

Statement: PS30.03

Cabinet – 5 MARCH 2024

Re: Agenda item 30 – Safety Valve Programme

Statement submitted by: Jen Smith

Bristol City Council was invited by the DfE to apply for the Safety Valve Programme in July 2023. It then went into a development period with the DfE with the application being submitted to the DfE on 12 January 2024.

This was supported by the Chief Executive, the Director Education and Skills and the Council's Section 151 Office.

So this has been imminent since last summer yet the council chose to submit this to Cabinet to be rubber stamped the day before the meeting?

What is Bristol playing at? Why has this been a secret from the public?

For something that will have such a huge impact on the city's SEND population, it is reprehensible to act this way.

Being on the Safety Value Programme means huge cuts will be coming to SEND. The public had already guessed this was coming due to the Better Value for SEND, shortbreaks, Home to School Transport and top up funding.

But this is whole new level of cuts which will have a hugely detrimental impact on children and young people in Bristol who have already had their education decimated. And will impact on those who are coming through the system and will come through the system.

This whole agenda item should be pulled. It should be subject to proper scrutiny and public scrutiny.

Not only has Bristol City Council kept this quiet, it's also been dumped as a Cabinet agenda item far too late for people to take part in the democratic process.

It is unconscionable that Bristol is operating in this manner.