
GwE JOINT COMMITTEE
27.1.16

Present: **Councillor Eryl Williams (Chair)**
 Councillor Michael Williams (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Chris Bithell, Wyn Ellis Jones and Gareth Thomas.

Co-opted Members with no vote: Annwen Morgan (Secondary Schools Representative) and Rita Price (Wrexham Diocese).

Officers with no vote : Ian Budd (Lead Director – Chair of Management Board (Flintshire Council)), John Davies (Wrexham County Borough Council), Karen Evans (Denbighshire Council), Delyth Molyneux (Isle of Anglesey Council), R. Ellis Owen (Conwy County Borough Council) and Arwyn Thomas (Gwynedd Council).

Also present: Huw Foster Evans (GwE Managing Director), Rhys Howard Hughes (GwE Assistant Director (Support and Brokerage)), Susan Owen Jones (GwE Business and Finance Manager), Alwyn Jones (GwE Assistant Director (Standards)), Geraint Rees (Welsh Government Representative), Iwan Evans (Host Authority’s Legal Services Manager – Gwynedd Council), Hefin Owen (Host Authority’s Finance Manager – Gwynedd Council) and Bethan Adams (Host Authority’s Members Support Officer – Gwynedd Council)

Apologies: Dafydd Edwards (Host Authority’s Head of Finance – Gwynedd Council), Alison Fisher (Governor Representative) and Jonathan Morgan (Special Schools Representative).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declaration of personal interest was received by any Members present.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of this meeting, held on 12 November 2015, as a true record.

3. CLUSTER STANDARDISATION AND MODERATION - KS2 AND KS3

The GwE Managing Director presented a report which discussed in detail the regional and national standardisation and moderation procedures for validating teacher assessments at the end of key stages 2 & 3.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main points were highlighted:

- It is easy to forget the pupils who are unable to attain the benchmark, and so pupils’ progress should be assessed from the Foundation Phase;
- In response to a member’s question, GwE’s Assistant Director (Standards) noted that Dafydd Rhys, GwE Challenge Adviser, had contacted the 6% of KS2 & KS3 assessment leaders who had not attended the information session;
- Following the work undertaken, a better national understanding is expected, which would mean an improvement in the reliability and consistency of teacher assessments;
- It was difficult to set a specific time in terms of a fair national comparison.

RESOLVED to accept and note the report.

4. INVESTIGATING THE PROCEDURE FOR SETTING TARGETS, TRACKING PROGRESS AND INTERVENTION

The GwE Managing Director presented a report which provided information on findings of research on procedures for setting targets, tracking progress and intervention, which issued from a significant difference between 2015 KS4 final targets/predictions and true performance in many schools in the region.

Attention was drawn to the recommendations resulting from the research undertaken for GwE, local authorities and schools. It was noted that the report will be presented in a regional conference on 12 February.

In response to a question from a member regarding the recommendation that GwE/ Local Authorities establish a working party of school leaders and technical experts to form a generic system for tracking the new indicators, GwE's Assistant Director (Standards) noted that there will be collaboration with SIMS to create a common system for the entire region. The member noted the need to take immediate action, bearing in mind that the technology already exists, in order to ensure consistency across the region.

Members referred to the impact of staff absences and the lack of available supply staff in maths and English on the performances of some schools. The GwE Managing Director noted that they will look to establish a national recruitment campaign to try to attract teachers to work in Wales.

RESOLVED to accept and note the report.

5. KEY STAGE 4 LEVEL 2+ - PROGRESS TOWARDS 2016 TARGETS

The GwE Managing Director presented a report which discussed in detail the progress towards 2016 KS4 Level 2+ targets for each Local Authority. It was noted that steps had been taken to report on a regular basis and that a central collection of progress data would take place at the end of February and at the end of April 2016.

Karen Evans (Denbighshire Council) expressed the need to clearly specify that it is schools' targets that are noted in the 'Autumn Term: Schools' Aggregate Targets and Predictions 2016' table, and not those set by the Local Authority. She added that the robustness of school targets varied.

The GwE Managing Director noted that some schools' targets were challenged further to the initial challenge, with targets refined as a result of the intervention.

In response to comments by members regarding the certainty that an improvement will be seen in summer 2016 results, Ian Budd (Lead Director – Chair of Management Board (Flintshire Council)) noted that matters which needed attention had been identified, that an action plan was in place, and that he was therefore hopeful that results would be better. John Davies (Wrexham County Borough Council) corroborated the comments noting that only the exam results would give definite confirmation, but that he was confident that there would be improvement.

Concerns that the statistics are being collected in different ways across Wales were highlighted.

RESOLVED to accept and note the report.

6. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

A presentation was given by GwE's Assistant Director (Support and Brokerage) on the leadership development programme.

There was an opportunity for members to ask questions, and they were responded to as follows:

- There is an application process in order to take part in the Leaders' Development Programme;
- 102 middle leaders had taken part in the Middle Leaders' Development Programme;
- There is an approval officer in the Local Authority to verify that each individual is ready to apply for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).
- 47 individuals had been approved to apply for the NPQH in 2016 but the Welsh Government's funding was sufficient only for 41 individuals;
- Upon receiving the NPQH qualification an individual is suitable to work as a Head Teacher in any school in Wales, including Church Schools;
- That the necessary commitment can lead to difficulty in obtaining Head Teachers from the Secondary and Special sectors to serve as panelists in the Assessment Centre.

It was announced that a conference for around 1,400 teachers would be held at 5.00pm, 12 February 2016 in Venue Cymru, Llandudno where there would be a presentation by Sir John Jones. An invitation was extended to the members.

7. WELSH-MEDIUM AND CAPACITY BUILDING NETWORK

Arwyn Thomas (Gwynedd Council) presented a report which provided an update on the activity and outcomes of the Welsh-Medium and Capacity Building Network. It was reported that, following positive reports on the success of the Language Charter in Gwynedd, an application had been received by Welsh Government to use Gwynedd's expertise and good practice to extend the project to other areas in Wales.

It was noted that a successful conference had been held to launch the Language Charter regionally on 22 January 2016. Attention was drawn to the action plan to extend the Charter across the region.

Geraint Rees (Welsh Government representative) congratulated the network for its work across the region, and noted that other areas could benefit from the good practice.

Positive comments were put forth regarding the collaboration, and it was noted that there was an enthusiasm about ensuring the success of the Charter across the region.

In response to a comment by a member, Arwyn Thomas (Cyngor Gwynedd) noted that he would arrange for members to receive the papers that were presented in the conference along with an evaluation of the day.

8. 2015-18 BUSINESS PLAN: MONITORING REPORT

The GwE Managing Director presented a progress monitoring report on the Business Plan for 2015-18.

Arwyn Thomas (Cyngor Gwynedd) noted the need to ensure that 'Headlines/Mitigation' in the monitoring dashboard address the milestones.

RESOLVED to accept and note the report.

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ESTYN'S REGIONAL CONSORTIA INSPECTIONS (APRIL 2016)

The GwE Managing Director presented a report on the arrangements for Estyn's inspections of the regional consortia, specifying that GwE's inspection would be held during 18 – 29 April 2016. It was noted that a follow-up inspection would take place in around 12 months to look at progress made against the recommendations.

It was reported that the Estyn inspectors would hold a meeting with the members of the Joint-Committee during the week commencing 25 April 2016.

In response to the inquiry regarding Estyn's capacity to hold interviews through the medium of Welsh, the GwE Managing Director noted that he would contact Estyn leaders for confirmation.

RESOLVED to accept and note the report.

The meeting started at 1.30 p.m. and concluded at 3.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN