

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday, 7 March 2023.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chairman), Mrs C Bell, Mr D L Brazier, Miss S J Carey, Mrs S Chandler, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr D Murphy and Mrs S Prendergast

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies

(Item 1)

Apologies were received from Mr Oakford and from Mr Hill, who was in attendance virtually.

2. Declarations of Interest

(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Decision 23/00012 - Department For Education Safety Valve Funding Proposal

(Item 3)

John Betts, Finance Consultant, was in attendance for this item

1) Mr Love introduced the report. Mr Love said that the report set out the basis on which there was a proposed agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) to eliminate, over the medium term, the deficit on the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The deficit was heading towards £150 million by the end of 2022/23 and it was noted that the level of deficit was not unique to Kent County Council as several upper-tier authorities had been challenged by this issue.

2) Mr Betts outlined further detail on the report. The DSG was a ringfenced grant that was received by local authorities and provided to schools and other educational settings to provide education services. There had been an overspend on the High Needs block of the DSG by KCC and the majority of Councils across England. This issue had been recognised by the DfE which had initiated negotiations with 20 local authorities this year to support the management of the deficit, the process was named the Safety Valve Programme. The agreement was to be published along with all the other councils who had entered the negotiations. The first tranche of funding was expected to arrive with KCC soon after publication, with additional funding conditional on the implementation of the required reforms.

3) The Leader extended his thanks for the work carried out on the agreement.

4) RESOLVED to agree the recommendations as outlined in the report.

