



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 5th December 2023

Title: Update From the DSG Spending Review Group

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Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note the work of the group and the update regarding Delivering Better Value.

Reason for decision: For Information

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. This report updates Schools Forum on the work of the DSG Spending Review Group

2. Focus of the DSG Spending Review Group

2.1 Over the last term, the DSG Spending Review Group has focused on the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Work. The DBV programme aims to support local areas to address the three key challenges facing the SEND system with a focus on both achieving better outcomes for children and young people and achieving greater efficiency within the system.

2.2 The work to date has been intensive and has included a robust review of both activity and financial data which has then been triangulated by case audits, surveys to schools, parents and young people and deep dive's into the key areas that emerged from both the data and case audits.

2.3 The key theme's emerging from the financial and activity review highlighted the need to:

- Strengthen mainstream support
- Reduce pressures on maintained special schools

- Reduce the dependence on independent specialist provision

2.4 The data work identified the need to explore further parents and young people's views and experiences of Inclusion, variational analysis to understand the differences in numbers of pupils supported through SEN Support or EHCP's across schools, process mapping work in relation to annual reviews and placement decisions and some further case audits in relation to post 16 transitions and provision.

2.5 Considering both the key data areas identified and the findings of the case audits the deep dive work, the following group work streams have been identified and form the basis of the projects for the grant application:

- Supporting the aspirations of children and young people without EHC Plans
- Provision and Decision Making
- Meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs
- Preparation for Adulthood

2.6 Throughout the DBV work in Buckinghamshire there has been strong engagement with a wide range of partners throughout the local area, including schools, parents and young people. The DSG spending review group has also met monthly through out the autumn term in order to monitor the work.

2.7 A critical area of the work has also been to understand the financial forecast for the High Needs Block for the coming years and demonstrate the necessity to drive forward work to intervene early in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and enable further mitigations to reduce pressures on the High Needs Block.

2.6 The council is now in the process of finalising our grant application for £1m for one year to support activity to progress the priority workstreams as outlined above. These workstreams closely align with the workstreams of the wider SEND Improvement work in Buckinghamshire.

3 Future work of the DSG Spending Review Group

3.1 The group will continue to focus on monitoring the effectiveness of the existing mitigations alongside the work of the addiotnal mitigations being identified through DBV.

3.2 As the demand and subsequent financial pressures continue to grow it is vital that this group continues to meet, drive forward work and report back to Schools Forum.

