

**GwE JOINT COMMITTEE
12.11.15**

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

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

Co-opted Members with no vote: Diane Chisholm (Primary schools representative), Annwen Morgan (Secondary schools representative) and Jonathan Morgan (Special schools representative).

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

Also present: Huw Foster Evans (GwE Managing Director), Susan Owen Jones (GwE Business and Finance Manager), Alwyn Jones (GwE Assistant Director (Standards)), Geraint Rees and Claire Rundle (Welsh Government representatives), Iwan Evans (Host Authority Legal Services Manager - Cyngor Gwynedd)) and Bethan Adams (Host Authority Members Support Officer - Cyngor Gwynedd).

Apologies: Dafydd Edwards (Host Authority Head of Finance – Cyngor Gwynedd), Alison Fisher (Governors' representative), Rhys Howard Hughes (GwE Assistant Director (Support and Brokerage)) and R. Ellis Owen (Conwy County Borough Council)

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed minutes of this meeting held on 23 September 2015 as a true record.

3. GwE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The GwE Managing Director presented GwE's annual report, which discussed in detail the progress achieved against the priority outcomes of 2014-15.

A Member voiced his concern in relation to the outcomes of 2014-15, drawing particular attention to the results in KS4.

Ian Budd (Lead Director – Chair of Management Board (Flintshire Council)) noted that the situation had been analysed in detail and that a further report would be presented to the Management Board in a meeting in January.

The GwE Managing Director noted that teacher assessment arrangements had been reinforced by means of a national verification process in order to reflect the true achievement of pupils.

RESOLVED to accept and note the content of the report.

4. REPORT ON PUPIL OUTCOMES 2015

The GwE Managing Director presented a report which summarized the situation in terms of indicators of pupil outcomes in 2015. He guided the Members through the report by key stage.

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

- Target results differed in individual authorities. In response, the GwE Managing Director noted that it was an issue that affected the whole of Wales. He noted that there were pending plans to improve consistency across local authorities and that individual schools would be challenged on their targets on pupil levels;
- No target should be set for a pupil if it is not attainable;
- KS2 outcomes had improved in Gwynedd and Angelsey, and that collaboration should be encouraged to disseminate good practice;
- There was a decline in pupil results when comparing KS3 teacher assessments with the true results in KS4. In response, the GwE Managing Director noted that procedures were in place to assist teachers to generate meaningful assessments;
- The process of moderation of teacher assessments and visiting individual schools made a difference, but questioned the capacity to look at each school and each subject individually. In response, the GwE Managing Director noted that visits to schools would be held to measure improvements against targets implemented within resources. He added that they would maybe look to vary the use of grants such as the Education Improvement Grant to this purpose;
- The need to ensure that competent teachers teach mathematics and the need to consider the lack of mathematicians. In response, John Davies (Wrexham County Borough Council) noted that GwE is advertising for individuals who specialize in mathematics and English to respond to the demand;
- It would be interesting to look at the new GCSE results in mathematics and English. The need to re-train teachers and to attract individuals who were specialists in their subjects was noted. In response, Geraint Rees (Welsh Government) noted that Professor John Furlong was looking at a teacher training programme on behalf of Welsh Government. He added that there was a real national concern about keeping individuals in the teaching profession;
- It would be useful to come to a judgement on KS5 results. In response, GwE's Assistant Director (Standards) noted that it was difficult to compare results since a low number of pupils took the subjects of this Key Stage in Sixth Form, but that schools were visited when there was a problem with a particular subject;
- It was questioned whether it would be possible to establish the outcomes of FSM pupils in order to benchmark how they compare with pupils across Wales.
- It would be interesting to see the profile of KS4 in the results of Estyn inspections. GwE's Assistant Director (Standards) noted that when the inspection results were received, proposals for individual schools across the Region would be considered.

RESOLVED to accept and note the content of the report.

5. 2015 ESTYN RECOMMENDATIONS – UPDATE ON PROGRESS REPORT (JUNE – OCTOBER 2015)

The GwE Managing Director presented a report which gave an updated analysis of the progress in relation to Estyn's recommendations (June 2015). He noted that useful comments were put forth by Arwyn Thomas (Gwynedd Council) regarding the content of the report since its publication. He added that the Joint Committee would receive regular updates on the progress.

RESOLVED to accept and note the content of the report.

6. 2015-18 BUSINESS PLAN

The GwE Managing Director presented the Business Plan, which notes GwE's vision, aims and priorities for action for the next three years. Attention was drawn to detailed work streams that are in place for each priority in 2015/16 and that the details are attached to the Business Plan.

In response to a comment about inconsistency with regard to Challenge Advisers, the GwE Assistant Director (Standards) noted that systems are being strengthened so as to ensure that Challenge Advisers have the appropriate skills.

In response to a comment about recruiting Headteachers to Challenge Adviser posts, the GwE Assistant Director (Standards) noted that some of them were newly retired Headteachers, whilst others were Headteachers in schools who were supporting another school.

Many comments were made about the lack of Headteachers and the need to develop the leaders of the future. In response, the GwE Managing Director noted that the development programmes mainly target middle leaders and Headteachers and it is hoped that a national pack will be available.

Geraint Rees (Welsh Government) noted that the 4 consortia are looking at each other's work and it is hoped that development plans will be in place by the summer on all levels, from teachers to Headteachers. He added that the response of Headteachers in the region to the development plans is positive.

RESOLVED to approve the 2015-18 Business Plan.

7. SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

Ian Budd (Lead Director – Chair of Management Board (Flintshire council)) presented a report discussing in detail the proposed scrutiny arrangements so as to respond to the Wales Audit Office recommendation. It was noted there is collaboration with the relevant local authority scrutiny committees to set up a co-ordinated programme with the intention for each local authority to look at one element of the corporate programme and the business plan and share learning across each authority.

RESOLVED that the GwE Management Board and the GwE Senior Leadership Team work with the relevant local authority scrutiny committees to implement a co-ordinated work programme in relation to school improvement.

8. REGIONAL NETWORKS

Ian Budd (Lead Director – Chair of Management Board (Flintshire council)) presented a report on the Regional Networks and discussed in detail the proposed reporting process, namely that:

- every network reports back to the GwE Management Board;
- minutes of meetings are shared with the GwE Management Board;
- Joint Committee is to receive a progress report from one of the networks in the termly meeting

A member noted there is good collaboration between the local authorities with regard to sponsors.

RESOLVED:

- (i) to accept and note the report;**

(ii) to approve the proposed reporting process.

9. GwE STAFFING STRUCTURE – DECISION MAKING

The GwE Managing Director presented a report on changing the procedure for approving changes to the staffing structure. It was noted that at present any new posts must be presented to the Joint Committee for approval in line with Schedule 2 of the current Inter-Authority Agreement (18/02/13). As Joint Committee meetings are only held once every term, it was noted that the procedure could cause a delay in the appointments process.

A recommendation that the Joint Committee delegates the responsibility of making changes to the GwE structure to the GwE Managing Director (in line with Host Authority processes) was reported. It was noted that the structure will be reported on in the Business Plan and in the GwE Annual Report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) to accept and note the report;**
- (ii) delegate the responsibility of making changes to the GwE structure to the GwE Managing Director (in line with Host Authority processes, included as appendix 1).**

The meeting commenced at 9.40 a.m. and concluded at 11.10 a.m.

CHAIRMAN