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To: Scrutiny Committee - 18 March 2025

Subject: Safety Valve Programme

Classification: Unrestricted

**Summary:**

This report provides an update on the Council’s plans to balance the High Needs Funding element of the Designated Schools Grant, including operational and financial plans to achieve this. This report outlines the approach taken and the challenges with predicting impact that is achieved through whole system change.

**Recommendations:**

The Scrutiny committee is asked to comment on and note the report.

**1. Context**

- 1.1 This report follows and expands on the information submitted to Scrutiny Committee on 4 December 2024 and 29 January 2025. The latter of which sets out the national context in relation to financial pressures facing Local Authorities in relation to the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system, the requirement for the Council to work within the resources available, and the implications of a failure to do so.
- 1.2 Original plans in relation to the Safety Valve were created in Summer 2022 using data available at that time, predictive modelling based on trends from the preceding years (most notably 2021-22) and an assumption of linear progression. On 7 March 2023 Cabinet took a Key Decision that enabled the Council to enter into the “Safety Valve” agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). The Executive Decision taken included how the programme is aligned to *Priority 4: New Models of Care and Support* of “Securing Kent’s Future” and supports the ambition to make rapid and sustained improvements in the support provided to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families in Kent.
- 1.3 Activity was subsequently identified that could:
- a. support the implementation of this transformative change.
  - b. deliver the financial outcomes of the Safety Valve programme, including a long term financial sustainable SEND system in Kent.

- c. improve outcomes for children and young people, addressing the areas of weakness identified in the SEND Local Ofsted Inspection of 2019 and the subsequent re-visit of 2022.
  - d. ensuring that Kent is delivering against the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (2023) and
  - e. ensure that the Council is compliant with its duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015.
- 1.4 Since that time, significant progress has been made in the areas of whole system change, strengthening of statutory processes, staffing and communication.
- 1.5 In some key areas, including the number of children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), the number of children in maintained special schools and the number of children in Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools (NMIS), Kent remains a negative outlier compared to both statistical neighbours and national averages, though the data shows evidence of positive change. For example, Requests to Assess reduced in 2024 by 7% compared to 2023. (See Section 3 for more information on the progress made).
- 1.6 Unusually for a five-year commitment, the nature of the Safety Valve does not allow for an annual review of the agreement with the DfE to take into account, for example, the impact of inflation. However, given the progress made to date, and in acknowledging areas of ongoing challenge, the assumptions underpinning the Safety Valve financial projections and the activity being undertaken to bring spend on the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Designated Schools Grants (DSG) into balance by the end of the agreement, have been subject to review and revision.
- 1.7 This report outlines progress to date and impact identified, the most recent financial projections, actions to improve financial outcomes and indicative timescales, risks and barriers to success.

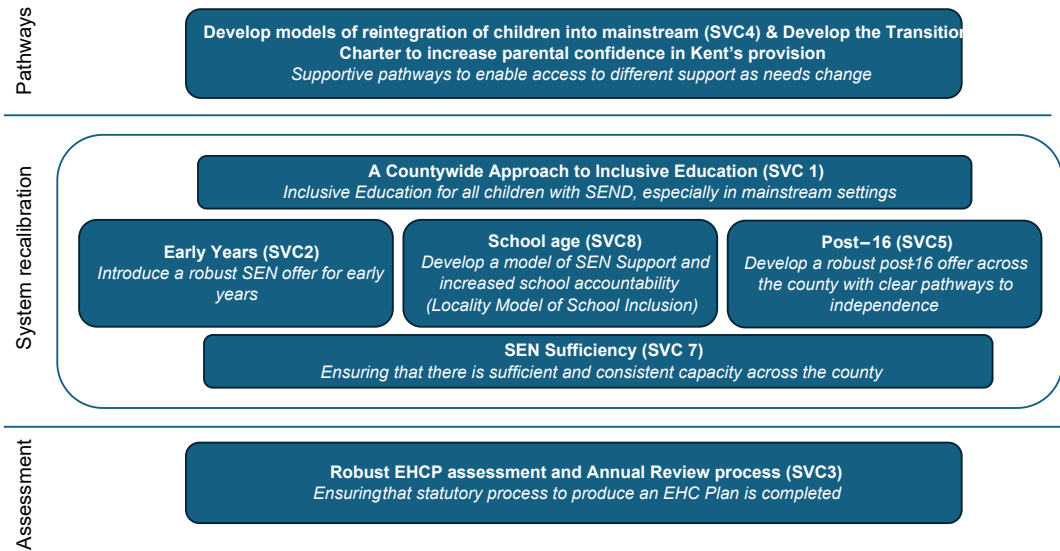
## **2. Progress to date and impact identified**

- 2.1 Under the nine conditions of the Safety Valve (Appendix 1), the Council has committed to delivering whole system, transformative change that can create a financially sustainable model of support for children and young people with SEND over the long term.
- 2.2 Over 30 projects have been implemented to achieve this transformation, falling into three main areas.
- 2.3 Assessment: ensuring that children and young people's needs are assessed accurately and in a timely way, followed by Annual Reviews to ensure that support is adapted as needs change.
- 2.4 System Recalibration: a focus on transforming how the system works to support children and young people through their educational career. A key

priority being greater inclusion for children and young people with SEND across all educational settings, and specifically in mainstream.

2.5 Pathways: recognising and understanding that as children and young people develop and grow, their needs will change requiring the existence of supportive pathways at key transition points and the opportunity to transfer into other forms of support/educational settings and can meet their evolving needs.

2.6 This is outlined below.



**3. Key areas of progress**

3.1 The core assumption of the Safety Valve programme is to increase the number of children and young people successfully educated in mainstream settings, including at SEN Support level, to bring Kent more in line with national averages and avoiding the higher cost implications of placing children in specialised and private independent settings.

3.2 The second SEND Quarterly Report, presented to this Committee in December 2024, outlined the significant resource available to mainstream schools to develop and embed inclusive practice, the work with mainstream schools to develop SEN capacity to enable the meeting of statutory duties and capital investment to improve accessibility.

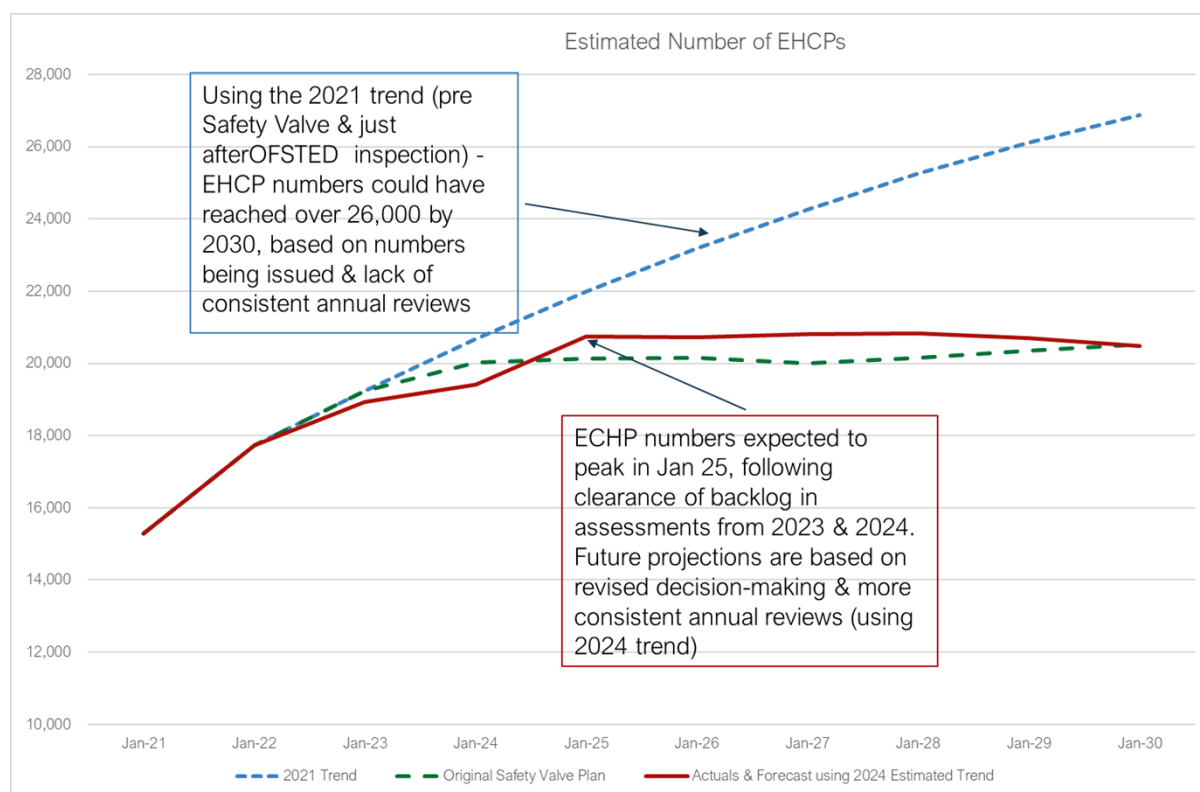
3.3 Several key areas of work, such as the Early Years Review and Communities of Schools projects will re-shape this resource to ensure greater alignment, reduce duplication and bureaucracy, and improve access to and efficacy of the resources available.

3.4 To date, a primary area of focus has been on the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process. This process is a statutory duty of the local authority and is the foundation of a fully functioning education and SEN system.

3.5 Positive improvements in both the assessment and annual review process are now enabling the Council to have a better understanding of the overall demand for SEN in the county to enable more robust financial planning and targeted actions.

3.6 Successful implementation of more robust decision making and capacity building of permanent staff within the EHCP team have resulted in changes to projections of the number of children who will have an EHCP in the future and the number of children with SEN who are having their needs met successfully on SEN Support.

3.7 The graph below shows an illustration of estimated numbers of EHCPs comparing 2021 and 2024 trends



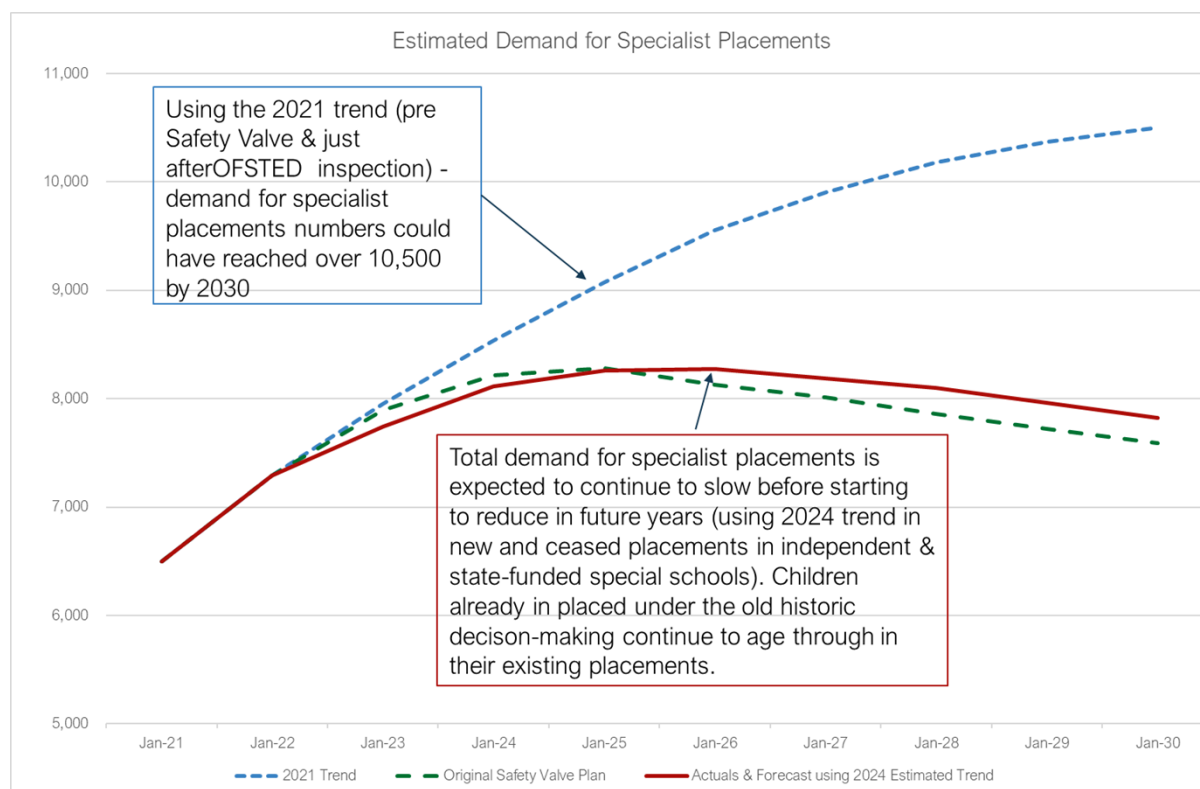
3.8 The table below shows the number of Requests to Assess received is reducing.

# of requests for EHC statutory needs assessment Columns shaded "Grey" are part months and not yet complete.

Area	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025
North	96	57	61	71	89	26	54	86	74	70	94	80
East	128	83	94	101	118	29	86	127	148	112	124	116
South	105	69	76	74	64	26	47	83	98	82	88	81
West	83	69	68	56	71	30	60	79	95	76	70	62
Not Kent Address	7	3	3	2	4	4	1	1	5	6		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>341</b>

3.9 The percentage of EHCPs being issued within the 20 week timeframe is also increasing, with 51.5% being issued within 20 weeks in August 2024, 76% during October 2024, and 89.9% during February 2025.

3.10 As a consequence of more robust decision making, and investment in increasing places in Kent state-funded special schools and Specialist Resource Provision (SRPs), children and young people with SEND are increasingly being educated in our state-funded settings (including mainstream and special schools), as illustrated in the graph below on the estimated demand for specialist places



3.11 The table below shows a summary of progress:

Number of:	2023	2024
Children living in Kent	342,900	348,300
Children and young people (0-25) with EHCPs	19,407	20,665
Children and young people statutory school age with EHCPs	13,864	14,564
Requests for statutory assessments	4,302	3,991
Percentage of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks	18.0	33.4
School age children on SEN Support	27,968	29,782

Source of EHCP and SEN Support Figures: DfE published SEND2 datasets, school census and Synergy data.

3.12 Smaller, targeted projects to review high cost placements of Kent young people within other local authority independent Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs) and increased fairness and consistency in decision making regarding the placement of children and young people in independent mainstream settings are already achieving financial savings and future cost avoidance.

3.13 The number of children in an independent school stabilised during 2024, rather than continuing to increase as has been seen in previous years and the introduction of a more robust fee increase request for non-maintained and independent special schools in September 2024, avoided additional spend of approximately £1m in 2024-25.

3.14 The above information demonstrates the benefits now being realised from an initial intensive focus on ensuring robustness on statutory duties and targeted projects of intervention. Consequently, the year-on-year spending increases are slowing down as changes begin to take effect, although not as quickly as expected when the programme was first planned and agreed.

<b>Total Spend on High Needs Block by main spend type figures in £m ( as reported in November 2024 Finance Monitoring to Cabinet in January 2025)</b>					
	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
	£'ms	£'ms	£'ms	£'ms	£'ms
Maintained Special School	106	123	137	151	163
Independent Schools	49	60	68	76	81
Mainstream Individual Support and SRP	46	54	61	65	75
Post 16 institutions	17	19	21	24	24
Other SEN Support Services	49	43	48	49	48
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>Rate of increase in spend</b>		13%	10%	11%	7%

3.15 Fundamentally, the current Safety Valve plan assumes linear improvement over a five year period. As a five-year plan, it would be reasonable to review and make adjustments based on learning, new activity trends and updated data. Therefore, in response to this, and as noted above (Point 1.6), the financial projections and activity being undertaken to bring spend on the HNB of the DSG into balance by the end of the agreement have been reviewed and the latest forecast position is outlined below.

3.16 More information about the Safety Valve, including quarterly reports submitted to the Department for Education as part of the agreement can be found via this link: [Safety Valve agreement - Kent County Council](#)

#### **4. Revised Safety Valve financial projection (Karen to provide)**

4.1 Below is a summary of the Accumulated Position of the Designated Schools Grants as of 31 March 2025.

	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>	<b>26-27</b>	<b>27-28</b>
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	£'ms	£'ms	£'ms	£'ms
Maintained Special Schools	163	165	168	173
Independent Special Schools	82	78	64	42
Mainstream School Support (incl. SRPs & Communities)	75	81	84	85
Post 16	25	33	37	43
Other SEN Support & Alternative Provision Services	48	43	41	40
Savings to be attributed from further actions		-5	-6	-7
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>377</b>
Estimated High Needs Grant	-323	-351	-362	-371
Transfer from Schools Block*	-15	-16	-16	-16
Variances on other blocks	-1	0	0	0
<b>Net DSG Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>-11</b>
DfE Contributions	-9	-14	-14	-28
Council Contributions	-15	-15	-11	10
<b>Accumulated Position DSG as at 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>30</b>

4.2 The forecast is currently being reviewed in light of the outturn for 2024-25. The assumptions build on the impact of the system changes outlined in above, and expected impact over the next three years from the roll out of changes from the early years review, localities and an estimate of the number of state-funded special and SRP places available. This will be updated further following the next stages of the both the SRP and Special School Review.

4.3 The ambition remains for this council to reach an in year breakeven position by the end of 2027-28 and for the accumulated DSG deficit to be paid off, the residual deficit of £30m reflects the estimated cost of delays to the new special schools. This forecast also reflects a total £17m savings target (equating to approximately £5.5m a year) yet to be attributed. Further actions outlined below are intended to support closing this gap.

## 5. Actions to improve financial performance and indicative timescales

5.1 Moving forward, there will be an ongoing focus on retaining and building on the progress made to date, at the same time projects to recalibrate the education system in Kent are entering into implementation phases. These include:

- a. Revised model of support for Early Years
- b. Localities Model of School Inclusion (including development of Communities of Schools and SEN Funding Model)
- c. Review of Specialist Resource Provision
- d. Review of state-funded special schools.

(See supporting documents section for more detail)

5.2 Following periods of analysis, consultation and design these are now approaching implementation as outlined below.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Phased Implementation</b>	<b>Full Implementation</b>
Support for Early Years	April 2025 – September 2025	September 2025
Communities of Schools	April 2025 – September 2025	September 2025
SEN Funding Model	April 2025 – August 2026	September 2026
Specialist Resource Provision	May 2025 – April 2026	April 2026 (related to SEN Funding Model and admissions criteria / new contract)
Special schools	May 2025 – August 2026 (delayed from original timescales)	

5.3 The expectation is that the implementation of these areas of system recalibration will accelerate progress already being made, specifically in relation to more children with SEN being supported in mainstream settings.

5.4 New and ongoing areas of challenge are listed below along with identified current and new actions to address them.

<b>Area of Challenge</b>	<b>Actions to address</b>
Number of children coming into the SEN system continues to rise	Implementation of a revised model of support for Early Years to increase inclusive practice in mainstream settings to reduce the numbers of young children entering into a specialist pathway at Year R/Year 1.  Increased robustness, transparency and consistency in the EHCP process.
Rising levels of additional financial support requested by mainstream and special schools  Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptional pupil need requests have nearly doubled in the two years between 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 forecasts from £7.5m to £14m (an 87% increase).</li> <li>• Requests for mainstream top up funding requests for SEN support cases has increased from £13m to</li> </ul>	The Localities Model of School Inclusion will have two key features to address this area. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communities of Schools that will enable the schools to have more flexibility in deploying available resources to meet the needs of the children in their local area through whole school approaches, with less dependence on individual one to one support and greater emphasis on supporting interventions for groups of children in an individual school or across a group of schools with similar interventions.</li> <li>2. By implementing a SEN Funding Model that will bring a more consistent approach to the different funding arrangements for top-up funding for mainstream, SRP and special through one funding system. Individual</li> </ol>



<p>£21m in the two years between 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 forecasts (a 62% increase).</p>	<p>funding packages will still be available for our children who are considered more complex and occur less frequently across all schools through a graduated tariff structure that will be used to inform the funding allocations for children attending special schools and SRPs; and identify the relevant funding stream for pupils with an EHCP in mainstream schools.</p> <p>In more tangible terms, the phased transfer of costs associated with the provision of Specialist Teaching and Learning Service from separately funding in the HNB to including within the Communities of Schools budget will deliver £2m saving in 2025-26 academic year.</p>
<p>Kent remains a negative national outlier in the number of children educated in special schools across the county.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Localities Model of School Inclusion, the revised model of support for Early Years settings, review of Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) and the Special School Review will enable more children with SEN to be supported in mainstream settings.</p> <p>SRP Phase 3 will consider the type and location of SRPs to create pathways within SRP provision as an alternative to special schools, offering opportunities for transfer at end of key stages.</p> <p>Plans to accelerate capital spend on small projects to increase accessibility in mainstream schools and Post-16 specialist provision is in development. Removing barriers to mainstream inclusion.</p> <p>Understanding and creating pathways into mainstream settings for Post-16 students as part of the review into Post-16 provision.</p> <p>Ongoing delivery and refinement of embedded annual Phase Transfer process.</p>
<p>The rapidly increasing cost of special school places as a consequence of inflation, the wider economy and Government's aspirations around national living wage, including independent special schools placements.</p>	<p>Ongoing targeted review of outcomes for children and young people in independent placements outside of Kent to determine if suitable, alternative provision in Kent can meet their needs and implementing that transition.</p> <p>Increased fairness and consistency in decision making regarding the placement of children and young people in independent mainstream settings.</p>

	<p>Ongoing use and refinement of fee increase process for Non-Maintained Independent Special Schools to enable cost avoidance.</p> <p>Planned re-procurement of the Non-Maintained Independent Special Schools Dynamic Purchasing System.</p>
<p>Like much of the country, there are more children and young people being educated out of schools</p>	<p>Planned projects to:</p> <p>Undertake a review of Emotionally Based School Avoidance to understand the experience of children and young people, barriers to school attendance and design supported pathways back into mainstream.</p> <p>Thematic review of children and young people not in school to identify pathways for re-integration into education and preparation for adulthood, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and processes related to Education Other Than At School packages.</li> <li>• Tuition</li> <li>• Hospital Schools</li> </ul>
<p>Costs of tuition have risen at a higher rate than originally assumed due to inflation pressures and market conditions.</p>	<p>Tuition remains a more cost effective provision in comparison to independent special school places. However, an increase in the number of children being educated out of school alongside increases in costs, have resulted in a larger than expected increase in cost in this area.</p> <p>Understand options to maximise use of most value for money providers.</p>
<p>Delays in resolving joint funding placements with Health</p>	<p>Ongoing work to embed the Joint Funding Review process.</p>

5.5 The timescales for implementation and realisation of benefits can be found in Appendix 2.

## 6. Alternative options

6.1 A range of alternative options have also been considered, and ruled out. These are areas of more radical change that could be delivered in a shorter timeframe and, whilst realising financial benefits, would be subject to the significant risk of unintended consequences.

- A specific programme to identify and move children from special school to mainstream, and from independent to state-funded special schools (currently this may be considered at key points of transition). Benchmarking undertaken in 2024 as part of the special school review showed that in Kent there were approximately a third more children educated in special school (either state-funded or independent) than the national average. This would indicate scope to move up to 2,000 pupils.
  - We have ruled this option out. The Council has made a commitment to not move children, unless it is deemed to be the most appropriate way to meet children and young people’s needs as part of a review process and / or at a point of transition. Further schools, could refuse to engage and public perception is undermined.
- Cuts to mainstream funding. The criteria for accessing mainstream top-up funding could be adjusted to reduce or remove the support for children who do not have an EHCP. Latest spending shows we will spend approximately £20m in 2024-25 on providing additional funding to schools to help support children without an EHCP.
  - We have ruled this option out. Short-term risk that schools become more likely to enter into deficit if insufficient time is given to allow for this change, including possible restructuring.
- Ceasing all (non-statutory) SEN Support Services generating a saving of over £10m.
  - We have ruled this option out. Mainstream schools may refuse to take children and refer more children for an EHCP based on “lack of sufficient resources”. A change of placement may be requested or the placement breaks down, leaving children and young people out of education.

## **7. Risks and barriers to success**

- 7.1 Generally, it takes two to three years to embed cultural changes within organisations and systems. Not recognising the need to change can impede, delay and de-rail change programmes. In relation to the Safety Valve, some projects have experienced significant challenge and additional steps have been required to rebuild relationships, trust and assurance that the system is working together to achieve best outcomes for children and young people.
- 7.2 Since the beginning of the programme, five public and other targeted consultations have been undertaken to inform the development of models enabling system recalibration, and six Key Decisions have been taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to enable this change. The time taken to complete Democratic processes was not accounted for in the original timescales or projections of when benefits would be realised. As additional context, four reports have been submitted to Scrutiny Committee, and information has been provided for seven meetings of the SEND Sub-Committee in relation to specific project areas, SEND and the Safety Valve more generally.

- 7.3 Delays to the building of the two new special schools which would have increased the overall number of state-funded special schools places available, and therefore more children and young people being educated in private independent schools. The original Safety Valve assumptions included new schools in Swanley and Whitstable opening from September 2024 (now unlikely to open until September 2027 at the earliest) and a further school on Isle of Sheppey to open from September 2025 (this was rejected by Department for Education).
- 7.4 If they had opened this year as expected, a saving of £1.9m would have been achieved. The total lost saving from the delays between 2024-2025 and 2027-2028 is approximately £23m in total. This is adding to the deficit and accounts for the continuing forecast of a £20-£30m remaining accumulated deficit at the end of March 2028.

## **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 There is a national challenge around how the SEND system works and part of this involves funding. Until there is greater clarity at a national level, the Council needs to continue delivering on its Safety Valve agreement, to best protect those receiving SEND services as well as the local taxpayer.
- 8.2 Significant work has been undertaken and progress made in achieving the outcomes of the Safety Valve agreement.
- 8.3 The current Safety Valve plan assumes linear improvement over a five year period. Focus to date has been on embedding robust statutory processes as the building blocks of a well-functioning education system while undertaking planning and completing democratic processes required to implement the transformative change required to recalibrate the SEN education system.
- 8.4 As a five-year plan it would be reasonable to review and make adjustments based on learning, new activity trends and updated data. In light of this, the financial projections have been revised.
- 8.5 The ambition remains to reach a breakeven position on the in-year High Needs Grant by the end of 2027-28 financial year, and to reduce the accumulated deficit which was originally forecast to be over £600m, if historic trends had continued. It is likely the accumulated deficit will not be fully paid back by March 2028, with a residual balance of at least £30m remaining relating to the costs incurred from delays in building new special schools. The forecast seeks to implement further actions to counteract the costs of increased inflation, higher demand for additional support, and delayed actions caused by protracted reviews. The ability to recover the position still remains a risk.
- 8.5 A range of projects have been developed to continue delivering the objectives and benefits of the programme, some of which are now embedded as business as usual, others are approaching full implementation and some are in the early

stages of development. It is expected that as these programmes are implemented, demonstration of outcomes and benefits will accelerate.

## Supporting Documents

### Children Young People and Education Cabinet Committee

Project	Supporting Documents
Model of support for Early Years	<p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Tuesday, 16th January, 2024, 10.00 am</a></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Tuesday, 9th July, 2024, 2.00 pm</a></p>
Local Model for School Inclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities of Schools, including</li> <li>• Specialist Teaching and Learning Service</li> </ul>	<p>Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (inclusion resource)</p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Tuesday, 9th July, 2024, 2.00 pm</a></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th January, 2025, 10.00 am</a></p> <p>Localities Model</p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 2.00 pm</a></p>
Local Model for School Inclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN Funding</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th January, 2025, 10.00 am</a></p>
Specialist Resource Provision	<p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 2.00 pm</a></p>
State-funded special schools	<p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 2.00 pm</a></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on Thursday, 21st November, 2024, 2.00 pm</a></p>

**Scrutiny Committee (including Scrutiny Committee and SEND Sub-Committee)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Committee</b>
Following second area SEND inspection and in light of pending discussions with DfE about participating in the Safety Valve, discussion regarding establishment of a SEND Sub-Committee.	Scrutiny Committee: 25 January 2023  <a href="#">Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 25th January, 2023, 2.00 pm</a>
SEND Sub-Committee process of gathering information and evidence, reviewing and scrutinising decisions and actions taken by KCC's Executive.	SEND Sub Committee  Seven meetings: 22 March 2023 to 7 February 2024
SEND Sub-Committee presented a report of their work Members resolved to disband the SEND Sub-Committee and return responsibility to the Scrutiny Committee	Scrutiny Committee: 24 April 2024  <a href="#">Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 24th April, 2024, 10.00 am</a>
SEND Quarterly monitoring (including details of reporting to SEND Sub-Committee)	Scrutiny Committee: 18 September 2024  <a href="#">(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Scrutiny Committee, 18/09/2024 10:00</a>  <a href="#">(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Scrutiny Committee, 18/09/2024 10:00</a>
SEND Quarterly monitoring	Scrutiny Committee: 4 December 2024  <a href="#">(Public Pack)SEND Scrutiny - Quarterly Reporting (2nd report) Agenda Supplement for Scrutiny Committee, 04/12/2024 10:00</a>  <a href="#">(Public Pack)Scrutiny Review - SEND Transformation Agenda Supplement for Scrutiny Committee, 04/12/2024 10:00</a>



## **Appendix 1: Nine Conditions of the Safety Valve Agreement**

- Implement a countywide approach to 'Inclusion Education', to further build capacity in mainstream schools to support children and young people with SEN, thus increasing the proportion of children successfully supported in mainstream education and reducing dependence on specialist provision;
- Introduce a robust SEN offer for early years, through a review, which explores alternatives to special school admission before KS2, SEN redesign and implementation of County Approaches to Inclusive Education (CAIE) to support a consistent mainstream offer, including leadership development programmes, peer review and core training offer;
- Review the system of EHCP assessments and annual reviews to ensure robustness, transparency, and consistency, through use of consistent criteria and practice framework;
- Implement models of reintegration of children from special/independent schools to mainstream;
- Develop a robust post 16 offer across the county with clear pathways to independence for children with SEN, through increased post 16 opportunities for preparing for adulthood;
- Develop the Transition Charter to increase parental confidence in Kent's provision. This involves working with schools to enable them to articulate the provision pathways for parents clearly and provide support to both children and parents at key transition points;
- Ensure there is sufficient and consistent capacity across the county to support children with severe and complex needs in their local area where possible. This includes recruitment of temporary posts to support sufficiency planning, reviewing the use of SRPs and reviewing the specialist continuum to ensure only the most severe and complex needs are supported in special schools;
- Increase school accountability through development of a school/area-led approach to commissioning of SEN support services (Locality Based Resources), to better respond to the needs of children and young people with SEND;
- Continue working closely with NHS Kent and Medway to ensure a common understanding of SEND needs, including the drivers behind increases in need, ensuring clarity of clinical assessment and the subsequent funding associated.



## Appendix 2: Timeframes for expected project implementation and delivery of benefits per financial year

### Key:

	Scoping / Planning / Design
	Pilot / Phased Implementation
	Full implementation / delivery of benefits

SVC	Project	April 2025 – March 2026				April 2026 – March 2027				April 2027 – March 2028			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	STLS / LIFT review												
1	Accelerate capital spend in small projects												
2	Early Years Implementation												
2	Early Years Foundation Stage: Year R Inclusion												
3	Continuous Improvement: embedding and evaluating process improvements (CI Team)												
3	Continuous Improvement: EHCP process												
3	Annual Review Integration with ICS												
3	Continuous Improvement: Officer Support at Annual Review to ensure consistency of decision making regarding Exceptional Pupil Need												

4	Review of Independent Placements in Other Local Authority SPIs/PFA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
4	Review of Independent Mainstream Placements	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
4	Review of EBSA	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
5	Pathways for All	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
5	Review of Post – 16 Provision	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
6	Implementation and monitoring of Phase Transfer	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
7	SEN Sufficiency Planning: SRP Phase 2	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
7	SEN Sufficiency Planning: Special Schools	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
7	Re-procurement NMISS Dynamic Purchasing System	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
7	Thematic review of children and young people, not in schools	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
8	Locality Based Resources: Communities of Schools	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
8	Locality Based Resources: SEN Funding Model	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
9	Joint Funded Placement process	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
9	Implementation and embedding of Balanced System Scheme	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■