

***School Standards and Workforce
Group***

***Review and Challenge
Summer 2014***

Feedback report and action points



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Review and Challenge meetings - Summer 2014

The Review and Challenge events, although regionally based, have been supported by the sharing of information across partners. This is in line with our system-wide approach to collaborative working and acknowledges a shared responsibility to improve outcomes for all learners across Wales.

Reflecting this approach, the key discussion points, actions and feedback from the review and challenge meetings are summarised within this paper. Attached to this paper are separate annexes with more regionally specific details relating to each of the four meetings.

This paper will be shared jointly with each region and will form the basis of advice to be provided to the Minister for Education and Skills.

Focus of events

The focus of these first events was to set the context for each region in relation to the commitments contained within the business plans and the issues specific to each region. Specifically, to assess the level assurance in relation to the strength of governance, how this will support the delivery of outcomes as defined within the business plans, and to ensure that there are appropriate and effective systems for scrutiny within each region.

Attendance at Review and Challenge meetings

With regard to attendance at this round of Review and Challenge meetings it is noted that only one region (GwE) included attendance by a member of the Joint Committee.

The attendance of the Review and Challenge meetings was agreed in consultation with the MDs and Lead Directors and is intended to include the members of the Executive Board. Whilst it is understood that membership of the Executive Board is in some cases still being established, it is expected that attendance of future meetings will adhere to that set out within the terms of reference.

Introduction and overview

Each meeting was opened by a welcome from the Chair followed by a brief outline of the stages and arrangements which underpin the Review and Challenge events.

To provide the context of regional achievements, issues and risks, each consortium made a presentation linked to their agreed priorities in the National Model business plans.

Review and Challenge discussion

This was based upon the lines of enquiry circulated in advance of the meeting and the content of each region's presentation.

The themes discussed were similar at each meeting, however the focus for each discussion was tailored to reflect the business plans of each region:-

These themes were:-

- Strength of **governance and scrutiny** arrangements
- **Funding** arrangements
- **Quality assurance** and consistency

Key points from discussion

- **Governance and scrutiny**

Whilst there has been progress made in establishing and appointing to the Joint Committees and Executive Boards, it is evident that this varies across the regions and that in some, significant gaps still remain. It is important that these roles are filled quickly.

The move to the governance arrangements laid out within the National Model has meant changes to existing accountability structures. This has led to potential for additional complexity where existing groups / boards have continued but that now have different

advisory or expert functions. An action for each region is to ensure that the roles of each are clearly defined and that these structural changes are implemented at pace.

The implementation of these changes does not change the statutory duties of local authorities. The receipt of legal advice has aided clarity in relation to making the guidance on decision making powers that support the governance arrangements for consortia explicit. The National Model guidance has been updated to reflect this.

The need for robust and effective scrutiny arrangements was made clear, and, whilst there was assurance given that there are appropriate processes in place within each region, it is important to ensure that these are consistently applied and that these include systems of challenge and feedback to consortia.

Whilst verbal assurance has been provided by each region with regard to governance arrangements, it is recognised that this will need to be evidenced. A common action for each region is to provide a map or diagram that clearly sets out their governance arrangements, the scrutiny process and how any advisory / expert groups link to these. Each consortium will also provide evidence of the formal mechanisms to respond to issues raised through LA scrutiny committees.

There will continue to be a dialogue with each consortium in relation to the operation of governance arrangements as part of the relationship between WG and consortia.

- **Funding arrangements**

The level of detail within the business plans was limited for three of the four consortia. This was an area of particular focus for each of the Review and Challenge discussions.

It was noted that only one region (EAS) had provided an adequate breakdown of funding which correlated to the funding schedule as agreed by Leaders and laid out within the National Model. It is understood that some functions currently remain with local authorities (governor services, 14-19 and HR), and that funding relating to these will not become part of the core consortium funding until 2015-16. However, it is expected that funding can be

attributed to the contributions made by each local authority and linked to the separate annexes of the business plans.

Whilst each region provided assurance that the appropriate accounting systems were being performed by the S151 officers of host local authorities, the issue of financial management and the ability to determine value for money was highlighted. Specifically, consortia identified that greater flexibility in relation to a number of grants would be beneficial to their financial planning and management.

The question of how value for money will be demonstrated is a clear area for development in all regions and an action point has been raised for a workshop to be organised with this as a focus. Each region has agreed to provide further information to support both the levels of funding and the mechanisms by which financial management will align with decision making. In addition WG can contribute to consortia meetings to provide further clarity with regards to the funding arrangements identified within the national model if consortia feel this beneficial.

- **Quality assurance and consistency**

The change from system leader to challenge advisor is seen as a key driver in improving the quality of challenge and support for schools. This is also a key feature of a move from training to support and development through a school to school approach. The development of national standards and training will further assist in ensuring consistency across Wales.

Within each consortium there have been changes to structures to ensure greater consistency and quality of provision to schools. It is also important that there is specific support identified by consortia for those local authorities in an Estyn category requiring follow up or intervention, which responds to the areas for improvement identified within Post Inspection Action Plans (PIAPs).

Each region has specific characteristics which underpin how it is organised. There had been some concerns about how consistency would be applied, particularly in those consortia with greatest rurality where hub models have been established. Reflecting this,

central consortium structures have been developed which are intended to ensure that there is consistency and which will facilitate moderation. It is too early to fully assess the effectiveness of these structures; however, there is evidence of successful progress achieved by hubs in both ERW and GwE.

To support the business plan, each region will provide detail of the supporting annexes for each local authority. Future Review and Challenge events will consider regional outcomes against the targets set in the business plans. The focus of these Review and Challenge meetings was the methods and assumptions made in determining the targets. Specifically, this was highlighted where progress appeared to be on a straight line trajectory, or where for example with attendance, the rate of improvement might be expected to slow as rapid initial success has been achieved.

New GCSEs and PISA

There was discussion in relation to the plans that each region has in place to support schools in their preparations for the new GCSEs; particularly the emphasis on developing skills similar to those required by PISA, and also the changing requirements within English Language and Welsh First Language, which will represent a significant shift away from the current focus on Literature.

Whilst each region has made progress in developing their plans there were some regionally specific areas of concern raised:-

- Further clarity is required from EAS in relation to the pace at which support will be delivered.
- Central South plans are based on the recruitment of specific expertise and the School Improvement Group (SIG) model to provide support.
- The model proposed by ERW around its 3 hubs is more extensive and will require additional funding to be provided by the consortium.
- Further work is ongoing to finalise the approach to be put in place by GwE which will have a greater focus on using school to school support.

This work will be ongoing and monitored through the project to support new GCSEs and PISA.

Action points and follow up

The Review and Challenge events have resulted in a number of action points to take forward which are contained in the following annexes. The completion of these action points is critical in providing assurance and confidence that the plans described and being set in place by consortia are operational and effective, as well as practical.

WG will work with consortia to follow up on these actions and they will form an important element of ongoing dialogue in relation to regional progress. A formal update will also be reported on at the autumn Review and Challenge events.

Annex 1: EAS - Review and Challenge Event – 20th June 2014

1. Attendance

Welsh Government:

- Brett Pugh, Director of School Standards and Workforce Group (Chair)
- Steve Vincent, Deputy Director, Schools Management and Effectiveness Division
- Gwen Kohler, Head of Delivery and Implementation
- Bethan Guilfoyle, Practitioner Secondee, Schools Standards and Workforce Group
- Geraint Rees, Practitioner Secondee, School Standards and Workforce Group

Consortium:

- Steve Davies, Managing Director
- James Harris - Head of Education, Newport (and Lead Director, EAS)
- Sandra Aspinall - Acting Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Education and Life Long Learning
- Trevor Guy - Interim Education Officer, Blaenau Gwent
- Sarah McGuinness - Director of Education, Monmouthshire
- Dermot McChrystal - Acting Chief Education Officer, Torfaen

Estyn (observers):

- Mark Champion
- Jane Taylor

Apologies:

- Councillor Debbie Wilcox, Vice Chair of Joint Education Group
- Councillor David Hardacre, Cabinet Officer, Caerphilly

2. Actions

EAS			
Ref	Action	Who	Timescales
EAS(07/14)1	Review whether greater flexibility is possible for grant schemes (for example foundation phase, 14-19)	WG	Ongoing - update to be provided by Martyn Gray in October
EAS(07/14)2	Data sharing	WG & EAS	Work will continue and new arrangements finalised by January 2015
EAS(07/14)3	Value for Money Expert Group	WG	September 2014
EAS(07/14)4	HR clarification of National / Regional roles	WG	To be developed through the HR group
EAS(07/14)5	Write to Paul Mathews in relation to G7 group	WG	Completed.
EAS(07/14)6	Provide a narrative of governance arrangements		August 2014
EAS(07/14)7	Absolute clarity of decision making process and evidence of scrutiny	EAS	August 2014
EAS(07/14)8	Provision of detail that aligns budgets to each LA appendix (map)	EAS	August 2014
EAS(07/14)9	Identification from appendices of LAs in Estyn monitoring of specific support in place.	EAS	August 2014
EAS(07/14)10	Attendance by members of the Executive Board / Joint Committee at future Review and Challenge meetings.	EAS	October Review and Challenge events

Annex 2: Central South - Review and Challenge Event – 24th June 2014

1. Attendance

Welsh Government:

- Brett Pugh, Director of School Standards and Workforce Group (Chair)
- Steve Vincent, Deputy Director, School Management and Effectiveness Division
- Gwen Kohler, Head of Delivery and Implementation
- Bethan Guilfoyle, Practitioner Secondee, Schools Standards and Workforce Group
- Karl Napieralla, Practitioner Secondee, School Standards and Workforce Group

Consortium:

- Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director
- Robert Hopkins, Head of School Improvement
- Jennifer Hill, (Lead Director) Chief Learning and Skills Officer, Vale of Glamorgan
- Deborah McMillan, Director, Bridgend
- Nick Batchelar, Director, Cardiff
- Lorraine Buck, Director, Merthyr
- Chris Bradshaw, Director, RCT

Estyn (observers):

- Sarah Lewis

2. Action points

Central South			
Ref	Action	Who	Timescales
CSC(07/14)1	To note frustration of consortia at pace of actions / development of National Leadership.	WG	Immediate
CSC(07/14)2	Confirmation to progress categorisation now rather than delay.	WG	Immediate
CSC(07/14)3	(a) For a discussion to take place at the Directors meeting in respect of funding arrangements. (b) To provide a narrative that supports the strategy in relation to budget and provides clarity in respect of progress and timescales.	WG	August 2014
CSC(07/14)4	To provide details of memberships of both Joint Committee & Executive Board	CSC	August 2014
CSC(07/14)5	To provide clarity in the form of a diagram or map of the accountability model that underpins the consortia	CSC	August 2014
CSC(07/14)6	To augment the business plan with examples of the positive elements of work that is and has been undertaken.	CSC	August 2014
CSC(07/14)7	To provide a reconciliation of how regional targets have been aggregated and how these have been determined.	CSC	August 2014
CSC(07/14)8	To review the read across between targets for level 2 inclusive.	CSC	August 2014
CSC(07/14)9	To provide copies of the annexes which support the plan providing detail for each LA.	CSC	August 2014
CSC(07/14)10	Attendance by members of the Executive Board / Joint Committee at future Review and Challenge meetings.	CSC	October Review and Challenge events

Annex 3: ERW - Review and Challenge Event – 26th June 2014

1. Attendance

Welsh Government:

- Brett Pugh, Director of School Standards and Workforce Group (Chair)
- Steve Vincent, Deputy Director, School Management and Effectiveness Division
- Gwen Kohler, Head of Delivery and Implementation
- Geraint Rees, Practitioner Seconded, School Standards and Workforce Group

Consortium:

- Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director
- Eifion Evans, Director, Ceredigion (Lead Director ERW)
- Kate Evan Hughes, Chief Education Officer, Pembrokeshire
- Aled Evans, Director, Neath Port Talbot
- Arwyn Thomas, Chief Education Officer, Swansea
- Rob Sully, Director, Carmarthenshire
- Helen Morgan Rees, Head of the Eastern Hub
- Alan Walters, Head of the Western Hub
- Meinir Ebbsworth, Head of the Northern Hub

Estyn (observers):

- Simon Brown
- Mererid Stone

2. Action points

ERW			
Ref	Action	Who	Timescales
ERW(07/14)1	Report funding concerns in relation to formula basis for grants.	WG	Ongoing - update to be provided by Martyn Gray in October
ERW(07/14)2	Facilitate work with Curriculum Division to link with ERW in the work they are doing in relation to moderation.	WG & ERW	August 2014
ERW(07/14)3	ERW to update on the work it is undertaking on reviewing how scrutiny is undertaken in each LA and the training being provided to support this.	ERW	August 2014
ERW(07/14)4	A diagram or map of the accountability model that underpins the consortia is to be provided which will provide clarity and indicate lines of decision making and scrutiny.	ERW	August 2014
ERW(07/14)5	To update the business plan to reflect current position on a number of key elements.	ERW	August 2014
ERW(07/14)6	To set a specific meeting to provide details in relation to the budget including how it will be monitored.	ERW & WG	August 2014
ERW(07/14)7	To consider how ERW can extend working with GwE.	ERW	Ongoing
ERW(07/14)8	Copies of the appendices, which support the Business plan and provide detail for each Local Authority, will be provided with supporting financial details.	ERW	August 2014
ERW(07/14)9	Attendance by members of the Executive Board / Joint Committee at future Review and Challenge meetings, as laid out in the terms of reference.	ERW	October Review and Challenge events

Annex 4: GwE - Review and Challenge Event – 1st July 2014

1. Attendance

Welsh Government:

- Brett Pugh, Director of School Standards and Workforce Group (Chair)
- Steve Vincent, Deputy Director, School Management and Effectiveness Division
- Gwen Kohler, Head of Delivery and Implementation
- Bethan Guilfoyle, Practitioner Secondee, Schools Standards and Workforce Group
- Geraint Rees, Practitioner Secondee, School Standards and Workforce Group

Consortium:

- Elfyn Jones, Acting Managing Director, GwE
- John Davies, Head of Lifelong Learning, Wrexham and Chair of the North Wales Education Consortium
- Ian Budd, Head of Lifelong Learning, Flintshire
- Karen Evans, Head of Education, Denbighshire
- Geraint James, Statutory Head of Education Services, Conwy
- Dewi Jones, Head of Education, Gwynedd and Vice-Chair of the North Wales Education Consortium
- Gwynne Jones, Head of Lifelong Learning, Isle of Anglesey
- Councillor Eryl Williams, Chair of the GwE Joint Committee
- Marc Berw Hughes, Senior System Leader, GwE
- Siwan Meirion, Senior System Leader, GwE

Estyn (observers):

- Iwan Roberts

2. Action points

GwE			
Ref	Action	Who	Timescales
GwE(07/14)1	To provide a document to clarify decision making process and roles which demonstrate the “golden thread”. This should clearly show the roles and structure of each group.	GwE	August 2014
GwE(07/14)2	To keep WG updated on progress, and, when completed provide a copy of a partnership agreement which will enable clarity to schools on the roles and responsibilities of partners across the system.	GwE	August 2014
GwE(07/14)3	Provide evidence in relation to the QA around the scrutiny function and its consistency across each LA.	GwE	August 2014
GwE(07/14)4	Update the Business Plan for key information such as financial budget and monitoring arrangements.	GwE	August 2014
GwE(07/14)5	Develop work in relation to planning arrangements. This will need to identify how capacity can be built.	GwE & WG	Ongoing with update in October
GwE(07/14)6	Copies of the BP supporting appendices, which provide detail for each LA, to be provided with supporting financial details.	GwE	August 2014
GwE(07/14)7	Update against the streamlining of arrangements to manage grants which are currently performed outside of GwE.	GwE	August 2014
GwE(07/14)8	Clarity is needed in relation to how historic programmes such as the NSP can be aligned with the national model.	WG	Ongoing
GwE(07/14)9	Attendance by Executive Board and Regional Committee members to future Review and Challenge meetings, as laid out within the terms of reference.	GwE	October Review and Challenge events