

SUBJECT: EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS PLAN (2018-2020) and LOCAL AUTHORITY ANNEX 018-2019 (Draft for consultation)

MEETING: Children and Young People Select Committee

DATE: 13th February 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. To seek members views on the draft EAS Business Plan 2018-2021 and the Local Authority Annex 2018-2019

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. For members to consider the main strengths and areas for development within Monmouthshire ,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.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within Monmouthshire are met through bespoke work with each school. The EAS offers a wide range of bespoke support that is based upon best practice.

4. REASONS:

Expected outcomes

- 4.1. The Business Plan is now in the process of consultation which will last until mid-February 2018. All feedback from the Monmouthshire 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.
- 4.2. 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 Monmouthshire 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

- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. Section 2 of the Business Plan (Appendix A) highlights a summary of wider regional improvements over the last 12 months.
- 4.5. Appendix C details the mid-year review of the current Monmouthshire Annex.
- 4.6. 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 Development	Satisfactory Progress

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

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

4.7. 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

4.8. 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

- 4.9. 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.
- 4.10. 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.”
- 4.11. The improvements that are required at regional and LA level will continue to require a strong commitment of partnership working to be successful with Monmouthshire 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.
- 4.12. School leaders in schools in Monmouthshire 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)

- 4.13. 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 Monmouthshire. 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.
- 4.14. 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

4.15. 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:

4.16. 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.

4.17. 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'

4.18. 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.

4.19. 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

4.20. 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.

4.21. 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.

4.22. 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 Monmouthshire schools can be found on pages 2-5 in the LA Annex 2018-2019 (Appendix B)**

LA Annex Documents

4.23. 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 Monmouthshire

- Attainment at Foundation Phase is much higher than the Wales average, the rate of improvement is also higher than Wales.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is higher than the Wales average and the rate of improvement is higher than Wales from 2014 - 2017.
- Attainment at Key Stage 4 is higher than the Wales average and shows a much faster rate of improvement than that across Wales.
- Attainment at Key Stage 5 has above the Wales average since 2015, and the rate of improvement is higher than that across Wales since 2014.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the FPI+1 rose by 6.3pp between 2014 and 2017, and by 0.4pp from 2016.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the CSI+1 at KS2 rose by 12.7pp between 2014 and 2017, and by 3.6pp from 2016.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the CSI+1 at KS3 rose by 20.1pp between 2014 and 2017, and by 3.1pp from 2016.
- The proportion of pupils achieving 5A*/As rose by 5.5pp between 2014 and 2017, and by 4.9pp from 2016. The proportion of pupils achieving 5A*/As remains above that for Wales, and the gap between Monmouthshire and Wales had risen by 6.0pp between 2014 and 2017

Gender

- Between 2014 and 2017 the gender gap narrowed at all key stages, and is significantly below the Wales gender gap.
- The gender gap narrowed between 2016 and 2017, due to an improvement or hold in boys' performance at all key stages. Girls' performance declined from 2016 at all key stages except KS3.
- At KS2, boys outperformed girls by 0.7pp.
- Performance of both boys and girls at each key stage is significantly above the Wales average.

FSM

- FP performance of FSM pupils in 2017 is above the Wales average, and the gap between FSM and non FSM pupils has remained the same since 2016, but has widened since 2014. It is wider than the Wales gap.
- KS2 performance of FSM pupils in 2017 is higher than the Wales average, and the gap has narrowed considerably since 2014 and is narrower than for Wales.
- KS3 performance of FSM pupils in 2017 is again above the Wales average. There's been a slight widening of the gap since 2014, which is still wider than the gap for across Wales.
- At KS4, the 2017 L2 incl, performance of FSM pupils was below the Wales average. The FSM/non FSM gap has narrowed since 2016, and is wider than the Wales gap.

FSM benchmarking quartiles

- At FP, 80% of schools are above the median for FPI. At KS2, 47% of schools are above the median for CSI. At KS3, 50% of schools are above the median for CSI. At KS4, 75% (3 out of 4 schools) are above the median for L2 inc.
- At KS4, Monmouth and Chepstow are in Quarter 1 for L2 inc, English and maths
- Caldicot is below the median in all three of these measures
- King Henry is below the median in English, but above in maths and L2 inc.

Attendance/Exclusions

- There has been a decrease in primary attendance of 0.2pp since 2014, but an increase in secondary attendance. Secondary remains above that of Wales, (Wales primary not available yet)
- There has been an increase in unauthorised absence at primary schools, but the figure remains stable at secondary schools. Secondary figure is lower than Wales.
- There has been an increase in exclusions of 5 days or fewer at primary level, but a decrease at secondary level. There has been increase in exclusions of 6 days or more at both primary and secondary level.
- There were 2 permanent exclusions in 2016/17 from primary schools, more than the previous three years combined.
- There have been 7 permanent exclusions at secondary level since 2013/14, 1 in 2013/14, 5 in 2015/16 and 1 in 2016/17.

Inspection/Categorisation

- The percentage of schools judged at least Good for current performance has increased since 2014 to 40%. Increase in schools judged at least Good for prospects for improvement has also increased to 40%. There was one unsatisfactory inspection in 2016/17.

- The percentage of primary schools categorised Green has increased to 43% in 2017/18. One secondary school categorised Amber, three Yellow (provisional and confidential).

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

Risks

4.24. 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 within the LA and 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.

4.25. Uncertain financial projections make it difficult to fully cost the Business Plan at this stage.

4.26. Continued changes in reporting arrangements and performance measures at KS4 for a number of subjects continues to present risks to LA and regional outcomes.

4.27. Limited impact of the work of the EAS in schools where underperformance in leadership is not challenged effectively.

4.28. 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.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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.

5.3. 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.

5.4. 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%
591,619	481,642	465,266	451,308	437,769	-26%	429,014

5.5. 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.

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

6.1. The EAS have their own Equalities and Welsh Language plans in place. Monmouthshire County Council has therefore not undertaken any specific impact assessment on the EAS Business Plan.

7. CONSULTEES:

