

Complete Agenda



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Meeting

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2021

Location

Zoom

Please contact for public access

Contact Point

Natalie Lloyd Jones

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(DISTRIBUTED 02/11/21)

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Meirion Jones	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Ian Roberts	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn	Wrexham County Borough Council
Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams	Gwynedd Council

Co-opted Non-voting Members

Rosalind Williams	Church of Wales
Claire Armitstead	Secondary School Representative
Richard Collet	Primary Schools Representative
Jonathan Morgan	Special Schools Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative

Non-voting Officers

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

Officers in Attendance

Dafydd L. Edwards	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority
Annwen Morgan	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Arwyn Thomas	GwE Managing Director
Alwyn Jones	GwE Assistant Director
Gareth Williams	GwE Advisory Board Chairman

Observer

AGENDA

1. ELECT CHAIR

To elect a Chair for 2021/22.

2. ELECT VICE-CHAIR

To elect a Vice-chair for 2021/22.

3. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

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

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5 - 11

(copy enclosed)

7. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021 AND RELEVANT AUDIT

12 - 83

To submit –

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

8. GWE BUDGET 2021-2022 - QUARTER 2 REVIEW

84 - 89

- To update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE's budget for the 2021/22 financial year.
- The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.

9. PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANT 2021-22

90 - 98

To present an update to the Joint Committee on the Pupil Development Grant Support Plan for 2021/22 across the region.

10. GWE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN 2021-2022 - QUARTER 2 MONITORING REPORT

99 - 134

To present the Quarter 2 Monitoring Report - GwE Regional Business Plan

2021-2022 to the Joint Committee.

11. SUPPORTING ALL SCHOOLS FOR CURRICULUM FOR WALES - 135 - 146
DEVELOPING CURRICULUM FOR WALES REGIONAL AND
LOCAL NETWORKS

To present information to Joint Committee members on our approach to developing Curriculum for Wales regional and local networks as part of supporting all schools and settings to implement Curriculum for Wales.

GwE JOINT COMMITTEE - 22 September 2021

Present:

Councillors: Phil Wynn (Chair - Wrexham County Borough Council), Julie Fallon (Conwy County Borough Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council), Meirion Jones (Anglesey County Council), Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Denbighshire County Council), Cemlyn Williams (Gwynedd Council).

Co-opted non-voting Members: Jonathan Morgan (Special Schools' Representative), Claire Armitstead (Secondary Schools' Representative)

Officers present: Sion Huws (Senior Lawyer - Corporate, Gwynedd Council, Host Authority), Rhys Howard Hughes (Anglesey County Council), Garem Jackson (Gwynedd Council), Arwyn Thomas (GwE Managing Director), Karen Evans (Denbighshire County Council), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director, GwE), Hywyn Jones (Group Accountant, Gwynedd Council, Host Authority), Bethan Roberts (Performance Management Manager, GwE), Marc Hughes, Elfyn Jones and Catrin Roberts (GwE Officers) and Natalie Lloyd Jones (Democracy Team Officer, Gwynedd Council, Host Authority).

Others who were invited: Gareth Williams (Chair of GwE Advisory Board)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from the following: Annwen Morgan (Chief Executive, Anglesey County Council), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council, Host Authority), Lowri Brown (Conwy County Borough Council), Claire Homard (Flintshire County Council).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declaration of personal interest was received.

3. URGENT MATTERS

A member referred to the worrying situation in our schools, noting this as the most uncertain time schools have faced during the pandemic due to the very high number of Covid-19 cases in schools.

It was decided that it would be more appropriate to hold further discussion outside the meeting of the Joint Committee, at a mutually convenient time.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was confirmed that the record presented appropriately reflected the meeting held on 14 July, 2021.

5. GWE BUDGET 2021-2022 - QUARTER 1 REVIEW

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION:

It was reported that this is an initial review, and a net underspend of (£48,805) is foreseen by the end of the 2021/22 financial year. It was added there are no matters arising to cause concern during the Quarter 1 monitoring process.

This is the first monitoring report of the year, which looks at true costs through to the end of June along with an expenditure forecast through to the end of the financial year, hoping there will be more clarity as regards the situation by the next quarterly review.

A general fund worth £612,335 is estimated by the end of the financial year, which is a positive situation to be in.

An internal income shortfall in rents was noted, as GwE buildings cannot be used to run schemes that are paid out of grants. In addition, it was noted transport use has resumed, albeit not back to normal levels, and an underspend is expected due to this.

6. GWE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN 2021-2022 - QUARTER 1 MONITORING REPORT

DECISION

To accept the monitoring report for Quarter 1.

DISCUSSION:

GwE Managing Director presented the paper and noted that circumstances will slow down or accelerate some of the actions noted. Members' attention was drawn to the data to support the main objectives, and reference was made to what engagement has taken place with different proposals. He noted this is relevant for members to report back in their Education Scrutiny Committees.

It was noted that transport is starting to increase in comparison with the last financial year. Reference was made to items such as curriculum and additional learning needs, and a need for sensitivity to schools' circumstances during this challenging time was emphasized.

It was noted that Estyn has resumed inspections as of the start of this term, mainly in schools causing concern.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- Headteachers are facing engagement challenges due to current circumstances.
- There are instances in schools where the Headteacher is teaching due to staff shortages.
- Reference was also made to staff shortages in special schools where there are children with more profound needs. This is creating significant difficulties.
- It was noted that further pressure with Estyn resuming inspections is causing concern in several schools.

7. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORTS

DECISION

- a) To accept and approve the content of the report along with the high-level regional priorities.
- b) To acknowledge the commitment GwE officers have shown to educational organisations across the north during the pandemic.

DISCUSSION:

GwE Assistant Director presented the report and an overview was given of how schools and PRUs in north Wales have responded to COVID-19.

It was noted that GwE staff have been supporting schools to evaluate the quality and impact of their provision during lockdown as part of their work programme.

The report is an overview of the discussions with schools, along with the areas that require further development and support.

It was added that schools have learned a lot from the first lockdown, and that provision in the second lockdown has built on this.

Members' attention was drawn to the regional priorities that have derived from the report and an overview was given.

Reference was made to the words of the Minister for Education on page 63 of the programme:

'all schools and post-16 providers will continue to be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. Our evaluation, improvement and accountability arrangements require consideration of a broad range of information, relevant to a school's own context, when undertaking self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements.'

It was noted that GwE will support schools to achieve this.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- GwE officers were thanked for their work with Local Authorities and Heads of Education to promote collaboration.
- The feedback in the report is excellent, and reference was made to all the support given on all levels.
- Reference was made to the concerns of some members regarding the inconsistency and variance in school provision. There is reference to this in the report, and it was added that sharing good practice illustrates that this is being addressed.
- One member added there is a need for good and timely communication so that Headteachers can respond to any challenges.

Response of GwE Managing Director to the comments:

- The importance of schools knowing what the assessment model is, whether it be teacher assessment, centre or examination.
- The main message is that schools are aware of the mechanisms that are required to be in place to ensure that all learners are achieving their potential.

8. REGIONAL PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES FOR SUPPORTING AND CHALLENGING SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN.

DECISION

To note and accept the content of the report.

DISCUSSION:

The report was presented, which concisely captures the work undertaken during the Spring and Summer terms to further strengthen the guidance and support available to schools causing concern.

It was noted the paper is relevant to a percentage of schools, so that they ensure more ownership and accountability for their improvement journey within a framework of collaboration in clusters and alliances.

It was acknowledged that some schools require more comprehensive and intense support, especially those in a statutory category or identified as at risk of falling into a statutory category.

An early warning system will enable GwE and authorities to intervene early. It was explained that regular contact with officers is useful for sharing information and collaborating on plans. At this point, it was noted that these schools will have an entire team to lead them, rather than a Supporting Improvement Adviser.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- Thanks were expressed for the timely report, outlining the process for giving support to schools causing concern.
- The importance of supporting schools was recognised, but also the work that needs to be done for them to be self-sufficient.
- One member asked about the data from the graph, and it was asked will consideration be given to the status of a school when noting pupils' attainment.

Response of GwE Managing Director to the comments:

- The days of core data regarding attainment have been adapted, as the new curriculum requires a qualitative and more holistic framework. He added that this will be a means to note learner achievement from a more bespoke baseline.

9. REGIONAL STRATEGY - RENEW AND REFORM: SUPPORTING LEARNERS' WELLBEING AND PROGRESSION

DECISION

To accept and approve the Regional Strategy.

DISCUSSION:

Joint Committee members were presented with the report on the strategic direction of GwE during the next stage due to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reference was made to the regional strategy, and it was noted that themes have been identified so as to ensure high quality provision for learners.

Reference was made to the innovative work undertaken as staff re-purpose, and the changes as a result of this.

There was discussion on how the role of the Supporting Improvement Adviser has evolved in order to meet the different requirements within schools. The internal evaluation process was referred to, so that schools can focus on improvement.

10. Y GYMRAEG - CLUSTER PLANS AND 'EIN LLAIS NI' ORACY PROJECT

DECISION

To approve the content of the report and plans to develop the project in line with targets set by Welsh Government.

DISCUSSION:

The report on arrangements and plans regarding the two main work streams in the Welsh language business plan this year was presented - arrangements for the Cluster Plans and 'Ein Llais Ni' Oracy Project.

There was discussion on the first work stream, namely the cluster plans, noting the objectives: to promote cluster meetings, develop Welsh language skills and encourage collaboration between the Primary and Secondary sectors. It was noted there will be three Advisers in each area, who will be working closely with the Local Authorities to ensure support.

In terms of the second work stream, the 'Ein Llais Ni' Project, it was explained the project is funded following an application to Welsh Government, with the aim of promoting Welsh oracy and refining learners' speaking skills.

It was noted the project has been designed in close collaboration with Professor Enlli Thomas, Bangor University and there will be a Research Officer for the project. The planning process has taken place, and schools have been informed. It was added that a steering group is about to be established to oversee the project and report back to Welsh Government.

There will be a launch conference on 20 October, to inspire schools and share strategies.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- Authorities are busy planning their WESP reports; all support to promote the Welsh language is appreciated.
- It was asked whether it is intended to report back in the future on the impact of activities undertaken to promote the Welsh language in our schools.
- Thanks were expressed for the timely report in the wake of a deterioration in the use of the language in schools due to lockdown, and this in Welsh language strongholds.

Response of GwE Managing Director to the comments:

- There are ongoing discussions on the possible usefulness of presenting a report to the Joint Committee for members to see the existing work streams to promote the Welsh language in schools.

11. **DIGITAL LEARNING**

Joint Committee members were presented with the report.

There was no further discussion or comments.

12. **GWE CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE**

Joint Committee members were presented with the report.

There was no further discussion or comments.

The meeting commenced at 13:30 and concluded at 15:00.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 7

GwE: Joint Committee 10/11/21



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MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	10 November 2021
TITLE	The Joint Committee's Final Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 and relevant Audit
PURPOSE	To submit – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Statement of Accounts post-audit;• The Wales Audit Office's report;• Letter of representation.
RECCOMENDATION	To receive and note the report on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales, approve the 2019/20 accounts, and authorize the Chairman to sign the letter of representation on behalf of the Joint Committee.
AUTHOR	Dafydd L Edwards, Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

1. FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Members will recall that it was reported as follows to the 14 July meeting of GwE's Joint Committee:

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

- 1.4 Gwynedd Council is the host Council responsible for meeting the accounting responsibilities and reporting on the financial matters of GwE's Joint Committee.
- 1.5 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 require all Joint Committees to prepare year-end accounts. Where the turnover exceeds £2.5million, a statement of accounts must be prepared in accordance with the CIPFA code for the Joint Committee.
- 1.6 GwE's Statement of Accounts were subject to an audit by Audit Wales, external auditors appointed by the Auditor General for Wales.

2. ACCOUNTS FOR 2020/21

The Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2020/21 was submitted to the 26 May 2021 meeting of GwE's Joint Committee in "outturn" format, and the Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 (subject to audit) in standard statutory format to the 14 July 2021 meeting.

3. AUDIT

It was noted at the time that these accounts would be subject to audit by Audit Wales, and the 'ISA 260' report is presented here by the Auditor General for Wales detailing Audit Wales' main findings. Paragraph 10 of the report states that "We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion" on the financial statements 2020/21.

4. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2020/21

The final version (post audit) of the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 is also presented herewith. The issues raised as part of the audit have been outlined in Appendix 3 of the 'ISA260' report presented by Audit Wales on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales.

5. RECCOMENDATION

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

- 'ISA260' report by the Auditor General for Wales
- The Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 (post audit)

6. LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

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

7. AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES CERTIFICATE

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

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Author of the report.

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

STATEMENT OF
ACCOUNTS
2020/21

Finance Department
Gwynedd Council
www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

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NARRATIVE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The GwE Joint Committee accounts for the year 2020/21 are presented here on pages 8 to 36. The Statements of Accounts are prepared in accordance with CIPFA's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21*.

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 2020/21 :

Conwy	15.30%
Denbighshire	15.30%
Flintshire	22.68%
Gwynedd	17.63%
Anglesey	10.15%
Wrexham	18.94%
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 2021.
- **The Cash Flow Statement** - This statement summarises the flow of cash to and from the Joint Committee during 2020/21 for revenue and capital purposes.

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

GwE's Vision and Priorities

GwE's vision states that they 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>

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

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

Financial Strategy

The Joint Committee's Financial Strategy and 2020/21 Budget adopted by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 26 February 2020 sets out the foundation for us to achieve the improvement priorities, whilst also trying to meet the continuous increase in demand for our services. The Financial Strategy is unavoidably dependent upon these priorities. The strategy is available at:

<https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/g2787/Public%20reports%20pack%2026th-Feb-2020%2010.30%20GwE%20Joint%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

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.

2020/21 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://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/g4373/Public%20reports%20pack%2026th-May-2021%2010.30%20GwE%20Joint%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

2020/21 Financial Performance

- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on page 9 shows that the Joint Committee's gross revenue expenditure on 'cost of services' level was £13,583k during 2020/21, with a net position of £236k.
- The financial out-turn position for 2020/21 was reported to the Joint Committee at its meeting on 26 May 2021. Joint Committee Members' approval was sought to transfer the (£83k) underspend to an earmarked reserve.
- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement on pages 9 and 10 detail the analysis in movements for the year.

TABLE I - Budget and Actual Comparison Summary (Net)

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

	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Expenditure on Operations	13,344	13,264	(80)
Income			
Council Contributions for the core service:			
Conwy	(637)	(637)	0
Denbighshire	(637)	(637)	0
Flintshire	(944)	(944)	0
Gwynedd	(734)	(734)	0
Anglesey	(422)	(422)	0
Wrexham	(789)	(789)	0
Other Income	(9,181)	(9,184)	(3)
Net (Underspend)/Overspend	0	(83)	(83)

TABLE 2 –Transposition movement between 'Budget and Actual Comparison Summary (Net)' (Table I) 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	13,264	(17)	13,247	336	13,583
Income	(13,347)	0	(13,347)	0	(13,347)
Net Cost of Services	(83)	(17)	(100)	336	236

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

Material Items of Income and Expenditure

Related Items include :-

- £3,541k on pensions, being the annual remeasurement of the net defined benefit liabilities relating to pensions, in line with Gwynedd Pension Fund's Actuary's assessment (Note 16).
- £13,347k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 21).

Other Issues

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

Provisions and Reserves

The Joint Committee has provisions of £3k and earmarked reserves of £811k. 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 increased by £4,069k to £12,373k in 2020/21. 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 13.

Changes in Accounting Policies and to the Accounts

The Joint Committee's existing accounting policies have been amended to reflect only the changes required in accordance with proper accounting practices, following adjustments for the 2020/21 financial year to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

Further Information

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

Further information relating to the accounts is available from:

Ffion Madog Evans
Senior Finance Manager
01286 679133

or

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.

10 Tachwedd 2021

Councillor Phil Wynn
GwE Joint Committee Chairman

THE HEAD OF FINANCE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

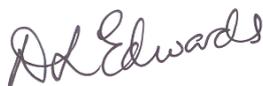
The Head of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the GwE Joint Committee Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* ("the Code").

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 2021 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

21 October 2021

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.

2019/20				2020/21		
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
4,364	907	5,271	Employees	4,808	336	5,144
288	0	288	Property	153	0	153
197	0	197	Transport	15	0	15
1,611	0	1,611	Supplies and Services	826	0	826
7,721	0	7,721	Third Parties	7,445	0	7,445
0	71	71	Non-distributed Costs	0	0	0
(14,551)	0	(14,551)	Income	(13,347)	0	(13,347)
(370)	978	608	Cost of Services	(100)	336	236
0	225	225	Other Income and Expenditure	0	199	199
(370)	1,203	833	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(100)	535	435
(341)			Opening General Fund Balance	(711)		
(370)			(Surplus)/Deficit on General Fund in Year	(100)		
(711)			Closing General Fund Balance	(811)		

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.

2019/20			2020/21			
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Note	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
5,271	0	5,271		5,144	0	5,144
288	0	288		153	0	153
197	0	197		15	0	15
1,611	0	1,611		826	0	826
7,721	0	7,721		7,445	0	7,445
71	0	71		0	0	0
0	(14,551)	(14,551)		0	(13,347)	(13,347)
15,159	(14,551)	608		13,583	(13,347)	236
225	0	225	10	199	0	199
15,384	(14,551)	833		13,782	(13,347)	435
		(1,800)	16			3,541
		(1,800)				3,541
		(967)				3,976

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 2019 carried forward		(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		(370)	(597)	(967)
(Increase)/Decrease in 2019/20		(370)	(597)	(967)
Balance 31 March 2020 carried forward	9	(711)	8,396	7,685
<u>Movement in reserves during 2020/21</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		435	0	435
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	3,541	3,541
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		435	3,541	3,976
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	8	(535)	535	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	9	(100)	4,076	3,976
(Increase)/Decrease in 2020/21		(100)	4,076	3,976
Balance 31 March 2021 carried forward		(811)	12,472	11,661

BALANCE SHEET

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

31 March 2020 £'000		Note	31 March 2021 £'000
0	Long-term Debtors		0
0	Long-term Assets		0
476	Short-term Debtors	11	509
2,557	Cash and Cash Equivalents	12	5,959
3,033	Current Assets		6,468
(1,909)	Short-term Creditors	13	(4,114)
(3)	Short-term Provisions	14	(3)
(502)	Grants Receipts in Advance	21	(1,639)
(2,414)	Current Liabilities		(5,756)
(8,304)	Pension Liability	25	(12,373)
(8,304)	Long-term Liabilities		(12,373)
(7,685)	Net Assets		(11,661)
(711)	Usable Reserves	15	(811)
8,396	Unusable Reserves	16	12,472
7,685	Total Reserves		11,661

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.

2019/20		Note	2020/21
£'000			£'000
833	Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services		435
(518)	Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	17	(3,837)
315	Net cash flows from Operating Activities		(3,402)
0	Investing Activities		0
0	Financing Activities		0
315	Net (Increase)/Decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(3,402)
(2,872)	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(2,557)
(2,557)	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		(5,959)

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

I.1 General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Joint Committee's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2021. 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 2020/21*, 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 accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis.

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

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

I.2 Accruals of Expenditure and Income

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

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

I.3 Cash and Cash Equivalents

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

I.4 Employee Benefits

I.4.1 Benefits Payable during Employment

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

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.4.2 Termination Benefits

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

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

1.4.3 Post-employment Benefits

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

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

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

1.4.4 The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

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

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

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.0% calculated as a weighted average of 'spot yields' on AA rated corporate bonds.

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

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

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Service cost comprising:

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

Remeasurements comprising:

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

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

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

1.4.5 Discretionary Benefits

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

NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.5 Events after the Reporting Period

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.7 Government Grants and Other Contributions

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

1.8 Overheads and Support Services

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

1.9 Provisions

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

1.10 Reserves

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

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

NOTE 1 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.11 Value Added Tax

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

1.12 Debtors and Creditors

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

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

1.13 Long-Term Contracts

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

1.14 Joint Operations

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

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

NOTE 2 – CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY

The Joint Committee's existing accounting policies are amended only insofar as to reflect the guidance in the 2020/21 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 2021/22 Code:

Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations

Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS 7

Interest Rate Benchmark Reform – Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16.

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2021 and therefore there is no impact on the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, and none of the new or amended standards within the 2021/22 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. Continued economic uncertainty following Britain leaving the European Union remains. Whilst the effects of the Covid-19 crisis remain a financial challenge for the Joint Committee in the short and medium term. However, the Joint Committee has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Joint Committee might be impaired.

All available and related information is sourced and applied in assessing and determining the position, which is particularly critical when considering such matters as actuarial valuation of pension fund assets and liabilities, 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 2021 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.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted global financial and property markets. As a result of the volatility in market conditions, year-end valuation reports provided to the Gwynedd Pension Fund on 31st March 2020 included a statement that there was material valuation uncertainty related to the UK property funds managed on behalf of the Fund. However, no material uncertainties in property valuations are being reported as at 31 March 2021.

NOTE 6 – MATERIAL ITEMS OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

Related items include:-

- £3,541k on pensions, being the remeasurements of the net pension defined benefit liabilities relating to pensions, in line with Gwynedd Pension Fund's Actuary's assessment (Note 16).
- £13,347k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 21).

NOTE 7 – NOTE TO THE EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

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

2019/20				
ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i)	Other Differences (ii)	Total Adjustments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts				
Employees	0	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

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

(i) Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments

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

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

(ii) Other Differences

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

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

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

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

2020/21		
ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS	Usable Reserve General Fund Balance	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	£'000	£'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Note 25)	(1,336)	1,336
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	808	(808)
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account		
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(7)	7
Total Adjustments	(535)	535

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

NOTE 9 – TRANSFERS TO/FROM USABLE RESERVES

The note below sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in usable reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans, with a net increase of £100k.

Usable Reserves

	GwE Joint Committee Reserves
	£'000
Balance 31 March 2020	711
<u>Transfers:</u>	
In	100
Out	0
Balance 31 March 2021	811

NOTE 10 – FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2019/20		2020/21
£'000		£'000
225	Net interest on the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)	199
225	Total	199

NOTE 11 – SHORT-TERM DEBTORS

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£'000	£'000
Trade Receivables	91	46
Prepayments	70	75
Other Receivable Amounts	315	388
Total	476	509

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 2020 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000
Cash in Bank held by Host Authority	2,557	5,959
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,557	5,959

NOTE 13 – SHORT-TERM CREDITORS

	31 March 2020 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000
Trade Payables	430	568
Other Payables	1,479	3,546
Total	1,909	4,114

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 31 March 2020 £'000	(Addition) / Reduction / Transfer £'000	Used during the year £'000	Balance at 31 March 2021 £'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 2020		31 March 2021
£'000		£'000
(8,304)	Pensions Reserve	(12,373)
(92)	Accumulated Absences Account	(99)
(8,396)	Total Unusable Reserves	(12,472)

Pensions Reserve

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

2019/20		2020/21
£000		£000
(8,904)	Balance 1 April	(8,304)
1,800	Re-measurements of the net pension defined benefit (liabilities) / assets (Note 25)	(3,541)
(1,796)	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	(1,336)
596	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	808
(8,304)	Balance 31 March	(12,373)

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

2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
(89) Balance 1 April	(92)
(3) Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(7)
(92) Balance 31 March	(99)

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

2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
471 (Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	(3,342)
211 Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	33
(1,200) Pension Liability	(528)
(518)	(3,837)

NOTE 18 – EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Statement of Accounts was authorised by the Head of Finance on 26 May 2021. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or related notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2021, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect its impact.

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:

2019/20			Chief Officers	2020/21		
Salary	Employer’s Pension Contribution	Total		Salary	Employer’s Pension Contribution	Total
£	£	£		£	£	£
100,896	22,803	123,699	Chief Officer	103,545	23,815	127,360

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 2020/21 or 2019/20.

Number of other employees who received more than £60,000 and includes remuneration and termination benefits:			
Number in 2019/20		Number in 2020/21	
Total		Total	
8	£60,000 - 64,999	5	
3	£65,000 - 69,999	6	
1	£70,000 – 74,999	4	

NOTE 20 – EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

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

2019/20		2020/21
£'000		£'000
11	Fees payable to the auditor appointed by the Auditor General for Wales with regard to external audit services	11
11	Net Fees	11

NOTE 21 – GRANT INCOME

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

	2019/20		2020/21	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Grants and Contributions Credited to Services				
Welsh Government -				
Pupil Development Grant (PDG) - Looked After Children	970		1,029	
PDG – Strategic Adviser	100		97	
PDG – Consortia Led Funding	0		142	
Other	153		115	
		1,223		1,383
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant -				
Welsh Government (excluding the EIG)		5,824		4,561
Education Improvement Grant (EIG)				
Welsh Government	1,836		1,283	
Match funding from Councils	1,165		1,587	
		3,001		2,870
Other Government Grants and Contributions -				
Sports Council for Wales	1		0	
Education Workforce Council	251		276	
Arts Council for Wales	5		0	
		257		276
Other Grants and Contributions				
Councils' Contributions towards the Core Service				
Conwy	625		637	
Denbighshire	623		637	
Flintshire	927		944	
Gwynedd	720		734	
Anglesey	417		422	
Wrexham	772		789	
		4,084		4,163
Other Grants and Contribution		162		94
Total Grants and Contributions Credited to Services		14,551		13,347

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 giver. The balance at the year-end are as follows:

	31 March 2020 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000
Grants and Contributions Received in Advance		
<u>Short-term</u>		
Education Workforce Council	493	631
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	0	997
Other	9	11
Total	502	1,639

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.

Function of the Joint Committee

The Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) has been established in partnership between the six North Wales authorities, being Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Gwynedd Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council, to be accountable to the Councils and undertake the statutory function of the Councils in respect of school improvement and effectiveness. This includes the duty to monitor, challenge, provide support services for curriculum continued professional development and management of schools, and in addition provide services that can be commissioned by schools and local authorities. Summarised below are the payments and income between the Joint Committee and the Local Authorities for the the 20/21 financial year. Gwynedd Council has been appointed as host authority in implementing and maintaining the service, and the Joint Committee of all the partners oversees the management of the service.

Local Authority	Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Income Received	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Conwy County Borough Council	810	472	682	30
Denbighshire County Council	376	430	921	4
Flintshire County Council	707	1,110	1,478	0
Gwynedd Council	1,153	603	1,238	61
Isle of Anglesey County Council	386	255	689	0
Wrexham County Borough Council	740	451	789	2

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 2020/21 and balances as at 31 March 2021 is as follows:

Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
£'000	£'000	£'000
28	136	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 2020/21 no payments were made or owed by the Joint Committee for the related bodies.

NOTE 23 – EXIT PACKAGES

There were two exit packages during 2020/21, the staff in question were on temporary contracts, but had service carried forward from their previous employment, there were no exit packages during 2019/20.

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
£							£'000	£'000
0 - 20,000	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	8
20,001 - 40,000	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	34
Cyfanswm	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	42

NOTE 24 – PENSION SCHEMES ACCOUNTED FOR AS DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES

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

NOTE 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 General Fund.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

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

NOTE 25 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

Change in the Fair Value of Plan Assets, Defined Benefit Obligation and Net Liability	Period ended 31 March 2020			Period ended 31 March 2021		
	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fair Value of Plan 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
Opening Position at 1 April	17,783	(26,687)	(8,904)	17,622	(25,926)	(8,304)
Prior period pension adjustment**				(180)		(180)
Adjusted Opening Position at 1 April	17,783	(26,687)	(8,904)	17,442	(25,926)	(8,484)
Service Cost						
Current Service Cost*	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	0	(1,137)	(1,137)
Past Service Costs (including curtailments)	0	(71)	(71)	0	(0)	(0)
Total Service Cost	0	(1,571)	(1,571)	0	(1,137)	(1,137)
Net interest						
Interest Income on Plan Assets	433	0	433	408	0	408
Interest Cost on Defined Benefit Obligation	0	(658)	(658)	0	(607)	(607)
Total Net Interest	433	(658)	(225)	408	(607)	(199)
Total Defined Benefit Cost Recognised in Profit/(Loss)	433	(2,229)	(1,796)	408	(1,744)	(1,336)
Cash flows						
Plan participants' contributions	273	(273)	0	279	(279)	0
Employer contributions	599	0	599	797	0	797
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Paid	(433)	433	0	(453)	453	0
Unfunded Benefits Paid	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expected Closing Position	18,655	(28,756)	(10,101)	18,473	(27,496)	(9,023)
Remeasurements						
Change in demographic assumptions	0	1,036	1,036	0	(434)	(434)
Change in financial assumptions	0	2,480	2,480	0	(7,950)	(7,950)
Other experience	0	(686)	(686)	0	264	264
Return on Assets excluding amounts included in net interest	(1,033)	0	(1,033)	4,770	0	4,770
Total remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income (OCI)	(1,033)	2,830	1,797	4,770	(8,120)	(3,350)
Fair Value of Employer Assets	17,622	0	17,622	23,243	0	23,243
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(25,926)	(25,926)	0	(35,616)	(35,616)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities**	0	0	0	0	0	0
Closing Position at 31 March	17,622	(25,926)	(8,304)	23,243	(35,616)	(12,373)

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

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

NOTE 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 IAS19. This analysis distinguishes between the nature and risk of those assets, and to further break them down between those with a quoted price in an active market, and those that are not quoted. The asset split for Gwynedd Council is assumed to be in the same proportion to the Fund's asset allocation as at 31 December 2020. The split is shown in the table below. The actuary estimates the bid value of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2021 to be £2,510m 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 2020				At 31 March 2021			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets	Prices not quoted in Active Markets	Total		Quoted Prices in Active Markets	Prices not quoted in Active Markets	Total	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Equity Securities								
Consumer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Energy and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Institutions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health and Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt Securities								
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private Equity								
All	0	1,103	1,103	6	0	1,445	1,445	6
Real Estate								
UK Property	0	1,729	1,729	10	0	1,843	1,843	8
Overseas Property	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Investment Funds and Unit Trusts								
Equities	0	11,760	11,760	67	0	14,892	14,892	64
Infrastructure	0	400	400	2	0	410	410	2
Other	0	2,536	2,536	14	0	4,519	4,519	19
Cash and Cash Equivalents								
All	92	0	92	1	134	0	134	1
Total	92	17,530	17,622	100	134	23,109	23,243	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 1.5% per annum.

Both the Gwynedd Pension Scheme and Discretionary Benefits liabilities have been estimated by Hymans Robertson, an independent firm of actuaries. Estimates for the Gwynedd Pension Fund were based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2020. 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 2020	31 March 2021
Financial Assumptions	% p.a.	% p.a.
Pensions Increase Rate	1.9	2.85
Salary Increase Rate	2.2	3.15
Inflation Rate	1.9	2.85
Discount Rate	2.3	2.0
Long-term expected rate of return on all categories of assets	2.3	2.0
Take-up option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum		
for pre-April 2008 service	50	50
for post-April 2008 service	75	75
Mortality assumptions	Years	Years
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners		
Men	21.3	21.5
Women	23.4	23.9
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners		
Men	22.2	22.7
Women	25.1	25.9

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 2021 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 2020, 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	Approximate	Approximate
Change in assumption	increase to Defined	monetary amount
	Benefit Obligation	
	31 March 2021	31 March 2021
	%	£'000
0.5% decrease in real discount rate	11	3,915
0.5% increase in the salary increase rate	2	534
0.5% increase in the pension increase rate	9	3,290

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	
	£'000	%
Active Members	21,713	61.0
Deferred Members	4,036	11.3
Pensioner Members	9,867	27.7
Total	35,616	100.0

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

NOTE 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 2022 is £798k.

As the Actuary's report is based on estimates and due to timing issues, an adjustment of £191k has been made in 2020/21, which contains an adjustment of £180k which relates to the previous year (£3k in 2019/20) 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.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

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

Part 1: SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

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

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

Part 2: THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

2.4 The governance framework described above has been in place at GwE for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the 2020/21 statement of accounts.

Part 3: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

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

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

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

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

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

3.5 Since March 2020, to the date of publication of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, GwE has been responding to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Where this has had a significant and visible impact on GwE’s governance arrangements, this has been noted below.

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

How we do this:

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

- The voting members of the GwE Joint Committee are governed by the Code of Conduct of their relevant Council. The Codes of Conduct for Councillors and employees within the Constitution of the host authority are built upon the principles of openness, transparency and honesty.
- As part of the Regional Business Plan the following service and personal values are embedded within the service and have been set to enable the service to achieve the vision & objectives for delivery. These include:
 - Trust
 - Show no bias
 - Fairness
 - Respect diversity
 - Supportive and collaborative
 - Bilingual
 - Objectivity
 - Demand high standard
 - Integrity
- GwE, supported by the host authority, has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and decision making is effective.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all meetings of the Joint Committee during 2020/21 have been held virtually via Zoom. Guidance was produced for Members in relation to Attending Virtual Meetings.

Principle B	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
Assessment	Assured

How we do this:

- The Joint Committee meetings are open meetings and all papers are published on the host authority (Gwynedd Council) website & the GwE website.
- The Joint Committee meetings have a forward calendar of meetings set out for the year ahead.
- GwE is a partnership organisation, especially with the Local Authorities and even more so during the pandemic and in moving forward.
- Full stakeholder engagement via various forums both within & outside the formal governance structure.
- During 2020/21, GwE have worked effectively with Welsh Government on policy and continuity of learning. GwE has also worked consistently with the other regions and with Estyn in preparing guidance and resources for distance and blended learning and to provide advice on formative and continuous assessment. It has also strengthened the working relationship between those parties with positive professional exchanges, ensuring that the stakeholders are getting quality advice and resources.
- GwE encourages stakeholder engagement and feedback via a broad range of communication and engagement methods. Examples include: attendance at Headteacher Federation meetings; cluster groups; weekly bulletin; social media etc.

- One of the main strengths of work across North Wales has been the consistent messaging from the six local authorities through their political education portfolio holders and directors working with GwE to have one common message for the schools in North Wales. This consistency of messaging has been not only welcomed by schools but also by teacher unions and non-teaching unions who welcomed the clarity of messaging and support for their staff.
- GwE have produced a series of reports that we have shared with the Management Board and the Joint Committee during the year. These reports include the views of schools, staff and local authorities on the effectiveness of regional practice. Each report describes the quality of the provision and identifies areas for improvement to drive the learning agenda forward.
 - Effective collegiate and collective regional approach between the six local authorities and GwE.
 - Joint working has ensured strong governance and regional consistency in support, messaging and guidance given to schools.
 - Establish clear lines of communication with key stakeholders.
 - Reports for the Joint Committee
 - Weekly meetings with Management Board and Education Portfolio Holders - key strategic and political decisions.
 - Share regular updates and ensure contact and support.
 - Share information, key messages and work streams with LAs / Elected Members.
 - Update key stakeholders on various GwE matters.
 - Share regional information and ensure consistent messages.
 - Ensure consistency as regards national and regional information.
 - Ensure effective communication.
 - Prepare and co-ordinate regional meetings, for example the Management Board and Joint Committee.
 - Liaise with key stakeholders.
- Teamwork, joint working and collaboration has also been at the heart of the work with schools. All schools in the region are part of a cluster or a forum where they can come together to discuss operational issues as well as sharing best practice regarding distance and blended learning. This joint work facilitated by GwE staff has been very successful and sets a very strong infrastructure in place for future work and working relationship across the region.

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

How we do this:

- GwE's overall vision is reflected in the 3 year business plan & is further strengthened in the annual business plan.
- The regional priorities and areas for improvement are based firmly on the findings of our internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews on our current practice and direction of travel, and through consultation with headteachers and the Local Authorities. The Business Plan also addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE. Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser
- The clear and robust accountability framework in a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.

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

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

How we do this:

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

- engaging with key interested bodies and stakeholders when appropriate;
 - carrying out such other activities calculated to facilitate, or which are conducive to the successful delivery of the Service;
 - to oversee the management of the Service and ensure that the Service is provided and performs in accordance with the expectations of the Partner Authorities as reflected in the Full Business Case, Inter Authority Agreement and agreed Annual Business and Commissioning Plans;
 - to approve the budget for the Service on an annual basis;
 - to approve the business plan for the Service on an annual basis;
 - to monitor and manage the risks associated with the Service;
 - to ratify requests from the Service for additional budget funding from individual Councils;
 - to approve the staff structure of the Service;
 - to appoint the Managing Director of the Service;
 - to decide on disciplinary action against the Managing Director;
 - where required, to determine or arrange for the determination of appeals in relation to Human Resources matters.
- The Joint Committee is supported by a Management Board with the following terms of reference:
 - Co-construct the annual Business Plan, including the individual appendices to identify specific requirements at individual LA Level;
 - Monitor progress against the priorities and outcomes identified in the Business Plan on a regular basis;
 - Have arrangements in place to make sure that GwE financial controls and systems are robust;
 - Provide professional advice to the joint committee with regard to the appointment of the Managing Director;
 - Regularly report to the joint committee.
 - During the COVID period GwE has continually reflected on the effectiveness of the work. Both internal and external resources have been used to ensure that we have a balanced perspective on the quality of the work. This has included working with the Education Development Trust and Steve Munby to develop the organisation and plan our future infrastructure.

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

How we do this:

- GwE has re focused several times during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, communication & engagement within the leadership structure of GwE has been regular and clear. Daily meetings of the Senior Leadership Team were supported by weekly meetings of the GwE Management Board and Education Portfolio Holders.
- This enabled key strategic and political decisions to be made with clarity and confidence. This resulted in consistent messaging from the partner authorities through their political education

portfolio holders and directors working with GwE to have one common message for the schools in North Wales. This consistency of messaging has been not only welcomed by schools but also by teacher unions and non-teaching unions who welcomed the clarity of messaging and support for their staff.

- The Education Portfolio Holders have been given numerous briefings & kept up to date on all developments via reports & verbal updates. They have also been given the opportunity to access webinars & resources.
- Staff in GwE have adapted their work over the last year in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities during the COVID pandemic. During this very difficult period, GwE have kept true to their vision and values as an organisation that is continually learning.
- The OECD's transversal themes of Trust, Thinking together, Time and Technology have remained at the heart of the work with schools and partners.
- The service in its entirety has re focused several times during this period to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders. The ability to be flexible and agile and to work effectively together in different teams, often cross sector, has had significant impact on organisational behaviour and external perception. At the heart of the refocusing has been the need to ensure that the well-being of school leaders, their staff and learners is paramount to the decision-making and ensuring that the right level of support, operational or professional, can be directed accurately by the service.
- Weekly staff meetings have contributed to a consistency of approach in ensuring common messages to school teachers and leaders. There has been a strong emphasis on modelling appropriate and supportive behaviour throughout the period.
- GwE has worked on the strengths of individuals within the team and redeployed them where they have provided the maximum impact in their roles in supporting individual local authorities, schools, clusters, subject and phase networks. This bespoke provision of support based on strong principles of collaboration, exchanging and sharing and developing the best practice is a key learning principle that we will continue to develop in the next stages of evolving the service.
- The consistency and quality of challenge and support to schools is good. Regular training, support and discussions ensure that Supporting Improvement Advisers' knowledge and understanding of national and local developments, and the implications of this on their roles, is good.
- Quality Assurance processes continue to develop and evolve in line with national developments and principles. The annual Professional Review process has continued during the year.
- Messages and information are communicated clearly and on a regular basis to all employees. Generic, purposeful and effective support programmes are offered. Full and sector team meetings offer regular opportunities for collaboration, consultation and contributing to discussions and decisions regarding GwE's direction of work during a period of considerable change.
- GwE has also worked on a weekly basis from the beginning of spring 2021 with Professor Graham Donaldson to develop its own staff to effectively support schools with the new curriculum.

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

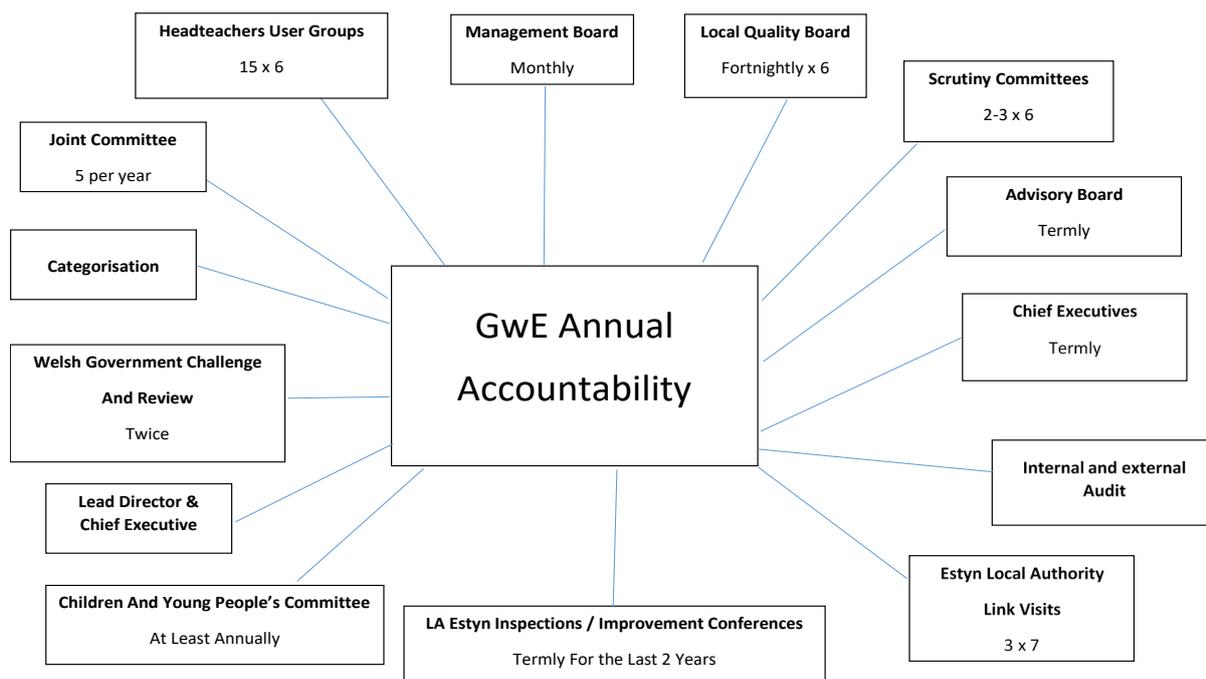
How we do this:

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

Principle G	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability
Assessment	Assured
Future actions	The Joint Committee will be given an opportunity in a future meeting to consider and adopt an Internal Audit Charter, as is required under the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

How we do this:

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



- GwE is a 'relevant body' which must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and system of internal control. In order to comply with these statutory requirements, the internal audit service of the host authority is provided to GwE in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (“PSIAS”). The Standards are relevant to every internal audit service provider for the public sector, whether internal, shared service or external.
- During the year & at the request of the Joint Committee, the GwE Managing Director, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer & Head of Finance in Gwynedd Council, reviewed the internal audit arrangements. As a result, the following process for identifying the need for internal audit and acting on the recommendations was agreed:
 - Identify the need for audit in specific areas. This work plan will be developed where possible through consideration of risk registers, performance reports, business plans etc.
 - Meeting between the host authority Audit Manager and GwE's Managing Director.

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

Part 4: SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

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

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

Part 5: GOVERNANCE MATTERS IDENTIFIED

5.1 Progress on Identified Governance Matters 2019/20

The table below provides an update on progress for those proposals for improvements identified during 2019/20:

Core Principle	Proposal for improvement	Responsible Officer	Update on progress
Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.	Ensure the governance review is finalised.	Host authority / Managing Director	Teamwork, joint working and collaboration has been at the heart of the service during the last 12 months. This joint work facilitated has been very successful and sets a very strong infrastructure in place for future work and working relationship across the region.

<p>Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership & the individuals within</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Managing Director</p>	<p>During this very difficult period, GwE has kept true to its vision and values as an organisation that is continually learning. Staff have received significant professional learning during the year.</p>
<p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<p>That the value for money framework is enhanced during the year in order to demonstrate further the prioritisation of resources.</p>	<p>Managing Director</p>	<p>GwE has continued to provide value for money & has worked within its budget again this year. The Mid Term Financial Plan including the value for money framework will be reviewed during 2021/22.</p>

Part 6: OPINION

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



GwE Lead Officer

Date: 14/07/2021

ARWYN LLOYD THOMAS

GwE MANAGING DIRECTOR



GwE Chairman

Date: 14/07/2021

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

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's 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 international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

Basis of opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

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

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21;

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

Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

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

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

My procedures included the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certificate of completion of audit

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

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
16 November 2021

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Audit of Accounts Report – GwE Joint Committee

Audit year: 2020-21

Date issued: November 2021

Document reference: 2674A2021-22

Purpose of this document

This document is a draft supplied in confidence solely for the purpose of verifying the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in it and to obtain views on the conclusions reached.

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

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Contents

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

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Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2020-21 accounts in this report. We have already discussed these issues with the Head of Finance and his team.
- 2 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of 'materiality'. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 3 We set this level at £276,000 for this year's audit.
- 4 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, as follows:
 - Related Party Disclosures £10,000
 - Senior Officer Remuneration £1,000
- 5 We have now substantially completed this year's audit.
- 6 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves; and our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. There are no relationships between ourselves and yourselves that we believe could undermine our objectivity and independence.

Impact of COVID-19 on this year's audit

- 7 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all aspects of our society and continues to do so. You are required by law to prepare accounts and it is of considerable testament to the commitment of your accounts team that you have succeeded in doing so this year in the face of the challenges posed by this pandemic. We are extremely grateful to the professionalism of the team in supporting us to complete our audit in such difficult circumstances.
- 8 The pandemic has unsurprisingly affected our audit and we summarise in **Exhibit 1** the main impacts. Other than where we specifically make recommendations, the detail in **Exhibit 1** is provided for information purposes only to help you understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this year's audit process.

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

Timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officers provided us with the draft accounts on 27 May 2021 as planned.• We expect your audit report to be signed by the middle of November 2021.
Electronic signatures	Given current social distancing requirements, it will be difficult for signing and certification of the accounts in hard copy again this year. We will accept electronic signatures from you.
Conducting the audit approach and obtaining audit evidence	Due to social distancing measures, Audit Wales and the majority of the Authority’s staff are currently working remotely from home. As a result, we adopted remote ways of working by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• holding Microsoft Teams meetings with officers throughout the audit to discuss progress and emerging issues; and• utilising our remote access to enable the audit team to access the Joint Committee and the hosting authority’s financial records and systems.

- 9 We will be reviewing what we have learned for our audit process from the COVID-19 pandemic and whether there are innovative practices that we might adopt in the future to enhance that process.

Proposed audit opinion

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

Significant issues arising from the audit

Uncorrected misstatements

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

Corrected misstatements

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

Other significant issues arising from the audit

16 In the course of the audit, we consider a number of matters relating to the accounts and report any significant issues arising to you. There were no significant issues arising this year. On completion of the audit, we intend to hold a post project learning exercise with key staff to further improve the accounts production and process for future years.

Appendix 1

Final Letter of Representation

GwE Joint Committee letterhead

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

10 November 2021

Representations regarding the 2020-21 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

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

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith.
- The design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- Full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;

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

Financial statement representations

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

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

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

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

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

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

Representations by the Joint Committee

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

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by GwE Joint Committee on 10 November 2021.

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

Signed by:

Dafydd L. Edwards

Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

Date:

Signed by:

Councillor Phil Wynn

Chair of GwE Joint Committee

Date:

Appendix 2

Proposed Audit Report

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

Opinion on the financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of GwE Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's 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 international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

Basis of opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Joint Committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of

accounting for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

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

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

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

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

My procedures included the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certificate of completion of audit

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

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
16 November 2021

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Appendix 3

Summary of Corrections Made

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

Exhibit 2: summary of corrections made

Value of correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£1,137,000	<p>Note 17 – Cash Flow Statement: Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements</p> <p>A misclassification was identified within the supporting note for the Cash Flow Statement. Grants Received in Advance should have been included within the (Increase) / Decrease in Creditors instead of within the total of Other non-cash items charged to net surplus/deficit on the provision of services. This correction was self-contained within Note 17.</p>	To comply with the disclosure requirement per CIPFA Code.
£304,000	<p>Note 21 – Grant Income</p> <p>A transposition error was identified in the disclosure of Education Improvement Grants (EIG) between the amount of Welsh Government grant received and the Match Funding from Councils. This correction is self-contained within Note 21a.</p>	To ensure that the correct amount of Welsh Government Grants and Match Funding from Councils in relation to EIG was disclosed.
Narrative and transaction disclosures	<p>Note 22 – Related Parties</p> <p>This note needed to be re-worked to include all relevant related parties and amend the figures in relation to the local authority transactions and member transactions. This was to correctly disclose the amounts of payments made, income received and amounts owing to/from the Joint Committee. These corrections were self-contained within Note 22.</p>	To ensure that the disclosure complies with the requirements in the CIPFA Code.

There have also been a number of minor amendments and disclosure updates as a result of our work.



Audit Wales

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

Agenda Item 8

GwE: Joint Committee 10/11/21



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	10 November 2021
TITLE	GwE Budget 2021/22 – 2nd Quarter Review
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE's budget for the 2021/22 financial year.• The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.
RECCOMENDATION	To accept the report.
AUTHOR	GwE Managing Director and Gwynedd Council Head of Finance.

1. CONCLUSION

- 1.1 The 2nd quarter review estimates a net underspend of (£79,720), mainly due to a saving on the core travel costs budget.
- 1.2 The impact of Covid-19 continues to have an effect on individual headings, and the following section of this report explains the reasons behind the main variations predicted.

2. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

2.1 Employees

Quarter 2: underspend (£62,691) Quarter 1: neutral

An underspend position is forecast for the financial year 21/22 due mainly to staff turnover, together with a small saving on other staff related costs (training, advertising etc)

2.2 Building:

Quarter 2: overspend £58,833 Quarter 1: overspend £24,514

This budget is dependent on external income and the use of GwE buildings by specific projects as part of it. As a result of the pandemic new ways of working have been adopted, with much more distance working, and virtual meetings.

GwE officers are not back in the office at the moment, but this may change before the end of the financial year. We are reporting a lack of income for the whole financial year in its entirety, since no use of GwE rooms has been made from April to October, and usage is not anticipated in the near future.

2.3 Travel:

Quarter 2: underspend (£75,862) Quarter 1: underspend (£73,319)

No substantive change to what was reported in Quarter 1, with school visits having resumed, but not to the same extent as before the Covid crisis. This heading will be subject to a review on new ways of working.

3. UNDERSPEND FUND

3.1 At the beginning of the 2021/22 financial year, the fund totalled £563,530.

3.2 Based on the forecasts of the current position it is estimated that the total fund will be £643,250 at the end of 2021/22, following the addition of the underspend of £79,720 forecast above.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: GwE Budget 2021/22 – 2nd Quarter Review.

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Co-author of report.

GwE JOINT COMMITTEE - NORTH WALES COUNCILS - Budget Review 2021/22 : Second Quarter July - September 2021

	Revised Budget (Quarter 1) £	Budget Adjustments (Quarter 2) £	Revised Budget (Quarter 2) £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net (Quarter 2) £	Over / (Under) Spend Net (Quarter 1) £
Expenditure						
Employees						
Salaries						
- Management, Brokerage, Standards and Administration	924,341	(55,000)	869,341	797,105	(72,236)	0
- Supporting Improvement Advisers	3,860,941		3,860,941	3,834,691	(26,250)	0
- Staff on Secondment	43,580	103,495	147,075	147,075	0	0
- Transferred against 'Specific Projects'	(1,820,533)	55,000	(1,765,533)	(1,724,418)	41,115	0
Training, advertising and other employee costs	42,588		42,588	37,268	(5,320)	0
Building						
Rent (includes services)	173,245		173,245	173,245	0	0
'Specific Projects' usage of offices recharge	(58,833)		(58,833)	0	58,833	24,514
Travel						
Travel Costs	137,264		137,264	61,402	(75,862)	(73,319)
Supplies and Services						
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	72,980		72,980	72,980	0	0
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	16,496		16,496	16,496	0	0
Audit Fees	11,454		11,454	11,454	0	0
Brokerage	288,698		288,698	288,698	0	0
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs						
Legal	5,726		5,726	5,726	0	0
Human Resources	9,818		9,818	9,818	0	0
Finance	42,456		42,456	42,456	0	0
Information Technology	46,957		46,957	46,957	0	0
National Model Commitments	469,948		469,948	469,948	0	0
Specific Projects						
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	10,251,998		10,251,998	10,251,998	0	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	1,031,754		1,031,754	1,031,754	0	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	102,787		102,787	102,787	0	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	155,642		155,642	155,642	0	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	346,769		346,769	346,769	0	0
ALN Transformation Grant	75,295		75,295	75,295	0	0
Fin-Ed Pathfinder Project	0	10,625	10,625	10,625	0	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	207,720		207,720	207,720	0	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	210,900		210,900	210,900	0	0

Total Expenditure	<u>16,649,991</u>	<u>114,120</u>	<u>16,764,111</u>	<u>16,684,391</u>	<u>(79,720)</u>	<u>(48,805)</u>
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	Revised Budget (Quarter 1) £	Budget Adjustments (Quarter 2) £	Revised Budget (Quarter 2) £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net (Quarter 2) £	Over / (Under) Spend Net (Quarter 1) £
Income						
Core Service Contributions						
- Anglesey Council (20/21: 10.15% - 21/22: 10.16%)	(429,053)		(429,053)	(429,053)	0	0
- Gwynedd Council (20/21: 17.63% - 21/22: 17.63%)	(744,676)		(744,676)	(744,676)	0	0
- Conwy Council (20/21: 15.30% - 21/22: 15.28%)	(645,228)		(645,228)	(645,228)	0	0
- Denbighshire Council (20/21: 15.30% - 21/22: 15.36%)	(648,731)		(648,731)	(648,731)	0	0
- Flintshire Council (20/21: 22.68% - 21/22: 22.72%)	(959,441)		(959,441)	(959,441)	0	0
- Wrexham Council (20/21: 18.94% - 21/22: 18.86%)	(796,417)		(796,417)	(796,417)	0	0
Specific Projects						
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	(10,251,998)		(10,251,998)	(10,251,998)	0	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	(1,031,754)		(1,031,754)	(1,031,754)	0	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	(102,787)		(102,787)	(102,787)	0	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	(155,642)		(155,642)	(155,642)	0	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(346,769)		(346,769)	(346,769)	0	0
ALN Transformation Grant	(75,295)		(75,295)	(75,295)	0	0
Fin-Ed Pathfinder Project	0	(10,625)	(10,625)	(10,625)	0	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	(207,720)		(207,720)	(207,720)	0	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	(210,900)		(210,900)	(210,900)	0	0
Income from Secondments	(43,580)	(103,495)	(147,075)	(147,075)	0	0
Total Income	(16,649,991)	(114,120)	(16,764,111)	(16,764,111)	0	0
Total Income over Expenditure	0	0	0	(79,720)	(79,720)	(48,805)
Memorandum -						
The GwE Surplus Fund						
				Fund balance as at 1 April 2021	(563,530)	(563,530)
				Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2021/22	(79,720)	(48,805)
				Less - Use of the Fund	0	0
				Fund balance as at 31 March 2022	(643,250)	(612,335)

Agenda Item 9

GwE: Joint Committee 10/11/2021



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REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

10 NOVEMBER 2021

Report by: Arwyn Thomas - GwE Managing Director

Subject: Pupil Development Grant 2021-22

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present an update to the Joint Committee on the Pupil Development Grant Support Plan for 2021/22 across the region.

2.0 Background

2.1 The purpose of the PDG funding is to make a lasting impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Consortia are responsible for ensuring that the grant is used for the purposes for which it is intended and GwE are responsible for developing and monitoring the annual Pupil Development Grant (PDG) Support Plan.

2.2 GwE's allocation is based on PLASC data for 2020 using year groups. For 2021/22:

	Number of eligible learners	Allocation £
Learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM)	14,969	17,214,350
Learners in early years settings (EYPDG)	2,754	3,167,100
Learners eligible for FSM in PRUs and EOTAS	129	148,350
Looked after children aged 3-15	986	1,133,900

2.3 Detailed information on the above funding is included in the annual support plan for Welsh Government. All funding is directly allocated to schools/settings; however, the LAC PDG is a consortia led funding model.

2.4 There is a lead person (strategic adviser) within the consortia who is responsible for the PDG Support Plan in regards to supporting schools and link with the national PDG group with WG.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 PDG FSM:

To continue to implement the annual support plan for 2021-22 across the region. The main focus will be supporting schools/settings to plan their PDG around effective teaching and learning.

3.2 To ensure the Regional and School grant dashboard is completed by all schools/settings to plan their use of the main grants (above) during this financial year, i.e. Early Years / FSM / EOTAS/LAC.

3.3 To roll out the guidance for schools/settings in regards to the use of the PDG and support for vulnerable learners.

3.4 To ensure the support plan is monitored quarterly with examples of impact.

3.5 Consortia Led Funding:

For the second year GwE are receiving Consortia led funding to support schools who are in need of extra support for their disadvantaged learners. The focus is on teaching and learning, targeted support and wider community engagement.

3.6. Allocation of LAC PDG 2021/22

We propose to continue with distributing the grant budget of £1,133.900 via the regional cluster model, individual bursary element and professional development – all in line with the Welsh Government Terms and Conditions.

3.7 All clusters will have access to funds and support across the region to ensure equity of offer and support.

3.8 GwE have continued to use the CRCS (children services data) linked to /PLASC data to identify and allocate funds to each cluster based on £1050 per learner who is looked after. The data does not include formerly looked after children. All of the clusters across the region have looked after children.

3.9 The Regional Cluster PDG dashboard is in place to assist schools/clusters in their grant planning. It also enables both GwE and LA to monitor and evaluate the plans.

3.10 There is an updated directory of universal and targeted support that clusters can access that is evidenced based to ensure quality of provision.

3.11 There are clear lines of accountability and monitoring of impact of the PDG via an annual evaluation cycle with resources shared with schools/settings on effective practise.

3.12 **Wellbeing:**

During 2021/22 GwE have set out the arrangements in the support plan for planning and delivering of wellbeing support to children, stating how we intend working with partners on these proposals in regards to the Whole School approach to supporting emotional and mental wellbeing.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note and approve the content of the report.

5.0 Financial Implications

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

5.2 GwE's allocation for 2021/2022 based on PLASC data for 2020 using year groups is noted in section 2.2 of the report.

6.0 Equalities Impact

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

7.0 Personnel Implications

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

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Welsh Government, Local Authorities (Children's Services and Education) and GwE Management Board.

9.0 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Regional guidance on the implementation & evaluation of the PDG (Pupil Development Grant) for educational establishments across north Wales.
-

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I confirm the financial figures within section 2.2 of the report.



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REGIONAL GUIDANCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION OF THE PDG (PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANT) FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS ACROSS NORTH WALES.

Welsh Government

The purpose of the PDG funding is to make a lasting impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners

1. Rationale:

This guidance aims to give an overview of the PDG in regards to the national agenda/requirements, the regional approach and support by the consortia and its relevance and impact on schools and settings.

2. National Context:

One of the key objectives in Our National Mission, Education in Wales, Action plan 2017–21 is to “raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.” The Welsh Government has expanded the PDG so that schools can improve on the life chances of our most deprived learners with focus on earlier intervention and supporting the most able and talented. The PDG also supports the implementation of objective 3 that refers to building “strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being.”

Extended definition of the use of the PDG:

April 2018

“The PDG should be used to support the needs of all children who are or have been eFSM in the previous two years or are looked after. The PDG is intended to provide support to disadvantaged learners to overcome the additional barriers that prevent those from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving their full potential.’

3. What are the PDG Allocations 2021/22?

WG have allocated PDG based on the 2020 PLASC data.

From April 2021, the PDG will continue to be allocated to support:

- learners who are eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) and who are educated in maintained schools;
- eligible learners who are singly-registered in pupil referral units (PRUs) and education other than at school (EOTAS);
- eligible learners in early years settings where the Foundation Phase is delivered; and
- Looked After Children (LAC), and former LAC who have been adopted from care or who are subject to a special guardianship or residence order aged 3-15.
- In addition, for 2020-21, the PDG will raise the EYPDG element of the grant to £1,150 per learner.

4. PDG Guidance for schools / settings:

WG states that the PDG should be used to:

1. Support all eFSM learners via effective early identification and tracking. This includes the more able learners.

2. Develop staff, both teaching and support, in the use of practice such as metacognition, growth mind-set and quality feedback, that are currently viewed to be the most effective for learners from deprived backgrounds.
3. Intervene early to address weakness, particularly in literacy and numeracy – this applies to early years but is also relevant at the start of secondary school and key transition stages.
4. Ensure that increased resources are targeted at Key Stage 3, both in the classroom and in enrichment activities and raising aspirations, while recognising the importance of Year 11 for all learners. The Cabinet Secretary expects secondary schools to deliver an aspirational target of 60% of PDG invested in KS3 learners.
5. Ensure that all PDG statements are published on school website (if school has no website copy sent and published by GwE.

School Development Plan:

It is a statutory requirement for all schools in Wales to have a school development plan (SDP) in place. Welsh Government recommends that the regional education consortia support schools to use their SDP as a vehicle for planning their use of the PDG for Free School Meals where appropriate. Copies of the SDP to be included as evidence on G6.

5. Regional Support:

GwE's regional business plan model for PDG is fully implemented across the region and outlines how the consortia will use their knowledge of schools and research to facilitate and support the sharing of best practice and collaboration to improve learner outcomes, within a self-improving school system.

There is little doubt that a direct correlation exists between educational attainment and economic prosperity. While it is true that many vulnerable learners succeed in our schools, nevertheless, the performance of some groups of learners still lags too far behind the performance and achievements of others.

The regional consortia has developed a one page PDG strategy that can be implemented by schools and settings and focuses on:

- I. Accountability and Whole schools approach
- II. Early Identification & Tracking of Learners
- III. Teaching & Learning
- IV. Additional Provision & Support
- V. Evaluating and measuring impact.

See copy of the PDG framework in the useful information section.



PDG
Framework.docx

6. Role of the Regional PDG Adviser:

The Consortia's Supporting Improvement Adviser for Wellbeing has overall responsibility for the PDG strategy and represents the region on the national PDG steering group. The adviser will be the main

point of contact for schools on effective and evidence based interventions. For further information and support contact your link School Improvement Adviser.

7. Role of the Link Supporting Improvement Adviser:

The REC have a responsibility to monitor the PDG funds within the context of the school improvement agenda and in accordance with WG requirements of an annual support plan produced by the consortia. In GwE your link Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) and SIA for Wellbeing will have a clear set of checklist criteria /monitoring questions to quality assure the use of the funds and its impact on vulnerable learners. This information will be used to identify successful practise in schools and identify the impact of the use of the PDG on pupil achievements. This will also identify the particular areas for improvement within the region and ensure the interventions are put in place to address them.

See copies of PDG monitoring questions.



GwE PDG Review
Key questions.docx



Successful Practise
Checklist for SIA.doc

8. Accountability & Evidence of PDG funds

The regional Grant Dashboard is the method of monitoring and ensuring accountability of the PDG. Each schools has a link to the dashboard via office 365 and are asked to populate their PDG funds against the key elements / objectives of the grant. The system also includes approval and quality assurance element. Schools and settings are also required to share their PDG Plans via schools or consortia website.



School Grants
Screenshots.docx

9. Evaluation and Measuring Impact of PDG

The guidance aims to support schools to monitor and evaluate the PDG funded interventions/support across the region. It can include whole schools approaches as well as targeted support for individuals. The implementation of the guidance will provide consistency in the way in which schools record their evidence and the regional consortia identify successful practise. The evaluation will be communicated to relevant partners in the most appropriate way that includes G6, school visits, individual LA meetings and annual report. The evaluation findings will also inform the business plan cycle model and WG support plan for the following year.

10. Role of Local Authority:

GwE will work collaboratively with the LA to ensure schools are adhering to the regional PDG monitoring and Evaluation Model. It will be the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure the

effectiveness of the PDG strategy through GwE. This will be achieved in the first instance via the GwE monitoring meetings in each Local Authority and via Scrutiny on request by elected members.

If there are any significant concerns regarding the use of PDG by a school / setting in the context of not meeting the requirements of the terms and condition of the grant, the local authority can request for the funds to be re allocated.



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

10 NOVEMBER 2021

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: GwE Regional Business Plan 2021-2022 - Quarter 2 Monitoring Report

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the Quarter 2 Monitoring Report - GwE Regional Business Plan 2021-2022 to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

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

2.2 Our strategic priorities recognise the present regional and national priorities. The main areas for development were identified through a process of service self-evaluation. The overarching priorities for 2021-2022 were agreed with the Joint Committee on 24 February 2021. This business plan was formally agreed by the Chief Education Officers of each Local Authority, the Joint Committee and the Lead Chief Executive in the Joint Committee meeting on 26 May 2021.

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

3.0 Considerations

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

3.2 The GwE Business Planning Framework ensures clarity and strategic harmony in achieving priorities locally, regionally and nationally. Throughout the year, our governance groups inform reports pertaining to our priority streams in the Business Plan.

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

3.4 In relation to how GwE will respond to the impacts of post-Covid in the context of Education, detailed service plans address this, along with the Regional Strategy 'Renew and reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression'. Through working with partners and key stakeholders and listening to them, we have identified specific themes to support our aim of ensuring that every pupil in north Wales benefits from provision of the highest possible standard. Their mental health and emotional well-being, their relationships and physical health are all essential enablers of good learning. We will support schools to focus on these areas as well as developing the key enabling skills, which include oracy, literacy, numeracy, planning, organising and critical thinking. In addition, the Supporting Improvement Advisers' initial visit to schools at the beginning of the year will focus on the needs of schools, taking into consideration the impact of Covid. Compound information arising from these visits will inform schools' support plans, and we will refine our business plans to reflect this.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve and accept the monitoring report for quarter2.

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

5.0 Financial Implications

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

6.0 Equalities Impact

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

7.0 Personnel Implications

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

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board and Joint Committee.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 - Quarter 2 monitoring report

Appendix 2 - Regional Data for Quarter 2

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I appreciate the Business Plan, which sets out a clear responsibility for the proper operation of business, risk, and value for money, inter alia. Paragraph 5 of the covering report states that GwE will fund any financial implications arising from the Business Plan within its current budget.



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GwE Business Plan 2021-2022 Quarter 2 Progress Report



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CONTENT

1. GwE Regional Business Plan 2021-2022

- Regional priorities & provision contributing to local authority priorities - Progress report for Quarter 2

2. Appendix: Regional Data

1. GwE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN

REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2021-2022

Progress report for Quarter 2 (01/07/2021 – 30/09/2021)

OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

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

EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

Ensure support for all schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis the four purposes, the 12 pedagogical principles and action research

Extensive high level Reform Journey training for schools leaders has been delivered across the region and is continuing this term (refer to Curriculum Realisation). All school leaders have been offered workshops on vision and curriculum planning for Curriculum for Wales (CfW) which has encompassed early thinking on planning for progress and the place of the 12 pedagogical principles in the curriculum.

In secondary schools, teaching and learning leaders in schools have been involved in discussions through forums on what they see as their strengths and development needs for improving pedagogy in their schools, which will feed into the offer from September onwards. On request, some schools have received input on what makes good teaching and learning for progress, with training developed based on the 12 principles. Planning for the Teaching and Learning offer is ongoing.

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

GwE and Shirley Clarke Action research project – Tier 3

The Formative Assessment Action Research project (GwE and Shirley Clarke) has been operational in the region since October 2017. The project is developing effectively and is implemented in a pattern of tiers, putting pedagogical principles in action in classrooms on the basis of robust evidence.

A twilight webinar with Shirley Clarke for all the region's schools entitled 'Formative Assessment 2021' was held on 28/09/2021. They received and revisited the main principles and practices and latest research. Over 1000 teachers from across the region attended. All teachers had access to messages directly from Shirley Clarke to regain momentum and support all practitioners and leaders of learning with further developing and embedding good, consistent pedagogical practice in preparation for CfW.

Ensure consistency of messages and support for schools regarding the 4 purposes and 12 pedagogical principles across networks, and in training and support provided by GwE

Regional and local Networks of practitioners have been established to collaborate on curriculum development - see Curriculum Realisation narrative. GwE are creating a bank of presentations that can be used as the starting point to respond to schools' requests for Professional Learning on Teaching and Learning issues such as questioning, differentiation etc. All will link in with the 12 pedagogical principles.

Ensure support for all schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis the four purposes, the 12 pedagogical principles and action research

Regional and local Networks of practitioners have been established to collaborate on curriculum development - see Curriculum Realisation narrative.

Individual SIAs are in discussion with individual schools and are planning and delivering bespoke support to schools and clusters e.g whole cluster training in aspects of the Framework (also see Foundation Phase Quarter 2 Monitoring Report).

Initial CaBan CfW session has taken place including update on 12 pedagogical principles, delivered in July 2021 to support consistency in approaches including in pedagogy between ITE and practicing teachers. One member of

CaBan lecturing staff attended Shirley Clarke training. CaBan lead schools are part of CfW networks including leading regionally will help to ensure consistent approach with ITE.

Assessment: Ensure consistency in schools' understanding of the key principles of the new assessment guidance - three purposes of assessment – day to day, identify and capture progress and understand group progress

A draft whole school tracker for the new curriculum has been created and trialed in a very limited number of schools across the region for feedback. The tracker focusses on the second and third purpose of assessment. The tracker has been shared with a few SIAs enabling discussions with a few schools and/or clusters across the region in September. The tracker will be shared with all SIAs in October in order to promote discussion within schools and/or clusters. The regional assessment group has met twice. The elected Chair and school representatives from the six Local Authorities have shared initial thoughts and key principles of assessment.

Transition: Support and co-construct transition procedures for summer 2021 with clusters. Develop cross sector collaboration on transition and the sharing of good practice

All schools were provided with WG guidance on assessment for CfW through the professional learning workshops on curriculum planning, session 2. These are available on the support centre and schools continue to access this advice through this resource.

Clusters are beginning to share successful practice in transition and collaborate across and between schools in order to develop a 3-16 curriculum. A small minority of clusters have planned shared teaching through this between high school and primary school staff, this includes mixed age groups in planning and implementing.

As more clusters evolve their practice later this term and next term, this will become more widespread. Successful practice is yet to be shared regionally – this will happen through the CfW networks.

Language and content of support and training includes 3-16 opportunities. Resources are yet to be developed – next step for quarters 3 and 4. Further guidance for schools to follow in quarters 3 and 4.

CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)

Ensure support for schools in relation to whole-school Curriculum Design and within Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLE)

Supporting schools through the Journey to 2022 providing professional learning for the new curriculum

As part of the support to schools for the new Curriculum for Wales, GwE has worked with the other regional consortia to develop a national professional learning offer that integrates all aspects of the wider reform including Schools as Learning Organisations, Y Gymraeg (towards a million Welsh speakers by 2050) and the Additional Learning Needs Transformational Bill. This cross regional offer is aimed at supporting all school practitioners, and focuses initially on Senior Leaders with the following themes:

- Leading Change
- Leadership for the new curriculum
- Developing a Shared Vision
- Planning for Curriculum Change – to include curriculum design, progression and assessment
- Leading Pedagogy
- Time and Space for Professional Learning

This professional learning offer was originally scheduled to begin in spring term 2020, however was naturally paused due to the priorities of the Covid-19 pandemic. In discussions with Head teachers across GwE, the professional learning resumed virtually in January 2021 with the Leading Change session. These sessions across the region are cluster-based and enable smaller groups of primary schools and their local secondary school to discuss the new Curriculum for Wales across the 3-16 learning continuum. Across the region, 832 Senior Leaders attended these Leading Change sessions. In recognition of the re-opening of schools to all learners in March and April, the Professional Learning sessions were again paused in March 2021. Following discussions with the Directors of Education through the GwE Management Board, a series of consultative workshops were held in April 2021 in each Local Authority to listen to feedback from Head teachers on the professional learning offer and how best to re-engage. Over 300 Head teachers attended the consultations.

To support re-engaging with the Curriculum for Wales work, a further leadership planning session has been developed for each individual cluster across the region to build capacity of clusters to collaborate across the requirements of the reform journey as a whole and form an agreed action plan for each cluster. As part of this, all Supporting Improvement Advisers have facilitated sessions where schools within a cluster have the opportunity to work collaboratively to strategically plan for the implementation of the curriculum. Adopting a flexible and sensitive approach to the timings of these sessions has been a key aspect of the discussions between GwE, the local authority and schools. Activities to support preparations for the new curriculum at school and cluster level have been identified within School Development Plans.

The use of technology to collaboratively develop cluster plans and websites ensure that the dialogue is ongoing and Senior Leaders are able to continue this work, following discussions back at individual school level. In addition to the Professional Learning offer, additional support from GwE is available to schools as they prepare for Curriculum for Wales. This support will be accessed at both cluster and individual school level, including tailored bespoke support where needed.

Further support available to schools also includes a series of 'Think-Pieces' which have been written by the GwE team as part of the weekly reform sessions with Professor Graham Donaldson. These papers, which cover key aspects of the curriculum reform journey including leadership, vision, pedagogy, assessment and curriculum design, have been shared and refined through consultation with wider partners in Local Authorities, Estyn and Bangor University. All senior leaders were invited to attend a webinar in May 2021 to explain and share this work on the Think Pieces.

AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE (AOLE) TEAMS

To deliver a professional learning offer for the 6 AOLES

A key aspect in moving forward is supporting schools to develop networks across all six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE). In June 2021, schools were invited to express an interest to be part of the regional Curriculum for Wales networks to contribute to GwE's ongoing support programme for schools in the following areas:

- Whole school Curriculum Design
- Unpacking the potential of one of the AOLES
 - Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
 - Mathematics and Numeracy
 - Science & Technology
 - Humanities
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Expressive Arts
- Assessment

The Curriculum for Wales Networks will work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs in developing effective AOLE practice which will help schools on the Reform Journey.

The publication of the Curriculum for Wales guidance in January 2020 signalled the next phase of curriculum reform and the rollout of Curriculum for Wales in all primary schools, maintained nursery schools and non-maintained nursery settings and from September 2022. Those secondary schools ready to roll out the curriculum in year 7 will be encouraged to do so, however formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll out in that year to years 7 and 8 together.

Across GwE, schools have previously been supported to engage with the Curriculum for Wales through Curriculum for Wales Cluster Facilitators. Professional learning and funding have been available to networks and clusters of schools to develop collaboration with practitioners across the 3-16 continuum. The Curriculum for Wales networks are the next stage in this development, looking to develop collaboration across the whole curriculum.

GwE have worked with fellow regional consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government to set out the expectations on schools and settings in respect of reform as we move towards implementation of Curriculum for Wales in Curriculum for Wales: The journey to 2022. This document also acknowledges the challenge that Covid-19 continues to present to all schools within the renew and reform strategy.

From starting with 300 names of practitioners in June to now having over 600 practitioners as part of local groups, the commitment to be part of this work and collaborate is clear and we are again very grateful to all who have made contact.

The regional Curriculum for Wales group has met on 2 occasions with Professor Graham Donaldson. There has been some productive discussion and presentations shared, recordings of which are available and will be shared when the local groups met. Each of the regional group members who are from schools within the Local Authorities are now in the process of making first contact with local group members. All the work of the Curriculum for Wales networks will be accessible to all schools via the GwE Support Centre and through discussions with the school's SIA.

OBJECTIVE 2- DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL)

Support primary schools plan their International Language (IL) provision

GwE Support Centre: International Languages in the primary sector.

A Primary IL section has now been developed on the GwE Support Centre to provide clear and up to date information and resources on the teaching and learning of IL in the primary as well as the GF offers and opportunities. All teachers have access to the website and will be able to find links and contacts they need to increase confidence and expertise and support their journey to 2022 and beyond.

English: <http://cefnogaeth.gwegogledd.cymru/adnoddau-gwe/pynciau-allgraidd-adnoddau-gwe/?lang=en>

Cymraeg: <http://cefnogaeth.gwegogledd.cymru/adnoddau-gwe/pynciau-allgraidd-adnoddau-gwe/>

Lead primary schools

9 Lead schools are now providing direct support to their own clusters and are available to support any school which request extra help.

Starter pack

The Lead Primary schools have now completed the video/tutorials to support schools to introduce IL in their curriculum. These are in the process of being posted on the GwE support Centre and information has been shared via the GF GwE Primary Newsletter, GwE Bulletin and Primary SIAs. The themes covered are:

- A Clear and Concise Road Map to Integrating International Languages
- Developing Confidence in Teaching International Languages
- Embedding Languages in the Curriculum
- Embedding Oracy with Additional Languages in a primary classroom
- Integrating French into different areas of learning
- Embedding Multilingualism.
- IL in Health and Well Being: how do you feel.

Power language subscriptions

Since July 2021, 31 new schools have registered for the fully-funded subscription to the Power Language resources which means that since 2018, 80 schools across the region will have been supported in receiving quality resources and training. 60 from Power Language Schools and 20 more from Primary Languages Network. All new schools have agreed to give some feedback on impact later on this academic year.

Provide professional learning opportunities

Cerdd Iaith: In June, 5 schools registered and attended the second round of Cerdd Iaith training. This means that together with the training in Nov / Dec, 20 teachers across the region in 2020-2021 have been trained to use the Cerdd Iaith resources.

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

Open University Telt Course and Associate Teacher:

9 teachers have enrolled in the OU TELT course for 2022 (part 1, 2 part 2).

Since 2018 and by June 22, 31 teachers across the region will have completed the one-year training course to learn and teach an IL in primary. 8 of those will have completed the second year as well.

In 2019, the OU selected one of our teachers to become an Associate Teacher and will continue in a monitoring and supporting role in the region and across Wales for the third year running.

Teaching and Learning languages in the primary classroom: pedagogical principles and resources:

Research in Primary Languages: Teacher Education Toolkit by Dr Alison Porter (university of Southampton) and Colleagues - clear and concise resources which outline the main principles of teaching and learning an International language in the primary sector to be shared. Each section focuses on 3 main principles and include a range of videos from practitioners who share their work in class. There is also a research and practice reading task for each section. Information is available on the GwE support Centre and all resources are available for free on request.

Secondary sector

Consortia to provide support through the regional Hub model

GwE Support Centre: International Languages – a secondary MFL/IL section has now been developed on the GwE Support Centre to provide clear and up to date information and resources on the teaching and learning of MFL/IL in the secondary as well as the GF offers and opportunities. All teachers have access to the website and will be able to find links and contacts to continue to develop their practice and support their journey to 2022 and beyond.

English: <http://cefnogaeth.gwegogledd.cymru/adnoddau-gwe/pynciau-allgraidd-adnoddau-gwe/?lang=en>

Cymraeg: <http://cefnogaeth.gwegogledd.cymru/adnoddau-gwe/pynciau-allgraidd-adnoddau-gwe/>.

School to school support

Regular support has been requested by HT from 3 individual schools. Support focuses on planning, assessment and progression, teaching and learning. Support is provided to individual schools/ departments. Subject network meetings have been planned half-termly to respond to needs identified by teachers and to support aspects of Teaching and Learning at KS4/KS5 and to supplement work undertaken by the regional and local groups organised by the service with schools from across the region.

Following our summer network meeting (1st July 2021) schools completed a survey regarding their needs in relation with their preparation for CfW. The aspects teachers would like support on in order of importance:

- Assessment: what and how
- Planning within AoLE
- Curriculum planning principles
- Principles of progression
- Statements of What Matters and Progression Steps
- Planning across AoLEs
- Primary-Secondary Transition
- Unpacking LLC

Other needs/questions or suggestions:

- How to deliver and ensure progress with very limited timetable (1 lesson/week)
- Effects of the pandemic
- What elements of the cfw are already in place in primary
- Impact of changes in GCSE on KS3 planning
- Linking MFL to other subjects especially in year 7 when learners have not got the basics yet
- How to cross paths within the LLC AoLE successfully
- Setting up teams group to support smaller department

Our support to respond to these needs will be in line and take place alongside the support network in place by the service. Its aim will be to supplement and not duplicate the work done by the regional and local groups.

Audits and plans for support

Data for 2020-2021 was collated late July and start of September. 50/54 schools have completed the audit. Languages uptake declined overall with some sharp drops in a number of schools where some classes could not run last year. Successful stories were also encouraging and sharing ideas to promote languages have been collated

and shared with all HoD across the region. Schools have been encouraged to engage with the GF partners' activities to raise interest and uptake. Continued support to promote languages will continue. Data for 2021-2022 is being audited and will be analyzed later this term.

Creating Across Languages project (Creative Poetry):

Following the work done last year between GwE SIAs and Bangor University, we have now made a start on the second phase of the project to collaborate with schools. Schools have been recruited and have attended a first meeting (22/09/21) to understand the aims and expectations of the project and our collaboration. The aim of the project is to introduce poetry as a creative means of exploring languages and identities. Creative writing across languages will help learners to think about their own lives through the multilingualism that surrounds us, and this practical approach will give them confidence in using languages expressively.

This is a possible model on how to design a unit of work and how to look at curriculum design within the AOLE but with the potential to link the learning with other and across AOLEs. It remains flexible and adaptable for schools to experience and to develop the model which will suit their school and local context.

Resources have been shared and action plan agreed to complete trialling and evaluation work by March 2022 and to share by summer 2022. Google classroom has been created for all to facilitate collaboration and to share evolving work. Constant support and regular monitoring meetings have been planned to support and guide schools.

Language awareness at KS3- Multilingualism

Cross-consortia contacts have been made to work collaboratively on adapting and trialling the resources in Welsh schools.

Provide direct support to secondary schools via the Cardiff University mentoring project for 2021-22

Promote and encourage school engagement in Mentoring schemes

Year 8/9 mentoring: effective communication and collaboration with schools across the region resulted in 21 schools applying for the programme. Amongst the 15 schools selected 5 were schools who had never participated before. Therefore, the programme is reaching a wider range of schools.

HLTA - TALP

Support teaching assistants with their professional development by implementing the training programme across the region.

Support experienced teaching assistants with their professional development by implementing the HLTA programme across the region.

Newly appointed Teaching Assistants

3 teaching assistants have completed the training between April and August 2021 and 55 teaching assistants have registered since September 2021 so far. A total of 58 out of a target of a 100 for the whole year. Details regarding the training will be shared in the weekly Bulletin and in the Google Classroom.

Teaching assistants at work

The training programme for experienced teaching assistants came to a halt from March 2020 until the end of summer 2021 due to the pandemic. Following national discussions, it was decided that we would adjust the original programme to ensure it was appropriate for digital platforms. The original Day 1 face to face session was adapted to offer 2 online modules. The programme will be available between November and December 2021. We intend to offer a pilot training programme for a 100 people (50 Welsh medium and 50 English medium). Facilitators will be trained to deliver the programme on a digital platform. We contacted clusters that were keen to offer their teaching assistants the training to arrange new dates.

Aspiring HLTA

Aspiring HLTA programme Cohort 2 training was delivered to 52 teaching assistants and 50 of those completed the complete training programme, in the form of 8 digital sessions.

As the Aspiring HLTA Cohort 2 programme was delivered digitally there were no limits on the amount of people that could take part and therefore we provided training for 50 teaching assistants. 49 applications were also received for Cohort 3 which shows a healthy amount of individuals across the region.

The last 4 training sessions for HLTA Cohort 2 will be delivered digitally during October/November 2021.

The comments received from teaching assistants, facilitators and assessors show that teaching assistants have a much better understanding of the Professional Standards and how to implement them in their everyday role. They also have a better understanding of the Curriculum for Wales following the training. Their input in discussions was professional and they showed enthusiasm regarding developing the Curriculum for Wales. We also found the teaching assistants appreciated the opportunity to be able to work with other teaching assistants across the region and nationally. The teaching assistants' digital skills had also improved and the technical session had been very helpful in this regard.

HLTA Status

Following attending 8 Aspiring HLTA digital sessions, 67% of Aspiring HLTA Cohort 2 teaching assistants applied for a HLTA status assessment. 33% weren't able to complete the assessment because either they couldn't get enough classroom teaching experience due to Covid's affect on schools, due to illness or because they failed to achieve a level 2 Literacy / Numeracy qualification in time. These will be assessed along with Cohort 3 teaching assistants.

Two new assessors, who specialized in special schools, were recruited and trained which means we have 23 assessors across the region for Cohort 2. All of which have received refresher training. A session was held to support the teaching assistants to present their assignments. Cohort 2 assessments will be held between October the 18th and November the 12th.

Y Gymraeg

Cluster Work

Many meetings have been held with the Local Authorities. Consequently, principles have been agreed for the year's work programme. This has led to consistency as regards initial work across the north. In consultation with the Authorities a new dashboard spreadsheet has been created, to collate all the information on planning, costs and reporting on progress. In addition to the regional group, each Authority has met on a regular basis with the link SIA, and these meetings have been an opportunity to investigate variances, needs and discuss local solutions.

Develop informal use of the Welsh language - 'Siarter Iaith' (Language Charter) and 'Cymraeg Campus'

The Siarter Iaith (SI) Co-ordinators have completed progress reports and a composite report has been shared with Welsh Government (WG). Funding has been allocated to each cluster to support Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus activities, and the Siarter Iaith Co-ordinators are a part of the discussions with clusters to plan expenditure effectively. Local discussions have also been held on how these activities contribute to the implementation of Authority WESPs (Outcome 3 and 5). A series of meetings have been planned with WG in order to ensure consistency across Wales, and there will be discussions on the roles of SI Co-ordinators across the region. Planning for April 2022 will commence next term.

Develop a Welsh language professional offer, which is a part of the regional Accelerated Learning Strategy

Discussions are ongoing in terms of collaborating with Local Authorities to provide a professional offer for the recovery of the Welsh language, which is a part of the regional Accelerated Learning Strategy (pedagogy and intervention resources to support learners across the ability range). In terms of next steps, we will highlight the provision and the next steps for schools in terms of professional development, ensuring that purposeful attention is given to secondary provision - immersion and using the language in other areas and subjects. It is intended to deliver a series of workshops, which will further deepen the work when embedding the principles of 'Ein Llais Ni' (see below).

Develop the language skills of the workforce

Data has been received by the National Language Centre regarding 'Croeso' on-line training: Practitioners in Education (Part 1 and Part 2, approximately 5 hours each). 94 have registered; 52 have completed Part 1 (units 1-5); and 43 have completed Part 2 (units 6-10).

Sabbaticals Schemes - a Welsh in a year course is being offered in 2 parts in the north this year.

- 12 have been accepted to undertake Part 1 (September-December)
- 9 are going on to Part 2 (January-April) with 8 additional members joining them.
- 5 are on the waiting list for Part 2.

To summarise:

- 12 on the Foundation course (part 1),
- 17 on the Intermediate course (part 2)
- 20 individuals are having access to the courses, with 5 in reserve

Support for GwE staff - 8 have been undertaking the learning Welsh training, completing Unit 5 of the Intermediate course, and are practising for the examination. 4 have committed to the 'Cynllun Siarad' through the National Centre, which are opportunities to chat in Welsh with GwE partners for an hour a week, for approximately 10 sessions. An application has just been submitted, 'Cymraeg Gwaith', for access to further training via the scheme.

Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in order to prepare for the Curriculum of Wales and WG's target of a million Welsh speakers:

'Ein Llais Ni' project (ELIN) - a unique scheme to promote learners' oracy skills

A successful application was made to Welsh Government early in 2021 for funding to support us to undertake an action research project to raise standards in Welsh oracy. This scheme is intended to provide the opportunity to re-ignite and embed listening and speaking skills in curriculum planning for Curriculum for Wales, taking into account international oracy learning and teaching strategies. There is robust collaboration between the University and the Project Team in planning for the research. The project will provide an opportunity for schools to collaborate as an action research team in collaboration with Bangor University and GwE.

A clear path has been developed for the project, providing a very strong foundation for developing the action research. Feedback from schools highlights a real need for this type of support, especially so when considering the impacts of Covid on pupils' oral skills and confidence.

We have invited individual schools and clusters of schools to join a unique opportunity to develop and refine practice to promote our learners' oracy skills here in North Wales. The implementation of the strategies will be supported at every stage of the journey led by an international expert on the promotion of bilingual oracy skills and teaching strategies, Professor Enlli Thomas, Bangor University. A National Conference to launch the research, the support resources, and to raise awareness of the findings of the 'Ein Llais Ni' project will be held on 20 October 2021.

Leadership Development

Initial mapping of primary literacy network meetings has taken place, with Welsh Networks meeting in the secondary - 27 (a combination of regional and local) (see Welsh and Literacy Business Plan). We will collaborate to plan the workshops that accompany the PL strategy to prepare for CfW, taking into account the content of the leadership programme for developing Welsh language leadership.

Developing Partnerships

Planning meetings have been held with Authorities, which has led to strengthening the collaboration and sharing further resources, highlighting needs across the authorities. In addition, the collaboration has been effective in terms of sharing information and implementation approaches across authorities so as to reduce planning workload.

The national work between the 4 regions in each key stage has continued, which has led to developing commendable resources for the primary and secondary sectors. Meetings enable the development of useful networks, and deepen collaboration based on need in schools.

A LEVEL

Regional deployment of ALPs: ALPs data is being collected currently for 2021 outcomes.

Developing future leaders: the Post-16 Leadership Course: following a review of the programme in tandem with the other consortia representatives, the course has been re-developed in a remote format over four half-days. First delivery session is October 19.

Developing resilience and independence in learners: training in the VESPA programme. Three further development sessions have been offered this term – introduction to VESPA; VESPA for form-tutors and Coaching.

Networking and sharing of practice across heads of 6: network meetings are scheduled shortly (October/November).

E-sgol

Continue to support the 6 pilot e-sgol schools and expand their curriculum in year 12: timetable and new subjects arranged with the 6 schools as well as outside provider Mudiad Meithrin providing Cam wrth Gam course.

Set up and work with the Regional Strategic board and Regional Operational board to implement actions, which will arise after meeting with LA directors for each for the six authorities to draw out common themes: meetings have taken place across all 6 authorities. Strategic board has met again – looking at members of the Regional Operational board. This will be further developed this term. Meeting before October half term 2021 to develop working with the regional operational board as well as further possible pilot projects.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

GwE is working closely with Bangor University on the 'Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact' (CIEREI) Project to ensure robust evaluation systems for their development programmes and to measure their impact in schools as part of a regional approach.

The research and evaluation work being undertaken this year is as follows:

1. CIEREI Collaborative Institute for Education and Childhood Research: Specific Projects focused on National and regional priorities/Promote the use of more evidence-informed strategies across the GwE region/Promote stronger links between education researchers in HEIs and schools to secure knowledge transfer via the 'trusted conduits' via iterative activities (Gorard, 2020)
2. CIEREI Research Clusters
3. Strategic role in developing a model of a Welsh Research Centre / Institute
4. ITE Enquiry Clusters
5. Senior Leaders / Masters funding
6. Professional Learning
7. Regional research projects

Also refer to Re-ignite Learning business plan for further detail on specific projects.

Improving Standards Through Effective Revision (iStER)

This PhD studentship is in its third and final year (2020-21) and the student is writing up papers for publication focused on the use of retrieval practice and practice testing strategies. The student has now submitted a proposal to continue this work with a range of secondary schools serving more disadvantaged communities.

Positive Readiness for Learning (PR4L) Project

This PhD studentship is in its second year (2020-21) and the student is currently continuing the evaluation of the impact of whole-school positive behaviour support strategies in two schools serving more deprived communities.

Warwick Collaborative Well-being Project

This collaborative PhD studentship is in its second year (2021-22) and the student is currently continuing the evaluation of whole-school well-being provision. The following main tasks have been completed:

- a systematic review of the literature on whole school well-being interventions and programmes. This has been submitted for publication.
- A regional survey of schools' use of well-being programmes in North Wales.

The third and final aspect of this project will commence in autumn term 2021. This will be an evaluation of a promising whole-school well-being programme called Connect. This work will be undertaken alongside two new KESS-sponsored masters' students in Bangor University, and will involve an evaluation of Connect alongside a translation of a Welsh language version.

UK KiVa Study

GwE is a co-applicant on this large-scale research project to evaluate the impact of the KiVa anti-bullying programme in primary schools. Following a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 30 schools in North Wales have been recruited for the study. Fifteen of the schools have been randomised to receive KiVa in 2021-22, and the remaining 15 schools will receive KiVa in 2022-23. The intervention schools were trained in the summer term 2021, and have been delivering KiVa from September 2021.

CIEREI Research Clusters

GwE has been working with Welsh Government on the initial phase of the National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry (NSERE) in 2021, and this was launched in July 2021. GwE has been working with Welsh Government to identify six schools in North Wales to form part of the 2021-22 pilot phase of this NSERE initiative to create more evidence-informed schools. This work continues alongside colleagues from Bangor University in the autumn term.

Strategic role in developing a model of a Welsh Research Centre / Institute

The aim of this action is to build on, and consolidate, the work that GwE and CIEREI have been undertaking since 2016. All of the projects listed in this report fall under this initiative, and GwE will continue to oversee a dual role both as coordinator of the school research and professional learning aspect of this collaborative work, but also provide dedicated academic supervision and support for the master's and PhD students that are engaged in this work. There is also an increasing focus on engaging with Welsh Government in 2021-22 to disseminate the outputs of the GwE-CIEREI work.

ITE

Collaborate with the Universities to ensure that initial teacher education and induction is a seamless process.

The 4 consortia and the ITE providers have collaborated this year on a Welsh Government project to improve the mentoring skills of the ITE and the Induction mentor. The 3 day workshops will be co-presented in September, December and May 2022. 4 consortia representatives and ITE colleagues have presented an update on progress to WG in June 2021.

Ensuring strong support for the GwE 2021/22 NQT cohort.

High quality National Professional learning programme is underway for NQTs. 321 GwE NQT's have attended session 1 of the NQT National training. Through collaborative approach, robust plans are in place for induction to be more seamless. The ITE/Consortium Induction Mentoring programme will start in November, there has been real interest in this new initiative

Procedures are in place to improve the quality of mentoring. 174 GwE school based Induction Mentors have attended the recent National training, the highest number in any consortium in Wales.

Specialist subject Networks are in the initial stage of development.

Some NQTs are currently on school based placement for the term – this innovative move is ensuring that they are able to successfully practice teaching and support their induction. There are over 100 primary and 30 secondary NQT's in GwE schools who are benefitting from this WG scheme.

Collaborate with Bangor University to develop and train teaching teachers in the primary and secondary sectors. To improve the knowledge and understanding of the positive impact of high quality ITE provision on schools within the region.

Communication is being currently updated – website in update, newsletter planned, potential webinar planned, and information has been provided to schools where appropriate. This ensures improved understanding of positive benefits of successful ITE provision.

GwE attend CaBan staff meetings and Inset where appropriate, and CaBan staff attend GwE professional learning opportunities – e.g. Shirley Clarke, CfW sessions, GwE staff deliver on BA and PGCE programmes. 24 GwE staff in total have offered sessions: 17 sessions were delivered in 2020-21, and so far in 2021-22 autumn term, 10 sessions are planned, with further to follow in quarters 3 and 4. This ensures shared staffing, improved resourcing, improved consistency in approach, improved knowledge and skills of GwE staff, CaBan staff and student teachers.

E-sgol collaboration – initial sessions planned to upskill and raise awareness of students of opportunities with regional e-sgol schools. Planned sessions and national networking to ensure equity of access and improved recruitment and subject knowledge in key shortage areas.

Cymraeg

Students and NQTs knowledge of Welsh is improving. Collaboration continues with Bangor University to ensure that pedagogy is embedded and that expectations, particularly for local Welsh culture and heritage, for the curriculum for Wales are addressed

The Welsh-medium primary PGCE course / pathway is fully in place.

Shared Research-based project, 'Ein Llais Ni' - weekly meetings being held between the GwE and Bangor University Research team. The expression of interest to join the collaborative project has been good with 103 primary and secondary schools from all LA's applying. Almost all schools are attending the conference and 60 will be involved closely in the research aspect of the project. The research team will be working closely with a specific number of school evaluating the effect of the strategies.

DIGITAL

Digital Resilience

GwE have recorded and released two chapters which are part of a series of podcasts discussing digital resilience. Amongst the subjects which were discussed were 'Misinformation', and 'Stay true to yourself online'. The podcasts have been recognised nationally, with the Welsh Government using them as an unofficial podcast to support their pages of support for schools through the Hwb site.

Developing Digital Leadership

During quarter 2, the digital facilitators programme was relaunched. The response so far has been good with nearly half the region's clusters responding. The programme will be operational during quarter 3. The programme will be supported by the launch of a national digital learning self evaluation tool – the latest date for this launch is January 2022.

Hwb

The data regarding the use of Hwb in the region continues to be high. The average number of schools that engaged with Hwb during quarter 2 was 93.16%. This is very encouraging given that the summer holidays took place during half the period in question. The average for each month was as follows:

- July – 97.66%
- August – 83.5%
- September – 98.3%

Professional Learning Opportunities

To support schools with their use of Hwb, a series of online courses were created that focus on effective use of the available services; Google for Education, J2E, Flipgrid, Adobe Spark. These courses have been designed on many levels to ensure that new and experienced users can take advantage of development opportunities. This training is offered as a course which is available on demand to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants can enrol in the course at a time that's convenient for them. So far, the content has been viewed 5642 times – which is an increase of 1502 views since quarter 1.

Support for the new curriculum

Programming equipment kits were distributed in schools across the region to allow them to experiment with requirements within Science and Technology AoLEs. The overall aim is to ensure that these schools are able to provide / share their experiences with other schools and present their experiences to local and regional Curriculum

for Wales networks. 3 practitioners were commissioned to prepare resources suitable for displaying and meeting requirements within the computing strand in the Curriculum for Wales. These resources will be ready to be launched during quarter 3 and 4.

MATHS AND NUMERACY

Schools causing concern

Primary and secondary: Bespoke support for schools in Estyn Category (Special Measures) has focused on supporting whole school monitoring procedures and preparing Schools appropriately for return Estyn visits. Bespoke support and workshops has continued for regional schools deemed 'at risk' or in ESTYN monitoring category. This has resulted in improved planning for the teaching and learning of Mathematics and a greater understanding of how numeracy supports learning across the curriculum.

Regional support

Primary and Secondary - Personalised Assessments: Literacy and Numeracy SIA have created a webinar to inform schools fully about the requirements and details of the National Personalised Assessments, for reading, numeracy and numerical reasoning. Awaiting the release of the Numerical Reasoning assessment prior to uploading on GWE Support Centre.

Primary and Secondary - Pathfinder for Financial Education Professional Learning in Wales: Delivered in collaboration with Ye/University of Edinburgh and externally funded by MaPS, to support the delivery of financial education across the region (e-learning and face to face training). Professional development has provided practitioners with opportunities to support their learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes in the key areas of financial education, as well as looking at the new Curriculum for Wales and how financial education aligns with this. Project completed end of summer term. Plan to share effective practice from project schools.

ENGLISH AND LITERACY

Schools causing concern

Bespoke support for schools causing concern in Estyn categories has prepared schools appropriately for return Estyn visits. Groups of schools with shared priorities for developing writing has been created. Ongoing support will be provided/facilitated in line with their needs.

Regional Network/Forum meetings have been established for HoD/A Level/Literacy leaders.

Curriculum for Wales

Network support has been established within Regional CfW Networks and will impact directly on Local network activities across the whole region.

Schools recruited to work on CfW project "Creating across Languages", to develop cross curricular skills, integral skills, cross-cutting themes and learning experiences.

Continued support for schools involved in the Building Reading Power pilot to make effective use of assessment data, including National Personalised Assessments, to inform planning and interventions.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Network meetings

During this term, twilight meetings were held on Teams for the Heads of the Welsh Departments (both by direct invitation and by open invitation). We decided to offer 'on demand' open sessions (focused) over Teams and these sessions were recorded and placed in the Teams below.

Establish 'GwE – The Welsh Language – Secondary' Teams:

In response to the need to share information quickly and to create a digital network, a 'GwE – The Welsh Language – Secondary' Teams was established.

A 'live' and up to date monthly 'newsletter' is shared via this Teams meeting and teachers are able to contribute towards it. Discussions are underway regarding establishing another Teams for English medium schools.

Curriculum for Wales Regional Networks

Following the introduction of the programme mentioned above (and the forthcoming national programme), the information will need to be cascaded to Heads of the Welsh Departments in the region.

Particular aspects will be presented as specific focus areas for the above 'on demand' open session and will be integrated into the Curriculum for Wales Regional Networks Programme.

These sessions will be recorded during the year to create a bank of resources to support Heads of the Welsh Departments on their journey to 'reform' their schools.

'Ein Llais Ni' Project

The innovative regional project (a joint project with Bangor University) will be operational during this year. An 'Ein Llais Ni' Conference was held for the schools that applied to join the project on October the 20th 2021.

'Y Stordy' – The GwE Support Centre

In order to engage with schools across the region, we are in the process of developing an 'Y Stordy' website to create a convenient home for 'Welsh and Literacy' resources at the GwE Support Centre.

The National Working Groups

The work of two of the national working groups is ongoing, namely the KS4 and KS5 working groups. Schools in the region are strongly represented on these working groups. Two members of the KS4 working group will be contributing towards the national event where their work will be launched during the Autumn Term 2021. The working groups' work is currently kept on 'Y Pair' (a resource network on Hwb) although, websites that were created by these working groups have now been incorporated into the official WJEC resource website too.

Support for Welsh Language NQT's 2021-22

Following the success of the working group that was established last year, the idea of establishing a similar national working group was shared with the officers that are responsible for the Welsh Language within the other consortia. We will continue the national discussions while ensuring that we offer support for Welsh Language NQT's within the region during the Autumn Term 2021.

SCIENCE

Improve the quality of planning for learning and teaching (pedagogy)

Due to the current situation without our schools, we have not been in a position to offer the planned professional learning identified within the business plan. The team is currently putting together a T & L strategy and planning on moving the offer forward in the Spring term.

Bespoke school support

Bespoke school support around teaching and learning and leadership has been provided to those schools identified by the school SIAs and those that have requested additional support. The secondary SIAs are currently working on the individual school support plans, which will identify which schools require Science support. This is due to be completed by the end of October, and this will direct the work programme for school support.

Supporting teachers and learners

As in Quarter 1, further development of the TANIO website has continued, and Cynnal are currently working on the platform to include areas for supporting Post 16 and the Curriculum for Wales. Due to the ongoing COVID situation and we are yet to identify individuals to develop resources and are looking at potentially offering funding to individual schools to complete the tasks. This will be explored next term, but will need to link with the work of the clusters and AoLEs.

FOUNDATION PHASE

To provide bespoke support for schools causing concern, enabling them to drive their own improvement journey

Nearly all schools receiving bespoke support are addressing actions identified by FP SIAs impacting positively of provision and outcomes. Most schools have effectively implemented actions to improve the quality of provision and pupil outcomes reducing in-school variance in some schools and greater consistency in the teaching and learning across the region. Support has also ensured a deeper understanding of the FP principles and pedagogy that aligns with the pedagogy within Enabling Learning guidance and CfW framework.

To further enhance the provision and pupil progress across all regional schools in preparation for the implementation of Curriculum for Wales.

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

Develop cross sector collaboration and the sharing good assessment practice

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

Bespoke training has been delivered for schools targeting those aspects identified as needing to be prioritized as a result of COVID eg. pupils' communication skills and health and wellbeing. Focus has been on developing these skills within a developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Training has also been delivered for Teachers and TAs new to the Foundation Phase on pedagogy and the 'Role of the Adult'. Training sessions have:

- Deepened practitioners understanding of how the pedagogical principles relate with each other in the creation of productive, effective learning experiences.
- Practitioners using a blend of developmentally appropriate pedagogical approaches that responds to learner needs (including emotional and social skills)
- Practitioners creating effective cross-curricular connections to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, drawing on learners' previous knowledge and experiences.
- Practitioners to consider not only the physical spaces but also the emotional climate that support learners to achieve their potential.
- Deepening practitioners understanding of the importance of observation in their everyday practice to:
 - gain a greater understanding of the needs, skills and progress of pupils
 - allows practitioners to identify the ways in which children and young people prefer to learn, and how best to motivate them to participate in the learning process.
 - identify those learners who might need extra support to help them reach their full potential.
- Practitioners understanding that effective observations enable them to plan appropriate provision that supports learners' involvement and enjoyment in their learning, as well as planning to support them in moving to the next stage of learning.
- Understand that assessment needs to be an ongoing process embedded into day-to-day practice, in a way that is indistinguishable from teaching and learning

SIA observations generally indicate that there is better use of observations and developmentally appropriate AfL strategies to plan the next steps in learning.

Schools have access to all training / networks / resources / successful practice case studies (within GwE Support Center, Google Classes and GwE Foundation Phase Network on HwB). Large number of schools regionally using the webinars etc within staff meetings and INSET to upskill the workforce. SIA notes that this is having a positive impact on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes.

OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP

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

LEADERSHIP

Continue to offer a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities in relation to leadership developmental programmes in order to develop present and future leaders

All modules of each Leadership Programme to date (with exception to the Experienced Headteacher Programme) have been successfully completed to the timetable set out in the original plan. We are on track to be completing the MLDP and SLDP by the end of the calendar year, AHDP (NPQH) to hold the Assessment Centre in February 2022 and the New and Acting Headteachers Programme by the end of this academic year.

Again during 2nd quarter, informal comments gathered from individuals delivering and running these programmes indicate that leaders participating in the programmes are showing a general increased confidence and understanding of effective leadership when discussing their leadership roles back in schools.

Arrangements are in place to collect formal feedback from participants across all programmes at the end of this calendar year. This will enable us to assess the impact of the leadership programmes in developing leaders on all steps of the Leadership Pathway.

As was noted in the previous quarterly report, frequent evaluation and content refinement of the programmes has ensured the ability to adapt to the relevant needs of current school leaders. The programme facilitators have remained mindful of the needs of school leaders during the pandemic, ensuring that they develop the tools and resilience to lead during challenging times. They have also ensured key messages and updates on the National Agenda and CfW are included in the programmes.

GwE SIAs are currently working nationally with the other Regions to further develop provision – specifically in regards to the Middle Leadership Development Programme and the New and Acting Headteacher Programme. This is to ensure that the programmes remain current, relevant and effective in supporting effective leadership development in the current climate.

GOVERNORS

In agreement with LAs, offer professional learning opportunities in Education Reform.

As part of the ongoing support for Governors Professional Learning, a number of presentations have been delivered across the region with the aim of introducing Governors to the Curriculum for Wales framework. These sessions have been well attended in all Local Authorities enabling all governors who attend have a better understanding of the aspects delivered, have increased confidence when supporting their schools and are able to contribute more strategically to governing body discussions.

Provide pre inspection training for Governors on Estyn's expectations during inspection.

Pre-inspection training has not been required during this quarter. Additional support has been available for schools in categories. In 2021 – 2022 GwE will work with schools to ensure that Governors are aware of their responsibilities regarding preparation for inspection during the 3 weeks leading into the visit.

Provide targeted support for Governors within schools on aspects which their Self Evaluation have identified as in need of improving.

No targeted support has been requested this quarter. GwE will support governors to have a better understanding of the aspect in need of improvement and the confidence to self improve.

ALLIANCES / NETWORKS / CLUSTERS

Collaborate with school leaders at all levels to further enhance the role and contribution of the primary / secondary clusters, the secondary alliances and the various regional networks in addressing regional and national priorities.

Almost all schools have engaged effectively with local 'alliances' or 'clusters' where they have collaborated with peers to identify, develop and share blended learning resources. The number of school-to-school resources available via the GwE Support Centre now totals over 200 and the number of 'visits' since launch is almost 40,000 with the number of resources downloaded since launch reaching nearly 8,000.

For secondary schools the work has also included supporting alliance partners with processes re: preparation for the awarding of grades in 2021.

All secondary and primary schools are actively involved in CfW Cluster collaboration. During the Spring/Summer term they have engaged in CfW workshops [*Leading change, Developing shared vision and Curriculum change sessions 1, 2, 3*]. Support is now being targeted to ensure that all schools will have a clear plan identifying actions for 2021-22 so that they are in a position to meet new statutory requirements for September 2022. Each plan will identify how schools address specific aspects including professional learning to support all staff; deployment of grants; trialling and evaluating approaches within curriculum design across all 6 AOLEs and wider engagement with stakeholders. SIA contact during the first half term of Autumn 2021 will focus on ensuring that each school has a plan in place.

To further support schools with this work, AOLE Networks at regional and local levels are operational from September. All leaders and teachers in all schools were recently given an opportunity to express an interest in collaborating with GwE to develop effective practice across 8 key areas/aspects, namely :

- Whole school Curriculum Design
- Unpacking the potential of one of the AOLEs
 - ✓ Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
 - ✓ Mathematics and Numeracy
 - ✓ Science & Technology
 - ✓ Humanities
 - ✓ Health and Wellbeing
 - ✓ Expressive Arts
- Assessment

Level of interest was high with over 300 applicants and initial regional and local meetings have been undertaken. During the Autumn and Spring Terms team members will have the opportunity to:

- work collaboratively with a group of peers supporting curriculum design on a local level and support AOLE development on a regional level.
- communicate and cascade learning and successful practice across the schools within the local authority.
- attend regional professional learning and discussion forums under the facilitation of Professor Donaldson
- contribute to developing planning and design models to support schools in trialling, evaluating and preparing the workforce for first teaching

The nature and intensity of support from traditional subject specific network/forums is currently being discussed and developed to ensure it augments and aligns with the AOLE work.

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

PDG LAC

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

The focus this quarter has been on implementing a clear and consistent communication plan for the LAC PDG 2021/22 with all Core Leads and targeting all LA Head teachers' forums/ clusters in regards to the plan/dashboard and mitigating any key concerns. This has been achieved in all of 6 LAs areas.

GwE have supported schools indirectly and directly who have been referred by SIA/Core Lead in regards to Health and Wellbeing/Supporting Vulnerable Learners/LAC/PDG as required. In addition GwE have been targeting clusters who have high numbers of LAC and is need of further guidance or whom may be of concern.

The GwE Support Centre continues to be a point of referral for all settings and work is currently on going to further enhance the resources. Focus has been very much on school health and wellbeing plan and cluster wellbeing plans in line with the WG framework.

GwE's cohort 7 Diploma in Trauma Informed Schools is fully subscribed (27) and therefore continuing to build capacity.

The regional Early Years PDG non-maintained group/network with all 6 LA have meet and terms of reference has been agreed. GwE have also supported access the Professional Learning with focus on PLAY/Early Years Trauma Informed Schools.

The focus has been on working with Wellbeing Leads in each of the LA and Healthy Schools in regards to the whole school approach and the mapping of wellbeing across the region. The draft regional Health and Wellbeing report has been completed.

The regional LACE/GwE network have also meet and in addition 6 additional individual meetings with each LA to discuss local need/concerns.

WORKFORCE WELLBEING (GwE and Schools)

To support the emotional well-being of the individual in the context of their professional role.

Placing health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

Our main priority during this time of unprecedented change and disruption has been the safety and well-being of our children and our workforce, doing all we can to support the physical and mental well-being of our children, young people and workforce throughout this period. There has been a focus on a variety of aspects within the wellbeing agenda e.g. resilience, adapting to a changing environment, personal reflection, action learning etc:

- Providing 'Reflective Spaces' - providing block of sessions with Dr Coral Harper or Mike Armiger. Dr Coral Harper and Mike Armiger have committed to working across the region from September 2021 and have doubled the capacity of Reflective Spaces available to Senior Leaders.
- Group session for TIS practitioners with Coral Harper. 1 session per term. 6 groups throughout the year.

'Reflective Spaces' continue to be used across the region with positive feedback from both coaches and coachees. Dr Coral Harper or Mike Armiger are working at full capacity. Data for October shows that Mike Armiger is working with 7 School leaders for 12 months with half termly meetings. Dr Coral Harper Coral is delivering a total of 43 sessions with 10 leaders from across the region meaning they get a total of 6 sessions each. This will run until February 2022 at which point we will hold a review and plan how we will extend the offer to more people. GwE have also created space for some 'emergency' support where schools are facing a specific challenge. Group sessions are planned for Spring Term 2022

Use a coaching framework in conversations, meetings and everyday leadership to unlock potential and encourage individual growth.

This is ongoing with staff undertaking the ILM Level 7 Executive Coaching and Mentoring course.

National Reflective Space has started with GwE staff supporting colleagues from South Wales.

Shane Fletcher, Team Manager from Crusaders Rugby, is starting group sessions for 11 leaders this term based on constructive, solution-based conversations. This will be on a 4 weekly cycle and the content of the session will be driven by the group.

WHOLE SCHOOL WELLBEING (AOLE)

Promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales'

Develop a Whole School Approach to wellbeing.

Co-create Whole School Wellbeing resources with schools from across the region

TEDxGwE Initiative

As a service we linked with the UN Climate Neutral Now scheme two years ago to offset GwEs emissions for travel. We further developed this relationship by supporting the '100 school challenge'. As we move closer to the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow during November 2021, we decided to take further action by developing the TEDxGWE Initiative.

TEDx is a global initiative to champion and accelerate solutions to the climate crisis, turning ideas into action. There will be a set of community led events hosted around the world; we have registered and have the licence for TEDxGWE.

GwE will hold a TEDxGwE event on 1st November 2021 for children and young people across north Wales. GwE will be the lead but we are currently developing a north Wales partnership and links with, Natural Resources Wales, Wrexham Glyndwr University, Theatre Clwyd, Do Well Ltd, Tales to Inspire and RENEW Wales.

In north Wales we want to use TEDxGWE as a catalyst to open up a conversation with leaders in public, private and third sectors, communities and our children and young people about the collective challenge we all face and turn the ideas from the children and young people in north Wales into action. Our mission is to unite our region to tackle climate change as we see this as a perfect vehicle to develop the Ethically Informed aspect of Curriculum for Wales.

We want to work with children and young people, using their voices to spark a region wide conversation to drive actions by bringing people together to understand the challenge and explore the most effective co created and evidence based solutions, ensuring we all rise to the challenge. The goal of global TEDx events is to answer five key interconnected questions that help inform a plan for a cleaner future:

- Energy - How rapidly can we switch to 100% clean power?
- Transport - How can we upgrade the way we move people and things?
- Materials - How can we re-imagine and re-make the stuff around us?
- Food - How can we spark a worldwide shift to healthier food systems?
- Nature - How do we better protect and re-green the earth?

Schools will be able to register for the event and submit a 60 second video using FlipGrid. The videos will be collated and shared with a wider audience. Schools will receive a resource pack to support participants in developing a TED talk so they can share their stories, issues, thoughts and actions needed to build a better future. RENEW Wales will fund the resource packs and mentors.

Our Flipgrid page has had a total of 350 views with 6 hours of engagement. 11 schools from each of the LAs across the region are taking part in the live event on the 1st November at Theatre Clwyd which will be hosted by Iolo Williams, Naturalist, TV and Radio presenter, author and wildlife tour leader. During the week of COP26 we will be sharing all of videos with Natural Resources Wales and the Local Authorities so they know what our young people think.

Each school has had 3 hours of coaching from Do-Well Ltd and Tales to Inspire, to support the preparation of the TED talk. As well as a promotional video we will also have a making of video produced by Modant. Guests on the day will be asked to make a pledge to support our young people. GwE have worked closely in partnership with Wrexham Glyndwr University, Natural Resources Wales, Renew Wales, Do-Well (UK) Ltd and Tales to Inspire to make this event happen.

As part of the National Wellbeing group GwE are working in collaboration with Mind Cymru to offer a facilitated (both in English and Welsh) virtual professional learning opportunity. From September 2021 schools have had access to, Mental Health Awareness Session and Managing Mental Health at work and supporting staff. Take up from schools is limited at the moment due to capacity.

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS

Lead, manage and co-ordinate the field of supporting parents and carers with their child's learning.
Ensure effective implementation of the role out of "Help your child to Learn" to schools and parent's and carers across Wales.
Ensure appropriate cohesiveness and capacity to provide high quality regional resources in this area.

The regional group has been established with representation from GwE and each LA to lead, manage and co-ordinate the field of supporting parents and carers with their child's learning. The main developments for quarter 2 is as follows:

- Social media pack has been produced and distributed to schools.
- The Resource developer has worked alongside GwE, sharing information with schools.
- The Research developer has created Help Your Teen to Learn (HYTTL) for year 9 upwards, this is currently being translated.
- The Regional Group will next meet on Thursday 11th November to discuss provision for parents of pupils with additional learning needs, to present the HYTTL resources and to discuss plans for a TA programme to support parents in the School environment.

Implement programmes which aims to mitigate the effects of school closures on pupils' reading and writing attainment in both English and Welsh.

Evidence-based teaching strategy designed to help pupils improve their fluency and progress in mathematics.

Develop online resources suitable for both school staff and parents to enable use of these interventions to assist the reading development of children over the next school year.

Continue to develop and produce a suite of universal support materials for secondary maths and secondary literacy.

Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – PHASE 2 - Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – PHASE 2

The RILL research team commenced Phase 2 work at the start of May 2021. They have now completed the adaptations to the original asynchronous/synchronous version of RILL developed in 2020, and these now include an adapted version for in-class use and also for parents and carers. Invitations for schools to attend training in the summer and autumn terms 2021 were circulated in June 2021 and GwE SIAs attended regional heads' forum meetings to explain the programme. RILL was received very positively in these meetings, especially the new, bespoke Welsh version.

Twenty nine of the 54 schools have been trained in RILL so far, and this includes 43 teachers. The remaining 25 schools invited to attend session by the end of the autumn term 2021. In addition to a full day training, GwE are currently offer weekly drop-in sessions to support teachers. GwE have also developed a Hwb network where teachers can access information and training materials (e.g., tutorials and how to videos), ask questions, and reflect on their experience with the research team/other teachers.

Precision Teaching and SAFMEDS

Research study attached to this project will not commence until September 2021.

- Monthly 'drop-in' sessions have been accessible to all regional schools
- Bespoke training delivered to regional schools and PRU
- Promote SAFMEDS through the Bulletin and GwE Support Centre
- Creation of bilingual resources ready to launch in due course:
 - SAFMEDS online tutorial
 - SAFMEDS bespoke online website
 - SAFMEDS revised training for hand-held cards
 - Introduction to Precision Teaching training
 - Additional Phase SAFMEDS hand-held cards to extend breadth of coverage from the Numeracy Framework
 - Commissioned creation of new Learning materials – these can be used as targeted and universal provision, targeting regular retrieval practice and fluency development
- Viewing figures for online materials as follows:
 - English: 1023 views on the reignite learning webinar and 391 views on the SAFMEDS training video.
 - Cymraeg: 474 for the webinar and 70 for the SAFMEDS training.

Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

All schools who signed up have had access to online training videos, and intervention resources to download for use in their schools. Ten schools have subsequently attended a follow-up Q&A session online. All schools will now be invited to attend four remote implementation support sessions between now and May 2022, and will be able to contact the research team for any support in the meantime. Further development of the Welsh medium materials is also underway, bringing them in line with the more recent developments of the English medium resources. Schools are also being invited to get involved in measuring progress in Oral Reading Fluency as well as trialling school-home use of the interventions to increase practice opportunities. Additional schools will be invited to participate in the project after half-term, and again in the new year.

Secondary maths

The Maths.Cymru website has developed to include resources to support interventions at KS4 and KS3. At KS4, there are resources available to support the foundation and intermediate tiers, with the higher tier being available before September 2021. These resources include instructional videos, worksheets and answers suitable for GCSE learning and an example of a GCSE question being completed in a video clip.

At KS3, the resources for number have been developed and will all be available before September 2021. These include a pre and post assessment powerpoint, resources to support learning which include links to instructional video clips, exemplar questions and tasks for learners to complete and self-mark.

Knowledge of the website and the resources for KS4 has been shared with the HOM regionally during 2020 and for KS3 has been shared with the Numeracy Coordinators regionally during 2020/21. Using the established forums has proven effective.

A few schools are working on trialling the use of the Maths.Cymru resources to support learners with their RRRS programmes. Support has been provided as needed and these projects are currently in their initial stages. Review of progress needed in the Autumn term. Two schools who are developing the project – both in Gwynedd.

Secondary literacy

Developments have been made to the Herio website resources to support learners' basic literacy skills. These are being used across the region. 11 schools are implementing the 'Building Reading Power' intervention programme. Five training sessions have been held and all schools have attended these sessions. Support materials have been developed and progress will be reviewed in the Summer term.

OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF IMPROVING SYSTEM

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

PEER ENGAGEMENT

Further develop peer review processes within schools to support robust self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels.

To build leadership capacity across the system.

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

To continue to develop the collaborative systems within G6 that facilitate schools peer engagement processes.

A regional set of principles for peer engagement was agreed with Head teachers prior to the COVID pandemic and a peer review model (*School Partnership Programme*) was shared with stakeholders and endorsed by the Management Board and Joint Committee.

Continuous training and support have been provided to all GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. There are 22 SIAs who have been trained as peer reviewers and improvement facilitators as part of the *School Partnership Programme*. Six SIAs have been fully trained as programme presenters and are able to deliver the *School Partnership Programme* training to schools and clusters.

All GwE staff received update *School Partnership Programme* training on September 17th 2021. A further 13 Supporting Improvement Advisers were fully trained on October 4th 2021 as programme presenters and are now able to deliver the *School Partnership Programme* training to schools and clusters.

Twelve clusters (72 schools) have received the *School Partnership Programme* training and have either commenced or are planning to participate in peer review during the summer term/early autumn term 2021. 97 head teachers/senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers across the region. 92 senior/middle leaders and talented teachers have been trained as '*improvement facilitators*'. This has provided good professional learning for leaders and teachers, and will contribute to enhancing leadership capacity across the region. All participating primary schools and clusters have received update training during the beginning of the summer term 2021. Update

training for participating secondary schools/clusters is planned for the autumn 2021. All special schools in the region participated in full training during the summer term 2021.

A schedule is in place to offer *School Partnership Programme* training to a new cohort of schools and clusters. It is planned to train approximately 15 clusters each term during the academic years 2021-22 and 2022-23 so that all 407 regional schools and PRUs will be participating in the peer review programme by the end of the next academic year. The programme will be aligned to the development of the new curriculum to support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress in implementing the reform journey.

In September 2021, schools and clusters were asked to express interest in participating in *School Partnership Programme* training during the Autumn Term 2021. In total across the region there were 33 clusters that expressed an interest comprising 193 regional schools. All clusters will now be scheduled to receive the *School Partnership Programme* training during the Autumn / Spring Term.

COACHING AND MENTORING

Provide Coaching and Mentoring training

GwE staff members have received 8 training sessions for the ILM Level 7 qualification 'Certificate for Executive and Senior Level Coaches and Mentors'. The team members are also undertaking their practical assignment, which is to coach 2 Senior Team members, who are in GwE schools. A training programme for the academic year from September 2021 will be arranged and provided by this core team. Even though peer work has not been undertaken regarding supervision yet, the 12 team members have been supporting each other's development as coaches, and continue to do so.

Support Professional Learning in Coaching and Mentoring

National 'Reflective Space' activities have commenced. Everyone has received the name of a coachee at the start of this half term and made contact via e-mail, and many coaching sessions have taken place.

Applications for the Induction Mentors scheme have been received; 25 of the applicants will go on to attend the national programme (July 2021).

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

National SCC Pilot Programme

The region has worked with WG and Estyn to establish a multi-agency panel for the 4 schools which are in Special Measures. Panel meetings have taken place in all 4 schools and Estyn monitoring visits in two of the schools. Estyn findings in both schools have demonstrated progress. Each school has an agreed bespoke 'holistic' support plan through a multi-agency agreement. In two of the schools, GwE have collaborated with Estyn to identify key milestones for the improvement journey and to define what improvement should look like at each milestone.

Strengthening regional structures and processes to support and challenge SCC

In response to the national approach to schools in Special Measures, regional processes for supporting, monitoring and challenging schools which are causing concern have been reviewed by a *Task and Finish* working party consisting of GwE Advisers and senior officers from each of the 6 LAs. To date, there have been 6 meetings and actions have included:

- identifying how revised structures and processes could improve effective flow of information between the various tiers and ensuring that responsibilities re: decision making are clear to all.
- agreement to establish a Multi agency group for all SCC in each of 6 LAs. Guidelines for terms of reference and membership outlined.
- agreement on high level *Thresholds and Triggers* to identify SCC [*Strand 1 : Standards, T+L, Assessment and Leadership; Strand 2 : Finance, HR, Management Services; Strand 3 : Inclusion, Attendance, Wellbeing and ALN*]
- agreement that all SCC to have a holistic 360 support plan.
- agreement that the local multi agency group would take an overview of monitoring progress for each school and where concerns escalate, would report up to a Local QB chaired by the DoE/HoS. Guidelines for terms of reference and membership to be agreed locally.
- agreement on a common set of values and behaviours which will underpin the work across the region.

- agreement on definition for schools to be identified on a continuum of autonomy towards becoming a self-improving School [thus avoiding the stigma of categorisation and Estyn 'speak'].
- initial planning undertaken for regional workshops for advisers and officers to ensure common approaches and consistency in identification of 'concerns', in support strategies and in quality of reporting. Workshops to be delivered in autumn term.

Ensure that all SCC are engaging effectively with national and regional programmes of support for CfW and with peer engagement, alliance/cluster and wider networking

All SCC have engaged, to varying degrees, with the CfW workshops and have been involved in follow-up discussions with their link SIA. Planning for CfW has been included as part of their revised PIAP/SDP from September. Both Wrexham schools in special measures have undertaken peer engagement training as part of the LA wide SPP model. All SCC have been involved in local 'alliances' where they have collaborated with peers to identify, develop and share blended learning resources and supported alliance partners with processes re: preparation for the awarding of grades in 2021. AOLE Networks at regional and local levels will be operational from September. We will need to ensure that all SCC are fully engaged with the regional and local AOLE Networks.

SCHOOLS AND SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS (SLO)

Ensure that GwE and its workforce continue to respond to all the requirements and values of Learning Organisations.

Assist those schools across the region that have not addressed SLO to restart the process successfully, therefore supporting their CfW reform journey.

It is intended to arrange professional learning for all service staff during the autumn term 2021 to update them on SLO requirements. SLO portfolio leaders will analyse and identify the main messages arising from the survey for GwE staff, and identify further aspects to develop. The analysis and main messages will be shared with the senior team in the first instance, before disseminating to the rest of the staff. Discussions are to be held with the Management Board regarding collaboration with the local authorities to ensure that engagement in this aspect by the schools improves and also give the authorities the opportunity to complete the survey.

A short bilingual webinar will be offered to all regional schools to raise awareness of SLO and the link with CfW and the reform journey.

SIAs will promote the use of the SLO survey as a starting point for schools to identify their needs in terms of further developing the 7 dimensions and will signpost schools to the survey on Hwb, and work with the school following analysis to identify dimensions to develop further.

Training for governors to raise awareness of the principles of SLOs is available in the provision for Governors in each LA.

A presentation was delivered in the international ICSEI conference in March 2021 with colleagues from New Zealand, British Columbia, England, Germany and Australasia - symposium entitled: Harness schools as learning organisations to realise system change during and beyond Covid-19. Follow-up sessions will contribute and share practice across GwE in an academic paper looking at SLOs and the 4 transversal themes.

Promote the launch of the NEIR [National Evaluation and Improvement Resource] with all regional schools - 6 schools from the north have been involved in preparing resources for the national tool. A formal launch has now been postponed until November. Estyn and WG need to identify 90 schools from across Wales to pilot further - GwE will collate the names of interested schools.

Due to the pandemic the demands on schools have been crippling as they have coped with the day to day operational issues of running a school. As both lockdowns eased, schools have engaged very well with PL in terms of the Curriculum for Wales Reform Journey.

It may be that schools have not realised this, but Professional Development over the periods of lockdown has been

significant - especially so as we consider the 4 transversal themes of Time, Technology, Trust and Thinking Together. Several of the dimensions have also been well addressed, for example promoting team learning, creating ongoing learning opportunities, learning through the external environment.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK

Develop schools use of the Four Purposes as part of the Quality Enhancement Framework to evaluate current practice and priorities.

Creating greater synthesis across the priorities for the Four Purposes.

“Matching Service” to align areas of expertise with areas for development.

Planned actions for completion from the Autumn term onwards:

- All schools to undertake an initial evaluation using the framework by Autumn Half term 2021 - Rollout of the Framework to all schools across the region is planned for the early second half term of the Autumn term 2021 through SIA presentation to cluster or individual schools.
- Collate the information from across the region and identify authority specific and regional priorities - Utilising the shared One drive in Office 365 to host the Framework will allow the data unit to analyse the findings by Authority as well as region wide.
- Core Leads to facilitate matching service for schools in their authority - data team to provide Core Leads with authority specific overview so that they can facilitate the matching Service as appropriate.
- Schools using the SPP Alliances and Cluster arrangements to respond to priority areas - work being undertaken in collaboration with EDT to ensure that the SPP framework supports responding to CfW challenges for schools. Use of the framework will be incorporated therefore into SPP peer review and improvement facilitator practice.

OBJECTIVE 6 – BUSINESS

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

Performance Management and Accountability

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

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

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

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

Value for Money

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

A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through increasingly effective use of data to identify key

priorities, the link between the business planning process and decisions regarding financial planning is strengthened as the work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.

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

Risk Register

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

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

Information sharing systems

The effectiveness of Tableau /Analytics as an analysis tool for G6 shared with SLT. Accounts created initially for SLT members with expected rollout for Core leads planned in the Autumn term 2021. Information from the analysis tool already being used effectively to inform system reports such as ALN transformation engagement and also schools engagement with the CfW professional learning offer. Additional dashboards to analyse GCSE and A-level results to administer and report on the professional learning courses offered regionally are planned.

Effective work has been undertaken by the ALN team and Link SIA's to ensure that schools begin to re engage with G6 post pandemic lockdowns. In particular this has focused on the ALN transformation milestones leading to an increase of schools engaging with and completing the status for their current progress. This has led to a clearer understanding of the requirements for areas needing further support.

A rolling programme of induction and support has been provided to new Head teachers and SLT members across the region both virtually and in face to face visits. In addition an increasing number of schools have now acquired admin rights for their own G6 staff accounts. As a result these schools are now able to manage their own account structures for their organisation.

Lead individuals have collaborated effectively with the digital team to further develop the potential of the GwE Support Centre. Currently, the total number of page views is 65,000 with downloads at 12,500.

2. APPENDIX

Regional Data.



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Appendix 2: Regional data Quarter 2



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2021-2022 BUSINESS PLAN

REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2021-2022

Regional Data for Quarter 2

OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

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

EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

Regional data:

GwE and Shirley Clarke project – Tier 3

Total schools across the region who have participated in Tiers 1,2, and 3

	Schools	Teachers
Tier 1	27	54
Tier 2	193	386
Tier 3	140	261
Total	260	701

- 89% of the region's schools
- 96% Primary
- 80% Secondary
- 70% Special

Over 1000 teachers from across the region attended the Shirley Clarke twilight session 28/09/2021.

CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)

Regional data:

Curriculum for Wales Workshops:

- % who've attended 1 session or more - 80.3%
- 54 sessions
- 108 hours of Professional Learning
- 1155 attended the sessions = 2310 hours of Professional Learning for school leaders

AOLE TEAMS

Regional data (13/10/2021)

Numbers who have declared an interest in contributing to the ongoing support programme for schools in relation to the Reform Journey:

Networks	Numbers
Assessment	94
Curriculum Design	124
Science and Technology	60
Health and Well-being	60
Languages, Literacy and Communication	87
Mathematics and Numeracy	60

Expressive Arts	61	
Humanities	53	

OBJECTIVE 2- DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Regional data:

- Power Language resources new subscriptions 2021-2022: 31 primary schools
- Open University 2021-2022: 9 primary teachers
- Continuous Support to secondary schools: 3
- Number of schools / network meeting 01/09/2021:
26 schools / 31 teachers

HLTA - TALP

Regional data:

- Newly appointed teaching assistants: 55
- Aspiring HLTA Cohort 3: 43
- HLTA Status Cohort 2: 33
- HLTS assessors: 24
- Google classroom for assistants: 1900 by October 2021

A LEVEL

Regional data:

Networking and sharing of practice across heads of 6: 20

DIGITAL

Regional data:

Regional Hwb engagement average for Quarter 2: 93.16% (*summer holidays inclusive)

MATHS AND NUMERACY

Regional data:

Bespoke support for schools:

- Primary: 1
- Secondary: 11

Financial Education

- Number completed e-learning: 48
- Number trained: 69

ENGLISH AND LITERACY
<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Literacy support for school either in Estyn category/Special Measures, causing concern or needing guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: 8 • Secondary: 13
WELSH AND LITERACY
<p>Regional data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network meetings: 16 • Members of Teams GwE - Y Gymraeg - Secondary: 27
FOUNDATION PHASE
<p>Regional data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific support at the request of SIA for individual schools or high-risk schools / Estyn category: 35

OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP
Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks
LEADERSHIP
<p>Regional data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Middle Leadership Development Programme: 98 2. Senior Leaders Development Programme: 61 3. Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (preparing for NPQH): 72 4. New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme: 37 5. Experienced Headteacher Development Programme: 17 <p>TOTAL: 285</p>
ALLIANCES / NETWORKS / CLUSTERS
<p>Data Rhanbarthol / Regional data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of secondary schools participating in alliance collaboration: 53 • Number of primary schools participating in cluster collaboration: 331 • Number of secondary schools participating in CfW cluster collaboration: 54 • Number of primary schools participating in CfW cluster collaboration: 331

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS
Committed to excellence, equity & well-being
PDG LAC
<p>Data Rhanbarthol / Regional data:</p>

Appendix 2

- Individual School Visits/Support: 24
- Head Teachers forums/Clusters: 10
- LA LACE officers: 12. One regional meeting
- LA Officers (ALN/Ed Psych/Wellbeing/Healthy School/Early Years): 8

Professional Learning:

- Nurture International: 26
- Trauma Informed Schools Award: 40

RE-IGNITE LEARNING

Regional data:

- Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – PHASE 2: 54 schools have signed up for training in September 2021.
- Precision Teaching and SAFMEDS online training sessions delivered: 7
- Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR): 42

OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF IMPROVING SYSTEM

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

PEER ENGAGEMENT

Regional data:

- Number of schools/clusters participating: 72/12
- Peer reviewers trained: 97
- Improvement facilitators trained: 92
- Autumn Term 2021 - Number of schools/clusters identified for next cohort training: 193 / 33

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

Regional data:

- Number of secondary regional SCC : 11
- Number of primary regional SCC : 2
- Number of secondary schools participating in the national SCC pilot [Special Measures]: 4
- Number of secondary regional SCC involved in SPP programme : 5
- Number of primary regional SCC involved in SPP programme : 0
- Number of secondary regional SCC involved in alliance collaboration : 11
- Number of primary regional SCC involved in cluster collaboration : 2
- Number of secondary regional SCC involved in CfW workshops and follow up discussions: 11

Appendix 2

- Number of primary regional SCC involved in CfW workshops and follow up discussions: 2
- Number of officers and advisers participating in the regional Task and Finish Group : 16

OBJECTIVE 6 – BUSINESS

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

Regional data:

Information sharing systems:

- GwE Support Centre
 - Number of page views: 65,000
 - Number of downloads: 12,500



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

10 NOVEMBER 2021

Report by: Arwyn Thomas - GwE Managing Director

Subject: Supporting all schools for Curriculum for Wales - Developing Curriculum for Wales regional and local networks

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present information to Joint Committee members on our approach to developing Curriculum for Wales regional and local networks as part of supporting all schools and settings to implement Curriculum for Wales.

2.0 Background

2.1 Wales is committed to an ambitious reform agenda to realising a transformational curriculum. The Curriculum for Wales is a purpose-led curriculum placing the 4 Purposes at the heart of all teaching and learning and as the shared vision for every child and young person in Wales.

2.2 The publication of the [Curriculum for Wales guidance](#) in January 2020 signalled the next phase of curriculum reform and the rollout of Curriculum for Wales in all primary schools, maintained nursery schools and non-maintained nursery settings and from September 2022. Those secondary schools ready to roll out the curriculum in year 7 will be encouraged to do so, however formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll out in that year to years 7 and 8 together.

2.3 GwE have worked with fellow regional consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government to set out the expectations on schools and settings in respect of reform as we move towards implementation of Curriculum for Wales in [Curriculum for Wales: The journey to 2022](#). This

document also acknowledges the challenge that Covid-19 continues to present to all schools within the renew and reform strategy.

2.4 Across GwE, schools have previously been supported to engage with the Curriculum for Wales through Curriculum for Wales Cluster Facilitators. Professional learning and funding have been available to networks and clusters of schools to develop collaboration with practitioners across the 3-16 continuum. The Curriculum for Wales networks are the next stage in this development, looking to develop collaboration across the whole curriculum.

2.5 In June 2021, schools were invited to express an interest to be part of the regional Curriculum for Wales networks to contribute to GwE's ongoing support programme for schools in the following areas:

- Whole school Curriculum Design
- Progression and Assessment
- Unpacking the potential of one of the AOLES
 - Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
 - Mathematics and Numeracy
 - Science & Technology
 - Humanities
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Expressive Arts

During the Summer term 2021, 300 teachers initially expressed an interest in being part of the networks. During September and October 2021, many more schools requested to be part of the local networks and there are now over 600 teachers from school settings across the region committed to being part of this work.

2.6 The Curriculum for Wales Networks will work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs in developing effective AOLE practice which will help schools on the Reform Journey. The work of the networks is fully aligned to the expectations detailed within the [*Curriculum for Wales: The journey to 2022*](#) document and represent the principles within of:

- Co-construction
- Pedagogy
- Engagement with professional learning, expertise and networks
- Schools as Learning Organisation
- Wider school context

3.0 Considerations

3.1 Attached (Appendix 1) is an overview of the networks at both regional and Local Authority level. Within each of the eight groups in all Local Authorities, two representatives from schools have been identified to represent the local group at a regional level. The role of these representatives is to attend the half termly regional meetings and to then lead and chair the local meetings to discuss and work collaboratively on modelling agreed aspects of curriculum design.

3.2 A team of Supporting Improvement Advisors has been allocated to work with each of the eight regional groups. The GwE colleagues are able to contribute to discussions and help facilitate and support the Chair within the local meetings as required. A key role for the Supporting Improvement Advisors will be to ensure that all schools have access to the work and learning that is developed and shared through the networks. This work can be accessed through the GwE Support Centre.

3.3 Clear communication channels will be paramount and processes for ensuring effective 2-way communication through the use of digital technology are being established, for example, the use of TEAMS to store and share documentation with all regional members having access to these live documents.

3.4 Regional network meetings will take place half termly and will focus on a specific theme. An overview of the themes has been agreed that comes directly from the Journey to Rollout document and can be found in Appendix 2. In this way, the requirements that all schools need to implement before rollout will be considered during the academic year 2021-2022. GwE will also work collaboratively to facilitate professional learning and input from 'experts' where needed. Where possible, sessions will be recorded for sharing within local networks. The overview of themes will be reviewed regularly, taking into consideration feedback from local network meetings, feedback from national conversations and work with fellow regional consortia.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to accept and approve the approach to developing regional and local networks as part of supporting all schools and settings to implement Curriculum for Wales.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 GwE will operate within current financial resources through Welsh Government grant funding. All schools will be funded £2000 to engage with networks at both regional and national level. School representatives in the GwE Curriculum for Wales regional and local networks will have access to additional funding of up to 15 working days to include attending local meetings, engage in professional learning and school-based work.

6.0 Equalities Impact

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

7.0 Personnel Implications

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

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board, Joint Committee and GwE Full Team.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – An overview of the Curriculum for Wales Regional and Local Networks

9.2 Appendix 2 – An overview of the themes to be considered by the Curriculum for Wales Networks for 2021-2022

9.3 Appendix 3 - Curriculum for Wales Networks Terms of Reference

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

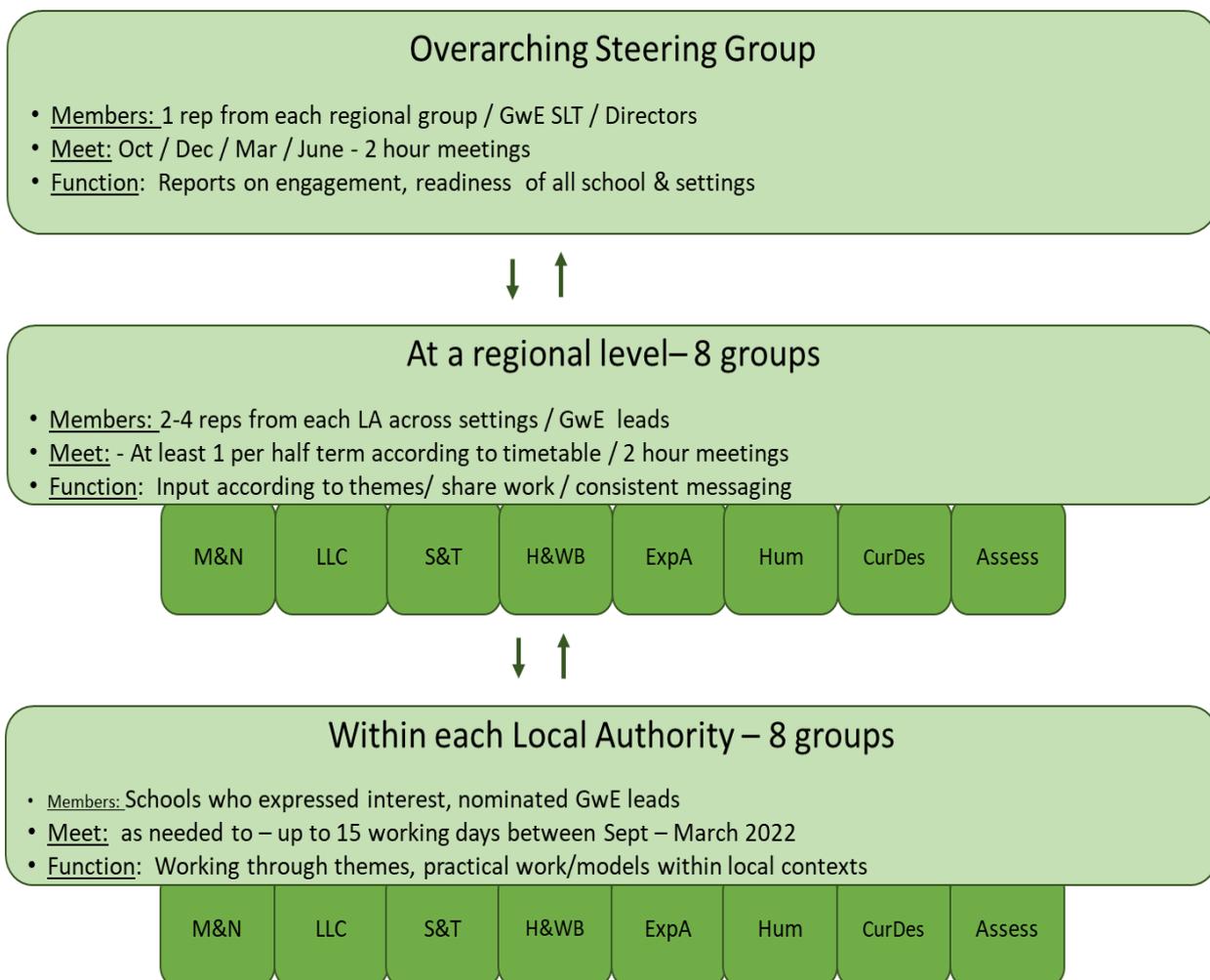
Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I confirm that there is an allocation within the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant to support the development of understanding, and to support curriculum design and planning in preparation for implementation of Curriculum for Wales. It is expected that GwE will operate within this financial resource as stated in 5.1 of the report.

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2

	Autumn Term 2021	Spring Term 2022	Summer Term 2022
AOLE groups	<p>Unpacking Statements of What Matters - key concepts</p> <p>Planning for Cross-curricular skills</p>	<p>Considering the role of professional enquiry—trailing within schools</p> <p>Developing range of models and approaches in local contexts</p>	<p>Models and approaches within and across AOLES—working with local community</p> <p>Evaluation of trialed models—sharing professional learning</p>
Curriculum design	<p>Understanding of a high-level curriculum model</p> <p>Considerations for shared understanding of progression</p>	<p>Planning for the mandatory elements—cross-cutting themes</p> <p>Approaches to support whole school health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Examples of summary curriculum to publish</p> <p>Examples of reporting to parents</p>
Progression & Assessment	<p>Considerations of whole school approaches to assessment</p>	<p>Models to show effective transition across 3-16 continuum</p>	<p>Preparing for first teaching</p>



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CURRICULUM FOR WALES NETWORKS

Terms of reference



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CURRICULUM FOR WALES NETWORKS

Terms of reference

1. Background & context

Wales is committed to an ambitious reform agenda to realising a transformational curriculum. The Curriculum for Wales is a purpose-led curriculum placing the 4 Purposes at the heart of all teaching and learning and as the shared vision for every child and young person in Wales.

The publication of the [Curriculum for Wales guidance](#) in January 2020 signalled the next phase of curriculum reform and the rollout of Curriculum for Wales in all primary schools, maintained nursery schools and non-maintained nursery settings and from September 2022. Those secondary schools ready to roll out the curriculum in year 7 will be encouraged to do so, however formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll out in that year to years 7 and 8 together.

Across GwE, schools have previously been supported to engage with the Curriculum for Wales through Curriculum for Wales Cluster Facilitators. Professional learning and funding have been available to networks and clusters of schools to develop collaboration with practitioners across the 3-16 continuum. The Curriculum for Wales networks are the next stage in this development, looking to develop collaboration across the whole curriculum.

GwE have worked with fellow regional consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government to set out the expectations on schools and settings in respect of reform as we move towards implementation of Curriculum for Wales in [Curriculum for Wales: The journey to 2022](#). This document also acknowledges the challenge that Covid-19 continues to present to all schools within the renew and reform strategy.

In June 2021, schools were invited to express an interest to be part of the regional Curriculum for Wales networks to contribute to GwE's ongoing support programme for schools in the following areas:

- Whole school Curriculum Design
- Unpacking the potential of one of the AOEs
 - Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
 - Mathematics and Numeracy
 - Science & Technology
 - Humanities
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Expressive Arts
- Assessment

The Curriculum for Wales Networks will work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs in developing effective AOE practice which will help schools on the Reform Journey. The work of the networks is fully aligned to the expectations detailed within the [Curriculum for Wales: The journey to 2022](#) document and represent the principles within of:

- Co-construction
- Pedagogy
- Engagement with professional learning, expertise and networks

- Schools as Learning Organisation
- Wider school context

2. Main purpose

Contribute to developing, planning and designing models to support schools. This will promote trialling, evaluating and preparation of the workforce for first teaching through evidence-based practice informed exemplification.

Maintain the overall direction of the Curriculum for Wales networks which includes:

- **Overseeing ongoing conversations:** providing assurance that these are proceeding as expected and are supported by the right people, resources, and inputs.
- **Maintaining coherence with wider work:** ensuring that ongoing and future planned conversations complement existing work – at the local, regional and national levels – in terms of the timing of conversations and the questions and outputs we are seeking from these
- **Setting direction of future conversations:** draw on feedback from ongoing conversations, emerging challenges and needs, and suggestions directly from practitioners on what issues they would like to see discussed at the Network. The group will use this feedback to plan which issues will be considered as conversations by the Network.
- **Planning communications around conversations and outputs:** ensuring that conversation outputs are shared widely and quickly, embedding good practice and new approaches across the system. Learning will be shared on digital platforms and through regular dialogue with all schools.

3. Aims & objectives

- Contribute to regional and local planning, designing and sharing of curriculum practice.
- Work collaboratively with a group of peers supporting curriculum design on a local level and support AOLE development on a regional level.
- Communicate and cascade learning and successful practice across the schools within the local authority.
- Support the development of a consistent and inclusive common programme of Professional Learning around curriculum design and assessment within AOLES.
- Contribute to developing planning and design models to support schools in trialling, evaluating and preparing the workforce for first teaching.
- Ensure appropriate cohesiveness and capacity to provide high quality regional resources in this area.
- Support the development of the Regional Strategy for North Wales.

- Consider Welsh Government's current policies and activity within integrating fields in order to react to them on a national level.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Regional groups	Local groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend regional professional learning and discussion forums under the facilitation of Professor Donaldson. • Lead and chair a local group of peers to work collaboratively supporting and modelling curriculum design. • Unpacking the potential of AOLE development. • Plan and design models to support schools with trialing on an evidence-based approach. • Evaluate impact of work. • Communicate and cascade learning and successful practice across the schools within the local authority and bring key messages back to the Regional Group. • Disseminate and share practice between the 8 Regional Groups. • Select a representative to attend the Overarching Executive Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure clear communication for effective collaboration with the Regional Group. • Maintain a clear rationale for each AOLE, ensuring work is aligned to the <i>Curriculum for Wales</i> framework and national priorities, and planned towards a continuum of learning from 3 to 16. • Plan and design exemplar models to support schools - unpacking the potential of AOLE development. • Promote collaborative working across schools to develop, trial, evaluate and share effective practice locally and across the region. • Encourage engagement of practitioners at all levels and disseminate successful practice across the AOLE partnerships and to wider audiences. • Support the development of a consistent and inclusive common programme of Professional Learning around curriculum design and assessment within AOLEs. • Promote school engagement and collaboration with wider stakeholders including learners, parents, local business and agencies and other educational establishments regarding curriculum planning.
GwE	Local Authority Members
<p>Attend all regional meetings so that they can contribute to discussions, help facilitate and support the Chair in leading the discussions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Regional Chairs as required. • Attending local group meetings as required. • Reporting regularly to the wider GwE team on how the work is progressing 	<p>Attend local network meetings as required and ensure that the key messages are passed to local authority teams.</p> <p>Support schools' discussion within the networks and contribute to local sense making.</p>

Support the Chair to ensure that the key messages from the regional group are passed to the local group and all schools for implementation.	Promote collaborative working across schools to develop, trial, evaluate and share effective practice locally and across the region.
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5. Membership

Regional	Local
8 groups	Within each Local Authority – 8 groups
<u>Members:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Graham Donaldson (Advisory role) • 2-4 reps from each LA across settings / GwE leads. • Occasional attendees can be invited in line with the determined priorities and the themes that will be discussed. 	<u>Members:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools who expressed interest, nominated GwE leads and LA officers. • Occasional attendees can be invited in line with the determined priorities and the themes that will be discussed.
<u>Function:</u> Input according to themes / share work / consistent messaging.	<u>Function:</u> Working through themes, practical work / models within local contexts.

6. Meetings

Regional groups	Local groups
<u>Autumn Term 2021</u> Regional meetings: Half day meetings per half term. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21/09/2021 • 06/10/2021 • 16/11/2021 • 14/12/2021 	<u>Autumn Term 2021</u> Local meetings: 3 x half day meetings per half term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting 1 – w/c 04/10/21 • Meeting 2 - between 11/10/21 and 16/11/21 • Meeting 3 - between 17/11/2021 and 20/12/2021
<u>Spring Term 2022 Overview</u>	<u>Spring Term 2022 Overview</u>
<u>Summer Term 2022 Overview</u>	<u>Summer Term 2022 Overview</u>

7. Secretariat

Regional groups	Local groups
<p>The Regional Networks will receive administrative support from GwE.</p> <p>GwE will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise the meetings and circulate agendas, papers and updates. • Maintain the CfW Networks Teams area. 	<p>Local meetings to be arranged by Local Chairs for the 8 groups.</p> <p>It may be possible to join groups from more than one LA if numbers are small enough.</p> <p>GwE to support establishing local Teams area as needed.</p>

8. Governance

Regional groups	Local groups
<p>Reporting mechanism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Groups - the issues highlighted as ones that need attention will be referred to the Overarching Steering Group and/or GwE Management Board for further consideration, and then to the GwE Joint Committee as needed. 	<p>Reporting mechanism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Groups - Report back to regional meetings and contribute any lessons learnt during the process.

Appendices / Supporting documents