

Report

Cabinet Meeting

Part 1

Date: 18 March 2020

Subject Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2020-2021

Purpose This report seeks agreement from members for the EAS Business Plan and the Local Authority Annex 2020-2021

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

Ward All

Summary This report asks for members to consider the EAS Business Plan and Newport LA Annex 2020-2021. Through this activity members will ensure that the plan promotes appropriate support and challenge for schools in Newport to continue to improve and that areas that have been identified as requiring improvement within Newport are addressed.

Proposal Members are requested to:

- Ensure that the Business Plan and accompanying Annex document enables appropriate support and challenge for schools and that it addresses the areas for improvement that have been identified within Newport's education strategic plans.; and
- Approve the EAS Business Plan 2020-2021 and the Newport Local Authority (LA) Annex 2020-2021

Action by The Education Achievement Service in partnership with the LA

Timetable The Business Plan and related LA Annex will commence from 1 April 2020

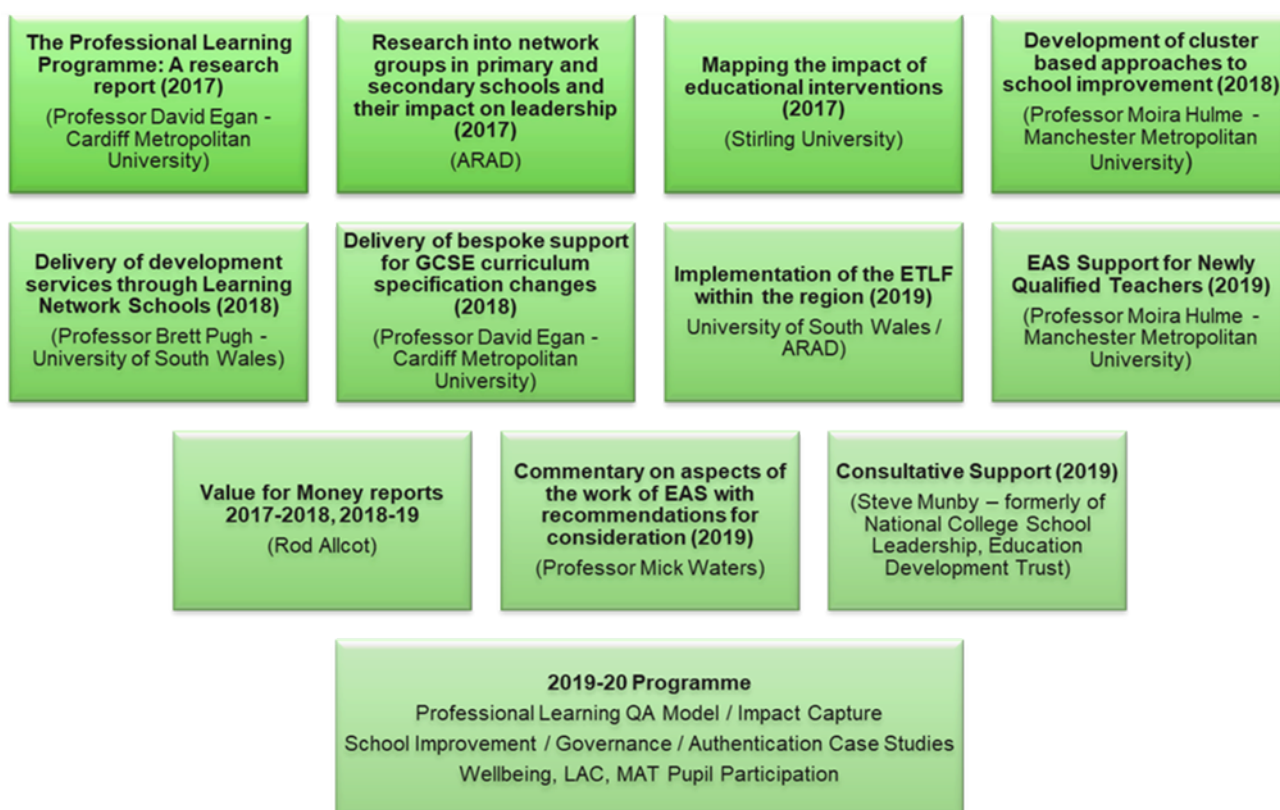
This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Sarah Morgan (Chief Education Officer)
- Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Signed

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 Business Plan (2020–2021) outlines the programme of work that is required to continue to improve 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 and external research.



- 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. Regional investment in building the capacity of schools and educational settings over the last five years have enabled 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.
- 1.4. For sustained school improvement to happen it is essential that the culture for change is embedded and that all partners work together recognising that each partner (school, LA and EAS) has its role to play in securing improvements.

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

- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group (JEG)
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
- Regional headteachers strategy group
- Regional governor strategy group
- Sample of teachers from within the region
- Sample of school councils from within the region

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

- Local Authority Annex documents 2020 – 2021
- Detailed Business Plan 2020–2021
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2020–2021
- Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2020–2021
- Local Authority Strategic Education Plan

1.7. 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.

1.8. 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.

1.9. Newport Strategic Priorities 2020/21 (as provided by the LA):

Strategic priorities for 2020/2021	Main link (s) to the improvement strands within the Business Plan
Improve provision and outcomes for FSM learners in all key stages.*	Strands 1, 2 and 3
Reduce variance in outcomes, teaching. and leadership, particularly at key stage 4. *	Strands 1, 2 and 3
Ensure a consistent approach to ALN provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 through the implementation of a Leadership/ALN Review framework in collaboration with Local Authority inclusion services.	Strand 2

Reduce persistent absenteeism, particularly in secondary schools, and so improve secondary attendance.*	Strand 2
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1.10.

1.11. EAS Improvement Strands:

Improvement Strand	Description
1	i) Developing a high-quality education profession ii) Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards
2	Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing
3	Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, supporting a self-improvement system
4	EAS Business Development

1.12. Each improvement strand within this plan has a specific emphasis on the work of the EAS in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners, in particular those in receipt of FSM and specific actions that are undertaken to improve secondary schools. 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.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by a Collaboration and Members agreement (CAMA) and Articles of Association. Ensuring that the EAS provides value for money is of utmost importance. As recipients of public funding it is important that budgets are allocated wisely. We will endeavour to deliver even better value for money through achieving financial balance and delivering services within the constraints of our budget, making further efficiency savings wherever possible and ensuring delegation rates to schools are maximised.
- 2.2 The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources: Local authority core contributions, regional school improvement grants and a service level agreement for governor support services. A spending plan accompanies the Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants is available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.
- 2.3 Delegation rates to schools has increased to 94% whilst the EAS staff profile by 48% since 2012. An element of the EAS was originally set a trading income target of £1.25m from schools to enable balanced year end account position. This has now been totally eradicated from income dependency and schools are no longer charged for any training or services provided in line with the business plan.
- 2.4 Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The current LA core

contribution is based on these figures less year on year efficiencies of £1.17m since 2012 agreed in collaboration with the 5 local authorities. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2020/21 are as follows: Newport LA's contribution for 2020/21 is £803,293, compared with £815,526 in 2019/20.

- 2.5 The Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) details the procedure that needs to be followed for all school improvement grants received into the region. All grants are approved by local authority Chief Education Officers / Directors of Education with a follow up ratification from JEG members. Historically there were two main grants received into the region from Welsh Government. Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The latter has been re-designated as the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and includes specific initiatives to support the objectives within the 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. In addition to the two main grants, two small regional indicative grants were received for SEREN learners.

3. Risks

3.1 Newport LA Risks

- Provision and outcomes for FSM learners in all key stages do not improve with sufficient pace
- Variance in outcomes, teaching, and leadership, particularly at key stage 4, is not reduced
- A consistent approach to ALN provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 through the implementation of a Leadership/ALN Review framework in collaboration with Local Authority inclusion services, is not developed and embedded into day-to-day practice.
- Persistent absenteeism, particularly in secondary schools, is not reduced sufficiently to have a positive impact on secondary attendance.

These risks are mitigated through the identification of priorities as seen in the priority areas above and within the detailed within the EAS Business Plan, Newport LA Service Plans and the Education Strategic Plan.

- 3.2 Regional Risks: As part of the internal EAS risk management process several aspects have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of this Business Plan. These clearly set out the elements that will be important to ensuring optimum impact of the work of the EAS in partnership with LAs. These are:

- 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.

4. Consultation

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

- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group (JEG)
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
- Regional headteachers strategy group
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- Sample of teachers from within the region
- Sample of school councils from within the region

5. Background Papers

5.1. The South-East Wales Regional Mission: Business Plan (2020-2021) (First Draft for Consultation)

5.2. Draft LA Annex Document 2020-2021

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The indicative contribution of £803,293 is included within the revenue budgets for 2020/21, therefore there are no additional financial pressures arising from this report.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. The EAS Business Plan reflects national priorities and standards for educational improvement and the final Business Plan will be approved as an EAS strategic document by the Company Board and the Joint Executive Group. The draft Business Plan has already been the subject of extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including Performance Scrutiny Committee (Partnerships). Cabinet are being asked to confirm that the specific elements of the plan, as set out in the Newport Annex, properly reflect and are correctly aligned to the priorities for school improvement as set out in the Education Strategic Plan and Estyn performance reports

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

Newport City Council recognises that it is our duty to work with partners including the EAS to provide future generations with the skills and knowledge they need to play a full and active role in their communities and wider society. Both Newport's and the nation's economic prosperity, social cohesion, fairness and wellbeing are built on the foundations of a strong and successful education system.

There are no staffing implications as a result of the EAS Business Plan 2020-2021.

As required the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been considered in this report. There is no requirement to complete a Fairness & Equality Impact Assessment.

Comments of Cabinet Member

The strategic priorities for Newport identified within the EAS Business Plan for 2020/21 align with the recommendations of the 2018 Newport Education Services Estyn report and dovetail with key objectives of teams within Newport City Council Education Services.

I note that consultation has taken place with a range of stakeholders including Local Authority and Diocesan Directors, regional head teacher and governor strategy groups and teachers from across the region. I am particularly pleased that the consultation process includes the views of school councils across the region and that the voices of children and young people in our schools are being included in this process.

The Local Authority annexe identifies that around half of Newport secondary schools are categorised as red or amber. Supporting Newport secondary schools so they require less external input remains a priority for the Local Authority and is identified within the strategic priorities contained in the EAS Business Plan.

Local issues

Not Applicable

Scrutiny Committees

This report was examined by Partnerships Scrutiny in February 2020

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 06 April 2011. The Act identifies a number of 'protected characteristics', namely age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership. The new single duty aims to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the regular business of public authorities. Compliance with the duty is a legal obligation and is intended to result in better informed decision-making and policy development and services that are more effective for users. In exercising its functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The Act is not overly prescriptive about the approach a public authority should take to ensure due regard, although it does set out that due regard to advancing equality involves: removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these differ from the need of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Although no targeted consultation takes place specifically aimed at children and young people, consultation on planning applications and appeals is open to all of our citizens regardless of their age. Depending on the scale of the proposed development, applications are publicised via letters to neighbouring occupiers, site notices, press notices and/or social media. People replying to consultations are not required to provide their age or any other personal data, and therefore this data is not held or recorded in any way, and responses are not separated out by age.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

All local authorities have a long-term duty to develop a prosperous Wales by developing skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities. Enabling and facilitating academic attainment for all learners provides a foundation for access to employment and helps break a cycle of deprivation.

Furthermore, regardless of the socio-economic demographic of an individual school community, all schools will be challenged and supported to improve pupil attainment with a view to create "more equal wales" that enables pupils to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. A specific focus of the draft EAS Business Plan is improving the attainment of vulnerable learners and closing the gap in attainment between those learners eligible for free school meals and those not eligible for free school meals. Improvement of pupil outcomes is supported by collaboration of schools, the Local Authority and the regional school improvement service (EAS) including the involvement of pupils, teachers, governors and wider community members in the planning and implementation of school improvement initiatives.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Section 17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the Local Authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

Consultation

The EAS Business Plan is currently undergoing consultation with all Local Authorities within the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC)

Dated: 12th February 2020