

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 2018

Present-

Councillors: Gareth Thomas - Chair (Gwynedd Council), Meirion Jones (Anglesey County Council), Garffild Lewis (Conwy County Borough Council), Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Denbighshire Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire Council).

Co-opted non-voting Members: Haf Williams (Primary Schools' Representative), Jonathan Morgan (Special Schools' Representative).

Non-voting Officers: Dr Lowri Brown (Conwy County Council), Julian Molan (Denbighshire County Council), Claire Homard (Flintshire Council), Ian Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council), Garem Jackson (Gwynedd Council).

Officers present: Arwyn Thomas (GwE Managing Director), Iwan G. Evans (Head of Host Authority Legal Services - Cyngor Gwynedd), Dr Gwynne Jones (Anglesey County Council), Alwyn Jones (GwE Assistant Director), Gareth Williams (Chair of GwE Advisory Board), Bethan E. Roberts (GwE Performance Management Manager), Hefin Owen (Host Authority Finance Unit Manager - Cyngor Gwynedd) and Sioned Williams (Host Authority Members' Support Officer - Cyngor Gwynedd).

1. ELECT CHAIR

IT WAS DECIDED to elect Councillor Gareth Thomas as Chairperson for 2018/19.

2. ELECT VICE-CHAIR

IT WAS DECIDED to elect Councillor Phil Wynn as Vice-chairperson for 2018/19.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillor Phil Wynn - Vice-chair (Wrexham County Borough Council), Peter Agnew (Secondary Schools' Representative), Arwyn Williams (Anglesey County Council), Dafydd L. Edwards (Host Authority Head of Finance - Gwynedd Council), Steve Vincent (Welsh Government), Susan Owen Jones (GwE Business Manager), Rhys Howard Hughes (GwE Assistant Director).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

5. WELSH PROFESSIONAL TEACHING AWARDS

The Managing Director reported that the Professional Teaching Awards ceremony was held in Cardiff on 13 May 2018. Awards celebrate the commitment and hard work of teachers across Wales. It was noted that many teachers/staff from authorities in the north were nominated, which is testament to strong educational standards in north Wales.

Three who won their individual categories were presented to the Joint Committee:

Outstanding New Teacher - Helen Jones, Flint High School.

The winners had the opportunity to talk about their work and expressed gratitude for their nomination.

Gwenan Ellis Jones, Cyngor Gwynedd also won the award for 'Inspirational use of the Welsh Language'.

In response, the joint committee congratulated the winners and those nominated for an award, and their hard work was commended.

6. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent matters.

7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018 as correct.

8. NEW ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

GwE Assistant Director gave a presentation on the new accountability framework, which is part of Welsh Government's reform journey. It was noted that the Accountability Framework is a small part of the journey, and that supporting schools to meet the reform journey agenda will be an immense challenge.

During the ensuing discussion, there was response to a series of questions/comments by joint committee members, in relation to:

It is important that all members (especially scrutiny members) have an understanding of the scale of the work ahead in light of changes in education.

It was suggested that GwE gives a presentation to cabinet members and the scrutiny members of all six authorities.

Concern that the process of managing data reports is not clear - there needs to be a better regional understanding.

What are the next steps and how can these be communicated?

IT WAS DECIDED:

GwE to give a presentation on the new Accountability Framework to the six local authorities.

GwE Managing Director to send a letter to Welsh Government on behalf of the Joint Committee seeking clarity on 'accountability' so as to ensure consistency.

9. GWE ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The Managing Director presented a report on the performance of the Service in terms of delivering the Service Functions and Key Aims. Members were led through the report, noting that it was a summary of the annual report to convey the high level messages.

IT WAS DECIDED To note and accept the report.

10. BUSINESS PLAN 2017-2020 - LEVEL 1

The Managing Director presented the Level 1 Business Plan. The Joint Committee were asked for its view on the most effective type of narrative for reporting on performance - is there a need to focus on what needs to be improved, or focus on achievements?

In response, the Joint Committee welcomed the current format, noting there needs to be a balance between achievements and what needs to be improved so as to understand the full picture.

IT WAS DECIDED To note and accept the report.

11. WELSH IN EDUCATION

GwE Assistant Director presented a report. It was proposed to review the regional structure so as to work more strategically to support Welsh in education, and to establish a Welsh language Strategic Board to lead the work. The Joint Committee was asked to approve the proposals outlined in the report.

During the ensuing discussion, there was response to a series of questions/comments by joint committee members, in relation to:

The idea of working more strategically was welcomed.

Who will be the members of the Welsh language Strategic Board? It is important that membership represents the variety of Welsh speakers across the region.

The importance of giving learners a strong voice in developments.

IT WAS DECIDED To accept the recommendations.

12. GWE FINAL ACCOUNTS 2017-18

The Host Authority Finance Unit Manager presented a concise report. Members were led through the report - there were no further comments by joint committee members.

IT WAS DECIDED To accept the report.

The meeting commenced at 10:00am and concluded at 11:40am

CHAIRMAN