



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26 FEBRUARY 2018

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS PLAN
2018-2021**

REPORT BY: DEBBIE HARTEVELD, MANAGING DIRECTOR, EAS.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek members views on the draft EAS Business Plan 2018-2021 and the Local Authority Annex 2018-2019, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs). This Business Plan (2018-2021) outlines the programme of work that is required to continue to accelerate outcomes for children and young people across all schools in South East Wales. The plan focuses on the urgent need to raise aspiration and accelerate improvement in pupil outcomes, improve the quality of teaching and leadership and build a self-improving system within and across schools and settings. The priorities for the Business Plan 2018-2019 have been derived from the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan and progress made across the region with the areas that have been identified as requiring improvements through self-evaluation processes and feedback from Estyn on the inspection of the EAS.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 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

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs). This Business Plan (2018-2021) outlines the programme of work that is required to continue to accelerate outcomes for children and young people across all schools in South East Wales. The plan focuses on the urgent need to raise aspiration and accelerate improvement in pupil outcomes, improve the quality of teaching and leadership and build a self-improving system

within and across schools and settings. The priorities for the Business Plan 2018-2019 have been derived from the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan and progress made across the region with the areas that have been identified as requiring improvements through self-evaluation processes and feedback from Estyn on the inspection of the EAS.

- 4.2 The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within Caerphilly are met through bespoke work with each school. The EAS offers a wide range of bespoke support that is based upon best practice.

Expected outcomes

- 4.3 The Business Plan is now in the process of consultation which will last until mid-February 2018. All feedback from the Caerphilly Scrutiny Committee will be considered and the final plan will be updated and shared with all LAs from March 2018 onwards. The final version of the Business Plan will commence on April 1st 2018.
- 4.4 The expected outcomes of the EAS Business Plan actions are noted in the success criteria section in Section 3 of the plan. These are ambitious and progress will be mapped against these. In addition, regional and Caerphilly pupil level targets and attendance targets are noted in Section 6 of the plan and later in this report. Members will be provided with update reports on progress made towards these targets at key points in the year.

Issues and Findings

Progress made towards EAS Business Plan 2017-2018

- 4.5 The progress made towards the Business Plan and LA Annexes is reported to The Joint Executive Group (JEG) and the EAS Company Board on a biannual basis. This is also complemented by a range of additional reports (such as pupil outcomes, progress towards targets information, regional value for money and progress of schools causing concern) that are shared with the above groups and also LA Education Scrutiny Committees and termly Challenge and Review events with Welsh Government Officers (with the Cabinet Secretary for Education in the autumn term event). This report is not intended to duplicate previous reports that have been provided and reports only against previous Business Plan priorities.
- 4.6 Section 2 of the Business Plan (Appendix A) highlights a summary of wider regional improvements over the last 12 months.
- 4.7 Appendix C details the mid-year review of the current Caerphilly Annex.
- 4.8 It is important to note that not all actions within the Business Plan will have an immediate impact on end of key stage outcomes. It is also important to note that outcomes cannot be attributed to solely to the work of the regional consortium as other partners in the system also play an important role. The role of school leaders and governing bodies in holding these leaders to account are a key factor in securing school improvement.

Current Business Plan Priority 2017-2018	Progress Judgement (October 2017)
1. Support for School Improvement	Satisfactory Progress
2. Pupil Wellbeing and Equity in Education	Satisfactory Progress
3. Professional Learning: Pedagogy and Leadership	Satisfactory Progress
4. Curriculum and Assessment	Satisfactory Progress
5. Curriculum and Pedagogy: Wider Curriculum and Pioneer	Satisfactory Progress

Development	
6. The Self-Improving System (SIS)	Strong Progress
7. Wider Regional and EAS Company Developments	Strong Progress

The progress judgements made above are set against the success criteria contained within the Business Plan for 2017/2018. These judgements are made by the EAS using internal self-evaluation processes to gather a wide range of first hand evidence. All judgements are shared through the governance structures.

Outcomes from Regional Estyn inspection (May 2016) and progress made towards the recommendations

4.9 In May 2016 Estyn and Wales Audit Office re-visited the region to undertake the inspection of the regional school improvement services provided by the EAS. The structure of the inspection report is based on those aspects of Estyn's Common Inspection Framework that apply to regional consortia, which are covered by five quality indicators, each are graded (Excellent, Good, Adequate or Unsatisfactory). Additionally, an evaluation of standards featured as a performance profile in the context section of the report. A summary of the outcome is below:

Section	Grade
Support for school improvement	Good
Leadership	Good
Quality improvement	Good
Partnership working	Good
Resource Management	Good

4.10 Estyn revisited the EAS in September 2017 to conduct an inspection of the progress the EAS had made towards the recommendations from a good baseline. A summary of the judgements is below:

Recommendation	Estyn Progress Judgement
R1 Consider the use of a wider range of performance indicators at school and regional level to ensure that the progress of all groups of learners is challenged and supported	Satisfactory Progress
R2 Improve consistency in the quality of evaluation of school improvement activities throughout the service	Strong Progress
R3 Identify and manage risks more effectively	Very Good Progress

4.11 The Estyn team considered a range of evidence including the consortium's business planning, evaluations, challenge advisers' reports, target setting procedures, risk assessments and the views of headteachers. Estyn does not plan to make any further follow-up visits to the EAS. Any remaining areas for improvement will be monitored informally by

Estyn's regional link inspector and the relevant local authority link inspectors, and considered during future inspections of local government education services.

- 4.12 Estyn noted in their report that "EAS senior managers make honest and accurate evaluations of the strengths and shortcomings in the school improvement activities that they provide for schools. They have a clear understanding of how to link the findings from self-evaluation activities to improvement planning."
- 4.13 The improvements that are required at regional and LA level will continue to require a strong commitment of partnership working to be successful with Caerphilly making full use of their statutory powers, as appropriate, and wider support services such as HR to ensure that all schools make improvements at the required pace.
- 4.14 School leaders in schools in Caerphilly requiring the most improvement will need to fully engage with the improvements that need to be made and, alongside governing bodies will need to drive forward this change at pace. The EAS will offer support and challenge through this process but will not be able to effect change on a whole level without the commitment from each tier within the system.

Implications

The South-East Wales Regional Mission: Business Plan (2018-2019)

- 4.15 This Business Plan focuses upon the actions that are required to accelerate improvement across the region and across all schools, PRUs, Special Schools and non-maintained nursery settings in Caerphilly. Whilst this plan is regional, the bespoke approach at school level and through each individual LA Annex enables all nuances in need to be addressed. The actions contained within the plan align with the Welsh Government strategic document Education in Wales: Our National Mission (Action Plan 2017 – 2021). Further details on delivery can be found in the Detailed Delivery Document and the Professional Learning Offer 2018-2019 (these will be updated and refined following the final version of the attached plan). The content of the Business Plan will be used to populate and report against the regional elements within the Wales Education Report Card.
- 4.16 The final version of the Business Plan will be supported by a range of supporting documents:
- Local Authority Annex documents April 2018-March 2019
 - Detailed Business Plan April 2018-March 2019
 - Detailed Resource Overview 2018-2019
 - Long Term 3-year Business Plan Overview
 - Regional Self-Evaluation Report
 - Regional Professional Learning Offer 2018-2019
 - EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
 - Self-Evaluation Timetable 2016-2018
- 4.17 The focus for improvement for 2018-2019 will continue to secure improvements in the following areas:
- To continue to raise aspiration, improve pupil outcomes, particularly for vulnerable groups of learners (FSM, Gender, EAL, MA and LAC) and reduce the variance within and across schools, settings and LAs.
 - To accelerate improvement in schools and settings where progress is too slow by ensuring a more consistent approach is applied to schools causing concern and the use of Local Authority statutory powers to accelerate progress in identified schools.
 - To continue to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and learning, particularly within the secondary phase.
 - Supporting schools to ensure the effective development of pupil skills at all phases.
 - Supporting the national approach and further development of the regional professional learning opportunities to ensure the success, equity and well-being of every learner.
 - Preparing schools to meet the curriculum and assessment demands in line with new accountability arrangements.

- Supporting the development of a 'world-class curriculum' that will help raise standards for all in Wales.
- To embed the regional approach to developing a self-improving system.

The Regional Ambition is, by 2021 that:

- 4.18 Working with our key partners we will aim to transform the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across South East Wales. We will do this by:
- Ensuring successful learning experiences and high levels of wellbeing particularly for those facing the greatest challenges;
 - Building effective networks of professionals, across the five Local Authorities and beyond and working together to improve leadership, teaching and learning; and
 - Attracting and retaining a team of outstanding people who embed our core values in their work and share a passion for excellence.
- 4.19 The delivery elements within the plan are centred around 7 key Improvement Strands: Support for School Improvement, Professional Learning (Teaching and Leadership), Excellence, Equity and Wellbeing, Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability, Supporting Collaboration, Curriculum Reform and EAS Company Developments). Each of these strands detail 'What we will do' and a section that will be used to monitor progress against detailed success criteria 'How will we know we will have made progress by March 2019'
- 4.20 The EAS has invested in building the capacity of schools and educational settings within the region over the last four years to enable more collaborative ways of working. This approach is enabling teachers and leaders to learn from each other, to try out new approaches and to engage with educational research as the backdrop for improvement. Across the region there are a number of well-established networks of professional practice, these will continue to be encouraged and the practice from within them shared.
- 4.21 The approach to build capacity and schools taking more of a collective ownership for the development of teaching and leadership has been developed further and the cluster model will be embedded over the next few years across the region.

Regional Key Stage Targets 2017-20 and Local Authority Attendance Targets

- 4.22 The Business Plan targets in Section 6 are derived from the information submitted by all schools across South East Wales during the statutory target setting process in autumn 2017. The target setting process across the region is robust with all LA / school aggregate targets linked to individual pupils.
- 4.23 To ensure that appropriate aspiration is applied across schools, a joint challenge process has been introduced by LA Officers and EAS staff. This process considers an analysis of projected future performance against previous performance, projected Free School Meal benchmark quarters, FFT estimates and WG modelled expectations.
- 4.24 The regional and LA targets for 2018 are final and Members will have had involvement with Directors in agreeing these. Targets for 2019 and 2020 remain draft and subject to additional challenge and scrutiny during the next iteration of the process in autumn 2018. **The targets for Caerphilly schools can be found on pages 2-5 in the LA Annex 2018-2019 (Appendix B).**

LA Annex Documents

- 4.25 Each LA Annex contains an overview of the performance and the main areas for development at a LA level. A summary of the schools that require the highest levels of support, inspection outcomes and an overview of categorisation for the LA. Pupil level targets and attendance targets are also included.

A summary of overall pupil performance in Caerphilly LA

- Since 2014, attainment at Foundation Phase has been above the Wales average, although the rate of improvement is below that of Wales. Since 2016, attainment at Key Stage 2 has been above the Wales average. The rate of improvement between 2014 and 2017 is higher than Wales.
- Attainment at Key Stage 3 is still below the Wales average, although the rate of improvement from 2016 and from 2014 is above the Wales rate.
- Attainment declined at Key Stage 4, but at a slower rate of improvement than that across Wales. Performance is still below the Wales average, but the gap has narrowed from 2014 and 2016.
- Attainment at Key Stage 5 is stable, with the same level of attainment in 2017 as in 2014. Performance remains below Wales.
- Since 2014, attainment at Foundation Phase has been above the Wales average. Since 2016, attainment at Key Stage 2 has been above the Wales average. The rate of improvement between 2014 and 2017 is higher than Wales.
- Attainment at Key Stage 3 is still below the Wales average, although the rate of improvement from 2016 and from 2014 is above the Wales rate.
- Attainment at Key Stage 4 shows a faster rate of improvement than that across Wales. Performance is still below the Wales average, with the gap narrowing from 2014 and 2016.

Gender

- Between 2014 and 2017 the gender gap narrowed at FP, and was below the Wales gender gap.
- At KS2 the gender gap narrowed in this time, and is also below the Wales gender gap.
- Between 2014 and 2017 the gender gap narrowed at KS3, but is still wider than the Wales gender gap.
- At KS4 the gender gap is wider than Wales, and has widened between 2014 and 2017.

FSM

- At FP and KS2, the performance of FSM pupils in 2017 is above the Wales average. But the FSM/non FSM gap is above the gap for Wales and has grown since 2014.
- At KS3, performance of FSM pupils has been below the Wales average between 2014 and 2017, and despite the FSM/non FSM gap narrowing, it is still wider than the gap across Wales.
- At KS4 performance of FSM pupils remains below the Wales average. In 2017, the FSM/non FSM gap widened, but is narrower than across Wales. FSM pupil performance has declined since 2014 although non FSM performance has improved in this period.

FSM benchmarking quartiles

- At FP, 59% of schools are above the median for FPI. At KS2, 54% of schools are above the median for CSI. At KS3, 40% of schools are above the median for CSI. At KS4, 77% (10 out of 13 schools) are above the median for L2 inc.
- Blackwood, Risca, St Martin's, Lewis Girls', Rhymney, Bedwas and Cwmcarn are all in Quarter 1 for L2 inc
- Heolddu, Lewis School and Ysgol Cwm Rhymni are all in Quarter 4 for L2 inc.

Attendance/Exclusions

- Over the past 4 years, attendance at primary schools has increased by 0.3pp.
- Attendance at secondary schools has increased overall since 2014, but at a slower rate to that across Wales, and attendance is still below the Wales average.
- Unauthorised absence in primary schools has increased to 0.9% since 2014.
- At secondary schools, unauthorised absence has increased since 2014 from 1.4% to 2.1%. The Wales figure has remained stable between 1.3% and 1.4% in this time.

- Since 2013/14 there has been a significant rise overall at primary and secondary level for exclusions of 5 days or fewer
- Since 2013/14 there has been a significant increase at secondary level for exclusions of 6 days or more. It has been fairly stable at primary level.
- There has been 1 permanent exclusion from primary in 2016/17, although there were no permanent exclusions from primary schools in the past 4 years
- Secondary permanent exclusions
2013/14 - 14
2014/15 - 8
2015/16 - 14
2016/17 - 20

Inspection/Categorisation

- The percentage of schools judged at least Good for current performance has increased since 2014 to 80%. One school was deemed unsatisfactory in 2016/17. Increase in schools judged at least Good for prospects for improvement has increased to 93%.
- The percentage of primary schools categorised Green has almost doubled to 44% in 2017/18. One secondary school categorised Red, seven Amber, five Yellow (provisional and confidential).

Business Plan 2018-2021 is designed to address the areas required improvement noted above.

Risks

- 4.26 Risks to delivery of the Business Plan occur when the following points are not adhered to:
- There is a lack of clarity about respective roles and statutory responsibilities leading to misconceptions about the role of the EAS.
 - Agreed actions are not carried out in a timely manner by EAS and / or LA e.g. Schools Causing Concern Register actions
 - EAS and LA staff do not demonstrate a united front when dealing with schools, particularly those that give cause for concern.
 - Schools are not held to account in a timely manner using the existing mechanisms.
 - There is not consistent application of agreed regional protocols e.g. meeting deadlines for target setting, elected Members attending selected EIBs
 - Timely consideration is not given to the use of LA Statutory Powers e.g. low standards, attendance, exclusions, leadership
 - Full use is not made of the training offers to ensure that all Elected Members are up to date with key messages.
 - Full use is not made of consultation events to help shape the direction of the EAS.
- 4.27 Uncertain financial projections make it difficult to fully cost the Business Plan at this stage.
- 4.28 Continued changes in reporting arrangements and performance measures at KS4 for a number of subjects continues to present risks to LA and regional outcomes.
- 4.29 Limited impact of the work of the EAS in schools where underperformance in leadership is not challenged effectively.
- 4.30 The work of the EAS in improving outcomes for vulnerable learners will remain slow unless there is greater engagement with all key partners across LAs to ensure effective joint targeting of resources.
- 4.1 Officers from the EAS and Council are working together to ensure that these risks are minimised and mitigated.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This report content (Education attainment) contributes to the Well being 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.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The EAS was set up to be reliant on three funding streams to remain financially viable: core funding from councils, grant funding (this includes a contribution from the regional Education Improvement Grant (EIG) and other Welsh Government (WG) Grants) and income generated from trading services to schools, which due to the notion of a self-improving school system has reduced overtime.
- 7.2 By way of context, the EAS has seen funding reductions in each of the areas noted above:
- A reduction in the EIG of 14% (since 2014 and a further potential 11.2% to the regional allocation which would equate to £192k reduction planned for EAS in 2018/2019);
 - A reduction in a WG grant to support new GCSE specifications of 50% which equates to £182k; and
 - A 92% reduction in trading income equating to £1.15m (since 2012 with a further £100k planned for 2018/2019). We do not intend reverting back to a trading organisation because we feel this compromises our legitimacy and is at odds with the strategic direction Members have asked for.
- 7.3 The service continues to be hampered by short term, ad hoc grant awards from Welsh Government. The EAS continues to manage staff changes and are now some 40% smaller in payroll staff than when the service started in 2012. Whilst this has been effectively managed to date it has been a contributing factor in increased cash contributions to the pension fund (£170k for the next two financial years). In addition, Members will be aware that the total regional EIG reduction for 2018/19 totals £3.028m. Whilst the detail surrounding this reduction is becoming clearer the regional position is still to be determined.
- 7.4 Over the past three financial years the EAS has been able to contribute to the efficiency savings of Councils by reducing the core funding commitment by 3%. Following a recent meeting of the EAS Company Board the funding profile for 2018/2019 and indicative funding for the following 2 financial years was discussed. Taking all factors into consideration, the Company Board agreed that it can offer a 2% efficiency saving on last year's core funding contribution for 2018/19 and an indicative 2% efficiency for the next 2 financial years.

EAS 'As Is' Model Aug 2012	2014/15 (funding levels set by WG, based on RSG formula to LA)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	% Movement 2011/12 to 2017/18	2018/19 Efficiency Saving
		-3.4%	-3%	-3%		2.0%
1,187,541	1,169,666	1,129,897	1,096,000	1,063,120	-10%	1,041,858

7.5 These efficiencies have been thought through carefully in what will be a challenging financial climate for the EAS and councils. It is likely that the EAS will need to implement a change management programme to enable a balanced budget to be set for the coming financial year. Considering this the Company Board will meet early January 2018 to formulate the detailed approach to this and will communicate with JEG Members as necessary

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1

- Education Achievement Service staff
- South East Wales Directors / Chief Education Officers and Diocesan Directors
- Joint Executive Group
- Education Achievement Service Company Board
- Education Achievement Service Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Circulated to individual Local Authority Education Scrutiny Committees via Chief Education Officers / Directors in January 2017
- Regional Headteacher Strategy Group
- Regional Governor Strategy Group
- Regional Youth Forum

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 For members 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, prior to the final draft being endorsed by Cabinet.

10.2 For members to consider the main strengths and areas for development within Caerphilly, as detailed in LA Annex and to consider how LA services can be aligned to meet the ambitious targets within the Business Plan, therefore ensuring all pupils meet their full potential, prior to the final draft being endorsed by Cabinet.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 EAS are required to submit their Business Plan to Welsh Government and Cabinet are scheduled to approve it.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000
- Children's Act 2004
- Standards and Framework Act 1998

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Headteachers
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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Education Achievement Service Business Plan 2018-2021
- Appendix 2 Local Authority Specific Annex 2018-2019
- Appendix 3 Local Authority Specific Annex 2017-2018 (for information only)