

Complete Agenda



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Meeting

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2022

Location

Virtual Meeting

Contact Point

Rhodri Jones

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(DISTRIBUTED 17/11/22)

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Councillor Ieuan Williams	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Gill German	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Ian Roberts	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn	Wrexham County Borough Council
Councillor Beca Brown	Cyngor Gwynedd

Co-opted Non-voting Members

Dylan Davies	Secondary School Representative
Delyth Roberts	Primary Schools Representative
Jonathan Morgan	Special Schools Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative
Jennie Downes	Church in Wales

Non-voting Officers

Dr Lowri Brown	Conwy County Borough Council
Claire Homard	Flintshire County Council
Garem Jackson	Gwynedd Council
Marc Berw Hughes	Anglesey County Council
Karen Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Geraint Davies	Denbighshire County Council

Officers in Attendance

Lowri Evans	Host Authority
Dewi Morgan	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority
Arwyn Thomas	GwE Managing Director
Alwyn Jones	GwE Assistant Director
Bethan Eleri Roberts	GwE Performance Management Manager
Gareth Williams	GwE Advisory Board
Graham Boase	Denbighshire County Council

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5 - 10

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 05.10.2022 be signed as a true record (attached).

5. APPROVE THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON GWE ACCOUNTS 11 - 86

To submit –

- The Statement of Accounts post-audit;
- The Wales Audit Office's report;
- Letter of representation.

6. BUDGET 2022-2023: QUARTER 2 REVIEW

87 - 91

To update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE's budget for the 2022/23 financial year.

7. GWE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2023: QUARTER 2 MONITORING REPORT 92 - 126

To present the Quarter 2 Monitoring Report – GwE Regional Business Plan 2022-2023 to the Joint Committee.

8. INTENTION TO REVIEW CURRENT OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS AND STAFFING STRUCTURE 127 - 130

To inform Joint Committee members regarding the intention to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure.

9. JOINT COMMITTEE'S LETTER TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE 131 - 137

To provide the Joint Committee with a formal record, following discussions and a decision made at the previous meeting on 05/10/22, in relation to the letter sent to the Minister for Education and Welsh language on 11/10/22.

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE – 05/10/22

Present:

Councillors: Julie Fallon (Chair) (Conwy County Borough Council), Ieuan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire Council), Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council), Beca Brown (Gwynedd Council).

Officers Without a Vote: Dr Lowri Brown (Conwy County Borough Council), Marc Berw Hughes (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Geraint Davies (Denbighshire Council), Dafydd Ifans (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Owen Owens (Gwynedd Council).

Officers present:

GwE – Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director) and Bethan Roberts (Performance Management Manager).

Gwynedd Council, the Host Authority – Sion Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Hywyn Lewis Jones (Group Accountant), Gwion Ellis Jones (Senior Accountant) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 7:

Ruth Thackray: Senior Leader – Curriculum for Wales

Present for item 8:

Elfyn Jones: GwE Regional Leader – Secondary

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Vice-Chair Gill German (Denbighshire County Council), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director of GwE), Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council), Garem Jackson (Gwynedd Council), Karen Evans (Wrexham County Borough Council), Claire Homard (Flintshire Council) and Claire Armistead (Secondary Schools Representative).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

4. MINUTES

It was confirmed that the minutes presented from the previous meeting held on 13 July 2022 were correct.

5. GwE BUDGET 2022/2023 – FIRST QUARTER REVIEW

The report was submitted by the Host Authority's Group Accountant and the following main points were noted:

- It was reported that an initial review of the budget had anticipated a net underspend of £116,306.00 by the end of the current financial year (2022/23).
- It was explained that sickness and staff turnover, secondments and maternity leave along with recruitment difficulties had contributed to this underspend.
- It was explained that a number of visits and meetings were now held virtually and therefore GwE was spending much less money than anticipated on travel.
- It was confirmed that GwE's fund had been £437,503.00 at the beginning of the current financial year (2022/23) and it had been estimated that the GwE fund would be £553,808.00 by the end of the current financial year (2022/23).

DECISION

- To accept and approve the Report for the first quarter review of the GwE 2022-2023 budget.

6. GwE BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2023 – QUARTER 1 MONITORING REPORT

The report was submitted by the Managing Director of GwE, and the following main points were noted:

- It was explained that GwE had developed 31 business plans that reflected the regional and national priorities.
- It was emphasised that Quarter 1 had been spent developing the business plans to be operational before the end of the current financial year (2022/23).
- A quarterly progress report was submitted to the Local Authorities on the regional priorities also providing an overview per individual local authority.

In response to an enquiry regarding GwE's regional fields of improvement, the GwE Managing Director noted:

- That schools had been concentrating mostly on continuing to provide education of the best standard possible throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. He confirmed that they continued to do this by ensuring that they safeguarded the health of pupils and staff. As the threat of the illness remained present, schools needed time to grow in confidence that the impact of Covid-19 would be lesser in future.

DECISION

- To approve the quarter 1 monitoring report of the GwE Regional Business Plan 2022/2023.

7. THE REFORM JOURNEY: PROGRESS REPORT

The report was submitted by the Senior Leader – Curriculum for Wales and the following main points were noted:

- It was mentioned that the report reflected on the past year looking at how primary and secondary schools were preparing for the new curriculum which had come into force in September 2022. It was noted that the report looked in particular at the summer term prior to the curriculum coming into force.
- It was explained that Welsh Government has shared 6 steps to prepare for this change in the curriculum and it was noted that schools were coping well with these steps.
- It was added that feedback from school leaders confirmed that additional steps were needed to reach these targets especially given the role of progression, assessment and pedagogy in the local context.
- It was explained that primary schools had engaged well in preparing for the new curriculum and that they were being supported by Curriculum for Wales through a series of workshops, webinars and models.
- It was explained that work was being done with secondary schools this year to focus on pupils moving to year 7, and next year the work would focus on years 7 and 8.
- It was confirmed that secondary schools were looking at local identity to ensure that the curriculum was embedded using suitable means.
- It was emphasised that pedagogy and self-evaluations varied from school to school and that strategies were being developed regularly. Support was provided to encourage well-being for all and schools were encouraged to collaborate to create a network of staff that were able to support each other through this reform journey.

The GwE Managing Director expanded on these points noting the following main points:

- An aspiration was expressed to present an update on the curriculum to new local authority members following the May 2022 elections, or to all local council members to update them on curriculum developments.
- In response to the comment, the Chair noted that holding an on-line update may be an option to update many members at the same time.
- The GwE Managing Director referred to the requirements for measuring the schools' progress and accountability. It was noted that the structure, shape and direction of the curriculum was difficult to determine, and therefore schools needed time to become confident on the best method to use taking advantage of the aspects that were most relevant to them. It was added that bridging and collaboration would take place naturally through local, geographical needs and learning experiences as time went on.

In response to an enquiry about the timetable in terms of when the assessment methods would be mature enough to be able to interpret whether these educating methods were more successful than the previous ones, the GwE Managing Director noted:

- It would take considerable time to be able to compare this. He went on to explain that this was mainly due to the new systems looking at well-being, learning experiences and the experiences against the four purposes. It was explained there was a need for detailed discussions in the future to seek to adopt a fair method of assessment given that the curriculum method was of a local nature and that different aspects affected

different locations within the various local authorities. It was also explained that political advice and guidance was needed on this matter.

DECISION

- To note and accept the report which highlights schools' preparations to adopt the Curriculum for Wales in light of the renew and reform agenda.

8. GwE WORK PROGRAMME DURING AUTUMN AND SPRING TERMS 2022 - 2023

The report was submitted by the GwE Regional Leader – Secondary, and the following main points were noted:

- It was explained that the joint-committee was already aware of the expectations and the requirements of the new national school improvement guidance. It was reminded that GwE, the Governors and Local Members were responsible for holding the regime to account on a local level and that Estyn shared the same responsibilities regionally and nationally.
- It was noted that this report highlighted the work programme for this term as well as successive terms to support every school to respond to the requirements of the new framework.
- It was confirmed that the report had been approved by the GwE Management Board and regional Headteachers had been consulted at Strategic Forums and at the GwE Conference for senior leaders at Venue Cymru on 22 and 23 September 2022.
- Detailed attention was given to the new guidance for improving schools noting the following points:
 - Schools were expected to possess robust self-evaluation processes along with the mechanism for improvement. It was also expected that schools had processes for planning and maintaining improvements.
- It was explained that schools were not alone in this as the local authorities and the regional consortia would ensure that they had support to maintain improvements.
- It was explained that one of the main duties of the LA, GwE and Estyn was to evaluate these procedures and improve them effectively. This meant there had to be a clear system of accountability for everyone to know what needed to be implemented and what additional intervention was needed.
- It was emphasised that evaluation and improvement procedures had changed over the last two years in light of the pandemic and therefore the work programme was not as simple as it looked at first sight. This derived from the fact that schools had faced very serious challenges to ensure that the children of the region continued to receive first rate education, safely. This meant that providing a high standard of education, well-being and health and safety had been a priority over the last two years rather than updating evaluation frameworks.

Wednesday, 5th October, 2022

- The headteachers of some of the schools in the region had expressed their gratitude for the Joint-committee's stance, it had helped to ensure that teachers' assessments were used to assess pupil attainment during this time, as it had operated as a very effective system in an uncertain time.
- It was noted that Estyn had now begun visiting schools again to carry out inspections, and the following main points were noted:
 - The Estyn inspection frameworks had not changed much since before the Covid-19 crisis.
 - It was explained that schools continued to cope with the additional problems deriving from the pandemic such as attendance, well-being, staff turnover and loss of basic skills.
 - To support schools on their improvement journey every school would receive a bespoke support plan highlighting the support that was most suitable for them.

Members of the Joint-committee were given an opportunity to share observations and ask questions:

- It was agreed there was a need to recognise the new challenges deriving from the pandemic. It was recognised there was a need for inspections to look at schools individually. It was emphasised that inspections, in general, were a key part of ensuring that pupils received education of the highest standard.
- It was noted that schools were also dealing with new challenges such as staff and pupil well-being along with matters such as the increase in the cost of living. It must be borne in mind that schools had grown to be community hubs in several areas and that education was going in the midst of an unprecedented period.
- It was proposed that it would be useful to offer training to governors to ensure that they understood the new Schools Improvement Framework.
- It was mentioned that it would be useful to receive input from the Welsh Government Minister for Education on these matters as there would be some time before we could measure the success of the new procedures and that staff and pupil well-being were currently at very concerning levels.

DECISION

- To accept and approve the report which outlines the main focus of the GwE Work Programme during the Autumn and Spring Terms 2022-23.
- To write to the Welsh Government Minister for Education to receive input.
- To arrange a meeting with Estyn to discuss these matters further.

9. GwE AUTUMN TERM REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The report was submitted by the GwE Managing Director for the Members' information and the following main points were noted:

Wednesday, 5th October, 2022

- There had been an excellent response to the conference, with approximately 500 people attending over the two days. This was the first conference for GwE to hold following the lockdown periods.
- A summary of the conference was provided:
 - A talk by Dafydd Iwan to encourage a million Welsh speakers.
 - Practical workshops.
 - Question and answer sessions.
 - Presentation by Professor Graham Donaldson.
 - It was added that there had been much emphasis on the well-being of individuals, leaders and staff as well as the post-Covid educating process throughout the conference.

Members of the Joint-committee were given an opportunity to share observations and ask questions:

- Gratitude was expressed to the business team responsible for arranging the conference and it was seconded that the feedback reaching the Members was very positive.
- It was asked whether it would be possible to share a recording of Professor Graham Donaldson's speech with the Members and others who had been unable to attend, due to the positive feedback.

In response to the enquiry about Professor Donaldson's speech, the GwE Managing Director noted that GwE could contact him to see if this was possible.

DECISION

- To accept and note the report on the GwE regional conference.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 11:50am.

CHAIR



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MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	23 November 2022
TITLE	The Joint Committee's Final Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 and relevant Audit
PURPOSE	To submit – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Statement of Accounts post-audit; • The Wales Audit Office's report; • Letter of representation.
RECCOMENDATION	To receive and note the report on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales, approve the 2021/22 accounts, and authorise the Chairperson to sign the letter of representation on behalf of the Joint Committee.
AUTHOR	Dewi Aeron Morgan, Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

1. FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Members will recall that it was reported as follows to the 13 July meeting of GwE's Joint Committee:

- 1.1 There are specific accounting and audit reporting requirements for Joint Committees.
- 1.2 Section 12 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 states that a joint committee of two or more (local) authorities is a local government body, and Section 13 of the Act requires such bodies to maintain accounts subject to audit by an external auditor approved by the Auditor General for Wales.
- 1.3 Although they are not independent legal entities, for the purposes of keeping accounts and being audited, a joint committee is separately subject to the same regulations as other local councils.

- 1.4 Gwynedd Council is the host Council responsible for meeting the accounting responsibilities and reporting on the financial matters of GwE's Joint Committee.
- 1.5 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (as amended) require all Joint Committees to prepare year-end accounts. Where the turnover exceeds £2.5million, a statement of accounts must be prepared in accordance with the CIPFA code for the Joint Committee.
- 1.6 GwE's Statement of Accounts were subject to an audit by Audit Wales, external auditors appointed by the Auditor General for Wales.

2. ACCOUNTS FOR 2021/22

The Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2021/22 was submitted to the 13 July 2022 meeting of GwE's Joint Committee in "outturn" format, along with the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 (subject to audit) in standard statutory format.

3. AUDIT

It was noted at the time that these accounts would be subject to audit by Audit Wales, and the 'ISA 260' report is presented here by the Auditor General for Wales detailing Audit Wales' main findings. Paragraph 9 of the report states that "We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion" on the financial statements 2021/22.

4. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2021/22

The final version (post audit) of the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 is also presented herewith. The issues raised as part of the audit have been outlined in Appendix 3 of the 'ISA260' report presented by Audit Wales on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales.

5. RECCOMENDATION

GwE's Joint Committee is asked to receive, note and approve the information in the appendices, i.e –

- 'ISA260' report by the Auditor General for Wales
- The Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 (post audit)

6. LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

The Chairperson of the meeting, together with Gwynedd Council's Head of Finance (as Statutory Finance Officer for GwE), are asked to certify the Letter of Representation (Appendix 1 to the Auditor General for Wales' report) after the Joint Committee has considered the above.

7. AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES CERTIFICATE

After receiving the Letter of Representation duly certified by the Chairperson and the Head of Finance, the Auditor General for Wales will issue the certificate on the accounts.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective

Statutory Finance Officer:

Author of the report.

GwE Joint Committee
(Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd,
Anglesey and Wrexham Councils)

STATEMENT OF
ACCOUNTS
2021/22

Finance Department
Gwynedd Council
www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

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NARRATIVE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) has been established in partnership between the six North Wales authorities, being Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Gwynedd Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council, to be accountable to the Councils and undertake the statutory function of the Councils in respect of school improvement and effectiveness. This includes the duty to monitor, challenge, provide support services for curriculum continued professional development and management of schools, and in addition provide services that can be commissioned by schools and local authorities.

Gwynedd Council has been appointed as host authority in implementing and maintaining the service, and the Joint Committee of all the partners oversees the management of the service.

The GwE Joint Committee accounts for the year 2021/22 are presented here on pages 8 to 36. The Statements of Accounts are prepared in accordance with CIPFA's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22*.

The Statement of Accounts consist of:

- **Expenditure and Funding Analysis** – Whilst this is not a statutory statement, it shows how annual expenditure is used and funded in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.
- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** - This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. The income and expenditure has been split between the six councils as follows for 2021/22 :

Conwy	15.28%
Denbighshire	15.36%
Flintshire	22.72%
Gwynedd	17.63%
Anglesey	10.16%
Wrexham	18.86%
Total	100%

- **Movement in Reserves Statement** – This statement shows the movement in year on the different reserves held by the Joint Committee, analysed into 'usable reserves' and 'unusable reserves'.
- **The Balance Sheet** - Sets out the financial position of the Joint Committee on 31 March 2022.
- **The Cash Flow Statement** - This statement summarises the flow of cash to and from the Joint Committee during 2021/22 for revenue and capital purposes.

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis and are supported by this Narrative Report, the Accounting Policies and various notes to the accounts.

GwE's Vision and Priorities

GwE's vision is:

- Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.
- Proudly Welsh and internationally informed, we will support our schools to become successful and confident learning organisations. We will collaborate to provide learners with the climate and education that they deserve so that they become capable and resilient individuals who realise their full potential.

GwE's Business plan identifies objectives set to meet its priorities, and is available at:

<https://www.gwegogledd.cymru/about-us/key-documents/?lang=en>

The Covid-19 crisis emerged at the end of March 2020 and continues to have far-reaching effects on our lives. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic GwE has repurposed its work in order to continue to provide effective services and support to its school communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. The service in its entirety has changed course several times during Covid-19 so as to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders, addressing the following aspects:

- Support the well-being and development of school leaders, their staff and their learners.
- Develop guidance, support and learning resources for schools on distance learning and blended learning.
- Support schools to reopen - collaborate with Local Authorities to ensure a consistent regional approach to developing a supportive framework to ensure that all regional schools have the appropriate policies in place along with a comprehensive risk assessment in order to create a safe environment to welcome pupils back to school.
- Support schools to evaluate the quality of their blended learning and distance learning provision.
- Provide a range of meaningful professional learning with a focus on 5 main areas: Well-being, The Reform Journey, Developing the Workforce, Accelerating Learning and Digital Learning.
- Continue to facilitate cluster working to support the development of Curriculum for Wales, Additional Learning Needs Transformation and the Welsh language.
- Provide a range of guidance documents to support schools to improve parental engagement, including sharing good practice.
- Utilise an accelerating learning approach regionally.
- Work closely with Bangor University and regional staff to ensure a range of high quality resources to support physical and emotional well-being as well as literacy and numeracy.
- Blended support for schools and LAs - establish the GwE Support Centre.
- Provide opportunities for schools to form alliances or to work in clusters so as to address the gaps in provision and offer other delivery approaches in order to meet any lockdown situations in the future.
- Collaborate with Professor Graham Donaldson to develop a range of think pieces to support schools to implement the new curriculum, integrating the Curriculum for Wales naturally into current practice.

Financial Strategy

The Joint Committee's Financial Strategy and 2021/22 Budget adopted by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 24 February 2021 sets out the foundation for us to achieve the improvement priorities, whilst also trying to meet the continuous increase in demand for our services. The Financial Strategy is unavoidably dependent upon these priorities. The strategy is available at:

<https://www.gwegogledd.cymru/about-us/governance/joint-committee/?lang=en>

The changes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic will also affect the medium term financial position of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee like other councils in Wales has worked with Welsh Government to respond to the situation in the best way possible.

2021/22 Performance

GwE reports quarterly on the performance of the service in delivering the service functions and key aims. The Annual Performance Report is available at (Joint Committee 13 July 2022):

<https://www.gwegogledd.cymru/about-us/governance/joint-committee/?lang=en>

2021/22 Financial Performance

- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on page 9 shows that the Joint Committee's gross revenue expenditure on 'cost of services' level was £21,798k during 2021/22, with a net position of £1,226k.
- The financial out-turn position for 2021/22 will be reported to the Joint Committee at its meeting on 13 July 2022. Joint Committee Members' approval is sought to transfer £230k from earmarked reserves to finance this years overspend.
- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement on pages 9 and 10 detail the analysis in movements for the year.

TABLE I - Budget and Actual Comparison Summary (Net)

Table I provides a budgetary performance comparison at a summary level, which is detailed further in Table 2.

	Budget	Actual	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure on Operations	20,731	20,962	231
Income			
Council Contributions for the core service:			
Conwy	(645)	(645)	0
Denbighshire	(649)	(649)	0
Flintshire	(960)	(960)	0
Gwynedd	(745)	(745)	0
Anglesey	(429)	(429)	0
Wrexham	(796)	(796)	0
Other Income	(16,507)	(16,508)	(1)
Net (Underspend)/Overspend	0	230	230

TABLE 2 –Transposition movement between 'Budget and Actual Comparison Summary (Net)' (Table I) to the Income and Expenditure format

	Performance Report (Out-turn)	Transposition Adjustment	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund Usable Reserves	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis	Income & Expenditure Statement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure	20,962	(103)	20,859	939	21,798
Income	(20,732)	160	(20,572)	0	(20,572)
Net Cost of Services	230	57	287	939	1,226

Transposition Adjustment - Adjustments in the transposition column relate to the net contribution to and from reserves.

Material Items of Income and Expenditure

Related Items include :-

- (£4,508k) on pensions, being the annual remeasurement of the net defined benefit liabilities relating to pensions, in line with Gwynedd Pension Fund's Actuary's assessment (Note 15).
- £20,572k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 20).

Other Issues

- There are financial risks with the global economy and the Joint Committee has taken the circumstances into account in its financial plans, whilst maintaining a prudent level of reserves.
- Continued economic uncertainty following the termination of the UK's membership of the the European Union and this may effect some factors and financial decisions by the Joint Committee.
- The current Covid-19 crisis remains a financial challenge for the Joint Committee in the short and medium term.

Provisions and Reserves

The Joint Committee has usable reserves of £1,156k. These are detailed in the Balance Sheet, Movement in Reserves Statement and in Note 9.

Pension Fund

The Joint Committee (as an employer) has a net liability from its share of the assets and liabilities of the Gwynedd Pension Fund, which has been calculated in accordance with International Accounting Standard 19. The Balance Sheet contains an assessment by the Fund's Actuary, Hymans Robertson, of the Joint Committee's share of the Pension Fund liability. This net liability has decreased by (£3,317k) to £9,056k in 2021/22. Refer to Note 24 for further information.

The net pension liability is a position at one point in time. Market prices can move substantially up or down in the short-term and it is therefore not possible to quantify the long-term effect such movements in market prices will have on the Pension Fund. The last valuation was at 31 March 2019, with the next based on 31 March 2022 for the 2022/23 accounts.

Governance

GwE is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk. Further information is included within the Annual Governance Statement.

Accounting Policies

The accounting policies adopted on behalf of the Joint Committee comply with all relevant recommended accounting practices and are fully explained in the Accounting Policies set out in Note 1 of the Accounts commencing on page 13.

Changes in Accounting Policies and to the Accounts

The Joint Committee's existing accounting policies have been amended to reflect only the changes required in accordance with proper accounting practices, following adjustments for the 2021/22 financial year to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

Further Information

The Statement of Accounts is available on Gwynedd Council's website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru.

Further information relating to the accounts is available from:

Ffion Madog Evans
Senior Finance Manager
01286 679133

or

Gwion Elis Jones
Senior Accountant
01286 679060

Finance Department
Gwynedd Council
Council Offices
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

This is part of the Council's policy of providing full information relating to the Council and the Joint Committees' affairs. In addition, interested members of the public have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is completed. The availability of the accounts for inspection is advertised on the Council's website at the appropriate time.

GwE JOINT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Gwynedd Council as host authority bears the responsibility for the arrangements and administration of the Joint Committee's financial affairs.

Gwynedd Council is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In Gwynedd Council, that "Section 151 Officer" is the Head of Finance. It is the Joint Committee's responsibility to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of its resources, to safeguard its assets, and to approve the Statement of Accounts.

23 November 2022

Councillor Julie Fallon
GwE Joint Committee Chairperson

THE HEAD OF FINANCE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the GwE Joint Committee Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* ("the Code").

In preparing the statement of accounts, the Head of Finance has selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently; has made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent and complied with the Code.

The Head of Finance has also kept proper accounting records which were up to date, and has taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the arrangements set out above, and presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the GwE Joint Committee at 31 March 2022 and the Joint Committee's income and expenditure for the year then ended.



Dewi Aeron Morgan CPFA
Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

15 November 2022

EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Restated 2020/21			2021/22			
Net Expenditure to be Funded by Usable Reserve balances	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis (see Note 7)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure to be Funded by Usable Reserve balances	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis (see Note 7)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
4,808	336	5,144	Employees	5,177	939	6,116
153	0	153	Property	168	0	168
15	0	15	Transport	46	0	46
826	0	826	Supplies and Services	1,795	0	1,795
7,445	0	7,445	Third Parties	13,673	0	13,673
0	0	0	Non-distributed Costs	0	0	0
(13,486)	0	(13,486)	Income	(20,572)	0	(20,572)
(239)	336	97	Cost of Services	287	939	1,226
0	199	199	Other Income and Expenditure	0	256	256
(239)	535	296	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	287	1,195	1,482
(1,204)			Opening Balances of Usable Reserves	(1,443)		
(239)			(Surplus)/Deficit on Usable Reserves in Year	287		
(1,443)			Closing Balances of Usable Reserves	(1,156)		

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing the Joint Committee service in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

Gross Expenditure	Restated 2020/21			Note	2021/22		
	Gross Income	Net Expenditure			Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£'000	£'000	£'000			£'000	£'000	£'000
5,144	0	5,144	Employees		6,116	0	6,116
153	0	153	Property		168	0	168
15	0	15	Transport		46	0	46
826	0	826	Supplies and Services		1,795	0	1,795
7,445	0	7,445	Third Parties		13,673	0	13,673
0	0	0	Non-distributed Costs		0	0	0
0	(13,486)	(13,486)	Income		0	(20,572)	(20,572)
13,583	(13,486)	97	Cost of Services		21,798	(20,572)	1,226
199	0	199	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	10	256	0	256
13,782	(13,486)	296	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services		22,054	(20,572)	1,482
		3,541	Remeasurement of the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)	15			(4,508)
		3,541	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(4,508)
		3,837	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(3,026)

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the Joint Committee, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure) and other 'unusable reserves'. The Statement shows how the movements in year of the Joint Committee's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax (via the Councils' contributions). The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

		Movement in Reserves Statement		
	Note	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Joint Committee's Reserves £'000
Balance 31 March 2020 carried forward		(711)	8,396	7,685
Adjustment to opening balance		(493)	1	(492)
Restated opening balance		(1,204)	8,397	7,193
<u>Movement in reserves during 2020/21</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		296	0	296
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	3,541	3,541
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		296	3,541	3,837
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	8	(535)	535	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Usable Reserves		(239)	4,076	3,837
(Increase)/Decrease in 2020/21		(239)	4,076	3,837
Balance 31 March 2021 carried forward	9	(1,443)	12,473	11,030
<u>Movement in reserves during 2021/22</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		1,482	0	1,482
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	(4,508)	(4,508)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		1,482	(4,508)	(3,026)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	8	(1,195)	1,195	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Usable Reserves	9	287	(3,313)	(3,026)
(Increase)/Decrease in 2021/22		287	(3,313)	(3,026)
Balance 31 March 2022 carried forward		(1,156)	9,160	8,004

BALANCE SHEET

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Joint Committee. The net assets of the Joint Committee (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Joint Committee. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves is usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Joint Committee may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use. The second category of reserves is those that the Joint Committee is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

Restated 1 April 2020 £'000	Restated 31 March 2021 £'000		Note	31 March 2022 £'000
476	509	Short-term Debtors	11	1,177
2,556	5,959	Cash and Cash Equivalents	12	1,587
3,032	6,468	Current Assets		2,764
(1,909)	(4,114)	Short-term Creditors	13	(1,712)
(3)	(3)	Short-term Provisions	14	0
(9)	(1,008)	Grants Receipts in Advance	20	0
(1,921)	(5,125)	Current Liabilities		(1,712)
(8,304)	(12,373)	Pension Liability	24	(9,056)
(8,304)	(12,373)	Long-term Liabilities		(9,056)
(7,193)	(11,030)	Net Assets		(8,004)
(1,204)	(1,443)	Usable Reserves	9	(1,156)
8,397	12,473	Unusable Reserves	15	9,160
7,193	11,030	Total Reserves		8,004

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Joint Committee during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Joint Committee generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating and investing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Joint Committee are funded by way of grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Joint Committee. Investing Activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Joint Committee's future service delivery.

Restated 2020/21 £'000	Note	2021/22 £'000
296	Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,482
(3,699)	Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	2,890
(3,403)	Net cash flows from Operating Activities	4,372
0	Investing Activities	0
0	Financing Activities	0
(3,403)	Net (Increase)/Decrease in cash and cash equivalents	4,372
(2,556)	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	(5,959)
(5,959)	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	(1,587)

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

I.1 General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Joint Committee's transactions for the 2021/22 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2022. The Joint Committee is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended), in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22*, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is historical cost. The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The Joint Committee's practice is to operate on the basis that all items of expenditure are treated as revenue in the first instance. Should any items of a capital nature (e.g. IT equipment, furniture) prove to have a material significance on the true and fair presentation of the financial position then the items would be treated according to proper practices.

The nature of the Joint Committee's transactions is limited and only the relevant policies can be seen below.

I.2 Accruals of Expenditure and Income

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received.

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

I.3 Cash and Cash Equivalents

The Joint Committee does not have its own bank account and cash is administered by Gwynedd Council within its own accounts.

I.4 Employee Benefits

I.4.1 Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which the employee renders service to the Joint Committee. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end that employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the accumulated absences account so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.4.2 Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Joint Committee to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept redundancy voluntarily and are charged on an accruals basis to the service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Joint Committee can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Joint Committee recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the Joint Committee fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Joint Committee to the Pension Fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the Pension Fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

1.4.3 Post-employment Benefits

Employees of the Joint Committee are members of one pension scheme:

- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by the Gwynedd Pension Fund at Gwynedd Council.

The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees when they worked for the Joint Committee and their previous employers.

1.4.4 The Local Government Pension Scheme

All other staff, subject to certain qualifying criteria, are entitled to become members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The pension costs charged to the Joint Committee's accounts in respect of this group of employees is determined by the fund administrators and represent a fixed proportion of employees' contributions to this funded pension scheme.

The Local Government Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme.

The liabilities of the Gwynedd Pension Fund attributable to the Joint Committee are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method - i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions such as mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.7% calculated as a weighted average of 'spot yields' on AA rated corporate bonds.

The assets of the Gwynedd Pension Fund attributable to the Joint Committee are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value as determined by the Fund's Actuary.

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Service cost comprising:

- Current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the service for which the employees worked.
- Past service cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non-distributed Costs.
- Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/(asset), i.e. the net interest expense for the Joint Committee – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability/(asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability/(asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability/(asset) during the period as a result of contributions and benefit payments.

Remeasurements comprising:

- The return on Plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability/(asset) – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- Actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- Contributions paid to the Gwynedd Pension Fund – cash paid as employer’s contributions to the Pension Fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Joint Committee to the Pension Fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the Pension Fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the Joint Committee of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 governs how the long-term liabilities which exist in relation to pension costs should be reported. Local Councils (including Joint Committees) in Wales and England are required to produce their financial statements in accordance with IAS 19.

1.4.5 Discretionary Benefits

The Joint Committee also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff (including teachers) are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.5 Events after the Reporting Period

Events after the balance sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events; and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

1.6 Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies, Estimates and Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Joint Committee's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

1.7 Government Grants and Other Contributions

Grants and contributions relating to capital and revenue expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis, and recognised immediately in the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as income, except to the extent that the grant or contribution has a condition that the Joint Committee has not satisfied.

1.8 Overheads and Support Services

Charges for services provided by the Central Support Departments within Gwynedd Council are derived from a combination of pre-determined fixed charges, actual recorded staff time, transaction logging and pre-determined formulae.

1.9 Provisions

The Joint Committee sets aside provisions for specific obligations which are likely or certain to be incurred but the amount of which cannot yet be determined accurately. Provisions are also made for doubtful debts. Known uncollectable debts are written off against the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee classifies these provisions as long-term or short-term liabilities as appropriate according to the nature of each provision.

1.10 Reserves

Specific reserves are created to set aside amounts for future spending schemes. This is done through transfers out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Certain reserves, namely "unusable reserves", are kept for the technical purpose of managing the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments and employee benefits. These do not represent the usable resources of the Joint Committee.

NOTE 1 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.11 Value Added Tax

Only in a situation when VAT is irrecoverable will VAT be included or charged as 'irrecoverable VAT'. Since the Joint Committee has not registered for VAT, the VAT is recovered through Gwynedd Council's VAT registration.

1.12 Debtors and Creditors

The Joint Committee's Accounts are maintained on an accruals basis in accordance with the Code of Accounting Practice. The accounts reflect actual expenditure and income relating to the year in question irrespective of whether the payments or receipts have actually been paid or received in the year.

An exception to this principle relates to electricity and similar quarterly payments which are charged at the date of meter reading rather than being apportioned between financial years, and certain annual payments such as insurance. This policy is consistently applied each year and therefore does not have a material effect on the year's accounts.

1.13 Long-Term Contracts

Long-term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the consideration allocated to the performance obligations satisfied based on the goods or services transferred to the service recipient during the financial year.

1.14 Joint Operations

Joint operations are arrangements where the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the assets and obligations for the liabilities relating to the arrangements. The activities undertaken by the Joint Committee in conjunction with other joint operators involve the use of the assets and resources of those joint operators. In relation to its interest in a joint operation, the Joint Committee as a joint operator recognises its share of assets, liabilities, revenue and expenses.

The GwE Joint Committee has been categorised as a Joint Operation, making use of the assets and resources of the operators rather than the establishment of a separate entity.

NOTE 2 – CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY

The Joint Committee's existing accounting policies are amended only insofar as to reflect the guidance in the 2021/22 CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

NOTE 3 – ACCOUNTING STANDARDS THAT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BUT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADOPTED

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom requires the expected impact of any accounting standards that have been issued but not yet adopted to be disclosed. This applies to the following new or amended standards within the 2022/23 Code:

A review of the accounting standards has been carried out this year, but none of the standards in question are relevant to GwE.

NOTE 4 – CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Joint Committee has had to make judgements, estimates and assumptions relating to complex transactions, those involving uncertainty about future events and also the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources.

The judgements, estimates and associated assumptions applied are based on current proper practices, historical experience and other factors that include historical and current assumptions and projections, and actual future projections, professional assessment, current trends, and local factors that are considered to be relevant.

In recent years there has been some uncertainty about future levels of funding from Welsh Government relating to grants. This issue forms an important part of the Joint Committee's continually revised financial strategy, and where all known and forecasted factors are given due consideration. Continued economic uncertainty following Britain leaving the European Union remains. Whilst the effects of the Covid-19 crisis remain a financial challenge for the Joint Committee in the short and medium term. However, the Joint Committee has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Joint Committee might be impaired.

All available and related information is sourced and applied in assessing and determining the position, which is particularly critical when considering such matters as actuarial valuation of pension fund assets and liabilities and earmarked reserves. However, because these issues cannot be determined with certainty, actual results may subsequently differ from those estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are continually reviewed.

NOTE 5 – ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT FUTURE AND OTHER MAJOR SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Joint Committee about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because certain balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be different from the assumptions and estimates.

The following item in the Joint Committee’s Balance Sheet at 31 March 2022 may be considered to be a significant risk (in terms of certainty in estimation of value), with the possibility of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Pensions liability	<p>Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Joint Committee with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p> <p>Brexit and COVID-19 both initially had negative impacts on the UK economy and pension asset values, but the market appears to be recovering and stabilising. However, another serious outbreak of COVID-19 could have a detrimental impact on asset returns, as could an increase in interest rates to curb inflation increases as a result of the recovery.</p>	The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions are set out in Note 24.

NOTE 6 – MATERIAL ITEMS OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

Related items include:-

- (£4,508k) on pensions, being the remeasurements of the net pension defined benefit liabilities relating to pensions, in line with Gwynedd Pension Fund’s Actuary’s assessment (Note 15).
- £20,572k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 20).

NOTE 7 – NOTE TO THE EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
2021/22	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i)	Other Differences (ii)	Total Adjustments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts				
Employees	0	935	4	939
Property	0	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0
Third Party	0	0	0	0
Unallocated Costs	0	0	0	0
Income	0	0	0	0
Cost of Services	0	935	4	939
Other Operating Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	256	0	256
Taxation and non-specific grant income	0	0	0	0
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	0	1,191	4	1,195

ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
2020/21	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i)	Other Differences (ii)	Total Adjustments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts				
Employees	0	329	7	336
Property	0	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0
Third Party	0	0	0	0
Unallocated Costs	0	0	0	0
Income	0	0	0	0
Cost of Services	0	329	7	336
Other Operating Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	199	0	199
Taxation and non-specific grant income	0	0	0	0
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	0	528	7	535

NOTE 7 – NOTE TO THE EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS (continued)

(i) Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments

Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 *Employee Benefits* for pension-related expenditure and income:

- For **Services**, this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the Joint Committee as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.
- For **Financing and investment income and expenditure**, the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

(ii) Other Differences

Other differences between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute:

- For **Services**, this represents an adjustment for accumulated absences earned but not taken during the year.
- For **Financing and investment income and expenditure**, the other differences column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts.

NOTE 8 – ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Joint Committee in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Joint Committee to meet future expenditure.

2021/22		
ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS	Usable Reserve General Fund Balance	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	£'000	£'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Note 24)	(2,006)	2,006
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	815	(815)
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account		
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(4)	4
Total Adjustments	(1,195)	1,195

2020/21		
ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS	Usable Reserve General Fund Balance	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	£'000	£'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Note 24)	(1,336)	1,336
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	808	(808)
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account		
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(7)	7
Total Adjustments	(535)	535

NOTE 9 – TRANSFERS TO/FROM USABLE RESERVES

9a. The General Fund

The note below sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in usable reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans, with a net decrease of (£374k).

	GwE Joint Committee General Fund £'000
Balance 31 March 2021	811
<u>Transfers:</u>	
In	16
Out	(390)
Balance 31 March 2022	437

9b. Earmarked Reserves

The note below highlights the amount set aside from the Earmarked Reserves in usable reserves in order to provide funding for spending plans to support supporting Newly Qualified Teachers into the future, with an increase of £87k.

	Restated GwE Joint Committee Earmarked Reserves £'000
Balance 31 March 2021	632
<u>Transfers:</u>	
In	87
Out	0
Balance 31 March 2022	719

NOTE 10 – FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2020/21	2021/22
£'000	£'000
199 Net interest on the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)	256
199 Total	256

NOTE 11 – SHORT-TERM DEBTORS

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Trade Receivables	46	37
Prepayments	75	57
Other Receivable Amounts	388	1,083
Total	509	1,177

NOTE 12 – CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

The Joint Committee does not have its own bank account and cash is administered by Gwynedd Council within its own accounts. The figure shown in the table each year is the net cash sum held on behalf of the Joint Committee within the Gwynedd Council amounts.

	31 March	31 March
	2021	2022
	£'000	£'000
Cash in Bank held by Host Authority	5,959	1,587
Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,959	1,587

NOTE 13 – SHORT-TERM CREDITORS

	31 March	31 March
	2021	2022
	£'000	£'000
Trade Payables	568	410
Other Payables	3,546	1,302
Total	4,114	1,712

NOTE 14 – PROVISIONS

The Joint Committee sets aside provisions for specific obligations, the amount or timing of which cannot be determined accurately. It is not permitted, under accounting conventions, to make provisions for uneven patterns of expenditure. However, earmarked reserves may be established and are included in Note 9.

	Balance at	(Addition) /	Used	Balance at
	31 March	Reduction /	during the	31 March
	2021	Transfer	year	2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Short-term Provisions</u>				
Green Car Scheme Provision	(3)	3	0	0
	(3)	3	0	0

Green Car Scheme Provision – provision relating to staff leased car scheme requirements.

NOTE 15 – UNUSABLE RESERVES

Restated 31 March 2021 £'000		31 March 2022 £'000
(12,373)	Pensions Reserve	(9,056)
(100)	Accumulated Absences Account	(104)
(12,473)	Total Unusable Reserves	(9,160)

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Joint Committee accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Joint Committee makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Joint Committee has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2020/21 £000		2021/22 £000
(8,304)	Balance 1 April	(12,373)
(3,541)	Re-measurements of the net pension defined benefit (liabilities) / assets (Note 24)	4,508
(1,336)	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(2,006)
808	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	815
(12,373)	Balance 31 March	(9,056)

NOTE 15 – UNUSABLE RESERVES (continued)

Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance neutralised by transfers to or from the Account

Restated 2020/21 £000		2021/22 £000
(93)	Balance 1 April	(100)
(7)	Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(4)
(100)	Balance 31 March	(104)

NOTE 16 – CASH FLOW STATEMENT: ADJUSTMENTS TO NET SURPLUS OR DEFICIT ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR NON-CASH MOVEMENTS

Restated 2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
(3,204)	(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	3,413
33	Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	668
(528)	Pension Liability	(1,191)
(3,699)		2,890

NOTE 17 – EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Statement of Accounts was authorised by the Head of Finance on 30 May 2022. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or related notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2022, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect its impact.

NOTE 18 – OFFICERS’ REMUNERATION

18a. The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended) require the Joint Committee to disclose the following information relating to employees appointed as Senior Officers, and whose salary is between £60,000 and £150,000. In compliance with the defined requirements, the pensionable pay, employer’s pension contributions and other employer costs are included below (including termination benefits), but the employer’s national insurance contributions are excluded. The remuneration paid to the Joint Committee’s senior officers directly employed by GwE is as follows:

2020/21			Chief Officers	2021/22		
Salary	Employer’s Pension Contribution	Total		Salary	Employer’s Pension Contribution	Total
£	£	£		£	£	£
103,545	23,815	127,360	Chief Officer	105,029	24,157	129,186

18b. Other Joint Committee employees receiving more than £60,000 remuneration for the year (excluding employer’s pension and national insurance contributions) were paid the following amounts. Termination benefits are to be included in the figures; however, there were no cases in 2021/22 or 2020/21.

Number of other employees who received more than £60,000 and includes remuneration and termination benefits:		
Number in 2020/21		Number in 2021/22
Total		Total
5	£60,000 - £64,999	15
6	£65,000 - £69,999	9
4	£70,000 – £74,999	3
0	£75,000 - £79,999	1

NOTE 19 – EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

The Joint Committee has incurred the following costs relating to external audit.

2020/21		2021/22
£'000		£'000
11	Fees payable to the auditor appointed by the Auditor General for Wales with regard to external audit services	11
11	Net Fees	11

NOTE 20 – GRANT INCOME

20a. The Joint Committee credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

	Restated 2020/21		2021/22	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Grants and Contributions Credited to Services				
Welsh Government -				
Pupil Development Grant (PDG) - Looked After Children	1,029		1,135	
PDG – Strategic Adviser	97		103	
PDG – Consortia Led Funding	142		196	
Other	115		374	
		1,383		1,808
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant - Welsh Government (excluding the EIG)				
		4,561		10,801
Education Improvement Grant (EIG)				
Welsh Government	1,283		1,386	
Match funding from Councils	1,587		1,625	
		2,870		3,011
Other Government Grants and Contributions - Education Workforce Council				
	414		537	
		414		537
Other Grants and Contributions				
Councils' Contributions towards the Core Service				
Conwy	637		645	
Denbighshire	637		649	
Flintshire	944		960	
Gwynedd	734		745	
Anglesey	422		429	
Wrexham	789		796	
		4,163		4,224
Other Grants and Contribution		94		191
Total Grants and Contributions Credited to Services		13,485		20,572

NOTE 20 – GRANT INCOME (continued)

20b. The Joint Committee has received grants, contributions or donations that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached that could require the monies to be returned to the giver. The balance at the year-end are as follows:

	Restated 31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Grants and Contributions Received in Advance		
<u>Short-term</u>		
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	997	0
Other	11	0
Total	1,008	0

NOTE 21 – RELATED PARTIES

The Joint Committee is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Joint Committee or to be controlled or influenced by the Joint Committee. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Joint Committee might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Joint Committee. To conform to the requirements, this is done by Members and Senior Officers completing a personal declaration, as defined in the CIPFA Code of Practice.

Function of the Joint Committee

The Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) has been established in partnership between the six North Wales authorities, being Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Gwynedd Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council, to be accountable to the Councils and undertake the statutory function of the Councils in respect of school improvement and effectiveness. This includes the duty to monitor, challenge, provide support services for curriculum continued professional development and management of schools, and in addition provide services that can be commissioned by schools and local authorities. Summarised below are the payments and income between the Joint Committee and the Local Authorities for the the 2021/22 financial year. Gwynedd Council has been appointed as host authority in implementing and maintaining the service, and the Joint Committee of all the partners oversees the management of the service.

Local Authority	Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Income Received	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Conwy County Borough Council	2,150	99	955	6
Denbighshire County Council	1,738	59	1,062	70
Flintshire County Council	2,690	180	1,037	20
Gwynedd Council	2,624	336	1,057	32
Isle of Anglesey County Council	1,329	226	920	0
Wrexham County Borough Council	2,295	97	316	464

NOTE 21 – RELATED PARTIES (continued)

Members

Members of the Joint Committee have an influence over the Joint Committee's financial and operating policies.

Members have declared an interest or relationship (as defined) in companies or businesses which may have dealings with the Joint Committee. A breakdown of the payments made to these companies under this heading during 2021/22 and balances as at 31 March 2022 is as follows:

Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
£'000	£'000	£'000
154	209	27

The figures are based on information received in respect of Councillors' returns.

Officers

The Joint Committee's Senior Officer has declared as required and where appropriate an interest or relationship (as defined) in companies, voluntary, charitable, or public bodies which receive payments from the Joint Committee. During 2021/22 no payments were made or owed by the Joint Committee for the related bodies.

NOTE 22 – EXIT PACKAGES

There were no exit packages during 2021/22. There were two exit packages during 2020/21, the staff in question were on temporary contracts, but had service carried forward from their previous employment.

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22
£							£'000	£'000
0 - 20,000	1	0	0	0	1	0	8	0
20,001 - 40,000	1	0	0	0	1	0	34	0
Cyfanswm	2	0	0	0	2	0	42	0

NOTE 23 – PENSION SCHEMES ACCOUNTED FOR AS DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES

There are no teachers employed by the Joint Committee that are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

NOTE 24 – PENSION COSTS

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers and other employees, the Joint Committee makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Joint Committee has a commitment to make the payments. These need to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

GwE participates in two post-employment schemes:

- a) **The Local Government Pension Scheme** administered locally by Gwynedd Council. This is a funded defined benefit scheme based on final salary for service up to 31 March 2014 and based on a career average salary from 1 April 2014. The Joint Committee and the employees pay contributions into the fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.
- b) **Arrangements for the award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement.** This is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pensions payments as they eventually fall due.

The Gwynedd Pension Fund is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Pensions Committee of Gwynedd Council. Policy is determined in accordance with the Local Government Pensions Scheme Regulations. In the past the investment managers of the fund have been appointed by the Gwynedd Pension Fund Committee. As the investments are transferred to the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) the managers will be appointed by the partnership.

The principal risks to the Joint Committee from the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, structural changes to the scheme (such as large-scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of equity investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policies note to the General Fund.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The Joint Committee recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge it is required to make against Council Tax (via the Councils' contributions) is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the Joint General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

NOTE 24 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

Change in the Fair Value of Plan Assets, Defined Benefit Obligation and Net Liability	Period ended 31 March 2021			Period ended 31 March 2022		
	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fair Value of Plan Assets	17,622	0	17,622	23,243	0	23,243
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(25,926)	(25,926)	0	(35,616)	(35,616)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Opening Position at 1 April	17,622	(25,926)	(8,304)	23,243	(35,616)	(12,373)
Prior period pension adjustment**	(180)		(180)			
Adjusted Opening Position at 1 April	17,442	(25,926)	(8,484)	23,243	(35,616)	(12,373)
Service Cost						
Current Service Cost*	0	(1,137)	(1,137)	0	(1,750)	(1,750)
Past Service Costs (including curtailments)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Service Cost	0	(1,137)	(1,137)	0	(1,750)	(1,750)
Net interest						
Interest Income on Plan Assets	408	0	408	471	0	471
Interest Cost on Defined Benefit Obligation	0	(607)	(607)	0	(727)	(727)
Total Net Interest	408	(607)	(199)	471	(727)	(256)
Total Defined Benefit Cost Recognised in Profit/(Loss)	408	(1,744)	(1,336)	471	(2,477)	(2,006)
Cash flows						
Plan participants' contributions	279	(279)	0	293	(293)	0
Employer contributions	797	0	797	807	0	807
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Paid	(453)	453	0	(473)	473	0
Unfunded Benefits Paid	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expected Closing Position	18,473	(27,496)	(9,023)	24,341	(37,913)	(13,572)
Remeasurements						
Change in demographic assumptions	0	(434)	(434)	0	182	182
Change in financial assumptions	0	(7,950)	(7,950)	0	2,727	2,727
Other experience	0	264	264	0	(65)	(65)
Return on Assets excluding amounts included in net interest	4,770	0	4,770	1,672	0	1,672
Total remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income (OCI)	4,770	(8,120)	(3,350)	1,672	2,844	4,516
Fair Value of Employer Assets	23,243	0	23,243	26,013	0	26,013
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(35,616)	(35,616)	0	(35,069)	(35,069)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Closing Position at 31 March	23,243	(35,616)	(12,373)	26,013	(35,069)	(9,056)

* The current service cost includes an allowance for administration expenses of 0.5% of payroll.

** Adjustment to 2019/20 figures, following receipt of a revised report from Hymans for 2019/20.

NOTE 24 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

The Major Categories of Plan Assets as a Percentage of Total Plan Assets

The actuary has provided a detailed breakdown of Fund assets in accordance with the requirements of IAS19. This analysis distinguishes between the nature and risk of those assets, and to further break them down between those with a quoted price in an active market, and those that are not quoted. The asset split for Gwynedd Council is assumed to be in the same proportion to the Fund's asset allocation as at 31 December 2021. The split is shown in the table below. The actuary estimates the bid value of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2022 to be £2.734bn based on information provided by the Administering Authority and allowing for index returns where necessary. Only a portion of the Fund is relevant to the GwE.

Fair Value of Employer Assets

The asset values below are at bid value as required under IAS 19.

Asset Category	At 31 March 2021				At 31 March 2022			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets	Prices not quoted in Active Markets	Total		Quoted Prices in Active Markets	Prices not quoted in Active Markets	Total	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Equity Securities								
Consumer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Energy and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health and Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt Securities								
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private Equity								
All	0	1,445	1,445	6	0	1,466	1,466	6
Real Estate								
UK Property	0	1,843	1,843	8	0	2,231	2,231	9
Overseas Property	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Investment Funds and Unit Trusts								
Equities	0	14,892	14,892	64	0	16,532	16,532	64
Infrastructure	0	410	410	2	0	508	508	2
Other	0	4,519	4,519	19	0	5,195	5,195	20
Cash and Cash Equivalents								
All	134	0	134	1	81	0	81	0
Total	134	23,109	23,243	100	81	25,932	26,013	100

NOTE 24 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, life expectancy and salary levels. Life expectancy is based on fund-specific projections called VitaCurves with long-term improvement assumed to have already peaked and converging to 1.5% per annum.

Both the Gwynedd Pension Scheme and Discretionary Benefits liabilities have been estimated by Hymans Robertson, an independent firm of actuaries. Estimates for the Gwynedd Pension Fund were based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2021. The significant assumptions used by the actuary in the following table have had a significant impact on the values of the assets and liabilities as follows:

	31 March 2021	31 March 2022
Financial Assumptions	% p.a.	% p.a.
Pensions Increase Rate	2.85	3.20
Salary Increase Rate	3.15	3.50
Inflation Rate	2.85	3.20
Discount Rate	2.00	2.70
Long-term expected rate of return on all categories of assets	2.00	2.70
Take-up option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum		
for pre-April 2008 service	50	50
for post-April 2008 service	75	75
Mortality assumptions	Years	Years
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners		
Men	21.5	21.3
Women	23.9	23.7
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners		
Men	22.7	22.4
Women	25.9	25.7

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. In order to quantify the impact of a change in the financial assumptions used, the actuary has calculated and compared the value of the scheme liabilities as at 31 March 2022 on varying bases. The approach taken is consistent with that adopted to derive the IAS 19 figures provided in this note.

To quantify the uncertainty around life expectancy, the actuary has calculated the difference in cost to the Joint Committee of a one-year increase in life expectancy. For sensitivity purposes this is assumed to be an increase in the cost of benefits of broadly 3-5%. In practice the actual cost of a one-year increase in life expectancy will depend on the structure of the revised assumption (i.e. if improvements to survival rates predominantly apply at younger or older ages).

NOTE 24 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

The figures in the table below have been derived based on the membership profile of the Joint Committee as at 31 March 2019, the date of the most recent actuarial valuation. The approach taken in preparing the sensitivity analysis shown is consistent with that adopted in the previous year.

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme		
Change in assumption	Approximate increase to Defined Benefit Obligation	Approximate monetary amount
	31 March 2022	31 March 2022
	%	£'000
0.1% decrease in real discount rate	2	745
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4	1,403
0.1% increase in the salary increase rate	0	98
0.1% increase in the pension increase rate	2	641

The principal demographic assumption is the longevity assumption (i.e. member life expectancy). For sensitivity purposes, we estimate that a one-year increase in life expectancy would approximately increase the Employer's Defined Benefit Obligation by around 3-5%. In practice the actual cost of a one-year increase in life expectancy will depend on the structure of the revised assumption (i.e. if improvements to survival rates predominantly apply at younger or older ages).

Impact on the Joint Committee's Cash Flows

One of the objectives of the scheme is that employer contributions should be kept at as constant a rate as possible. Gwynedd Council has agreed a strategy with the fund's actuary to achieve a funding level of 100% over the next 17 years. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis.

The contributions paid by the Joint Committee are set by the Fund Actuary at each triennial valuation (the most recent being as at 31 March 2019), or at any other time as instructed to do so by the Administering Authority. The contributions payable over the period to 31 March 2021 are set out in the Rates and Adjustments certificate. For further details on the approach adopted to set contribution rates for the Joint Committee, please refer to the 2019 actuarial report dated 31 March 2020.

Information about the Defined Benefit Obligation

	Liability Split	
	31 March 2022	
	£'000	%
Active Members	22,052	62.9
Deferred Members	3,763	10.7
Pensioner Members	9,254	26.4
Total	35,069	100.0

The above figures are for funded obligations only and do not include unfunded pensioner liabilities. The durations are effective at the previous formal valuation as at 31 March 2019.

NOTE 24 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

Impact in Future Years

The total contribution expected to be made to the Local Government Pensions Scheme by the Joint Committee in the year to 31 March 2023 is £808k.

As the Actuary's report is based on estimates and due to timing issues, an adjustment of £8k has been made in 2021/22, (£191k in 2020/21), to bring the deficit in the Scheme based on the Actuarial figures in line with the liability related to the defined benefit pension schemes in the Balance Sheet. This variance has been treated as Actuarial Gains and Losses on Pension Assets and Liabilities and therefore has been included in the Liability related to the defined benefit Pension Schemes in the Balance Sheet.

NOTE 25 – PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT

As part of GwE's 21/22 accounts, figures from 20/21 accounts have been adjusted following a change in the treatment of one of GwE's sources of income. Following a review of the figures in question, it was confirmed that the value was material to GwE's accounts, and as a result a pror period adjustment have been made

There has been an adjustment to the accounts meaning that the income that GwE receives from the Education Workforce Council is now fully recognised in the financial year in which it is received. With any remaining income being allowed to transfer to usable reserves for the future. All the adjustments that have been made to figures 20/21 following the new treatment are detailed below. These figures are relevant

- a. The £139k corresponds to the difference between the income received in the year 20/21 by the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and what was originally reported on it. This value is the basis of the restatement.
- b. The £493k represents the income received by EWC up to 31 March 2020 which was dealt with as income received in advance, the new form of dealing with the income is fully in the year, with any income remaining contributing to the usable reserves meaning that an adjustment is needed to correct the starting point of the usable reserves as it was on 1 April 2020.
- c. The £632k is a combination of the two above, and this value is the income received by EWC up to 31 March 2021 which had not already been recognized as income in the year, but as a creditor and income in advance.

NOTE 25 – PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT (continued)

EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

	Net Expenditure to be Funded by Usable Reserve balances			Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	As previously stated 31 March 2021	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	As previously stated 31 March 2021
Income	(13,347)	(139)	(13,486)	(13,347)	(139)	(13,486)
Cost of Services	(100)	(139)	(239)	236	(139)	97
Surplus)/Deficit in Provision of Services	(100)	(139)	(239)	435	(139)	296
Opening Balance of Usable Reserves	(711)	(493)	(1,204)			
(Remaining)/Deficit on Usable Reserves in the year	(100)	(139)	(239)			
Closing Balance of Usable Reserves	(811)	(632)	(1,443)			

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	Gross Income			Net Expenditure		
	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	As previously stated 31 March 2021	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	As previously stated 31 March 2021
Income	(13,347)	(139)	(13,486)	(13,347)	(139)	(13,486)
Cost of Services	(13,347)	(139)	(13,486)	236	(139)	97
(Surplus)/Deficit in Provision of Services	(13,347)	(139)	(13,486)	435	(139)	296
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				3,976	(139)	3,837

NOTE 25 – PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT (continued)

STATEMENT OF THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES

	Total Usable Reserves			Reserves that cannot be used			Total Joint Committee Reserves		
	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	435	(139)	296				435	(139)	296
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	435	(139)	296				3,976	(139)	3,837
(Increase)/Net Decrease before Transfers to Usable Reserves	(100)	(139)	(239)				3,976	(139)	3,837
(Increase)/Decrease in 2020/21	(100)	(139)	(239)				3,976	(139)	3,837
Balance 31 March 2021 carried forward	(811)	(632)	(1,443)	12,472	1	12,473	11,661	(631)	11,030

NOTE 25 – PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT (continued)**THE BALANCE SHEET**

	As previously stated 1 April 2020	Restatement	Restated 1 April 2020
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,557	(1)	2,556
Current Assets	3,033	(1)	3,032
Grants Received in Advance	(502)	493	(9)
Current Liabilities	(2,414)	493	(1,921)
Asedau Net	(7,685)	492	(7,193)
Usable Reserves	(711)	(493)	(1,204)
Unusable Reserves	8,396	1	8,397
Total Reserves	7,685	(492)	7,193

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
Advance Grant Receipts	(1,639)	631	(1,008)
Current Commitments	(5,756)	631	(5,125)
Net Assets	(11,661)	631	(11,030)
Usable Reserves	(811)	(632)	(1,443)
Reserves that cannot be used	12,472	1	12,473
Total Reserves	11,661	(631)	11,030

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
(Surplus)/Net Deficit on Provision of Services	435	(139)	296
Adjustments to the surplus or net deficit on provision of services for non-financial movements (creditors, debtors and pension)	(3,837)	138	(3,699)
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities	(3,402)	(1)	(3,403)
(Increase)/Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(3,402)	(1)	(3,403)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	(2,557)	1	(2,556)

NOTE 9 – TRANSFER TO/OF USABLE RESERVES**9b. Earmarked Reserves**

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
Balance 31 March 2021	0	632	632

NOTE 25 – PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT (continued)

NOTE 15 – RESERVES THAT CANNOT BE USED

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
Accumulated Absence Account	(99)	(1)	(100)

NOTE 15 – RESERVES THAT CANNOT BE USED (continued)

Accumulated Absence Account

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
Balance 1st April	(92)	(1)	(93)
Balance 31st March	(99)	(1)	(100)

NOTE 16 – CASH FLOW STATEMENT: ADJUSTMENTS TO THE NET SURPLUS OR DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR NON-CASH MOVEMENTS

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	(3,342)	138	(3,204)
Total	(3,837)	138	(3,699)

NOTE 20 – GRANT INCOME

20a.

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
Grants and Contributions from another Government (Education Workforce Council)	276	138	414
Total	13,347	138	13,485

NOTE 20 – GRANT INCOME (continued)

20b.

	As previously stated 31 March 2021	Restatement	Restated 31 March 2021
Education Workforce Council	631	(631)	0
Total	1,639	(631)	1,008

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

This statement meets the requirement to produce a Statement of Internal Control pursuant to Section 5 of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018).

Part 1: SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1.1 GwE was established as a Joint Committee to be a regional school effectiveness and improvement service by the 6 North Wales local authorities in 2013 by undertaking the functions that are detailed in an agreement between the Joint Committee and the authorities. In the agreement, the Councils have agreed to work together in a partnering relationship to establish a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service to be accountable to, and undertake the statutory functions of the Councils in respect of school improvement and effectiveness.

1.2 The vision was to establish a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement service to be accountable to, and undertake the statutory responsibilities of, the six local North Wales Authorities in respect of the duties to monitor; challenge; provide support services for curriculum continued professional development and management of schools, and in addition provide services that can be commissioned by schools and local authorities.

1.3 GwE is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

1.4 In discharging this overall responsibility, GwE is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk and adequate and effective financial management.

Part 2: THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which GwE is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authorities that are part of GwE to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

2.3 The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of GwE's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

2.4 The governance framework described above has been in place at GwE for the year ended 31 March 2022 and up to the date of approval of the 2021/22 statement of accounts.

Part 3: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

3.1 The GwE Management Board monitors matters of governance continuously in a disciplined manner, raising a wider awareness of these, and promoting a wider ownership of the Annual Governance Statement.

3.2 To demonstrate good governance, GwE must show that it is complying with the core (and supporting) principles contained within the Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA / Solace, 2016). This statement has been prepared in accordance with those principles.

3.3 An outline is given of the Governance Areas and GwE’s arrangements to deal with these, and the effectiveness of these arrangements, in the remainder of this section of the Annual Governance Statement.

3.4 For each governance principle, an evaluation has been made based on a combination of:

- A review of relevant reports & documents prepared during the year;
- The review of progress made against the Business Plan;
- Discussion with and based on comments received from officers, SLT & the Management Board.
- Continuous reflection on the effectiveness of the work, both internally & externally, i.e. Estyn, Steve Munby, Education Development Trust, Professor Graham Donaldson, Scottish Government and other Regional Consortia.

3.5 Since March 2020, to the date of publication of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts, GwE has been responding to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Where this has had a significant and visible impact on GwE’s governance arrangements, this has been noted below.

Principle A	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

- GwE follows the host authority (Gwynedd Council) operating rules, which details how decisions need to be made and the procedures to be followed to ensure they are efficient, transparent and available to local people.
- The GwE Inter Authority Agreement have agreed to the following principles of good governance:
 - Openness and Trust
 - Commitment and Drive
 - Skills and Creativity
 - Effective Relationships
 - Developing and Adaptive
 - Reputation and Standing
 - Reasonableness of Decision Making
 - Necessary Consents
 - Members and Officers’ Commitments

- The voting members of the GwE Joint Committee are governed by the Code of Conduct of their relevant Council. The Codes of Conduct for Councillors and employees within the Constitution of the host authority are built upon the principles of openness, transparency and honesty.
- The service's vision, values and behavior were reviewed during the year. As part of the Regional Business Plan the following service and personal values are embedded within the service and have been set to enable the service to achieve the vision & objectives for delivery. These include:
 - Respect;
 - Trust;
 - Wellbeing;
 - Innovate and inspire;
 - Support and collaborate;
 - Cymru a'r Gymraeg
- GwE, supported by the host authority, has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and decision making is effective.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all meetings of the Joint Committee during 2021/22 have been held virtually via Zoom. Guidance was produced for Members in relation to Attending Virtual Meetings.

Principle B	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

- The Joint Committee meetings are open meetings and all papers are published on the host authority (Gwynedd Council) website & the GwE website.
- The Joint Committee meetings have a forward calendar of meetings set out for the year ahead.
- GwE is a partnership organisation, especially with the Local Authorities and even more so during the pandemic and in moving forward.
- Full stakeholder engagement via various forums both within & outside the formal governance structure.
- During 2021/22, GwE have worked effectively with Welsh Government on policies and continuity of learning. GwE has also worked consistently with the other regions and with Estyn in preparing guidance and resources. It has also strengthened the working relationship between those parties with positive professional exchanges, ensuring that the stakeholders are getting quality advice and resources.
- GwE encourages stakeholder engagement and feedback via a broad range of communication and engagement methods. Examples include: attendance at Headteacher Federation meetings; cluster groups; weekly bulletin; social media etc.
- One of the main strengths of work across North Wales is the consistent messaging from the six local authorities through their political education portfolio holders and directors working with GwE to have one common message for the schools in North Wales. This consistency of messaging has been not only welcomed by schools but also by teacher unions and non-teaching unions who welcomed the clarity of messaging and support for their staff.

- GwE have produced a series of reports that we have shared with the Management Board and the Joint Committee during the year. These reports include the views of schools, staff and local authorities on the effectiveness of regional practice. Each report describes the quality of the provision and identifies areas for improvement to drive the learning agenda forward.
 - Effective collegiate and collective regional approach between the six local authorities and GwE.
 - Joint working has ensured strong governance and regional consistency in support, messaging and guidance given to schools.
 - Establish clear lines of communication with key stakeholders.
 - Reports for the Joint Committee
 - Meetings with Management Board and Education Portfolio Holders - key strategic and political decisions.
 - Share regular updates and ensure contact and support.
 - Share information, key messages and work streams with LAs / Elected Members.
 - Update key stakeholders on various GwE matters.
 - Share regional information and ensure consistent messages.
 - Ensure consistency as regards national and regional information.
 - Ensure effective communication.
 - Prepare and co-ordinate regional meetings, for example the Management Board and Joint Committee.
 - Liaise with key stakeholders.
- Teamwork, joint working and collaboration has also been at the heart of the work with schools. All schools in the region are part of a cluster or a forum where they can come together to discuss operational issues as well as sharing best practice. This joint work facilitated by GwE staff has been very successful and sets a very strong infrastructure in place for future work and working relationship across the region.
- Prior to the COVID pandemic agreement was reached on a regional set of principles for peer engagement. For this purpose, a peer review model was distributed (the Schools Partnership Programme [SPP]) to stakeholders, approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee. Continuous training and support were provided for all GwE SIAs on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. There is a programme in place to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and Referral Units

Principle C	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

- GwE’s overall vision is reflected in the 3 year business plan & is further strengthened in the annual business plan.
- The regional priorities and areas for improvement are based firmly on the findings of our internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews on our current practice and direction of travel, and through consultation with headteachers and the Local Authorities. The Business Plan also addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE. Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser

- The clear and robust accountability framework in a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.
- There are detailed self-evaluation arrangements. Plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact. Staff on all levels fully understand their responsibility for continued improvement and accountability. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.
- Self-evaluation is a strong feature in GwE and the self-evaluation process is cyclical and ongoing. Great emphasis is placed on accountability and continuous review, and there is consistent emphasis on progress in line with priorities.
- A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through increasingly effective use of data to identify key priorities, the link between the business planning process and decisions regarding financial planning is strengthened as the work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.
- A formal framework is in place to assess the wider value for money provided by GwE. The judgement is consistent across all stakeholders on how to measure the value for money of GwE activities within the structure and objectives of the business plan.

Principle D	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

- GwE has an agreed Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) that sets out clearly how the Joint Committee operates and how decisions are made and procedures need to be followed to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability.
- The Joint Committee is a joint committee constituted by the Councils under section 101(5) and 102(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000. Meetings of the Joint Committee are subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 including the provisions on access to information and meetings held in public.
- Members of the Joint Committee and the public have the full benefit of access to the Joint Committee papers and supporting information.
- The Joint Committee meets a minimum of three times a year.
- The IAA identifies the following two categories of decisions together with the means by which they will be taken:
 - ‘Joint Committee Matter’ – being a matter which is to be decided upon at a quorate (3 voting members) meetings of the Joint Committee by those present and entitled to vote and any such decision will be binding on all the Councils;
 - ‘Matter Reserved To The Councils’ – being a matter which will have to be referred to each Council for decision and, for the avoidance of doubt, any such matter will not be dealt with by the Joint Committee (as the case may be) until the matter has been determined by all

of the Councils. If the Councils fail to reach the same decision in respect of such matter then the matter shall be referred under Dispute Resolution as a dispute for resolution.

- The terms of reference and delegated powers of the Joint Committee are to promote joint working in the delivery of the Service through:
 - facilitating constructive partnership working;
 - engaging with key interested bodies and stakeholders when appropriate;
 - carrying out such other activities calculated to facilitate, or which are conducive to the successful delivery of the Service;
 - to oversee the management of the Service and ensure that the Service is provided and performs in accordance with the expectations of the Partner Authorities as reflected in the Full Business Case, Inter Authority Agreement and agreed Annual Business and Commissioning Plans;
 - to approve the budget for the Service on an annual basis;
 - to approve the business plan for the Service on an annual basis;
 - to monitor and manage the risks associated with the Service;
 - to ratify requests from the Service for additional budget funding from individual Councils;
 - to approve the staff structure of the Service;
 - to appoint the Managing Director of the Service;
 - to decide on disciplinary action against the Managing Director;
 - where required, to determine or arrange for the determination of appeals in relation to Human Resources matters.

- The Joint Committee is supported by a Management Board with the following terms of reference:
 - Co-construct the annual Business Plan, including the individual appendices to identify specific requirements at individual LA Level;
 - Monitor progress against the priorities and outcomes identified in the Business Plan on a regular basis;
 - Have arrangements in place to make sure that GwE financial controls and systems are robust;
 - Provide professional advice to the joint committee with regard to the appointment of the Managing Director;
 - Regularly report to the joint committee.

- During the COVID period GwE has continually reflected on the effectiveness of the work and have re-purposed several times during the COVID pandemic to provide services and support to all its school communities. Both internal and external resources have been used to ensure that we have a balanced perspective on the quality of the work. This has included working with the Education Development Trust Steve Munby, OECD, Scottish Government and other Regional Consortia to develop the organisation and plan our future infrastructure.

Principle E	Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
Assessment	Assured

- GwE has re focused several times during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, communication & engagement within the leadership structure of GwE has been regular and clear. Key strategic and political decisions were made with clarity and confidence. This resulted in consistent messaging from the local authorities through their political education portfolio holders and directors working with GwE to have one common message for the schools in North Wales. This consistency of messaging has been not only welcomed by schools but also by teacher unions and non-teaching unions who welcomed the clarity of messaging and support for their staff.
- The Education Portfolio Holders have been given numerous briefings & kept up to date on all developments via reports & verbal updates.
- Staff in GwE have adapted their work over the last year in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities during the COVID pandemic. During this very difficult period, GwE have kept true to their vision and values as an organisation that is continually learning.
- The OECD's transversal themes of Trust, Thinking together, Time and Technology have remained at the heart of the work with schools and partners.
- The service in its entirety has re focused several times during this period to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders. The ability to be flexible and agile and to work effectively together in different teams, often cross sector, has had significant impact on organisational behaviour and external perception. At the heart of the refocusing has been the need to ensure that the well-being of school leaders, their staff and learners is paramount to the decision-making and ensuring that the right level of support, operational or professional, can be directed accurately by the service.
- Weekly staff meetings have contributed to a consistency of approach in ensuring common messages to school teachers and leaders. There has been a strong emphasis on modelling appropriate and supportive behaviour throughout the period.
- GwE has worked on the strengths of individuals within the team and redeployed them where they have provided the maximum impact in their roles in supporting individual local authorities, schools, clusters, subject and phase networks. This bespoke provision of support based on strong principles of collaboration, exchanging and sharing and developing the best practice is a key learning principle that we will continue to develop in the next stages of evolving the service.
- The consistency and quality of challenge and support to schools is good. Regular training, support and discussions ensure that Supporting Improvement Advisers' knowledge and understanding of national and local developments, and the implications of this on their roles, is good.
- Quality Assurance processes continue to develop and evolve in line with national developments and principles. The annual Professional Review process has continued during the year.
- Messages and information are communicated clearly and on a regular basis to all employees. Generic, purposeful and effective support programmes are offered. Full and sector team meetings offer regular opportunities for collaboration, consultation and contributing to discussions and decisions regarding GwE's direction of work during a period of considerable change.
- GwE has also worked from the beginning of spring 2021 with Professor Graham Donaldson to develop its own staff to effectively support schools with the new curriculum.

Principle F	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

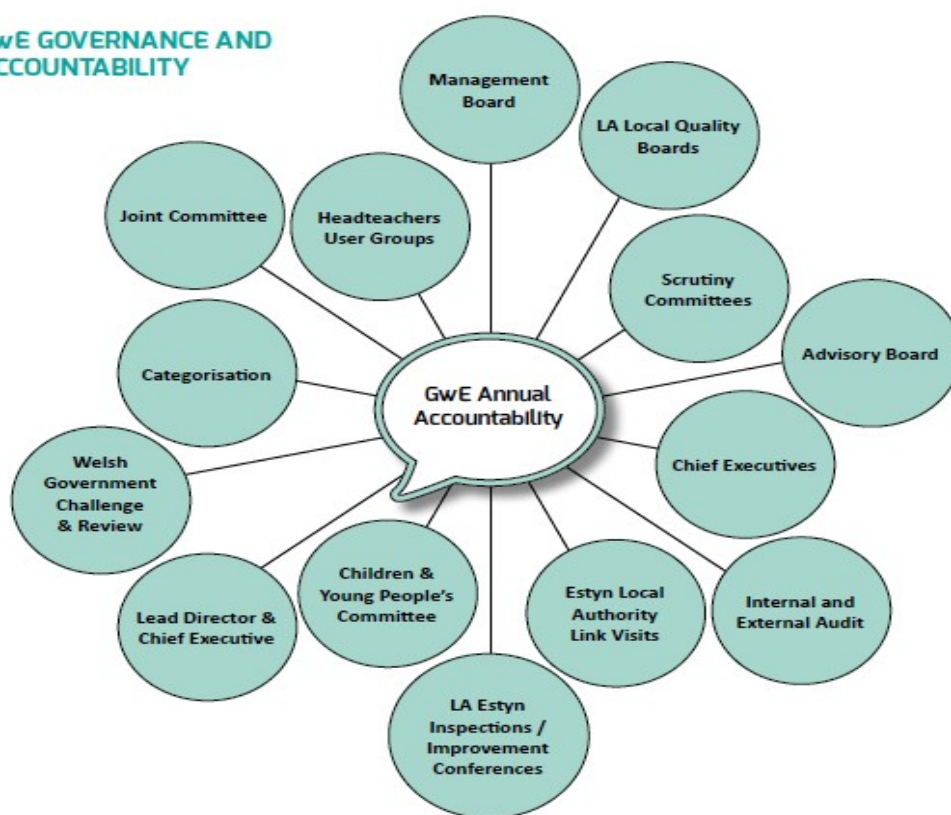
- The clear and robust accountability framework in a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.
- There are detailed self-evaluation arrangements. Plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact. Staff on all levels fully understand their responsibility for continued improvement and accountability.
- Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.
- The self-evaluation process is cyclical and ongoing. Great emphasis is placed on accountability and continuous review, and there is consistent emphasis on progress in line with priorities.
- The consortium has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation on financial arrangements is effective, and GwE staff, the host local authority and Joint Committee all review the core funding and grant expenditure on a regular basis.
- A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through increasingly effective use of data to identify key priorities, the link between the business planning process and decisions regarding financial planning is strengthened as the work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.
- A formal framework is in place to assess the wider value for money provided by GwE. The judgement is consistent across all stakeholders on how to measure the value for money of GwE activities within the structure and objectives of the business plan.
- There are rigorous and comprehensive arrangements in place to accurately identify and manage risks on a local, regional and national level. The risk register is a live document, which is updated on a regular basis in order to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is reviewed every month in a senior leadership meeting and the Management Board and the Joint Committee review the register on a quarterly basis.
- Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and meet the outcomes as intended.

Principle G	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

- The Joint Committee meetings are open meetings and all papers are published on the host authority (Gwynedd Council) website & the GwE website.
- GwE has annual accountability to various stakeholders throughout the year as can be seen in the following diagram.

GwE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



- GwE is a 'relevant body' which must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and system of internal control. In order to comply with these statutory requirements, the internal audit service of the host authority is provided to GwE in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards ("PSIAS"). The Standards are relevant to every internal audit service provider for the public sector, whether internal, shared service or external.
- The following process for identifying the need for internal audit and acting on the recommendations has been agreed:
 - Identify the need for audit in specific areas. This work plan will be developed where possible through consideration of risk registers, performance reports, business plans etc.
 - Meeting between the host authority's Audit Manager and GwE's Managing Director.
 - To agree the audit program for the year with the Management Board.
 - Content of the programme to be shared with the Joint Committee.

- The Audit Unit of the host authority to conduct the audits.
 - Share draft audit reports with relevant GwE management for accuracy and agree actions to address any risks.
 - The host authority's Audit Unit to send audit reports to GwE's Managing Director and relevant managers.
 - Relevant GwE officers to act on agreed actions (administrative issues not requiring Joint Committee input).
 - GwE Managing Director to share individual audit reports with Management Board.
 - The host authority's Audit Manager submits an annual report to the Joint Committee on any audits carried out during the year.
 - Relevant GwE officers to act on Joint Committee decisions.
 - GwE officers to report progress as necessary to the Joint Committee.
- GwE has succeeded in managing and evaluating itself regularly and as a result external accountability bodies opinions have been positive.

Part 4: SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

4.1 The above assessment indicates that there are no issues which are a significant governance issue.

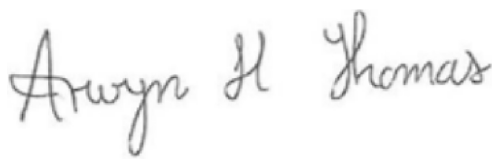
4.2 Each of the areas of governance has been reviewed in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and we are satisfied that GwE has been able to modify its working arrangements in order to cope with the crisis.

Part 5: GOVERNANCE MATTERS IDENTIFIED

5.1 No governance issues were identified in 2021/2022.

Part 6: OPINION

We are of the opinion that the governance arrangements described above offer assurance that our governance arrangements work well overall. However, we intend to take measures to deal with the matters noted above during next year in order to improve our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these measures will deal with the need to improve as identified in the effectiveness review, and will monitor their operation as part of the next annual review.




GwE Lead Officer

Date: 13/07/2022

ARWYN LLOYD THOMAS

GwE MANAGING DIRECTOR

GwE Joint Committee



Chair of GwE Joint Committee

Date: 13/07/2022

COUNCILLOR JULIE FALLON

Glossary

Actuarial Gains and Losses – For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial surpluses that arise because events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses) or the actuarial assumptions have changed.

Asset – Items of worth that are measurable in terms of value.

- A current asset will be consumed or will cease to have material value within the next financial year.
- A non-current asset provides benefit to the Council and to the services it provides for a period of more than one year.

Balances (or Reserves) – These represent accumulated funds available to the Council. Some balances (reserve) may be earmarked for specific purposes for funding future defined initiatives or meeting identified risks or liabilities.

Capital Expenditure – Expenditure on the procurement of a non-current asset, which will be used in providing services beyond the current accounting period or expenditure that adds to, and not merely maintains, value of an existing non-current asset.

CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting) – The Professional Institute for accountants working in the public services.

Creditors – Amounts owed by the Council for work done, goods received or services rendered, for which payments have not been made by the end of that accounting period.

Current Service Cost – The increase in the present value of a defined benefit pension scheme's liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.

Debtors – Amount owed to the Council for works done, goods received or service rendered within the accounting period, but for which payment has not been received by the end of that accounting period.

Defined Benefit Scheme – A pension or other retirement benefit scheme other than a defined contribution scheme.

Defined Contribution Scheme – A pension or other retirement benefit scheme into which an employee pays regular fixed contributions as an amount or as a percentage of pay, and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have sufficient assets to pay all employees benefits relating to the employee Service in the current and prior periods.

Fair Value – The price that would be received to sell an asset, or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Financial Instruments – Any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another. The term covers both financial assets and financial liabilities, from straightforward trade receivables (invoices owing) and trade payables (invoices owed) to complex derivatives and embedded derivatives.

General Fund – This is the main revenue fund of the Council and it includes the net cost of all services financed by local taxpayers and Government grants.

Impairment – A reduction in the carrying value of a fixed asset below its carrying value (due to obsolescence, damage or an adverse change in the statutory environment).

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) – A suite of accounting standards used across the world. They must be applied by all reporting entities to all financial statements in order to provide a true and fair view of the entity’s financial positions, and a standardised method of comparison with financial statements of the other entities.

Inventories – Amounts of unused or unconsumed stocks held in expectation of future use. They are categorised as goods or other assets purchased for resale, consumable stores, raw materials and Components, Products and Services in intermediate stages of completion and finished goods.

Investment Property – Property that is held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation, or both.

Liability – Amounts due to individuals or organisations which will have to be paid at some time in the future.

Provision – A liability that is of uncertain timing or amount which is to be settled by transfer of economic benefits.

Related Parties – Parties are considered to be related if one party has the ability to Control the other party or exercise significant influence over the other party in making financial or operating decisions.

Reserves – An amount set aside for a specific purpose in one year and carried forward to meet future obligations.

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of GwE Joint Committee

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's financial statements comprise the Expenditure and Funding Analysis, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2022 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the GwE Joint Committee in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the GwE Joint Committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Joint Committee and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the statement of accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the GwE Joint Committee's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to GwE Joint Committee's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in management override.
- Obtaining an understanding of the GwE Joint Committee’s framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the GwE Joint Committee operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the GwE Joint Committee.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the GwE Joint Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the GwE Joint Committee’s controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor’s report.

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of GwE Joint Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales’ Code of Audit Practice.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
November 2022

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Audit of Accounts Report – GwE Joint Committee

Audit year: 2021-22

Date issued: November 2022

Document reference: 3247A2022

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at infoofficer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

Contents

We intend to issue an unqualified audit report on your Accounts. There are some issues to report to you prior to their approval.

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Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2021-22 accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with the Head of Finance and his team.
- 3 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of 'materiality'. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 4 We set this level at £441,000 for this year's audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, as follows:
 - Related Party Disclosures £10,000
 - Senior Officer Remuneration £1,000
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year's audit.
- 7 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves; and our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. We have previously notified you of a potential threat to auditor independence and objectivity arising with the Audit Manager who is an acquaintance of a former member of the Joint Committee who departed following the May elections. We confirm that the planned safeguards to mitigate the potential threat set out in our Audit Plan have operated as intended.

Impact of COVID-19 on this year's audit

- 8 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a continuing impact on how our audit has been conducted. We summarise in **Exhibit 1** the main impacts. Other than where we specifically make recommendations, the detail in **Exhibit 1** is provided for information purposes only to help you understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this year's audit process.

Exhibit 1 – impact of COVID-19 on this year’s audit

Timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We received the draft accounts on 30 May 2022 as planned.• We expect your audit report to be signed in November.
Electronic signatures	Given ongoing remote working, we will use electronic signatures for the approval and certification of this year’s accounts.
Audit evidence	<p>The audit of the financial statements was undertaken remotely again this year by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• holding Microsoft Teams meetings with officers throughout the audit to discuss progress and emerging issues; and• utilising our remote access to enable the audit team to access the Joint Committee and the hosting authority’s financial records and systems.

Proposed audit opinion

- 9 We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year’s accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation based on that set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 10 We issue a ‘qualified’ audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 11 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards along with confirmation of other specific information you have provided to us during our audit.
- 12 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Significant issues arising from the audit

Uncorrected misstatements

13 There are no misstatements identified in the accounts, which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

14 There were initially misstatements in the accounts that have now been corrected by management. However, we believe that these should be drawn to your attention, and they are set out with explanations in **Appendix 3**.

Other significant issues arising from the audit

15 In the course of the audit, we consider a number of matters relating to the accounts and report any significant issues arising to you. There were no significant issues arising this year.

Appendix 1

Final Letter of Representation

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Representations regarding the 2021-22 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of the GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2022 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith; and
- the design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and

- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the GwE Joint Committee and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements;
- our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others;
- our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements; and
- the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by the Joint Committee

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by the GwE Joint Committee on 23 November 2022.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

Dewi Aeron Morgan

Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

23 November 2022

Signed by:

Councillor Julie Fallon

Chair of GwE Joint Committee

23 November 2022

Appendix 2

Proposed Audit Report

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of GwE Joint Committee

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's financial statements comprise the Expenditure and Funding Analysis, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2022 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the GwE Joint Committee in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt

on the GwE Joint Committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Joint Committee and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the statement of accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the GwE Joint Committee's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to GwE Joint Committee's policies and procedures concerned with:

- identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in management override.
 - Obtaining an understanding of the GwE Joint Committee's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the GwE Joint Committee operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the GwE Joint Committee.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the GwE Joint Committee and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the GwE Joint Committee's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of GwE Joint Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
November 2022

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Appendix 3

Summary of Corrections Made

During our audit, we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention due to their relevance to your responsibilities over the financial reporting process.

Exhibit 2: summary of corrections made

Correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£0	<p>Note 18b – Officers’ Remuneration</p> <p>Amendment required to the number of staff disclosed per salary banding, to include all relevant staff to comply with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations. An additional four individuals were added to the disclosure note for 2021-22 as follows:</p> <p>Band £60,000 - £64,999 from 12 to 15 Band £65,000 - £69,999 from 8 to 9</p>	To be compliant with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations.
<p>£718,000 in 2021-22</p> <p>£631,000 in 2020-21</p>	<p>Note 20b – Grant Income</p> <p>Amendment required to remove the Education Workforce Council grant from ‘Grants and Contributions Received in Advance’ as there are no grant conditions attached to this grant. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting requires such grants to be recognised in full in the CIES in the year the grant is received, with any remaining unspent grant at year end transferred to a reserve to be utilised in future years. The correction also resulted in a material prior period adjustment. The correction also affected the primary financial statements and various notes. An additional disclosure note (Note 25) has been included to capture all the adjustments made.</p>	To be compliant with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2021-22.
<p>£29,000</p> <p>Disclose £154,000 not £125,000</p>	<p>Note 21 – Related Parties</p> <p>Amendment required to disclose the correct figure for the ‘Payments Made’ in relation to members’ declared interests, or relationship in</p>	To ensure that the correct value of Payments Made is disclosed.

companies or business, which may have dealings with the GwE Joint Committee.
This correction is self-contained within Note 21.

There have also been several other narrative amendments as a result of our work.



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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.



MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	23 November 2022
TITLE	GwE Budget 2022/23 – 2nd Quarter Review
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE’s budget for the 2022/23 financial year. • The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.
RECCOMENDATION	To accept the report.
AUTHOR	GwE Managing Director and Gwynedd Council Head of Finance.

1. CONCLUSION

- 1.1 Based on second quarter expenditure and income and estimates based on management explanations, this review forecasts a net underspend of (£91,800) by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.
- 1.2 The following section of this report explains the reasons behind the main variations predicted.

2. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

2.1 Employees:

Quarter 2: underspend (£46,552) Quarter 1: underspend (£84,046)

The underspend is due to staff turnover, which includes staff on secondment and on maternity leave, along with recruitment problems in general. A reduction in the anticipated underspend was seen, as the situation is much clearer following the start of the academic year, with less of a reliance on external grants to contribute towards the costs of various core staff.

2.2 Building:

Quarter 2: overspend £25,367 Quarter 1: overspend £25,367

Rent from the use of GwE buildings is dependent on income from schools, authorities and internal use by projects that are funded through grants. These activities restarted in September, and so it is anticipated that this income stream will improve during the year, but a lack of income for the period from April to August will lead to overspending.

2.3 Travel

Quarter 2: underspend (£59,759) Quarter 1: underspend (£46,771)

After being suspended during the Covid-19 crisis, visits to schools have now resumed. However, new ways of working have generally led to more virtual meetings, and therefore less travel.

3. UNDERSPEND FUND

3.1 At the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year, the fund totalled £437,503.

3.2 The fund total at the end of 2021/22 is estimated at £529,303 having taken into account the underspend anticipated above.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: GwE Budget 2022/23 – 2nd Quarter Review.

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective

Statutory Finance Officer:

Co-author of the report

GwE JOINT COMMITTEE - NORTH WALES COUNCILS - Budget Review 2022/23 : Second Quarter July - September 2022

	Quarter 1 Budget £	Quarter 2 Adjustments £	Revised Budget £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net Quarter 2 £
Expenditure					
Employees					
Salaries					
- Management, Brokerage, Standards and Administration	914,159		914,159	836,429	(77,730)
- Supporting Improvement Advisers	4,029,640		4,029,640	3,914,252	(115,388)
- Staff on Secondment	155,661		155,661	155,661	0
- Transferred against 'Specific Projects'	(1,835,832)		(1,835,832)	(1,689,266)	146,566
Training, advertising and other employee costs	44,070		44,070	44,070	0
Building					
Rent (includes services)	179,274		179,274	179,274	0
'Specific Projects' usage of offices recharge	(60,880)		(60,880)	(35,513)	25,367
Travel					
Travel Costs	142,041		142,041	82,282	(59,759)
Supplies and Services					
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	75,520		75,520	65,520	(10,000)
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	17,070		17,070	17,070	0
Audit Fees	11,853		11,853	11,853	0
Brokerage	298,745		298,745	298,745	0
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs					
Legal	5,925		5,925	5,925	0
Human Resources	10,160		10,160	10,160	0
Finance	43,933		43,933	43,933	0
Information Technology	48,591		48,591	48,591	0
National Model Commitments	469,948		469,948	469,948	0
Specific Projects					
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	10,509,734	299,226	10,808,960	10,808,960	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	1,125,850		1,125,850	1,125,850	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	100,000		100,000	100,000	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	195,847	61,271	257,118	257,118	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	346,769		346,769	346,769	0
ALN Transformation Grant	11,346		11,346	11,346	0
Fin-Ed Pathfinder Project	10,625		10,625	10,625	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	207,720		207,720	207,720	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	210,900		210,900	210,900	0
Total Expenditure	17,268,669	360,497	17,629,166	17,538,222	(90,944)

	Quarter 1 Budget £	Quarter 2 Adjustments £	Revised Budget £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net Quarter 2 £
Income					
Core Service Contributions					
- Anglesey Council (21/22: 10.16% - 22/23: 10.14%)	(445,643)		(445,643)	(445,643)	0
- Gwynedd Council (21/22: 17.63% - 22/23: 17.59%)	(772,960)		(772,960)	(772,960)	0
- Conwy Council (21/22: 15.28% - 22/23: 15.26%)	(670,688)		(670,688)	(670,688)	0
- Denbighshire Council (21/22: 15.36% - 22/23: 15.48%)	(680,010)		(680,010)	(680,010)	0
- Flintshire Council (21/22: 22.72% - 22/23: 22.67%)	(996,049)		(996,049)	(996,049)	0
- Wrexham Council (21/22: 18.86% - 22/23: 18.86%)	(828,867)		(828,867)	(828,867)	0
Specific Projects					
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	(10,509,734)	(299,226)	(10,808,960)	(10,808,960)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	(1,125,850)		(1,125,850)	(1,125,850)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	(100,000)		(100,000)	(100,000)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	(195,847)	(61,271)	(257,118)	(257,118)	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(346,769)		(346,769)	(346,769)	0
ALN Transformation Grant	(11,346)		(11,346)	(11,346)	0
Fin-Ed Pathfinder Project	(10,625)		(10,625)	(10,625)	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	(207,720)		(207,720)	(207,720)	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	(210,900)		(210,900)	(210,900)	0
Income from Secondments	(155,661)		(155,661)	(155,661)	0
Other Income	0		0	(856)	(856)
Total Income	(17,268,669)	(360,497)	(17,629,166)	(17,630,022)	(856)
Total Income over Expenditure	0	0	0	(91,800)	(91,800)
Memorandum -					
The Underspend Fund					
				Fund balance as at 1 April 2022	(437,503)
				Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2022/23	(91,800)
				Less - Use of the Fund	0
				Fund balance as at 31 March 2023	(529,303)

Agenda Item 7

GwE: Joint Committee 23/11/22



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Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2022

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: GwE Regional Business Plan 2022-2023 - Quarter 2 Monitoring Report

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the Quarter 2 Monitoring Report - GwE Regional Business Plan 2022-2023 to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Business Plan sets out our vision, values and behaviours and the priority areas for improvement across the region.

2.2 Our strategic priorities recognise the present regional and national priorities. The main areas for development were identified through the service's self-evaluation process.

2.3 Progress against the Regional Business Plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee. Attached is the monitoring report for quarter 2.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 The Managing Director and Chair of the Management Board have responsibility for delivering the Regional Plan, as accountable officers. The Joint Committee is ultimately accountable for delivering the plan.

3.2 The GwE Business Planning Framework ensures clarity and strategic harmony in achieving priorities locally, regionally and nationally. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the Business Plan will be reported through our governance groups.

3.3 Detailed service plans underpin these priorities, which note the support and provision available to all schools in the region. How and when each priority will be achieved is outlined, and expectations set in terms of next steps in realising the reform journey.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve and accept the monitoring report for quarter 2.

4.2 To decide whether there are any aspects they wish to discuss further in future meetings.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within current financial resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board and Joint Committee.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Quarter 2 monitoring report

Appendix 2 - Regional Data for quarter 2

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I am satisfied that the update is a fair reflection of the situation. I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.



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GwE Business Plan 2022-2023 Quarter 2 Progress Report



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REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2022-2023

Progress report for Quarter 2

OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

Support for schools in commencing the Curriculum for Wales with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles, evidence-based practice and action research. Further development of formative assessment

In-house formative assessment training for SIAs has resulted in individual SIAs being well prepared to support individual schools and clusters.

During the GwE 'Inspiring Leadership' Headteacher conference in September 2022, workshops were held by SIAs, including two with focus on pedagogy– 'Formative Assessment across the continuum - deepening the roots' and 'Planning for the Principles of Progression using Solo Taxonomy strategies'. Schools who attended the workshops had the opportunity to review formative assessment practices in light of recent research and messages shared. They also gained an understanding of SOLO taxonomy and its potential for teaching and learner progression. Interest has been generated in SOLO taxonomy in schools with follow up sessions requested.

Upskill GwE SIAs to be able to provide bespoke support to their schools with pedagogy, formative assessment the 4 purposes, assessment, planning and transition

In-house formative assessment training for all SIAs on principles and effective strategies has ensured that all SIAs are updated and well equipped and informed to be able to support schools with formative assessment development. An updated SIA support/ training/ research pack and resources has also been shared.

The Train the Trainer support for 15 GwE Secondary and 15 Primary Advisers from Mike Gershon has ensured that SIAs further developed their skills to present and manage workshops, in order to engage and develop teaching staff pedagogy skills. This will be repeated for more SIAs in the near future.

Assessment

Pupil progress tracker has been piloted, reviewed and fully developed and finalised in collaboration with key schools. Training in implementing this has been led this term for all SIAs to support their schools and clusters. Bespoke training is available for schools and clusters on request, and for all schools through a series of face to face training events across the region. The training has been very well received as the tracker meets what schools require currently. A number of schools and / or Alliances have shared their processes and tracking sheets as part of the regional training. As a result, a number of schools have been able to identify processes that would best fit their situation.

On-going support for schools in developing assessment has taken place, including sharing of successful practice, either bespoke by SIAs for schools and clusters, and LA staff where relevant, or through accessing on-line sessions delivered last term. SIAs have had access to these sessions in order to support their own clusters.

Partnership working with schools to develop professional dialogue has taken place on a bespoke basis, as well as key messages being shared through regional training. Schools having successful practice in this area have been identified and their practice shared.

Some schools are now fully implementing the Pupil Progress tracker and /or other tracking processes and are beginning to use this effectively to stimulate professional dialogue and track learning and achievement linked to the Curriculum for Wales. This will enhance learning and improve progression through improving communication and targeting support. Awareness has been raised about the usefulness and relevance of the tracker; this has underlined key messages about the Curriculum for Wales and underpinned principles.

Due to the upskilling of the workforce in assessment practice in the Curriculum for Wales, schools are aware of their

next steps and are further developing, designing and embedding assessment provision. This is making a key difference in improving schools' focus upon assessing learners holistically.

On-Entry Assessment

A regional session has been delivered and presentation shared with schools and SIAs on 'On Entry' Assessment arrangements for September 22, including strategies to make effective transitions and on entry assessments including observations against statutory requirements and one-page profiles. Key messages have been shared to aid transition into Nursery.

Transition

ITE students have been updated in planning for successful transition (GwE Keynote lecture and 2-hour workshop for 140 PGCE students in CaBan.)

Schools are beginning to develop new arrangements for cluster collaboration to support 3-16 progression.

The 'Pontio GwE Workshop' took place on 7/10/2022, focusing on successful transition in line with CfW. Two primary schools and the secondary were invited from all clusters and most clusters were present. Those who did not attend are in the process of being identified to target support needs.

Schools and clusters, and ITE teachers across the region have been upskilled in ways to support successful transition. Feedback from the workshop has been very positive and practical and next steps have been planned by each cluster which should prove impactful.

The next steps following the Pontio GwE workshop are as follows:

- Provide information to schools which clarifies new transition plan requirements and arrangements under the Curriculum for Wales, with key message from the workshop as 'mop up' for very few clusters (regionally) who did not attend
- Support clusters in transition of pedagogy pilot project.
- Provide sharing platform as part of sharing event in early January 2023 to broaden successful practice
- Support individual and groups of clusters in developing a cluster vision for transition.
- Support individual clusters and schools in improving transition – Building relationships, collaboration, sharing learning (middle school concept), progression in skills, explore wider context of transition, particularly beyond Y6-7.
- Develop sharing success workshop for January 2023 with clusters from each LA invited to attend.

CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)

Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise all aspects of the Reform Journey by implementing the new curriculum based on their individual starting points.

A series of National CfW Professional Learning online sessions have started in Autumn term to support leaders and teachers to continue their work on CfW. Cross regional team have worked to update the national programme to include school examples and opportunities for schools to discuss practice with other schools across Wales within breakouts. Sessions are being co-delivered by cross regional and partnership colleagues as part of equity of access to all schools across Wales. A cross-regional website has been launched which raises awareness of the programme and to share recordings and materials with all schools. Across GwE, staff are working within teams to identify support packs as part of the regional PL programme.

The impact is as follows:

- Increasing number of PL sessions to support teachers with practical examples shared from schools on sharing their process.
- Positive levels of engagement from schools across Wales with over 228 practitioners attending with the majority of these being members of SLT – GwE schools have over 100 practitioners attending.
- Evaluation forms of the CfW programme show that of participants who have completed evaluation forms, 100% strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with the learning experience.
- Bespoke cluster and school PL sessions being requested from GwE to support whole school and staff training to support curriculum discussions.
- All SIAs engaged in regular professional dialogue with SLT members across all schools during Autumn term

to identify professional learning for school staff.

- Increased number of hits on the Curriculum for Wales support centre indicates that school practitioners are accessing the recorded PL sessions and exemplars.

AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE (AoLE) TEAMS

Ensure that all practitioners from all settings have access to high quality Professional Learning and support in the discipline of the AOLEs and cross-cutting themes

804 practitioners are attending regional and local networks as part of preparing for Curriculum for Wales implementation in September 2022. These 804 members are from schools, GwE SIAs, LA colleagues, CABAN staff. The structure has 48 local networks established - 6 x AOLEs, curriculum design, progression and assessment. One regional network has been established with regular attendance of between 115-130 practitioners. An infrastructure has been established with monthly regional meetings with Professor Graham Donaldson attending and offering guidance / feedback - focus of meetings based on expectations within Journey to Rollout. All local meetings across all 6 LAs meet monthly in between the regional meetings. There is communication through TEAMS with members and it is a key aspect in sharing work with all schools through GwE SIAs, website, regular updates at Headteacher forums. Formal evaluation with Bangor University has started to better understand the impact of the regional and local networks.

The impact is as follows:

- Increased number of schools developing and sharing examples of their approaches to whole school design and planning of mandatory elements, including cross-curricular skills.
- Increased number of schools developing and sharing of their approaches to whole school design and planning e.g. workshops during the regional Conference in September 2022.
- Increased number of website hits accessing greater number of materials and examples shared by networks and schools:

1/9/21 - 23/3/22

2845 Cfw GwE Support Centre

2674 CiG Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE

1/9/21 - 18/7/22

6587 GwE Support Centre

6492 Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE

1/9/21 - 10/10/22

7358 Cfw GwE Support Centre

7239 CiG Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE

The first Curriculum for Wales regional network meeting for the Autumn term is scheduled for 26/10/22 allowing schools and practitioners to be able to settle into the new curriculum, share initial experiences and any learning to date and agree foci for regional networks

Further to schools' preparedness and strategy to respond to the statutory requirements of September 2022, all primary school settings and those secondary starting CFW in September 2023 have designed curriculum summaries and agreed these with their governors for sharing wider.

OBJECTIVE 2- DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL)

Provide principles and raise awareness across all education settings on the importance of multilingualism and prioritising of languages and widening of learner choices.

Work with the regional and local groups is developing this awareness across sectors. Regular updates and resources around multilingualism is provided on the GwE Support Centre MFL section as well as the newsletter. It is our

intention to develop this aspect further and try and work with the lead schools and possibly recruit schools to pilot using resources to develop and raise the value of multilingualism in their settings and show case this to other schools in the region.

Support schools and settings to plan their International Language (IL) provision.

School to school and cluster support primary:

The uptake on the Professional Learning offer is good. The lead schools have continued to work within their cluster and contacts. Support at cluster and school level is provided when requests have been made to the team. When support or meetings have occurred, schools feedback show they welcome the Global Futures offer and opportunities for schools. Schools applying for the funded Power Language subscription continues to grow (+ 15 schools in the last quarter: total number to date 105 schools). Contacts have also increased (+21 in the last quarter: total of direct contacts on mailing list: 202).

School to school support secondary

Hub Leaders and IL Lead are providing support to individual schools or cluster to respond to requests. Network meetings are planned termly: the next meeting will take place in the next quarter. The Global Futures GwE offer outlined in the half-termly newsletter, including professional learning and CfW development projects, are responding directly to the needs identified by Heads of Department in the summer. Schools are signing up to the various opportunities which will take place in the next quarter.

BSL developments

More links with schools have been established, including schools, teachers of BSL and the North Wales Teachers of the Deaf group. Contacts, details of possible support have been collated to develop support for schools where BSL is their choice. Follow up meetings have been arranged to continue to grow a range of tools and resources to ensure the provision for BSL is appropriate and curriculum planning aligns with the expectations and vision of CfW.

Creating across languages: Using poetry across the LLC AoLE as a means to use language creatively - Secondary sector

Project pilot schools trial 2021-2022: The project trialled by the two secondary schools have come to an end. Students' work has been displayed in Pontio in July. School feedback was very positive and enabled practitioners to develop ideas to plan within the AoLE. Practitioners felt the project gave the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the commonalities and where connections can be made between the subject within the LLC and possibly across AoLEs. The project and developmental work will be shared to schools in the region via the GwE Support Centre and INSET days when relevant.

Designing for Languages within CfW: Programme for Pilot schools 2022-2023.

Secondary sector

Schools have been invited to register their interest for this pilot programme. This is a unique opportunity for International Languages and Welsh practitioners to work alongside Professor Jenny Eddy of Queens' College, New York University, to design and implement their plans within the AoLE which will best suit the vision and their whole school curriculum design in order to realise the four purposes for all learners. Members of the Regional group for LLC have also been invited. To date, 33 practitioners and 26 schools have registered. 4 members of the Regional Group will also attend, representing two primary schools and two English secondary. Programme to start on 5 and 6 October 2022.

Continue to build on activity at primary schools to prepare for CfW

Lead schools are continuing with their planning and developing their next stages of development. Through the various communications with schools engaging with the Global Futures events and offer, guidance and support is provided to develop the curriculum which best suits their school and context.

Projects in progress:

- International projects and Taith Programme in progress: Rugby in France and Wales — Normandy / Power Language training and links with France, Spain and Germany 2023-2024: PL schools.
- BSL: developing curriculum and SoL for BSL as IL beginner level.
- Power language Resources: Embedding languages within the curriculum: training session- 16 Nov 22
- Upskilling course: French Languages for primary teachers - 9 November and January 2022-2023

- Primary Network meetings for IL: termly face to face or hybrid meeting, dates and location (according to LA or Hub- best suit needs of schools). Discussions in progress.

Continue to address the challenge regarding take-up of modern foreign languages in secondary schools with the help of our Global Futures partners.

The GwE Support Centre MFL/ IL section provides links to useful websites and resources to promote languages. In addition, we have been promoting the MFL mentoring and are organising “Let’s Take Languages” days for students in year 9 at Bangor University to try and raise uptake at KS4. The Curriculum design programme ‘Designing for languages within CfW’ will aim to provide pilot schools with a process to ensure their planning is innovative, based around relevant and current contexts and essential cultural and societal questions whilst developing the appropriate language skills and knowledge at the right pace and depth.

Links with MFL mentoring

Year 8/9 mentoring:

21 schools have been offered a place with the project, with 4 of these schools engaging in a new stream called Linking Languages. 4 schools are on the reserve list. Every year, the number of schools showing an interest is rising. The number of returning schools is high, showing they feel the programme has a positive impact on their learners’ perceptions of languages.

Let’s take languages: Bangor University Day 10/ 11/22

Schools have been invited to register for the event organised by the GwE Team in collaboration with Routes Cymru. The day will offer a range of workshops aimed at Year 9 pupils, featuring language tasters and useful information about studying languages at university and careers. Discussions for additional days are in progress to respond to the high demand.

Designing for Languages within CfW: Programme for Pilot schools 2022-2023.

To date, 26 schools and 33 practitioners have registered. Dissemination and development of programme from March 2023.

Provide our practitioners with the skills, knowledge and experiences to plan and deliver international languages provision.

Regional Education Consortia and partnerships to continue to provide support for primary and secondary schools across their regions to prepare for the CfW.

Power language resources funding: 105 schools have applied to date. Offer remains open to other schools.

All offers from Global Futures partners are shared with schools regularly and through the various channels available.

Increase the opportunities for learners to experience languages at primary school and at secondary to experience languages alongside examination courses.

All offers from Global Futures partners are shared with schools regularly through the various channels. The GF Team work very closely with schools and identify some offers which may be more relevant to their context.

Taith: The details for the International links programme have been shared and promoted. Schools are encouraged to make use of the funding to develop links with partner schools and engage in various projects and professional developments. GF GwE Team are in close contact with Taith and ensure that relevant and current details, development and support offer are shared regularly.

Oneworld: meeting with the programme director took place in September 2022. Details of opportunities have been shared with schools to connect with schools around the world.

Power Language training and International links: GF GwE is planning, in collaboration with PL, to apply for Taith funding and organise a project which will combine International links with schools and immersion training in Spain, France and Germany in 2022-2024. Details of schools involved and of project to be confirmed in next quarter.

Provide direct support to primary teachers via the Open University Teachers Learning to Teach languages (TELT) programme.

All schools enrolled on the course have been sponsored by GF GwE. To date, 50 teachers have enrolled on the course. 10 of these teachers have enrolled in the second year of the course. One of them is now a teacher associate for Open University and supports current teachers on the course. The course enables practitioners to develop their language skills and confidence in language pedagogy. This year, we would like to evaluate the impact the course has had for the workforce and explore a way to involve these teachers in supporting other practitioners.

Provide direct support to secondary schools via the Cardiff University MFL Student Mentoring Project for 2022-2023.

Mentoring 22-23: GF GwE has encouraged schools to register their interests and targeted schools where numbers were low or who have not engaged with the programme before. Recruitment is promising: 21 schools have been offered a place with the project, with 4 of these schools engaging in a new stream called Linking Languages. 4 schools are on the reserve list.

Work with our language institute colleagues to highlight the wide range of support available to schools including qualifications, expertise and classroom support.

All opportunities and events organised by the Language Institutes are shared regularly with schools. Participation is encouraged and network meetings enable schools to share the impact of such events on their learners. This is on-going and will continue.

Challenge the misconceptions around language learning.

Expand our collaboration work with our Global Futures partners to ensure consistent messages are disseminated to raise the profile of international languages.

Provide positive messages and communications that challenge the negative perceptions of language learning.

Collaboration with partners is on-going to agree and share materials such as promotional videos, communication and marketing to address the issues.

Promote the Global Futures brand to all schools across Wales in order to ensure equality of access to support for all learners

On-going communication and marketing in constant development. The aim for this year is to use social network to promote what is happening in Languages and in North Wales.

HLTA - TALP

Newly appointed teaching assistants

The effectiveness of the digital 'Induction' programme implemented during 2021-22 was monitored, revising it in line with feedback and any updates for 2022-23, especially as regards the Curriculum for Wales. 77 teaching assistants registered for the 4-module training (playlist) during 2021-2022, and due to access granted to the programme at any time during the academic year it was seen that teaching assistants registered for the training at different times of the academic year. There has been very positive feedback overall to this training during 2021-22, with the majority noting training has had a high impact on their practice.

Data collection systems were jointly revised with the other Consortia in July 2022. It was decided nationally that teaching assistants need to be encouraged to complete the 4 modules. At present there is no specific time to complete the training e.g. 2/3 terms. A TEAMS has been created for teaching assistants who are registering for the programme, as a contact point with the Co-ordinator. The programme was advertised again in the GwE Bulletin and in the Google Classroom for Teaching Assistants in September.

Practising teaching assistants

Two clusters completed the 'Practising teaching assistants' programme, and the programme has commenced with 2 other clusters. The content of the programme was reviewed with the other Consortia in July. Three other clusters are eager to undertake the training during this next academic year. The programme will be available regionally once again (face to face) from the end of the autumn term onwards - preparations are underway. Training will be held in 3 locations across the region - Mold, St Asaph and Caernarfon/Bangor.

Aspiring HLTA

Cylch 4 - the programme was finished in June. A 'PLR surgery' was offered, to discuss Personal Learning Reflections and assessment arrangements. This had a very positive impact, with many teaching assistants improving their reflections on professional learning following these meetings.

A review session was held on 12/9/2022 for applicants for Cylch 4 assessments, and Cylch 4 assessments will be held 17/10/22 – 11/11/2022. Fifteen applications were submitted for the HLTA Assessment.

The number of Cylch 4 Assessments is down Nationally due to illness, school circumstances, not enough experience of leading classes due to the situation in schools during the last academic year, lack of qualifications, not completing the Aspiring HLTA programme. Comments received by teaching assistants, facilitators and assessors note a much better understanding of Professional Standards and Curriculum for Wales following the training. Teaching assistants have also valued working with other teaching assistants across the region and nationally and appreciate their digital skills have improved, with the technical session very helpful in this regard. The oral feedback received was that the majority would prefer face to face training.

Cylch 5 - has been advertised. 43 applications received - 39 accepted and a place offered to 2 applicants on Cylch 6, which shows healthy numbers across the region. Training will commence in October 2022 (Welsh or English-medium). Modules 1 and 4 will take place face to face, and teaching assistants can choose whether to take Modules 2 and 3 face to face or virtually.

HLTA status

Following attending 8 digital sessions for Aspiring HLTAs, 82% of Cylch 3 Aspiring HLTAs applied for the HLTA status assessment. 18% did not achieve the status, either due to not having sufficient classroom teaching experience or not gaining the level 2 Literacy/Numeracy qualification due to the impact of Covid. Some have left education. These will undergo assessment with Cylch 4 teaching assistants. 24 Assessors have been undertaking Cylch 3 assessments. Each assessment was moderated regionally, and a sample of six moderated nationally. 27/28 were met, with 1/28 'not met yet' due to lack of experience in leading whole classes.

HLTA assessors

National refresher training was held on 3/10/22 over TEAMS, and a drop-in session for GwE Assessors on 10/10/2022. Four Assessors have left as they are no longer working in a school.

Introduction to Curriculum for Wales

New training has been jointly created with the other Consortia, in order to give teaching assistants an introduction to the Curriculum for Wales. The training was split into 2 sessions, and was available in both Welsh and English. The sessions were delivered nationally at a variety of times, so that teaching assistants may be released. The training was adapted to create bespoke training for one primary school in GwE (25 teaching assistants).

Y Gymraeg

Develop the support for schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism and the advantages of Welsh-medium education.

Discussions with Local Authority officers have continued, with a member of the GwE Team attending Headteacher forums as required and the Language Forums Sub-committees, established to respond to the requirements of the new WESPs.

Support to develop the growth of Welsh-medium provision in English-medium schools

A regional plan has been drawn up to support English-medium secondary schools and lead practitioners identified. Discussions with authority officers are continuing, leading to a joint understanding of the provision for schools and highlighting any gaps in order to support further. There is national agreement for all regions to jointly develop a professional learning offer to support practitioners in English-medium schools, which is aligned to the Framework. A working group has been established and initial ideas noted. Consequently, there is joint understanding of what is available to support schools as a basis for any local amendments as required.

Develop a Welsh language professional offer in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales (3-16) and strengthen the collaboration/transition from primary to secondary.

- Schools are getting in touch to discuss further support for developing pedagogy and plan for improving the

language skills of the workforce.

- On demand sessions have continued for secondary Welsh leads (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools).
- A small network of English-medium schools has been established and is to be developed further.
- Applications for support for specific schools continue via SIAs and the support is incorporated into the school support plan and in consultation with an officer from the Authority where relevant.

Developing skills:

Ein Llais Ni

Analysis of the case studies continues with discussions on the most effective approach to categorising them e.g. in alignment with the Literacy Framework, according to sector. Two presented their work in a workshop during GwE's Regional Conference in September 2022. Planning is underway for a project celebration event in November 2022 - '*Ein Llais Ni – Datblygu siaradwyr y dyfodol*'. Bangor University is undertaking an evaluation of the provision by GwE following interviews with teachers and analysis of the questionnaires for learners.

Develop informal use of Welsh - 'Siarter Iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'.

The planning work with co-ordinators continues. The need to share successful practice at the end of the spring term was identified. A number of Welsh leads across the region have attended the Siarter Iaith (Secondary) national network meeting and created national connections. The next meeting will be held in January 2023 and it is hoped a representation of regional schools will contribute to this national meeting.

Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum of Wales and WG's target of a million Welsh speakers.

The Leadership Academy co-ordinated a meeting to draw together the supporting provision for schools to evaluate Welsh, which has led to ensuring a joint understanding of the lines of enquiry for leaders.

Develop the Welsh and Welsh-medium workforce - the language skills of the education workforce

The resource to browse the National Centre for Learning Welsh website is being promoted regionally, leading to an increase in the declarations of interest in the Sabbaticals course. Members of the GwE team are involved in national discussions on developing the language skills of the education workforce.

A LEVEL

Develop effective leaders

A Middle Leadership Training Programme (post-16) is provided again this year, now with an option for ILM Level 5 accreditation. The first session on 18/10/2022. Six Heads of Sixth Form from the region are undertaking the national course. Network meetings have been arranged for October. There is a Post-16 Conference in the pipeline and a Google form to gather views on provision has been shared with regional Heads of Sixth/colleges.

Ensure post-16 teaching and learning provision of a high standard

A post-16 effective teaching programme for NQTs has been jointly planned with the other consortia, which will be ready to be delivered during the next quarter.

Support schools to monitor the progress of post-16 students

Use of ALPs on a regional level: Regional schools' ALPs data has been gathered for 2022 outcomes. County and local consortia reports are being prepared. Access for schools to their reports. Some schools are using ALPs to track learner progress. ALPs training is available for schools.

Support schools to provide a range of approaches to promote their learners' well-being.

Heads of Sixth network meetings have provided opportunities to share VESPA/Bloom good practice and express any general concerns about learner well-being.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

KiVa Anti-Bullying Research Project

As part of GwE's ongoing initiatives to focus policy and practice on more evidence-informed approaches, this project was undertaken with schools in North Wales to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of KiVa anti-bullying programme in reducing child reported bullying in UK schools compared to usual practice. GwE is a co-applicant on this large-scale research project to evaluate the impact of the KiVa anti-bullying programme in primary

schools. Following a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 30 schools in North Wales have been recruited for the study. Fifteen of the schools were randomised to receive KiVa in 2021-22, and the remaining 15 schools will receive KiVa in 2022-23. The intervention schools were trained in the summer term 2021, and have been delivering KiVa from September 2021. The funding here is for the training and support materials to allow the 15 control schools to receive KiVa in 2022-23. Twelve of the control schools have confirmed they wish to receive the training.

Thirty GwE primary schools were recruited in October 2019 as part of a group of 116 schools from across the UK. Schools were randomly allocated to either receive training to deliver KiVa or they were assigned as a control school to carry on with everyday provision. The intervention schools delivered KiVa from September 2021 to July 2022, and researchers are hoping to have provisional findings of the outcomes in both groups at the end of the year. This paper is a study protocol where the research team describe the trial in detail for other researchers. The full study findings can be accessed by downloading the open access paper using this link:

[The UK stand together trial: protocol for a multicentre cluster randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of KiVa to reduce bullying in primary schools | BMC Public Health | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](https://www.biomedcentral.com/uk-stand-together-trial-protocol-for-a-multicentre-cluster-randomised-controlled-trial-to-evaluate-the-effectiveness-and-cost-effectiveness-of-KiVa-to-reduce-bullying-in-primary-schools)

Positive Readiness for Learning (PR4L) Project – Behavioural Scientists in Clusters

This is a proposal to embed a behavioural scientist to work with a different group of schools – or a cluster – during each term in 2022-23. The aim of this project is to provide training and individualised coaching to teachers in the classroom to provide confidence and consistency when addressing disruptive behaviour within the classroom.

Teachers and school staff will be encouraged to identify and acknowledge positive behaviour in students and respond consistently to behavioural challenges. The aim of the project is to focus on schools with persistent issues with either low level disruption and/or staff who want to know more about evidence-informed strategies (preferable the former to show impact). For example, meeting staff to improve their understanding of tier 1 (universal) behaviour management strategies. Initial discussions have taken place with GwE core leads, and candidate schools will be confirmed by October half term 2022.

KESS ALN Reading Research

This is a proposal for up to 4 SEN schools in the KESS East region to collaborate with us on a funded KESS2 East MRes project from October 2022 - June 2023. This will involve Bangor University, GwE, and SEN schools in the region. The MRes student and supervisors will work closely with participating schools to conduct an audit and rapid review of assessment and intervention approaches being used, to explore staff experiences and perceptions of current provision, and to reflect on the findings, current practices, and ideas for further development and evaluation. We hope this collaborative project will enable us to further develop and evaluate areas of strong practice, as well as identifying areas for developing provision to help improve reading outcomes for a wide range of learners. Initial discussions have taken place with GwE core leads. Schools will be confirmed in October 2022. The advert to recruit the KESS master's student has gone live and we hope to appoint in early November.

Health Economics and PBMA

This project aims to support and develop headteacher decision making processes using effective decision-making methodology and to investigate if schools produce robust effectiveness and social validity data to support interventions in the school and consider value for money. It also aims to evaluate the impact of the project by tracking changes in provision.

ITE

Support schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on pedagogy, effective teaching and action research

Support cross sector collaboration to ensure consistency of effective teaching practice to support learner transition

Develop the language skills of the education workforce to expand the proportion who can teach and work through the medium of Welsh

Continue to support collaboration at all levels of leadership to ensure all learners achieve their potential

Continue to implement regional strategies for children who are vulnerable to learning, concentrating on their inclusion, emotional wellbeing, attendance and any additional learning needs to impact positively on their

progress and wellbeing

Continuing to develop our work in clusters, alliances and sector transition to improve quality and develop the Curriculum for Wales agenda

Full programme of national NQT training is in place this term (6 different sessions). This will be enhanced further through regional training next term. Consistency and collaboration are ensured through regular meetings with consortia colleagues nationally and key messages are shared regionally through regular local meetings.

Good progress is being made with the National NQT, EV and IM training programmes:

- Number of GwE NQTs having attended Session 1 is 216 (approx 72% of this year's cohort)
- Number of GwE External Verifiers having attended training is 78 (approx 92% of the EV's working in the GwE consortium)
- Number of GwE Induction Mentors having attended Session 1 is 62

NQTs are supported consistently across the region, including through their access to professional Learning. Through early identification of the STS we believe there is an improvement in the Support/guidance provided for the STS NQTs (short term Supply) this year. We have seen an increase of 30% in the number of STS NQTs attending the NQT training.

Accreditation meetings have taken place. EWC have provided further guidance and next steps. Full submission of ITE ALN programmes will take place in March 2023 for accreditation from September 2024; potentially this will be the first accredited ALN ITE programme in Wales. Meetings with WG continue for relevant advice and to ensure programmes fit with national priorities for vulnerable learners and ALN. Currently documentation in development is focussed upon aligning the programmes to the accreditation criteria and Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership.

Further alignment and collaboration continue - shared meetings and professional learning have taken place between key staff. 11 GwE staff have delivered sessions on the CaBan ITE programmes this term; these have included on-line and face to face lectures and workshops, and a key note lecture. These have focussed upon pedagogy, Curriculum for Wales, Human Rights and RVE, digital skills, curriculum design and planning, literacy and numeracy. Further sessions are planned. GwE CaBan Memorandum of Understanding has been updated to reflect recent work. There are further planned update, Professional learning and information sharing sessions taking place throughout the year. These include Estyn where appropriate, for example, through engagement with stakeholder meetings.

GwE staff have taken part in CaBan quality assurance meetings - there are planned shared quality assurance and enhancement engagement opportunities such as lesson studies and monitoring in lead schools throughout the academic year.

Regional consistency is strengthened through strong collaboration between GwE and CaBan – it ensures a common approach to research, professional learning and improved integration as a learning organisation across the region. As a consequence of the consistent cultural approaches of the organisations, teachers access up to date and impactful upskilling as they progress through their teaching careers, and programmes and learning is personalised to the unique needs of the region, as well as responsive to national priorities.

Collaboration with the OU continues through regular partnership meetings. Provision has been updated and improved to include further funding for Welsh medium students in secondary settings. Information sharing has taken place and there is planned further activity to update stakeholders. Students have access to a range of different ways of becoming teachers, including work-based programmes through the OU as well as traditional route to ITE.

Next steps:

- Consistent pathways for professional learning are currently being addressed and mapped, further work in this area is needed. Currently working on constructing a Regional NQT programme which is to be delivered during term 2 and 3.
- Continued accreditation process for ALN ITE pathways including collaboration with the EWC and WG, as well as lead schools through stakeholder meetings and programme development.

- Further planned shared professional learning opportunities to ensure cohesion and consistency between organisations, including shared quality assurance and enhancement.
- Updates to be provided to stakeholders to further ensure consistency and collaboration.

DIGITAL

Develop digital leadership in regional schools

The digital facilitators programme continues to develop. The first briefing session of the academic year was held in September when objectives were set for this year. The feedback was positive and there is a general sense that the collaboration within clusters is beginning to build momentum. Following a recent review of the programme, 84% of clusters present noted they have started the work in their clusters, with 65% noting they have been able to hold several meetings. A number of clusters noted that establishing a working group in the cluster has proved challenging in the last year due to a number of Covid related challenges, and staffing problems making it very difficult to secure schools' commitment to the programme. Despite the challenges, we are confident that the programme has progressed successfully. In response to this, we will be offering more individual support for digital facilitators/clusters in order to ensure the work is progressing effectively. A number of clusters have successfully embedded the programme in their cluster and are examples of working groups that are taking effective action during the first phases of the programme. Some of the digital facilitators have also contributed to the professional learning offer this year. Due to new roles and posts, 16 new facilitators have undertaken the role during September and we will be meeting these individuals to support them to commence their duties as soon as possible.

Provide a professional learning programme to develop opportunities and raise standards in digital competence via Hwb.

The digital professional learning offer - 275 practitioners have registered to attend training sessions. Training was held for digital leaders during September. This was the first day of a 2-day programme focusing on the practical elements of leading the digital field in schools. Forty-six digital leaders from across the region attended the session. Day 2 will be held in November, and another cohort of leaders will start in January 2023. The aim of this programme is to develop leadership capacity within clusters, and that more individuals are upskilled to support the work of the digital facilitators.

Embed 360 Digi Cymru as the region's main self-evaluation tool for digital learning.

To date, 226 of the region's schools have registered on the digital learning self-evaluation system, 360 Digi Cymru. 105 schools have revisited the system to update their evaluation. We continue to encourage schools to engage with this review. We have recorded a series of webinars to ensure there is on demand support available to enable schools to engage. As part of the digital facilitators programme, the facilitators are responsible for encouraging schools to use the self-evaluation system, asking each school in their cluster to complete the review over the next term. The data will then be discussed on a cluster level to ascertain strengths within the cluster as well as general aspects for development.

MATHS AND NUMERACY

Bespoke support for schools causing concern

Primary and Secondary

Bespoke support has continued for regional schools deemed 'at risk' or in ESTYN category. This has resulted in improved planning for the teaching and learning of Mathematics and a greater understanding of how numeracy supports learning across the curriculum. Repeated, regular visits/meetings with schools have involved training staff, collaboratively support them in planning and assessing learner progress, how to track and use this to move learners forward and inform their provision, monitoring the impact of activities to date and identifying and sharing resources pertinent to school/learner needs within the setting as they implement and move towards Curriculum for Wales reform. New bespoke support requests have been submitted by individual SIA's as part of their support plans for schools.

Current regional support & CfW

Heads of Maths local network meeting (July 6th & July 8th)

This has resulted in schools sharing good practice, collaborating on familiarising with the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE, gaining a better understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies and the pedagogical implications. Schools clearer with their understanding of the next steps needed on the journey to fully implement CfW.

Personalised Assessments

SIA's have continued to support regional Primary, Secondary and Special schools with the effective use of the Online Personalised Assessments. This has included bespoke training and sharing of Welsh Government guidance. This has ensured schools have been up to date with current guidance and effective practice.

Basic number skills package

A 'Basic Number Skills' pack which includes whole class resources and individual resources which can be adapted according to the needs of learners across the continuum has been created. They are written in Welsh and English and include an answer pack. The resources give learners the opportunity to reinforce and revisit skills that are key skills to develop across the continuum, ensuring learners fluency in this area. The resources have been hosted on a Google Classroom and shared with various schools to trial. It is too early to determine impact to date; an evaluation will take place next term before sharing regionally.

Spring Primary/Secondary Mathematics Workshop

Plans have been submitted to SLT and approved, to organise a regional Primary/Secondary Mathematics workshop in the Spring term. Guest speakers and venue have been booked in line with the Primary & Secondary Business Plan budget. The objectives of the workshop are to promote collaboration across the continuum, develop effective pedagogy and ensure clear consistent messages are shared regionally.

Mathematics Research and Innovation Working Groups

Plans have been submitted to SLT for the formation of Research and innovation working groups to explore one of the following themes, aligning with the continued work of the CfW regional networks:

- Effective use of manipulatives and representations
- Effective use of problem-solving strategies
- Effective use of questioning and differentiation
- Using the proficiencies to plan for progression
- Successful transition in Mathematics between Primary and Secondary school

The aim of these working groups is to facilitate opportunities for practitioners to:

- Share and discuss good practice across the continuum
- Familiarise with relevant research
- Collaborate on planning which is evidence informed
- Review and evaluate trialed practices
- Broaden and deepen understanding of the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE

CaBan/Bangor University September 2022

Primary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA have delivered four lectures – introduction to Mathematics and Numeracy AOLE/ to Welsh Medium Primary PGCE students. (approx. 27 students). These sessions supported new practitioners to gain a better understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies and effective pedagogy in mathematics to deliver CfW in regional classrooms during this academic year.

ENGLISH AND LITERACY

Provide bespoke support for schools causing concern, enabling them to drive their own improvement journey. Support schools to understand and implement curriculum reform.

Primary:

All referrals for bespoke support for schools causing concern/ who have specific provision improvements to be made in literacy and language, have been met, with either support completed or continuing.

Development of CfW curriculum provision has continued within the LLC regional and local networks, with sharing of effective practice from specific network schools used in regional and National PL on CfW.

Effective practice schools have been commissioned to provide basic literacy skills pedagogical presentations/resources to supplement PL packs for basic literacy skills, to be available end of Autumn/Spring 2022/23.

Secondary:

Bespoke requests from schools have been supported and delivered by the team.

Continued training session for Building Reading Power – impact referenced in recent Estyn report. Additional training has been rolled out to all schools in the area in July 2022. Talk the Talk training has been delivered to NQT and RQT in July 22. Development of CFW provision are discussed within the LLC regional and local networks.

Plans and some dates are now in place for literacy specific basic skills PL for Autumn/Spring 2022/23, in conjunction with 3-8, 8-11 and 11-16 age range colleagues.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Welsh language Networks

During Quarter 2, an 'on demand' (Teams) Network Meeting was held for Welsh Leads (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools) following WJEC CDP training to confirm important messages and share subsequent courses of action. There are arrangements underway to hold a Welsh Leads Network Meeting (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools) in a 'host' school as well as organising a similar meeting for Welsh Leads in English-medium schools during Quarter 3. Arrangements have also been made to hold a network meeting for Literacy Co-ordinators (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools) during Quarter 3. A support network was established between Welsh departments in three English-medium schools in the region, and this model will be developed further during Quarter 3.

Consultation workshops and national working groups

During Quarter 2, regional Welsh leads were encouraged to attend consultation webinars (e.g. LLC AoLE Consultation Webinar - Qualifications Wales) as well as continuing to encourage and facilitate leaders to become members of national working groups (e.g. Welsh Subject Level Working Group - Qualifications Wales) in order to ensure the voice of the region is heard in these national discussions. During Quarter 3 there will be meetings to encourage and facilitate responses to the survey by Qualifications Wales on the design proposals for the new GCSE courses (Qualified for the Future).

GwE Regional Conference Workshops - September 2022

Leaders of two Welsh Departments in the region contributed to two of the workshops held during GwE's Regional Conference in September 2022. These were attended by Headteachers and Authority Officers across the region.

'Ein Llais Ni' Project - During Quarter 2, one regional secondary Welsh Department involved in the 'Ein Llais Ni' project this year contributed to the project workshop held during GwE's Regional Conference. A number of other secondary schools in the project will be contributing to an event entitled *'Datblygu siaradwyr y dyfodol'* to be held during Quarter 3, as well as contributing to the project research report and the CPD training resource to be submitted to WG and shared regionally and nationally during Quarter 3.

The Secondary Language Charter

A number of regional Welsh leads attended a Secondary Language Charter national network meeting held during Quarter 2, establishing national connections. The next meeting will be held in January 2023 and it is hoped a representation of regional schools will contribute to this national meeting.

Design Space - CfW Welsh language design

Following collaboration with the SIA for International Languages (see IL/Global Futures Business Plan), curriculum design workshops were arranged for languages within the LLC AoLE as part of a whole school design. These were led by Professor Jenny Eddy from Queens College, New York and were aimed at secondary schools across the region. A representation of Welsh departments from Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools attended the workshops. The work of schools that are part of this project will continue during Quarter 3 and 4.

NQT

During Quarter 2 there was input into an on-line training session for NQTs in English-medium schools in one regional LA, introducing Welsh as a mandatory element of the CfW.

GwE Support Centre

Work continues with developing the Welsh pages on GwE's Support Centre, and the aim is for this platform to run alongside the 'live' Teams and Google Classroom digital platforms, with the former a permanent base and the latter a developmental platform. The newsletter *'O'r Stoddi'* is an additional tool for sharing information with leaders

across the region, and a bilingual version of the newsletter for English-medium secondary schools will be shared during Quarter 3.

SCIENCE

Realising Curriculum for Wales

Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings on the Science and Technology AoLE, to help them implement the new curriculum within this area

Bespoke support has been provided to all departments that have requested CfW support – members of these departments are developing their understanding of the CfW framework in the context of Science and technology. The schools that have received support, and who are adopting CfW in September 2023, are beginning to plan units of work.

Provide regional and local networks for leaders and teachers of Science and Technology AoLE with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment and progression

Local Networks have taken place in all local authorities in quarter 1, and will resume again in quarter 3. Exemplars and resources have been shared by the groups and are available for other schools (including non-network schools) to view on line bilingually. These resources are providing discussion points and ideas for schools to consider.

Support schools and their Science departments to ensure development of their understanding of the elements of the curriculum for Wales including; application and development of the cross-curricular skills, the integral skills, and cross-cutting themes within Science

The Science and Technology AoLE website has been developed and translated into Welsh – the website is supporting schools and departments to consider big ideas/themes in Science and Technology and different methods of planning for learning. This link to the website has been shared with all schools. Currently developing exemplars of a thematic approach to integrating cross curricular and integral skills.

Over quarter 2, HPS has been working with MAGNOX, NDA to develop Educational Business Engagement (EBE) opportunities for schools as part of the development of CWRE (careers and work-related experiences) as a cross cutting theme in the CfW. This work will continue to establish school visits to the facilities, and STEM ambassadors to the schools.

Assessment and Accountability

Support schools and their Science departments to develop their understanding of progression and assessment Support schools and leaders of Science to evaluate and enhance their provision for the Curriculum for Wales

The second professional learning event on the Science and technology AoLE, included a strong focus on understanding and planning for progression. Feedback from this training was very positive, and the supporting resources available on the Science and Technology website have enabled teachers to further develop their understanding of progression in learning and the role of the descriptions of learning in planning for learning. In Q3, we intend to develop this further via County INSET and school support visits.

Improve Teaching

Collaboration and school to school working and sharing of best practice is being developed through the Science and Technology AoLE regional networks. Schools involved have gained valuable experience and understanding through working together and sharing ideas for planning for learning and pedagogical considerations. This work will be shared on the GwE support centre for other schools to access. Quarter 3 will see the development of teacher-expert networks, particularly in Technology (WMS 2) and Computational Thinking (WMS 6).

Developing the TANIO website – following further quality assurance processes, PowerPoints and other resources will be converted into HTMLs for faster, smoother access on the website. Separate Science GCSE resources are being developed, and bilingual flashcards to improve AO1 Science recall will become available to students during quarter 3. The website has recorded a significant number of hits and downloads over the examination period, demonstrating that the resources are being widely used across Wales.

Supporting Leadership

School visits continue to support Middle Leaders with self-evaluation, identifying priorities for improvement, evaluating the quality of provision and teaching and learning.

AGES 3-8

Provide bespoke support for schools causing concern, enabling them to drive their own improvement journey
Further enhance the provision and pupil progress across all regional schools in preparation and implementation of Curriculum for Wales.

Ensure good or better use of formative assessment strategies in all schools

Develop cross sector collaboration and sharing good assessment practice

Develop cross sector collaboration on transition and the sharing of good practice

Ensure consistency of messages for schools regarding curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning across cross sector networks, training and support provided by GwE

Bespoke support has been delivered to schools causing concern across the region see LA data. Nearly all schools causing concern are making steady progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders upskilled during the process. Support is developing practitioners understanding of Foundation Learning principles and pedagogy and impacting upon pupils' progress.

Regional FP network has been delivered for practitioners and SIAs sharing guidance from WG on 'On Entry' Assessment arrangements for September 2022. This has included strategies to make effective transitions and on entry assessments including observations against statutory requirements and one-page profiles. Key messages shared to aid transition into Nursery.

Bespoke support has been delivered to individual schools and clusters on specific aspects of the curriculum. This has upskilled staff on the 3-11 continuum regarding expanding and deepening skills within the learning experiences and environment.

Joint practitioner and SIA delivery of cluster woodwork workshops exemplifying impact of Woodwork provision on the development of skills across AOLE's, cross-curricular skills and integral skills. Case studies shared has demonstrated effective methods of observation and assessment through real life authentic experiences which positively impacted pupil's overall progress and well-being.

A cross section of schools across the region, 4 from each LA is involved in an informed research project 'Communication Friendly Spaces Approach'. Practitioners are reflecting and reviewing their learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Schools have audited their environments and reflected upon the impact of their provision on learners in line with Enabling Learning guidance.

OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

LEADERSHIP

Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standard

National Professional Learning, National leadership Programmes for Teachers/Headteachers

As the 2021-22 cohorts are approaching the completion of their development programmes, the team have worked on recruiting sustainable numbers of appropriately experienced applicants from across the region for the 2022-23 cohorts. The numbers of quality applicants so far are encouraging.

Informal monitoring and evaluation based on delivery team discussions indicate that all programmes continue to have a positive effect on leaders' confidence and ability to contribute to a self-improving and collaborative system. Discussions with participants and with their line managers indicate that the programmes are consistently contributing to the development of self-reflecting practitioners who are taking greater responsibility for their own professional learning and career development and are further developing their understanding of their leadership

role, particularly in regards to the successful implementation of CfW.

The programmes are continuing to ensure that delegates across all programmes reflect successfully on their own professional practice as school leaders against the National Leadership Standards.

Participants have been upskilled and empowered to lead and support colleagues in their settings, strengthening the leadership capacity in their schools.

The Leadership Pathway facilitates appropriate professional learning for leaders at all levels, supporting their development to the next stage of their career.

All programmes are being updated accordingly to reflect the national agenda and address issues relating to the impact of the pandemic. This is happening at a National and regional level

In regards to the changes to the New and Acting Headteacher Programme, the induction provision for new Headteachers from across the region is now more consistent, supportive and effective.

GOVERNORS

Governing Bodies are effectively supported when appointing at Head teacher and SLT level in line with GWE protocol.

As part of our ongoing support for Governors' Professional Learning, presentations have been delivered across the region with the aim of introducing Governors to the Curriculum for Wales framework. These sessions have been well attended in all Local Authorities.

Pre-inspection training has not been required during this quarter. Additional support has been available for schools in categories. Now that inspections are underway, GwE representatives are working with schools to ensure that Governors are aware of their responsibilities regarding preparation for inspection.

ALLIANCES / NETWORKS / CLUSTERS

Collaborate with school leaders at all levels to further embed the contribution of:

- **primary/secondary clusters**
 - **secondary alliances**
 - **regional networks**
- in addressing national and regional priorities**

To ensure that governing bodies are aware of the importance of alliance/cluster collaboration particularly as it relates to CfW development

One of the key strands of the recently published *School-Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability* gives new impetus to the collaborative work undertaken with school leaders at all levels to embed the contribution of primary/secondary clusters and secondary alliances. In moving forward, the national expectation that schools effectively engage with peers and specifically around evaluation, improvement planning and developing a consistent approach and understanding of learner progress will support our efforts and ensure greater traction and impact in the cultural shift.

EDT/SPP training has continued, introducing new clusters/alliances to the model and offering a refresher for those who wanted to re-engage post Covid.

From September 2022, the main thrust for primary/secondary clusters will be around supporting transition and working towards a common understanding and application of 'progression'.

Almost all schools across all sectors have engaged effectively with local alliances and clusters. The focus has been primarily on CfW cluster collaboration and on contributing to evaluation and improvement planning activities. Their work has been augmented by the contributions of the AoLE, Assessment and Curriculum Design Networks at regional and local levels. As a result, a number of alliances are developing strong emerging practice around planning collaborative activities to support the reform journey and aspects of school improvement, and Primary

clusters have been able to work on developing cluster priorities around CfW for their SDP. In addition, leaders are demonstrating an increased level of confidence with curriculum roll-out.

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

PDG LAC

**To further develop & implement the national PDG strategy across the region.
Embed the PDG LAC cluster/alliance model across the region**

The GwE PDG support plan for 2022-2023 has been submitted to Welsh Government focusing on the following areas: Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals, Looked After Children, Early Years Pupil Development Grant and Pupils Eligible for free school meals who are educated in PRUs and EOTAS.

A new regional team is in place with clear roles and responsibilities. GwE have two Health and Wellbeing Supporting Improvement Advisers and Joint Leads for PDG and LAC PDG. The Supporting Improvement Advisers also work with their link schools to ensure that all schools understand and undertake their duties, with a particular focus on preparing for the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience in Curriculum for Wales.

GwE has developed an overall PDG framework model that is been implemented in schools/LAs across the region. The focus has been on supporting targeted schools within specific LAs to raise the standards of FSM learners and ensuring a strategic steer to supporting SIAs to implement evidence-based interventions.

Our focus for 2022/23 is to ensure all clusters / SEN schools /PRUs receive the PDG LAC funds with focus on supporting effective teaching & learning, emotional health and wellbeing, Professional Learning in regards to a whole school approach to trauma informed practise and in addition targeted support in line with the PEP.

We will continue to work closely with the 6 LAs to ensure clear communication and collaboration in regards to additional support and interventions with the LAC PDG and that all cluster plans are approved by both GwE and the LA.

WORKFORCE WELL-BEING (GwE and schools)

Support leaders' well-being with the ongoing challenges linked with leadership, through providing 'Reflective Spaces' to school leaders across the region.

'Reflective Spaces' continue to have a positive impact across the region. Mike Armiger and Coral Harper are running at full capacity. We have instructed Mindful Visionaries to undertake a pilot and they are currently working with 3 school leaders from across the region.

WHOLE SCHOOL WELL-BEING (AoLE)

Promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales' by building on the momentum of our successful TEDxGwE.

Planning is in progress for us to work in collaboration with Glyndwr University and the North Wales Public Service Boards to run a 'Future Leaders Pilot' to enable young people (aged 14-16) to directly contribute to the development of regional Well-being Plans, sharing their views and ideas on how well-being can actively be improved for them and people like them in their local area. We will build an increased understanding of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, develop as 'global and ethical informed citizens', and build a sense of self-efficacy and potential as future (and current) leaders. Date for delivery has been agreed for 21/11/2022. A review will take place after this to explore roll out to other settings.

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS

Ensure effective implementation of the roll out of "Help your child to Learn" to schools, parents and carers across Wales

A regional group has been established with representation from GwE and each LA to lead, manage and co-ordinate the field of supporting parents and carers with their child's learning.

The main developments are as follows:

- The Research developer has created Help Your Child to Learn (HYTTL) Primary and Years 7 & 8.
- The Research developer has created Help Your Teen to Learn (HYTTL) for year 9, 10 & 11.
- Bilingual Communication packs for HYCTL and HYTTL have been shared with schools.
- Training packages for TAs to use with parents (HYCTL & HYTTL) have been developed.
- A platform was created on the GwE website with information for Parents, Carers & Schools – this ensures easy access for all.
- 12 Schools to pilot the training package for Help your Child to learn. The group will reconvene in the autumn term with feedback. The training will then be available for all schools across the region.
- Secondary colleagues to be invited to attend training in the Autumn term. The aim is to do this with all secondary schools across the region.

REIGNITE LEARNING

High Frequency Word/Repeated Reading (HFW/RR) & Headsprout Implementation Support

This work stream consists of two aspects: **Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)** using HFW and RR strategies, and the continued provision for schools to use Headsprout reading programmes, known as the **Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)** project. Both of these projects are continuation of work started in the previous year. Updates are as follows:

Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

Fifty-two schools and 66 teachers have signed up and had access to online training videos, and intervention resources to download for use in their schools. The number of teachers that have accessed the Google classroom is as follows:

- 63 have accessed the English resources
- 41 have accessed the Welsh resources.

Fourteen schools have attended follow-up Q&A support sessions online, and have had access to a member of the research team for implementation support. The support sessions took place in September 2021 and January 2022. Schools have also been invited to measure progress in Oral Reading Fluency using the DIBELS screening test. Two schools have measured progress using DIBELS pre-post screening resources and one school is monitoring progress. Another six schools expressed interest in measuring pupil progress using DIBELS. The Repeated Reading fluency materials have been further developed for use at home and in school (additional practice opportunities). Schools have been invited to trial the use of the materials at home and in school. Four schools have expressed interest. Throughout 2021-22, we have continued to update the Repeated Reading and High Frequency Word interventions to make them more accessible and usable. We are also in the process of designing an iFOR manual and creating simple short training videos. Adverts have been placed on the GwE Bulletin in September 2022 for schools to sign up to the November 2022 iFOR training sessions.

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)

Summary of ongoing progress as follows:

- On-going school support via email/phone call/video call from Research Officer available for any support required by school staff (technical, buying/renewing licences, implementation, training, how to access resources etc)
- All resources including how to guides and training videos as of September 2021 are accessible via Hwb for school staff and Google Classroom for parents
- All project details were advertised via the GwE bulletin and via twitter
- Autumn Term 2021 all schools were supported with renewing their current licences or trial licences
- Spring Term 2022 - two getting started with Headsprout webinars delivered and 2 How to monitor progress webinars (these were recorded and made accessible on the GwE support centre. 10 schools attended and have continued to have on-going support since.
- Summer Term 2022 - 3 Q and A sessions for schools. 2 schools attended.

Next steps actions completed autumn term 2022:

- Continued support offered to school staff from the Research Officer
- Monitor Hwb to allow access to new schools
- Continue to monitor Google Classroom
- Update training videos when required

Adverts will be placed on October Bulletin for schools to sign up to the November KPR training sessions.

Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL)

The RILL research team commenced Phase 2 work at the start of May 2021. They have now completed the adaptations to the original asynchronous/synchronous version of RILL initially developed in 2020 during lockdown.

Thirty-three schools have been trained in RILL (58 teachers) during the 2021-22 school year, with the majority being Welsh medium.

During 2021-22 RILL focused on training new schools to implement the programme. Training consisted of asynchronous tasks, a live full-day training session with the RILL team (max 5 teachers per online session), and a short follow-up discussion. Weekly drop-in sessions were also available to those who required further and continuous support. We also conducted some in person training within participating schools.

In addition to a Hwb network where teachers can access information and training materials, ask questions, and reflect on their experience, a new website has been created that includes information and support materials for schools, teachers, and parents. The website also contains materials for parents to use with children at home – including two new vocabulary words, a story, and discussion points to encourage interaction and the use of oral language. These materials complement the Welsh medium RILL materials and are intended to be set as homework by the teacher prior to the lesson. For non-Welsh speaking parents, English descriptions/translations are included, as well as videos to support low confident readers.

We have also developed and piloted a battery of online assessments to capture impact data for RILL.

In 2022-23, the first objective is to expand RILL to provide a 15-week tech-based language and literacy Welsh programme to disadvantaged children (i.e., non-Welsh-at-home, low SES and ability) and to test its effectiveness in improving Welsh language and reading skills. We have begun to successfully recruited 20 schools to commence this work in October 2022. We will also be recruiting a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring term 2023.

To help target schools use an evidence-informed study and revision strategies

This project is aimed at gathering feedback and information on the feasibility of using a new set of practice testing (iStER) resources to help learners improve GCSE mathematics outcomes. We will commence work with staff at Ysgol Caergybi this term and further training for learners is scheduled for November 2022.

OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

Supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve practice

PEER ENGAGEMENT

Continue to further develop peer review processes in schools in order to support robust self-evaluation actions and improvement planning on all levels.

Continue to develop leadership capacity across the system.

Embed peer review as a key aspect of school improvement across the region.

For the last four years there has been agreement with Headteachers on a series of regional principles for peer engagement. A model of peer review and improvement planning was agreed (the School Partnership Programme [SPP]) for stakeholders, approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee.

All GwE SIAs have received continuous training and support on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching.

By September 2022, 29 SIAs have been trained as peer reviewers and improvement facilitators as part of the SPP. All new staff members have received SPP refresher training.

During October 2021, 13 SIAs were trained to deliver the programme, and following a programme of observing training during April 2022 the first SPP training programme entirely facilitated by GwE staff was delivered to cohort 3b during May 2022. By September 2022, 10 additional SIAs have received training to deliver the programme. This means that 33 SIAs can now deliver the SPP programme successfully. Following this increased capacity to deliver the programme, initial training was delivered to 90 schools in cohort 3C by a team of GwE facilitators.

By September 2022, 37 clusters/alliances (206 schools) have received SPP training and they have already undertaken peer review, or are preparing to undertake peer review during the autumn term 2022. 266 Headteachers / senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers across the region. 226 senior leaders / middle leaders and proficient teachers have been trained as improvement facilitators. This has enabled leaders and teachers to benefit from professional education of a high standard and it will contribute to improving leadership capacity across the region. By September 2022 both the first and second tier of primary schools and clusters involved in the programme have received extended training for their improvement facilitators, with the focus on developing increasing and effective use of research in their improvement workshops.

There is a programme in place to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and the Referral Units. The intention is to train approximately 15 clusters every term during the 2021-22 academic year, and in 2022-23. The Programme will be aligned to developing a new curriculum in order to support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress towards the reform journey. To this end a series of reflection questions with a focus on the reform journey have been created in alignment with the peer process, and schools receiving the training are signposted to the curriculum prompts that are part of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.

In September 2021, schools and clusters not already involved in the programme were asked to express an interest in participating in SPP training. A total of 33 clusters across the region expressed interest, which included 193 regional schools. Therefore, by the end of September 2022, half of the region's schools have received initial training and are starting, or have started, their peer review and improvement planning work.

Four clusters / alliances have been identified to be included in a case study on research into the impact of the programme in 2022-23. A researcher from the Education Development Trust will complete this work on behalf of the region.

COACHING AND MENTORING

Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards

The National Coaching Programme has been shared with schools and GwE staff - training to commence soon. Information on level 5 and 7 qualifications has been shared with schools and GwE staff. Information on the level 3 qualification will be shared following 'Train the Trainer' sessions. Supervision Sessions and an invitation to the Good Practice Group have been shared, and Reflective Spaces sessions shared with schools and GwE staff.

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

Continue to collaborate with Welsh Government, Estyn and the relevant regional LAs on the national multi-agency pilot for secondary schools in Special Measures and on Stage 3 support for those schools recently taken out of category.

In collaboration with LA Officers, further strengthen regional structures and processes to support and challenge primary and secondary SCC.

Planning and delivering the new curriculum for Wales.

Collaboration with Welsh Government, Estyn and the regional LAs are continuing on the national multi-agency approach for secondary schools in Special Measures and on Stage 3 support for those schools recently taken out of category. Collaboration with LA Officers is also continuing to further strengthen and ensure a higher level of consistency in regional structures and processes to support and challenge primary and secondary SCC.

Currently there are 4 secondary schools in Special Measures. It is not anticipated that any of the 4 schools will be removed from category during this educational year.

Work is continuing with Stage 3 'sustainable exit' support for the schools recently taken out of statutory category.

2022-23 bespoke 'holistic' support plans for all of the schools noted above is currently being discussed and will be finalised by mid-October. Plans will also ensure that all schools are effectively engaging with key partners as they plan and deliver their new curriculum and will ensure increasing engagement with alliance/cluster and wider networking for improving leadership, provision and the quality of teaching and learning.

SCHOOLS AND SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS (SLO)

Ensure that GwE and its workforce continue to embrace all the requirements and values of a Learning Organisation.

Assist schools across the region to gain a deeper understanding of what being a Learning Organisation entails so that it becomes a natural part of the school culture.

Further strengthen our partnership with HEIs and develop students' awareness of SLOs

Following analysis of GwE staff responses in the Learning Organisation questionnaire, it emerged that 'establishing a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration' is the dimension to be developed further. During the pandemic, this aspect has strengthened considerably, with the service having repurposed itself 7 times during this period in order to respond to schools' needs. Consequently, GwE SIAs have had to conduct research into alternative methods of supporting schools during this unsettling time and it has led to innovative work in the use of ICT. The 4 transversal themes of Time, Technology, Trust and Thinking Together have been vital during this time in order to further strengthen the partnership between the service and schools.

The engagement with schools during the pandemic has had to be very sensitive due to all the managerial pressure of ensuring the health and well-being of pupils and staff comes first. A knock-on effect is that schools have developed naturally in a number of dimensions e.g. establishing a culture of enquiry, extending use of systems, promoting team learning and developing a shared vision. The 4 transversal themes have also developed considerably - especially the technology element. Schools will now be further supported to look at and further develop their culture of enquiry through exemplifying the work of the NPEP schools and also signposting effective practice within the region.

The electronic SLO survey has received a soft launch by Welsh Government given the difficult period all schools have endured during the pandemic. Engagement with the survey so far has been quite low and is an aspect which will need further promotion during next terms work and will be a natural part of schools processes as they develop their work around Curriculum for Wales. We plan to introduce recap sessions for all interested schools either through recorded webinars or asynchronous sessions.

Further developmental work needs to be done with our HEI partners to look at Schools as Learning Organisations and to ensure that our students have a deeper understanding of SLOs and their values.

OBJECTIVE 6 – BUSINESS

Ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

Information sharing systems

A dashboard with KS4 and KS5 examination results was shared at the beginning of term. It is intended to develop and release dashboards for KS4 indicators and regional schools' PLASC data during the term, which will enable staff to harness the required information quickly.

Performance Management and Accountability

The clear and robust accountability framework is a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.

There are detailed self-evaluation arrangements. Plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact. Staff on all levels fully understand their responsibility for continued improvement and accountability.

Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.

Self-evaluation is a strong feature in GwE and the self-evaluation process is cyclical and ongoing. Great emphasis is placed on accountability and continuous review, and there is consistent emphasis on progress in line with priorities. Consequently, GwE leaders accurately identify areas of good performance and areas for development, or areas where there is an element of risk in terms of improving experiences and educational outcomes for learners.

Value for Money

The consortium has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation on financial arrangements is effective, and GwE staff, the host local authority and Joint Committee all review the core funding and grant expenditure on a regular basis.

A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium-term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through increasingly effective use of data to identify key priorities, the link between the business planning process and decisions regarding financial planning is strengthened as the work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.

A formal framework was produced to assess the wider value for money provided by GwE. The judgement is now consistent across all stakeholders on how to measure the value for money of GwE activities within the structure and objectives of the business plan.

Risk Register

There are rigorous and comprehensive arrangements in place to accurately identify and manage risks on a local, regional and national level. The risk register is a live document, which is updated on a regular basis in order to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is reviewed every month in a senior leadership meeting and the Management Board and the Joint Committee review the register on a quarterly basis.

Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and meet the outcomes as intended.

2. APPENDIX:

Regional Data



GwE

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GwE Business Plan 2022-2023 Regional Data Quarter 2



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2022-2023 BUSINESS PLAN

REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2022-2023

Regional Data for Quarter 2

OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

CONTINUUM OF EDUCATION 3 to 16

Regional data:

Attendance figures for GwE Regional Transition workshop: 157

CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)

Regional data:

6 steps of curriculum realisation:

GwE Summary No. of Schools	All Schools 404	On-track
		On-track
1. Identifying the unique factors of the school / setting and how these contribute to the four purposes.		99.5%
2. Reviewing the vision, values and behaviours to support curriculum realisation.		98.9%
3. Understanding of curriculum design considerations including mandatory elements and school linguistic policy.		98.6%
4. Review curriculum design models and investigate the suitability for their specific school / setting.		97.0%
5. Considering the role of progression, assessment and pedagogy in their local curriculum / context.		94.0%
6. Designing, planning and trialing their proposed curriculum model, evaluating initial designs and developing medium term plans.		93.0%

AOLE TEAMS

Regional data:

Attendance at Regional Meetings

21/9/21 – 132 attendees
 6/10/21- 115 attendees
 16/11/21 – 117 attendees
 14/12/21 – 130 attendees
 2/3/22 – 116 attendees
 5/4/22 – 112 attendees
 27/4/21 – 115 attendees
 7/6/22 – 105 attendees
 29/6/22 – 101 attendees

The total number of practitioners involved in the networks remains at 806 which includes GwE, LA and CABAN colleagues.

OBJECTIVE 2- DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION**Improving the teaching & learning in our schools****MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES****Regional data:**

Power Language - 2 year subscription: 105 schools

Power language Training primary- Power Language: Number of schools registered to date (29 teachers)

Upskilling primary: Number of schools registered to date - 10 teachers

OU 2022-2023: Number of schools - 14 teachers

Year 8/9 Mentoring – interest: 25 schools (4 reserves)

Designing for languages programme: Number of schools registered to date - 34 teachers

Creating across Languages project - 2022-2023

Number of schools interested, to date: 3

Let's take Languages: Uni day for year8/9:

Number of schools interested, to date - 300 pupils

HLTA - TALP**Regional data:**

Newly appointed teaching assistants: 11

Assistants at work: 88

Aspiring HLTA Cohort 4: 26

HLTA Status Cohort 3: 27

Aspiring HLTA Cohort 5: 39

HLTA Assessors: 31

Introduction to Curriculum for Wales: 207

Google classroom for assistants

Regional numbers:	1845 by Summer 2022
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Y Gymraeg (PL)**Regional data:**

Ein Llais Ni – case studies presented: 65

A LEVEL**Regional data:**

6 Head of 6th form attending the National Mid/Post 16 Leadership Programme.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**Regional data:**

KiVa Anti-Bullying Research Project: 30

DIGITAL**Regional data:**

Percentage of schools in the region that engaged with Hwb during quarter 2 - 98.08%

MATHS AND NUMERACY**Regional data:**

	Number of schools	Number of visits
Primary Individual subject school support	0	0
Secondary Individual school support	12	17

ENGLISH AND LITERACY**Regional data:**

Primary bespoke support visits: 5

Secondary bespoke visits and PL: 17

WELSH AND LITERACY**Regional data:**

Welsh Language Leaders Network 'On demand' meeting following WJEC CPD training (as well as the number who attended training): 17

Welsh Language Teachers' Support Network in English medium schools: 3

'Ein Llais Ni' Project (GwE) - the number of secondary schools that are part of the project: 14

Siarter Iaith Secondary – virtual meeting 21.09.22: 8

'Design for CiG Languages' training – representation from secondary school Welsh departments: 14

Online meeting for NQT teachers in English medium schools (6.10.22): 5

Members of the Teams / Google Classroom 'GwE - Y Gymraeg - Uwchradd': 27

Members of Teams / Google Classroom 'GwE - Y Gymraeg - Secondary' - membership of this digital network for English-medium schools continues to increase: 17

SCIENCE**Regional data:**

STEM Gogledd Webinar 5 (07.07.22): Developing a STEM community of Employers and Business Links with schools: 17 attendees.

AGES 3-8

Regional data:

Summer Term Network: Approx.

- Welsh 139
- English 151

School support

No of schools	No of visits
25	36

Cluster support - no of schools: 36

OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

LEADERSHIP

Regional data:

2021-22 COHORT

	2021-22
1.Middle Leadership Development Programme	102
2.Senior Leaders Development Programme	72
3.Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (preparing for NPQH	35
4.New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme	32
5.Experienced Headteacher Development Programme	17
TOTAL	258

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

RE-IGNITE LEARNING

Regional data:

Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

Fifty two schools and 66 teachers have signed up and had access to online training videos, and intervention resources to download for use in their schools. The number of teachers that have accessed the Google classroom is as follows:

- 63 have accessed the English resources
- 41 have accessed the Welsh resources.

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR): 45

A breakdown of the numbers of teachers, parents and online resource views is as follows:

	07/2021	07/2022
Number of schools who have renewed licence(s) since September 2021	30	15
Number of pupils joined Google Classroom	40	40
Number of staff joined Hwb	71	73
Video Guide views: Headsprout at home (Parents and staff)	399	513
Video Guide views: How to use Headsprout stories (Parents)	106	363
Video Guide views: How to conduct Benchmarks (Parents)	18	46
Video Guide views: How to conduct Fluency Building (Parents)	13	54
Video Guide views: How to set up a free trial/buy or renew a licence (School Staff)	65	77
Video Guide views: How to add pupils to the programme (School Staff)	84	135
Video Guide views: How to check scores (School Staff)	39	85
Video Guide views: How to input Benchmark scores (School Staff)	16	25
Video guide views: How to access Google Classroom (Parents)	33	50
Webinar 1 Getting started with Headsprout	-	2
Webinar 2 Progress monitoring when using Headsprout	-	0

Regional data:**Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL)**

Thirty-three schools have been trained in RILL (58 teachers) during the 2021-22 school year, with the majority being Welsh medium.

OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF IMPROVING SYSTEM

Supporting a system in which the education profession have the skills, capacity & agency to continually learn & improve their practice

PEER ENGAGEMENT**Regional data:**

Number of schools / clusters / alliances that are part of the programme: 206 / 37

Number of Peer Reviewers trained: 266

Number of Improvement Facilitators trained: 226

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN**Regional data:**

Secondary schools in Special Measures: 4

Primary schools in Special Measures: 1



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2022

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Intention to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform Joint Committee members regarding the intention to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure.

2.0 Background

2.1 Staff in the Local Authorities and GwE adapted their work in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities during the COVID pandemic. During this time, GwE kept true to their vision and values as an organisation that is continually learning. The OECD's transversal themes of Trust, Thinking Together, Time and Technology remained at the heart of the work with schools and partners. The service in its entirety had to re-focus several times during the COVID period to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders. The ability to be flexible and agile and to work effectively together in different teams, often cross sector, had significant impact on organisational behaviour and external perception. As we continue to support schools in the wake of the pandemic, it is timely to review the current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that we continue to evolve and develop in order to effectively support schools post COVID.

2.2 As we undertake national reform and continue to support schools to implement the new curriculum, it's clear that we are in a different place to the one that we imagined when the guidance for the Curriculum for Wales was published. We recognise that some of the

preparation time for the curriculum will have been devoted to managing the impact of the pandemic over the past few years. On the other hand, with an even stronger focus on well-being and significant investment in teaching and learning, the values under-pinning the curriculum have been at the heart of how schools have been working. GwE is fully committed to supporting schools and PRUs to maintain this momentum to ensure that every learner in North Wales is offered provision of the highest quality. We have recognised that our Professional Learning will need to evolve to offer a more limited centrally delivered provision with an enhanced school to school (and cluster to cluster) professional learning offer. We see the following areas as our key regional Professional Learning Offer over the next few years: Improving Learner Skills; Improving the Learner Experience; Pedagogy; Equity and Wellbeing; ‘*Y Gymraeg*’; Assessment and Learner Progression and Leadership Development. Professional learning will be key in supporting schools to implement and move forward their School Development Plan priorities. A support plan will be agreed with every school and setting in line with the requirements of the School Improvement Guidance (June 2022).

2.3 The new national ‘School Improvement Guidance (June 2022)’ provides a point of reference for schools, pupil referral units, local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn, which outlines the Welsh Government’s expectations of them in contributing to school improvement, in the context of their wider legal duties. The overarching purpose of school improvement is to help schools give learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes, whatever their background, in order to achieve high standards and aspirations for all. Under the Curriculum for Wales, a fundamental part of this will be ensuring that schools support every learner to make progress, contributing to the four purposes. The guidance supports that objective by setting out a framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability that will deliver sustainable school improvement and drive behaviours and practices that are required by the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. To be successful, it is crucial that all aspects of the school system are aligned with and support the new curriculum and its underlying principles. The Welsh Government plans to update the guidance, building on learning in 2022/23 and 2023/24, and to issue it as statutory guidance to come into force in September 2024. It is therefore timely that GwE reviews its operational arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that it can effectively address the requirements of the guidance.

3.0 Matters for consideration

3.1 A review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure is needed to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to:

- ensure that schools are effectively supported post COVID to address the impact of the pandemic on learners' progress and wellbeing;
- ensure that schools are effectively supported to implement the new curriculum and all aspects of the reform journey;
- address national expectations for school improvement as outlined in the recently published 'School Improvement Guidance (June 2022)'; and to
- build upon the strong foundations of a collaborative way of working that has been established regionally as we move towards a self-improving system.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note the content of the report and permit the service to move forward to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any new operating model will be funded via existing and future resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 GwE will follow Host Authority procedures in any restructuring of the service.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 GwE staff will be fully consulted during the review process if the Joint Committee agree to proceed.

9.0 Schedule

9.1 Operational during the first quarter of the next financial year.

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

The intention to review the staffing structure is noted and I confirm that approving the GwE staffing structure is one of the functions of the Joint Committee itself.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I welcome the intention to review GwE's operating arrangements and staffing structure in the context of an ever-changing situation. Officers from Finance services will assist GwE with this work as required. I note that part 5 of the report confirms that there are no financial implications arising from the report, and that GwE will operate within their current financial resources when undertaking the review.



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2022

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Letter to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide the Joint Committee with a formal record, following discussions and a decision made at the previous meeting on 05/10/22, in relation to the letter sent to the Minister for Education and Welsh language on 11/10/22.

2.0 Background

- 2.1. The letter (Appendix 1) on behalf of GwE's Joint Committee, sent to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, expressed concern regarding the increasing pressures on the leaders and staff of our schools, and especially so as Estyn resumes its inspection cycle.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The letter very much welcomed what is highlighted in the new School Improvement Guidance, especially the tone of the document. It also welcomed greatly the direction His Majesty's Chief Inspector is setting for the regulatory body.
- 3.2. The thrust of the correspondence was to draw attention to the risk that the new inspection cycle presents to the implementation and realisation of many of the positive steps that the guidance requires of us.
- 3.3. The Joint Committee is fully aware that there are no easy solutions to many of the challenges listed but the region is keen to engage in a positive and productive way with the Welsh Government and Estyn to identify and define the most positive way forward.

3.4 To date, the Joint Committee has not received a response to the letter.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to formally note the content of the letter and to consider whether any further correspondence is needed.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board, the Joint Committee and Regional Headteachers.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Letter to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language dated 11.10.22

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Nothing to add to the report from the perspective of financial propriety.



11/10/2022

Annwyl Weinidog,

Ysgrifennwn atoch ar ran Cyd-Bwyllgor GwE, sydd yn cynnwys y chwe deilydd portffolio addysg ar draws Gogledd Cymru, i'ch hysbysu o'n pryder a'n consyrn am y pwysau cynyddol sy'n disgyn ar arweinwyr a staff ein hysgolion ac yn enwedig felly wrth i Estyn ail-gydio yn eu cylch arolygu.

Rydym yn croesawu yn fawr yr hyn gaiff ei amlygu yn y *Canllaw Gwella Ysgolion* newydd ac yn arbennig felly tŷn a naws y ddogfen. Mae'r cynnwys yn gosod cyfeiriad a disgwyliadau clir i ni oll ac yn amlygu'n ddeheuig a chywrain y diwylliant a'r ymddygiad y dylid ei arddel gan bob partner a rhanddeiliad sydd yn gweithredu oddi fewn i'r gyfundrefn addysg. Mae'r canllaw yn sicr yn cynnig cam cadarnhaol ymlaen.

Rydym hefyd yn croesawu yn fawr y cyfeiriad y mae Prif Arolygydd ei Fawrhydi yn ei osod ar gyfer y corff rheoleiddio. Roedd hi'n chwa o awyr iach cael ei glywed yn rhannu ei weledigaeth hefo ni yn ein cynhadledd i arweinwyr yn Llandudno diwedd Medi.

Byrdwn ein neges yn yr ohebiaeth hon ydy tynnu eich sylw at y risg y mae cylch arolygu newydd yn ei gyflwyno i weithredu a gwireddu llawer o'r camau cadarnhaol y mae'r canllaw yn ei ofyn ohonom ac yn enwedig felly os na ellir sicrhau bod gweledigaeth a deisfyiadau y Prif Arolygydd yn cael eu rhoi ar waith ymhob arolygiad ar draws pob sector.

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you on behalf of the GwE Joint Committee, which includes the six portfolio holders for education across North Wales, to inform you of our concern about the increasing pressures on the leaders and staff of our schools and especially so as Estyn resumes its inspection cycle.

We very much welcome what is highlighted in the new School Improvement Guidance, especially the tone of the document. The content sets clear direction and expectations for us all and skilfully highlights the culture and behaviour that should be espoused by all partners and stakeholders who operate within the education system. The guidance certainly offers a positive step forward.

We also welcome greatly the direction His Majesty's Chief Inspector is setting for the regulatory body. It was a breath of fresh air to hear him share his vision with us at our conference for leaders in Llandudno at the end of September.

The thrust of our message in this correspondence is to draw your attention to the risk that a new inspection cycle presents to the implementation and realisation of many of the positive steps that the guidance requires of us and especially so if it cannot be ensured that the Chief Inspector's vision and requests are implemented in every inspection across every sector.



Dros y ddwy flynedd diwethaf, mae prosesau a gweithdrefnau gwerthuso a gwella mewn ysgolion wedi gorfod cael eu haddasu a'u cymhwyso i ymateb i'r sefyllfaoedd wirioneddol heriol yr oedd y sectorau yn eu hwynebu. Diau, ymhob ysgol, y gorfu i uwch arweinwyr saernïo ffocws ac egni ar reoli risg ac ar sicrhau diogelwch a lles eu dysgwyr a'u staff.

Ystyrier yr her i arweinwyr fod yn gwerthuso ansawdd ac effaith y dysgu a'r addysgu oddi fewn i batrwm gwaith:

- pan am gyfnodau helaeth o'r flwyddyn roedd pawb adref ac yn gweld ei gilydd ar sgrin yn unig.
- ble am gyfnod roedd y plant mewn swigod ac yn methu cyd-weithio'n effeithiol yn y dosbarth mewn parau a grwpiau.
- pan fo pawb am gyfnod yn gorfod gwisgo mwgwd neu orchudd wrth gyfathrebu.
- pan fo'r athro am ran o'r flwyddyn yn gorfod gweithredu tu ôl i sgrin blastig ym mhen blaen y dosbarth.
- pan nad oedd modd i athro gyflwyno adborth ysgrifenedig ar bob llyfr a thasg.
- pan fo angen cadw llyfrau am dros 72 awr cyn mynd ati i'w craffu.
- pan oedd hanner y plant yn bresennol yn y dosbarth ond yr hanner arall yn gorfod gweithio o adref.

Enghreiffiau yn unig o senarios ydy'r uchod, wrth gwrs, ond maent oll yn amlygu'n glir pa mor anodd oedd cynnal prosesau hunan-werthuso cadarn a phwrpasol a fyddai'n fecanwaith ar gyfer gwella. Mewn rhai ardaloedd mwy difreintiedig, roedd yr heriau i arweinwyr yn sylweddol ddwysach wrth gwrs.

Pan yn arolygu ysgolion a lleoliadau mae gweithredu Estyn yn ddarostyngedig i ofynion y Fframwaith Arolygu – a honno yn fframwaith sydd brin wedi newid o ran gofynion a disgwyliadau ers y cyfnod cyn Covid.

Over the past two years, schools' evaluation and improvement processes and procedures had to be adapted and applied to respond to the really challenging situations that the sectors were facing. Undoubtedly, in every school, senior leaders had to re-direct focus and energy on risk management and on ensuring the safety and well-being of their learners and staff.

Consider the challenge leaders face in evaluating the quality and impact of learning and teaching within a work pattern:

- *when, for large periods of the year, everyone was at home and only saw each other on screen.*
- *when, for a period, the children were in bubbles and unable to work together effectively in the classroom in pairs and groups.*
- *when everyone, for a period, had to wear a mask or face-covering when communicating.*
- *when the teacher, for part of the year, had to teach behind a plastic screen at the front of the class.*
- *when it wasn't possible for a teacher to provide written feedback on each book and task.*
- *when books needed to be kept for over 72 hours before they were scrutinised.*
- *when half the children were present in the classroom but the other half had to work from home.*

Of course, the above are only examples of scenarios, but they all clearly highlight how difficult it was to carry out robust and purposeful self-evaluation processes that would be a mechanism for improvement. In some more deprived areas, the challenges for leaders were, of course, significantly more intense.

When inspecting schools and locations, Estyn's work is subject to the requirements of the Inspection Framework - a framework that has hardly changed in terms of requirements and expectations since the pre-Covid period.



Yn y tymor byr, mi rydan ni yn pryderu am pa mor barod ydy llawer o'n hysgolion i fod yn gallu ymateb yn hyderus i'r gofynion a'r disgwyliadau sy'n cael eu hamlygu yn y fframwaith a'r risg sy'n deillio o hynny.

Prin yw'r ysgolion sydd wedi cyrraedd man lle maent yn gallu gweithredu gyda'r un hyder a'r un miniogrwydd â'r hyn welwyd cyn y pandemig. Mae ein trafodaethau gyda phenaethiaid rhanbarthol yn amlygu'n glir y sefyllfaoedd wirioneddol heriol maent yn eu hwynebu ers Medi ac ymhlith y prif gonsyrn fynegir ganddynt gellir rhestru:

- dysgwyr yn ei chael yn anodd ymgysylltu hefo'u dysgu
- ymddygiad yn fwy heriol nag y bu erioed
- presenoldeb yn anghyson
- problemau iechyd meddwl ar gynydd ac ar daflwybr wirioneddol bryderus
- dysgwyr mwyaf bregus, ac eraill, wedi colli gafael neu lithro'n ol mewn sgiliau sylfaenol megis llafaredd a darllen
- trosiant sylweddol mewn arweinyddiaeth - a phenaethiaid ac arweinwyr newydd wedi dod i mewn i'r gyfundrefn ond hefo fawr ddim profiad o weithredu yn y rôl tu hwnt i'r gweithredu 'gweithredol' 'welwyd dros Covid.

Pan fo Estyn yn ymweld ag ysgol, oddi fewn i Faes Arolygu 1 byddant yn canolbwyntio ar safonau a chynnydd mewn dysgu ac yn benodol felly yn y medrau. Ymhob ysgol bron, mae yna bryder am y cynnydd hwnnw oherwydd effaith andwyol dwy flynedd o bandemig.

Oddi fewn i Faes Arolygu 2 byddant yn edrych ar les dysgwyr a'u hagweddau at ddysgu. Rydan ni eisoes yn gwybod bod hyn yn destun pryder ar draws nifer uchel o ysgolion.

Oddi fewn i Faes Arolygu 5 byddant yn mesur pa mor effeithiol y mae arweinwyr wedi bod

In the short term, we are concerned about how prepared many of our schools are to be able respond confidently to the requirements and expectations that are highlighted in the framework and the risk that results from that.

There are few schools that have reached a point where they can operate with the same confidence and sharpness as what was seen before the pandemic. Our discussions with regional heads clearly highlight the truly challenging situations they have been facing since September and among the main concerns expressed by them are:

- *learners find it difficult to engage with their learning*
- *behaviour is more challenging than ever*
- *attendance is inconsistent*
- *mental health problems on the rise and on a truly worrying trajectory*
- *the most vulnerable learners, and others, have lost their grasp or slipped back in basic skills such as oracy and reading*
- *significant turnover in leadership - new headteachers and leaders have come into the system but have little experience of acting in the role beyond the 'operational' actions which were required of them during Covid.*

When Estyn visits a school, within Inspection Area 1 they will focus on standards and progress in learning and specifically in skills. In almost every school, there is concern about this progress due to the adverse effects of two years of pandemic.

Within Inspection Area 2 they will look at the well-being of learners and their attitudes to learning. We already know that this is a cause for concern across a large number of schools.

Within Inspection Area 5 they will measure how effectively leaders have been maintaining high



yn cynnal ansawdd uchel neu'n gwella agweddau gwan yn y ddarpariaeth. Eto, mae'n hysbys i ni oll, ymhob ysgol bron, mai llithriadau yn hytrach na chynnydd sydd i'w weld ar draws sawl agwedd.

Yn ychwanegol i hyn, nid oes unrhyw arweiniad wedi'i gyflwyno gan Estyn o ran sut bydd cyd-destun ysgol yn cael ei gymryd i ystyriaeth pan fo gweithgareddau arsylwi a chraffu yn digwydd ganddynt mewn arolygiad. Mae hwn yn fater o wir bryder i ni oll ac yn gosod yr ysgolion hynny sydd yn gweithredu oddi fewn i'r ardaloedd mwyaf difreintiedig o dan anfantais sylweddol. O leiaf gyda'r model hanesyddol o ddadansoddi data cyflawniad, roedd modd edrych ar berfformiad ysgol yng nghyd destun ysgolion tebyg. Nid felly pan fo craffu ac arsylwi yn digwydd a'r tebygolrwydd ydy bod cymhwyso cyd-destun yn disgyn ar fymppyw arolygyr unigol.

Croesewir crisialder hefyd ar y pwynt dilynol - oddi fewn i'r drefn ddiwygiedig o arolygu, os bydd ysgol wedi adnabod diffygion neu lithriadau [boed hynny mewn sgiliau neu ddiffyg cynnydd ymhlith grwpiau o ddysgwyr neu mewn agweddau at ddysgu] ac os bydd ysgol yn gallu tystio eu bod yn gweithredu cynlluniau i fynd i'r afael â'r diffygion yna ond nad ydy effaith y gweithredu hwnnw i'w weld mewn safonau hyd yma - a fydd hynny yn debygol o'u cadw allan o unrhyw weithgaredd dilynol? Ynte a fydd y ffaith NAD oes effaith ac 'impact' ar safonau yn golygu'r angen i ymweliad pellach ymhen y flwyddyn? Os mai'r diwethaf sy'n wir, yna rhagwelir cynnydd sylweddol a chyflym yn y ganran o ysgolion fydd yn cael eu gosod mewn categori neu ddilyniant.

Mewn cyfnod pan fo recriwtio a dargadwad yn cyflwyno her sylweddol i ni oll, fe allai hyn arwain at nifer nid ansylweddol o arweinwyr ac athrawon yn cymryd y penderfyniad anffodus i adael y proffesiwn.

quality or improving weak aspects of the provision. Again, as is known to all of us, in almost every school, it is slippages rather than progress that can be seen across many aspects.

In addition to this, no guidance has been presented by Estyn in terms of how the context of a school will be taken into account when lesson observation and scrutiny activities are carried out by them during an inspection. This is a matter of real concern for all of us and places those schools that operate within the most deprived areas at a significant disadvantage. At least with the historical model of analysing attainment data, it was possible to look at a school's performance in the context of similar schools. Not so with scrutiny and observation and the likelihood is that the application of context would be at the whim of individual inspectors.

Clarity would also be welcomed on the following point - within the revised inspection process, if a school has identified shortcomings or slippages [whether they be in skills or a lack of progress among groups of learners or in attitudes to learning], and if a school is able to evidence that they are implementing plans to tackle those shortcomings but that the effect of that action is not reflected in standards to date - will that be likely to keep them out of any follow-up activity? Or will the fact that there is NO impact on standards mean that there is a need for a further visit within a year? If the latter is true, then a significant and rapid increase is predicted in the percentage of schools that will be placed in a category or follow-up.

At a time when recruitment and retention present a significant challenge to us all, this could lead to a not inconsiderable number of leaders and teachers taking the unfortunate decision to leave the profession.



Rydym yn llawn sylweddoli nad oes datrysiadau rhwydd i lawer o'r heriau gaiff eu rhestru ond rydym yn awyddus i ymgysylltu mewn modd cadarnhaol a chynhyrchiol hefo Llywodraeth Cymru ac Estyn i adnabod ac i ddiffinio y ffordd mwyaf cadarnhaol o symud ymlaen.

Gallwn eich sicrhau, yn gwbl ddidwyll, y cewch ein cefnogaeth lawn ac edrychwn ymlaen at dderbyn eich sylwadau fel ein bod oll yn gallu cyd-weithio'n effeithiol i wireddu disgwyliadau y *Canllaw Gwella Ysgolion* newydd.

Yn gywir,

Cyng. Julie Fallon (Cyngor Bwrdeistrefol Sirol Conwy) a Chadeirydd Cyd-Bwyllgor GwE
Cyng. Ian Roberts (Cyngor Sir y Fflint)
Cyng. Beca Brown (Cyngor Gwynedd)
Cyng. Ieuan Williams (Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn)
Cyng. Phil Wynn (Cyngor Bwrdeistrefol Sirol Wrecsam)
Cyng. Gill German (Cyngor Sir Ddinbych)

Copi i:

Owain Lloyd - Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a'r Iaith Gymraeg, Llywodraeth Cymru
Owen Evans - Prif Arolygydd Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

We are fully aware that there are no easy solutions to many of the challenges listed but we are keen to engage in a positive and productive way with the Welsh Government and Estyn to identify and define the most positive way forward.

We can assure you, in all good faith, that you will have our full support and we look forward to receiving your comments so that we can all work together effectively to realise the expectations of the new School Improvement Guidance.

Yours sincerely,

*Cllr. Julie Fallon (Conwy County Borough Council) and Chair of Joint Committee
Cllr. Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council)
Cllr. Beca Brown (Gwynedd Council)
Cllr. Ieuan Williams (Anglesey County Council)
Cllr. Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council)
Cllr. Gill German (Denbighshire County Council)*

Copy to:

*Owain Lloyd - Director of Education and the Welsh Language, Welsh Government
Owen Evans – His Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales*

