

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE DECISION NOTICE



Date of meeting:

11 November 2020

SUBJECT

ITEM 1:ELECTION OF CHAIR

DECISION

Councillor Phil Wyn, Wrexham County Borough Council, was elected Chair for 2020/21

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is a statutory requirement to elect a Chair for the Joint Committee annually.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

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ITEM 2:ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

DECISION

Councillor Meirion Jones, Isle of Anglesey County Council, was elected Vice Chair for 2020/21.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is a statutory requirement to elect a Vice Chair for the Joint Committee annually.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.

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ITEM 7:GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS : INTERNAL AUDIT

DECISION

Arrangements were approved as noted in point 4.1 of the report, adding as an exception, where appropriate, that some individual audit reports will need to be presented to the Joint Committee as and when the need arises, rather than waiting for the annual report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

During the last Joint Committee meeting members requested that GwE's Managing Director, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Head of Finance at Gwynedd Council, review the governance arrangements and report back in the following meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.

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ITEM 8 :INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

DECISION

The reports were accepted, noting that appropriate and sufficient management and processes are in place. Therefore, there will be no need to present similar items to the Joint Committee in the future, except for mentioning them in the host authority Audit Manager's annual report to the Joint Committee.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As the regional consortium for north Wales, GwE co-ordinates and administers the regional grants from Welsh Government. A number of audits are undertaken on specific aspects of controls, procedures and processes on an annual basis.

The audits confirm appropriate and sufficient management and processes within GwE, the host authority and local authorities in administering the grants and in meeting Welsh Government terms and conditions. As noted in the previous decision, GwE will share these reports with the Joint Committee so that it is aware of them.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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ITEM 9 :RISK REGISTER

DECISION

The Joint Committee reviewed the contents of the register and accepted the information.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The purpose of the risk register is to formalise the process of identifying risks and take subsequent mitigating actions. Through effective management of the region's risks, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and attain the outcomes as intended.

The risk register is a live document that is reviewed regularly. It is presented to the Joint Committee annually, and when new risks are identified and there is a need for the Joint Committee to be aware of them.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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ITEM 10:BUDGET - QUARTER 2 MONITORING

DECISION

The report was accepted.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

There is a need to update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE's budget for the 2020/21 financial year. It was noted that GwE's 2020/21 budget is under control, despite the impact of Covid-19.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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ITEM 11 :ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

DECISION

The self-assessment tool and the Additional Learning Needs Professional Offer were both approved, which will support Local Authorities and schools to implement the reforms as set out in the Draft Learning Needs Code for Wales.

A further report was requested for the next meeting, noting how the self-assessment tool will work and any financial implications arising as a result of the draft Learning Needs Code.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Local Authorities and relevant agencies are duty bound to consider the Additional Learning Needs Code, which will be published in its final form in spring 2021. Local Authorities and relevant agencies must ensure that their policies, practice and information and advice services consider in full the legal requirements of the Act.

The regional ALN Transformation Team has produced a self-assessment tool in order to support Local Authorities to assess their readiness for implementing the draft Code.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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ITEM 12 :INDEPENDENT REVIEW - QUALIFICATIONS 2020

DECISION

It was agreed that the region's main priority during the next phase is to give secondary schools the appropriate support to help KS4 and KS5 learners to receive fair accreditation. In order to implement this it was agreed to use reserves, which are as a result of the underspend.

It was decided to write to the Minister for Education, firstly to thank her for her announcement of 10 November on the arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2021, and to note concerns arising from the meeting.

It was decided to write to Geraint Rees, Chair of the Design and Delivery Group, outlining the concerns noted.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

On Monday 17 August 2020, Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education, confirmed that A level, AS, GCSE, Skills Challenge Certificate and Welsh Baccalaureate grades in Wales are now awarded on the basis of Centre Assessment Grades.

In the Children, Young People and Education Committee the Minister noted that she will commission an independent review of the arrangements for awarding grades in the summer 2020 examination series, and the considerations for 2021.

It was noted there needs to be a discussion to consider any further response required following the Minister for Education's statement on 10 November 2020 in relation to the Independent Review, and to consider what support schools need to implement the recommendations effectively.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.

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SUBJECT

ITEM 13 :BLENDED LEARNING RESOURCES

DECISION

The report was noted and accepted, and to support the regional approach and model so as to ensure continuity of learning in north Wales.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The strategy and support available to schools to ensure continuity of learning so that they can prepare for any further disruption that could occur in the coming weeks and months was outlined.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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SUBJECT

ITEM 14 :WELLBEING REPORT

DECISION

The report was noted and accepted, and to support the regional approach to supporting children's wellbeing and the wellbeing of the region's workforce.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

GwE's main priority during this period of unprecedented change and disruption is the safety of children and the region's workforce, and to do all that we can to support the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people throughout this period.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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ITEM 15 :ESTYN THEMATIC REVIEW

DECISION

The report was noted and accepted, and it was agreed to hold further discussions following publication of the report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Consultation undertaken with the Statutory Officers to gather their views, which are included in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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SUBJECT

ITEM 16:SCHOOLS IN CATEGORY

DECISION

The report was noted and accepted, and the next steps were agreed. It was decided to write to Estyn to request prompt guidance and clarity as regards the situation.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Joint Committee members needed to be updated on the current situation regarding schools in a Statutory Category and Estyn Review. At present, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools are facing a range of unprecedented challenges. It is likely that these challenges will be amplified in schools that are in a statutory category or Estyn Review.

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The Statutory Officers were consulted to seek their views, which have been included in the report.
