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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Sharon Hughes
(Tel: 01443 864281 Email: hughesj@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 19th March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

A Special meeting of the **Education Scrutiny Committee** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 25th March, 2021 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed within a large, loopy, hand-drawn oval shape.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports: -

3	21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme - Phase 2 Proposal for Plasyfelin Primary.	1 - 8
4	21st Century Schools and Education Band B Programme - Phase 2 Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School.	9 - 16
5	21st Century Schools and Education Band B Programme - Phase 2 Proposal for a Centre for Vulnerable Learners.	17 - 24
6	Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2021-2022.	25 - 56

Circulation:

Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C. Andrews (Vice Chair), P.J. Bevan, A. Collis, C.J. Cuss, W. David, A. Farina-Childs, Ms J. Gale, D.T. Hardacre, D. Havard, M.P. James, B. Miles, Mrs G.D. Oliver, Mrs T. Parry (Chair), J.E. Roberts and J. Simmonds

Co-opted Members:

Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative (with voting rights on educational matters)
Mr M. Western

Parent Governor Representatives (with voting rights on educational matters) G. James (Parent Governor Representative) and Tracy Millington (Parent Governor Representative)

Outside Body Representatives (without voting rights)
Mrs J. Havard (NEU) and Mrs P. Ireland (NEU)

Caerphilly Governors Association (without voting rights)
Mr D Davies

And Appropriate Officers

HOW WE WILL USE YOUR INFORMATION

Those individuals that attend committee meetings to speak/give evidence will be named in the minutes of that meeting, sometimes this will include their place of employment or business and opinions expressed. Minutes of Meetings including details of speakers will be publicly available to all via the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk. except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items.

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 25TH MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BAND B
PROGRAMME – PHASE 2 PROPOSAL FOR PLASYFELIN
PRIMARY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members views on the next stage (Phase 2) of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme.
- 1.2 There are 3 projects identified as part of Phase 2, one of which is the Plasyfelin Primary school proposal outlined in this report.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides an update to Members on the current position of the Band B (£78 million) 21st Century School and Colleges Capital Programme.
- 2.2 Plasyfelin Primary School has been identified as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Phase 2 programme.
- 2.3 The proposal is to build a new and enlarged replacement school in the grounds of the existing school site, to accommodate future projected demand within the area. The new school will provide 420 pupil places plus nursery.
- 2.4 The project outlined in 2.3 above is in early developmental stage and officers will ensure that Members are updated on a regular basis in relation to all aspects of the proposal and processes in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:

a) Note the contents in this report.

b) Give their views and endorse the recommendation to proceed to Welsh Government Business Case stage on the Plasyfelin Primary School proposal prior to consideration by Cabinet on 7th April 2021.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Capital programme and seek Members views and endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to progress the Plasyfelin Primary School proposal to Welsh Government business case submission.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Band B

5.1.1 The key aims of the 21st Century Schools and Education Band B investment programme, outlined by WG, is to:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools.
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location, providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community.

5.1.2 The first two schemes identified as priority for Phase 1 of the Band B programme are the expansion of Trinity Fields Special School and the relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

5.1.3 The schemes identified as part of Phase 2 of the Band B programme include the adaption and refurbishment of the old grammar school building on the former Pontllanfraith High School site to accommodate a Centre for Vulnerable Learners, the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior and Llanfabon Infants school via the expansion of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate 275 pupils plus nursery, and a new and enlarged replacement Plasyfelin Primary school in the grounds of the existing school site to accommodate future projected demand.

5.1.4 The 21st Century Schools Band B Programme looks to deliver a combination of new school builds, expansions, amalgamations, relocations and refurbishments, all with the potential to support the Welsh Government and Council's strategies on decarbonisation and provide a new model of delivery.

5.2 This report focusses on Plasyfelin Primary School

5.2.1 Educational transformation remains a vital outcome of our investment in Band B of the Programme. We also recognise that that it is hugely important that we address the condition of our school buildings. Several projects were identified and agreed by a cross-party working group as part of the formation of the Strategic Outline Plan submitted to Welsh Government outlining the Band B programme for Caerphilly.

- 5.2.2 As per 5.2.1, the Authority identified Plasyfelin primary school as requiring investment. Originally designed as a separate Infant and Junior School, the current Plasyfelin Primary School site consists of 2 separate CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme) prefabricated school buildings, linked together by an exposed walkway. Only 30% of classrooms meet the size compliant requirements (56m²) set by Welsh Government in line with the Building Bulletin 99 Regulations.
- 5.2.3 The proposal relates to a new and enlarged build replacement school for Plasyfelin Primary School to be situated within the current grounds of the existing school site to include increased accommodation for up to 420 pupils plus nursery provision and also additional multi-use sporting and community facilities. This proposal will ensure future projected demand can be met within the area and to update a facility to provide a fit for purpose 21st Century facility.
- 5.2.4 Our aspiration and a pre-requisite for Welsh Government investment, is to commit to making assets available to support educational need, community use, promote community resilience and contribute to meeting several Local Authority Strategies. To optimise the use of the new infrastructure and resources, as part of the proposal, flexibility will be built into the school suited to local demand.
- 5.2.5 Funding for the project has been identified from the Band B funding envelope. The Welsh Government intervention rate is 65% for this type of Capital scheme , with the Local Authority meeting the remaining 35% of the costs as broken down below, subject to any abnormalities:

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Plasyfelin Primary	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000

- 5.2.6 The School Organisation Code 2018 applies to proposals in respect of maintained schools as defined by Section 98 or the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- 5.2.7 The School Organisation Code 2018, provides clear statutory guidance as to the processes that need to be adhered to by the Education Directorate when progressing a proposal.
- 5.2.8 The process to be followed is outlined below (based on the assumption that approval is reached at each stage):
- Report presented to Cabinet for approval to progress proposal through the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools Business Case process
 - Outline Business Case submitted to Welsh Government for review and approval at their Business Case Scrutiny Group and their Programme Investment Panel
 - Due to the nature of the scheme there is no need to undertake a formal period of consultation as per the statutory guidance provided in the School Organisation Code 2018. However, engagement with the school as well as the wider community will be undertaken throughout the process in line with the Authority’s Consultation and Engagement framework.
 - Property Services to undertake full planning application process including formal consultation as per planning guidance
 - Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government for final review and approval at Welsh Government’s Business Case Scrutiny Group and Programme Investment Panel

5.2.9 Progression at each stage is subject to scrutiny, review and approval by Cabinet Members and/or Welsh Government.

5.2.10 Any project that requires construction or alteration of existing facilities is subject to a full and separate planning process conducted by the Council's Property Services Division.

5.3 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to endorse the recommendations to proceed to business case submission to Welsh Government in relation to the phase 2 project – Plasyfelin Primary School

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report as it merely updates on the progress of individual projects.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 Caerphilly's Attainment Strategy: To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experience.

7.2 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The proposal contributes towards the following Corporate Well-being Objectives:

- Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all
- Objective 2 - Enabling employment
- Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

7.3 The proposal also contributes to the following Strategies:

- Caerphilly Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2018-2028)
- Shared Ambitions Strategy (2019-2022)
- Sport Wales Vision for Sport
- Decarbonisation Strategy: Reduce-Produce-Offset-Buy

8. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

8.1 The Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being

goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

8.2 The Act sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed below:

- **Long Term** - Forecasting of pupil numbers has been utilised to identify the demand for school places to ensure sufficient Educational places in our schools. This information has been used to prioritise schools within the SOP.
- **Prevention** - Improving the quality of the Education estate generally will support pupils in their long term education and skills outcome in that they are more likely to succeed if their Educational experience is positive.
- **Integration** - The 21st Century Schools Programme is subject to BREEAM and Community Benefits of individual proposals are assessed and monitored for their impact on the Welsh economy. The proposals are also part of a strategy to promote Welsh Language and Culture.
- **Collaboration** – The 21st Century Schools Programme is collaboration between the Council and Welsh Government to improve the quality of the Education estate.
- **Involvement** – Through the consultation process the Council will ensure that there is full engagement with all relevant stakeholders, e.g. parents, pupils and the local community. Collaborative partnership working between 21st Century Schools and the Early Years Division who work with the voluntary sector.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 All relevant Equality Impact Assessments for individual projects in Phase 2 will be undertaken at the appropriate stage and will be made available to any persons who wish to receive copies in addition to being published on the Council's website.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Members have previously agreed to earmark a total of £6.975m for Band B of the 21st Century Schools & Colleges Programme.

The Authority's contribution to the Trinity Fields Project and the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon Projects is currently estimated at £6.413m. This figure includes a contribution of £647k from a Social Services Capital earmarked reserve to support additional spend on the Trinity Fields Project. Consequently the balance remaining as uncommitted from the £6.975m is currently £1.209m.

- 10.2 Phase 2 of the programme, totals £18,500,000. The Authority's contribution within this sum is £5,925,000.

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Plasfelin Primary	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000
Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000

The Authority's contribution towards phase 2 of the programme is estimated at £5,925,000, as detailed above. This cost will be met from the remaining funding of £1.209m already earmarked for 21st Century Schools, plus a figure of £4.716m from the Authority's Place-Shaping Reserve.

The total funding commitment from the Authority towards these 5 projects is £12.338m

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 These will be dependent on specific proposals and have been considered as part of the consultation process.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Author: Andrea West, 21st Century Schools Manager

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities
Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education and Achievement
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement

Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background Papers:
None provided

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BAND B
PROGRAMME – PHASE 2 LLANCAEACH JUNIOR SCHOOL
AND LLANFABON INFANTS SCHOOL

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members views on the next stage (Phase 2) of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme.
- 1.2 There are 3 projects identified as part of Phase 2, one of which is the Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School proposal outlined in this report.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides an update to Members on the current position of the Band B (£78 million) 21st Century School and Colleges Capital Programme.
- 2.2 Llancaeath Junor School and Llanfabon Infrants Schools have been identified as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Phase 2 programme.
- 2.3 The proposal is to amalgamate Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School via the expansion and refurbishment of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accomodate the new Primary School with places for 275 pupils plus nursery.
- 2.4 The project outlined in 2.3 above is in early developmental stage and officers will ensure that Members are updated on a regular basis in relation to all aspects of the proposal and processes in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:

a) Note the contents in this report.

b) Give their views and endorse the recommendation to proceed to Welsh Government Business Case stage on the Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School proposal prior to consideration by Cabinet on 7th April 2021.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Capital programme and seek Members views and endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to progress the Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School proposal to Welsh Government business case submission.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Band B

5.1.1 The key aims of the 21st Century Schools and Education Band B investment programme, outlined by WG, is to:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools.
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location, providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community.

5.1.2 The first two schemes identified as priority for Phase 1 of the Band B programme are the expansion of Trinity Fields Special School and the relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

5.1.3 The schemes identified as part of Phase 2 of the Band B programme include the adaption and refurbishment of the old grammar school building on the former Pontllanfraith High School site to accommodate a Centre for Vulnerable Learners, the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School via the expansion and refurbishment of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate the new Primary School provision, and a new and enlarged replacement Plasyfelin Primary school in the grounds of the existing school site to accommodate future projected demand.

5.1.4 The 21st Century Schools Band B Programme looks to deliver a combination of new school builds, expansions, amalgamations, relocations and refurbishments, all with the potential to support the Welsh Government and Council's strategies on decarbonisation and provide a new model of delivery.

5.2 This report focusses on Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School

5.2.1 Educational transformation remains a vital outcome of our investment in Band B of the Programme. We also recognise that that it is hugely important that we address the condition of our school buildings. Several projects were identified and agreed by

a cross-party working group as part of the formation of the Strategic Outline Plan submitted to Welsh Government outlining the Band B programme for Caerphilly.

- 5.2.2 As per 5.2.1, the Authority identified Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School as requiring investment to create a 3-11 through Primary provision from a single location to provide a fit for purpose 21st Century facility, reducing surplus places, increasing opportunities for community use and removing 2 category C schools in relation to condition.
- 5.2.3 The proposal related to the amalgamation Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School via the expansion and refurbishment of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate the new 3-11 Primary School provision with places for 275 pupils plus nursery.
- 5.2.4 Our aspiration and a pre-requisite for Welsh Government investment, is to commit to making assets available to support educational need, community use, promote community resilience and contribute to meeting several Local Authority Strategies. To optimise the use of the new infrastructure and resources, as part of the proposal, flexibility will be built into the school suited to local demand.
- 5.2.5 Funding for the project has been identified from the Band B funding envelope. The Welsh Government intervention rate is 65% for this type of Capital scheme, with the Local Authority meeting the remaining 35% of the costs as broken down below, subject to any abnormalities:

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000

- 5.2.6 The School Organisation Code 2018 applies to proposals in respect of maintained schools as defined by Section 98 or the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- 5.2.7 The School Organisation Code 2018, provides clear statutory guidance as to the processes that need to be adhered to by the Education Directorate when progressing a proposal.
- 5.2.8 The process to be followed is outlined below (based on the assumption that approval is reached at each stage):
- Report presented to Cabinet for approval to progress proposal through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Business Case process
 - Outline Business Case submitted to Welsh Government for review and approval at their Business Case Scrutiny Group and their Programme Investment Panel
 - Due to the nature of the scheme a consultation process as per the statutory guidance provided in the School Organisation Code 2018 will be undertaken.
 - A 'Consultation Document' will be published and consultees as prescribed in the School Organisation Code 2018 will have the opportunities to express their views on the proposal during the consultation period.
 - Children and Young People's views will also be captured to ensure the 'pupil voice' is included as part of the process.
 - A 'Consultation Report' will be produced summarising the views received and presented to Education Scrutiny Committee to endorse the recommendations and then to Cabinet for approval to progress to Statutory Notice.

- A 'Statutory Notice' will be published for a 28 day period where formal written objections may be submitted by prescribed consultees as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018
- An 'Objection Report' will be presented to Scrutiny summarising the concerns and Members will be asked to endorse the recommendations to Cabinet to proceed to Full Business Case
- Property Services to undertake full planning application process including formal consultation as per planning guidance
- Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government for final review and approval at Welsh Government's Business Case Scrutiny Group and Programme Investment Panel

5.2.9 Progression at each stage is subject to scrutiny, review and approval by Cabinet Members and/or Welsh Government.

5.2.10 Any project that requires construction or alteration of existing facilities is subject to a full and separate planning process conducted by the Council's Property Services Division.

5.3 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to endorse the recommendations to proceed to business case submission to Welsh Government in relation to the phase 2 project – Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report as it merely updates on the progress of individual projects.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 Caerphilly's Attainment Strategy: To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experience.

7.2 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The proposal contributes towards the following Corporate Well-being Objectives:

- Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all
- Objective 2 - Enabling employment
- Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

7.3 The proposal also contributes to the following Strategies:

- Caerphilly Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2018-2028)
- Shared Ambitions Strategy (2019-2022)

- Sport Wales Vision for Sport
- Decarbonisation Strategy: Reduce-Produce-Offset-Buy

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 The Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
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- A globally responsible Wales.

8.2 The Act sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed below:

- **Long Term** - Forecasting of pupil numbers has been utilised to identify the demand for school places to ensure sufficient Educational places in our schools. This information has been used to prioritise schools within the SOP.
- **Prevention** - Improving the quality of the Education estate generally will support pupils in their long term education and skills outcome in that they are more likely to succeed if their Educational experience is positive.
- **Integration** - The 21st Century Schools Programme is subject to BREEAM and Community Benefits of individual proposals are assessed and monitored for their impact on the Welsh economy. The proposals are also part of a strategy to promote Welsh Language and Culture.
- **Collaboration** – The 21st Century Schools Programme is collaboration between the Council and Welsh Government to improve the quality of the Education estate.
- **Involvement** – Through the consultation process the Council will ensure that there is full engagement with all relevant stakeholders, e.g. parents, pupils and the local community. Collaborative partnership working between 21st Century Schools and the Early Years Division who work with the voluntary sector.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 All relevant Equality Impact Assessments for individual projects in Phase 2 will be undertaken at the appropriate stage and will be made available to any persons who wish to receive copies in addition to being published on the Council's website.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Members have previously agreed to earmark a total of £6.975m for Band B of the 21st Century Schools & Colleges Programme.

The Authority's contribution to the Trinity Fields Project and the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon Projects is currently estimated at £6.413m. This figure includes a contribution of £647k from a Social Services Capital earmarked reserve to support additional spend on the Trinity Fields Project. Consequently the balance remaining as uncommitted from the £6.975m is currently £1.209m.

- 10.2 Phase 2 of the programme, totals £18,500,000. The Authority's contribution within this sum is £5,925,000.

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000
Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000
Plasyfelin	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000

The Authority's contribution towards phase 2 of the programme is estimated at £5,925,000, as detailed above. This cost will be met from the remaining funding of £1.209m already earmarked for 21st Century Schools, plus a figure of £4.716m from the Authority's Place-Shaping Reserve.

The total funding commitment from the Authority towards these 5 projects is £12.338m.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 These will be dependent on specific proposals and have been considered as part of the consultation process.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Author: Andrea West, 21st Century Schools Manager

Consultees: Christina HARRY, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services

Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities
Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education and Achievement
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background Papers:
None provided

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH MARCH 2021

**SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BAND B
PROGRAMME – PHASE 2 PROPOSAL FOR A CENTRE FOR
VULNERABLE LEARNERS**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members views on the next stage (Phase 2) of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme.
- 1.2 There are 3 projects identified as part of Phase 2, one of which is the Centre for Vulnerable Learners proposal outlined in this report.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides an update to Members on the current position of the Band B (£78 million) 21st Century School and Colleges Capital Programme.
- 2.2 The Centre for Vulnerable Learners has been identified as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Phase 2 programme.
- 2.3 The proposal is to adapt and refurbish the old grammar school building, formerly the Pontllanfraith High School site, to accommodate creating a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners.
- 2.4 The project outlined in 2.3 above is in early developmental stage and officers will ensure that Members are updated on a regular basis in relation to all aspects of the proposal and processes.
- 2.5 For the purposes of reporting to Welsh Government, the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will be referred to in the business case and supporting documentation as a Pupil Referral Unit.

- 2.6 Pupil Referral Units are exempt from the consultation processes outlined in line School Organisation Code 2018 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:

a) Note the contents in this report.

b) Give their views and endorse the recommendation to proceed to Welsh Government Business Case stage on the Centre for Vulnerable Learners proposal prior to consideration by Cabinet on 7th April 2021.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Capital programme and seek Members views and endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to progress the Centre for Vulnerable Learners proposal to Welsh Government business case submission.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Band B

- 5.1.1 The key aims of the 21st Century Schools and Education Band B investment programme, outlined by WG, is to:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools.
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location, providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community.

- 5.1.2 The first two schemes identified as priority for Phase 1 of the Band B programme are the expansion of Trinity Fields Special School and the relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

- 5.1.3 The schemes identified as part of Phase 2 of the Band B programme include the adaption and refurbishment of the old grammar school building on the former Pontllanfraith High School site to accommodate a Centre for Vulnerable Learners, the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior and Llanfabon Infants school via the expansion of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate 275 pupils plus nursery, and a new build replacement Plas-y-felin Primary school in the grounds of the existing school site to accommodate 420 pupils plus nursery.

- 5.1.4 The 21st Century Schools Band B Programme looks to deliver a combination of new school builds, expansions, amalgamations, relocations and refurbishments, all with the potential to support the Welsh Government and Council's strategies on decarbonisation and provide a new model of delivery.

5.2 This report focusses on the Centre for Vulnerable Learners

5.2.1 Educational transformation remains a vital outcome of our investment in Band B of the Programme. We also recognise that that it is hugely important that we address the condition of our school buildings. Several projects were identified and agreed by a cross-party working group as part of the formation of the Strategic Outline Plan submitted to Welsh Government outlining the Band B programme for Caerphilly.

5.2.2 The Authority has undertaken an extensive and far reaching review of ALN provision across the County Borough. The outcome of this work is the development of a model for service delivery that meets the needs of all learners across the Borough, quality assures the provision and continually evaluates the future requirements for our most vulnerable learners, placing the child at the heart.

5.2.3 The proposal related to the adaption and refurbishment of the former Pontllanfraith High School site to accommodate a Centre for Vulnerable Learners. The requirements of the ALN reform bill has led to the need to expand this type of provision.

5.2.4 Funding for the project has been identified from the Band B funding envelope:

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000

5.2.5 The School Organisation Code 2018 applies to proposals in respect of maintained schools as defined by Section 98 or the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. This does not include Pupil Referral units.

5.2.6 A Pupil Referral Unit is a type of school or establishment maintained by the Local Authority to provide suitable education for children and young people who, by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise, may not receive such education in mainstream settings as per Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

5.2.7 For the purposes of reporting to Welsh Government, the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will be referred to in the business case and supporting documentation as a Pupil Referral Unit to enable access to the appropriate funding and match ratios.

5.2.8 The Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Business Case process will be followed in conjunction with the Council's internal decision making processes and with reference to the CCBC Consultation and Engagement Framework.

5.2.9 The process to be followed is outlined below:

- Report presented to Cabinet for approval to progress proposal through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Business Case process
- Outline Business Case submitted to Welsh Government for review and approval at their Business Case Scrutiny Group and their Programme Investment Panel
- Due to the nature of the scheme there is no need to undertake a formal period of consultation as the statutory guidance provided in the School Organisation Code 2018 does not apply in this instance. However, engagement with relevant agencies as well as the wider community will be

undertaken throughout the process in line with the Authority's Consultation and Engagement framework.

- Property Services to undertake full planning application process including formal consultation as per planning guidance
- Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government for final review and approval at Welsh Government's Business Case Scrutiny Group and Programme Investment Panel

5.2.10 Progression at each stage is subject to scrutiny, review and approval by Cabinet Members and/or Welsh Government.

5.2.11 Any project that requires construction or alteration of existing facilities is subject to a full and separate planning process conducted by the Council's Property Services Division.

5.3 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to endorse the recommendations to proceed to business case submission to Welsh Government in relation to the phase 2 project – Centre for Vulnerable Learners proposal.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report as it merely updates on the progress of individual projects.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 Caerphilly's Attainment Strategy: To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experience.

7.2 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The proposal contributes towards the following Corporate Well-being Objectives:

- Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all
- Objective 2 - Enabling employment
- Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

7.3 The proposal also contributes to the following Strategies:

- Caerphilly Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2018-2028)
- Shared Ambitions Strategy (2019-2022)
- Sport Wales Vision for Sport
- Decarbonisation Strategy: Reduce-Produce-Offset-Buy

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 The Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

8.2 The Act sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed below:

- **Long Term** - Forecasting of pupil numbers has been utilised to identify the demand for school places to ensure sufficient Educational places in our schools. This information has been used to prioritise schools within the SOP.
- **Prevention** - Improving the quality of the Education estate generally will support pupils in their long term education and skills outcome in that they are more likely to succeed if their Educational experience is positive.
- **Integration** - The 21st Century Schools Programme is subject to BREEAM and Community Benefits of individual proposals are assessed and monitored for their impact on the Welsh economy. The proposals are also part of a strategy to promote Welsh Language and Culture.
- **Collaboration** – The 21st Century Schools Programme is collaboration between the Council and Welsh Government to improve the quality of the Education estate.
- **Involvement** – Through the consultation process the Council will ensure that there is full engagement with all relevant stakeholders, e.g. parents, pupils and the local community. Collaborative partnership working between 21st Century Schools and the Early Years Division who work with the voluntary sector.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 All relevant Equality Impact Assessments for individual projects in Phase 2 will be undertaken at the appropriate stage and will be made available to any persons who wish to receive copies in addition to being published on the Council's website.

9.2 The proposal in relation to establishment of a Centre for Vulnerable Learners will also have a positive impact on the children and young people with additional support needs who will be attending the site.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Members have previously agreed to earmark a total of £6.975m for Band B of the 21st Century Schools & Colleges Programme.

The Authority's contribution to the Trinity Fields Project and the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon Projects is currently estimated at £6.413m. This figure includes a contribution of £647k from a Social Services Capital earmarked reserve to support additional spend on the Trinity Fields Project. Consequently the balance remaining as uncommitted from the £6.975m is currently £1.209m.

- 10.2 Phase 2 of the programme, totals £18,500,000. The Authority's contribution within this sum is £5,925,000.

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000
Plasyfelin Primary	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000

The Authority's contribution towards phase 2 of the programme is estimated at £5,925,000, as detailed above. This cost will be met from the remaining funding of £1.209m already earmarked for 21st Century Schools, plus a figure of £4.716m from the Authority's Place-Shaping Reserve.

The total funding commitment from the Authority towards these 5 projects is £12.338m.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 These will be dependent on specific proposals and have been considered as part of the consultation process.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Author: Andrea West, 21st Century Schools Manager

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive

Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities
Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education and Achievement
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background Papers:
None provided

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH MARCH 2021

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS
PLAN 2021-2022**

**REPORT BY: DEBBIE HARTEVELD, MANAGING DIRECTOR, EAS.
TO BE DELIVERED BY EDWARD PRYCE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – POLICY AND STRATEGY**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan on an annual basis. This report asks for members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan as part of the regional consultation process.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This document contains the main priorities that the EAS believe will be relevant to focus upon in the next iteration of the regional Business Plan for 2021-2022. It is challenging to try to predict the way in which society will be operating from summer 2021 with regards to managing the spread of coronavirus. The priorities contained within this document assume that the EAS will build upon the learning and momentum from the past few months.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to receive the report for information and take the opportunity to comment on the contents of the Business Plan as part of the consultation process; and
- 3.2 Members are asked to consider the main strengths and areas for development within Caerphilly, and to consider how LA services can be aligned with the priorities contained within the document, therefore ensuring all pupils meet their full potential.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The EAS are required to submit their Business Plan to Welsh Government and the Scrutiny committee asked for feedback before Cabinet are scheduled to approve it.

5. THE REPORT

Background

- 5.1 The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.
- 5.2 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan. This document contains the main priorities that the EAS believe will be relevant to focus upon in the next iteration of the regional Business Plan for 2021-2022. It is challenging to try to predict the way in which society will be operating from summer 2021 with regards to managing the spread of coronavirus. The priorities contained within this document assume that the EAS will build upon the learning and momentum from the past few months.
- 5.3 However, this plan will also need to consider how schools and settings will operate in a COVID-19 recovery phase and the support that will be required. Consideration will also be given to the priorities that were set and agreed prior to the pandemic in the previous Business Plan 2020-2021 depending on their relevance in the current climate.
- 5.4 The EAS will work collaboratively with local authority partners, schools and settings to implement the Business Plan. It is critically important that the EAS remains sensitive and responsive to the needs of the school workforce and will continue to be a highly supportive, reflective and responsive organisation.
- 5.5 The EAS will build upon what has worked well during this period, particularly the aspects of our role that have been successful within the virtual environment. The support that the EAS will offer will fully align to the expectations set by local authorities, Welsh Government (WG) and links to emerging research.
- 5.6 The EAS understands the need to over communicate with clarity to provide reassurance regarding advice, guidance, support and expectations. As a result, the EAS will work with local authorities to minimise any unnecessary bureaucracy for schools and settings to ensure they are able to focus on their important priorities and their support for learners.
- 5.7 The timing, delivery and focus of the support will be carefully considered considering the challenges that are likely to continue into the summer and autumn terms 2021.
- 5.8 Members are asked to take the opportunity to comment on the contents of the Business Plan as part of the consultation process and provide a written response as appropriate.
- 5.9 Please note that a mid-year evaluation of the current revised Covid Business Plan (2019/20) 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 (created in January 2021). Within the context of evolving accountability arrangements and the Covid-19 Pandemic, school and aggregate LA performance data has not been available for presentation to this committee.

- 5.10 The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within Caerphilly will continue to be met through bespoke work with each school, both virtually and when safe to do so physically.
- 5.11 The EAS will offer an evolving Professional Learning Offer (PLO) to all schools and settings across the region, in order to meet development needs as we emerge from the pandemic. We will continue to fund schools (grant permitting) to deliver a large proportion of the professional learning activity, where appropriate virtually.
- 5.12 All schools will continue to be provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances and to allow for changes in light of the pandemic.
- 5.13 The centralised model of service delivery that has been adopted across the South East Wales region has enabled efficiencies to be realised, economies of scale to be secured, particularly in relation to avoiding duplication of functions and the ability to secure a range of educational expertise within the region.
- 5.14 The talent and expertise that resides in schools within and beyond the region is incentivised and used effectively to support professional learning and school improvement activity. There has been inevitable fragility in the ability of schools to offer support beyond their own settings because of the pandemic, this situation will be managed with sensitivity and will be constantly reviewed.
- 5.15 For sustained school improvement to happen it is essential that all partners work together more closely than ever recognising that each partner (school, LA and EAS) has its role to play in providing support to secure improvements.
- 5.16 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
 - EAS Company Board
 - EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
 - Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
 - All Headteachers from within the region
 - All Chairs of Governors from within the region
 - School Councils from within the region
 - All school based Professional Learning Leads
 - EAS Supporting School Trade Union Group (SSTU Group)
- 5.17 The final version of the Business Plan will be supported by a range of supporting documents:
- Detailed Business Plan 2021–2022
 - Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2021–2022
 - Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
 - EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
 - Regional Professional Learning Offer 2021–2022
 - Local Authority Strategic Education Plans

- 5.18 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. The EAS will work in partnership with local authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate and those that arise from the changing local and national situation.
- 5.19 EAS will work in partnership with local authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate and those that arise from the changing local and national situation.
- 5.20 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, that rapid and sustainable school improvement can be achieved. This joined up approach will be even more critical as we work in partnership to support schools and settings during this challenging time.
- 5.21 Caerphilly Strategic Priorities 2021-22 (as provided by the LA):

Strategic priorities for 2021/2022

- Further improve the quality of leadership across all phases of education.
- Address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on pupil wellbeing and engagement.
- Endeavour to ensure the implementation of remote and blended learning strategies provide high quality support to pupils across all phases of education.
- Further improve pupils' acquisition of digital competency skills.

Regional Priorities 2021-2022

- 5.22 The EAS will endeavour to be a professional partner working with schools to provide support using external expertise and experience. All schools and settings will be entitled to a range of professional learning and bespoke support which aligns to their school improvement priorities. Full consideration will be given to the current climate in which schools and settings are operating. Within this context the priorities of the EAS will be to:
- A. To ensure that the wellbeing support for practitioners and learners in schools and settings is paramount.
 - B. Provide bespoke support to schools and settings in line with agreed school improvement priorities that reflect the current situation and positions of schools and settings.
 - C. Provide support to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including continued use of blended learning approaches, particularly in identified secondary schools.
 - D. Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures.
 - E. Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise Curriculum for Wales, as appropriate.
 - F. Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.

- G. Consolidate, promote and further develop the regional school and practitioner networks, enabling effective routes of communication and support.
- H. Continue to support the development of leaders at all levels in schools and settings.
- I. Further build the capacity of governing bodies through the regional professional learning offer and bespoke support, as appropriate.
- J. Further develop a culture around accountability that identifies and values a broad spectrum of characteristics of effective schools and settings.
- K. Embed the EAS internal evaluation model, continue to welcome external challenge and support, ensure the effective and efficient support to schools and settings and adhere to legislative requirements that fully supports the wellbeing of staff.

Ambitions for 2021-22

5.23 Working in partnership with local authorities, schools and setting the ambitions for 2021/22 and beyond are challenging to capture without having clarity around the changing nature of the pandemic and the effect it will have on schools and settings. In this regard, the ambitions below need to be read within the context they have been derived:

- The EAS has placed wellbeing at the forefront of its work.
- There is a clear strategy to improve the quality of distance and blended learning experiences for learners. There has been good engagement in the regional strategy and many opportunities have been provided for schools to share to develop more effective teaching across and within schools and settings.
- Where schools and settings have engaged in the regional wellbeing support offer it has helped to support improvement in their provision for wellbeing.
- Schools and settings receive the right type of support, as appropriate to help them make progress against their school improvement priorities.
- Most schools can identify and provide the most appropriate support to specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures, to help them to progress.
- A regional strategy developed in collaboration with practitioners provides a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionality affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The quality and impact of the provision for professional learning for educational practitioners and governors is good and those schools that have engaged are able to evidence the impact of this.
- Refined and extended networks ensure effective collaboration and communication to support school improvement.
- A range of professional learning and bespoke support provided to schools and settings helps them realise Curriculum for Wales.
- Working with schools and local authorities, a regional model of support will be developed and implemented, focusing on accurate self-evaluation using a broad range of characteristics, aligned to school improvement priorities.

Risks

5.24 EAS 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.
- Uncertain financial grant projections may destabilise the ability to deliver the agreed business plan.
- The uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and the effect this will have on schools and settings.

5.25 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, Caerphilly LA Plans and the Education Strategic Plan.

5.26 Caerphilly LA will have its own risks linked to the delivery of the strategic objectives within their corporate plans.

Conclusion

5.27 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan on an annual basis. This report asks for members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan as part of the regional consultation process.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1. There are no specific assumptions.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 The recommended course of action contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

7.2 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

Please see Caerphilly Strategic Priorities (5.21 above).

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 This report content contributes to the Wellbeing Goals. This report is for consultation only and so does not analyse the 5 ways of working in terms of decision making but it does recognise that going forward support is put in place to improve attainment. This must take a long term view as part of its impact on life chances, employment and quality of life. Causes within attainment are complex although one of the main ones is deprivation. The measure that is commonly used to measure deprivation is a pupil's eligibility to receive Free School Meals. One of the Council's Well-being Objectives is to 'Improve outcomes for all learners but we want to particularly focus on those

vulnerable to underachievement.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The EAS have their own Equalities and Welsh Language plans in place. CCBC has therefore not undertaken any specific impact assessment on the EAS Business Plan.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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 will accompany the Business Plan and will be intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants will be available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.
- 10.3 Delegation rate to schools has increased to 94.4%, whilst the EAS staff profile has reduced by 53.1% since 2012.
- 10.4 The local authority's indicative core contribution for 2021/22 are as follows: Caerphilly LA's contribution for 2021/22 is £985,591 compared with £1,005,705 in 2020/21 and £1,021,020 in 2019/20.
- 10.5 At the time of writing this report, there is uncertainty with regards to the regional grant funding from WG for 2021/2022. As a result of the pandemic, it is likely that there will be reductions in the regional grant profile. When the grant position has been confirmed the EAS detailed delivery plan will be updated accordingly.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 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
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees

- All Headteachers from within the region
- All Chairs of Governors from within the region
- School Councils from within the region
- All school based Professional Learning Leads
- EAS Supporting School Trade Union Group (SSTU Group)

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000, Children's Act 2004, Standards and Framework Act 1998

Author: Debbie Hartevelde, Managing Director, Education Achievement Service

Consultees: In addition to the groups listed above
 Christina Harray, Chief Executive
 Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
 Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
 Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member for Learning and Achievement
 Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
 Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
 Steve Harris, Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
 Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
 Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
 Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN
 Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
 Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
 Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
 Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
 Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation)
 Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
 Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer.

Appendix 1: Education Achievement Service: Regional Business Plan (Post Covid Recovery: April 2021-March 2022) (Consultation 2nd Draft)

Education Achievement Service Regional Business Plan (April 2021-March 2022) (Consultation 2nd Draft)



The final version of the Business Plan will be available in both Welsh and English.

This first draft document containing the high-level priorities has been shared with the following groups as part of the consultation process in December 2020:

- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Headteacher Strategy Group

Comments and feedback from the first consultation process have been considered in this draft version of the Business Plan.

This draft version of the Business Plan 2021-2022 will be shared with the following groups in January 2021. Views on the document can be submitted via this link: [BP 2021-22 Feedback](#)

- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
- All Headteachers from within the region
- All Chairs of Governors from within the region
- School Councils from within the region
- All school based Professional Learning Leads
- EAS Supporting School Trade Union Group (SSTU Group)

The final version of the Business Plan 2021-2022 will be presented for agreement to the Regional Joint Executive Group and then to each LA Cabinet / Executive and Welsh Government in March 2021.

<p>Cllr K Preston Chair of Education Achievement Service Company Board</p>	
<p>Cllr J Collins Chair of Joint Executive Group</p>	
<p>Ms D Hartevelde Managing Director, Education Achievement Service</p>	
<p>Mr Will McClean Lead Director on behalf of South East Wales Directors Group</p>	

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Section 1: Position statement

“Especially in times of uncertainty, it is important for the organisation to be agile and to be able to respond quickly to changing needs. In these times of challenge, the continue to focus on staying close to schools, listening to the voice of school leaders and working closely with local authorities. Relationships and trust are crucial in times of uncertainty so in spite of the other pressures this needs to continue to be prioritised very strongly and time proactively put aside in diaries to do it.”

(Steve Munby: Review of the EAS - October 2020)

This document contains the main priorities that the EAS believe will be relevant to focus upon in the next iteration of the regional Business Plan for 2021-2022. It is challenging to try to predict the way in which society will be operating from summer 2021 with regards to managing the spread of coronavirus. The priorities contained within this document assume that the EAS will build upon the learning and momentum from the past few months.

However, this plan will also need to consider how schools and settings will operate in a COVID-19 recovery phase and the support that will be required. Consideration will also be given to the priorities that were set and agreed prior to the pandemic in the previous Business Plan 2020-2021 depending on their relevance in the current climate.

The EAS will work collaboratively with local authority partners, schools and settings to implement the Business Plan. It is critically important that the EAS remains sensitive and responsive to the needs of the school workforce and will continue to be a highly supportive, reflective and responsive organisation.

The EAS will build upon what has worked well during this period, particularly the aspects of our role that have been successful within the virtual environment. The support that the EAS will offer will fully align to the expectations set by local authorities, Welsh Government (WG) and links to emerging research.

The EAS understands the need to over communicate with clarity to provide reassurance regarding advice, guidance, support and expectations. As a result, the EAS will work with local authorities to minimise any unnecessary bureaucracy for schools and settings to ensure they are able to focus on their important priorities and their support for learners.








The timing, delivery and focus of the support will be carefully considered considering the challenges that are likely to continue into the summer and autumn terms 2021.

Section 2: Regional Context

The centralised model of service delivery that has been adopted across the South East Wales region has enabled efficiencies to be realised, economies of scale to be secured, particularly in relation to avoiding duplication of functions and the ability to secure a range of educational expertise within the region.

The talent and expertise that resides in schools within and beyond the region is incentivised and used effectively to support professional learning and school improvement activity. There has been inevitable fragility in the ability of schools to offer support beyond their own settings because of the pandemic, this situation will be managed with sensitivity and will be constantly reviewed.

Key regional facts and figures

	<p>The number of pupils of compulsory school age within the region in 2020 was 73,090. This represents 19% of all pupils in Wales.</p>
	<p>There are 233 maintained schools in the region, 16% of all maintained schools in Wales (EAS figure correct from September 2020, Wales figure from PLASC, 2020).</p>
	<p>There are 20 Welsh medium primary schools, 3 Welsh medium secondary, 17 Roman Catholic and 11 Church in Wales schools within the region.</p>
	<p>The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is 20.9%. This level of eligibility is the second highest of the four regional consortia with Central South Consortium with Central South Consortium highest with 21.3% (PLASC, 2020).</p>
	<p>In the region, 10% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 19% (2011 Census, ONS).</p>
	<p>The percentage of pupils aged 5 or over from an ethnic minority background is 11.3%.</p>
	<p>Based on local authority reported numbers (Summer 2019), 1024 children in the region are looked after (LAC) by a local authority and attend a school in the region. (No new information available and not included on PLASC for 2020)</p>

Overview of school numbers in the region Jan 2021
Caerphilly (21.6% FSM)

- 14 **Non-maintained Nursery Settings**
- 63 **Primary** (11 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)
- 6 **Infant**
- 4 **Junior**
- 11 **Secondary** (1 Welsh medium)
- 1 **Special**
- 1 **Pupil Referral Unit**
- 1 **3-18**


Blaenau Gwent (25.5% FSM)

- 3 **Non-maintained Nursery Settings**
- 19 **Primary** (1 Welsh medium, 3 Roman Catholic, 1 Church in Wales)
- 2 **Secondary**
- 2 **Special**
- 2 **3-16**


Monmouthshire (13.1% FSM)

- 25 **Non-maintained Nursery Settings**
- 30 **Primary** (2 Welsh medium, 6 Church in Wales, 2 Roman Catholic)
- 4 **Secondary**
- 1 **Pupil Referral Service**


Newport (19.5% FSM)

- 23 **Non-maintained Nursery Settings**
- 2 **Nursery**
- 43 **Primary** (3 Welsh medium, 2 Church in Wales, 6 Roman Catholic)
- 9 **Secondary** (1 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)
- 2 **Special**
- 1 **Pupil Referral Unit**


Torfaen (25.0% FSM)

- 15 **Non-maintained Nursery Settings**
- 25 **Primary** (3 Welsh medium, 3 Church in Wales, 3 Roman Catholic)
- 6 **Secondary** (1 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)
- 1 **Special**
- 1 **Pupil Referral Service**


Overview of regional school staffing

Blaenau Gwent	506	Teaching Staff	554	Support Staff
Caerphilly	1,523	Teaching Staff	1,389	Support Staff
Monmouthshire	644	Teaching Staff	648	Support Staff
Newport	1,475	Teaching Staff	1,316	Support Staff
Torfaen	779	Teaching Staff	773	Support Staff
In total / EAS	4,927	Teaching Staff	4,680	Support staff

Overview of the number of regional school governors

Blaenau Gwent	327
Caerphilly	1063
Monmouthshire	429
Newport	768
Torfaen	396
EAS	2983

Section 3: Regional Priorities 2021-2022




The EAS will endeavour to be a professional partner working with schools to provide support using external expertise and experience. All schools and settings will be entitled to a range of professional learning and bespoke support which aligns to their school improvement priorities. Full consideration will be given to the current climate in which schools and settings are operating. Within this context the priorities of the EAS will be to:

- A. To ensure that the wellbeing support for practitioners and learners in schools and settings is paramount.
- B. Provide bespoke support to schools and settings in line with agreed school improvement priorities that reflect the current situation and positions of schools and settings.
- C. Provide support to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including continued use of blended learning approaches, particularly in identified secondary schools.
- D. Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures.
- E. Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise Curriculum for Wales, as appropriate.
- F. Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.
- G. Consolidate, promote and further develop the regional school and practitioner networks, enabling effective routes of communication and support.
- H. Continue to support the development of leaders at all levels in schools and settings.
- I. Further build the capacity of governing bodies through the regional professional learning offer and bespoke support, as appropriate.
- J. Further develop a culture around accountability that identifies and values a broad spectrum of characteristics of effective schools and settings.
- K. Embed the EAS internal evaluation model, continue to welcome external challenge and support, ensure the effective and efficient support to schools and settings and adhere to legislative requirements that fully supports the wellbeing of staff.

Local authority education strategic priorities 2021/22 (provided by each local authority)


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. The EAS will work in partnership with local authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate and those that arise from the changing local and national situation.


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, that rapid and sustainable school improvement can be achieved. This joined up approach will be even more critical as we work in partnership to support schools and settings during this challenging time.

Local Authority	Strategic priorities for 2021/2022	Main link(s) to improvement strands within the Business Plan
<p>Blaenau Gwent</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community. • Ensure high quality leadership and teaching that secures good progress for all learners, particularly the vulnerable and those who are eFSM. • Improve wellbeing for learners at all stages of development. • Secure strong progress in skills, particularly in English and mathematics at key stages 3 and 4. • Support schools who are identified as causing concern through regional protocols to secure improvement, in conjunction with the EAS. 	
<p>Caerphilly</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further improve the quality of leadership across all phases of education. • Address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on pupil wellbeing and engagement. • Endeavour to ensure the implementation of remote and blended learning strategies provide high quality support to pupils across all phases of education. • Further improve pupils' acquisition of digital competency skills. 	
<p>Monmouthshire</p> 	<p>Monmouthshire strategic priorities for 2020/21 aligned well with the following four recommendations from our Estyn inspection in February 2020. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R1 Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals. R2 Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards. 	

	<p>R3 Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision. R4 Strengthen the use of information gathered through self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning.</p> <p>The year that followed has been unprecedented and in managing our response to the global pandemic, our priorities have taken a step back. Instead, we have adopted key strategic aims that can be responsive to emerging needs in a rapidly changing environment. Whilst the current uncertainty remains, we continue to work towards addressing our Estyn recommendations, and prioritising emerging need.</p>	
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Local Authority	Strategic priorities for 2021/2022	Main link(s) to improvement strands within the Business Plan
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<p>Newport</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address barriers to learning at home, particularly where this is due to a lack of access to suitable computers or adequate connectivity. • Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs. • Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals. • Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils. • Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design. 	
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<p>Torfaen</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the progress (ensure catch up) of all learners, with a particular focus on FSM and vulnerable learners at key stage 4 by ensuring LA services compliment and support regional provision.* • Ensure all of Torfaen schools have a clear strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning particularly in secondary schools to reduce within school variation so all pupils, including boys and vulnerable learners, make appropriate progress over time. * • Ensure continued development and support for blended learning across all sectors in Torfaen.* • Reduce the level of variability in the quality and impact of leadership at all levels in secondary schools in the authority to secure strong, sustained pupil outcomes.* 	
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EAS Business Plan 2021/2022

The actions below have been developed in collaboration with our key partners, many of the actions have been refined from the originally agreed Business Plan 2020/2021 and the Revised Business Plan 2020/2021.

As noted above, the EAS will be sensitive and responsive to changing priorities as a result of the pandemic and may need to change direction and repurpose priorities as required. The support will be made available to all schools and settings, there is an understanding that schools and settings are likely to be facing continuing challenges. It will be the decision of leaders to determine the most appropriate type and timing of at any of the support on offer in line with their priorities.

Priority A	To ensure that the wellbeing support for practitioners and learners in schools and settings is paramount.		
Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 3: Equity, excellence and wellbeing	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:			
Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R4 Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils 			
What will the EAS do?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine the regional Equity and Wellbeing Strategy (which encompasses strategies for all disadvantaged and vulnerable learners) to further develop multi-agency working, to build on the universal provision for all schools and settings. Enhance the regional wellbeing offer to practitioners and learners. Create an online interactive curriculum tool that captures the resources available to support schools in shaping their provision for Health and Wellbeing at a local and regional level. Provide a programme of professional learning to build the capacity within schools and settings to support learners with their emotional health and wellbeing based upon the principles of adverse childhood experiences. Support schools and settings to adopt the National Whole School Approach to Wellbeing and Mental Health. 			
Priority B	Provide bespoke support to schools and settings in line with agreed school improvement priorities that reflect the current situation and positions of schools and settings.		
Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 3: Equity, excellence and wellbeing	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:			
Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R2 Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs R3 Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals 			

What will the EAS do?

- Undertake professional dialogue with schools and LAs to agree on school's improvement priorities and support.

Supporting a self-improvement system

- Refine the Challenge Adviser Role to reflect national model for school support identification and ensure key focus on support for school improvement.
- Identify lead schools and settings considering strengths in leadership capacity, curriculum design, learning culture and behaviour to support system wide improvement, including support for distance and blended learning.
- Broker school-to-school collaboration and cluster working.
- Refine the Learning Network Schools approach to reflect new and emerging service priorities.
- Develop a bespoke peer working model that builds mutual and reciprocal peer support to achieve increased levels of excellence across schools.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for schools, governing bodies and local authorities to understand the changing assessment and accountability arrangements within the reform agenda.

Supporting School Self Evaluation and Quality Assurance

- Further develop a boarder range of evaluation criteria that do not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but look at a wider range of school improvement information, including quality and effectiveness of distance and blended learning.
- Provide professional learning to all schools and settings to promote effective self-evaluation, improvement planning processes and effective strategies for formative and summative assessment.
- Further develop the regional approach of 'School on a page' so that a broader range of information is used for accountability purposes focused on pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning, the standards achieved and progress made by all pupils including those in vulnerable groups, the quality of teaching and learning in schools and settings as well as the quality of leadership.
- Support Schools to effectively quality assure their processes for distance and blended learning.
- Provide a comprehensive professional learning programme for elected members that supports the regional and national priorities around evaluation and quality assurance including distance and blended learning in order that they are able to hold schools to account more effectively.
- Establish mechanisms whereby schools may engage peers in the self-evaluation process to gain external perspective on improvement priorities including distance and blended learning.
- Support the continuing pilot of the national evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR) in identified regional schools as context dictates and ensure key learning is shared with all schools and settings.
- Further develop the use of pupil progress data at school level in line with national guidance on whole school target setting

Priority C	Provide support to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including continued use of blended learning approaches, particularly in identified secondary schools.		
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Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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What will the EAS do?

Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:

Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:

- R2 Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs

Teaching and Learning

- Provide a range of delivery models and access to a wider range of blended professional learning across all areas of learning to support schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning within and beyond the region.
- Use the established network of school practitioners to further enhance the regional website as a mechanism to share effective whole school strategies for teaching and learning, including distance and blended learning.
- Support schools to use a range of first-hand evidence to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including distance and blended learning through a modelled, shared and guided approach.
- Continue to work in partnership with key partners, to include Welsh Government and Higher Education Institutions to offer a programme of professional learning to develop staff proficiency in the Welsh language.
- Continue to support and work collaboratively with school leaders, as appropriate, to develop and refine whole school teaching and learning strategies, using a team around the school model.
- Continue to provide a range of strategies to support leadership of teaching and learning e.g. school to school, research informed approaches, virtual professional learning and networking opportunities.

Targeted support for the secondary phase (in addition to above)

- Supporting schools to ensure that curriculum pathways provide an appropriate choice for all learners.
- Engage with Career Wales to design a programme that offers learners career advice from year seven onwards in order to map their flightpaths to their desired destinations.
- Design and facilitate national online resources to complement the middle leadership programme for more able and SEREN school leads.
- To support schools with Sixth Forms to have access to Russell Group Universities to support them with their SEREN learners.
- Collaborate with schools and other sectors to share and analyse outcome and destination data at key stage 5 for all groups of learners.

Priority D	Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures.		
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Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 3: Equity, excellence and wellbeing	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:

Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:

- R3 Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals

- R4 Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils

What will the EAS offer schools and settings?

Specific focus on improving the outcomes of Vulnerable Learners

- Implement the regional plan for Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) to provide appropriate support and guidance for identified learners to make progress.
- Design and facilitate professional learning for specialist teaching assistants in partnership with local authorities and settings.
- Evaluate the current range of enhanced curriculum opportunities funded via the pupil development and RRRS grants to share best practice across the secondary phase.
- Capture best practice of a range of curriculum offers that are provided in PRU and Special school settings.

Partnership Working: LA Inclusion Leads

- Implement a revised regional approach, as appropriate, to improve the monitoring and impact of the pupil development grant.
- Work in partnership with local authorities to analyse attendance and exclusions data for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners and support school leaders to share effective practice and to improve outcomes, as appropriate.
- Work in partnership with local authorities to analyse FSM and LAC data and provide additional advice and support for schools and settings who have an increase in these groups as a result of COVID.

Partnership Working: External Partners

- Continue to work in partnership with Challenge Education to support the 'RADY' network of schools engaged with the 'Raising the achievement of disadvantaged youngsters' programme.
- Commission and external evaluation of the impact of the RADY programme.

Partnership Working: ALN reform

- Work with local authority partners to explore and agree roles and responsibilities with regards to the EAS role in securing the effective regional provision for ALN.
- Support, as appropriate, the Regional ALN Transformation Officer to update stakeholders on ALN Reform and support the delivery of professional learning in line with the remit of the work of the EAS.

Targeted Support for Schools and Settings:

- Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected as a result of COVID pandemic.
- Refine the current Teaching and Learning Strategy to include an annex supporting the teaching and learning of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of learners.
- Extend the use of first hand evidence within schools to support and ratify the progress that is made by disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of learners.
- Extend the Vulnerable Learner Lead Programme through primary and secondary settings.
- Refine the grant planning system and the processes in place to support the planning, reviewing and evaluating of impact of expenditure in line with the research from the Education Endowment Foundation.
- Provide a programme of professional learning through a 'Train the Trainer' approach that provides the foundations of universal provision across all schools and settings. This will include strategy development and professional learning for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of learners.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pupil voice and pupil participation across the region in partnership with the School and Super Ambassador Programme to influence school and regional priorities. • Deliver a regional programme across all settings supporting More Able and Seren Learners. 			
Priority E	Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools to help them realise Curriculum for Wales.		
Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 3: Equity, excellence and wellbeing	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:			
Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R2 Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs • R5 Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design 			
What will the EAS do?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all schools with access to the national professional learning programmes to support the implementation of the curriculum for Wales. Ensure that this professional learning reflects the priorities set out in the national implementation plan. • Provide schools with examples of effective school development actions for curriculum reform and provide bespoke support to schools and settings to implement these. • Encourage all schools to be research informed by creating a network of lead enquirers to develop the capacity for professional enquiry in all schools. • Review the regional Welsh language strategy in collaboration with school leaders and other partners, considering the findings for future delivery models. • Encourage schools to actively seek resources and experiences that support learners to understand the stories of different groups, including diverse and minority groups, and enable all learners to see themselves and their experiences and knowledge developed through the curriculum. 			
Priority F	Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.		
Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 3: Equity, excellence and wellbeing	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
What will the EAS do?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with other regions and higher education institutions, provide a national mentoring and coaching programme to develop and support school leaders and governors. 			
Schools as Learning Organisations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all professional learning is underpinned by the principles of effective learning organisations and encourages schools to develop as effective learning organisations. • Provide coordinated support to ensure all schools develop as effective learning organisations e.g. how to use the survey to inform school development priorities. 			

- Share case studies where schools and clusters are effectively developing as learning organisations.

Professional learning teaching assistants

- Provide a virtual professional learning offer that supports teaching assistants whether new to the role, a practicing teaching assistant or as an experienced higher-level teaching assistant.
- Design and facilitate professional learning for specialist teaching assistants in partnership with local authorities, Special Schools and PRU's.

Professional Learning for statutory induction

- Refine and develop a Nationally designed virtual induction professional learning offer to support all those who support the induction process including: Newly Qualified teachers, the school-based induction mentor, and the external verifier.
- Continue supporting early career teachers beyond the statutory induction period.
- Further strengthen partnership working with HEI institutions to offer joint induction support for early career entry.

Initial Teacher Education

- Continue to work with higher education partners, cross regional partners and schools in developing and delivery of all routes into initial teacher education, as appropriate within the current arrangements.

Priority G	Consolidate, promote and further develop the regional school and practitioner networks, enabling effective routes of communication and support.		
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Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:

Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:

- R2 Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs
- R5 Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design

What will the EAS do?

- Review all existing networks to ensure all practitioners have access to relevant networking opportunities with colleagues within and beyond the region.
- In partnership with schools and settings continually review their capacity to support the wider system.

Priority H	Continue to support the development of leaders at all levels in schools and settings.		
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Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 4: Evaluation, improvement and accountability	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:

Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:

- R2 Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs
- R3 Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals

What will the EAS do?

- Further develop the strategic approach to identifying and supporting the next group of leaders within the region.

National professional learning offer for leaders

- Provide a blended professional learning offer in partnership with higher education institutions and other regions to support leaders at all levels in all schools and settings through a nationally endorsed range of programmes: Middle leadership, senior leadership, aspiring headteacher / preparation for NPQH, NPQH, New and Acting headteachers, experienced headteachers.
- Work in partnership with local authorities to support school leaders to address the actions, as appropriate, contained within the Welsh in Education strategy and Cymraeg 2040: Welsh language strategy.

Identifying, recruiting and retaining effective leaders

- Identify aspirational leaders and provide them with bespoke professional learning and a range of leadership experiences that supports them to develop an individual professional learning journey, particularly within the Welsh medium and secondary sectors.
- Work with local authorities and governing bodies to explore a range of leadership models e.g. Executive headship
- Regional specialist HR will work with local authorities to review and revise senior leadership recruitment processes to include using evaluations from a range of stakeholders and professional learning for appointment panel members.
- In partnership with other regions and higher education institutions, provide a national mentoring and coaching programme to develop and support school leaders and governors.

Specialist HR

- Work with local authorities to complement existing education HR services and provide a range of specialist HR professional learning for school leaders and governors.

Priority 1 Further build the capacity of governing bodies through the regional professional learning offer and bespoke support, as appropriate.

Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 4: Evaluation, improvement and accountability	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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What will the EAS offer schools and settings?

- Continue to refine the delivery of the Governor Support Service Level Agreement (2020-22), ensuring governing bodies are supported through timely, constructive guidance that enables effective governance.
- Further develop professional learning for governors, including online materials, interactive and recorded workshops, regular briefings for all chairs of governing bodies, support for existing self-evaluation tools and the development of a cluster-based approach.
- Provide focused professional learning for chairs and vice chairs of governing bodies in secondary schools, that supports them in addressing phase specific challenges.
- Develop a pilot programme to develop coaching approaches for Chairs of Governors.
- Provide opportunities for collaborative professional learning for school leaders and governors, encouraging and enabling peer support arrangements for governing bodies to refine and develop their capacity to support their schools.
- Identify governors who can undertake additional roles within and beyond their own governing bodies, providing bespoke professional learning to strengthen and build capacity within the region.

Priority J	To further develop a culture around accountability that identifies and values a broad spectrum of characteristics of effective schools and settings.		
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Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 4: Evaluation, improvement and accountability	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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What will the EAS offer schools and settings?

- Work collaboratively with a range of partners to develop a regional approach that identifies and values the characteristics of an effective school.
- Identify a broader range of evaluation strategies that do not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but looks at a wider range of school improvement information.
- Provide a comprehensive professional learning programme for elected members that supports the regional and national priorities around evaluation and quality assurance including distance and blended learning in order that they are able to hold schools to account more effectively.
- Determine the support arrangements for all schools in line with national guidance considering how regional consortia and local authorities can agree with the school the additional support it needs to improve and to build its own capacity to improve and considering specifically distance and blended learning.

Priority K	i. Embed the EAS internal evaluation model, continue to welcome external challenge and support and ensure the effective and efficient support to schools and settings. ii. Ensure the EAS adheres to legislative requirements and fully supports the wellbeing of staff.		
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Link to National Mission	Enabling objective 1: Professional learning Enabling objective 2: Leadership Enabling objective 3: Equity, excellence and wellbeing Enabling objective 4: Evaluation, improvement and accountability	Link to LA Strategic Priorities	To be updated when LAs provide their strategic priorities
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Link to Estyn Recommendations: Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 Update report from June to November 2020:

- Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:
- R5 Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design

What will the EAS do?

Business delivery model

- Continue to refine the business model for the EAS to ensure that it aligns to regional and national priorities and addresses the needs of schools and settings.
- Maintain the credibility of the service using EAS core staff and the move to the school led system whilst ensuring effective provision and value for money.
- Embed the EAS internal evaluation model, continue to welcome external challenge and support and ensure the effective and efficient support to schools and settings.
- Ensure the EAS adheres to legislative requirements and fully supports the wellbeing of staff.
- Use the Investors in People development programme to support service improvements.
- Refine and enhance the communication and marketing strategy to ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement, to include the development of a regional pupil forum.
- Continue to engage with other consortia and middle-tier organisations, such as Estyn, to realise efficiencies in programme development and delivery.
- Support and advise local authorities, as appropriate, in the delivery of their statutory functions for SACRE and the development of individual Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

Staff Development

- To maintain high levels of staff morale and wellbeing in the backdrop of reduced funding and the implementation of change management processes.
- Continue to develop collaborative ways in which the EAS team contribute to and feel part of the decision-making processes and are recognised more systematically for their successes.
- Provide access to coaching and mentoring support for all staff.
- Maintain a high-quality, well informed, flexible and motivated workforce that represent the service values and vision.
- Embed performance management processes and extend the professional learning opportunities for staff that meet individual and service needs.
- Ensure all EAS staff are well informed regarding all aspects of the reform agenda.

Funding, Resourcing and Governance

- Work with key partners to deliver a more sustainable funding model that aligns with the workforce plan and secures an updated Collaboration and Members Agreement.
- Continue to develop the regional grant mapping tool to enable more efficient and effective interrogation of data, impact capture and value for money at school, LA and regional level.
- Continue to publish the regional grant allocations and maximise delegation rates to schools.
- Refine the value for money model, further exploring access to comparative data.
- Managing a complex governance interface to ensure communication, satisfaction and engagement levels remain high.

Section 4: Ambitions for 2021/2022

Working in partnership with local authorities, schools and setting the ambitions for 2021/22 and beyond are challenging to capture without having clarity around the changing nature of the pandemic and the effect it will have on schools and settings. In this regard, the ambitions below need to be read within the context they have been derived:

- The EAS has placed wellbeing at the forefront of its work.
- There is a clear strategy to improve the quality of distance and blended learning experiences for learners. There has been good engagement in the regional strategy and many opportunities have been provided for schools to share to develop more effective teaching across and within schools and settings.
- Where schools and settings have engaged in the regional wellbeing support offer it has helped to support improvement in their provision for wellbeing.
- Schools and settings receive the right type of support, as appropriate to help them make progress against their school improvement priorities.
- Most schools can identify and provide the most appropriate support to specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures, to help them to progress.
- A regional strategy developed in collaboration with practitioners provides a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The quality and impact of the provision for professional learning for educational practitioners and governors is good and those schools that have engaged are able to evidence the impact of this.
- Refined and extended networks ensure effective collaboration and communication to support school improvement.
- A range of professional learning and bespoke support provided to schools and settings helps them realise Curriculum for Wales.
- Working with schools and local authorities, a regional model of support will be developed and implemented, focusing on accurate self-evaluation using a broad range of characteristics, aligned to school improvement priorities.
- Evaluations of the impact of regional policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic will be used to inform future ways of working and curriculum design.

Section 5: Delivery arrangements for 2021/2022

Governance and funding

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.

How will the EAS held to account for the delivery and impact of this Business Plan?

The progress on the implementation and impact of the Business Plan will be reported formally at a mid-year basis to the Joint Executive Group and Company Board; this will include an evaluation of the regional plan and of each individual local authority annex document. These reports, as in previous years, will be suitable for scrutiny activity at local authority and national level. In addition, the progress made towards the implementation of key actions will be reported at each meeting of the Joint Executive Group and Company Board.

This year the EAS will report additional information on a termly basis, to both the Joint Executive Group and local authorities around the progress and impact of its work in support of each local authority strategic objective and their related success criteria and the progress schools are making towards their individual targets. This approach will be aligned to the national changes in the accountability system.

Throughout the year there will be many interim impact reports associated with the implementation streams within the Business Plan which will be reported through each of the governance groups, though individual LA committees (as requested) and through evaluation and improvement events with Welsh Government officials, These include: reports on pupil outcomes and progress, progress on schools causing concern, regular updates on outcomes/impact from regional / local authority self-evaluation activity and regional strategies, feedback from external reviews, annual regional value for money report, Managing Director's Annual Report, outcomes from regional school and governor surveys.

The financial accounts are reported to both the company board on a quarterly basis and through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on a termly basis. The final year end accounts are externally audited and reported in line with the 2016 UK Corporate Governance Code. In compliance with the Companies Act these accounts are reported and approved at the Annual General Meeting by the Joint Executive Members who are shareholders of the EAS.

Consortium funding

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.

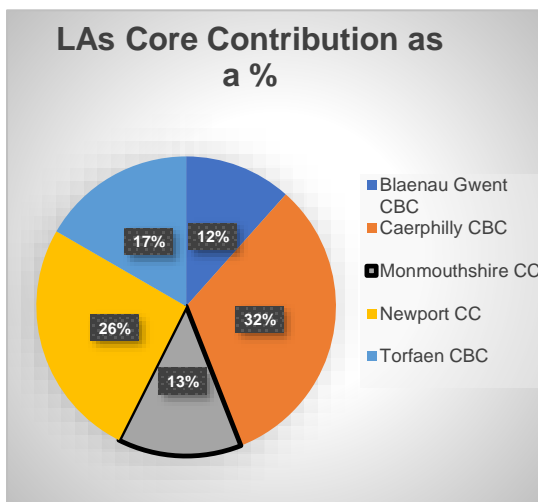
Delegation rates to schools has increased to 94.4% whilst the EAS staff profile has reduced by 53.1% since 2012.

Local authority contributions 2021/2022

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 £1.23m since 2012 agreed in collaboration with the 5 local authorities. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2021/22 are as follows:

Local Authority	
Blaenau Gwent CBC	£351,806
Caerphilly CBC	£985,591
Monmouthshire CC	£405,844
Newport CC	£787,227
Torfaen CBC	£506,028
Total	£3,036,496



In terms of the above £0.796m of this figure is used to secure capacity within the EAS team from current serving headteachers and schools and £0.2m of this figure is used to secure service level agreements and venue costs sourced through local authorities.

Regional school improvement grants

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.

Grant Name (To be updated when information on grants is received from Welsh Government)	Grant Total	Amount delegated to schools	Delegation* Rate	Regionally Retained
	Indicative Calculation 2021/22			
	£	£		£
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)				
- Education Improvement Grant	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
- Professional Learning for Teachers	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
- Other grant initiatives	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc

PDG (Lead Regional PDG Adviser)	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Seren Pre 16	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Seren Post 16	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Total	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

*Delegation: This refers to funding which gives freedom of choice to a school in how it is used. It must however be spent in accordance with, and in the spirit of, the core purpose of the grant and the individual school development plan.

Governor Support Service Level Agreement

The EAS has responsibility for providing a Governor Support service to all schools in the region. The service provides support to school governing bodies, headteachers, and individual governors. This includes advice, guidance, training, and an optional clerking service to support governing bodies to deliver their responsibilities.

The optional clerking service is provided through an annual service level agreement with an option to buy into a clerking service and then additionally a statutory committee clerking service. Only two school opted not to buy into the clerking service in 2020/21. The indicative funding for 2021/22 is £0.387m.

Section 6: Additional supporting documents

This Business Plan is supported by the following documents:

- Local Authority Annex documents 2021 – 2022
- Detailed Business Plan 2021–2022
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2021–2022 (to follow once detailed received from WG)
- Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2021–2022
- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans

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