

Scrutiny Report



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Part 1

Date: 2 February 2022

Subject Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2022 - 2025

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Designation
Ed Pryce	Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy
Geraint Willington	Education Achievement Service (EAS) Director
Sarah Davies	Principal Challenge Advisor (EAS)
Sarah Morgan	Chief Education Officer
Andrew Powles	Deputy Chief Education Officer

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 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
- 1.2 Consider the main strengths and areas for development within Newport, and to consider how LA services can be aligned with the priorities contained within the document, therefore ensuring all pupils meet their full potential.
- 1.3 Determine if it wishes to make any comment to the Cabinet on the Business Plan, or any of the specific actions for Newport.

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 As an organisation we have reviewed how we have written the Business Plan and communicated this to our partners. We decided it was timely to review and adapt this process and to make it more accessible to a wider audience. We have used the 'Theory of Change' approach to help us articulate the changes and impact we want to make as the regional school improvement service for South-East Wales and the connections and actions needed that will allow that change and impact to be successfully achieved. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will receive annual reviews each year.
- 2.3 However, this plan also considers how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic. The EAS will remain sensitive and responsive to the needs of the workforce and will continue to be a highly supportive, reflective, and responsive organisation.

Previous Consideration of EAS Business Plan

- 2.5 Previously, the Education Advisory Service Business Plan for 2021-22 was reported to this Committee on 15 February 2021 following which the Committee's Comments were forwarded to the Cabinet where the EAS Business Plan also considered.

2.3 Partnership Committee Terms of Reference

At the AGM meeting of Council held on 16 May 2017 a new Scrutiny Committee Structure was agreed including the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships, the remit of which includes:

Holding partnerships to account for their performance.

To include - EAS, Newport Live, Norse, SRS and Joint Commissioning arrangements:

- Performance of the partners against agreed objectives;
- Effectiveness of governance structures;
- Undertake formal consultation on key documents as required.

The Committee should therefore focus its questioning on how the consortium is working together to create and implement its Business Plan 2022-25

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The following information is attached for the Committees consideration:

Appendix A - Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny - Managing Director EAS;

Appendix 1 - Education Achievement Service: Regional Business Plan 2022-2025 (Consultation Version - Accessible).

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is 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
- Consider the main strengths and areas for development within Newport, and to consider how LA services can be aligned with the priorities contained within the document, therefore ensuring all pupils meet their full potential.
- Consider how well the Consortium is working in partnership on a regional level.

Suggested Lines of Enquiry

4.1 ***In considering / evaluating the EAS Business Plan, the Committee may wish to consider focusing questions on:***

- How the Consortium sets priorities and whether they are robust and achievable?
- What barriers and challenges to improving performance does the Consortium encounter and how will these be addressed?
- How will progress against the Business Plan be monitored and scrutinised?
- What are the resource implications of delivering on the plan and how does collaborative working as a consortium maximise the resources available?
- What is the process for the approval of the final Business Plan by each LA Partner?
- How does the Consortium work together as partners to mitigate risks to delivery of the Business Plan?

4.2 **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

The Committee's consideration of the Draft EAS Business Plan should consider how the Partnership is maximising its contribution to the five ways of working. The following are examples of the types of questions to consider:

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
Long-term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.	What long term trends will impact upon the delivery of the EAS Business Plan?
	How will changes in long term needs impact upon the EAS Business Plan in the future?
Prevention Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.	What issues are facing the Consortium's service users at the moment?
	How is the Consortium addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?
Integration Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.	Are there any other organisations providing similar / complementary services?
	How does the Consortium's performance upon the delivery of the Business Plan impact upon the services of other public bodies and their objectives?
Collaboration	Who will the Consortium work with to deliver the Business Plan ?

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).	How is the Consortium using knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence the Business Plan?
Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.	How has the Consortium sought the views of those who are impacted by the delivery of the Business Plan?
	How has the Consortium taken into account diverse communities in decision making?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Our National Mission ([Our national mission | GOV.WALES](#) - the National Education Improvement Strategy (2017-2022))

‘Aim: that every child and young person should benefit from excellent teaching and learning.

To deliver the aims the document sets out four enabling objectives:

1. Professional Learning: The Welsh Government and our strategic partners are committed to supporting teachers through professional learning from the time they decide to become teachers through their whole career.
2. Leadership: The Welsh Government recognises the scale of the challenge headteachers and other leaders face as we seek to realise Curriculum for Wales and address our schools’ needs in relation to COVID-19.
3. Equity, Excellence and Wellbeing: The Welsh Government will work closely with stakeholders to continue to devise and implement a proactive, inclusive education system. In continuing to raise standards for all, we will prioritise support for children and young people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or have ALN. Through this system, we will quickly identify areas of inequality and adversity and target resources to develop and deliver programmes to alleviate the main causes of inequality and to ensure that those who need help get the support that they need employment.
4. Evaluation, improvement and accountability: The Welsh Government acknowledges the importance of an evaluation, improvement and accountability system that is aligned to the principles of Curriculum for Wales.

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 6.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022; **Building on Success - Building a Better Newport** sets out the following:

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
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Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People	Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council		

The **Aspirational People Commitments** within the Corporate Plan that relate to this report are as follows:

Ref No.	Commitment:
6	The Newport Children's Charter sets out our commitment to children and families, including headlines commitments to children in care and care leavers
7	Three new state of the art schools will be built, tangibly improving student choice and the educational offer in the city.
8	The annual Newport Work Discovery week is established bringing together residents, employers and the public sector to connect and raise aspirations. The council commits to 15 apprenticeships per year as part of this city-wide drive.
9	Increasing educational and social care capacity, so that fewer than ten children will be educated out of the city, and the number of out of county social care placements will reduce by 25%
10	Newport will improve the number of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths in line with the Welsh average.

7 Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The council has a number of legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality. A copy of the relevant EAS Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) has been produced.

7.1 Summary of impact – Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

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. The plan will deliver 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 will contribute, through schools and partners in the Local Authority to a skilled and well-educated population. High quality education is a fundamental 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 support, monitor and evaluate school performance and the quality of provision is essential.

7.2 Summary of impact – Equality Act 2010

The EAS have their own Equalities plan in place. Newport City Council has therefore not undertaken any specific impact assessment on the EAS Business Plan. This equalities assessment is included in the EAS FEIA. The EAS Business Plan delivers school improvement services to all schools and settings. There is no direct work with the public and no direct support for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), as this remains within the remit of the Local Authority. However, descriptions of the range of support and professional learning programmes, to provide a positive impact, including elements on wellbeing and support for schools in developing and inclusive curriculum for all are included.

7.3 **Summary of impact – Socio-economic Duty**

Whilst this section is not applicable, as this Business Plan is not a strategic decision, the plan describes a range of support for schools related to reducing socio-economic impact, particularly for learners who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or those who are looked after (LAC/CLA)

7.4 **Summary of impact – Welsh language**

The EAS has an updated (September 2021) Welsh Language Policy in place and Welsh language support for schools development of the language is included in the plan. Newport City Council has therefore not undertaken any separate impact assessment on the EAS Business Plan.

8. **Background Papers**

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2017-22](#)
- [Report and Minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships on 12 March 18](#)
- [EAS Website](#)
- [Estyn's 2017 Inspection Report](#)
- Welsh Government action plan for Education in Wales: [Education in Wales: Our National Mission 2017 - 21](#)
- [Report to Annual Council 16 May 2017 upon New Scrutiny Committee Structures](#)
- [‘Qualified for life’](#) - the national Education Improvement Strategy (2014)

Report Completed: January 2022