



Education Achievement Service
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg

EAS Value for Money (VFM) 2021-2022

Presentation to accompany Newport Partnerships scrutiny
report (9 November 2022)

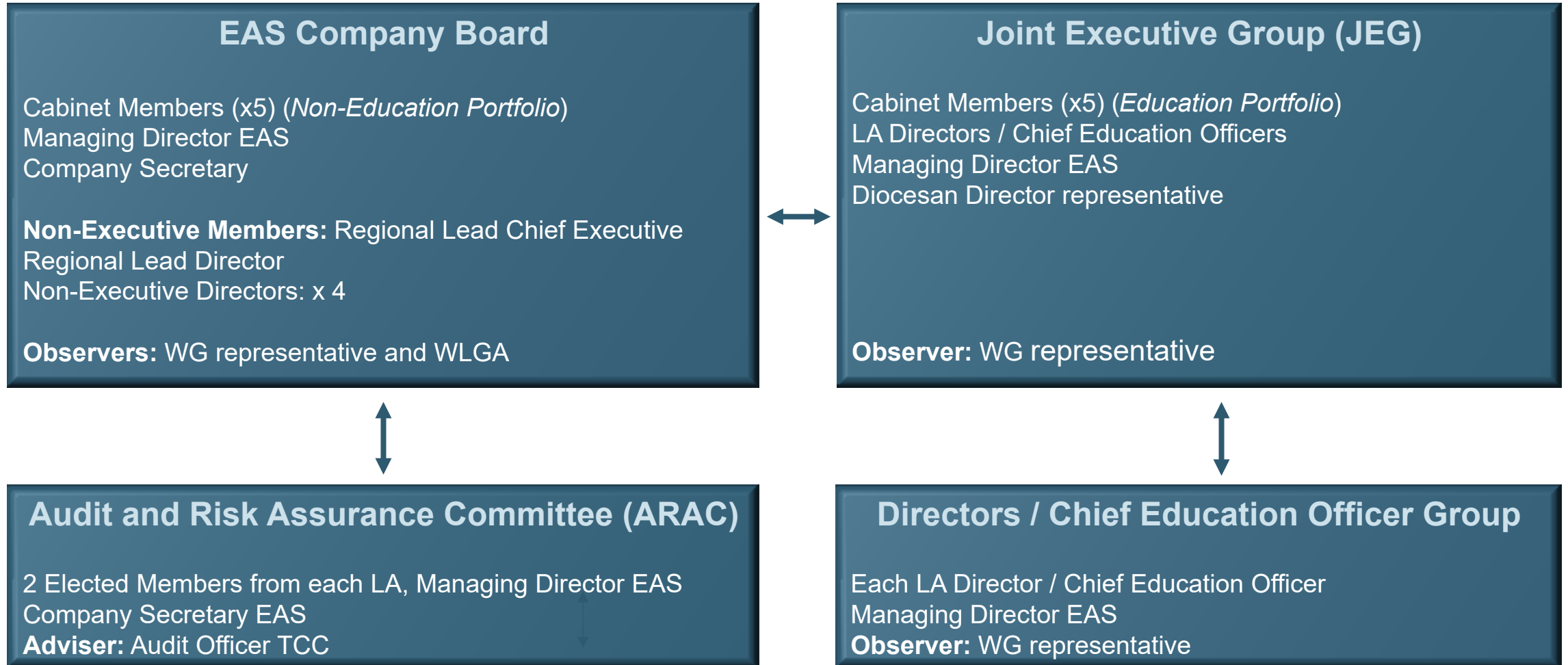


Context – the EAS



- The Educational Achievement Service (EAS) is the school improvement service of the five local authorities in South East Wales.
- The EAS is owned by the five Councils and operates within a defined **governance structure populated by representative Elected Members** from each Council.
- The EAS has been in operation since **September 2012** and has undergone many changes during this period.
- Through the commissioning of a **Business Plan the EAS delivers key school improvement support** to all schools and educational settings across the South East Wales region.

Context – EAS Governance Structure



Context – Value For Money (VfM) report



- The VfM report focuses on the delivery of the **regional service**.
- Considers regional impact on a number of **measurable outcomes** within the commissioned **regional business plan (2021-22)**, **not the current Business Plan (2022-2025)**
- The report has been written by an **external consultant**, Rod Alcott following a tender process.
- The report has been shared and agreed through EAS Governance structures (**Company Board, ARAC and Joint Executive Group (JEG)**) in Summer 2022

What is Value for Money?



VfM or cost effectiveness, is a measure of how well resources are being used to achieve intended outcomes. Good value for money is the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes.

- **Economy:** minimising the cost of resources used while having regard to quality (inputs) – spending less;
- **Efficiency:** the relationship between outputs and the resources used to produce them – spending well;
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which objectives are achieved (outcomes) – spending wisely

- **Equity:** the extent to which services are available to and reach all people that they are intended to – spending fairly;
- **Sustainability:** an increasingly standard consideration within the context of the Well Being of Future Generations Act (WBFG) – spending for the long term.

- It was recognised from the outset that time and financial constraints did not allow for a detailed consideration of the above criteria across the full range of activities undertaken, and services provided, by the EAS in the period under review..
- The review is not therefore of school improvement in its broadest sense, but a review of a particular approach to school improvement (*School to School Model*)
- To ensure the validity of any subsequent judgements it was essential to identify an area of activity that was broad enough to provide a representative view of the EAS, but specific enough to lend itself to detailed analysis and subsequent evaluation.
- The dominant external consideration is that of operating under the challenges posed in continuing to adapt service delivery to respond to a global pandemic.

Review Method



The review was an evaluation of how successful the EAS approach to school to school learning has been in terms of the quantity, quality and deployment of resources designed to secure improvement. This necessitated:

- comparing the costs associated with a decentralised school to school approach with the previous more centralised approach;
- gathering information from the EAS including, where available, from relevant reports and surveys;
- gathering, where possible, feedback from participating schools; and
- bringing the above together.

Review Evaluation

For the purposes of this review VfM would be demonstrated if the approach ensures that:

- effectiveness remains unimpaired or improves while costs have been reduced; or
- effectiveness improves while costs remain constant; or
- increased spending is offset by improved effectiveness
- equity is preserved; and
- sustainability can be demonstrated.

Evaluating impact provided a unique challenge given that measures of educational outcomes such as:

- examination results * (not to be used for accountability purposes)
- school categorisation (suspended by Welsh Government and subsequently now ceased)
- Estyn inspection reports (not available during the pandemic).

*Welsh Government suspended the calculation and publication of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 academic years. Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.

Economy and Efficiency



Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
LA Funding	£3,376,653	£3,275,353	£3,209,847	£3,145,651	£3,098,465	£3,036,496
Trading Income	£601,974	£447,460	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Core Funding	£3,978,627	£3,722,813	£3,209,847	£3,145,651	£3,098,465	£3,036,496
Grants	£56,082,261	£52,033,572	£51,991,066	£49,022,408	£51,996,479	£60,830,062
Total	£60,060,888	£55,756,385	£55,200,913	£52,168,059	£55,094,944	£63,866,558
Delegated To Schools	£50,384,126	£46,481,315	£48,886,304	£46,142,076	£48,754,009	£58,240,283
Delegation Rate	90%	89%	94%	94%	94%	96%
Residual Income	£7,668,633	£7,278,655	£6,314,609	£6,025,983	£6,340,935	£5,626,275

- From 2016/17 the **reduction in core funding** has been continuous. An agreed 10.07% reduction in LA funding, which, along with the elimination of trading income, resulted in a reduction in total core funding of some £942k or **23.7% in absolute terms**; although in real terms, when inflation and pay awards are taken into consideration, the reduction has been in excess of 30%.
- **Grant money** received from the Welsh Government reduced year on year up to 2019-20 but has increased over the last two years with a significant increase of £8.83m or some 17% between 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- When reductions in LA funding, elimination of trading income and increases in grant money received are added together the increase in total funding is £3.81m which represents a **6.3% increase in absolute terms over a six year period**.
- **However**, when **increases in the rate of delegation to schools (95.5%)** are taken into account then residual income spent on running the organisation, including staffing costs, **fell by some £2.04m or 26.6%** from 2016-17 to 2021-22.
- Reduced spending has resulted in reduction in staffing numbers, with the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff reducing from 111 in 2016-17 to 63.3 in 2021-22, taking the total reduction in FTE staff reduction to 47.7 over the period 2016-17 to 2020-21, **representing a reduction of almost 43% in staffing levels**.

The School to School (S2S) Delivery Model



Four Areas of Support:

- School Improvement Partner (SIP)
- Learning Network Schools (LNS)
- Professional Learning Networks (PLN)
- Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning Schools (CfW PL)

The evidence that was gathered is presented in the table below to reflect the three component areas of expenditure:

- School Improvement – Challenge Advisers or School Improvement Partners as they have been re-titled and S2S (delegation to headteachers to support allocated headteachers)
- Curriculum and Wellbeing – Mainly subject specific advisers and LNS (departments in schools providing support to departments in other schools)
- Leadership and Teaching – Mainly former headteachers undertaking professional learning for schools (building future leaders at all levels) and delegation to schools within clusters to embed and continue practice.

S2S Delivery Model – Finance (Service Delivery)



Area of Expenditure	2020-2021	2021-2022	Change
School Improvement (core)	£1,326,035	£917,771	-£408,264
School to School (S2S) (schools)	£1,352,903	£1,826,747	£473,844
Curriculum (core)	£1,414,510	£1,156,663	-£257,847
Equity, Health and Wellbeing (core)	£137,485	£296,522	£159,037
Curriculum for Wales - LNS (schools)	£218,725	£401,320	£182,595
Leadership and Teaching (core)	£405,833	£370,176	-£35,657
Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning Schools – Leadership and Teaching (schools)	£344,960	£510,000	£165,040
Total	£5,200,451	£5,479,199	£278,748

Comparing 2020-21 (where funding was already used heavily to support S2S delivery) with 2021-22 (where this model has been expanded)

- overall spending has increased by 5%
- distribution to schools to support the model has increased by 43%
- Core funding decreased by 17%

External Judgements of the EAS



The refined School to School (S2S) delivery model represents good value for money. This judgement has been arrived at from the following evaluative judgements:

- **The model is efficient:** - Evidence gathered from case studies demonstrates that the small 5% increase in spending to fund investment in the model can result in significantly accelerated progress in schools requiring support; with a consequent reduction in the amount of time that additional support needs to be provided.
- **The model is equitable:** The distribution of funding ensures that those schools most in need of support receive the most support.
- **The model is sustainable:** The concentration on capacity building, based on leadership development in supported schools, ensures that progress is sustainable and increases the pool of potential support providers in the future.

- The EAS must ensure that approaches to school improvement represent continuation and refinement to this model rather than any shorter-term fixes.
- The EAS must ensure that it has systems and mechanisms in place to gather valid data and wider intelligence on school performance to verify the effectiveness of the model and inform future improvements.