

Joint session of the Strategic Education Delivery Group and Our national mission Change and Delivery Boards – 2nd November 2021

1. Welcome and Introductions

[Information redacted] welcomed members to the second joint session and this opportunity to update members on progress over the summer and future plans.

2. Update since joint SEDG, Change and Delivery Board meeting (08 July 2021)

It had been a busy time since the group last met in July. The third wave of the pandemic had had a significant impact on schools and settings since the start of September, and *[Information redacted]* thanked everyone for all of their support. He hoped things would improve with the continuing roll-out of the vaccination to 12-15 year olds.

[Information redacted] highlighted some of the announcements made recently reflecting the work underway and priorities to come including around reforms to post-16 education and the introduction of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill which establishes a new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, and the outcome of the spending review.

[Information redacted] acknowledged all partners were keen to find ways to create time and space for teaching staff to support implementation of our reforms and manage the continued impact of COVID on learning. Efforts to reduce bureaucracy in the system should continue and there was a role that programme governance could play in that, something *[Information redacted]* would pick up in the agenda.

[Information redacted] passed to *[Information redacted]* to raise what he felt was a matter of significant importance with the group.

[Information redacted] thanked *[Information redacted]* and welcomed everyone able to join us today. *[Information redacted]* began by reminding everyone that during the previous Senedd term, Welsh Government accepted the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recommendation to define roles and responsibilities within the system.

As the response to the pandemic continues to put significant pressure on our time and resources, and as we focus efforts on implementing the ambitious programme of reforms set out in Our national mission and new Ministerial commitments, the call for time and space is being made loud and clear from all corners. More than ever now, we need to work in partnership and put learners first, at the heart of everything we do. *[Information redacted]* continued to explain that in his role as chair of SEDG, he felt we must re-visit the work we have done on understanding the roles and

responsibilities across our education partners and Welsh Government. This is something we have worked hard at and made good progress, but doesn't feel we've ever managed collectively to quite get it over the line, so we need to revisit this. In the context of the pressures we are all facing as a sector. It feels that now is the time to put renewed energy into this to ensure we have a collective clear understanding of the unique role of all partners.

[Information redacted] confirmed that in Welsh Government this has picked up a new specific focus and there is a strong will to make sure we get there.

[Information redacted] agreed, reflecting that we need to, in this space, pick this work back up over the coming months. *[Information redacted]* also reflected that in his time in this role there has been a consistent message from all parties that there is more work to be done in this space and we need to have clarity of output.

[Information redacted] concluded by saying that he wanted to raise this now and feels there should be some focused activity soon to make sure we collectively identify the roles and responsibilities and put the principles in practice.

[Information redacted] asked if people can agree on this via the chat bar and feedback, and we can then confirm how we will go forward.

[Information redacted] handed over to *[Information redacted]* for the next item.

3. Our National Mission Planning

Talking members through a presentation, *[Information redacted]* guided members through the work we've done over the summer, explaining where we've come from, where we are now and what we feel we need to do. *[Information redacted]* highlighted that we need clarity on remit and scope of the work as well as the communications and engagement required, and this will tie in with the work on roles and responsibilities. It is important that we do not duplicate in terms of the governance of our reforms, and that the right updated governance is needed through the next implementation phase to ensure delivery.

[Information redacted] suggested there was opportunity to move to a single programme board, operating at delivery level but with seniority to make decisions on behalf of organisations. SSG and SEDG could provide strategic input and stakeholder voice. Subject to agreement, we would move quickly to put the updated arrangements in place. *[Information redacted]* suggested it would be possible to do this between meetings and asked for feedback from members in discussion or via email after the meeting.

If there is broad agreement, we can circulate proposals with a view to agreeing membership, along with amended terms of reference and delivery focused remit. We could expect to move quickly to revised arrangements with monthly meetings beginning in December.

4. Education Progress Updates

[Information redacted] began by reflecting on the key areas of work during this Senedd term. Firstly, there was the response to the current pandemic, both in terms of operations in schools and settings and supporting learners and the profession through the Renew and Reform programme. Then there was the reform agenda already underway including the new Curriculum for Wales and ALN implementation. Thirdly, there were long standing issues where Covid-19 delayed action including for example Elective Home Education (EHE), Independent Schools, the Schools Funding Review etc. Finally, there was the Programme for Government with a number of new commitments such as Reform of the School Day and Year.

[Information redacted] also noted that the WG Draft Budget would be published on 20 December and would set out financial plans for a three year period.

- Curriculum reform implementation and policy update on wider curriculum and assessment areas – *[Information redacted]*

The consultation on assessment was published at the end of the summer, everything is going to plan and timescale. The What Matters statements are progressing well and to time. The National Networks are continuing through the autumn term, a number of dates are set. The Spring Networks will be on the key themes of reading and oracy.

[Information redacted] went on to say we feel our focus needs to be on supporting schools and practitioners in developing their own curricular. We meet regularly with consortia and Estyn to listen to what schools are saying and to help to reduce the burden on them. 2022 is not the end point of the rollout. Schools will take different journeys: there is disruption at the moment and things have been very unpredictable this year, we need to remember and listen to this. The National Network conversations have been very positive.

[Information redacted] noted the ongoing importance of partners feeding back intelligence from the front line on where schools are on their journey with implementation, particularly in light of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

[Information redacted] commented that schools are in different places, there is huge variation across, but also within regions.

[Information redacted] also commented that we have come a long way already in the reforms; people have probably made more progress than they realise. We need to continue to support.

- Pedagogy, Leadership and Professional Learning – *[Information redacted]*

[Information redacted] talked through the slides on the re-development of the National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL). He also confirmed a highlight document will be refreshed and sent out to members before the end of term.

[Information redacted] revisited the NAPL, and ran through the expectations and a

framework for the design and delivery of Professional Learning (PL); talked about what is the vision now for PL – needs to focus on PfG, curriculum reform, equity of access.

[Information redacted] commented that equity of access has become better due to digital over the last 18 months, however there are still issues for example access for Teaching Assistants is not as good. Enquiry and mentoring will be a key issue; however in the international context it is looking quite positive. *[Information redacted]* went through an example of how it all might unfold, what people are entitled to and expected to do.

The plan has been shared with the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Board who have endorsed it. It has also been shared with the Minister, who has reacted positively to it. *[Information redacted]* confirmed to the Minister that a full term would be needed to undertake the co-construction process, so will need up until the February half term. The team is currently setting up meetings with all our partners to take forward.

- Support for learners – *[Information redacted]*

[Information redacted] provided an update on key areas of work, including ALN reform and review of free school meals eligibility criteria.

The review of the Healthy Eating in schools regulations had been paused. There is extensive engagement at the moment with local authorities and key stakeholders on increasing eligibility for FSM, more will be announced over the coming months, the next stage will then be implementation. Then the regulations work will be brought back to the table.

The work around the ALN Act was understood to be complete in terms of the original commitments in Our national mission with the Code and necessary Regulations in place. In reality however we are still on the journey, in a key implementation phase and working collectively on what this means for years two and three. Guidance will be published on implementation in year one in the next week or so on the details for the first year.

[Information redacted] also provided an update on youth work and engagement, which is in a really positive place. Received an important report from the Interim Youth Work Board recently providing recommendations to strengthen youth work in Wales. We are now looking at the recommendations, and the Minister for Education and Welsh Language will say more on this over the next month. We have also started to redraft the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

[Information redacted] invited Skills Higher Education & Lifelong Learning colleagues to give an update on the introduction of the Tertiary Education and Research Bill. *[Information redacted]* confirmed that it was introduced yesterday, the Minister will be making an announcement later this week. They had received positive reaction from stakeholders, who are keen to engage on the detail over the coming weeks.

[Information redacted] confirmed that engagement meetings will take place over the coming months, and the Minister has announced the creation of a Strategy and Implementation Board, due to meet for the first time on 11th November. A programme of meetings will also take place with the Minister over the next six to eight months.

5. Programme risks

[Information redacted] gave an overview of the programme risk register (shared in the papers for the meeting), pointing out there is a focus on creating time and space in the system, the continuing impact of Covid and there have been some updates to the risks this month. He confirmed that there will be a role for the programme board to review the risks each month, and talked about the overall compound risk for the programme as a whole – given there are so many red risks, what does this mean for the programme in terms of delivery, to time, scope and quality.

[Information redacted] reflected on this, commenting on how do we re-energise everyone across the sector on the challenges to come, and progress this huge agenda particularly for the reforms that are already underway; there is a challenge around how we create space, given the things that the Minister for Education and Welsh Language is keen to push ahead with at pace, and this is a risk for delivery. We can continue to discuss these issues at our next programme board meeting in December.

6. Any Other Business

[Information redacted] asked if there were any further comments under this item, thanking everyone again for their time, appreciating the pressure that everyone is under. He closed the meeting by confirming again the work that will be needed going forwards on roles and responsibilities.