

SUBJECT: EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS) BUSINESS PLAN (2020-2021) and LOCAL AUTHORITY ANNEX 2020-2021

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE:

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the EAS Business Plan 2020-2021 and the Local Authority (LA) Annex 2020-2021.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1. Members will ensure that the Business Plan and accompanying Monmouthshire LA Annex enables appropriate support and challenge for schools and that it addresses the areas for improvement that have been identified within Monmouthshire's education strategic plans.

4. REASONS:

4.1. The South East Wales Consortium is required to submit to the Welsh Government a three-year business plan that will be updated annually. This plan and the Monmouthshire LA Annex cover the period 2020-2021. This meets the requirements set out in the Welsh Government's National Model for Regional Working. The business plan addresses all aspects in support of improvements across the school and settings in Monmouthshire.

4.2. The EAS will support the LA in their statutory responsibility of securing that their education and training functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential.

4.3. Monmouthshire Strategic Priorities 2020/21 (as provided by the LA):

Strategic priorities for 2020/2021	Main link (s) to the improvement strands within the Business Plan
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Strengthen leadership and teaching and learning capacity in identified schools to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. *	1, 2 and 3
Improve the outcomes for all vulnerable learners, particularly those eFSM, at the secondary stages (key stages 3 and 4) and at the higher levels. *	1, 2 and 3
Reduce variance in outcomes between schools and departments particularly at key stage 4. *	1, 2 and 3
Work with all stakeholders to develop effective mechanisms to help reduce the amount of exclusions.	2

4.4 EAS Improvement Strands:

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

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

4.6 The actions contained within the plan align with the Welsh Government strategic document Education in Wales: Our National Mission (Action Plan 2017-2021), are based upon findings from educational research and best practice and address the priorities in each local authority strategic plan.

4.7 As a result of internal self-evaluation we still need to work with local authorities to:

- Ensure that schools that require the highest levels of support and / or in Statutory Categories secure improvement within an acceptable timescale (within 2 years) to reduce their support level and / or be removed from a statutory category.
- Consider a more strategic approach to identifying the next group of headteachers in the region. Further develop the executive headship role so that the very best leaders can make an impact in more than one school.
- Provide effective intervention, challenge, support and capacity-building. Continue to be clear about the bottom lines for intervention and continue to refuse to compromise when children are losing out on a good education. In most cases the focus should be on capacity-building.

- Develop a talent management and leadership framework that focuses on middle leadership development on individual schools and clusters rather than mixed cohorts
- Retain a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools, continuing to focus on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region.
- Continue to build the capacity of governing bodies within the region by revising the delivery model for governor training, aligned to the cluster model and provide bespoke professional learning to secondary governing bodies to enable them to undertake their roles effectively.
- Further strengthen the governance arrangements by appointing high quality non-executive directors who can provide additional expertise and independent external challenge.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, to include skills development, in identified secondary schools in order to secure improved learner progress, outcomes and engagement in learning, particularly for vulnerable learners.
- Retain a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools, continuing to focus on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region

4.8 As a result of internal self-evaluation, we still need to work with local authorities and schools to:

- Continue to develop bespoke and school led peer review models focussing on improving the quality of teaching and learning that build mutual and reciprocal peer support and challenge.
- Continue to be clear about what the role of EAS is around the wellbeing and equity agenda. Continue to champion and to integrate the work and to stay focused on EAS priorities.
- Develop a boarder range of evaluation strategies that identifies that does not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but looks at a range of teaching and leadership behaviours that would be a result of a support or intervention strategy.
- Further strengthen the governance arrangements by appointing high quality non-executive directors who can provide additional expertise and independent external challenge.
- Continue to promote succession planning within EAS and to empower the broader leadership team, especially when it comes to exposure to governance and to the production of strategic reports.

4.9 As a result of internal self-evaluation, we still need to work with local authorities and schools to:

- Secure the effective implementation of curriculum for Wales in all schools and settings. Engage in consultations that support the reform agenda.
- Engage in two pilot programmes for schools causing concern and the implementation of the National Resource for School Improvement.
- Design and deliver national professional learning.
- Ensure that elected members are fully apprised of changes to accountability arrangements.
- To secure an indicative 3-year grant funding model.

Risks

4.10 Monmouthshire LA Risks

- Leadership and teaching and learning capacity in identified schools, is not strengthened sufficiently to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points.
- Outcomes for all vulnerable learners, particularly those eFSM, at the secondary stages (key stages 3 and 4) and at the higher levels, are not improved sufficiently.
- There remains excessive variance in outcomes between schools and departments particularly at key stage 4.
- Effective mechanisms to help reduce the amount of exclusions, are not put in place.

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, Monmouthshire LA Service Improvement Plan and the Education Strategic Plan.

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

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

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 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.

5.2 The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources: Local authority core contributions, regional school improvement grants and a service level agreement for governor support services. A spending plan accompanies the Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants is available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.

5.3 Delegation rates to schools has increased to 94% whilst the EAS staff profile by 48% since 2012. An element of the EAS was originally set a trading income target of £1.25m from

schools to enable balanced year end account position. This has now been totally eradicated from income dependency and schools are no longer charged for any training or services provided in line with the business plan.

- 5.4 Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The current LA core contribution is based on these figures less year on year efficiencies of £1.17m since 2012 agreed in collaboration with the 5 local authorities. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2020/21 are as follows: Monmouthshire LA's contribution for 2020/21 is £414,127, compared with £420,218 in 2019/20.
- 5.5 The Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) details the procedure that needs to be followed for all school improvement grants received into the region. All grants are approved by local authority Chief Education Officers / Directors of Education with a follow up ratification from JEG members. Historically there were two main grants received into the region from Welsh Government. Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The latter has been re-designated as the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and includes specific initiatives to support the objectives within the 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. In addition to the two main grants, two small regional indicative grants were received for SEREN learners.

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

- a. High Quality education is a fundamental pre-requisite of ensuring future local and national prosperity through the provision of an informed and well-educated workforce and society. The Local Authority's statutory role to monitor and evaluate school performance and the quality of provision, coupled with its statutory powers of intervention in schools causing concern is fundamental to ensuring that all schools provide high quality education provision.

7. CONSULTEES:

- a. The Business Plan is currently in the consultation process. The Consultees are noted below:
- EAS staff
 - Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
 - Regional Joint Executive Group (JEG)
 - EAS Company Board
 - EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
 - Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
 - Regional headteachers strategy group
 - Regional governor strategy group
 - Sample of teachers from within the region

- Sample of school councils from within the region

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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

- b. Draft LA Annex Document 2020/2021

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