

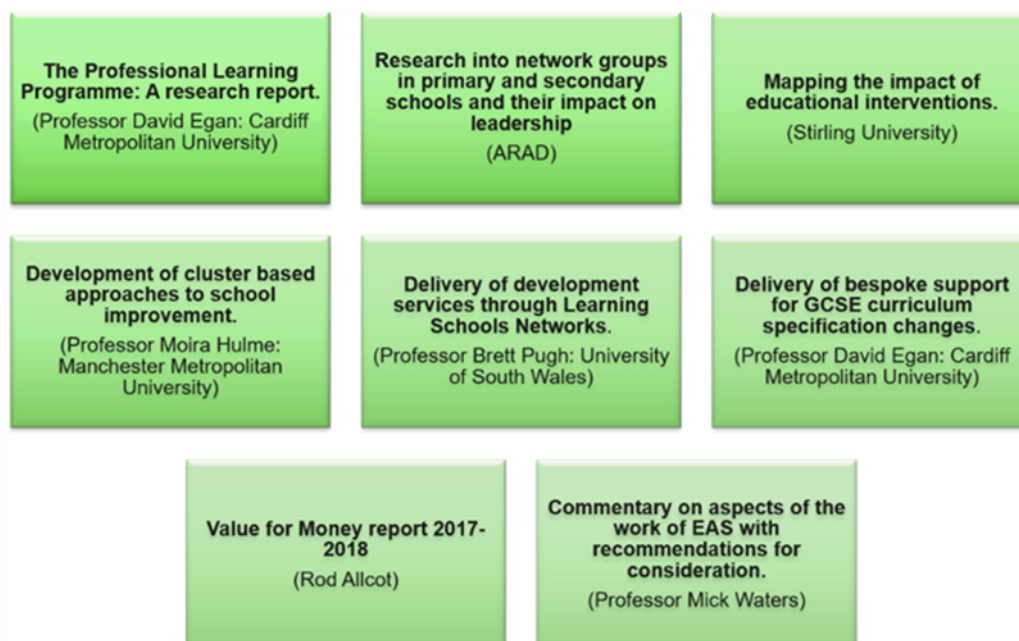
Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny - EAS Business Plan 2019-20

Author Debbie Hartevelde, Managing Director, Education Achievement Service (EAS)

Date February 2019

1. Background and Report

- 1.1. The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs). This 2019-2020 Business Plan (**Appendix 1**) outlines the programme of work that is required to continue to accelerate outcomes and provision for children and young people in settings and schools in South East Wales. The plan focuses on the need to raise aspiration and accelerate improvement in pupil outcomes, improve the quality of teaching and leadership, support schools to realise the national reform agenda and to continue to build upon the self-improving system within and across schools and settings.
- 1.2. Priorities for the Business Plan have been derived from Local Authority Strategic Plans, the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan, areas that have been identified as requiring improvements through internal self-evaluation processes, external research and feedback from Estyn. The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within each LA are met through bespoke work with each school. This Business Plan addresses Newport local authority strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of the EAS.
- 1.3. The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within Newport are met through bespoke work with each school. The EAS offers a wide range of bespoke support that is based upon best practice.
- 1.4. The EAS Business Plan priorities continues to be shaped using the outcomes of external reviews and research:



- 1.5. Please note that a mid-year evaluation of the current business plan has been submitted to each of the EAS governance groups and has been available for local authorities to share as appropriate within their own democratic processes. School and aggregate LA performance data has been presented to this committee in previous reports and this business plan has been informed by that data analysis.

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1.6. The Business Plan is in the consultation process. The Consultees are noted below:

- Education Achievement Service Staff
- SEWC Directors and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group
- Education Achievement Service Company Board
- Education Achievement Service Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual Local Authority Education Scrutiny Committees
- Regional Headteacher Strategy Group
- Regional Governor Strategy Group
- Pupil Consultation

1.7. Advice and guidance have also been sought from the following people:

- Sir Alasdair McDonald (Specialist Adviser to Cabinet Secretary for Education for vulnerable learners)

1.8. The final version of the Business Plan will be supported by a range of supporting documents:

- Local Authority Annex documents 2019 – 2020
- Detailed Business Plan 2019–2020
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2019–2020
- Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2019–2020
- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans

1.9. The regional focus for improvements (these are also focus areas for all schools within Newport) for 2019/2020, will be to secure further improvement in the following areas:

- To provide schools and settings access to a wide range of professional learning and advice and guidance to support: the successful realisation of the curriculum and wider reform agenda, the implementation of the Professional Standards for Leaders and Teachers and the implementation of the national self-evaluation framework.
- To facilitate and quality assure effective professional learning opportunities to enable the sharing of best practice within and beyond the region, ensuring all schools and settings have access to evidence-based research to continually improve their practice and aim for excellence.
- To continue to raise aspiration, improve pupil outcomes (particularly for vulnerable groups of learners: FSM, gender, EAL, more able (MA) and LAC) and reduce the variance within and across schools, settings and LAs.
- To accelerate improvement in schools and settings where improvement remains too slow by ensuring earlier intervention and support and supporting the use of local authority statutory powers to accelerate progress.
- To provide a range of professional learning and bespoke support to reduce the variance within and across identified schools and to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and learning, particularly within the secondary phase across all departments.
- Supporting schools to ensure pupils make appropriate progress in literacy, numeracy and digital skills at all phases.

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- To embed and refine the regional Equity and Wellbeing Strategy to improve regional multi agency working, to reduce duplication and to simplify the support offer to schools and settings for disadvantaged learners.
- To further develop the regional strategy to develop a self-improving system through the cluster, networks, learning network schools and peer working models.
- To work with other middle tier partners to implement the new arrangements for accountability and to ensure a streamlined approach to the reform agenda.

The Regional Ambition is, by 2021 that:

- 1.10. Working with our key partners we will aim to transform the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across South East Wales. We will do this by:
- Ensuring successful learning experiences and high levels of wellbeing particularly for those facing the greatest challenges;
 - Building effective networks of professionals, across the five Local Authorities and beyond and working together to improve leadership, teaching and learning; and
 - Attracting and retaining a team of outstanding people who embed our core values in their work and share a passion for excellence.
- 1.11. This Business Plan addresses each local authority strategic priority that are indicated with *. These priorities fall within the remit of the work of the EAS. Additionally, the EAS will work in partnership with Newport LA to support additional local authority priorities, as appropriate.
- 1.12. The EAS will support the LA in their statutory responsibility of securing that their education and training functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential.
- 1.13. The improvements that are required at regional and local authority level require a strong commitment of partnership-working to be successful. Where local authorities and the EAS work in close partnership there is evidence, particularly with regards to schools causing concern, that rapid and sustainable school improvement can be achieved.
- 1.14. Newport Strategic Priorities (as provided by the LA):

Strategic priorities for 2019/2020	Main link (s) to the improvement strands within the Business Plan
Improve outcomes for FSM learners.*	Improvement Strand: 1, 2 and 3
At key stage 4, develop senior and middle leadership improvement in the wider foundation subjects so that: professional learning, levels of accountability, curriculum development, teaching and learning and outcomes are consistent with those of the core subjects.*	Improvement Strand: 1, 2 and 3
Develop a robust individual school additional learning needs review framework.	Improvement Strand: 2

- 1.15. Each improvement strand within this plan now has a specific emphasis on the work of the EAS in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners, in particular those in receipt of FSM. These strategies are based on a wide range of research evidence. It will be important that all other stakeholders, including Newport LA and schools, have their own specific strategies to support vulnerable learners.

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LA Annex Documents

1.16. Each LA Annex (**Appendix 2**) contains an overview of the performance and the main areas for development at a LA level. A summary of the schools that require the highest levels of support, inspection outcomes and an overview of categorisation for the LA. Pupil progress information is included for the first time. The EAS will work closely with all key partners to ensure the realisation of this Business Plan. The implementation of the tiers, noted below, are embedded in the way in which we will continue to work across the sectors.

How does the EAS support schools to identify and address their school improvement priorities?

1.17. Through regional funding the EAS has invested in building the capacity of schools and educational settings within the region over the last five years to enable more collaborative ways of working. This approach is enabling teachers and leaders to learn from each other, to try out new approaches and to engage with educational research as the backdrop for improvement. Across the region there are now a variety of ways in which the EAS supports and challenges school improvement. The impact and effectiveness of the strategies are reviewed regularly through both internal and external processes. A summary of these supporting strategies are below:

- The role of the Challenge Adviser in supporting, brokering and challenging the pace of progress schools make in addressing their identified school priorities;
- The role of EAS Officers (including subject specific support, support for governors, Wellbeing and Equity) in supporting, brokering and challenging the pace of progress schools make in addressing their identified school priorities;
- Access to funded school networks (Learning Network Schools) that support all aspects of professional development and school improvement focused on improving the quality of leadership and teaching and learning;
- Access to a wide range of professional learning, some with accreditation options, for teaching assistants, teachers, school leaders and governors.
- Peer working and peer reviews;
- The use of trained and accredited coaches and mentors for teachers and leaders, sourced from within and beyond;
- Access to eLearning materials and high-quality resources.

2. Risks

2.1 There are several risks that have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of the Business Plan priorities, these are noted below:

- Full use is not made of consultation events to help shape the direction of the Business Plan to ensure collective regional ownership of priorities and actions for improvement;
- The work of the EAS in improving outcomes for learners (particularly vulnerable learners) will not be optimised unless there is engagement with all key partners across LAs to ensure effective joint targeting of resources;
- A lack of clarity about respective roles of the EAS and LA partners in the school improvement agenda;
- Schools / settings that require improvement are not: identified at an earlier enough stage, accessing /engaging / receiving the most appropriate or effective support, are not held to account in a timely manner using the most appropriate strategies;
- Agreed actions are not carried out in a timely manner by identified parties;
- There is not consistent application of agreed regional protocols;
- LA statutory powers are not utilised in a consistent, appropriate and timely way; and
- Uncertain financial projections to enable more effective long term planning.

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3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 The EAS has a robust governance model that is underpinned by the Collaboration and Members agreement (CAMA). The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources, illustrated below. A detailed spending plan will accompany the final Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of grants is shared with all stakeholders on a termly basis.
- 3.2 The EAS was set up originally to be reliant on three funding streams to remain financially viable: core funding from councils, grant funding (this includes a contribution from the regional Education Improvement Grant (EIG) and other Welsh Government Grants and income generated from trading services to schools, which due to the notion of a self-improving school system has now been successful eradicated as an income stream.
- 3.3 The EAS continues to be hampered by short term grant awards from Welsh Government but working with you we will continue to make the best use of this funding in a suboptimal environment. We continue to manage staff changes and are now some 44% smaller in payroll staff than when we started in 2012. Whilst this has been effectively managed to date it continues to be a contributing factor in increased cash contributions to the pension fund to meet the pension liability (circa £170k is required in each of the next two financial years).
- 3.4 Over the past three financial years, the EAS has been able to contribute to the efficiency savings of Councils by reducing the core funding commitment by 8%. Following a recent meeting of the EAS Company Board the funding profile for 2019/20 was discussed. Taking all factors into consideration, the Company Board agreed that it could offer a 2% efficiency saving on last year's core funding contribution for 2019/20 as was indicated in our indicative figure last year. Newport's contribution for 2019/20 is: £815,526.
- 3.5 These efficiencies have been thought through carefully in what will be a challenging financial climate for the EAS. This offer of efficiency has been derived in good faith and has been based upon indicative information to date. The EAS will need to implement a change management programme to enable a balanced budget to be set for the coming financial year.
- 3.6 It is important to note that for the EAS to continue to provide a regional service there needs to be a consistent regional percentage reduction, as in previous years. The alternative to this would be an unworkable two-tier approach to the delivery of the Business Plan priorities across the region and to schools within individual Local Authorities.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The Business Plan is in the consultation process. The Consultees are noted below:
 - Education Achievement Service Staff
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 - Regional Joint Executive Group
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 - Regional Headteacher Strategy Group
 - Regional Governor Strategy Group
 - Pupil Consultation

5. Background Papers

- 5.1. The South-East Wales Regional Mission: Business Plan (2019-2020) (First Draft for Consultation)