



Schools Funding Forum 11th January 2024

ITEM 9

Subject Heading:

Delivering Better Value in High Needs

Report Author:

**Katherine Heffernan – Head of Finance
Business Partnering**

Eligibility to vote:

Information only

SUMMARY

This report provide an update on the Delivering Better Value in High Needs programme

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum

- (i) Notes the update on the DSG Management Plan to this group

REPORT DETAIL

Delivering Best Value (DBV) in High Needs Update

Trevor Cook provided an update on the DBV programme to all head teachers at the Education Strategic Briefing held on 14th September 2023. This paper gives a brief update on work since then.

The LA submitted a grant application for £1m to the DfE, the maximum sum permitted. This bid was accepted and funding of £1m was awarded to be split over two financial years (£333.3k in 2023-24 and the remaining £666.7k in 2024-25).

The workstreams to be funded by the grant are:

- Building parental confidence
- Establishing a multi-agency Inclusion Peer Review Team
- Increase capacity of professionals on the ground.
- Co-produced training

These actions are expected to produce a mitigation impact through ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the child can be met in the most appropriate and inclusive setting which also provides better value for money – in mainstream rather than special schools and in maintained schools rather than the independent sector.

However the projected savings although significant are lower than the potential pressure on the High Needs Block. As part of the DBV process the LA has been required to submit revised forward forecasts of the projected deficit by 2026-27. A prudent but realistic projection is a cumulative deficit of £91m which could be reduced to £83m through the delivery of the management plan.

The DfE will be considering our submission as well as those of other authorities in similar situations in early January.