

Report to:	EDUCATION ATTAINMENT AND IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Date:	20 June 2023
Executive Member:	Councillor Feeley – Executive Member, Education, Achievement and Equalities
Reporting Officer:	Jane Sowerby – Assistant Director of Education
Subject:	SEND SUFFICIENCY AND DELIVERING BETTER VALUE IN SEND PROGRAMME
Report Summary:	This report seeks to provide an update on two significant Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) improvement areas, SEND Sufficiency and Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND. The need to efficiently utilise SEND resources and provide the right local, good quality school setting for children and young people with SEND is a clear priority for Children’s Services.
Recommendations:	That Board note the report.
Corporate Plan:	The content of this report is integral to the delivery of the following priorities within the Corporate Plan: Starting well: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very best start in life 2. Aspiration and hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood 3. Resilient families and supportive networks to protect and grow our young people 4. Opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise Enablers and ways of working: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A stronger prioritisation of well-being, prevention and early intervention 2. An evidence led understanding of risk and impact to ensure the right intervention at the right time 3. An approach that supports the development of new investment and resourcing models, enabling collaboration with a wide range of organisations
Policy Implications:	There are no policy implications to this report.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	Strong SEND Sufficiency helps to ensure that there is enough cost-efficient provision available to meet the needs of Tameside’s children and young people whilst avoiding the use of high cost independent placements. Participation and engagement with the DBV programme will help the local authority to address its Dedicated Schools Block deficit by identifying and focusing on the areas where intervention will provide the greatest financial impact. As part of this programme the authority will bid for a grant worth up to £1m to fund these interventions.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)**

Under the Education Act 1996 The Council as an education authority has a duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to education in its area. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient schools in their area, and to consider the need to secure provision for children with SEND.

The work being undertaken in this programme is intent to support that provision and provides the Board with an opportunity to monitor and review progress.

Risk Management:

A risk register will be maintained to ensure the key risks to implementing the various strands of DBV in SEND and improving our SEND Sufficiency position.

There is a real risk that, even with effective mitigations in place, Tameside will not be able to balance the High Needs budget within current funding levels as demand throughout the SEND system continues to grow at pace.

Background Information:

Schools Forum – High Needs Budget and Deficit Recovery Update:
<https://tamesideintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g8204/Public%20reports%20pack%2019th-Jan-2023%2010.00%20Schools%20Forum.pdf?T=10>

Introduction to DBV in SEND:
<https://newtoneurope.wistia.com/medias/ebgn5vudos>

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting:

 e-mail: dave.leadbetter@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Over recent years, rising demand and other pressures have contributed to many local authorities accruing deficits on their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the Covid pandemic has exacerbated these issues. The overspend on Tameside's DSG High Needs Block budget (i.e. the funding that supports provision for pupils and students with SEND) has been increasing year-on-year to the point at which it has become unsustainable. The High Needs Block in-year deficit for the last three years is as follows:

2020-21 - £1,821,981

2021-22 – £2,850,466

2022-23 - £1,971,507

1.2 Consultation and engagement on plans to address the DSG High Needs deficit have been ongoing since Tameside submitted its Deficit Management Plan* in November 2020. Schools Forum have had oversight since the plan was first submitted.

* Local authorities with an overall deficit on their DSG account at the end of a financial year must be able to present a plan to the DfE for managing their future DSG spend.

The DBV programme sits alongside and complements existing and ongoing work across Tameside to manage the DSG High Needs deficit. A summary of the current budget position and indicative DSG mitigations was presented to Schools Forum on 19 January 2023 (see background papers). One of the main mitigations is to improve the sufficiency of SEN provision across Tameside in order to manage resources more efficiently and more importantly to provide the good quality and local SEN provision.

1.3 In September 2023 Tameside will increase SEN sufficiency with the following actions:

- Increase places at Oakdale Special School by 16
- Establish a new 10 place Resource Provision at Dane Bank Primary School
- Establish a new 10 place Resource Provision at St.James CE Primary School

1.4 In January 2024, a new 15 place Resource Provision is planned to open, in a staged manner, at Longdendale Secondary School. This will provide a pathway for those children that require a continuation of their primary Resource Provision setting through to secondary school.

1.5 The significant capital project to re-locate Hawthorns Special School to a more fit for purpose site with a new build is starting to gather pace and will provide an increase of 80 special school places. A range of schools continue to build their business cases to further improve SEND sufficiency from September 2024 onwards.

1.6 The above increase in specialist school capacity will reduce the pressure on maintained special school provision and reduce the need to utilise out of borough, high cost independent and non-maintained special school provision.

1.7 The DfE is running a range of intervention programmes to assist local authorities with deficits to achieve High Needs spend sustainability. Tameside was invited to participate in the DfE's Delivering Better Value in SEND support programme. Newton Europe, in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), have been commissioned by the DfE to deliver DBV and will support 55 local authorities and their local systems to identify the highest impact changes that each LA involved can make to better support their local children with SEND and make plans to implement those changes. The programme will place children and young people with SEND at the centre of the approach and decision-making.

1.8 The implementation plans will build on existing initiatives and address the underlying challenges in each LA's high needs system. Tameside, like other LAs on the programme, will be involving parents and carers, schools / settings, local partners and our front line staff when designing this plan, ensuring the programme is underpinned by a comprehensive data-driven and evidence-

led diagnostic. There is also the opportunity for local authorities involved in the DBV Programme to apply for an implementation grant offered by DfE. Tameside joined the second tranche of local authorities starting DBV in December 2022.

1.9 The programme will comprise of three phases as follows:

Pre-engagement strategy period (December 2022 / January 2023): Tameside met with the DfE to discuss the programme in detail, the nature of support the DfE would be providing and how Tameside will best work with the DfE to drive and achieve the objectives of the programme. A comprehensive dataset of Education Health and Care Plans, provision and finance was provided as a baseline.

DfE provided a small grant to support data analysis and assurance at the beginning of this engagement phase and to ensure an effective delivery of phase 1.

Phase 1: 6 months: supported by a delivery partner (Newton), SEND Advisers and Financial advisers and involving a comprehensive diagnostic in order to:

- To identify sustainable changes that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- To enable us to build an evidence-based application to the DfE for a grant to assist with the implementation of those changes.
- Build a strong, objective evidence base across a third of local authorities, which can be used to influence future national reform.

The stages of the diagnostic include:

- Local area stocktake (assessment of existing processes, plans, capability, relationships, etc.).
- Facilitation of key stakeholder engagement for each authority
- Data analysis and assurance.
- Identification of root cause/underlying cost drivers and mitigating solutions/reforms.
- Improvement plan including reform implementation critical path
- A quality assured DSG management plan.

At the end of phase 1 (30th June 2023) the DfE will agree with each LA critical elements of its action plan to form a grant application of up to £1m.

Phase 2: 30 months – supported by SEND Advisers and regional teams. Implementation of action plans produced in phase 1, with critical elements funded through Section 14 grants.

2. CONCLUSION

2.1 Work throughout the DBV programme and SEND sufficiency improvements will ensure an improvement in local, good quality SEN place capacity and choice and efficient use of resources.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 As set out at the front of the report.

