

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Children's Select Committee

Place: Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

Date: Thursday 5 September 2024

Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 28 August 2024. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225718215 or email max.hirst@wiltshire.gov.uk

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This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

10c **Safety Valve update (Pages 3 - 10)**

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 3 September 2024

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Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

5th September 2024

Safety Valve Update

Background

1. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is funding which local authorities in England receive to support schools. The DSG is split into four blocks which support different parts of the schools system.
2. One of these blocks is the High Needs Block which is used to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Since 2018/19 the High Needs Block has been under increasing pressure. This growth in expenditure has been seen in every council in England, and Wiltshire is no exception.
3. In Wiltshire from 2018/19 to 2022/23, this equated to a 51% growth in the number of children supported by an EHCP, and a 46% growth in the amount of money being spent from the High Needs Block. Over the same period, the money received into the High Needs Block from government only grew by 36%.
4. While High Needs Block income has not kept pace with the growth in demand, there are also changes that councils can make to respond to the changing strategic context.
5. The government introduced a statutory override which allows councils to hold their DSG deficit as a negative reserve on their balance sheet, separate from the rest of the council's finances. This statutory override, however, is due to expire 31st March 2026 and at that point the cumulative unmitigated deficit could be £117.0m while the current forecast total general fund and earmarked reserves are £90m.
6. Safety Valve is a DfE programme to support councils that have a financial challenge with their High Needs Block. The invitation to join Safety Valve was received in August 2023.
7. The High Needs Block Sustainability Plan for Wiltshire has been developed with stakeholders to identify improvements in our SEND system that will create better support for children and young people and their families, while addressing the financial challenges.
8. That plan was submitted to DfE in January with endorsement from Children's Select Committee, Wiltshire Schools Forum, and a cross-sector board including membership from Wiltshire Parent Carers Council (WPCC) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This was then turned into an agreement which was signed in March 2024.
9. At the end of the plan period, the cumulative mitigated deficit is forecast to be £137.2m. The agreement commits the DfE to contribute £67m of additional DSG towards this figure, while £70.3m will need to be found from other funding sources to completely remove the deficit.

10. If the council successfully meets the deal criteria faster than expected, then this figure could reduce however, if the council fails to meet the deal criteria then this figure will go up, and could lead to the DfE withholding future Safety Valve funding.
11. The plan that the council submitted sets out how the savings can be met through a series of “invest to save” projects that will improve support for children and young people with SEND, and their families.
12. The plan has been combined with other strategic documents in SEND, and the new SEND and AP Strategy, and turned into a Transformation Programme. This programme has 6 priority programme areas which are closely aligned to the emerging SEND and AP Strategy:
 - Voice of the child and their family
 - Improving support, skills and practice
 - Right support at the right time
 - Preparation for adulthood
 - Financial assurance in our SEND system
 - Improving communication, processes and culture

September update

13. Work is ongoing to revamp the Programme Dashboard to ensure the Children’s Select have an accurate and transparent view of the programme and its progress. This is attached as Appendix 1. There are still some gaps where the programme team will insert relevant measures as they arise.
14. Overall, the programme has been RAG rated Amber/Green. This is because, while the project activity is proceeding as planned, the data indicators are not moving yet.
15. Financial indicators are currently RAG rated Green because the latest reported forecast has all financial indicators on track. However, it should be noted that the financial indicators lag behind the SEND data, and so this is likely to change as the data catches up.
16. Efforts remain focussed on improving support in schools, ensuring the capital build programme is delivered, and developing the post 16 offer. These areas are most likely to deliver meaningful impact in the short to medium term.
17. Two programme areas within SEND Transformation are RAG rated Red/Amber “At Risk”:
 - Improving support, skills and practice – amber due to the adverse movement of the EHCP numbers indicating that more is required to support children without a plan.
 - Right support at the right time – amber due to concerns about the delivery of new special school places, especially as related to the Safety Valve capital request.
 - Preparation for adulthood – amber due to delivery plans still being in draft, however there has been positive progress on this and it is expected to be green in September.

18. The Preparation for Adulthood Programme has moved from Red/Amber to Green/Amber and is now rated “Off Track”. This improvement is due to the stronger position around the ceasing of EHCPs, and the programme plan which is being developed by the new Project Manager.
19. As was reported in June, and July, the council is still waiting to hear about the capital request of £5.7m that was submitted to bring forward the provision of special school places in the south of the county. The DfE requested more information about the bid in May, which was supplied. However, given this is a ministerial decision, the current expectation is that the authority is unlikely to hear back until after the UK General Election on 4th July, and probably not until October 2024 at the earliest.
20. However, due to the reprofiling of the capital programme in Wiltshire, the council has managed to ensure that the money is available to deliver his programme. However, this has put future developments, like the much-needed secondary resource bases, at risk unless government finance comes forward.
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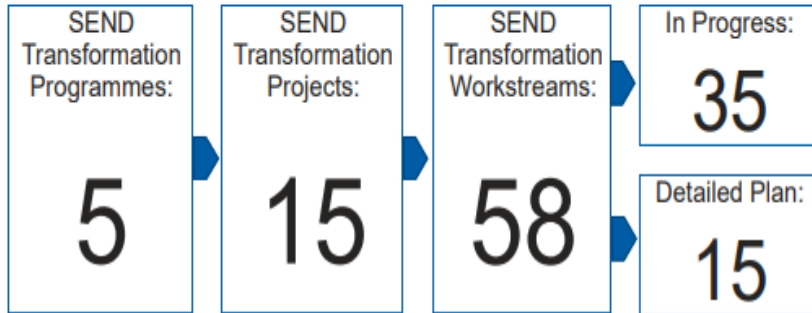
Appendices:

1. Childrens Select Committee Transformation Dashboard

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Portfolio Summary



Forecast Savings against plan (£m)

-0.188✓

Goal: -0.188 (+0%)

Number of EHCPs

5828!

Goal: 5608 (-3.92%)

HNB Overspend 2024/25 (£m)

28.280✓

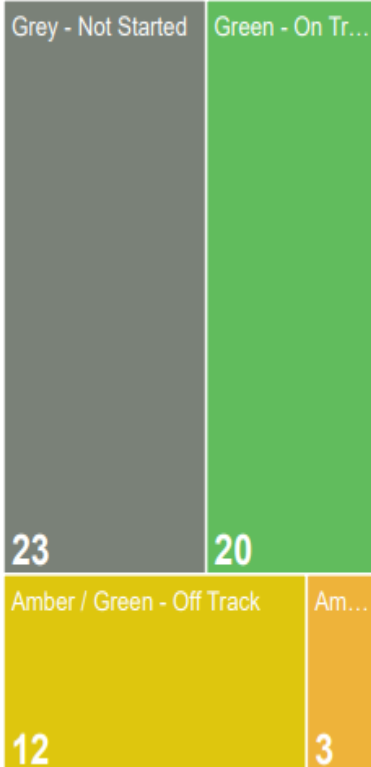
Goal: 28.280 (+0%)

% EHCPs in INMSS

6.22%!

Goal: 5.97% (-4.19%)

Workstream Status



Workstreams Off Track

Project	Workstream	RAG	Service Lead	Project Lead
Give young people and parents confidence in the employability and education offer	Increase PfA capacity to allow more informed and proactive conversations about ceasing plans.	Amber / Green - Off Track	Lisa Fryer	Ben Stevens
Improve inclusion practice through training and support	Increased Behavioural Support offer available to schools	Grey - Not Started	Teresa McIlroy / James Wood	Ben Stevens
Improve inclusion practice through training and support	Resource Library to allows schools and early years to borrow inclusive resources	Amber / Green - Off Track	Paul Redford / Emma Cooke	Ben Stevens
Improve inclusion practice through training and support	Wiltshire SEND Inclusion Charter	Amber / Green - Off Track	Lisa Fryer / Vikki Vince	Grace Davies
Integrated system of early support and intervention	A trauma informed early-intervention model for children with mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns	Amber / Red - At Risk	Kai Muxlow / Tiff Ferris	Ben Stevens
More effective processes and an improved experience of the process	Increase capacity in pressured areas of Statutory SEND service	Amber / Green - Off Track	Lisa Fryer	Ben Stevens
Proactive support at School Transition points	A model of short-term transition funding	Grey - Not Started	Lisa Fryer	Ben Stevens
Proactive support at School Transition points	Improved transition planning for children with SEN	Grey - Not Started	Caroline Bell / Helen Ortnor / EP Rep	Ben Stevens
Young people who are ready to embrace adulthood	Better link-up between health, social care and education	Grey - Not Started	Lisa Fryer / Hazel Malcolm / Caroline Rowen	Ben Stevens

Key Risks (12+ Risk Score)

Risks have not moved since last month.

At a programme level, the key risks remain that our interventions are not sufficient to meet the challenge, and that capital is not provided. Work is continuing against both risks to reduce both the impact and the likelihood.

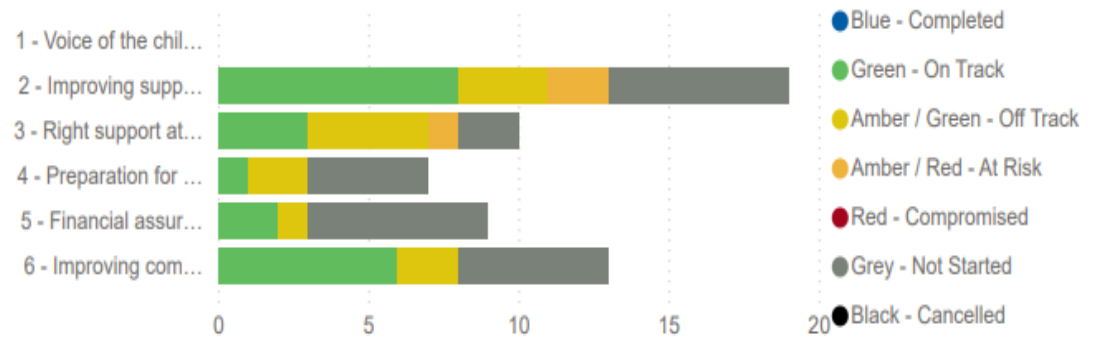
Programme level risks

ID	Risk	Impact	Risk Owner	Impact (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk Score	Action required
R-002	If the mitigations fail to have an impact, or if growth is stronger than forecast, we will not meet our trajectory.	The Council will face further financial difficulty and the DfE may withhold payments under the Safety Valve agreement	Kathryn Davis	5	4	20	Further work is underway to ensure this risk is understood corporately, including in our comms plan
R-003	We may not be able to access the capital investment required to deliver the mitigations in our plan	The Services could be impacted and fail to deliver the outcomes required for our learners	Liz Williams	5	3	15	We are engaging fully with Safety Valve and are discussing the opportunity to take on a negotiator to act on our behalf. We should also try to make

Transformation Programme Overview

Narrative

Workstream Status by Programme



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1 - Voice of the child and their family		Milestones delivered on time 0% (Blank) 100%				
2 - Improving support, skills and practice		Milestones delivered on time 0% 80% 90% 100%	24/25 savings forecast (£m) -0.753 -0.376 -0.376	EHCNA 12 month rolling average 99	Share of new EHCPs in Early Years 30.5%	
3 - Right support at the right time		Milestones delivered on time 0% (Blank) 90% 100%	24/25 savings forecast (£m) 0.000 0.000 0.000	Special School places commissioned 950	CYP with EHCP in AP for >1 term 173	
4 - Preparation for adulthood		Milestones delivered on time 0% 83% 90% 100%	24/25 savings forecast (£m) 0.000 0.582 0.582	Post 16 cease 12 month rolling ave 11	% Post-16 ceases which are non-NEET 28.6%	
5 - Financial assurance in our SEND system		Milestones delivered on time 0% 50% 90% 100%	24/25 savings forecast (£m) 0.000 0.000 0.000	Current average cost per EHCP (£) 17.1K	Ad hoc funding decisions this month (Blank)	
6 - Improving communication, processes and culture		Milestones delivered on time 0% 83% 90% 100%	24/25 savings forecast (£m) -0.753 -0.376 -0.376	EHCNA requests from parent carers 33.7%	EHCP issued within 20 week target 20.4%	

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