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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 2019/20 are presented here on pages 7 to 35. The Statements of Accounts are prepared in accordance with CIPFA's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20*.

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 2019/20 :

Conwy	15.30%
Denbighshire	15.26%
Flintshire	22.71%
Gwynedd	17.64%
Anglesey	10.20%
Wrexham	18.89%
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 2020.
- **The Cash Flow Statement** - This statement summarises the flow of cash to and from the Joint Committee during 2019/20 for revenue and capital purposes.

These accounts are supported by this Narrative Report, the Accounting Policies and various notes to the accounts.

GwE's Vision and Priorities

GwE's vision states that they we will have:

“Outstanding schools naturally collaborating and jointly identifying direction for improvement which will deliver excellent standards and wellbeing for their pupils”.

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>

Financial Strategy

The annual budget is established within the context of the medium-term financial strategy, in order to ensure that the budget is preparing for the future position, rather than addressing the requirements of one year only. This medium-term planning has proven to be very beneficial to the GwE, enabling it to plan necessary savings rationally, without having to take rushed/inappropriate decisions, and establishing a regime to identify budgetary savings and cuts. GwE's Medium Term Financial plan sets out the foundation for its priorities, and is available at:

<https://democracy.cyngor.gwynedd.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=243&mid=2494&ver=4>

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.

2019/20 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:

<https://www.gwegogledd.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20200520-GwE-Agenda.pdf>

2019/20 Financial Performance

- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on page 8 shows that the Joint Committee's gross revenue expenditure on 'cost of services' level was £15,159k during 2019/20, with a net position of £608k.
- The financial out-turn position for 2019/20 was reported to the Joint Committee at its meeting on 20 May 2020. Joint Committee Members' approval was sought to transfer the (£190k) underspend to an earmarked reserve.
- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement on pages 8 and 9 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	14,541	14,361	(180)
Income			
Council Contributions for the core service:			
Conwy	(625)	(625)	0
Denbighshire	(623)	(623)	0
Flintshire	(927)	(927)	0
Gwynedd	(720)	(720)	0
Anglesey	(417)	(417)	0
Wrexham	(772)	(772)	0
Other Income	(10,457)	(10,467)	(10)
Net (Underspend)/Overspend	0	(190)	(190)

TABLE 2 –Transposition movement between ‘Budget and Actual Comparison Summary (Net)’ (Table 1) to the Income and Expenditure format

	Performance Report (Out-turn) £'000	*Transposition Adjustment £'000	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £'000	Income & Expenditure Statement £'000
Expenditure	14,361	(180)	14,181	978	15,159
Income	(14,551)	0	(14,551)	0	(14,551)
Net Cost of Services	(190)	(180)	(370)	978	608

* The adjustments in the transposition column relate to contributions to and from reserves, and the Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis column relate to the required technical adjustments for pensions and accumulated absences.

- **Material Items of Income and Expenditure**

Related Items include :-

- (£1,800k) on pensions, being the annual remeasurement of the net defined benefit assets relating to pensions, in line with Gwynedd Pension Fund’s Actuary’s assessment (Note 16).
- £14,551k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 21). A decrease of £1,514k compared to 2018/19.

- **Other Issues**

- There are financial risks with the global situation. Because of this general situation, it has been necessary for the Joint Committee to take the circumstances into consideration in its financial plans, whilst maintaining a prudent level of reserves.
- Since the referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union, there has been a degree of economic uncertainty. This is expected to last for some time and may affect some factors and financial decisions made by the Joint Committee.
- The arrival of the COVID-19 crisis presents a further financial challenge for the Joint Committee in the short and medium term.

Provisions and Reserves

The Joint Committee has provisions of £3k and earmarked reserves of £711k. These are detailed in the Balance Sheet, Movement in Reserves Statement and in Notes 9 and 14.

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 £600k to £8,304k in 2019/20. Refer to Note 25 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 taking place at 31 March 2022.

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 12.

Changes in Accounting Policies and to the Accounts

The Joint Committee's existing accounting policies are amended only insofar as to reflect the guidance in the 2019/20 CIPFA 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

Hywyn Lewis Jones
Group Accountant
01286 679145

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.

15 September 2020

Councillor Phil Wynn
GwE Joint Committee Chairman

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 2020 and the Joint Committee's income and expenditure for the year then ended.



Dafydd L. Edwards B.A., C.P.F.A., I.R.R.V.
Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

8 September 2020

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.

2018/19				2019/20		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis (see Note 7)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	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
4,264	662	4,926	Employees	4,364	907	5,271
297	0	297	Property	288	0	288
193	0	193	Transport	197	0	197
2,558	0	2,558	Supplies and Services	1,611	0	1,611
8,560	0	8,560	Third Parties	7,721	0	7,721
0	0	0	Non-distributed Costs	0	71	71
(16,065)	0	(16,065)	Income	(14,551)	0	(14,551)
(193)	662	469	Cost of Services	(370)	978	608
0	191	191	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	225	225
(193)	853	660	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(370)	1,203	833
(148)			Opening General Fund Balance	(341)		
(193)			(Surplus)/Deficit on General Fund in Year	(370)		
(341)			Closing General Fund Balance	(711)		

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.

2018/19				2019/20		
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure		Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£'000	£'000	£'000	Note	£'000	£'000	£'000
4,926	0	4,926	Employees	5,271	0	5,271
297	0	297	Property	288	0	288
193	0	193	Transport	197	0	197
2,558	0	2,558	Supplies and Services	1,611	0	1,611
8,560	0	8,560	Third Parties	7,721	0	7,721
0	0	0	Non-distributed Costs	71	0	71
0	(16,065)	(16,065)	Income	0	(14,551)	(14,551)
16,534	(16,065)	469	Cost of Services	15,159	(14,551)	608
191	0	191	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	225	0	225
16,725	(16,065)	660	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	15,384	(14,551)	833
		1,313	Remeasurement of the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)			(1,800)
		1,313	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(1,800)
		1,973	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(967)

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	Unusable Reserves	Total Joint Committee's Reserves
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance 31 March 2018 carried forward		(148)	6,827	6,679
<u>Movement in reserves during 2018/19</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		660	0	660
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	1,313	1,313
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		660	1,313	1,973
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	8	(853)	853	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		(193)	2,166	1,973
<i>(Increase)/Decrease in 2018/19</i>		(193)	2,166	1,973
Balance 31 March 2019 carried forward	9	(341)	8,993	8,652
<u>Movement in reserves during 2019/20</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		833	0	833
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	(1,800)	(1,800)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		833	(1,800)	(967)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	8	(1,203)	1,203	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	9	(370)	(597)	(967)
<i>(Increase)/Decrease in 2019/20</i>		(370)	(597)	(967)
Balance 31 March 2020 carried forward		(711)	8,396	7,685

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 Authority 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'.

31 March 2019 £'000		Note	31 March 2020 £'000
0	Long-term Debtors		0
0	Long-term Assets		0
265	Short-term Debtors	11	476
2,872	Cash and Cash Equivalents	12	2,557
3,137	Current Assets		3,033
(2,421)	Short-term Creditors	13	(1,909)
(3)	Short-term Provisions	14	(3)
(461)	Grants Receipts in Advance	21	(502)
(2,885)	Current Liabilities		(2,414)
(8,904)	Pension Liability	25	(8,304)
(8,904)	Long-term Liabilities		(8,304)
(8,652)	Net Assets		(7,685)
(341)	Usable Reserves	15	(711)
8,993	Unusable Reserves	16	8,396
8,652	Total Reserves		7,685

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.

2018/19 £'000		Note	2019/20 £'000
660	Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services		833
(3,260)	Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	17	(518)
(2,600)	Net cash flows from Operating Activities		315
(1)	Investing Activities		0
(2,601)	Net (Increase)/Decrease in cash and cash equivalents		315
(271)	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(2,872)
(2,872)	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		(2,557)

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

I.1 General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Joint Committee's transactions for the 2019/20 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2020. The Joint Committee is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20*, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

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 employees render 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 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 two separate pension schemes:

- The Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Westminster Government's Department for Education.
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by the Gwynedd Pension Fund at Gwynedd Council.

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

However, the arrangements for the teachers' scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be identified to the Joint Committee. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contributions scheme and no liability for future payment of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to the Teachers' Pension Scheme in the year.

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 2.3% 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. Known uncollectable debts are written off against the Joint Committee. These provisions are classified 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

Jointly controlled operations are activities undertaken in conjunction with other venturers that involve the use of the assets and resources of the venturers rather than the establishment of a separate entity. The GwE Joint Committee has been categorised as a Joint Operation.

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.

NOTE 2 – CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY

The Joint Committee’s existing accounting policies are amended only insofar as to reflect the guidance in the 2019/20 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 2020/21 Code:-

Amendments to IAS 28 Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures: Long-term Interests in Associates and Joint Ventures

Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2015-2017 Cycle

Amendments to IAS 19 Employee Benefits: Plan Amendment, Curtailment or Settlement.

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2020 and therefore there is no impact on the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts, and none of the new or amended standards within the 2020/21 Code are expected to have a material impact on the information provided in the financial statements.

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. The impact of the decision for Britain to leave the European Union also remains unclear. The effects of COVID-19 at the end of March 2020 has been another factor to consider.

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, earmarked reserves, provisions and contingent liability. 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 2020 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:

- **Pension Liability** – The Pension Liability position as contained within the accounts is based on a number of complex assessments and judgements and varying profiles such as discount rate used, projected salary levels, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on Pension Fund assets, as provided by Actuaries engaged by the Pension Fund. Further details are contained in Notes 24 and 25.

NOTE 6 – MATERIAL ITEMS OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

Related items include:-

- (£1,800k) on pensions, being the remeasurements of the net pension defined benefit assets relating to pensions, in line with Gwynedd Pension Fund's Actuary's assessment (Note 16).
- £14,551k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 21). A decrease of £1,514k compared to 2018/19.

NOTE 7 – NOTE TO THE EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
2019/20				
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i) £'000	Other Differences (ii) £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts				
Employees	0	904	3	907
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	71	0	71
Income	0	0	0	0
Cost of Services	0	975	3	978
Other Operating Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	225	0	225
Taxation and non-specific grant income	0	0	0	0
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	0	1,200	3	1,203

ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
2018/19				
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i) £'000	Other Differences (ii) £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts				
Employees	0	652	10	662
Property	0	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0
Third Party	0	0	0	0
Income	0	0	0	0
Cost of Services	0	652	10	662
Other Operating Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	191	0	191
Taxation and non-specific grant income	0	0	0	0
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	0	843	10	853

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* 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.

2019/20		
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 25)	(1,796)	1,796
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	596	(596)
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	(3)	3
Total Adjustments	(1,203)	1,203

2018/19		
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 25)	(1,437)	1,437
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	594	(594)
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	(10)	10
Total Adjustments	(853)	853

NOTE 9 – TRANSFERS TO/FROM EARMARKED RESERVES

The note below sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans, with a net increase of £370k.

Earmarked Reserves

	GwE Joint Committee Reserves £'000
Balance 31 March 2019	341
<u>Transfers: In</u>	<u>370</u>
Balance 31 March 2020	711

NOTE 10 – FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2018/19		2019/20
£'000		£'000
<u>191</u>	Net interest on the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)	<u>225</u>
191	Total	225

NOTE 11 – SHORT-TERM DEBTORS

	31 March 2019 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Trade Receivables	142	91
Prepayments	49	70
Other Receivable Amounts	74	315
Total	265	476

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
	2019	2020
	£'000	£'000
Cash in Hand	2,872	2,557
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,872	2,557
Bank Overdraft	0	0
Total	2,872	2,557

NOTE 13 – SHORT-TERM CREDITORS

	31 March	31 March
	2019	2020
	£'000	£'000
Trade Payables	417	430
Other Payables	2,004	1,479
Total	2,421	1,909

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
	2019	Transfer	year	2020
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Short-term Provisions				
Green Car Scheme Provision	(3)	0	0	(3)
	(3)	0	0	(3)

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

NOTE 15 – USABLE RESERVES

The Movement in Reserves Statement details the movements in the Joint Committee's usable reserves.

NOTE 16 – UNUSABLE RESERVES

31 March 2019		31 March 2020
£'000		£'000
(8,904)	Pensions Reserve	(8,304)
(89)	Accumulated Absences Account	(92)
(8,993)	Total Unusable Reserves	(8,396)

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. A debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore would show 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.

2018/19		2019/20
£000		£000
(6,748)	Balance 1 April	(8,904)
(1,313)	Re-measurements of the net pension defined benefit (liabilities) / assets (Note 25)	1,800
(1,437)	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	(1,796)
594	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	596
(8,904)	Balance 31 March	(8,304)

NOTE 16 – 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

2018/19		2019/20
£000		£000
(79)	Balance 1 April	(89)
(10)	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	(3)
(89)	Balance 31 March	(92)

NOTE 17 – CASH FLOW STATEMENT: ADJUSTMENTS TO NET SURPLUS OR DEFICIT ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR NON-CASH MOVEMENTS

2018/19		2019/20
£'000		£'000
1,825	(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	512
(4,045)	Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	211
(843)	Pension Liability	(1,200)
(197)	Other non-cash items charged to net surplus/deficit on the provision of services	(41)
(3,260)		(518)

NOTE 18 – EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE

The Head of Finance authorised the Statement of Accounts on 3 June 2020. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2020, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

NOTE 19 – OFFICERS’ REMUNERATION

19a. The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 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:

2018/19				Chief Officers	2019/20		
Employer’s		Other			Employer’s		
Salary	Pension	Employer	Total		Salary	Pension	Total
£	£	Costs	£		£	£	£
100,333	22,675	0	123,008	Chief Officer	100,896	22,803	123,699

19b. 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 2019/20 or 2018/19.

Number of other employees who received more than £60,000 and includes remuneration and termination benefits:			
Number in 2018-19		Number in 2019-20	
Total		Total	
10	£60,000 - 64,999	8	
4	£65,000 - 69,999	3	
0	£70,000 – 74,999	1	

NOTE 20 – EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

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

2018/19		2019/20
£'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

Deloitte have been appointed by the Auditor General for Wales as Gwynedd Council’s, and subsequently GwE’s, external auditor.

NOTE 21 – GRANT INCOME

21a. The Joint Committee credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

	2018/19		2019/20	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Grants and Contributions Credited to Services				
Welsh Government -				
Pupil Development Grant - Looked After Children	874		970	
Pupil Development Grant - Strategic Adviser	0		100	
Other	263		153	
		1,137		1,223
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant - Welsh Government (excluding the EIG)		7,077		5,824
Education Improvement Grant (EIG)				
Welsh Government	2,002		1,836	
Match funding from Councils	1,232		1,165	
		3,234		3,001
Other Government Grants and Contributions -				
Sports Council for Wales	10		1	
Education Workforce Council	309		251	
Arts Council for Wales	0		5	
		319		257
Other Grants and Contributions				
Councils' Contributions towards the Core Service				
Conwy	633		625	
Denbighshire	626		623	
Flintshire	932		927	
Gwynedd	725		720	
Anglesey	420		417	
Wrexham	778		772	
		4,114		4,084
Other Grants and Contribution		184		162
Total Grants and Contributions Credited to Services		16,065		14,551

NOTE 21 – GRANT INCOME (continued)

21b. 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 provider. The balance at the year-end is as follows:

	31 March 2019 £'000	31 March 2020 £'000
Grants and Contributions Received in Advance		
<u>Short-term</u>		
Newly Qualified Teachers Programme	344	493
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	117	0
Other	0	9
Total	461	502

NOTE 22 – 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.

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 2019/20 and balances as at 31 March 2020 is as follows:

Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
£'000	£'000	£'000
183	2	0

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 2019/20 no payments were made or owed by the Joint Committee for the related bodies.

NOTE 23 – EXIT PACKAGES

There were no exit packages in 2019/20 or 2018/19.

NOTE 24 – PENSION SCHEMES ACCOUNTED FOR AS DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES

Teachers employed by the Joint Committee are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by the Government's Department for Education. The scheme provides teachers with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Joint Committee contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries.

The scheme is technically a defined benefit scheme. However, the scheme is unfunded and the Department for Education uses a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by local authorities. The Joint Committee is not able to identify its share of the underlying financial position and performance of the scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Financial Statement, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

No members of staff employed by the Joint Committee were part of the Teachers' Pension Scheme during 2019/20, and therefore no contributions were made, (In 2018/19 the Joint Committee paid £10k in respect of teachers' pension costs, which represented 16.48%, of teachers' pensionable pay). In addition the Joint Committee is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms for the teachers' scheme. There were no such costs in 2019/20 or 2018/19. These costs are accounted for on a defined benefits basis and are included in Note 25.

NOTE 25 – 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 Joint Committee.

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 Committee's 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 25 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

Change in the Fair Value of Plan Assets, Defined Benefit Obligation and Net Liability	Period ended 31 March 2019			Period ended 31 March 2020		
	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fair Value of Plan Assets	15,969	0	15,969	17,783	0	17,783
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(22,717)	(22,717)	0	(26,687)	(26,687)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Opening Position at 1 April	15,969	(22,717)	(6,748)	17,783	(26,687)	(8,904)
Service Cost						
Current Service Cost*	0	(1,246)	(1,246)	0	(1,500)	(1,500)
Past Service Costs (including curtailments)	0	0	0	0	(71)	(71)
Total Service Cost	0	(1,246)	(1,246)	0	(1,571)	(1,571)
Net interest						
Interest Income on Plan Assets	437	0	437	433	0	433
Interest Cost on Defined Benefit Obligation	0	(628)	(628)	0	(658)	(658)
Total Net Interest	437	(628)	(191)	433	(658)	(225)
Total Defined Benefit Cost Recognised in Profit/(Loss)	437	(1,874)	(1,437)	433	(2,229)	(1,796)
Cash flows						
Plan participants' contributions	260	(260)	0	273	(273)	0
Employer contributions	568	0	568	599	0	599
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Paid	(345)	345	0	(433)	433	0
Unfunded Benefits Paid	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expected Closing Position	16,889	(24,506)	(7,617)	18,655	(28,756)	(10,101)
Remeasurements						
Change in demographic assumptions	0	0	0	0	1,036	1,036
Change in financial assumptions	0	(2,181)	(2,181)	0	2,480	2,480
Other experience	0	0	0	0	(686)	(686)
Return on Assets excluding amounts included in net interest	894	0	894	(1,033)	0	(1,033)
Total remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income (OCI)	894	(2,181)	(1,287)	(1,033)	2,830	1,797
Fair Value of Employer Assets	17,783	0	17,783	17,622	0	17,622
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(26,687)	(26,687)	0	(25,926)	(25,926)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities**	0	0	0	0	0	0
Closing Position at 31 March	17,783	(26,687)	(8,904)	17,622	(25,926)	(8,304)

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

** The unfunded liabilities comprise of £0 in respect of LGPS unfunded pensions and £0 in respect of Teachers' unfunded pensions.

NOTE 25 – 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 IAS 19. 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 GwE is assumed to be in the same proportion to the Fund's asset allocation as at 31 December 2019. The split is shown in the table below. The Actuary estimates the bid value of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2020 to be £1,947m, 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 2019				At 31 March 2020			
	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	443	0	443	2	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	532	0	532	3	0	0	0	0
Energy and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Institutions	208	0	208	1	0	0	0	0
Health and Care	1,137	0	1,137	6	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	311	0	311	2	0	0	0	0
Other	604	0	604	3	0	0	0	0
Debt Securities								
Other	0	2,584	2,584	15	0	0	0	0
Private Equity								
All	0	965	965	5	0	1,103	1,103	6
Real Estate								
UK Property	565	1,061	1,626	9	0	1,729	1,729	10
Overseas Property	0	9	9	0	0	2	2	0
Investment Funds and Unit Trusts								
Equities	3,460	5,097	8,557	48	0	11,760	11,760	67
Infrastructure	0	350	350	2	0	400	400	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	2,536	2,536	14
Cash and Cash Equivalents								
All	457	0	457	3	92	0	92	1
Total	7,717	10,066	17,783	100	92	17,530	17,622	100

NOTE 25 – 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 1.25% 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 2019. 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 2019	31 March 2020
Financial Assumptions	% p.a.	% p.a.
Pensions Increase Rate	2.5	1.9
Salary Increase Rate	2.5	2.2
Inflation Rate	2.5	1.9
Discount Rate	2.4	2.3
Long-term expected rate of return on all categories of assets	2.4	2.3
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	22.0	21.3
Women	24.2	23.4
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners		
Men	24.0	22.2
Women	26.4	25.1

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 2020 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 25 – 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 2020	31 March 2020
	%	£'000
0.5% decrease in real discount rate	11	2,737
0.5% increase in the salary increase rate	2	401
0.5% increase in the pension increase rate	9	2,305

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 2020		Weighted Average Duration
	£'000	%	
Active Members	14,213	54.8	26.0
Deferred Members	2,893	11.2	27.0
Pensioner Members	8,820	34.0	15.0
Total	25,926	100.0	22.0

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 25 – 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 2021 is £780k.

In April 2017, the Joint Committee made a payment of £394k to the Gwynedd Pension Fund to cover the fixed element of the employer contributions for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20. By making this payment, the Joint Committee benefited from a lower contribution rate than would have otherwise been calculated.

As the Actuary's report is based on estimates and due to timing issues, an adjustment of £3,067 has been made in 2019/20 (£25,800 in 2018/19) 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.

McCloud and Sargeant Legal Judgements

The Gwynedd Fund's salary growth assumption at the 2016 valuation were equal to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and therefore, in 2018/19, no allowance was made for the McCloud/Sargeant judgements. But at the 2019 valuation, the salary increase assumption was increased above CPI, therefore Gwynedd Council have now recognised a liability for the McCloud/Sargeant judgements for the first time in their 2019/20 accounts. The approximate impact of this judgement has been included within the past service cost figure that is reported within the surplus/deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

APPENDIX A

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 Councils' 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 2020 and up to the date of approval of the 2019/20 statement of accounts.

Part 3: THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

3.1 GwE has used the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016) in compiling its Annual Governance Statement. The Framework comprises two Core Principles and five Supporting Principles:

Core principles

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law; and
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Supporting principles

- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
- Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control, and strong public financial management; and
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

3.2 GwE has applied these principles to structure its Annual Governance Statement for financial year ending 31 March 2020 and to assess the arrangements in place.

3.3 GwE has a range of governance arrangements in place, many of which are set out in the Inter Authority Agreement and / or are part of the governance arrangements of Gwynedd Council (as host authority).

Table 1 – Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within GwE

Good Governance Principles	Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within GwE
Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law.	<p>By signing the Inter Authority Agreement, the Councils have agreed that they would maintain their relationship in accordance with the following principles of good governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	<p>Forward plans for committee meetings together with the matters to be considered, where appropriate.</p> <p>Full stakeholder engagement via various forums both within & outside the formal governance structure, e.g. Headteacher</p>

	Forums & the User Groups.
Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;	Performance Management Framework 3 year business plan & annual business plans Quarterly business plan monitoring reports to the Joint Committee
Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;	Regular risk management updates to the Joint Committee Medium Term Financial Plan Annual budgetary plan Scrutiny Committees Challenge & Review sessions with Welsh Government. Children And Young People's Committee LA Estyn Inspections / Improvement Conferences Estyn Local Authority / Link Visits Categorisation Process / Moderation County Quality Board's
Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	3 Year Business Plan Annual Business Plan Self-evaluation process & annual report preparation Annual Report
Managing risks and performance through robust internal control, and strong public financial management	Risk Register updates Annual Report Internal audit Host authority financial regulations Medium Term Financial Plan
Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.	Statement of accounts Annual Governance Statement Production of reports on key areas of business Internal & external audit Independent external evaluations throughout the year, e.g. Steve Munby Local Authority Scrutiny Committees

3.4 Functions

3.4.1 The Councils have signed an agreement on 13 February 2013 to formalise each of their roles and responsibilities in respect of the Service, and have appointed Gwynedd Council the Host Authority for operating and maintaining the Service in accordance with the terms of the agreed Final Business Case.

3.4.2 The agreement is comprehensive, and includes information on governance and administrative aspects of the Joint Committee. The agreement is the foundation of GwE's governance framework within which GwE operates and allocates responsibility and accountability, as follows:

- The GwE Joint Committee;
- The GwE Management Board;
- The GwE User Group(s);
- The Host Authority.

3.5 Membership

3.5.1 The Councils have entered into an Agreement to establish and implement GwE pursuant to the powers conferred on them by Section 9 of the Local Government Wales Measure 2009, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and associated Regulations.

3.5.2 Membership of the Joint Committee includes one member each from Isle of Anglesey County Council, Gwynedd Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, and Wrexham County Borough Council with voting rights.

3.5.3 The Statutory Chief Education Officers, one from each local authority in North Wales, are currently officer members without voting rights.

3.5.4 One Diocese Representative, one Primary Schools Representative, one Secondary Schools Representative, one Special Schools Representative and one Governor Representative are co-opted non-voting members.

3.6 Principles

By signing the agreement, the Councils have agreed that they would maintain their relationship in accordance with the following principles of good governance:

- **Openness and Trust**
In relation to the Agreement the Councils will be open and trusting in their dealings with each other, make information and analysis available to each other, discuss and develop ideas openly and contribute fully to all aspects of making the joint working successful;
- **Commitment and Drive**
The Councils will be fully committed to working jointly, will seek to fully motivate employees and will address the challenges of the Service with drive, enthusiasm and a determination to succeed;
- **Skills and Creativity**
The Councils recognise that each brings complementary skills and knowledge which they will apply creatively to achieving the Councils' objectives, continuity, resolution of difficulties and the development of the joint working relationship and the personnel working within it;
- **Effective Relationships**
The roles and responsibilities of each Council will be clear with relationships developed at the appropriate levels within each organisation with direct and easy access to each other's representatives;
- **Developing and Adaptive**
The Councils recognise that they are engaged in what could be a long term relationship which needs to develop and adapt and will use reasonable endeavours to develop and maintain an effective joint process to ensure that the relationship develops appropriately and in line with these principles and objectives;

- Reputation and Standing

The Councils agree that, in relation to this Agreement and the Service generally, they shall pay the utmost regard to the standing and reputation of one another and shall not do or fail to do anything which may bring the standing or reputation of any other Council into disrepute or attract adverse publicity to any other Council;

- Reasonableness of Decision Making

The Councils agree that all decisions made in relation to this Agreement and the Service generally shall be made by them acting reasonably and in good faith;

- Necessary Consents

Each Council hereby represents to the other Councils that it has obtained all necessary consents sufficient to ensure the delegation of functions and responsibilities provided for by this Agreement; and

- Members and Officers' Commitments

Each Council shall use its reasonable endeavours to procure that their respective members and officers who are involved in the Service shall at all times act in the best interests of the Service, and respond in a timely manner to all relevant requests from the other Councils.

3.7 The Host Authority

3.7.1 The Inter Authority Agreement states that the Councils have agreed, with effect from the Commencement Date of the service, that Gwynedd Council will be the Host Council for the Service which shall be carried out for and on behalf of itself and the Councils and Gwynedd Council agrees to act in that capacity subject to and in accordance with and to the extent provided for by the terms of this Agreement. For the avoidance of doubt the role of Host Council includes:

- subject to the indemnities and warranties act as the employing authority for any staff engaged in the discharge of the Service's functions (appointing, employing or accepting the secondment of staff) in accordance with this Agreement;
- being the legal point of contact for the purposes of managing the Service;
- providing such administrative resources and facilities that may be necessary for the purpose of discharging the Service and hold all central funds;
- providing such Human Resources Services that may be necessary for the purpose of discharging the Service and hold all central funds;
- provide senior officers who will act as Secretary, Monitoring Officer, and Treasurer (who will also be the Section 151 Officer) for the Service and who will therefore act as the primary legal and financial advisers to the Service;
- power to enter into contracts for supplies and services as required for the purposes of the Service.

3.7.2 For the avoidance of doubt the duties and responsibilities of the Host Authority pursuant to this agreement shall only bind the Host Authority to the extent that they have been resourced by the Councils through this Agreement.

3.7.3 Save and except where otherwise required by law all staff employed by the Host Authority pursuant to this agreement shall be employed on the Host Authority's relevant terms and conditions of employment and related staff policies including salary structures.

3.7.4 If the Host Council defaults and the Agreement is terminated in respect of it pursuant to Clause 2 (Termination) or the Host Council withdraws pursuant to Clauses 21 or 22 (Withdrawal), then a replacement Host Council will be appointed by the Councils and the withdrawing/defaulting Host Council will not have the right to vote in regard to any such appointment.

3.7.5 For the duration of this Agreement, the Host Council shall act diligently and in good faith in all its dealings with the other Councils and

3.7.6 For the duration of this Agreement, the other Councils shall act diligently and in good faith in all their dealings with the Host Council and shall use their reasonable endeavours to assist the Host Council to support the Service.

3.8 Officer Conduct

To ensure a consistent approach to working practices & processes, all officers are subject to the terms & conditions of employment (which are based on Gwynedd Council's operating terms and conditions).

Part 4: ASSESSING THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

4.1 GwE has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.

4.2 In line with the Core and Supporting Principles of the Framework, the approach taken to assess GwE's arrangements has been:

- Provide a brief description of the arrangements and procedures in place;
- Examine and document the main activities that have taken place around these areas, taking account of supporting evidence from GwE's internal processes and audit reports.
- Form a view on the extent to which the activities comply with the procedures in place; and
- Make proposals for improvement.

4.3 Gwynedd Council is the Host Authority of the Joint Committee. As a result, therefore, reviews of the effectiveness of the Local Code of Governance, the Constitution and the system of internal control of that authority will also incorporate the basis of the Joint Committee's governance.

4.4 The effectiveness of GwE's governance arrangements is set out in section 5.

Part 5: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Progress made to implement recommendations reported in the 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement

5.1.1 The 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement identified areas where improvements were deemed necessary to further reinforce the effectiveness of GwE's current arrangements.

5.1.2 These were detailed in the GwE Business Plan for 2019/20 & Risk Register and in particularly Strategic Objective 6, i.e. ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

5.1.3 During the year plans were reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact; the Joint Committee received reports on progress at their meetings.

5.1.4 As at 31 March 2020, progress had been made against all of the improvements & will be further developed during 2020/21.

5.1.5 Based on the above, it is considered that overall, sufficient progress has been made during 2019/20 in the delivery of the proposals for improvement with the requirement for further work to be completed in 2020/21. Details of which are included in Part 7 of this statement.

5.2 Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law.

5.2.1 GwE follows 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.

5.2.2 GwE, supported by the host authority, has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and decision making is effective. This includes, ensuring minutes of meetings are accurate; publishing online meeting programmes & reports in advance of meetings; making decisions based on evidence based reports; and publishing the minutes of meetings. A review

of a sample of GwE Joint Committee meetings during the year confirmed that the procedures had been followed.

5.2.3 GwE adopts the employment policies of the host authority. All officers starting with GwE are provided with an induction & staff handbook. In addition, a Professional Review process is in place for all staff & is reviewed on a termly basis.

5.2.4 Staff quality assurance processes continue to develop and evolve in line with national developments and principles. 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.

5.2.5 In the event that an officer decides to operate outside the intended terms and conditions of employment, arrangements were in place for officers to 'blow the whistle' through the host authority's Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure. In addition to the Whistleblowing policy, there were arrangements in place to tackle potential fraud, bribery & corruption.

5.2.6 GwE follows the host authority's gifts & hospitality policy and arrangements were in place, via registers, to record gifts and hospitality in line with the Policy.

5.2.7 GwE has adopted the following personal and service values:

- Impartiality
- Fairness
- Respect for diversity
- Being supportive and cooperative
- Bilingualism
- Objectivity
- Insistent on high standards
- Honesty.

These personal and service values are included within all job descriptions; & are used to inform discussions as part of the Professional Review process.

5.2.8 The Managing Director leads the GwE officers & chairs the Senior Leadership Team.

5.2.9 During the 2019/20 financial year, one senior post holder left their position. Following an internal review of the Senior Leadership Team, it was agreed by the Joint Committee that the position not be filled. This reduction of one senior role contributed towards GwE meeting its requirements in terms of permanent savings.

5.3 Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

5.3.1 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 on the principles of openness, transparency and honesty.

5.3.2 General Data Protection Regulation

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018.

GwE follows the guidance from the host authority; formally records the lawful basis upon which data / information is processed within suites of documents called Data Protection Registers; and has 'Privacy Notices' that are available on the website setting out how it intends to use information and how it will deliver its services and statutory responsibilities. The Business Senior Leadership Team within GwE ensures GDPR compliance, working closely with the host authority statutory information management officer. It is considered that this approach continues to support GwE in complying with the GDPR and demonstrates openness and transparency when dealing with its customers.

5.3.3 GwE, supported by the host authority, operates a Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 publication scheme in accordance with legislative requirements. During 2019/20, 2 FOI requests were received and were responded to within 20 working days.

5.3.4 A Full Business Case has been provided for the Service, dated March 2012, with the business case showing evidence that clear objectives have been established and are SMART and that an appropriate work programme is in place.

5.3.5 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. A 3 Year Business Plan, 2017-2020 is in place for the service which has been approved by the Joint Committee (03/10/17) & Welsh Government. The Business Plan ensures an appropriate work programme (annual business plan) is in place & monitoring reports are presented to the Joint Committee at their meetings. GwE consulted on its vision and priorities for 2019/20 and the Annual Business Plan 2019/20 was approved by the Joint Committee on 20 February 2019.

5.3.6 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. During 2019/20, the Joint Committee has received quarterly business plan updates. Based on the updates provided, it is considered that appropriate and regular information is made available to the Joint Committee to review and challenge performance and hold management to account.

5.3.7 Looking ahead, uncertainty is expected on future year resources levels provided by the UK Government to Welsh Government due, primarily to the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit. GwE has a medium term financial plan which is updated as required. It will be imperative to revisit the medium term financial plan at the appropriate time in order to re-model options & help frame medium term service planning.

5.3.8 GwE has a forward work plan of committee meetings and the Joint Committee meeting of 20 February 2019 agreed the annual meetings calendar for 2019/20.

5.3.9 The GwE Joint Committee is the main decision body & has appropriate membership. The terms of reference of the Joint Committee set out some of its responsibilities together with a list of members of the Joint Committee and voting rights. The role of the Authorities has been identified in the Agreement.

5.3.10 During 2019/20 the Joint Committee met on the following dates:

- 22/05/19
- 08/07/19
- 11/09/19
- 17/11/19
- 26/02/20

During these meetings, the Joint Committee received 31 reports, all of which were published on the host authority & GwE's website prior to the meetings. Key decisions were also taken by the GwE Management Board. A sample of the GwE Joint Committee reports was reviewed & confirmed that a consistent format was used.

5.3.11 Based on the above information, it is considered that the decision making arrangements operated during 2019/20 were open & transparent, & compliant with the Inter Authority Agreement.

5.3.12 As a result of the adoption of the National Model for Regional Joint Working the governance structure of GwE was reviewed. This involved creating an Advisory Board and a Management Board and a review of the structure of the Joint Committee. The review of the agreement is in the process of being formalised.

5.3.13 The Service follows Gwynedd Council complaints procedure. During 2019/20 no complaints have been received.

5.3.14 Schools provide feedback via the User Group that has been established to provide support to the Joint Committee as well as challenge. Appropriate representatives from secondary and primary schools of the 6 authorities belong to the user group.

The User Group is operating effectively because:

- It has the right to report and make recommendations to the Joint Committee on any matter within the scope of functions of the Service.
- The group met on the following dates:
 - 03/04/19 (primary)
 - 21/06/19 (secondary)
 - 20/09/19(primary)
 - 20/09/19 (secondary)
 - 09/12/19 (primary)
 - 28/01/20 (primary)
- The group includes:
 - 6 Secondary representatives, one from each Authority
 - 6 Primary representatives, one from each Authority
 - 1 representatives of Special Schools
 - School Governors - 1 representative per Council.

5.3.15 GwE encourage stakeholder engagement & feedback via a broad range of communication & engagement methods. Examples include: attendance at Headteacher federation meetings; focus group discussions on specific areas; weekly bulletin; social media etc.

5.3.16 It is proposed that the formalisation of the governance review is finalised.

5.4 Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

5.4.1 The draft regional priorities for 2019/20 were approved by the Joint Committee at their meeting on the 20th of February 2019. The regional business plan (level 1) sets out the priority areas for improvement across the region, these were defined as:

- Developing a high-quality education profession
- Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards
- Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being
- Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system
- Transformational Curriculum
- Business

5.4.2 GwE's base budget for the 2019/20 financial year was approved by the Joint Committee at their meeting on the 20th of February 2019.

5.4.3 In addition to the level 1 business plan, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core lead. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is reviewed regularly in meetings between the core lead and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.

5.4.4 The regional business plan set out the priorities across the region. These priorities are those at Level 1 and are the responsibility of the Managing Director and Chair of the Management Board to deliver as the accountable officers. The Joint Committee are ultimately accountable for the delivery against the priorities.

5.4.5 Annual Level 2 and 3 plans sit below the Level 1 plan and give more detailed information with regard to national, regional and local priorities. The Level 2 and 3 plans provide detail with regard to the actions to be delivered and the outputs and success criteria to be achieved. The 3 level business planning framework developed ensures accountability for delivery and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively.

5.4.6 During 2019/20, the Joint Committee has received quarterly business plan updates. Based on the updates provided, it is considered that appropriate and regular information is made available to the Joint Committee to review and challenge performance and hold management to account. The information is also made public.

5.5 Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

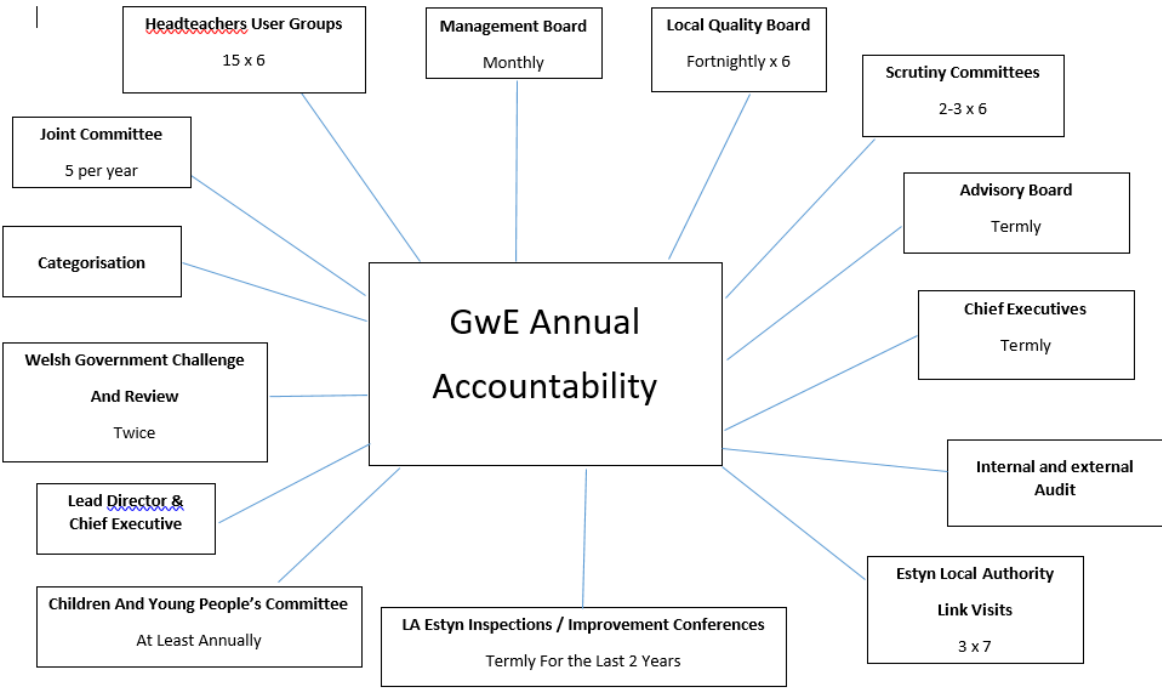
5.5.1 The clear and robust accountability framework in a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and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

5.5.2 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.

5.5.3 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 reviewed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.

5.5.4 Performance reports were presented to the Joint Committee & LA Scrutiny Committees during 2019/20, with reports also presented to Welsh Government as part of the Challenge & Review meetings. The Welsh Government annual autumn Challenge and Review meetings are chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Education focusing on performance, progress, planning and budgets in the context of national priorities. The last meeting was very positive and it was expressed that it had set a high bar, demonstrating the political maturity of the Joint Committee.

5.5.5 The diagram below illustrates the annual accountability reporting completed by GwE during 2019/20.



5.5.6 Based on the above, it is considered that the information published during 2019/20 would provide opportunity for stakeholders to understand GwE's performance & hold it to account.

5.5.7 At the Joint Committee meeting held on the 11th of September 2019, the Joint Committee approved the efficiency savings target implementation plan. The cumulative total savings of £206,485 was therefore applied to the core budget in 2019/20. With this context in mind, GwE allocated resources & put in place arrangements to maximise its impact.

5.6 Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership & the individuals within

5.6.1 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.

5.6.2 Quality Assurance processes continue to develop and evolve in line with national developments and principles. 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.

5.6.3 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.

5.6.4 A Professional Review process is in place for all staff & is reviewed on a termly basis. Staff are encouraged to participate in various professional development activities during the year.

5.6.5 During 2019/20, specific training was provided to members & Scrutiny members by GwE & also by Welsh Government.

5.6.6 It is proposed that staff development continues & is built upon during the next year ensuring that staff receive any new support requirements / developments as a result of Covid-19.

5.7 Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

5.7.1 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.

5.7.2 Under the agreement, the Service's Managing Director will report annually to the Joint Committee and to each individual Council on the performance of the Service in undertaking Functions and achieving Key Service Objectives.

5.7.3 The Annual Report for 2018/19 was presented to the Joint Committee at their meeting on 22/05/2019.

5.7.4 The membership & meeting frequency of the GwE Joint Committee during 2019/20 was in line with the Inter Authority Agreement.

5.7.5 GwE function under the corporate policies of the host authority, including information management. GwE also have in place specific documentation relating to their work, e.g. WASPI Data Disclosure agreement relating to the disclosure of personal pupil information contained within the School Statutory returns, Local Authority and Schools Management information systems and other educational data systems including tracking systems (e.g. FFT, Incerts).

5.7.6 At the balance sheet date, GwE function under the corporate policies of the host authority, including financial procedure rules.

5.7.7 Internal Audit work is provided by the host authority’s Internal Audit service. One audit assignment was undertaken at GwE during 2019/20 – a review of travel expenses. The internal audit review gave a “limited assurance” opinion. As a result of the work, GwE has committed to reminding managers of the need to review travel expenses claims in order to mitigate the risks identified.

5.7.8 The Wales Audit Office audits GwE’s annual statement of accounts and the outcome from the audit reported to the Joint Committee.

5.7.9 GwE’s financial & operational performance is monitored and scrutinised by the GwE Joint Committee.

5.7.10 The latest audited statement of accounts (i.e. for the 2018/19 financial year) received an unqualified audit report and were approved at the meeting of the Joint Committee on the 11th of September 2019, this being in advance of the statutory deadline of the 15th of September.

5.7.11 The latest Wales Audit Office report ‘Audit of Financial Statements Report and Management Letter’ reported to the Joint Committee on the 11th of September 2019 concluded that the accounting statements and related notes:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018-19.

5.7.12 The 11th of September 2019 Wales Audit Office report make one recommendation to be addressed by GwE and the host authority.

Matter arising 1 – Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant - Education Improvement Grant element	
Findings	<p>GwE are the administering body for the new Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant, an element of which is be distributed by Gwynedd Council (acting as host authority) amongst the other North Wales Councils (GwE’s constituent local authorities). The 2018-19 award amount was £35,844k of which £26,638k relating to the Education Improvement Grant is redistributed. £24,636k was redistributed to the other local authorities in North Wales and £2,002k was retained by GwE. The basis of redistribution is agreed annually by the GwE Management Committee adjusting the prior years allocation by any cuts to the grant income from the Welsh Government. The figures are then confirmed as accurate by the finance department of each authority (we have evidenced this via review of email returns to GwE)</p> <p>Formal grant offer letters are not sent out to each authority confirming the EIG amount, however we have evidenced that annual EIG grant compliance returns are certified by each authority.</p> <p>We have agreed the fund transfers to bank statements and remittance advice and we are satisfied that the distribution is scrutinised by the GwE Management Committee, which includes representatives from each local authority, who would identify a material misstatement were there to be one. However, we have not been able to evidence the specific Management Meeting Committee meeting agenda item or meeting minutes explicitly confirming the approval of this allocation.</p>
Recommendation	<p>It is recommended that the GwE Management Board meetings include an agenda item to explicitly agree the annual EIG distribution.</p>

Priority	Low.
Benefit of Implementing Recommendation	To ensure that EIG redistribution is formally approved by the GwE Management Committee confirming the allocation is appropriate and in accordance with the GwE and the EIG priorities.
Accepted in full by management	Yes.
Management response	Agreed.
Implementation date	During 2019-20

The recommendation was agreed by Management & was implemented on 11 October 2019.

5.7.13 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.

5.7.14 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.

5.7.15 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.

5.7.16 It is proposed that the value for money framework is enhanced during the year in order to demonstrate further the prioritisation of resources.

5.8 Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

5.8.1 GwE has implemented an open and consistent approach to reporting its business, as set out in sections 5.4 & 5.5 of the Annual Governance Statement, with the aim of helping to ensure information is understandable to stakeholders and that they have the opportunity to challenge GwE's performance, plans and decisions.

5.8.2 A review of a sample of information reported to the Joint Committee has revealed that:

- Annual Reports and Plans are reported publicly, providing an overview of performance, for example;
- Performance management reports are reported quarterly & all information is made available publicly;
- The minutes of meetings confirm that designated officers attend each meeting to orally present reports and answer questions, and a number of occasions were noted where updates were delivered via presentations.

Part 6: SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

6.1 The processes outlined in previous sections of this statement describe the methods used by GwE to identify the most significant governance issues that need to be addressed.

6.2 Based on the assessment undertaken, it is considered that GwE's governance arrangements were fit for purpose and publicly demonstrated how they contributed to the delivery of improved school performance outcomes as set out in the Business Plan.

6.3 The overall conclusion has been based upon:

- An open approach to engaging with stakeholders, planning and delivering services, and reporting and scrutiny of GwE's performance;
- Clear arrangements for decision making that were supported by robust service management and financial management arrangements;
- The reporting of understandable priorities and ambition, as set out in GwE's Business Plan, with progress reports demonstrating improvement in outcomes and performance at the same time as maintaining financial stability;
- Sound arrangements to support elected Members and Officers in the effective discharge of their responsibilities and also in maintaining high standards of conduct when undertaking business on behalf of GwE;
- A medium term approach to financial planning that helped inform strategic decision making and prioritisation of resources.

6.4 Notwithstanding this overall position, the assessment has identified areas where improvements are deemed necessary to further reinforce the effectiveness of GwE's current arrangements. These are detailed in section 7.

6.5 The response to COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lives. In this challenging context, the education system and schooling has been significantly disrupted. On 23 March 2020, schools were re-purposed to support children of key workers and some vulnerable learners. School leaders have worked tirelessly to adapt to new arrangements and develop processes to support the learners and families within their homes and communities. GwE staff have also adapted their work in order to continue to provide services and support for all our school communities.

The main priorities and work streams for GwE during this period have been as follows:

- Phase 1: Pre-lockdown
- Phase 2: Supporting schools at the beginning of lockdown
- Phase 3: Distance Learning
- Phase 4: Supporting schools to re-open
- Phase 5: Blended Learning

A report was shared with the Joint Committee at their meeting on 15 July 2020, detailing the activities, outcomes and impact of our work since the lockdown began, covering the period 23 March 2020 to 22 May 2020 (Phase 1 – 4 above).

We see that Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) will have an evolving role over the coming months in supporting schools with the following aspects:

- Supporting distance learning and developing a blended approach to encompass distance learning and face to face learning
- Supporting the repurposing of schools
- Supporting Professional Learning (PL)

A further report will be presented to the Joint Committee in September 2020.

6.6 Governance arrangements in GwE have continued during COVID-19 with all meetings continuing via online platforms. No disruption to arrangements have been experienced.

6.7 Looking ahead the robust governance arrangements in place in GwE, together with implementing the proposals for improvement set out in section 7 below, will be critical in supporting the organisation to re-purpose and realign regional support and also continue to provide an effective school improvement service during the Covid-19 and recovery period.

Part 7: PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 Further to completing the assessment of GwE's governance arrangements, below are the proposals for improvement:

Core Principle	Ref no.	Proposal for improvement	Timescale for implementation	Responsible Officer
Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	5.3.16	Ensure the governance review is finalised.	March 2021	Host authority / Managing Director
Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership & the individuals within	5.6.6	That staff development continues & is built upon during the next year ensuring that staff receive any new support requirements / developments as a result of Covid-19.	Mach 2021	Managing Director
Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	5.7.15	That the value for money framework is enhanced during the year in order to demonstrate further the prioritisation of resources.	March 2021	Managing Director

7.2 The GwE Senior Leadership Team has accepted the proposals for improvement and is committed to their implementation during 2020/21. An update on progress will be reported to the Joint Committee (during the year) to enable members to review and scrutinise the extend of progress being made.

Arwyn H Thomas

GwE Lead Officer

Date : __15/07/2020__

ARWYN LLOYD THOMAS

GwE MANAGING DIRECTOR



GwE Chairman

Date: __15/07/2020__

COUNCILLOR PHIL WYNN

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.

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.

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's financial statements comprise 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 the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20 based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2020 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)). 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 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

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require me to report to you where:

- the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the responsible financial officer has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Joint Committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The responsible financial officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report and accounts. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated later in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies, I consider the implications for my report.

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 2019-20;

- The information given in the Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the 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 Governance Statement.

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

- proper accounting records have not been kept;
- 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.

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.

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 set out on page 6, 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 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.

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

Anthony J Barrett
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
15 September 2020

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