health Plans	The recommendations will be to approved the co-production of the Cheshire East Place -	BROUGH, Shelley	Yes	Yes	Fair	Yes	No

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Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
			Mental Health Plan and Cheshire East Place - Learning Disabilities Plan						
CF/13/23-24	13/11/2023	Second Financial Review of 2023/24 (Children & Families Committee	This report outlines how the Council is managing resources to provide value for money services during the 2023/24 financial year. The purpose of the report is to note and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2023/24 and approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	THOMPSON, Alex	No	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/09/23-24	13/11/2023	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 - 2027/28 (Children & Families Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2023. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	THOMPSON, Alex	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/16/23-24	13/11/2023	Children's Services Improvement Plan	To update committee on our preparation for inspection, our current improvement plan in response to previous inspection findings, and the findings from our self-evaluation.	BIRTLES, Kerry	N/A	No	Fair	No	No
CF/24/23-24	13/11/2023	Capital programme build update	TBC	BAYLEY, Mark	TBC	TBC	Fair	TBC	TBC
CF/30/23-24	13/11/2023	Unregulated/unregistered children's home arrangements	Scrutiny around regulation of childrens homes arrangements	BIRTLES, Kerry	No	No	Fair;#Open	No	No

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Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
CF/35/23-24	13/11/2023	Basford East New Primary School Postponement to Scheme	The purpose of the report is to request a postponement to the scheme and explain the reasons for the delay.	PROPHET, Joanne	Yes	Yes	Open	No	Yes
	13/11/2023	Basford East New school, delay to opening	To update committee regarding the delay to opening the new Basford East Primary Free School.	WILLIAMSON, Claire	TBC	Yes	Open	No	No
CF/34/23-24	11/12/2023	SENIF policy with consultation	Change allocation of funding from an hourly rate to a banding formula aligning with reforms to EHCP funding.	HOLDCROFT, Danielle	Yes	Yes	Fair;#Open	No	No
AH/22/2023-24 & CF/18/23-24	15/01/2024	Substance Misuse Recommission	To be confirmed	BROUGH, Shelley	Yes	Yes	Fair	No	No
CF/19/23-24	15/01/2024	Children and Families Scorecard Q2	To ensure the Committee has oversight of Children and Families performance	HARDING, Bev	No	No	Open	No	No
CF/08/23-24	15/01/2024	Third Financial Review of 2023/24 (Children & Families Committee)	This report outlines how the Council is managing resources to provide value for money services during the 2023/24 financial year. The purpose of the report is to note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2023/24 and approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	THOMPSON, Alex	No	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/10/23-24	15/01/2024	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 - 2027/28 Provisional Settlement Update (Children & Families Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2023. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to	THOMPSON, Alex	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No

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Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
			Council on changes to the current financial strategy.						
CF/29/23-24	15/01/2024	Cheshire East Sufficiency Strategy for Cared for Children 2024-25	The Statutory Guidance for Sufficiency (s22 of the Children Act, 1989) sets out a requirement for Local Authorities to work with key partners to be in a position to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care in their local authority area which meets the needs of children and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty'). The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must also have a regard to the benefits of securing a number of providers and a range of services. Fundamentally, the accommodation available must meet the needs of children cared for by Cheshire East Council. This updated Strategy details	BAGGALEY, Martyn	Yes	No	Fair	No	No

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Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
			current needs across the Borough, documents progress made to deliver the plans within the current (2021-2023) Strategy and our plans to meet emergent needs in 2024-25 and beyond.						
AH/23/2022-23 & CF/33/23-24	12/02/2024	Supported Employment Strategy and Implementation Plan	This report sets out the recommendations for a strategic approach to supported employment. This is about adult social care customers with complex needs and support into work	BROUGH, Shelley	Yes	Yes	Open;#Fair;#Green	Yes	No
CF/36/23-24	12/02/2024	Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 including schools and early years funding formula	To approve the planned use of the different elements of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2024/25 in terms of schools, high needs, early years and central blocks. To include specific approval of the schools funding formula	WILLIAMSON, Claire	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No

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Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
			and early years funding formula						
CF/01/24-25	03/06/2024	Service Budgets 2024/25 (Children & Families Committee)	The purpose of this report is to set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2024/25 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	THOMPSON, Alex	No	No	Open	Yes	No

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cared For Children and Care Leavers Committee**
held on Tuesday, 20th June, 2023 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)
Councillor J Saunders (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, C Bulman, D Clark, E Gilman, G Hayes, S Holland, B Posnett, J Saunders and B Puddicombe

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE
Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director Children's Services
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Annemarie Parker, Head of Service: Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Laura Rogerson, Head of Service: Inclusion
Nicola Wycherley, Designated Nurse Safeguarding and Cared for Children, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Carol Bulman be appointed as Chair.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Jos Saunders be appointed as Vice-Chair.

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Beanland.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

6 **UPDATE FROM SHADOW COMMITTEE (VERBAL UPDATE)**

A meeting of the Shadow Committee had been held recently with some new young people attending. The meeting was positive and the young people had expressed an interest in co-producing new documents and initiatives with the Council in the future.

Members of the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee were encouraged to attend a meeting of the Shadow Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

7 **CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS QUARTER 4 SCORECARD 2022/23**

The committee received the Cared for Children and Care Leavers scorecard for quarter four of 2022-23.

Members raised concerns around the number of vacancies for permanent social workers. Officers advised that this was a national issue but that social work recruitment and retention was higher in Cheshire East than in some other authorities. Cheshire East had set up social work apprenticeships and was also about to start a targeted campaign to recruit more experienced social workers.

It was noted that the number of children who had not received a dental check within 12 months appeared to be increasing but that these figures were likely to have increased due to improved reporting. Work was ongoing to continue improving dental care for cared for children and young people.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 14:38

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)