

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	DfE Safety Valve Programme Update
Meeting date	3 January 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This short item provides information on the work carried out by Children's Services and the Corporate Finance team regarding BCP's invitation to join the Safety Valve Programme from the Department for Education.</p> <p>During October 2023, Officers have been working to identify a proposal which would see the in year High Needs Block Budget for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disability to be balanced within a 5-year period.</p> <p>Despite significant efforts the Local Authority has been unable to provide a proposal which balances the budget within the 5-year time period set down by the Safety Valve Agreement framework.</p> <p>A proposal has been submitted to the Department for Education as detailed within. The Local Authority will be informed of the outcome during January 2024.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The proposal is noted and that an update is provided following the Department for Education's decision in January 2024.</p>
Reason for recommendations	As above

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children's Services
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

Background

1. This item provides information on the proposal which has been made to the Department for Education in December following the request to join the DfE's Safety Valve Programme.
2. Provided for this item are two documents which explain the proposal and the potential implications for this area of work.
3. Appendix 1 is the DSG management plan that was presented to school's forum on 13 December. This paper references 2 scenarios, the first provides a financial model which balances in year by year 5 as per requirements of the SV agreement however this will not provide a good service and the assumptions used have been agreed as unrealistic, including by the DfE SEND advisor supporting the safety valve programme. The second scenario is based on very challenging assumptions but is potentially deliverable, but this does not balance the DSG within 5 years with the in-year gap maintained around the current level of £27.5 million.
4. Appendix 2 is the 15-year SV submission that was submitted to the DfE on 15 December. The financial model is based on scenario 2 with further assumptions to reach a year 5 in year gap of £23 million.
5. Following a decision by the Department for Education in January, a further programme of work will take place to either implement the proposal or make alternative plans based on the advice and findings by the Department for Education.

Options Appraisal

6. N/A

Summary of financial implications

7. N/A - this cannot be determined until a decision from the DfE is received.

Summary of legal implications

8. N/A - this cannot be determined until a decision from the DfE is received.

Summary of human resources implications

9. N/A - this cannot be determined until a decision from the DfE is received.

Summary of sustainability impact

10. N/A

Summary of public health implications

11. N/A - this cannot be determined until a decision from the DfE is received.

Summary of equality implications

12. N/A - this cannot be determined until a decision from the DfE is received.

Summary of risk assessment

13. N/A - this cannot be determined until a decision from the DfE is received.

Background papers

None

Appendices

1. DSG Management Plan Report Presented to Schools Forum 13 December 2023

2. DSG 15 Year Plan Safety Valve Submission December 2023

Appendix 2 is exempt from publication under clause 9.2.3. of the constitution: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).