

# Complete Agenda



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo  
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



CYNGOR SIR  
YNYS MÔN  
ISLE OF ANGLESEY  
COUNTY COUNCIL



CONWY  
CONWY BORODDREF SIROL  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CYNGOR  
Sir Ddinbych  
Denbighshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL

CYNGOR  
Sir y Fflint  
Flintshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL

wrexham  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BORODDREF SIROL  
wrecsam

Meeting

**GWE JOINT COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2023**

Location

**Virtual Meeting - Zoom**

Contact Point

**Ffion Elaine Evans**

**[ffionelainevans@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:ffionelainevans@gwynedd.llyw.cymru)**

(DISTRIBUTED 28/11/23)

# **GWE JOINT COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE**

### **Voting Members**

#### **Councillors**

Councillor Dafydd Roberts	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Gill German	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Mared Eastwood	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn	Wrexham County Borough Council
Councillor Beca Brown	Cyngor Gwynedd

### **Co-opted Non-voting Members**

Dylan Davies	Secondary School Representative
Delyth Roberts	Primary School Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative
Jennie Downes	Church in Wales Representative

### **Non-voting Officers**

Marc Berw Hughes	Anglesey County Council
Dr Lowri Brown	Conwy County Borough Council
Claire Homard	Denbighshire County Council
To be confirmed	Cyngor Gwynedd
Karen Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Geraint Davies	Denbighshire County Council

### **Officers in Attendance**

Graham Boase	Denbighshire County Council
Arwyn Thomas	GwE Managing Director
Alwyn Jones	GwE Assistant Director
Bethan Eleri Roberts	GwE Performance Management
Dewi Morgan	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority

### ***Observer***

# AGENDA

## 1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

## 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

## 3. URGENT MATTERS

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

## 4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5 - 8

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2023, be signed as the true record.

## 5. AUDIT WALES - GWE AUDIT PLAN 2023

9 - 28

To present Audit Wales' report.

## 6. THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 AND RELEVANT AUDIT

29 - 100

To submit –

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

## 7. GWE BUDGET 2023/24 - REVIEW UP TO THE END OF SEPTEMBER 2023

101 - 106

To update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE's budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

## 8. GWE BUSINESS PLAN 2023/2024 - QUARTER 1 & 2 MONITORING REPORT

107 - 151

To present the GwE Business Plan 2023/24 - Quarter 1 and 2 Monitoring Report for approval.

## 9. REVIEW THE RISK REGISTER

152 - 157

To present the latest GwE Risk Register to the Joint Committee for approval.

## 10. GWE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

158 - 164

To share information on the Professional Learning Offer.

**11. ESTYN CONSULTATION ON FUTURE INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES** 165 - 179

To provide the Joint Committee with a formal record of the response to the Estyn Consultation 'Future inspection arrangements for local government education services and school improvement services'.

---

## GWE JOINT COMMITTEE - 12/07/2023

---

### Present:

**Councillors:** Julie Fallon (Chairperson) (Conwy County Borough Council), Beca Brown (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dafydd Roberts (Anglesey County Council), Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council), Mared Eastwood (Flintshire County Council).

**Co-opted non-voting Members:** Dylan Davies (Secondary Schools' Representative).

**Non-voting Officers:** Claire Homard (Flintshire County Council), Marc Berw Hughes (Anglesey County Council), Garem Jackson (Cyngor Gwynedd), Clare Scanlon (Conwy County Borough Council) and Ruth Thackray (Denbighshire County Council).

### Officers present:

**GwE -** Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director), Bethan Roberts (Performance Management Manager) and Meleri H Roberts (Translator).

**Cyngor Gwynedd - Host Authority -** Ffion M Evans (on behalf of Head of Finance Department), Siôn Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Gwion Jones (Senior Accountant) and Einir Davies, Ellie M Evans and Ffion E Evans (Democracy Services Officers).

At the beginning of the meeting, sympathies were extended to Lowri Gwyn (translator) and her family in their recent bereavement.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Nicola Stubbins (Denbighshire County Council), Geraint Davies (Denbighshire County Council), Dr Lowri Brown (Wrexham County Borough Council), Dewi A Morgan (Cyngor Gwynedd) and Graham Boase (Denbighshire County Council).

## 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

## 3. URGENT MATTERS

No urgent matters were raised.

## 4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was confirmed that the record presented of the meeting on 24 May was accurate and an update was given on the following from the minutes:

**Item 10 - Review of Current Operating Arrangements and Staffing Structure -** it was confirmed that a meeting had taken place and that an announcement was expected in the next few days which would also reflect national needs.

**Item 12** - Reform Journey Celebration Event - 22/06/2023 - all those involved were congratulated for its outstanding success and it was noted that very good feedback had been received.

**5. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, SUBJECT TO AUDIT, FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023**

The Statement of Accounts was presented by the Assistant Head of Finance, who confirmed that the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 require the Joint Committee to prepare annual accounts. As GwE's turnover exceeds £2.5 million, full accounts must be prepared rather than an annual return as prepared for smaller Joint Committees, which are much more straightforward.

It was confirmed that the accounts had been completed and released since the end of June for audit by Auditors Wales.

As a side-effect of Covid, there had been an extension in the statutory timetable for auditing accounts, with the audit completion date being the end of November this year. As a result, a post-audit version will be presented at the December meeting.

At the meeting on 24 May, a report was had on the year-end financial position for 2022/23, in a simple outturn format. It was reported that an overspend of £139K arose from intentional expenditure on prioritising essential plans during the year to support schools, however that it was funded from reserves. However, the Statement of Accounts in a standard format is for external and governance purposes.

Although the document is lengthy, it was noted that it conforms to the CIPFA standard format in terms of the main statements. It was noted that:

The Narrative Report presents information regarding the accounts and GwE's vision and priorities, financial strategy, financial performance and elaborates on the main matters. Table 2 marries the position reported in the year-end outturn with that in the Income and Expenditure Statement in the Accounts.

The Movement in Reserves Statement summarises GwE's financial position, and this statement marries the income and expenditure position with the balance sheet position and includes information about both usable and unusable reserves. It was confirmed that there had been a substantial movement in unusable reserves over the year. It was noted that usable reserves, i.e., GwE reserves had reduced by £2K by the end of March 2023 to £1.154 million.

Note 10 provides an analysis of GwE general reserves and NQT reserves. £139K has been used to fund overspend over the year and £137K placed in the NQT fund over the year.

Note 15 - Unusable Reserves shows a movement of £9 million due to the pensions situation. It was confirmed that pensions have moved from being commitments to assets, and that this is a general picture seen, due to market conditions in general. This has resulted in there being considerable movement in the balance sheet position of Joint Committees and Local Authorities.

In terms of Officers' Remuneration, it was confirmed that inflation means that there are more salary bands in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.

Reference was made to the £2.8 million reduction in Grant Income between both years. It was noted that several one-off grants had been received in 2021/22 as a side-effect of Covid, a

number being substantial and late in the year, however that such grants have not been received in 2022/23, which is a similar situation to that of the Councils.

It was confirmed that there were no exit packages in 2022/23 and 2021/22.

It was noted that there had been a movement in Pension figures due to market conditions.

The Joint Committee was asked to note and accept the Statement of GwE Accounts (subject to audit).

### **IT WAS RESVOLVED**

To note and accept the Statement of Accounts, subject to audit, for the year ending 31 March 2023.

## **6. GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

GwE's Managing Director presented the Governance Statement and confirmed that he was aware that some Joint Committee members were already familiar with the status of the meeting and the need for a governance statement. He referred to the seven principles being measured, and the process of publishing a Business Plan at the beginning of the year and reporting on progress over the year:

- A Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- B Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- C Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- D Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- F Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- G Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

It was noted that it was pleasing to report the examples of the Service's work were considered to be supporting schools, and that there was a strong desire to continue to collaborate.

The comment about collaboration was reinforced, noting that sustained unity of voice in North Wales is extremely important in moving forward, and that cross-regional working and strong unity had meant that a great deal had been achieved.

All staff were thanked for their work and the transparency and integrity of the Statement were also appreciated.

### **IT WAS RESVOLVED**

To accept and approve the Governance Statement.

## **7. EVALUATION AND IMPACT STRATEGY**

GwE's Assistant Director presented the Report with a request for Joint Committee members to approve the 'Evaluation and Impact Strategy'.

It was noted that there is a need to question what is working and not working, and the monitoring element was drawn to the attention of the Joint Committee. It was noted that the impact of short-term matters can be captured in the form of questionnaires or evaluation forms, however that there is a need to look at the behaviour of practitioners and impact on learners as far as intense programmes are concerned. It is difficult to gauge the exact impact of training, despite the close collaboration with schools. The danger of trying to capture the impact of everything was noted. It was confirmed that the documents only give a taste and that discussions will be ongoing with the Authorities.

The floor was opened for questions/comments:

It was noted that the Strategy is clear and that it is possible to contribute to the principles. It was felt that the evaluation approach/method was robust and there was a willingness to support the strategy and collaboration.

It was asked how Elected Members could be assured that their schools were making progress? It was confirmed that the work is conducted at a school level and at a Local Authority level.

It was noted that it is a crucial document in the wider aspects, involving higher-level discussions. The principles are underpinning and there is a need for transparency. The principles set the picture and outline collaboration.

Given that it is a programme for the next 3 or 4 years, it was asked whether staff well-being and resilience (noted for the Spring Term) should be a higher priority? It was confirmed that there is room to play around with the timetable, however that time needs to be allowed for evaluation to show actual/long term impact.

It was confirmed that a lot is going on. It was reported that consideration needs to be given to how to reduce work pressures on teachers, despite their commitment to the work.

The valuable discussion was welcomed.

## **IT WAS RESVOLVED**

To accept and approve the Evaluation and Impact Strategy

The meeting started at 10:30am and concluded at 11:15am.

---

**CHAIR**



## GwE Joint Committee – Detailed Audit Plan 2023

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: September 2023

Document reference: 3787A2023



This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. Further information can be found in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities each with their own legal functions as described above. Audit Wales is not a legal entity and itself does not have any functions.

No responsibility is taken by the Auditor General, the staff of the Wales Audit Office or, where applicable, the appointed auditor in relation to any member, director, officer or other employee in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 Code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales, the Wales Audit Office and, where applicable, the appointed auditor are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at [infoofficer@audit.wales](mailto:infoofficer@audit.wales).

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. This document is also available in Welsh.

# About Audit Wales

## Our aims and ambitions

### Assure



the people of Wales that public money is well managed

### Explain



how public money is being used to meet people's needs

### Inspire



and empower the Welsh public sector to improve



Fully exploit our unique perspective, expertise and depth of insight



Strengthen our position as an authoritative, trusted and independent voice



Increase our visibility, influence and relevance



Be a model organisation for the public sector in Wales and beyond

# Contents

Introduction	5
Your audit at a glance	7
Financial statements materiality	8
Significant financial statements risks	9
Other areas of focus	10
Financial statements audit timetable	12
Statutory audit functions	13
Fee and audit team	14
Audit quality	16
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – key ISA315 changes and impact	17

# Introduction

This Detailed Audit Plan specifies my statutory responsibilities as your external auditor and to fulfil my obligations under the Code of Audit Practice.

It sets out the work my team intends undertaking to address the audit risks identified and other key areas of focus during 2023.

It also sets out my estimated audit fee, details of my audit team and key dates for delivering my audit team's activities and planned outputs.



**Adrian Crompton**

Auditor General for  
Wales

## My audit responsibilities

I complete work each year to meet the following duties:

- I audit the GwE Joint Committee's (Joint Committee) financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.
- The Joint Committee has to put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and I have to be satisfied that it has done this.

## Audit of financial statements

I am required to issue a certificate and report on your financial statements which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness' and an assessment as to whether the Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement is prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance and is consistent with your financial statements and my knowledge of the Joint Committee.

In addition to my responsibilities for auditing the Joint Committee's financial statements, I also have responsibility for responding to questions and objections about the accounts from local electors (additional fees will be charged for this work, if necessary).

I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and related notes but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material is set out later in this plan.

I will also report by exception on a number of matters which are set out in more detail in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

There have been no limitations imposed on me in planning the scope of this audit.

# Your audit at a glance



## My financial statements audit will concentrate on your risks and other areas of focus

My audit planning has identified the following risks:

### Significant financial statement risk

- Management Override

### Other areas of audit focus

- Valuation of the pension fund net liability
- Valuation of pension fund surplus
- Grant Income



## Materiality

Materiality	£376,000
Reporting threshold	£18,000

# Financial statements materiality



## Materiality £376,000

My aim is to identify and correct material misstatements, that is, those that might otherwise cause the user of the accounts to be misled.

Materiality is calculated using:

- 2022-23 gross expenditure of £18.8 million
- Materiality percentage of 2%

I report to those charged with governance any misstatements above a trivial level (set at 5% of materiality).



## Areas of specific interest

There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the user of the accounts and we have set a lower materiality level for these:

- Senior officer remuneration £1,000
- Related Party disclosures – £10,000 (Individuals), £376,000 (Other Bodies)



# Significant financial statements risks

Significant risks are identified risks of material misstatement for which the assessment of inherent risk is close to the upper end of the spectrum of inherent risk or those which are to be treated as a significant risk in accordance with the requirements of other ISAs. The ISAs require us to focus more attention on these significant risks.

## Exhibit 1: significant financial statement risks

Significant risk	Our planned response
The risk of management override of controls is present in all entities. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, it is viewed as a significant risk [ISA 240.32-33].	The audit team will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• test the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements;</li><li>• review accounting estimates for bias; and</li><li>• evaluate the rationale for any significant transactions outside the normal course of business;</li></ul>

The audit team is yet to conclude all areas of the risk assessment. Should any further significant financial risks arise on completion of this work, we will update the S151 officer and the Joint Committee via its chair and re-issue my Detailed Audit Plan if required.

# Other areas of focus

I set out other identified risks of material misstatement which, whilst not determined to be significant risks as above, I would like to bring to your attention.

## Exhibit 2: other areas of focus

Audit risk	Our planned response
<p><b>Valuation of the pension fund net liability</b></p> <p>The Local Government Pension scheme (LGPS) pension fund liability, as reflected in the financial statements, represents a material estimate. The nature of this estimate means that it is subject to a high degree of estimation uncertainty as it is sensitive to small adjustments in the assumptions used in its calculation.</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the instructions issued by management to their management experts (actuary) for this estimate and the scope of the actuary’s work;</li> <li>• assess the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary who carried out the valuations;</li> <li>• assess the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Council to the actuary to estimate the liability;</li> <li>• test the accuracy of the pension fund net liability and disclosures in the financial statements with the actuarial report from the actuary; and</li> <li>• assess the reasonableness of the assumptions made by the actuary by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (auditor’s expert) and undertaking any additional procedures required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pension Scheme Surpluses</b></p> <p>Following the triennial funding valuation undertaken of LGPS pension funds as at 31 March 2022, the Joint Committee’s IAS 19 Results Schedule from the Actuary shows a surplus. The recognition of pension fund surpluses is complex, requiring consideration of the future economic benefits available in the form of refunds from the plan, or reductions in future contributions to the plan, as well as any scheme rules</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the actuary’s process for calculating the surplus recognisable at 31 March 2023; and</li> <li>• consider whether the surplus is recognisable under IFRIC 14.</li> </ul>

requiring employers to make minimum funding payments to the scheme.

**Grants income**

As reported in the 2021-22 Audit of Accounts Report, a material adjustment was required to correct the accounting treatment of the Workforce Council grant in the Joint Committee's accounts.

The audit team will review the accounting treatment of a sample of grant income received during 2022-23 to ensure they have been correctly accounted for in the financial statements.

# Financial statements audit timetable

I set out below key dates for delivery of my accounts audit work and planned outputs.

### Exhibit 3: key dates for delivery of planned outputs

Planned output	Work undertaken	Report finalised
2023 Detailed Audit Plan	September 2023	September 2023
Audit of financial statements work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audit of Financial Statements Report</li><li>• Opinion on the Financial Statements</li></ul>	October to November 2023	November 2023

# Statutory audit functions

## Statutory audit functions

In addition to the audit of the accounts, I have statutory responsibilities to receive questions and objections to the accounts from local electors. These responsibilities are set out in the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004:

- Section 30 Inspection of documents and questions at audit; and
- Section 31 Right to make objections at audit.

As this work is reactive, I have made no allowance in the fee table below. If I do receive questions or objections, I will discuss potential audit fees at the time.

# Fee and audit team

In January 2023 I published the [fee scheme](#) for the 2023-24 year as approved by the Senedd Finance Committee. My fee rates for 2023-24 have increased by 4.8% for inflationary pressures. In addition, my financial audit fee has a further increase of 10.2% for the impact of the revised auditing standard ISA 315 on my financial audit approach. More details of the revised auditing standard and what it means for the audit I undertake is set out in **Appendix 1**.

I estimate your total audit fee will be £12,884.

Planning will be ongoing, and changes to my programme of audit work, and therefore my fee, may be required if any key new risks emerge. I shall make no changes without first discussing them with the Joint Committee

### **Our financial audit fee is based on the following assumptions:**

- The agreed audit deliverables sets out the expected working paper requirements to support the financial statements and includes timescales and responsibilities.
- No matters of significance, other than as summarised in this plan, are identified during the audit.

The main members of my team, together with their contact details, are summarised in **Exhibit 4**.

### **Exhibit 4: my local audit team**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Contact number</b>	<b>E-mail address</b>
Matthew Edwards	Engagement and Audit Director	029 20 320 663	<a href="mailto:matthew.edwards@audit.wales">matthew.edwards@audit.wales</a>
Yvonne Thomas	Audit Manager (Financial Audit)	029 22 677 830	<a href="mailto:yvonne.thomas@audit.wales">yvonne.thomas@audit.wales</a>
Sioned Owen	Audit Lead (Financial Audit)	029 20 829 338	<a href="mailto:sioned.owen@audit.wales">sioned.owen@audit.wales</a>

There are some threats to independence that I need to bring to your attention relating to the Audit Manager who is an acquaintance of a former member of the Joint Committee who departed following the May 2022 elections. Appropriate steps will be implemented to ensure that any potential conflicts relating to the 2022-23 financial year are managed. With the exception of this, I can confirm that all other members of my team are independent of the Joint Committee.

# Audit quality

Our commitment to audit quality in Audit Wales is absolute. We believe that audit quality is about getting things right first time.

We use a three lines of assurance model to demonstrate how we achieve this. We have established an Audit Quality Committee to co-ordinate and oversee those arrangements. We subject our work to independent scrutiny by QAD\* and our Chair, acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2022](#).



## Our People

The first line of assurance is formed by our staff and management who are individually and collectively responsible for achieving the standards of audit quality to which we aspire.

- Selection of right team
- Use of specialists
- Supervisions and review



## Arrangements for achieving audit quality

The second line of assurance is formed by the policies, tools, learning & development, guidance, and leadership we provide to our staff to support them in achieving those standards of audit quality.

- Audit platform
- Ethics
- Guidance
- Culture
- Learning and development
- Leadership
- Technical support



## Independent assurance

The third line of assurance is formed by those activities that provide independent assurance over the effectiveness of the first two lines of assurance.

- EQCRs
- Themed reviews
- Cold reviews
- Root cause analysis
- Peer review
- Audit Quality Committee
- External monitoring

\* QAD is the quality monitoring arm of ICAEW.



# Appendix 1

## The key changes to ISA315 and the potential impact on your organisation

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
<b>More detailed and extensive risk identification and assessment procedures</b>	<p>Your finance team and others in your organisation may receive a greater number of enquiries from our audit teams at the planning stage of the audit. Requests for information may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• information on your organisation’s business model and how it integrates the use of information technology (IT);</li><li>• information about your organisation’s risk assessment process and how your organisation monitors the system of internal control;</li><li>• more detailed information on how transactions are initiated, recorded, processed, and reported. This may include access to supporting documentation such as policy and procedure manuals; and</li><li>• more detailed discussions with your organisation to support the audit team’s assessment of inherent risk.</li></ul>
<b>Obtaining an enhanced understanding of your organisation’s environment, particularly in relation to IT</b>	<p>Your organisation may receive more enquiries to assist the audit team in understanding the IT environment. This may include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IT applications relevant to financial reporting;</li><li>• the supporting IT infrastructure (e.g. the network, databases);</li><li>• IT processes (e.g. managing program changes, IT operations); and</li><li>• the IT personnel involved in the IT processes.</li></ul> <p>Audit teams may need to test the general IT controls and this may require obtaining more detailed audit evidence on the operation of IT controls within your organisation.</p> <p>On some audits, our audit teams may involve IT audit specialists to assist with their work. Our IT auditors may need to engage with members of your IT team who have not previously been involved in the audit process.</p>

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
<p><b>Enhanced requirements relating to exercising professional scepticism</b></p>	<p>Our audit teams may make additional inquiries if they identify information which appears to contradict what they have already learned in the audit.</p>
<p><b>Risk assessments are scalable depending on the nature and complexity of the audited body</b></p>	<p>The audit team's expectations regarding the formality of your organisation's policies, procedures, processes, and systems will depend on the complexity of your organisation.</p>
<p><b>Audit teams may make greater use of technology in the performance of their audit</b></p>	<p>Our audit teams may make use of automated tools and techniques such as data analytics when performing their audit. Our teams may request different information or information in a different format from previous audits so that they can perform their audit procedures.</p>



Through our Good Practice work we share emerging practice and insights from our audit work in support of our objectives to assure, to explain and to inspire. Our newsletter provides you with regular updates on our public service audit work, good practice and events, which can be tailored to your preferences. For more information about our Good Practice work click [here](#). Sign up to our newsletter [here](#).



Audit Wales  
1 Capital Quarter  
Tyndall Street  
Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Tel: 029 2032 0500  
Fax: 029 2032 0600  
Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

Website: [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

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



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo  
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

<b>MEETING</b>	GwE Joint Committee
<b>DATE</b>	06 December 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	The Joint Committee's Final Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 and relevant Audit
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To submit – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Statement of Accounts post-audit;</li> <li>• The Wales Audit Office's report;</li> <li>• Letter of representation.</li> </ul>
<b>RECCOMENDATION</b>	To receive and note the report on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales, approve the 2022/23 accounts, and authorise the Chairperson to sign the letter of representation on behalf of the Joint Committee.
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Dewi Aeron Morgan, Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

## 1. FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Members will recall that it was reported as follows to the 12 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 2014 (as amended) 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 2022/23**

The Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2022/23 was submitted to the 24 May 2023 meeting of GwE's Joint Committee in "outturn" format, and the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 (subject to audit) in standard statutory format to the 12 July 2023 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 8 of the report states that "We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion" on the financial statements 2022/23.

## **4. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2022/23**

The final version (post audit) of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 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 2022/23 (post audit)

**6. LETTER OF REPRESENTATION**

**The Chairperson 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 Chairperson 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**  
**2022/23**



## **INDEX**

	<b>Page</b>
Narrative Report	2 – 6
Statement of Responsibilities	7
Expenditure and Funding Analysis	8
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	9
Movement in Reserves Statement	10
Balance Sheet	11
Cash Flow Statement	12
Notes to the Accounts	13 – 35
Appendix A – Annual Governance Statement	36 – 47
Glossary	48 – 49
Auditor’s Report	50 – 52

# 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, Cyngor Gwynedd, 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.

Cyngor Gwynedd 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 2022/23 are presented here on pages 8 to 35. The Statements of Accounts are prepared in accordance with CIPFA's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23*.

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 2022/23 :

Conwy	15.26%
Denbighshire	15.48%
Flintshire	22.67%
Gwynedd	17.59%
Anglesey	10.14%
Wrexham	18.86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- **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 2023.
- **The Cash Flow Statement** - This statement summarises the flow of cash to and from the Joint Committee during 2022/23 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 is:

- Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.
- Proudly Welsh and internationally informed, we will support our schools to become successful and confident learning organisations. We will collaborate to provide learners with the climate and education that they deserve so that they become capable and resilient individuals who realise their full potential.

The GwE business plan is one over a period of three years between 2023 and 2026, and also includes a detailed business plan over 12 months for 2023-2024. It outlines GwE's strategic objectives for 2023-2026, and the improvement priorities and work programs to be achieved over the following 12 months.

The regional priorities and areas for improvement are firmly rooted in the findings of internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews of current practices and the direction of the GwE journey, and through consultation with Headteachers and the Local Authorities. The priorities are a combination of improving provision, leadership and school outcomes, as well as achieving the Reform Journey and the Curriculum for Wales.

GwE continues to look outwards and welcomes challenges within Wales, and beyond, while ensuring that what is developed is suitable for the context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders, especially the voice of teachers and school leaders in all sectors, and listening to children and young people as they learn and to support them to reach their potential.

GwE has a clear plan which outlines how, by working closely with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve learning and teaching, raise the aspiration to have an impact on standards, ensuring that the school environment supports the well-being of learners and practitioners.

The business plan also addresses the strategic priorities of the Welsh Government and the Local Authorities, which are within the remit of GwE. The plan also gives consideration to how schools and educational settings continue to face the side effects of Covid.

## **Financial Strategy**

The Joint Committee's Financial Strategy and 2022/23 Budget adopted by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 15 February 2023 sets out the foundation to achieve the improvement priorities, whilst also trying to meet the continuous increase in demand for services. The Financial Strategy is unavoidably dependent upon these priorities. The strategy is available at:

<https://www.gwegogledd.cymru/about-us/governance/joint-committee/?lang=en>

The financial impact of the Covid crisis has been significant for the Councils which are members of the Joint Committee, with a combination of additional costs, income losses and a failure to realise savings. The impact was not as significant in 2022/23 compared to the previous two years and unlike previous years there was no financial support available to the Councils from the Welsh Government.

## **2022/23 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 (Joint Committee 24 May 2023):

<https://www.gwegogledd.cymru/about-us/governance/joint-committee/?lang=en>

## 2022/23 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 £18,579k during 2022/23, with a net position of £793k.
- The financial out-turn position for 2022/23 will be reported to the Joint Committee at its meeting on 24 May 2023. Joint Committee Members' approval is sought to transfer £139k from earmarked reserves to finance this year's overspend.
- 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	17,786	17,948	162
Income			
Council Contributions for the core service:			
Conwy	(671)	(671)	0
Denbighshire	(680)	(680)	0
Flintshire	(996)	(996)	0
Gwynedd	(773)	(773)	0
Anglesey	(445)	(445)	0
Wrexham	(829)	(829)	0
Other Income	(13,392)	(13,415)	(23)
<b>Net (Underspend)/Overspend</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>139</b>

### 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 Usable Reserves £'000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £'000	Income & Expenditure Statement £'000
Expenditure	17,948	(137)*	17,811	768	18,579
Income	(17,809)	23**	(17,786)	0	(17,786)
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>(114)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>793</b>

\*Transposition Adjustment – This adjustment relates to the net contribution to and from reserves.

\*\*Transposition Adjustment - This adjustment relates to the interest on balances received during the financial year.

## **Material Items of Income and Expenditure**

Related Items include :-

- (£10,625k) 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 15).
- £17,786k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 19).

## **Other Issues**

- There is significant economic instability and financial risks in the UK and globally. With the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) having noted that the UK's medium-term fiscal outlook has worsened since March 2022 due to a weak economy, higher interest rates and unemployment. The Joint Committee has taken these circumstances into account in its financial plans, keeping a prudent level of reserves.

## **Provisions and Reserves**

The Joint Committee has usable reserves of £1,154k. These are detailed in the Balance Sheet, Movement in Reserves Statement and in Note 10.

## **Pension Fund**

An assessment has been carried out by Gwynedd Pension Fund's Actuary, Hymans Robertson, of the Joint Committee's actuarial position. In order to comply with International Accounting Standard 19, the Joint Committee has shown a net asset worth £557k as at 31 March 2023 on its Balance Sheet. Refer to Note 22 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 2022, with the next taking place at 31 March 2025.

## **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 2022/23 financial year to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

## Further Information

The Statement of Accounts is available on Cyngor Gwynedd's website [www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru).

Further information relating to the accounts is available from:

Ffion Madog Evans  
Assistant Head of Finance – Accounting and Pensions  
01286 679133

or

Gwion Elis Jones  
Senior Accountant  
01286 679060

Finance Department  
Cyngor Gwynedd  
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**

Cyngor Gwynedd as host authority bears the responsibility for the arrangements and administration of the Joint Committee's financial affairs.

Cyngor Gwynedd 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 Cyngor Gwynedd, 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.

**06 December 2023**

---

**Councillor Julie Fallon**  
**GwE Joint Committee Chairperson**

#### **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 2023 and the Joint Committee's income and expenditure for the year then ended.



---

**Dewi Aeron Morgan CPFA**  
**Head of Finance, Cyngor Gwynedd**

**29 November 2023**

## 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.

2021/22				2022/23		
Net Expenditure to be Funded by Usable Reserve balances	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis (see Note 8)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure to be Funded by Usable Reserve balances	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis (see Note 8)	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
5,177	939	6,116	Employees	6,136	768	6,904
168	0	168	Property	297	0	297
46	0	46	Transport	140	0	140
1,795	0	1,795	Supplies and Services	1,695	0	1,695
13,673	0	13,673	Third Parties	9,543	0	9,543
(20,572)	0	(20,572)	Income	(17,786)	0	(17,786)
<b>287</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>1,226</b>	<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>793</b>
0	256	256	Other Income and Expenditure	(23)	255	232
<b>287</b>	<b>1,195</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>1,025</b>
(1,443)			Opening Balances of Usable Reserves	(1,156)		
287			(Surplus)/Deficit on Usable Reserves in Year	2		
<b>(1,156)</b>			Closing Balances of Usable Reserves	<b>(1,154)</b>		



## 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.

2021/22			2022/23			
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Note	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
6,116	0	6,116	Employees	6,904	0	6,904
168	0	168	Property	297	0	297
46	0	46	Transport	140	0	140
1,795	0	1,795	Supplies and Services	1,695	0	1,695
13,673	0	13,673	Third Parties	9,543	0	9,543
0	(20,572)	(20,572)	Income	0	(17,786)	(17,786)
<b>21,798</b>	<b>(20,572)</b>	<b>1,226</b>	<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>18,579</b>	<b>(17,786)</b>	<b>793</b>
256	0	256	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	255	(23)	232
<b>22,054</b>	<b>(20,572)</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>18,834</b>	<b>(17,809)</b>	<b>1,025</b>
		(4,508)	Remeasurement of the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)			(10,625)
		<b>(4,508)</b>	<b>Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>			<b>(10,625)</b>
		<b>(3,026)</b>	<b>Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>			<b>(9,600)</b>

## 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.

		<b>Movement in Reserves Statement</b>		
	<b>Note</b>	<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	<b>Unusable Reserves</b>	<b>Total Joint Committee's Reserves</b>
		<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Balance 31 March 2021 carried forward</b>		<b>(1,443)</b>	<b>12,473</b>	<b>11,030</b>
<u>Movement in reserves during 2021/22</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		1,482	0	1,482
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	(4,508)	(4,508)
<b>Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>		<b>1,482</b>	<b>(4,508)</b>	<b>(3,026)</b>
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	9	(1,195)	1,195	0
<b>Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Usable Reserves</b>		<b>287</b>	<b>(3,313)</b>	<b>(3,026)</b>
<b>(Increase)/Decrease in 2021/22</b>		<b>287</b>	<b>(3,313)</b>	<b>(3,026)</b>
<b>Balance 31 March 2022 carried forward</b>	10	<b>(1,156)</b>	<b>9,160</b>	<b>8,004</b>
<u>Movement in reserves during 2022/23</u>				
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		1,025	0	1,025
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		0	(10,625)	(10,625)
<b>Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>		<b>1,025</b>	<b>(10,625)</b>	<b>(9,600)</b>
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	9	(1,023)	1,023	0
<b>Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Usable Reserves</b>	10	<b>2</b>	<b>(9,602)</b>	<b>(9,600)</b>
<b>(Increase)/Decrease in 2022/23</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>(9,602)</b>	<b>(9,600)</b>
<b>Balance 31 March 2023 carried forward</b>		<b>(1,154)</b>	<b>(442)</b>	<b>(1,596)</b>

## 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 2022 £'000		Note	31 March 2023 £'000
1,177	Short-term Debtors	12	270
1,587	Cash and Cash Equivalents	13	2,634
<b>2,764</b>	<b>Current Assets</b>		<b>2,904</b>
(1,712)	Short-term Creditors	14	(1,865)
<b>(1,712)</b>	<b>Current Liabilities</b>		<b>(1,865)</b>
(9,056)	Pension Liability	22	557
<b>(9,056)</b>	<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>		<b>557</b>
<b>(8,004)</b>	<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>1,596</b>
(1,156)	Usable Reserves	10	(1,154)
9,160	Unusable Reserves	15	(442)
<b>8,004</b>	<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>(1,596)</b>

## 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.

<b>2021/22</b>		<b>Note</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>£'000</b>			<b>£'000</b>
1,482	Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services		1,025
2,890	Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	16	(2,072)
4,372	Net cash flows from Operating Activities		(1,047)
0	Investing Activities		0
0	Financing Activities		0
4,372	Net (Increase)/Decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(1,047)
(5,959)	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(1,587)
<b>(1,587)</b>	<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>		<b>(2,634)</b>

# **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**

## **NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

### **I.1 General Principles**

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Joint Committee's transactions for the 2022/23 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2023. The Joint Committee is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended), in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23*, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is historical cost. 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.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- 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 Cyngor Gwynedd within its own accounts.

### **I.4 Employee Benefits**

#### **I.4.1 Benefits Payable during Employment**

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

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 are 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 projected earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 4.75% 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:

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.

## NOTE I – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

- 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 General Fund 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 England and Wales 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 not material or 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 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 Cyngor Gwynedd are derived from a combination of pre-determined fixed charges, actual recorded staff time, transaction logging and pre-determined formulae.

### **1.9 Provisions**

Provisions are made where an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date:

- that gives the Council a present obligation
- that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and
- where a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

If it is not clear whether an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date, it is deemed to give rise to a present obligation if, taking account of all available evidence, it is more likely than not that a present obligation exists at the Balance Sheet date. The present obligation can be legal or constructive.

Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.



## **NOTE 1 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**

### **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.

### **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 Cyngor Gwynedd’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.

### **1.13 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 2022/23 CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

## **NOTE 3- PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS**

There are no prior period adjustment during 2022/23.

## **NOTE 4 – 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.

A review of the accounting standards has been carried out this year, but none of the standards in question are relevant to GwE.

## **NOTE 5 – 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 assessments, 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, and high levels of inflation and interest rates. However, the Joint Committee has determined that this uncertainty is not 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 6 – 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 2023 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:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Uncertainties</b>	<b>Effect if actual results differ from assumptions</b>
Pensions Liability	<p>Estimating the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgments relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which wages are expected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries are involved in giving expert advice to the Council about the assumptions to be used.</p> <p>Brexit and Covid had negative effects on the UK economy and pension asset values, and currently there are high inflation and interest rates, but the market seems to be improving and stabilizing. However, a pandemic or other global crisis could have a detrimental effect on asset returns, as well as an increase in interest rates to curb the rise of inflation as a result of the recovery.</p>	The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions are set out in Note 22.

**NOTE 7 – MATERIAL ITEMS OF INCOME AND EXPENSE**

Related items include:-

- (£10,625k) 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 15).
- £17,786k in grants and contributions and equivalent expenditure (Note 19).

## NOTE 8 – NOTE TO THE EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
2022/23				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i) £'000	Other Differences (ii) £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Employees	0	757	11	768
Property	0	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0
Third Party	0	0	0	0
Income	0	0	0	0
<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>768</b>
Other Operating Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	255	0	255
Taxation and non-specific grant income	0	0	0	0
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,023</b>

ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN FUNDING AND ACCOUNTING BASIS				
2021/22				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (i) £'000	Other Differences (ii) £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Employees	0	935	4	939
Property	0	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0
Third Party	0	0	0	0
Income	0	0	0	0
<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>939</b>
Other Operating Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	256	0	256
Taxation and non-specific grant income	0	0	0	0
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,195</b>

## NOTE 8 – 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 9 – 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.

2022/23		
<b>ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS</b>	<b>Usable Reserve General Fund Balance</b>	<b>Movement in Unusable Reserves</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:</b>		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Note 22)	(1,900)	1,900
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	888	(888)
<b>Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account</b>		
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	(11)	11
<b>Total Adjustments</b>	<b>(1,023)</b>	<b>1,023</b>

2021/22		
<b>ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS</b>	<b>Usable Reserve General Fund Balance</b>	<b>Movement in Unusable Reserves</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:</b>		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Note 22)	(2,006)	2,006
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	815	(815)
<b>Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account</b>		
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	(4)	4
<b>Total Adjustments</b>	<b>(1,195)</b>	<b>1,195</b>

## NOTE 10 – TRANSFERS TO/FROM USABLE RESERVES

### 10a. The General Fund

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 decrease of (£139k).

	<b>GwE Joint Committee General Fund £'000</b>
<b>Balance 31 March 2022</b>	<b>437</b>
<u>Transfers:</u>	
In	0
Out	(139)
<b>Balance 31 March 2023</b>	<b>298</b>

### 10b. The Newly Qualified Teachers Fund

The note below highlights the amount set aside from the Newly Qualified Teacher Fund in usable reserves in order to provide funding for spending plans to support supporting Newly Qualified Teachers into the future, with an increase of £137k.

	<b>GwE Joint Committee Newly Qualified Teachers Fund £'000</b>
<b>Balance 31 March 2022</b>	<b>719</b>
<u>Transfers:</u>	
In	137
Out	0
<b>Balance 31 March 2023</b>	<b>856</b>

## NOTE 11 – FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
256 Net interest on the net pension defined benefit liability/(asset)	255
0 Interest Receivable	(23)
<b>256 Total</b>	<b>232</b>

## NOTE 12 – SHORT-TERM DEBTORS

	<b>31 March</b>	<b>31 March</b>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Trade Receivables	37	78
Prepayments	57	55
Other Receivable Amounts	1,083	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>270</b>

## NOTE 13 – CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

The Joint Committee does not have its own bank account and cash is administered by Cyngor Gwynedd 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 Cyngor Gwynedd amounts.

	<b>31 March</b>	<b>31 March</b>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Cash in Bank held by Host Authority	1,587	2,634
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>1,587</b>	<b>2,634</b>

## NOTE 14 – SHORT-TERM CREDITORS

	<b>31 March</b>	<b>31 March</b>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Trade Payables	410	406
Other Payables	1,302	1,459
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,712</b>	<b>1,865</b>



## NOTE 15 – UNUSABLE RESERVES

31 March 2022		31 March 2023
£'000		£'000
(9,056)	Pensions Reserve	557
(104)	Accumulated Absences Account	(115)
<b>(9,160)</b>	<b>Total Unusable Reserves</b>	<b>442</b>

### 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 credit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a surplus 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 need to be paid.

2021/22 £000		2022/23 £000
<b>(12,373)</b>	<b>Balance 1 April</b>	<b>(9,056)</b>
4,508	Re-measurements of the net pension defined benefit (liabilities) / assets (Note 22)	10,625
(2,006)	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	(1,900)
815	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	888
<b>(9,056)</b>	<b>Balance 31 March</b>	<b>557</b>

### 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 is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

2021/22 £000		2022/23 £000
<b>(100)</b>	<b>Balance 1 April</b>	<b>(104)</b>
(4)	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	(11)
<b>(104)</b>	<b>Balance 31 March</b>	<b>(115)</b>

**NOTE 16 – CASH FLOW STATEMENT: ADJUSTMENTS TO NET SURPLUS OR DEFICIT ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR NON-CASH MOVEMENTS**

2021/22	2022/23
£'000	£'000
3,413 (Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	(153)
668 Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	(907)
(1,191) Pension Liability	(1,012)
<b>2,890</b>	<b>(2,072)</b>

**NOTE 17 – OFFICERS' REMUNERATION**

**17a.** The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended) 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:

2021/22			Chief Officers	2022/23		
Salary	Employer's Pension Contribution	Total		Salary	Employer's Pension Contribution	Total
£	£	£		£	£	£
105,029	24,157	129,186	Chief Officer	106,954	24,599	131,553

**17b.** 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 2022/23 or 2021/22.

Number of other employees who received more than £60,000 and includes remuneration and termination benefits:			
Number in 2021/22		Number in 2022/23	
Total		Total	
15	£60,000 - £64,999	17	
9	£65,000 - £69,999	10	
3	£70,000 - £74,999	7	
1	£75,000 - £79,999	4	

## NOTE 18 – EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

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

2021/22	2022/23
£'000	£'000
11 Fees payable to the auditor appointed by the Auditor General for Wales with regard to external audit services	13
<b>11 Net Fees</b>	<b>13</b>

## NOTE 19 – GRANT INCOME

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

	2021/22		2022/23	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Grants and Contributions Credited to Services</b>				
Welsh Government -				
Pupil Development Grant (PDG) - Looked After Children	1,135		1,126	
PDG – Strategic Adviser	103		100	
PDG – Consortia Led Funding	196		257	
Other	374		321	
	<b>1,808</b>		<b>1,804</b>	
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant -				
Welsh Government (excluding the EIG)	<b>10,801</b>		<b>7,601</b>	
Education Improvement Grant (EIG)				
Match funding from Councils	1,625		1,259	
Welsh Government	1,386		1,813	
	<b>3,011</b>		<b>3,072</b>	
Other Government Grants and Contributions -				
Education Workforce Council	537		622	
	<b>537</b>		<b>622</b>	
Other Grants and Contributions				
Councils' Contributions towards the Core Service				
Conwy	645		671	
Denbighshire	649		680	
Flintshire	960		996	
Gwynedd	745		773	
Anglesey	429		445	
Wrexham	796		829	
	<b>4,224</b>		<b>4,394</b>	
Other Grants and Contribution	<b>191</b>		<b>293</b>	
<b>Total Grants and Contributions Credited to Services</b>	<b>20,572</b>		<b>17,786</b>	

## NOTE 20 – 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, Cyngor Gwynedd, 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 2022/23 financial year. Cyngor Gwynedd 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.

	Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Income Received	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
Local Authority	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Conwy County Borough Council	1,793	39	718	13
Denbighshire County Council	972	343	1,045	0
Flintshire County Council	2,214	50	1,084	0
Cyngor Gwynedd	2,296	34	1,322	41
Isle of Anglesey County Council	1,128	20	776	6
Wrexham County Borough Council	1,152	424	829	4

### 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 2022/23 and balances as at 31 March 2023 is as follows:

Payments made	Amounts owed by the Joint Committee	Amounts owed to the Joint Committee
£'000	£'000	£'000
378	18	17

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 2022/23 no payments were made or owed by the Joint Committee for the related bodies.

## NOTE 21 – EXIT PACKAGES

There were no exit packages in 2022/23 or 2021/22.

## NOTE 22 – 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 Cyngor Gwynedd. 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. GwE's proportion of the total contributions to the Gwynedd Pension Fund in 2022/23 was 1.3% (1.5% in 2021/22).
- 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 Cyngor Gwynedd. 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 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 22 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

Change in the Fair Value of Plan Assets, Defined Benefit Obligation and Net Liability	Period ended 31 March 2022			Period ended 31 March 2023		
	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset	Assets	Liabilities	Net (liability) /asset
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fair Value of Plan Assets	23,243	0	23,243	26,013	0	26,013
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(35,616)	(35,616)	0	(35,069)	(35,069)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Opening Position at 1 April</b>	<b>23,243</b>	<b>(35,616)</b>	<b>(12,373)</b>	<b>26,013</b>	<b>(35,069)</b>	<b>(9,056)</b>
Current Service Cost*	0	(1,750)	(1,750)	0	(1,645)	(1,645)
Past Service Costs (including curtailments)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Service Cost</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,750)</b>	<b>(1,750)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,645)</b>	<b>(1,645)</b>
Net interest						
Interest Income on Plan Assets	471	0	471	711	0	711
Interest Cost on Defined Benefit Obligation	0	(727)	(727)	0	(966)	(966)
<b>Total Net Interest</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>(727)</b>	<b>(256)</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>(966)</b>	<b>(255)</b>
<b>Total Defined Benefit Cost Recognised in Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>(2,477)</b>	<b>(2,006)</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>(2,611)</b>	<b>(1,900)</b>
Cash flows						
Plan participants' contributions	293	(293)	0	310	(310)	0
Employer contributions	807	0	807	852	0	852
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Paid	(473)	473	0	(446)	446	0
Unfunded Benefits Paid	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Expected Closing Position</b>	<b>24,341</b>	<b>(37,913)</b>	<b>(13,572)</b>	<b>27,440</b>	<b>(37,544)</b>	<b>(10,104)</b>
Remeasurements						
Change in financial assumptions	0	2,727	2,727	0	13,064	13,064
Change in demographic assumptions	0	182	182	0	534	534
Other experience	0	(65)	(65)	(167)	1,070	903
Return on Assets excluding amounts included in net interest	1,672	0	1,672	(949)	0	(949)
<b>Total remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income (OCI)</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>2,844</b>	<b>4,516</b>	<b>(1,116)</b>	<b>14,668</b>	<b>13,552</b>
Fair Value of Employer Assets	26,013	0	26,013	26,324	0	26,324
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	0	(35,069)	(35,069)	0	(22,876)	(22,876)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Closing Position at 31 March</b>	<b>26,013</b>	<b>(35,069)</b>	<b>(9,056)</b>	<b>26,324</b>	<b>(22,876)</b>	<b>3,448</b>

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

\*\* The other experience on obligations includes an allowance for the pension increase order applied to the funded obligations at April 2023 being different to the pension increase assumption adopted in the Employer's Schedule of results at the start of the period. Within this other experience item, the funded obligations have increased by £1,666,000 as a result of the pension increase order being different to the previous assumption.

## NOTE 22 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

The debit balance on the Balance Sheet reflects a surplus in the benefits earned by employees and the resources the Joint Committee has set aside to meet them, which has been limited by IAS 19 and IFRIC 14.

	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000
Fair Value of Plan Assets	26,013	26,324
Present Value of Funded Obligations	(35,069)	(22,876)
Effect of IAS 19/ IFRIC 14	0	(2,891)
<b>Net Asset/(Liability) arising from Defined Benefit Obligation</b>	<b>(9,056)</b>	<b>557</b>

### 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 GwE is assumed to be in the same proportion to the Fund's asset allocation as at 31 December 2022. The split is shown in the table below. The actuary estimates the bid value of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2023 to be £2.771bn 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.

## NOTE 22 – PENSION COSTS (continued)

### Fair Value of Employer Assets

The asset values below are at bid value as required under IAS 19.

Asset Category	At 31 March 2022				At 31 March 2023			
	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	%
<b>Equity Securities</b>								
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
<b>Debt Securities</b>								
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Private Equity</b>								
All	0	1,466	1,466	6	0	1,657	1,657	6
<b>Real Estate</b>								
UK Property	0	2,231	2,231	9	0	2,170	2,170	8
Overseas Property	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Investment Funds and Unit Trusts</b>								
Equities	0	16,532	16,532	64	0	16,388	16,388	62
Infrastructure	0	508	508	2	0	747	747	3
Other	0	5,195	5,195	20	0	5,280	5,280	20
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>								
All	81	0	81	0	82	0	82	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>25,932</b>	<b>26,013</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>26,242</b>	<b>26,324</b>	<b>100</b>



## NOTE 22 – 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 the Fund's VitaCurves with improvements in line with the CMI 2021 model, with a 10% weighting of 2021 (and 2020) data, standard smoothing (Sk7), initial adjustment of 0.25% and a long term rate of improvement of 1.5% p.a. for both males and females.

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 2022. 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 2022	31 March 2023
<b>Financial Assumptions</b>	<b>% p.a.</b>	<b>% p.a.</b>
Pensions Increase Rate	3.20	2.95
Salary Increase Rate	3.50	3.45
Inflation Rate	3.20	2.95
Discount Rate	2.70	4.75
Long-term expected rate of return on all categories of assets	2.70	4.75
<b>Take-up option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum</b>		
for pre-April 2008 service	50	65
for post-April 2008 service	75	65
<b>Mortality assumptions</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Years</b>
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners		
Men	21.3	21.9
Women	23.7	24.3
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners		
Men	22.4	22.9
Women	25.7	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 2023 on varying bases. The approach taken is consistent with that adopted to derive the IAS19 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 22 – 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 2022, 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.

<b>Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme Change in assumption</b>	<b>Approximate increase to Defined Benefit Obligation 31 March 2023</b>	<b>Approximate monetary amount 31 March 2023</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>£'000</b>
0.1% decrease in real discount rate	2	439
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4	915
0.1% increase in the salary increase rate	0	68
0.1% increase in the pension increase rate	2	377

### 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. The Joint Committee 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 2022), or at any other time as instructed to do so by the Administering Authority. The contributions payable over the period to 31 March 2023 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

	<b>Liability Split 31 March 2023</b>	
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>%</b>
Active Members	12,741	55.7
Deferred Members	1,777	7.8
Pensioner Members	8,358	36.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,876</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above figures are for the funded obligations only and do not include any unfunded pensioner liabilities. The durations are effective at the previous formal valuation as at 31 March 2022. The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for the scheme members in 2022/23 is 20 years.

## **NOTE 22 – 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 2024 is £693k.

As the Actuary's report is based on estimates and due to timing issues, an adjustment of £36k has been made in 2022/23, (£8k in 2021/22), to bring the position in the Scheme based on the Actuarial figures in line with the closing position as at 31 March 2023. This variance has been treated as Actuarial Gains and Losses on Pension Assets and Liabilities.

## **NOTE 23 – EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD**

The Statement of Accounts was authorised by the Head of Finance on 30 June 2023. 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 2023, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect its impact.

## **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 2023 and up to the date of approval of the 2022/23 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, , Education Development Trust, Professor Graham Donaldson, Scottish Government, OECD and other Regional Consortia.

3.5 Since March 2020, to the date of publication of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts, GwE have adapted their work in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities during the COVID pandemic. 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:
  - Respect;
  - Trust;
  - Wellbeing;
  - Innovate and inspire;
  - Support and collaborate;
  - Cymru a'r Gymraeg
- GwE, supported by the host authority, has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and decision making is effective.
- All meetings of the Joint Committee during 2022/23 have been held virtually via Zoom. Guidance has been 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. Effective collegiate and collective regional approach between the six local authorities and GwE ensures strong governance and regional consistency in support, messaging and guidance given to schools.
- One of the main strengths of work across North Wales is 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.
- There is full stakeholder engagement via various forums both within & outside the formal governance structure.
- 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.
- GwE continues to look outward and to welcome challenge from both inside and outside Wales whilst making sure that what it is developing is right for its context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders especially those of teachers and leaders in schools across

all sectors and listen to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspirations.

- 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.
- 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
  - 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. GwE has encouraged schools to collaborate through sharing practice and co-constructing areas that need improving. We have invested in various cluster models, alliances and networks, and encouraged schools to find a range of appropriate partners to deliver improvement and changes. 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. 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.
- The region has also looked outward for good practice in terms of identifying effective peer review models as well as encouraging our schools to develop and evolve their own practice. GwE believe that peer engagement should closely complement the dimensions identified within the OECD publication 'What Makes a School a Learning Organisation'. The principles within sit within all Professional Learning and across GwE.
- Critical to the development of the learning organisation work, there are four transversal themes which run throughout to include Trust, Time, Technology and Thinking Together. These have been fundamental in developing GwE's approach to developing strong partnerships as trust underpins the relationships needed internally and externally for learning organisations to thrive.
- For the last 5 years there has been agreement with Headteachers on a series of regional principles for peer engagement. A model of peer review and improvement planning was agreed (the Schools Partnership Programme [SPP]), approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee. All GwE SIAs have received continuous training and support on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching and a programme is in place to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and the Referral Units.
- In June 2022, Welsh Government published the new guidance and information on school improvement and the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

continues to work collaboratively with all schools and settings to develop and refine schools' self-evaluation processes as part of their strategic improvement process.

- GwE and the Local Authorities are collaborating closely together and have established a regional School Improvement Guidance Task and Finish Group to develop a regional approach to identify, create, deliver and monitor Schools Support Plans. The group are exploring potential avenues for stronger collaboration across LAs to build capacity and ensure greater consistency of support and ensuring that we adopt a holistic and transparent approach in term of reporting and sharing of information.

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 lead.
- 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.
- GwE have also developed an Evaluation and Impact Strategy so that it can clearly evaluate and capture impact of its work in line with its core school improvement function and to enable it to fully meet the expectations as outlined in the School Improvement Guidance. The purpose of the strategy is to articulate clearly how GwE will engage in ongoing evaluation processes in line with its commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement as a learning organisation.



self-evaluation processes will draw upon a range of sources that are both qualitative and quantitative which support schools in working towards the national priorities.

- 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 kept under regular review to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and when new risks are identified, of which the Joint Committee needs to be made aware. Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region’s objectives, make effective use of resources and meet outcomes as intended.

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

How we do this:

- The Management Board monitors matters of governance continuously and GwE has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and that decision making is effective. A series of reports have been produced and 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.
- Regular visits by Estyn HMI through the Regional Consortia Link Inspector are consistently fed back very positively on the:
  - Strategic Direction of the Service
  - Increasing maturity in the partnership with Local Authorities
  - Quality of support for individual schools
  - Accuracy of GwE findings matching those of inspectors
  - Range and quality of Professional Learning on offer
  - Rigorous high quality Business Planning process
  - Schools consistently commenting on the quality of support and supportive nature of work with GwE
- 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.
- GwE has continually reflected on the effectiveness of the work. Staff in GwE adapted their work in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities during the COVID pandemic. The service in its entirety had to re-focus several times during the COVID 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, had significant impact on organisational behaviour and external perception.
- GwE continues to look outward and to welcome challenge from both inside and outside Wales whilst making sure that what it is developing is right for its context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders especially those of teachers and leaders in schools across all sectors and listen to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspirations.
- 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, OECD, Scottish Government and other Regional Consortia to develop the organisation and plan our future infrastructure.

- 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 the self-evaluation process, 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.

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 staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Communication & engagement within the leadership structure of GwE has been regular and clear. Key strategic and political decisions were made with clarity and confidence. This resulted in consistent messaging from the 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.
- Staff in GwE have adapted their work in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities. 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 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.
- 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 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

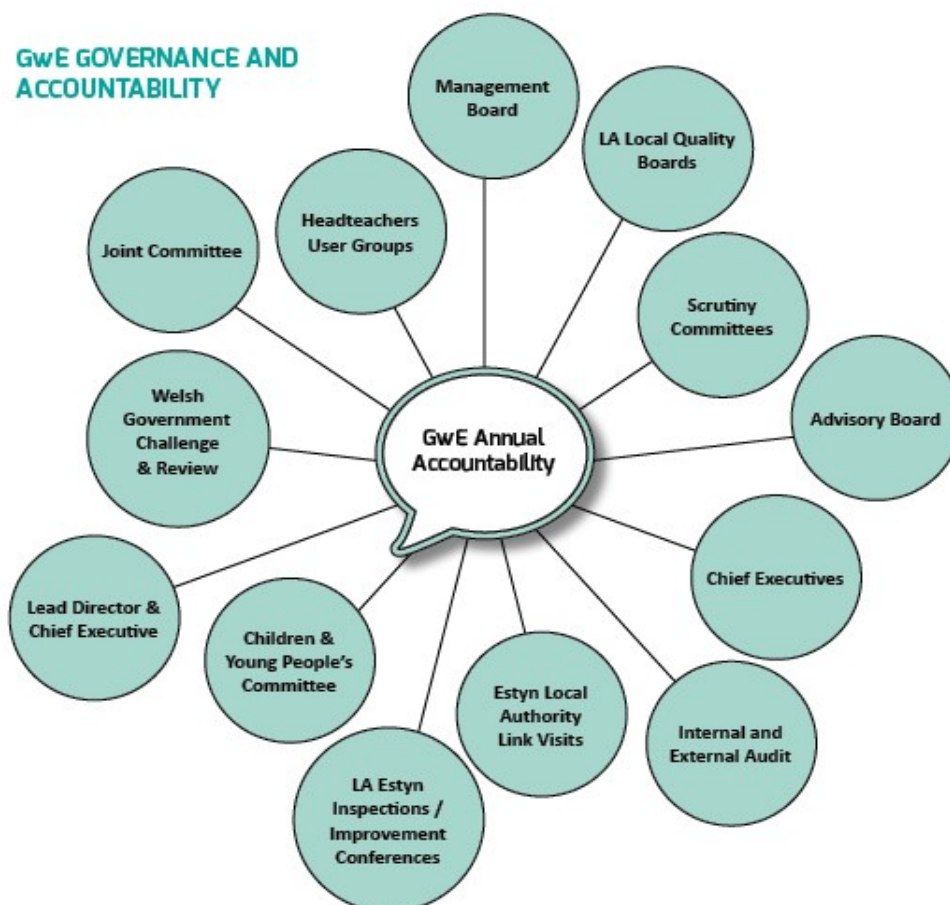
How we do this:

- 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.
- Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the Business Plan will be reported through our governance groups. Progress against the Regional Business Plan will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.
- 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

How we do this:

- There are robust procedures in place both regionally and locally for setting a direction and holding the Regional School Effectiveness Service (GwE) to account. The specific role of the service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders.
- There are very clear strategies, policies and processes in place that are understood by all stakeholders, and there exists an effective relationship between the six local authorities and GwE.
- The regional service evaluates its work regularly and uses information effectively to ensure that areas for improvement are identified swiftly and are firmly addressed via detailed business planning. There is a clear and effective process to ensure that the regional service meets Local Authorities corporate priorities and targets.
- The Joint Committee meetings are open meetings and all papers are published on the host authority (Gwynedd Council) website & the GwE website.
- Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan are reported through our governance groups. 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.
- The following process for identifying the need for internal audit and acting on the recommendations has been 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's 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 how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic and we are satisfied that GwE has been able to modify its working arrangements in order to cope with the crisis.

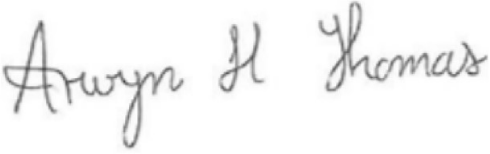
#### **Part 5: GOVERNANCE MATTERS IDENTIFIED**

5.1 No governance issues were identified in 2022/2023.

**Part 6: OPINION**

We are of the opinion that the governance arrangements described above offer strong assurance that our governance arrangements work well.

---



---

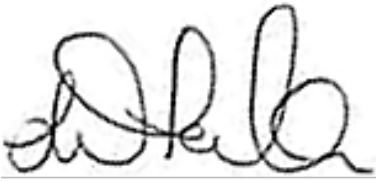
**GwE Lead Officer**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

ARWYN LLOYD THOMAS

GwE MANAGING DIRECTOR

---



---

**Chair of GwE Joint Committee**

**Date:** 12/07/2023

COUNCILLOR JULIE FALLON

## 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.

**Impairment** – A reduction in the carrying value of a fixed asset below its carrying value (due to obsolescence, damage or an adverse change in the statutory environment).

**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 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 2023 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's financial statements comprise the Expenditure and Funding Analysis, 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 UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-2023.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-2023.

### **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.

My staff and I are independent of GwE 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 GwE 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 Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts. 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.

## **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 is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23; 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 is in accordance with guidance.

## **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of GwE 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:

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

## **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 financial statements, which give a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls 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; and
- assessing GwE 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 the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by GwE Joint Committee will not continue to be provided in the future.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

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; and
- obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

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 and GwE Joint Committee about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the administering authority; and
- 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 team 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 GwE 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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my auditor’s report.

### **Other auditor’s responsibilities**

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

### **Certificate of completion of audit**

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

Adrian Crompton  
Auditor General for Wales  
18 December 2023

I Capital Quarter  
Tyndall Street  
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

## Audit of Accounts Report – GwE Joint Committee

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: November 2023

Document reference: 3939A2023

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at [infoofficer@audit.wales](mailto:infoofficer@audit.wales).

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.

This document is also available in Welsh. 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.

## Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction	4
Proposed audit opinion	4
Significant issues arising from the audit	5
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Final Letter of Representation	6
Appendix 2 – Proposed Audit Report	9
Appendix 3 – Summary of Corrections Made	14

# Audit of Accounts Report

## Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2022-23 accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with the Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and his team.
- 3 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.
- 4 We set this level at £377,000 for this year's audit.
- 5 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:
  - Related Party Disclosures £10,000
  - Senior Officer Remuneration £1,000
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year's audit subject to completion of final audit procedure steps. Should any issues arise from this work, we will provide a verbal update at the Committee.
- 7 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. We have previously notified you of a potential threat to auditor independence and objectivity arising with the Audit Manager who is an acquaintance of a former member of the Joint Committee who departed following the May 2022 elections. We confirm that the planned safeguards to mitigate the potential threat set out in our Audit Plan have operated as intended.

## Proposed audit opinion

- 8 **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**.
- 9 We issue a 'qualified' audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 10 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.
- 11 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.



## Significant issues arising from the audit

### Uncorrected misstatements

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

### Corrected misstatements

13 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

14 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 issues arising in these areas this year.

# Appendix 1

## Final Letter of Representation

[Audited body's letterhead]

Auditor General for Wales  
Wales Audit Office  
1 Capital Quarter  
Tyndall Street  
Cardiff  
CF10 4BZ

### Representations regarding the 2022-23 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 2023 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 2022-23; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith; and
- 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; and
- 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. There are no uncorrected misstatements.

## Representations by GwE 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 6 December 2023.

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:

Signed by:

Dewi Aeron Morgan

Councillor Julie Fallon

Head of Finance, Gwynedd Council

Chair of GwE Joint Committee

6 December 2023

6 December 2023

# Appendix 2

## Proposed Audit Report

### The 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 2023 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

GwE Joint Committee's financial statements comprise the Expenditure and Funding Analysis, 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 UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-2023.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of GwE Joint Committee as at 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-2023.

#### 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.

My staff and I are independent of GwE 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 GwE 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 Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts. 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.

## 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 is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23; 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 is in accordance with guidance.

## Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of GwE 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:

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

## 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 financial statements, which give a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls 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; and
- assessing GwE 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 the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by GwE Joint Committee will not continue to be provided in the future.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

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; and
  - obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

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 and GwE Joint Committee about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the administering authority; and
- 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 team 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 GwE 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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my auditor's report.



### **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

### **Certificate of completion of audit**

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

Adrian Crompton  
Auditor General for Wales  
18 December 2023

1 Capital Quarter  
Tyndall Street  
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

# 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.

Correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
<p><b>Balance Sheet:</b> Net assets increased by £557,000.</p> <p>Total reserves increased by £557,000.</p> <p><b>Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:</b> Adjustment of pension surplus / asset ceiling decreased by £557,000.</p>	<p>Note 22 Pension Costs - the net pension asset relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme was amended to limit the amount of surplus recognised in the financial statements.</p> <p>International Accounting Standard 19 limits the amount of pension surplus that can be recognised, taking into consideration future contributions and costs. This 'asset ceiling' is clarified by the International Financial Reporting Standards Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) within IFRIC 14 'The Limit on a Defined Benefit Asset, Minimum Funding Requirements and their Interaction'.</p> <p>The asset ceiling has been calculated by the pension fund actuary.</p> <p>The initial asset of £Nil was increased to £557,000.</p> <p>The amendment included a charge to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. This has also impacted on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement in Reserves Statement.</li> <li>• Note 15 Unusable Reserves.</li> </ul>	<p>To ensure the pension asset included within the financial statements complies with International Accounting Standard 19 and IFRIC 14.</p>

There have also been several other narrative amendments as a result of our work.





Audit Wales

1 Capital Quarter

Tyndall Street

Cardiff

CF10 4BZ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

Website: [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

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



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo  
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>GwE Joint Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	06 December 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>GwE Budget 2023/24</b> <b>Review up to the end of September 2023</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To update Joint Committee members on the latest financial review of GwE's budget for the 2023/24 financial year.</li> <li>The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.</li> </ul>
<b>RECCOMENDATION</b>	To accept the report.
<b>AUTHOR</b>	GwE Managing Director and Gwynedd Council Head of Finance.

## 1. CONCLUSION

- 1.1 Based on expenditure and income up to the end of September 2023 and estimates based on management explanations, this initial review forecasts a net overspend of £36,614 by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.
- 1.2 The following section of this report explains the reasons behind the main variations predicted.

## 2. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

### 2.1 Employees:

#### Overspend £51,984

Overspend following a budget transfer referred to in 3.1, however the overspend is reduced due to an underspend following staff turnover, mainly due to two permanent posts which have not yet been filled. It is hoped that both positions will be filled before the end of the financial year.

### 2.3 Travel

#### Underspend (£15,370)

This budget is expected to underspend this year, but nearer to neutral than in recent years. The schools are no longer directly affected by Covid, so GwE staff are freely able to visit schools as needed. This will be the first full financial year where staff travelling will approach levels before 2020. However, it will be beneficial to see if the new ways of virtual working lead to a reduction in travel costs in the long term.

## 3. SAVINGS TO BE FOUND

- 3.1 In establishing the 2023/24 budget at the GwE Joint Committee on 15 February 2023, a target was set for budgetary savings equivalent to £102,112, corresponding with the increase in costs for the year. Subject to the Chief Executives' feedback on reviewing the service's current staffing structure operational arrangements, the savings will be shouldered in the context of the structure as a whole. This may be via efficiency savings or a reduction, depending on the chief executives' decision timetable.

#### **4. UNDERSPEND FUND**

4.1 At the beginning of the 2023/24 financial year, the fund totalled £298,632.

4.2 The fund total at the end of 2023/24 is estimated at £262,018 having financed the overspend anticipated above.

#### **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: GwE Budget 2023/24 – Review up to the end of September 2023.

#### **OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

##### **Monitoring Officer:**

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective

##### **Statutory Finance Officer:**

Co-author of the report

**GwE JOINT COMMITTEE - NORTH WALES COUNCILS - Budget Review 2023/24 : Up to the end of September 2023**

	Opening Budget £	Adjustments £	Updated Budget £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net £
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees					
Salaries					
- Management, Brokerage, Standards and Administration	995,534	(114,548)	880,986	930,244	49,258
- Supporting Improvement Advisers	4,204,304	1,050	4,205,354	4,208,079	2,725
- Staff on Secondment	202,023	94,921	296,944	296,944	0
- Transferred against 'Specific Projects'	(2,051,145)		(2,051,145)	(2,051,145)	0
Training, advertising and other employee costs	47,384		47,384	47,384	0
Building					
Rent (includes services)	192,755	13,125	205,880	205,880	0
'Specific Projects' usage of offices recharge	(65,458)		(65,458)	(65,458)	0
Travel					
Travel Costs	153,578	(856)	152,722	137,352	(15,370)
Supplies and Services					
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	81,199		81,199	81,199	0
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	18,354		18,354	18,354	0
Audit Fees	12,744		12,744	12,744	0
Brokerage	321,211		321,211	321,211	0
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs					
Legal	6,371		6,371	6,371	0
Human Resources	10,924		10,924	10,924	0
Finance	47,237		47,237	47,237	0
Information Technology	52,245		52,245	52,245	0
Savings to found	(102,112)	102,112	0	0	0
National Model Commitments	469,948		469,948	469,948	0
Specific Projects					
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	10,813,528	(956,546)	9,856,982	9,856,982	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	1,125,850	19,550	1,145,400	1,145,400	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	100,000		100,000	100,000	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	257,118	(71,051)	186,067	186,067	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	658,964		658,964	658,964	0
ALN Transformation Grant	11,346	(11,346)	0	0	0
Fin-Ed Pathfinder Project	10,625	(10,625)	0	0	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	207,720		207,720	207,720	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	210,900		210,900	210,900	0



<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>17,993,147</u>	<u>(934,215)</u>	<u>17,058,932</u>	<u>17,095,546</u>	<u>36,614</u>
--------------------------	-------------------	------------------	-------------------	-------------------	---------------

	Opening Budget £	Adjustments £	Updated Budget £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net £
<b>Income</b>					
Core Service Contributions					
- Isle of Anglesey County Council (22/23: 10.14% - 23/24: 10.09%)	(443,336)		(443,336)	(443,336)	0
- Cyngor Gwynedd (22/23: 17.59% - 23/24: 17.53%)	(770,232)		(770,232)	(770,232)	0
- Conwy County Borough Council (22/23: 15.26% - 23/24: 15.17%)	(666,666)		(666,666)	(666,666)	0
- Denbighshire County Council (22/23: 15.48% - 23/24: 15.51%)	(681,484)		(681,484)	(681,484)	0
- Flintshire County Council (22/23: 22.67% - 23/24: 22.79%)	(1,001,422)		(1,001,422)	(1,001,422)	0
- Wrexham County Borough Council (22/23: 18.86% - 23/24: 18.91%)	(831,077)		(831,077)	(831,077)	0
Specific Projects					
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	(10,808,960)	960,499	(9,848,461)	(9,848,461)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	(1,125,850)	(19,550)	(1,145,400)	(1,145,400)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	(100,000)		(100,000)	(100,000)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	(257,118)	71,051	(186,067)	(186,067)	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(658,964)		(658,964)	(658,964)	0
ALN Transformation Grant	(11,346)	11,346	0	0	0
Fin-Ed Pathfinder Project	(10,625)	10,625	0	0	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	(207,720)		(207,720)	(207,720)	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	(210,900)		(210,900)	(210,900)	0
Income from Secondments	(202,023)	(94,921)	(296,944)	(296,944)	0
Other Income	(5,424)	(4,836)	(10,260)	(10,260)	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(17,993,147)</b>	<b>934,215</b>	<b>(17,058,932)</b>	<b>(17,058,932)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36,614</b>	<b>36,614</b>
<b>Memorandum -</b>					
<b>The General Fund</b>					
				<b>Fund balance as at 1 April 2023</b>	<b>(298,632)</b>
				Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2023/24	36,614
				Less - Use of the Fund	0
				<b>Fund balance as at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>(262,018)</b>



## REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2023

---

**Report by:** Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

**Subject:** GwE Regional Business Plan 2023-2024 - Quarter 1 and 2 Monitoring Report

---

### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

**1.1** To present the Quarter 1 and 2 Monitoring Report - GwE Regional Business Plan 2023-2024 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** The regional priorities and areas for improvement are strongly embedded in the findings of internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews of current practice and direction of travel and consultation with Headteachers and Local Authorities. Our priorities are a combination of improving provision, leadership and outcomes in schools, along with realising the Reform Journey and the Curriculum for Wales.

**2.3** Progress against the Regional Business Plan is reported to the Joint Committee. Attached is the monitoring report for quarter 1 and 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, reports pertaining to our priority streams in the Business Plan will be informed through our governance groups.

**3.3** These priorities are supported by detailed service plans, 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. In addition, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan which has been agreed by the Head of Service and the Core Adviser.

**3.4** When discussing the 2022-2023 GwE Annual Report in the Joint Committee meeting on 24/05/2023, it was suggested that workshops would be beneficial in the future to discuss specific matters in more detail. In response, a series of workshops have been arranged for the coming months on the following themes:

- School Improvement Framework - School Support Plans
- Transition
- Schools as Learning Organisations
- Pupil Development Grant / Looked After Children

### **4.0 Recommendations**

**4.1** The Joint Committee is asked to approve and accept the monitoring report for quarter 1 and 2.

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

**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 1 and 2 monitoring report

Appendix 2 - Regional Data

---

**OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

**Monitoring Officer:**

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

**Statutory Finance Officer:**

I am satisfied that implementing the decision sought will not create a new spending commitment. I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.



GwE

Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo  
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



# GwE Business Plan 2023-2024 Quarter 1 & 2 Progress Report



[www.gwegogledd.cymru](http://www.gwegogledd.cymru)



@GwEGogleddCymru



## CONTENT

### 1. GwE Regional Business Plan 2023 - 2024

- **Regional priorities and provision contributing to local authority priorities:  
Progress report for Quarter 1 & 2**

### 2. Appendix: Regional Data

REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2023 - 2024

Progress report for Quarter 1 & 2

**OBJECTIVE 1 – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**Priorities:**

- 1.1 - Ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and deliver robust improvement plans effectively.**
- 1.2 - Supporting leadership working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all.**
- 1.3 - Support leadership in schools to become familiar and ready to implement the new school improvement guidance.**
- 1.4 - Strengthening multi agency approaches to schools causing concern.**
- 1.5 - Strengthening partnership working with Local Authorities.**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**Self-evaluation and improvement planning**

**Improve the quality of leadership, teaching and learning and provision**

**Strengthening multi agency and ‘team around the school’ approaches to schools causing concern**

**Strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities**

Workshops to support schools further hone and strengthen their self evaluation and improvement planning processes have been delivered with the vast majority of regional schools attending. Follow-up bespoke sessions have been undertaken in a number of schools and supporting materials and resources have been shared with all schools. Feedback from schools has been positive with many noting that it has deepened their understanding of requirements and expectations of the new School Improvement Guidance (SIG). However, there remains some inconsistencies in the quality of improvement planning and specifically around the sharpness of the wording of priorities. Further support is also required around sharpening and honing expected outcomes captured within the Schools Improvement Plans / Department Improvement Plans (SIPs/DIPs).

Supporting Improvement Advisors (SIAs) are currently working with schools to hone SIPs/DIPs and to develop bespoke Support Plans.

Additional functions have been added to the template for the Support Plans which allows for the harvesting of priorities where LA input has been requested by schools. These will be extrapolated and shared with LA Officers once the process has been completed [mid October].

Nearly all schools have planned for, and are engaging with, an extensive range of evaluation processes and in most schools evaluative judgements are thorough and based on sound knowledge of pupil progress and draw on extensive qualitative and quantitative information. Additional support is targeted to schools where concerns remain about robustness of processes and accuracy of findings.

There are clear expectations in place this term that all SIAs should be included in scrutiny exercises with their link schools.

Link SIA engagement and network/forum agendas continue to focus on ensuring that school-based evaluation processes have an increased central focus on learner progress and standards. This area will remain a key focus of SIA engagement during 2023-24 and will also form the central pillar of cluster/alliance collaboration.

All SIAs are undertaking termly visits to work with the school to evaluate impact and progress against 4 key areas: Leadership, Teaching, Curriculum and Provision and Standards and Progress. These reports will feed into the LA Annual Progress Report which will be shared with scrutiny.

Many schools have effective peer engagement input which offers valuable opportunities for challenging the veracity and accuracy of scrutiny findings. However, progress has been slow in a few clusters/alliances. All clusters/alliances are working with their SIAs to develop actions plans for engagement this year and there is an expectation that



collaboration around ensuring a common understanding of standards and progress are central to those discussions. All clusters/alliances are expected to showcase successful practice in the regional conference at Venue Cymru during June 2024.

Task and Finish Group of regional headteachers and GwE staff have developed guidance and exemplar materials for schools regarding the requirement to publish a summary of self-evaluation findings, progress against prior SIP priorities, high-level improvement priorities for the forthcoming year and the external support the school will access to achieve those priorities. Four virtual twilight sessions have been delivered with recordings made available to those schools who were unable to attend. This area will remain a key focus of SIA engagement during 2023-24.

2023-24 operational guidance for Core Leads (CL) and Link SIAs has been shared and discussed with team members to ensure greater consistency in approaches and quality of work.

Enhanced expectations have been placed on CLs regarding quality assurance processes. This area will be a key focus for the Primary and Secondary Senior Lead during 2023-24. From October a GwE Quality Assurance Sub-group will be operational and membership will include the Senior Sector Lead, all CLs and the quality enhancement lead. Terms of Reference and work programme for the group have been developed and will be discussed in the initial meeting [date TBC].

Processes and systems around supporting SCC and for early identification of schools which are on a downward trajectory, are currently under review. Revised templates for CL reporting to Level 1 and Level 2 LA quality groups have been completed and will be discussed with GwE Quality Assurance sub-group and LA/GwE Task Group before adoption. Evolved processes and revised templates should lead to sharper reporting and greater focus on agreeing next steps when concerns remain.

The current profile for each sector identifies: 7 schools in statutory category [3 secondary / 4 primary]; 19 schools causing concern [3 secondary / 16 primary]; 27 schools where specific concerns have been identified [9 secondary / 18 primary] and 52 schools which are kept under review [14 secondary / 38 primary].

The work of the Management Board Task Group will also be central to ensuring that we further strengthen and apply a robust and consistent approach to developing, delivering and monitoring holistic support plans. Ensuring a more effective 'team around the school' approach will be a key focus for the Primary and Secondary Senior Lead during 2023-24.

### **Collaboration through primary cluster and secondary alliance working**

Cluster and alliance working is a strength across the GwE region. One of the main elements this year is a focus on supporting school leadership in preparation for the requirements of the School Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability (SIF) that will become statutory in September 2024. This has been an opportunity for GwE to work together with schools to refine and align several processes, and work towards reducing workload on all levels in the system.

The focus of this year's work programme is to ensure there are robust and purposeful systems and procedures in place in acknowledgement of expectations as set out in the SIF. Part of the requirements of the SIF is the need for school leadership to demonstrate leadership across the system and how this is achieved. The funding has been distributed to clusters and alliances and used to:

1. Further strengthen the quality of leadership across the system
2. Develop the skills of leaders and further enhance processes and systems for effective self-evaluation, improvement planning and measuring impact.
3. Further promote effective collaboration, that includes peer review, at an alliance and cluster level to meet the requirements of the SIF.
4. Promote Professional Learning - for example, clusters to identify schools or activities to share successful practice within and beyond the cluster.

As last year, each cluster / alliance has submitted a specific implementation plan with the work been facilitated by GwE SIAs. In addition, each cluster/alliance is required to identify successful practice to share with others in a conference in Venue Cymru, Llandudno on 6 June 2024.

## OBJECTIVE 2- CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

### Priorities:

#### 2.1 - Realising Curriculum for Wales

#### 2.2 - Assessment, progression and accountability

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & NETWORKS (CfW)

**Support with schools' and PRUs' understanding and approaches in terms of the CfW, and through an ongoing cycle of curriculum review under the CfW.**

**Support with CfW development in schools and PRUs to ensure that all practitioners have the relevant information and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting.**

Curriculum for Wales is a significant programme of reform with effective teaching and learning and realising the Four Purposes central to its success. GwE has ensured that all curriculum support aligns to the expectations and principles within Welsh Government's Journey to 2022 and the updated Curriculum for Wales framework. In line with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales, all schools and settings have been supported to meet the new statutory requirements within the expected timeline. It is imperative that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues to support learner transition.

#### **Regional CfW Networks**

To facilitate professional dialogue, GwE provided an infrastructure for Curriculum for Wales networks. Under regular guidance and feedback from Professor Graham Donaldson, schools developed and shared effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experiences (AoLEs) and whole school curriculum design and assessment. The regional service has effectively supported leaders in preparation for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic. The profession had an infrastructure across the region to share and discuss emerging practice within the new Curriculum for Wales. The regional networks shared the fruits of their labour with all schools via GwE Support Centre providing an opportunity for practitioners to disseminate regional messaging and share local practice. Led by the networks, effective webinars have been held for all school leaders on curriculum design, assessment and progression and planning principles. Schools have noted that the presentations have boosted their confidence to develop their high-level Curriculum Design to include their vision, principles and to incorporate the four purposes. All schools have accessed these workshops either via a live recording or through subsequent discussions with the Link Supporting Improvement Adviser.

An event was held on 22/06/2023 to celebrate emerging practice across the education system for regional school leaders, staff and other stakeholders. Members of the Regional CfW Network and other stakeholders held joint workshops and stalls to share practice and there were also speeches by guest speakers. This event was an opportunity to celebrate and share practice so that practitioners may contribute to best emerging practice within the system and across the Region and develop a better understanding of how to effectively realise the CfW.

A number of attendees noted that they had benefited greatly from the wide range of what was on offer. Also, people had benefited from the informal networking and the opportunities to exchange experiences and resources. There was positive feedback from attendees and constructive comments for further development. Nearly all of those who responded have identified next steps following the event. Most of the comments noted that they will adapt/refine what they are already doing in schools as they have learned more or had inspiration from ideas in the various sessions. The workshops proved to be a popular approach. Practitioners appreciated seeing examples from schools to develop their own ideas based on the presentations, taking into account their approaches in the future.

It is intended to evolve and revise this structure which will ensure that we facilitate and develop Professional Learning Networks that meets the demand and needs in schools in order to encourage collaboration, information sharing, and successful practices among educators and staff. It is our intention to continue with the annual sharing event to share emerging practices to draw attention to effective and successful work.

GwE also provides support for the new curriculum on three levels:

1. Bespoke support for individual schools.

2. Localised support through clusters, alliances and networks.
3. Universal regional Professional Learning offer.

### **Cross-regional CfW Networks**

All Regional AoLE SIA groups intend to hold two training days during the next academic year - October/November 2023 and June/July 2024. All AoLE groups have identified a focus to these sessions. They meet every half term, and these meetings are facilitated by the National Professional Learning group. The meetings are also an opportunity to share successful practice from different Regions across Wales.

### **National Networks**

The National Network brings together teaching professionals, experts, stakeholders, policy makers and enabling partners to identify and address the barriers to, and opportunities for, the implementation of Curriculum for Wales. It is an open platform, with opportunity for all practitioners in Wales to get involved in national co-construction to address shared challenges and opportunities. Funding is passed directly to schools, with the schools determining their priorities.

### **Curriculum for Wales National Professional Learning Offer**

During the academic year 2022/23, over 700 practitioners engaged with one or more aspects of the NAEL endorsed cross-regional programme to support the realisation of the curriculum for Wales. Asynchronous resources have been accessed over 2300 times by users across Wales. [Welsh Education Consortia - Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning](#)

To develop this programme further, a common set of workshops to support practitioners understanding of assessment have been co-constructed with the cross-regional professional learning group through the summer term, for commencement in September 2023. Each cross-regional AoLE group is also planning two sharing practice sessions (Oct/Nov 2022 / Jun/July 2023), to share examples of identified aspects of curriculum design, progression and assessment from schools across Wales. Feedback from schools attending the first cross-regional session indicated that the focus of future sessions should be to provide examples of effective cluster working, how schools are completing on-entry assessments and how schools are balancing a range assessment approaches through their curriculum provision. This will be built into future sessions and the impact of this work will be evaluated using the agreed regional impact model. Ongoing participant evaluation indicates that nearly all attendees developed new knowledge and skills that would support them within their role, would recommend the professional learning to a colleague and were prepared for future commitments to act.

## **EXPRESSIVE ARTS**

**Support development of the CfW in schools and PRUs to ensure all practitioners receive the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting**

### **Establish Expressive Arts Networks at the request of schools/clusters/alliances/SIAs**

A whole day session was delivered on 11/05/23 to facilitate an Expressive Arts Cluster Meeting with Primary and Secondary practitioners. This has enabled practitioners to deepen their confidence in knowledge and understating of the Expressive Arts AoLE which in turn will develop their planning. Practitioners feedback note that 100% of those in attendance found the session beneficial.

### **Ensure support for the principles and practice of curriculum design**

Practitioners have access to GwE's Professional Learning Presentations linked to curriculum design on the GwE website:

- Unpacking and understanding the Expressive Arts AoLE
- Progression in learning in the Expressive Arts AoLE
- Integral Skills in the Curriculum for Wales
- What is Creativity?

This has enabled practitioners to access all relevant documentation and to have sound knowledge and understanding of the mandatory and statutory requirements for Expressive Arts curriculum design. This has also enabled all practitioners to have raised confidence to plan effective, authentic, and exciting experiences for the Expressive Arts AoLE. Documents and evidence of emerging practice of the above has been received from the Regional Chairs and uploaded to the Expressive Arts section on GwE Website for all practitioners to access.

Practitioners who have accessed the resources will have sound knowledge, skills, and possible experiences to realise the Expressive Arts AOLE in their own settings. They will also develop confidence to deliver the Expressive Arts through a multidisciplinary approach.

**Ensure all practitioners receive the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting**

Practitioners have access to a wide range of resources and presentations on the GwE website to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the Expressive Arts AoLE in their setting, for example, Unpacking the Discipline Specific Considerations. Regional Chairs and many Secondary Practitioners have been established and are in the process of collaborating to look at each of the 5 disciplines and their specific considerations and produce an overview/presentation explaining their meaning.

4 Secondary Practitioners have been identified and approached and have agreed to be members of a small Expressive Arts working party. A meeting has been held to outline the brief of the collaboration and funding sent to each school. They will send relevant documents and evidence of emerging practice of the above as an ongoing process.

All Secondary Special Schools/PRU have been invited to express an interest to be members of a small working party to share and collate evidence of emerging practice and collaborate on a specific Expressive Arts project.

**Deliver regional workshop for Teachers and TAs who teach learners 3-8 yrs old on 'Developing a deeper understanding of the 'Expressive Arts' AoLE.**

Regional Workshops have been delivered for Senior Management Teams, Teachers and Teaching Assistants on developing a deeper understanding of the Expressive Art AoLE. This has enabled practitioners to develop their understanding of the five disciplines within the AoLE and planning progression within the 3-8 age Group within rich and purposeful learning experiences. Practitioners feedback note that they have a better understanding of the importance of process and development of skills rather the focus being on the end product.

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

**Support development of the CfW in schools and PRUs to ensure all practitioners receive the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting**

Bespoke support has been delivered to schools across the region, including schools causing concern. Support to develop practitioners' understanding of the holistic way the Health and Wellbeing AOLE is to be delivered in all settings.

The Supporting Improvement Advisers work with their link schools to ensure that all schools understand and undertake their duties, with a particular focus on preparing for the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience in Curriculum for Wales. New Networks to support collaboration, training and support, sharing key messages and good practice are also being established.

GwE representative has attended The School Health Research Network (SHRN) National Conference and identified good practise with schools.

During the regional Curriculum for Wales event in June 2023, Health and Wellbeing contributed to cross-sector workshops, namely:

- What is the effectiveness of collaboration between the primary and secondary for the benefit of the child?
- Emerging Wellbeing Cultures

as well as various market stalls.

A newsletter has been created and circulated across all schools in the region and Local Authority staff who are responsible for Health and Wellbeing.

A secondary Task and Finish group has been established focusing on 'Assessment for Progression in Health & Wellbeing' and further meetings have been organised.

GwE Digital Skills SIA has presented an interactive workshop on 'Digital Skills in the Health & Wellbeing AOLE'. This included hands-on work with micro-bit to demonstrate how this can be used effectively with Health and Wellbeing lessons. Healthy Schools co-ordinators also attended from Local Authorities.

## HUMANITIES

### Support development of the CfW in schools and PRUs to ensure all practitioners receive the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting

During the regional Curriculum for Wales event in June 2023, the regional CfW Network and other stakeholders contributed to cross-sector workshops, namely:

- Why 'what matters' matters?
  - Learn about leading the Humanities in an all through school.
  - Developing the conceptual understanding of our learners.
- Why 'what matters' matters?
  - Exploring our 'cynefin' with Y1 and Y2 learners.
  - Exploring our 'cynefin' with Y7 learners
  - Planning for progression - a disciplinary approach
  - Reflecting on the 'why?' so that 'we can make it better each time'

as well as various market stalls.

A questionnaire for secondary Humanities teachers was developed to gather information about how schools are responding to the new Curriculum for Wales.

As of 11 October 2023, 38 responses have been submitted from teachers across the 6 local authorities. 89% of the responses came from teachers who were responsible for planning and teaching a Y7 curriculum for the Humanities or for a Humanities discipline. The main messages are as follows:

- Business studies and social studies are included in Y7 planning in 34% of schools.
- 45% of schools provide an integrated Humanities curriculum to Y7 pupils, 39% teach disciplinary lessons and 16% provide a combination of disciplinary and integrated lessons.
- Many are confident that the 4 Purposes, the statements of what matters in the humanities and the descriptions of learning are influencing their planning.
- A few teachers noted that they had been involved in local discussions on the Humanities, *e.g. book looks, transition days, preliminary talks.*
- Currently, the majority of Humanities teachers think that their disciplinary planning and provision of valuable learning experiences are working well.
- The majority of teachers have not received any professional learning to support their planning in the Humanities, and would like further support, *e.g., planning for progression in the Humanities, seeing examples of schemes of work, working with external partners.*
- From the questionnaire, 6 schools have been identified and will provide examples of their emerging practice at the Humanities Conference 16/11/2023.

## LANGUAGES, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION

### ENGLISH AND LITERACY

#### Support development of the CfW in schools and PRUs to ensure all practitioners receive the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting

##### Primary

*Cariad@ddarllen / Reading for Pleasure* programme has been completed with attendees from across Primary and Secondary, Welsh and English sectors. In feedback, nearly all delegate schools have asked for continued input in the academic year and have recorded initial positive findings on creating cultures of reading for pleasure in their schools. Resources are being shared and accessed in a designated google classroom. Previous and new delegates will continue as a network, starting on 5/12/2023. Collaboration with Bangor University will be extended to this, with Professor Manon Jones guest speaking on the development of reading (informed by feedback from delegates in previous sessions). She will also offer guidance on effective implementation and impact measuring strategies. Delegates will share their own activity so far from Summer 2023 and formally plan their own further implementation and enquiry based teaching plans, to share in future networks (Spring 2024).

*Oracy Voice 21* programme has been completed. This was attended by both Primary and Secondary, Welsh and English medium schools. Delegates feedback on day 5 shared their improvement activity and findings to their fellow delegates. As a result, the dedicated google classroom has many useful presentations and resources to share and use between the cohort. Nearly all requested that further support and activity continues into the new academic year and plans have been drafted for a cohort 2, supported by findings from cohort 1. Cohort 1 will continue their

work through termly network/workshops, etc. Nearly all schools reported positive impact on provision and pedagogy and pupil engagement through their initial reviews.

Two open afternoons have been held to support regional training in Oracy and Reading for Pleasure. Both sessions were well attended and all feedback positive and showing positive impact on schools' improvement planning for the coming terms to support SDP work. Further sessions are planned and resource packs to be finalised and uploaded. Ten schools have been directly supported/visited by the Literacy SIA. From these ten, two have been identified as effective practice schools and will be working to support improvement activity across the region (open days, resource packs, cluster support, etc).

The Regional 3-8 summer term Network Meetings focused on the pre-reading skills, early reading skills and higher order reading skills. This has enabled practitioners to develop a better understanding of how to plan progression in reading skills within a developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Cross-regional LLC PL offer (English, Welsh, MFL - Primary and Secondary) has been created and GwE are using CfW LLC network members to repeat presentations made at the regional CfW Marketplace (June 2023) to cross-regional delegates.

All referrals for bespoke support for schools causing concern who have specific provision improvements to be made in literacy and English have been met, with either support completed or continuing. The team has supported schools who required individual support for English and Literacy.

The SIA team has developed the concept of curriculum sequencing and long-term planning for CfW via the Heads of English Forum – 96% attendance. Follow up work has been planned for 7 schools.

Familiarisation with the 6-stage approach to developing a literacy strategy was delivered in a literacy leaders forum in June. All those in attendance expressed an interest in becoming members of local working parties to collaboratively support each other to embed the strategy.

A Level literature network meeting to support teachers across the region to review the summer exam series and to create network opportunities for new and experienced teachers of the course.

## **WELSH AND LITERACY**

### **Welsh Language and Literacy Networks**

A regional Network Meeting for Literacy Co-ordinators (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools) was held at Venue Cymru, Llandudno to present the '6 Stage Strategy - Literacy' and a follow-up meeting to provide further support for coordinators has taken place.

A network meeting was held for Welsh Language Leaders of English Medium Schools in the region. Following the meeting there were further examples of schools creating links and further collaboration across the region. Network meetings were organized for the Welsh Language Leaders and Literacy Coordinators of the region (to be held during Quarter 3), and a supportive network of Welsh language leaders was established in English medium secondary schools based on the model developed during 2022-23.

### **'Literacy in the Workplace 2023 - Working in Welsh' (GwE) project**

Launch meetings have been held for this collaborative project with Careers Wales which will lead to collaboration between the region's secondary schools and local businesses to target one of the aims of 'Cymraeg 2050' as well as introduce Welsh when teaching CfW cross-curricular themes. This project will be developed locally as part of the developmental plans of schools involved, with guidance and advice from Careers Wales.

### **'Closing the Reading Gap' Project (GwE)**

During Quarter 1, a meeting of the 'Closing the Reading Gap' project (GwE) was held, a project for Literacy Coordinators in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools in the region. This project develops interventions in the book by Alex Quigley, 'Closing the Reading Gap', alongside research findings in '21st Century Readers – Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World' (OECD 2021) document to target higher-order reading skills and refocus on pedagogy to refine reading skills on digital platforms. A number of Literacy Coordinators involved in the project

attended a virtual workshop - 'Closing the Reading Gap Masterclass', led by Alex Quigley in Quarter 1 and this project will be developed locally as part of the developmental plans of schools involved during Quarter 2.

### **Promoting the Welsh language in English-medium schools and the *Siarter Iaith Uwchradd* (Secondary Language Charter)**

At a network meeting, an update was had on 'The Welsh language in our school' from the schools present, and members from the Welsh Department in one of the region's English-medium schools collaborated with GwE's Welsh Language Team to develop an accompanying resource for [Cynllunio ar gyfer taith y Gymraeg](#) (*Planning the journey of the Welsh language*) which will provide practical guidance for English-medium secondary schools on implementing the guidance.

### **GCSE 'Llunyddiaeth' (Visual Literature) Working Party**

A working party of Welsh Leads has been established in response to the demand for new interactive digital resources following changes in the GCSE Welsh Literature and Visual Literature Unit. During Quarter 2, a working group of Welsh Language Leaders met to begin the work of creating new interactive digital resources for schools in the region following changes to the GCSE Welsh Literature Unit. The first part of the work stream of this working group will be presented regionally during Quarter 3.

### **'Ein Llais Ni' Project (GwE)**

Work has continued to develop and populate the website [Ein Llais Ni | Prosiect llafaredd GwE](#) the home of resources and case studies from Phase 1 schools and following a successful application to Welsh Government to roll out Phase 2 of the project this year. As part of Phase 2, a number of the region's secondary schools involved in the original project agreed to become lead schools, with members from the Welsh Departments of those schools specifically promoting the next phase. In addition, a project launch meeting was held with Welsh Department representatives from a number of English-medium secondary schools in the region and the project will be operational at these schools (under the lead of the Welsh Department at these schools), supported by GwE's Welsh Language Team.

### **GwE Support Centre**

Work is ongoing to develop the Welsh Language pages on GwE's Support Centre, and the aim is for this platform to run alongside the 'live' Teams and Google Classroom digital platforms, with the former being a permanent base and the latter a developmental platform. The newsletter '*O'r Stordy*' is an additional tool for sharing information with leaders across the region.

### **INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES (IL) / MFL**

**Ensure that all schools and PRUs support the learners and the Global Futures (GF) action plan by reflecting the importance of International Languages in Curriculum for Wales as part of their offer to all learners.**

GwE continues to promote initiatives and events to raise the profile and importance of IL through Newsletters, GwE bulletin, emails, social media etc. The Global Futures Team have offered support to schools in promoting languages for options at KS4 and KS5 and events are booked for students at KS3 and KS4 in December and February. Documents have been created for schools with good uptake to share strategies with other schools through a common digital document. GwE have liaised and agreed details with Business Language Champion to offer language days for year 9 and year 10/11 – registration is in process with schools across the region applying. Practical and linked to the world of work, it is hoped to raise motivation and uptake at KS4 and KS5. Some schools, willing to share their strategies to raise uptake, have contributed to the new GwE IL website. Some strategies refer to GF GwE events and impact on pupils' perceptions and priorities. EDL (European day of Languages 26/9/23) events and ideas to raise interest and awareness of importance of languages has been shared with all schools and schools celebrated the day/week with various events.

Information is shared with GwE Core Leads and SIAs regularly and discussions are held in relation to the best ways to communicate and engage with the wider audience. All primary schools are aware of the core messages around the place of IL in the curriculum with new primary schools engaging in GF GwE offer and support. This has resulted in staff being more confident in planning and delivering curriculum for IL in practice.

GwE continues to liaise and to collaborate with CaBan ITE programme director to support the development of IL within the new programme from September 2023 with the principles and methodology of Teaching and Learning IL to be integrated in the new ITE programme at primary level.

Work is continuing to provide our practitioners with the skills, knowledge and experiences to plan and deliver international languages provision. GwE continues to provide support for primary and secondary schools across the regions to prepare for the Curriculum for Wales ensuring school to school support and responding to schools/cluster request for specific support to develop IL provision. Bespoke support has been provided to a number of schools: to ensure that staff are supported to deliver purposeful and effective teaching and learning for IL.

### **Ensure that all schools and PRUs support the learners and the Global Futures action plan by planning for international languages based on the aims and actions set out in the agreed Global Futures Action Plan**

GwE continues to provide opportunities to develop practice and messages around the importance of multilingualism through cluster work, liaison with Headteachers, Core leads and SIAs, links to useful resources and other various platforms. Links to useful resources, research and useful toolkits are shared in Newsletters.

A workshop session is planned for LLC teachers, primary and secondary, on Plurilingualism, and what that means for collaboration across English, Welsh and IL.

Support was given to the LLC Regional network with preparations for the GwE Market place on 22/6/2023. Examples from schools engaging with Global Futures and where practice is innovative and responding well to CfW vision were shared and well-received.

Sanako Connect: Secondary – following an information evening and presentation of offer and expectations, 15 secondary schools agreed to exploring using Sanako Connect (Web-based language teaching hub for schools) and to share their experience. Training sessions were delivered live. Recordings of training sessions and initial user guide were shared. Schools are engaging well in the programme and optional surgery sessions are available and accessed if needed. Bespoke supplementary support and training has been provided on demand which has been very effective in encouraging other staff to use Sanako in their practice and to keep momentum. This has resulted in a number of schools trialling innovative pedagogy using technology, evaluate and share practice and impact.

Schools have completed a first rapid review questionnaire in July to monitor progress and to help them identify next steps and to inform further support. Results were shared and discussed with Sanako support team. Training and support sessions for the autumn were designed to best respond to the survey analysis and provide schools with the relevant information and help.

Training session 2 was held on 25/9/23 which was very well attended and effective. A range of practice is taking place and new ideas and resources to develop further were shared. Recording of the meeting has been shared to all pilot schools for reference, share with staff and/or catch up.

Welsh and English departments have been invited to participate in the project to encourage collaboration and aligning approaches in developing oracy skills within LLC. Training session with specific Welsh and English resources will take place in October. 7 schools have expressed an interest.

### **Professional Learning offer for 2023-2024**

GwE continues to provide schools with opportunities to develop their practice and expertise through training days, webinars or on-line courses. The GF Team, primary and secondary, have met to agree on the Professional Learning offer for 2023-2024. Various webinars/training have been held, namely:

- Creating Across Languages - project development: Creative writing approach and work with international poets via Zoe Skoulding project (Secondary). A workshop was held in May for 15 schools (16 teachers attended). Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The event involved workshops led by Prof Zoë Skoulding, a poet and translator from Bangor University, and the interdisciplinary UK-Chilean artist collective montenegrofisher, Dr Jérôme Melançon, a poet from the University of Regina in the bilingual Canadian province of Saskatchewan, UK-based Chilean poet and researcher Dr Andrés Anwandter. Following this workshop, another workshop was held for 30 students Led by Zoe Skoulding and montenegrofisher focusing



on creative multilingualism in the context of the natural world. Work is continuing to promote project and help create opportunities to explore with schools offering new opportunities for learners to explore and use their languages creatively and through enriching experiences.

- 17/07/23 Pupil event: Creative multilingualism in the context of the natural world. Church Island- Menai Bridge. 30 pupils (2 schools) engaged in the 2 outdoors workshops. Montenegrofisher: exploring languages and sounds of the shoreline. Zoe Skoulding: exploring languages of trees, using a French poem in English translation. Teachers and pupils' engagement and feedback was very positive. There is a clear appetite for such opportunities. This has resulted in a number of schools developing and offering innovative teaching and planning approaches within LLC with pupils engaging in enriching creative activities.
- 18/04/23: An integrated plurilingual approach to Language Learning (IPA): Research-based Classroom Practices' Dr Caterina Sugrañes Ernest (FPCEE-Blanquerna, University Ramon Llull), Dr Maria González-Davies (FPCEE-Blanquerna, University Ramon Llull).
- 29/06/23: Mark Burns "Challenge for all".
- Upskilling Power language on-line courses for primary school practitioners' beginners in Spanish/ French. Interest and applications growing: 39 teachers to date.
- Primary resources: Power Language subscription and support: 133 schools have been provided with the fully-funded three year subscription since March 2022.
- Primary: Follow-up from Power Language day. 8 primary schools were provided with link to partner schools in Spain.
- Sharing events offer: 2/3 events - including CfW GwE Marketplace and Regional Network. New Google website has been created to share the work.
- Funded Immersion training week in France or Spain: Taith grant application successful: 1 week immersion language and cultural training which will result in a number of teachers from primary and secondary upskilled to teach IL. Arrangements and organisation are in progress.
- Continue to promote institute events and support schools in engaging with these: ie i.e TE Anthea Bell Prize competition, Institut francais: Pop video/Joutes oratoires; Goethe Institute offer
- International links exchange with partner schools
- Let's take Languages Days - Bangor University
- Many bespoke or regional events and opportunities are also developed through active collaboration with partners and language-promoting institutes and promoted.
- Wales- Brittany partnership: Following meetings with our French counterparts at the Académie de Rennes (Brittany), primary and secondary schools have been offered the possibility to apply for a partnership with a school in either of the 4 departments of the French region. Full information has been forwarded to all schools. Registration is in progress.
- Wales- Malaga partnership - Following-up from Power Language training day last year all primary schools interested in a potential partnership with Spain were provided with links to a specific partner schools in the Malaga area
- MFL Mentoring: 17 schools will be taking part. Some schools not being able to participate previously were given priority. Develop positive attitudes towards language learning, importance of languages and raise student aspirations.

Evidence-based practices are shared with schools and plurilingualism approaches are being developed further in schools. Connections and planning across the LLC and across sectors is developing and improving.

Emerging practices are shared and celebrated, and staff and schools have the opportunity to reflect and review own practice. This provides opportunities for staff and schools to collaborate, share and develop quality of Teaching and Learning, identify needs and agree on best support.

### **The Articulated Assessment Transfer Tasks (AATT) of curriculum planning**

AATT project development - in collaboration with Professor Jennifer Eddy (Associate Professor and Program Director of World Language Education at Queens College, City University of New York, USA). Project schools and GwE are developing and collating all relevant documents and information to submit for publication. In order to develop further the practice around the AATT design processes and to give teachers the opportunity to collaborate, design and implement new exemplars, a new working party has been established consisting of 6/7 practitioners.

**Primary resources: Power Language subscription and support.**

142 schools are currently provided with the fully-funded subscription. The offer for a one-year subscription remains open as new schools still apply. A number of primary schools are accessing and using the Power Language resources effectively to suit their setting and context with staff more confident and proficient in the teaching and learning of IL.

**MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY****To provide support for Leaders of Mathematics & Numeracy, enabling them to drive their own improvement journey.****Primary and Secondary**

Bespoke support has continued for regional schools deemed 'at risk' or in ESTYN category. This has resulted in improved leadership of Mathematics and Numeracy and a greater understanding of how developing a strategic whole school numeracy plan supports numeracy across the curriculum. Repeated, regular visits/meetings with schools have involved training staff, developing a numeracy strategy, collaboratively supporting them in planning and assessing learner progress, how to track and use this to move learners forward and inform their provision, monitoring the impact of activities to date and identifying and sharing resources pertinent to school/learner needs within the setting as they implement and move towards Curriculum for Wales reform.

**Primary**

In collaboration with the Primary Literacy SIA, two Zoom meetings have been arranged to share the Primary Literacy and Numeracy Strategy regionally. This will allow regional dissemination in both Welsh and English. Literacy and Numeracy SIA's will brief school SIAs to ensure that all schools that have identified development of Literacy or Numeracy as an SDP priority for 2023/24 are also targeted. Termly Numeracy meetings will be arranged with a specific focus on supporting schools to implement the strategy following on from this.

**Secondary**

Heads of Mathematics regional meeting was held in June with 48 attendees. This has resulted in mathematics leaders gaining a better understanding of ESTYN expectations with 100% of attendees evaluating the session as useful or very useful on the feedback form. A workshop on developing self-evaluation and improvement planning processes was also delivered in the regional heads of mathematics region which has had a positive impact, with 75% of attendees evaluating the session as useful or very useful on the feedback form. Heads of Mathematics worked collaboratively on identifying strengths, sharing good practices and next steps for their departments.

SIA continue to provide guidance to leaders on developing a strategic plan. Numeracy local network meetings resulted in numeracy coordinators sharing good practice, their progress with planning strategically, collaborating on developing a whole school numeracy strategy and emerging practices from within the local network. Many schools (with a numeracy priority) have begun to develop an effective strategic plan for Numeracy.

Local Heads of Maths network meetings have been organised for October 2023, with 48 schools registered to attend. The focus of the meetings will be on effective self-evaluation and improvement planning, analysis of GCSE examinations, assessment and progression within CfW, ensuring Heads of Maths are up to date with key regional and national messages, and sharing good and emerging practices.

Local Numeracy Leaders meetings have also been organised for October 2023, with 44 schools registered to attend. The focus of the meetings will be on making effective use of the personalised assessments, supporting NL in planning strategically for the development of Numeracy across the curriculum, ensuring Numeracy Leaders are up to date with key regional and national messages, and sharing good and emerging practices.

**To improve and enhance the teaching and learning of Mathematics.****Primary and Secondary**

Bespoke requests from school to support teachers/ mathematics departments with teaching and learning have been delivered by the team. This has resulted in teachers/mathematics departments being given bespoke training on understanding mathematical pedagogical approaches including developing proficiencies, differentiation, and effective questioning. Teachers are trialling strategies which is leading to more effective planning.

Primary and Secondary SIA's have provided bespoke cluster support upon requests, to develop effective transition by ensuring a shared understanding between schools of the learning continuum within the Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE.

### **Primary**

Mathematics and Numeracy SIA has met with a Numeracy lead of a primary school to plan training on the effective use of manipulatives to support learner progress. Workshops have been planned for Spring Term.

Clusters of regional schools have received bespoke cluster support on the content of the new Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE with a specific focus on developing an understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies.

### **Secondary**

Day 1 of the 'Mathematics Education Innovation' programme ran in September 2023, with 29 attendees from across the region. The objectives of the workshop were to develop teachers' confidence and competence with the subject content, up to, and including intermediate tier GCSE, learn more about the principles of effective pedagogy in mathematics teaching, applying these principles in the classroom with practical strategies and resources, provide opportunities for reflection upon creating effective and engaging environments for learning mathematics. When asked on the evaluation form how valuable the day has been, 100% of attendees rated the day either 4 or 5 out of 5. With 75% rating the day 5 out of 5.

The 'Effective use of manipulatives' programme has been organised, with 44 schools registered to take part in the programme. Day 1 has been planned for October 2023, and will be a hands-on, practical workshop led by Jonathan Hall, and will focus on exploring how Algebra Tiles can be used effectively to allow pupils to make sense of key concepts such as directed numbers, solving equations, manipulating expressions and algebraic proof.

### **To improve and enhance the teaching and learning of numeracy across the curriculum (as a cross curricular skill)**

#### **Primary**

Mathematics and Numeracy SIA has provided bespoke support to teachers/numeracy leads in the development of numeracy across the curriculum, following requests from school SIA's. Support has focused upon ensuring curriculum design allows for real life and authentic application of numeracy and to support learners access to the wider curriculum. SIA has supported numeracy leads with quality assurance procedures to identify strengths and specific areas for improvement, resulting in increased confidence and understanding to lead whole school effectively.

Mathematics and Numeracy SIA has met with primary schools to support the regional dissemination of effective practice with regards to numeracy across the curriculum. This work is ongoing and will be shared regionally during the Autumn term.

Primary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA has met with Primary Science to produce a regional workshop on the effective development of numeracy skills in Science and Technology AoLE. Information will be shared with all SIA's and regional Primary schools in early September 2023 and workshops delivered regionally October 2023 onwards.

In collaboration with regional leads for Digital and Literacy, the regional 'Effective development of numeracy skills within Science and Technology AoLE' workshops have now been adapted into a three-day programme for teachers (8-11) focusing on the development of cross curricular skills within the Science and Technology AOLE.

Following SIA requests, clusters of regional schools have received bespoke cluster support on the content of the new Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE with a specific focus on developing numeracy across the curriculum.

#### **Secondary**

Within the bespoke support provided to school leaders, SIA's have supported the development of numeracy across the curriculum by collaborating with other key departments/teachers to plan authentic, effective, and appropriate numeracy related activities in their subjects. SIA's have supported numeracy coordinators with quality assurance procedures to identify strengths and specific areas for improvement, which has strengthened the confidence and understanding of numeracy coordinators of effective self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Curriculum & Assessment**

#### **Science & Technology Network Meetings**

Three Heads of Science Network meetings have taken place representing all 6 local authorities and were well attended (74 teachers) and appreciated. The network provides leaders and teachers of Science and Technology AoLE with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment, and progression.

The Networks reviewed examples of emerging practice in schools and focused on:

1. Developing an understanding of progression and the use progression mapping
2. Developing Integral Skills through project-based learning
3. Co-construction of a science & technology project / theme
4. Opportunities for developing Coding across the AOLE

Feedback from the evaluation forms was positive and several schools have purchased the crumble kits or are using the microbit kits following the training and are embedding digital technologies into their curriculum.

#### **Developing cross-curricular skills within the Science & Technology AOLE**

GwE Science subject SIAs are working with cross-Wales consortia to provide online professional learning guidance on developing the curriculum for Wales. This guidance will be used to inform the content of November network meetings. Selected schools have been approached to share their CfW emerging practice.

Collaboration with the GwE Literacy and Numeracy SIAs has begun to ensure that skill development is appropriate for each progression step. The GwE Numeracy leads have offered to support and provide guidance in the Autumn term network meetings.

The focus of the Q3 Autumn term network meetings will be planning for progression within skills. Coding workshops with GwE's digital lead and Technocamps have been delivered in the S&T network meetings. There will be a continued focus on this in the Autumn term network meetings. Meetings were well received with some teachers reporting that they were more confident with using Crumble and Microbit in class.

#### **Developing Careers & Work-Related Experiences within the Science & Technology AOLE**

Work is in progress with Regional Skills Partnership and Careers Wales with an initial CWRE project for schools being developed. It is hoped that this will be a template for other schools within the GwE region. As a result of support, teachers should:

- Know how to contact their Careers Wales Business Engagement Adviser (BEA)
- Know how to plan visits to employers – and visits from employers where appropriate in the curriculum
- Know how to book or organize STEM ambassadors to talk to students about their work
- Plan to include CWRE in their curriculum development and schemes of work
- Develop their LMI (Labour Market Information)

Guidance booklet for practitioners has been created and is currently in translation.

#### **Online Learning – TANIO**

Resources continue to be developed and updated for students and teachers on the TANIO website.

Impact captured by following:

- PPTs, HTML's, Flash Cards for the separate sciences developed and uploaded onto the TANIO website
- Resources can be accessed by mobile devices.
- Resource use monitored via cookies and hit counts – Google Analytics

#### **Science Action Research Project for 3-8 year old practitioners**

Collaboration and professional learning took place led by Kathy Schofield (PSTT fellow) and GwE 3 – 8 Team on 26.09.23 for 3- 8 yrs old practitioners. 21 out of 24 invited schools attended, a follow up session has been arranged for those schools who did not attend due to ESTYN inspections. Kathy Schofield has begun to visit invited schools across the region to support improving provision and case study examples.

## **DIGITAL**

### **Developing the mandatory cross-curricular skills and coding and digital skills**

A series of resources was launched during September to support digital work, which focus on pupil progress from progression step 1 to progression step 5. These resources are known as progression maps, and the intention is that they are available for practitioners to consider learner progress as they plan and prepare tasks. These resources can also be used to monitor, review and evaluate digital work as they provide a framework that can be used to review pupil progress. The response to these resources has been excellent thus far, with many practitioners finding them beneficial. Eight resource sets have been released thus far, and each set focuses on a specific aspect e.g., podcasts, producing a video, computational thinking etc. It is intended to continue to produce resources during quarter 3 in order to develop this work further.

The digital facilitators programme continues to develop. During quarter 2, a training session was held for all regional digital facilitators in the Conwy Business Centre. The focus was on the objectives of the programme for 2023-24. A workshop was held in the afternoon using Lego Spike kits to undertake programming tasks, in response to the new requirements within the Curriculum for Wales. The possibility of investing in kits as a cluster rather than as individual schools was discussed, to reduce the financial load. It was suggested that each digital facilitator discuss this further in their cluster. Some clusters have already contacted us to say they have agreed to buy the equipment as a cluster.

As part of the digital facilitators programme a number of clusters have been targeted - clusters that have either not commenced the work for various reasons or are new to the programme. Eleven clusters were invited to a training day. The purpose of these events was to give clusters an opportunity to commence collaboration work to develop the digital aspect. Clusters were given specific tasks during the session so to ensure that everyone leaves the session with a clear plan in place for the rest of the year. The cluster SIA was also present. This ensured they were aware of the plan so that this may be discussed further with schools on visits. The feedback was very positive, with schools noting they appreciate the time and opportunity to discuss in depth with colleagues from other schools.

The professional learning offer for digital learning is now live. At present, 38 events are being offered for 2023-24, and each is open for registration to practitioners across the region. Some events are one day events, with others held over 2 or 3 days as development programmes. In addition to the usual provision, we are offering development programmes this year focusing on programming requirements within the Curriculum for Wales. Coding training is offered on two tiers - foundation and intermediate. The intention is that teachers who attend the foundation training can develop their skills further by attending the intermediate sessions. We are also offering specialist sessions this year to practitioners from the secondary sector. These sessions will focus on the opportunities within individual areas of learning and experience to develop pupils' digital skills through purposeful activities that improve learners' skills as well as their understanding of the subject/area in question.

The collaboration with Bangor University continues. The University will conduct an audit on the impact of digital technology on the region's learners. It will be based on two key questions:

- a) How does support from the Local Authorities and the regional service support schools to improve their provision?
- b) How does digital technology have an impact on learner standards, and on the standard of teaching and learning in schools?

The audit is currently awaiting approval by the ethics panel so that work may commence. A questionnaire will be issued, which will be open to all regional schools. The response window will be open for a period of 4 weeks. Following this the University will visit a cross-section of schools that have responded to the questionnaire to conduct interviews. All the details will then be analysed to produce a regional report as well as a report for each local authority. The findings will help the regional service and the local authorities to plan the work programme for 2024-25.

## EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

### TRANSITION

**Support schools, PRUs, clusters and alliances across and beyond the 3-16 continuum to improve transition through improving curriculum provision, collaboration and standards of progression, improving transition for vulnerable learners, undertaking curriculum design and implementation, including developing and embedding learning progression**

The GwE team have been upskilled in the requirements of transition planning and the statutory content of transition plans. Relevant resources have been shared with SIAs and schools, including information on the requirements of

transition plans. Schools have shared relevant plans. An update is planned for 06/11/23 to ensure consistency in transition planning and that all plans meet the WG requirements.

The regional service has placed a strong focus on developing pedagogy as part of the support for developing the Curriculum for Wales. Representatives from clusters recently attended a GwE professional learning workshop on transition, where each cluster planned their next steps collaboratively in order to improve pupils' progression across the learning continuum.

All clusters have plans for transition, however, some clusters regionally are in need of further support in ensuring their transition plans are up to date with all requirements of the Curriculum for Wales and reflect these requirements fully. These clusters are continually supported by their SIAs and further professional learning is planned to develop robust professional dialogue around pupil progression and standards.

Universal and bespoke professional learning is planned for the autumn term 2023 to include collaboration and professional dialogue between clusters to ensure clarity and consistency in self-evaluation, and support schools and clusters to further embed and develop successful practice in ensuring 3-16 progression, commencing on 20/10/23, with 4 sessions which are held regionally.

During the regional Curriculum for Wales event in June 2023, successful practice on developing 3-16 transition was shared from 2 clusters and one special 6-19 school. Key messages included the importance of focusing upon pupils and their progress and targets, and what each individual pupil can achieve, and the central importance of collaboration, collective accountability and positive relationships in order to support these pupils to achieve.

Identified clusters continue to progress well within the Pedagogy Transition Project. Successful practice has been shared across the 12 clusters including staff at a variety of levels which has enabled further strategies to be implemented across the region within the cluster schools. Further sharing has been planned for the autumn term 2023, following this the project will be widened to include more clusters. There is a planned sharing of impact event for the regional curriculum for Wales conference on June 6th, 2024.

Next steps are planned in line with WG mandatory guidance and the business plan has been updated to reflect these to ensure that the link to mandatory collaboration and SIG is clear through universal professional learning in order to support head teachers to develop a shared understanding of progression.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Primary**

Workshops on the 3 Purposes of Assessment in the CfW for primary schools have been held to support schools to gain a better understanding of the purpose and use of assessment information to inform learning and teaching, as well as wider self-evaluation and improvement.

The workshops focused on:

- Supporting individual learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis
- Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time
- Understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice

8 sessions on the Three Purposes of Assessment was delivered across the region in May - June 2023. 4 sessions was delivered on Inset Days across the region on Assessment for Learning strategies and another 7 sessions have been delivered across the region on on entry assessments in June 2023. Another 2 sessions have been delivered across the region on entry assessments in September 2023 and also 2 sessions on the the Three Purposes of Assessment in October 2023. A number of secondary colleagues attended the Autumn term session emphasizing the importance of the 3-16 curriculum.

Feedback during the sessions indicated that many schools would like further training / refresher on main principles of Formative Assessment for all teaching staff, including teaching assistants and that this area is still a priority. GwE have provided an exemplar Assessment Policy for schools that meets the new requirements and can be adapted to reflect a school's practice. This has been well received by schools across the region.

## Secondary

Preparation has concluded for a Secondary workshop on reporting to be held 27 & 28 November 2023. This is targeted at school curriculum leaders and head teachers to explore the connection between vision, design, planning, progression, professional dialogue, school evaluation and improvement and reporting to parents. 80 places will be available across both workshops.

Michael Chiles Conference on assessment has been booked for February 2024. As keynote speaker he will focus on the centrality of assessment within the new curriculum and schools will share details of successes to date, and emerging practice

Planning is ongoing for a professional learning day to be offered on formative assessment approaches. This will focus on good approaches to support pupil progression in a secondary mixed ability classroom.

Bespoke professional learning has been delivered in a number of regional schools to support their work in developing assessment, planning for progress and formative assessment for learning practice within the classroom. 12 separate presentations/INSET day support programmes involving aspects of assessment planning have been delivered in Quarter 2 and the resources used are being made available to all SIAs to use with schools.

A professional learning and information sharing resource has been prepared for, and presented and explained to, all secondary core leads and SIAs, to inform head teachers and senior leaders of the requirements for reporting to parents. This has been fully contextualized into the continuum of planning for the new curriculum, and the legislation for reporting.

A professional learning and information sharing resource has been prepared for all Core Leads to support headteachers and leaders in planning for dialogues to develop a shared understanding of progression at school, cluster and secondary peer alliance level. This will inform all schools of the legal requirement and will support them in formulating their plans.

## OBJECTIVE 3 – DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

### Priority:

### 3.1 - Improve Teaching

#### CONTRIBUTION OF AOLE AND SUBJECT NETWORKS TO IMPROVE TEACHING

##### Improving Teaching and Learning

##### **Facilitate relevant universal professional learning offer or commissioned and bespoke targeted support.**

Commissioned by GwE, Mark Burns, the author of 'Teaching Backwards' provided a valuable insight into how to design and deliver effective lessons that engage and inspire pupils at a workshop on 29/06/2023. The workshop focused explicitly on the careful sequencing of the curriculum to ensure progression in learning. Mark's idea of 'backwards design' has proven to have a significant impact on student achievement and motivation over the years. The workshop focused on teaching backwards, starting with the end goal in mind. The training offered a practical, hands-on approach for staff to further their attitudes, skills and habits of excellence both for themselves and for their learners. Discussion are ongoing with him for a follow up workshop concentrating on differentiation and level of challenge. Further professional learning opportunities will be facilitated during the next academic year to develop:

- planning for progression
- differentiation (making learning accessible)
- increasing the level of challenge

Following the summer workshop, some schools have organised INSET days with Mark Burns to support their PL further.

##### **Establish a Teaching and Learning Network for Secondary Teaching & Learning leads to ensure that best practices are being developed and to support each other to develop a consistent pedagogical approach.**

The first Network meeting was held on 21/09/2023 focusing on Metacognition and Leadership. 41 out of 54 schools attended. Since the first meeting, there have been numerous requests from the Teaching & Learning leads

for our training resources for the to be used with staff in their own school. Feedback from meeting was positive and a Teaching & Learning Team has been established to communicate messages and support with fortnightly “drop in” sessions. The first newsletter has been emailed to all Heads, Teaching & Learning Leads, SIAs + Subject SIAs. The priority for the next Network meeting will be a session on effective questioning. This was a priority that was identified following the first Network meeting, along with effective feedback.

### **Support Teaching & Learning network**

It is intended to establish a pedagogy leads network for Primary and Secondary practitioners which will focus on:

- Further develop a purpose led curriculum
- To articulate practice in the 12 pedagogical principles
- Leadership of pedagogy/teaching and learning
- Planning for the Principles of Progression
- Impact of teaching on learning

## **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (RESEARCH AND ENQUIRY) (RILL)**

### **Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL)**

Phase 2 funding of RILL is provided by Welsh Government over two years as follows: May 2022 to May 2023; and May 2023 to May 2024. In 2022-23, Project 1 in this phase aimed to expand RILL to provide a 15-week tech-based language and literacy Welsh programme to disadvantaged children (i.e., non-Welsh-at-home, low SES and ability) and to test its effectiveness in improving Welsh language and reading skills.

During the autumn term 2022 RILL focused on developing 30 new Welsh and English lessons and offering in-person training to schools to implement the programme. We created a new [website](#) that information and support materials for schools, teachers, and parents. In October 2022 we recruited 28 schools and 39 teachers to receive RILL Cymraeg training and a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring and summer terms 2023.

We have also developed a battery of online assessments to capture impact data for RILL. Over 250 children enrolled on the RILL Cymraeg program have since been tested. Half of these children are now undergoing the RILL lessons twice weekly with their teacher or TA and were tested again in the summer term 2023. The second half of these children will begin the RILL lessons in September 2023. We recruited a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring and summer term 2023.

In the Spring term 2023 we have focused on supporting schools participating in the evaluation of RILL and amending the lessons in response to feedback from these schools. Additionally, we have started creating whole class materials to complement the existing RILL lessons. During the summer term we organised a co-creating workshop in which headteachers, teachers and TAs provided feedback on the draft whole-class materials as well as offer their own ideas for new activities. We will now combine this information to create the whole class materials over the summer months. These educators also participated in a focus group reflecting on their experience on the project.

In total, 53 schools have been trained in RILL Cymraeg for Project 1: 43 in North Wales and 11 in Ceredigion. We are also in contact with consortia across Wales with the aim of organising at least one training day in each region. In the summer term 2023 training sessions were organised in Bangor, as well as south east and south Central Wales. Project 2 will focus on expanding RILL to the whole-class level and testing the effects of complementary, whole-class instruction on all children’s literacy skills. We will commence in September 2023 and an invitation will be issued for 10 schools (20 teachers) to participate in the training for RILL English version.

By October 2023, 92 schools have been trained in RILL Cymraeg for Project 1: 47 in North Wales and 45 in other regions as part of our contract with Welsh Government to deliver training in each region. In the summer term 2023 training sessions were organised in Bangor, as well as Wrexham, Powys, Pembrokeshire, south east and south central Wales. Project 2 will focus on expanding RILL to the whole-class level and testing the effects of complementary, whole-class instruction on all children’s literacy skills. In September 2023 ten schools (20 teachers) were recruited to participate in the training for RILL English version.

### **Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)**



Since 2018, GwE has been working collaboratively with researchers from the Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact (CIEREI), Bangor University to create a suite of evidence-informed reading fluency interventions: Repeated Reading (RR), and High Frequency Words fluency (HFW). This project will focus on the roll out of our updated English and Welsh language RR intervention materials with schools. We plan to work with schools to evaluate the impact of the updated RR intervention following an 8-week intervention period in the spring term 2024.

All schools will receive access to training and RR intervention resources in English and Welsh. The research team will work with staff to identify target learners and plan for the intervention in the spring term 2024. The research team will help schools gather pupil progress data and evaluate the impact of the RR intervention. We began recruiting schools in June 2023 and will confirm participants in September 2023. We began recruiting 20 schools ready for a spring term 2024 start.

### **Inclusive Teaching of Early Numeracy (i-TEN) in mainstream primary schools.**

The i-TEN programme is adapted from Mathematics Recovery (MR). MR is a comprehensive evidence-informed programme for teaching numeracy to younger learners struggling with early mathematics skills. In this project we aim to work with schools to evaluate i-TEN with disadvantaged children in mainstream settings to provide an inclusive approach to early numeracy teaching and learning.

This is a collaborative project between GwE and the University of Warwick, and also contains a strong element of numeracy CPD for teachers as follows:

- In the first phase we will train staff in interested schools to use and evaluate the impact of the first three developmental stages for learners in Foundation Learning classes.
- In the second phase we are interested in working with schools to co-develop the lesson plans for the fourth and fifth developmental stage of MR in KS2 settings.
- We will also work with Welsh language settings to help the research team to create bilingual MR programme materials.

Interviews were held in July and a PhD research student was appointed. Recruitment will start for the first study in the spring and summer terms 2024.

### **Developing and Evaluating Mainstream Spelling Instruction (DEMSI).**

The Science of Reading (SoR) approach describes key reading and related skills that are critical for readers of all ability. In this project we plan to evaluate how the SoR approach may be applied to spelling instruction in mainstream classroom settings. Here, we propose a two-phase study in developing and evaluating mainstream spelling instruction for early writers. First, this DEMSI project seeks to understand the landscape of current spelling instructional practices for early writers (7-year-old children) in North Wales via a regional survey. Second, we plan to pilot a model to help train teachers to adapt and improve their own spelling provision to ensure it aligns with the SoR. This is a collaborative project between GwE and Leeds Trinity University.

We aim to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of co-creation workshops to implement a SoR spelling curriculum in North Wales. We will evaluate if a co-created SoR-adapted spelling curriculum be implemented successfully by classroom teachers, and, does a co-created SoR-adapted spelling curriculum improve learner outcomes. We plan to develop a series of four one-day workshops for Year 2 and Year 3 teachers alongside an experienced teacher familiar with the SoR. The workshops will focus on background SoR research, co-developing the curriculum, and assessing spelling progress.

We have created and shared the spelling questionnaire via the GwE Bulletin in July 2023 as part of Phase 1. The questionnaire will be promoted again in September 2023, and we have recruited ten primary schools to participate in the first stage of Phase 2. At the end of Phase 2 (summer term 2023), we plan to invite ten primary schools from the remaining LAs to receive feedback from project outcomes.

## **PEDAGOGY AND LEARNING DESIGN**

### **Improve teaching**

A National Pedagogy Project has been developed to

- facilitate conversation, collaboration and enquiry in order to support exploration and reflection on the pedagogical principles

- help shape the ongoing vision for learning as we realise Curriculum for Wales and support learners in realising the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales

This involves exploring the 'why' and 'how' as well as the 'what' of teaching and engages us in reflecting on the full range of interactions and relationships that lead to learning. There are 3 key elements to the work of the pedagogy project:

- sharing practice and reflection – easily accessible, timely and relevant opportunities and resources that support professional engagement, dialogue and reflection
- deepening understanding – exploring innovative practice through professional learning and enquiry in an evidence-informed way
- research development – developing academic research at national level to underpin our system-wide understanding of pedagogy.

The importance of collaboration and sharing has come to the fore during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and practitioners need to continue to learn from each other within and across regions in Wales. Collaborative activity between universities, regional consortia and schools will support the development of research-informed resources that will deepen our conversations and promote professional enquiry.

#### **Talk Pedagogy Research Project (2023-26) – Year 1 (2023-24)**

This project has been commissioned, and funded, by Welsh Government for three years from 2023. Interviews took place in the spring term 2023 to appoint a PhD research student from Bangor University to carry out the work, and a secondary teacher was appointed which will start the work in September 2023. The first task will be to focus on the following research question in the autumn and spring term 2023-24:

- *What are the views and perspectives of HEI academics, consortia colleagues and teachers in how we develop collaborative close to practice research for enabling teachers to become evidence-informed?*

The new PhD research student started work on 01/09/2023. Recruitment will start for the first study in the autumn and spring terms 2024.

#### **Towards 2024**

Plans are in place to work in collaboration with 8-11 age range teachers to further strengthen and support self-evaluation and school improvement towards realising the Curriculum for Wales through evaluating and developing current Curriculum approaches, Pedagogy and Progression.

The Professional Learning Offer has been finalised with 'Developing high quality teaching and learning' events taking place in November 2023, and 'Curriculum, pedagogy and progression' in March 2024. A handbook has been written and the content includes reviewing the journey to a purposes-orientated curriculum, pedagogical approaches at the right stage in learning and capturing progression in learning.

### **REALISING POTENTIAL – CHALLENGE FOR ALL (MAT)**

#### **Increase understanding of ways to support the Realising Potential/MAT (RP/MAT) agenda in schools**

GwE representatives (primary and secondary) have attended the Welsh Consortia Realising Potential Group and have contributed to the cross-consortia agenda for RP/MAT. Through ensuring a secondary and a primary focus on MAT and Challenge we can offer better support across schools.

A Resource has been prepared and shared with the GwE team and uploaded to the support resources for GwE, on what the current MAT/RP agenda is. This ensures Core Leads and SIAs are able to inform all schools of the resources that are available on the Welsh Consortia Website, the new MAT strategy and other offers from the cross consortia Group, such as webinars and podcasts.

GwE have organised, structured and recorded a podcast with the educationalist Mark Burns, on how to best support aspirations for all pupils through planning for challenging and engaging educational experiences. Mark shares a range of approaches and ideas for teaching and assessing progress. This is now shared with all regions of Wales as a valuable Resource for teaching.

A Revision powerpoint Resource has been updated for all secondary SIAs, to use with staff or directly with students, in preparing for external assessments. This provides contextualisation of the MAT learner's characteristics and many practical ideas for student revision.

Planning is taking place for 4 webinars to be delivered on MAT and RP topics. plus follow-up regional workshops to maximise the messaging, the first being in November, around a MAT strategy.

### **Enhance and improve access to support for MAT learners through the SEREN Programme**

GwE SIAs closely liaise with Seren co-ordinators regionally within authorities to support learner uptake for tailored Seren programme. GwE representatives attend the Seren regional meetings to contribute information regarding GwE work programmes and help disseminate key messages and information to regional schools via core leads and SIAs. This has resulted in Seren programme and its benefits being better understood in regional schools, and the capacities within schools to engage are better understood by the Seren group.

## **3-8 EDUCATION**

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

Most schools receiving bespoke support are addressing actions identified by 3-8 SIAs. They have effectively implemented actions to improve the quality of provision and pupil outcomes reducing in-school variance and ensuring greater consistency in the teaching and learning across the region. Support has also ensured a deeper understanding of the principles and pedagogy that aligns with the 3-8 pedagogy within Enabling Learning and CfW framework. However, in a very few schools that receive support, progress is very limited mainly due to staff being disengaged and reluctant to address the actions or changes and absenteeism in staffing.

### **Deliver high quality network meetings/cluster support/workshops**

Cluster support has been delivered across the region focusing on specific aspects of Enabling Learning, CfW pedagogy and AOLEs. It is too early to measure impact upon provision and outcomes, but impact includes:

- Consistency of messages for schools regarding teaching and learning
- Increase practitioners confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the developmental pathways, AOLEs and the aspects to consider when designing the curriculum for this age group.
- Practitioners using a blend of developmentally appropriate pedagogical approaches that responds to learner needs (including emotional and social).

Regional 3-8 summer term Network Meetings have focuses on the pre-reading skills, early reading skills and higher order reading skills. This has enabled practitioners to develop a better understanding of how to plan progression in reading skills within a developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Regional Workshops delivered for SMT, Teachers and TAs on developing a deeper understanding of the Expressive Art AOLE. This has enabled practitioners to develop their understanding of the five disciplines within the AOLE and planning progression within the 3-8 age Group within rich and purposeful learning experiences. Practitioners feedback note that they have a better understanding of the importance of process and development of skills rather the focus being on the end product.

Training sessions have been delivered regionally on 'On-Entry Assessment' WG guidance. This has increased practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the guidance and the importance of observations and transition arrangements.

Outdoor Learning - two open days were arranged in a Welsh and English school focusing on the outdoor learning environment and developing skills within the outdoors. Those who attended have observed how the outdoor learning environment and open-ended resources support pupils to develop their integral and cross curricular effectively within a purposeful and authentic learning experiences.

SIA training session delivered for SIAs on effective pedagogy for 3-8 year olds. SIAs have further developed their understanding of what a pedagogical appropriate approach looks like in a 3-8 learning environment. All workshops, Networks and training sessions have been very well attended and feedback has been very positive. Recording of all training sessions and resources available on GwE Support Centre and within Google Classrooms enabling practitioners to collaborate and share ideas regionally.

Mop-up training sessions delivered on 'On-Entry Assessment' WG guidance for practitioners who are in post since September 2023. This has increased their knowledge and understanding of the guidance and the importance of observations and transition arrangements.

Regional workshops delivered for teachers and TAs new to the 3-8 age group focusing on the principles of Enabling Learning and AOLEs within this age group and effective pedagogy. Those who attended have a secure knowledge and understanding of the three enablers within Enabling Learning, pedagogy and the curriculum to transfer into classroom practice.

Bespoke support delivered to a cluster on specific aspects of the Curriculum on developing numeracy skills within the areas of provision and learning. This has upskilled staff on the skill continuum regarding expanding and deepening numeracy skills within a developmentally appropriate learning experiences and environment.

#### POST 16

##### **To support schools in monitoring the progress of post-16 students - ALPS**

All schools across the region have uploaded A level data to ALPs and received feedback. All three joint Local Authorities have discussed the use of ALPs data at the first meeting of the year; all meetings held during the week of 2nd October. During the summer, a target group of 14 schools were offered free 1:1 consultation, the aim being to increase the number of schools in the region using ALPs for in-year monitoring rather than just examination analysis. 6 schools attended the education consultation and have since begun using ALPs in an enhanced capacity. Full ALPs regional review of 2022/23 examination outcomes to take place in November 2023.

##### **Support Post 16 Leaders in schools to provide strong and effective direction in all aspects of their role.**

All three joint Local Authority Networks have convened. All post 16 leaders have been offered the opportunity to participate in the post 16 leadership development programme. 9 GwE schools have booked onto the programme. All post 16 leaders have been offered the opportunity to attend the post 16 cross -regional Professional learning event. 10 GwE schools attended session one.

##### **Deliver high quality networks.**

Plans are in place to generate opportunities for subject specific networking – further update will be provided in Quarter 3 report.

#### Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

##### **To develop a national early career support package to support teachers in the first 4-years of their teaching careers in collaboration with ITE and Masters providers and Welsh Government (WG).**

##### **Further align ITE and early career teaching**

Progress continues with accrediting new ITE ALN programmes. New WG accreditation criteria have been published which include a recognition for the need for ALN pathways. Programmes are currently being co-constructed with special school and mainstream ALN partners across the region. Applications to the new pathways will open in October 2023, pending accreditation (programmes are due to commence in September 2024, including a one-year employment-based pathway). Weekly steering group meetings take place.

Shared Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement processes continue. Student pass rate this year has been high. Student satisfaction has been higher than in previous years. All areas of improvement are planned through the self-evaluation into the Improvement Plan for 2023-24.

Continued partnership working is strengthening ITE provision, including shared professional learning such as regional Curriculum for Wales marketplace 22/06/23 and on-going GwE CaBan lectures. Visit from Minister for Education and Welsh Language took place on 18/05/23 to launch a national recruitment video and take questions from students. Speakers included the Vice Chancellor, GwE Managing Director, Head of School and ITE Director. Shared programme construction includes research-linked work on Cymraeg, and on modern languages in a primary setting. GwE staff continue to contribute sessions to the CaBan on-campus taught programmes. Most recently on 12/10/23, 3 members of the GwE team led sessions to BA students on curriculum design within the curriculum for Wales. New students have settled well into their programmes, with a member of the GwE team meeting them as part of their induction in their first week.

Applications to Open University (OU) Programmes have been supported for 2023-25; numbers of applicants within the region are increasing. Initial applications to the OU Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for September 2023 have increased and GwE has a forecast of 28 students for the programme, up from 21 last year. This includes 12 students who have been offered places on the training through the medium of Welsh which represents almost a third of all applications across Wales. The OU's support from GwE within schools is very strong. New areas of subsidised study have been agreed and applications for these will open shortly.

**Further develop the national induction professional learning programme for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), induction mentors and external verifiers.**

Highly effective NQT moderation has taken place in July 2023, including regional (with all LAs present) and national moderation – this has been thorough and robust. Very positive feedback was provided to the GwE region, and six profiles from the GwE region were moderated with all judgements being confirmed by representatives of the national panel. NQT support has been strong in 2022-23 and areas of improvement for 2023-24 have been identified and actioned. A full professional learning offer has continued, including an innovative and very well received special schools workshop on 09/06/23. Feedback data from this workshop has been analysed – this showed particularly strong feedback for all sessions, particularly Effective Use of Support Staff, IDPs, Nurture and Wellbeing, Behaviour, Communication and Sensory Needs. Feedback from the survey has been used to plan future professional learning for 2023-24. There are continued very effective regional LA representatives meetings.

September 2023 NQTs are now receiving support through the national professional learning programme. Once initial modules have been completed the NQTs have access to the local offer, which includes many up to date and relevant sessions to improve teaching and learning and also for the NQTs to network and share practice and experiences in their informative year. All NQTs who are placed in GwE schools have been assigned a mentor within school and also an external mentor to support and evaluate their progress. There is a strong regional team in place from September across all LAs who support NQTs and are drawn together to ensure consistency through regular regional meetings. The next meeting will take place on 20/10/23.

**Continue to improve provision for Welsh language early career teaching and retention**

Research-driven ITE provision for Cymraeg continues to be considerable strength – this is outlined in the report for Cymraeg.

**OBJECTIVE 4 - LEADERSHIP**

**Priorities:**

**4.1 – Implement Regional and National Leadership Programmes**

**LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES**

**Facilitate the delivery of all elements of the leadership development pathway, offering a range of national programmes for middle, senior and experienced leaders.**

All modules of the Middle Leadership Development programme (MLDP) programme have been adapted for face-to-face delivery. All modules of the Senior leadership development programme (SLDP) bar Module 5, Session 1 have been adapted. All modules of the Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (AHTDP) bar Module 5 have been adapted. The content has been updated and is relevant, incorporating current changes in education for all programmes.

For all programmes, participants have been provided with access to the Professional Learning Passport (PLP) and have been guided on its use. Participants are able to use the resource to record and reflect on their progress across the leadership pathway. The use of the PLP needs embedding further. However, participants have the freedom to use the resource according to their needs.

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) endorsement processes will be paused as the Welsh Government considers the best approach to the reintroduction of the programme.

The Newly Appointed Headteachers Programme (NAHTP) has been restructured in order to facilitate better representation and provide opportunities for leaders across all authorities to network effectively. Regional modules will now be combined for face-to-face delivery.

The Experienced Headteachers Programme (EHTP) has been provided for Headteachers across the region in the Summer term and the external provider is currently conducting evaluation of impact.

The co-construction of the System Leadership development programme is on-pause while decisions regarding the NPQH are prioritised.

Practitioners across MLDP and SLDP are supported by an effective network of facilitators, school-based mentors, leadership coaches, headteachers and SIAs. This has been co-ordinated effectively by regional service staff.

Face to face delivery has afforded participants across all programmes to have greater opportunities for networking, reflection and to conduct honest conversations in a safe space. This promotes greater engagement for all participants and has raised confidence and the effectiveness of school leaders at all levels. Additionally, participants effectively take responsibility for their own professional learning.

All practitioners understand their role in a self-improving system, through the principles of delivering a Leadership Experience Task and also sessions based on the cycle of improvement and the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

All practitioners are encouraged where appropriate to aspire to the next level on the leadership pathway.

All practitioners have gained an enhanced knowledge of the leadership standards and how those standards can support their professional development.

Those that have demonstrated the necessary evidence, knowledge and experience of whole school leadership have been endorsed following completion of the AHDP. They will now move onto the next stage in readying evidence for headship in the NPQH Assessment Centre in February 2024. Participants have been briefed accordingly.

Feedback from all delivery sessions captured using the online QR code tool have been extremely positive.

Application window for MLDP and SLDP opened in September. The closing date is in October and numbers will be included in the Quarter 3 report.

#### HLTA – TALP

##### **Support the professional development of teaching assistants**

National evaluation forms have now been used for each programme, based on the Kirkpatrick model.

Following a national review of the format and content of the Induction programme, in line with Welsh Government priorities, a decision was made to launch the new programme on 6th November. This has ensured that the Induction Programme is up to date and relevant to the priorities of schools and Welsh Government. The national Communications Department will be creating new materials to advertise the revised programme.

Following a national review of the format and content of the Practising Teaching Assistants' programme in line with Welsh Government priorities, the new programme has been used with clusters of schools. Four clusters have now completed the training, 3 clusters have started the training and 3 other clusters have committed to deliver training so far this year.

Twenty-five teaching assistants completed the Cylch 6 Aspiring HLTA programme and 21 have applied for HLTA status assessment during the autumn term. Thirty-five applications have been received for the Cylch 7 Aspiring HLTA programme, and 32 will begin training in the autumn.

Cylch 8 of the Aspiring HLTA programme has been advertised in the Bulletin and on the Google Classroom for Assistants, with the deadline for applications being 24/11/2023. The programme will start in January 2024.

A mandatory refresher session was held for assessors prior to undertaking Cylch 5 and 6 assessments, upskilling and empowering HLTAs and teachers who are guiding and supporting colleagues in their settings.

Cylch 5 assessments have been completed for candidates with 34 meeting the national standards for HLTA status, i.e. a 100% of candidates. Rigorous regional and national moderation sessions have been held for quality assurance purposes, and it was noted that the overall standard of reflections was higher than previous years due to the standard of discussions and face-to-face professional interactions during the programme. Feedback in initial evaluation forms and following the assessment process is very positive, with nearly all participants stating that they either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statements.

The Miles Dyslexia Centre, Bangor University has been commissioned to deliver Dyslexia training to 15 assistants, leading to an Accredited Dyslexia Practitioner Status. Training will be delivered over the autumn and spring terms. One whole day and 2 half-day sessions have already been delivered.

Two special schools have been commissioned to hold sessions to share effective practice with mainstream assistants. The sessions will focus on behaviour, communication methods and sensory learning.

Termly Network for assistants and senior assistants - work has begun to organise the first session due to be held on 7 November.

#### COACHING AND MENTORING

**To continue to develop and embed a coaching and mentoring culture throughout the Welsh education system which provides a toolkit to assist in improving standards of education in Wales.**

A National Programme was delivered during the Summer term through the medium of Welsh and English for SLT members, ALN Co-ordinators and HLTAs.

An email has been sent to all attendees who have received training in the GwE region over the last two and a half years asking them to complete a questionnaire in order to collect information on the true impact of the training. Information about the level 3 qualification has been shared following the national sessions and information about level 5 and 7 qualifications has been shared with schools and GwE staff.

Early discussions have taken place in order to identify schools for a project collaborating with 3 Secondary schools, 3 primary schools and 1 Special School.

#### GOVERNOR SUPPORT

**Work with local authorities to ensure that governing bodies are prepared to implement the WG School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability**

High quality professional learning opportunities and support for governing bodies has been provided on topics including self-evaluation, data and information, curriculum for Wales, planning for improvement, Schools as Learning Organisations and guidance on effective governing bodies.

Support has been provided for school governing bodies in making good appointments at senior level. Furthermore, governing bodies have been supported the performance management process of headteachers

Support has been provided for local authorities to ensure that governing bodies have support in self-evaluation and development planning, including pre-inspection support for Governors on Estyn's expectations prior to and during inspection. Furthermore, bespoke support has been provided to governing bodies of schools in Estyn review and statutory categories where relevant.

Support has been provided to facilitate effective communication and information-sharing between GwE, LA and GSO. All stakeholders benefit from shared information.

GwE was represented at the regional and national Governor Support Officers (GSO) meetings:

- The Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) group meeting 08/06/23
- GSO North Wales meeting 14/06/23

GwE will be represented in the next meeting of the National GSO group on 09/11/23.

Support has been provided for Local Authorities in their provision of training for governing bodies to support school improvement. Further support and guidance for governors of the six LAs will be required in the lead up to the introduction of the School Improvement Framework in September 2024 and WAG governors competency framework.

Programmes of support have been agreed with the GSOs of all 6 LAs, identifying the required support for academic year 2023-24. This will enable the GSOs to publish their programmes in advance and encourage governors to attend.

#### SCHOOLS & SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

**Support ongoing Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO) implementation and the wider transition to a learning education system.**

### **Support the development of the workforce within the context of schools as learning organisations**

It is a limited number of regional schools that have updated their responses to the new Schools as Learning Organisations survey on Hwb. This will be developed further during the year. This will include identifying effective practitioners who are implementing SLO to deliver joint workshops to Headteachers during the autumn term. The experienced practitioners who are assisting us will have an opportunity during the workshop to talk about successful practice in their schools. Attendees will also have an opportunity during the workshop to complete the SLO survey before returning to school to complete it with the rest of the staff and teaching assistants. In so doing it is hoped to raise awareness and the profile of SLO across the region and ensure that a higher percentage of schools are completing the SLO survey to identify aspects for further development within the 7 dimensions.

GwE have engaged in cross consortia meeting along with WG representatives. This work reviewed previous SLO developments across consortia and the impact of covid on the national strategy. Contributions were made by partners and a new draft SLO National Strategy Action Plan was written (July 2023). The draft plan identified the following aims:

- All schools and settings complete the SLO survey once every 24 months
- Schools and settings development plans are informed by self-critical use of self-evaluation, enquiry and the SLO survey. Schools consistently challenge themselves to improve as learning organisations
- All education professionals are able to access well designed professional learning that includes a blend of approaches and opportunities for reflection, enquiry and collaboration for learning.

To meet these aims a GwE team member has been tasked with running professional learning sessions across the region in both Cymraeg and English - these sessions have been scheduled for October and November 2023. Their intention is to raise workforce awareness in relation to SLO, how the dimensions and associated culture contribute to meeting the needs of the new School Self Evaluation and Improvement Guidance and ultimately to increase the number of schools who complete the SLO survey on Hwb. Schools in each county with proven successful practice have been engaged to provide practical exemplars of practice, enabling Headteachers and senior leaders to identify how their existing practice meets aspects of the SLO model and facilitates School self-improvement.

### **SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME**

**Promote and oversee school-to-school collaboration and cluster working.**

**Deliver The Education Development Trust (EDT) School Partnership Programme (SPP) across the region's schools. SPP is a 3-year programme which develops school leaders' peer evaluation and support.**

For the last 5 years there has been agreement with Headteachers on a series of regional principles for peer engagement. A model of peer review and improvement planning was agreed (the School Partnership Programme [SPP]), approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee.

All GwE SIAs have received continuous training and support on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. By the end of September 2023, 29 SIAs have been trained as peer reviewers and improvement facilitators as part of the SPP. All new staff members have received SPP refresher training.

Initially, 13 SIAs were trained during October 2021 to deliver the programme and following a programme of observing training during April 2022 the first SPP training programme entirely facilitated by GwE staff was delivered to cohort 3b during May 2022. By September 2023, 20 additional SIAs have received training to deliver the programme. This means that 33 SIAs can now deliver the SPP programme successfully. Following this increased capacity to deliver the programme initial training was provided for 90 schools in cohort 3C by a team of GwE facilitators.

By September 2023, 46 clusters / alliances (255 schools) have received SPP training and they have already undertaken peer review, or are preparing to undertake peer review work. 329 Headteachers / senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers across the region. 290 senior leaders / middle leaders and proficient teachers have been trained as 'improvement facilitators'. This has enabled leaders and teachers to benefit from professional education of a high standard and it will contribute to improving leadership capacity across the region. By September 2023 both the first and second tier of primary schools and clusters involved in the programme have received extended training for improvement facilitators, with the focus on developing increasing and effective use of research in their improvement workshops. In addition, opportunities were provided across the region for



schools and partnerships to scale up their capacity to implement the programme by training additional improvement facilitators.

The main objective of the scheme is to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and the Referral Units. The intention is to train approximately 15 clusters every term during the 2021-24 academic years. The Programme will be aligned to work on developing a new curriculum and support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress towards the reform journey. To this end a series of reflection questions with a focus on the reform journey have been created in alignment with the peer process, and schools receiving the training are signposted to the curriculum prompts that are part of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.

In January 2023, schools and clusters not already involved in the programme were invited to express an interest in participating in SPP training as part of cohort 4. A total of 43 schools expressed an interest. Therefore, by the end of July 2023, half of the region's schools have received the initial training and are now starting, or have started, their peer review and improvement planning work.

As part of our partnership with the Education Development Trust initial questionnaires have been shared with all schools involved in the SPP. Analysis of responses by an EDT researcher shows that 77% of Headteachers state their experience of the programme is good or excellent, while 100% of teachers state their partnership with other schools is strong or very strong following the programme. Four clusters / alliances have been identified to take part in comprehensive interviews with the researcher, which will lead to developing a case study to further scrutinise the impact of the programme in 2023-24.

## OBJECTIVE 5 – A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

### Priorities:

**5.1 - Support staff in their wellbeing and resilience.**

**5.2 - Support schools to ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.**

**5.3 - Support schools to provide equity for all by tackling disadvantage and to have strong relationships with parents/carers and their communities.**

### Pupil Development Grant (PDG) / Looked After Children (LAC)

#### **To support the continued delivery of professional learning to support disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.**

GwE continues to provide Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) Training across the region to support disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. TIS diploma GwE 14 and 15 are part way through, training an additional 48 practitioners, across the region. Through the training, schools will have an awareness and understanding of Trauma Informed practice and how it can support vulnerable and disadvantaged learners

The new PDG/LAC-PDG guidance has been shared with SIAs to support their work in school and conversations around the use of PDG and PDG-LAC grants. As part of the SIA visits there is an increased focus on how schools support all of their vulnerable learners and how the school monitors the progress the learners make.

A member of the GwE team attends termly meetings with Looked After Children Education Co-ordinators, Early entitlement and Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and Education other than at school (EOTAS) leads. This ensures that everybody knows what each is offering and will help prevent duplication of work and Professional learning offers. It will also support evaluating the impact of the work that is being carried out and the impact of school plans for their PDG-LAC spend and how that is captured.

The cluster model of working with PDG-LAC is enabling clusters to be more creative with how the grant is used to support pupils across the catchment area.

#### **Continue the implementation of Raising Attainment in Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) across the region**

RADY (Raising Achievement for Disadvantaged Youngsters) is presented by the GwE, in partnership with its creators Challenging Education. This long-term programme is designed to support schools to address the impact

of disadvantage on their learners through an 'equity not equality' approach. An initial RADY online meeting has taken place and is part of GwE's commitment to the National Priority for Health, Well-being and Equity. The principles and approaches of RADY will suit all learners. The RADY principles are focussed on 'doing something different' by:

- Raising Awareness of Disadvantaged Youngsters
- Raising Aspirations of Disadvantaged Learners
- Raising Expectations of Disadvantaged Youngsters

There is a tiered approach to participating in the RADY programme. The programme is a long-term commitment and schools should not expect to see impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners immediately. However, schools will swiftly see impact on learner and staff behaviours, understanding some of the consequences of disadvantage on learners, and on perceptions and relationships. This then contributes to changing cultures in schools which in turn impacts on learner outcomes. 14 schools have signed up for the first phase of the RADY roll-out, working with Senior leaders to embed a system of high quality teaching and learning and expectation.

### **Teaching and Learning to Support Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners (SVL)**

The Welsh Government supporting vulnerable learners Resource has been launched. This programme is open to staff from Schools and Local Authorities in North Wales. The programme focuses on 'How do you deliver classroom-based equity for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Learners?'. Commissioned by the Consortia, for the exclusive use of all schools and settings in Wales, Supporting Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners Through Effective Teaching Learning, is a bespoke, comprehensive professional support programme, drawing together evidence-based strategies that will help practitioners enhance and embed effective classroom practice. Following the launch of the materials in February, Mike Gershon delivered three sessions in May 2023 giving Senior Leaders a guided tour through the programme.

The benefits of the programme have been identified as follows:

- Support vulnerable and disadvantaged learners by developing and enhancing teaching and learning.
- Keep teaching and learning at the top of the agenda.
- Inspire teachers to think critically and creatively about their practice.
- Give teachers the tools they can use to develop their practice.
- Facilitate and sustain innovative practice within classrooms.

All materials are available via [www.supportingvulnerablelearners.cymru](http://www.supportingvulnerablelearners.cymru) and are fully bilingual.

7 schools are currently trialling this resource as part of their school development planning. They have had the opportunity to discuss these with the Resource creator, guiding them on the most effective way of using the resource.

## **WORKFORCE WELLBEING (GwE AND SCHOOLS)**

### **To support well-being for school staff across the region**

The well-being of our children and our workforce continues to be a priority, doing all we can to support the well-being of our school staff, children and young people across the region. Head teachers appreciate the input of the Link Supporting Improvement Advisers in terms of providing guidance and support for schools and clusters to develop their provision. Almost all heads noted that facilitating cluster meetings has been instrumental in sharing ideas and good practice. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

### **To support the well-being of senior leaders in schools - To provide 'Reflective Spaces', individual and group meetings for senior leaders as needed**

Sessions of 'Reflective Spaces' have been organised for schools and is continuing to have a positive impact across the region as we continue to see a demand for this kind of support. The session is facilitated through break out rooms with a specific reflection and listening model to follow. This allows colleagues the safety of a structure to follow, whilst also allowing them to listen and reflect with their peers.

## **STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS**

## **Improve parental engagement**

The Local Authorities and GwE have provided a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement and have worked with Mike Gershon to facilitate parental access to quality materials so that they also can support their children. 'Helping your Child to Learn' (HYCTL) and 'Helping your Teen to Learn' (HYTTL) materials, and the 'Revise with Mike' resource have been very well-received. The range of revision strategies has also impacted on teachers' classroom floor practices as they prepare learners for end of year examinations. A 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.

Family engagement resources have been created by a small Group of 5 Teaching Assistants (TAs). These resources consist of 4 x 1 to 1.5 hour sessions that can be delivered by TAs with parents and their children in school. They are based on the Mike Gershon "Help Your Child to Learn" resources. The packs are designed to be picked up and used with only a small amount of preparation. A meeting has been arranged for November to develop a case study from the schools who have created the Resource. During this meeting they will also give feedback on how the packs how they were received by parents. A case study will be completed from this to share with other schools and used to promote the resources. The schools who developed the resource and will be invited to share the resources their experiences in Network meetings.

A case study has been written by a school who have increased family engagement through the work of the family engagement officer. Their practice has been identified as excellent and this will be promoted through GwE, but also shared with the National Equity Group and TIS UK.

A network to support Family engagement workers is in the process of being arranged. This will be to share good practice and to have time to discuss any common issues and suggest training for future events.

Bangor University are beginning a trial of the COping on-line parenting strategy that works with the carers of looked after children and school. An initial questionnaire has gone out to schools for parents to respond to. This will support parents with developing their parenting skills in a variety of ways.

Investors in Families is being promoted in the region as a tool to support the development of Community Focused schools.

A National programme on developing a poverty strategy is being devised by the National Equity Group, to be delivered to Senior leaders across the region. This will include a parental engagement element.

## **OBJECTIVE 6 – CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL**

### **Priorities:**

**6.1 - Support schools to plan purposefully in order to support and develop learners' skills and literacy in Welsh in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.**

**6.2 - Promote the learning of the Welsh language and develop the linguistic skills of the workforce.**

**6.3 - Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'**

### **WELSH IN EDUCATION**

**Support schools to undertake purposeful planning to support and develop learners' speaking and listening skills in Welsh in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.**

A resource for leaders is being used to assist SIAs when holding discussions on the Welsh language in their link schools. School leaders who give the Welsh language a prominent place in the vision of the school have been identified, and open mornings/days are offered regionally to share effective practice in various themes, for example, developing the language skills of staff through the Sabbaticals Scheme, developing a Welsh ethos through Cymraeg Campus, celebrating Welshness and the Welsh language as a central part of school vision.

Clear outcomes have been set for planning cluster work in 2023-24, which reflect the need to develop staff understanding of various aspects of the language, for example immersion, developing skills, literacy.

The SIA for Welsh and Literacy is a member of national working groups to develop a Professional Learning (PL) programme for Welsh and English-medium schools. Priorities have been noted and a strong understanding of the need to share provision across Wales. There is also national collaboration on developing PL provision for teaching assistants and leaders.

Support packs and PL Offer for Welsh have been produced and delivered based on the Business Plan, and planning for meeting training needs is ongoing. This includes collaboration on a 3-day programme, addressing a blend of literacy and digital training which will lead to the identification of effective practice in participating schools.

There has been close collaboration with primary schools and LA advisory teams on a support pack to address specific needs. There has been collaboration with SIAs on training, providing appropriate resources and collating on Google Classroom and step by step detailed planning with teachers. Following this, it was ensured that any provision is closely monitored and that support provided has a positive impact on teaching and learning. As a result of Talk for Writing training, lessons have been delivered successfully and teachers are now undertaking more purposeful planning. SIAs have supported schools to ensure consistency and a joint understanding of needs and improvement approaches through collaboration with teachers/leaders/departments in order to ensure consistency in key messages.

#### **Promote the learning of Welsh and develop the language skills of the workforce.**

LA officers have received a request to work with cluster co-ordinators to address the development of workforce language skills in cluster plans. There are ongoing discussions taking place between providers and local authority officers, facilitated by GwE, in order to ensure practitioners are identified and supported to take part in the 2023-24 Sabbatical Scheme. This has led to ensuring the course is full, and there is a reserve list in place. An advanced course for teaching assistants has been agreed for the summer term (April-July 2024). Two cohorts of GwE staff continue to receive training, Cymraeg Gwaith.

#### **Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'**

National discussions have taken place to update and adapt the Language Charter Framework to ensure that what is in place nationally via the Siarter iaith/Cymraeg Campus co-ordinators is more consistent. Timetable has been shared for presenting an amended draft to disseminate to schools for further consultation.

### **EIN LLAIS NI**

#### **Ein Llais Ni**

The purpose of Ein Llais Ni is to highlight the importance of oracy in the school curriculum in the context of the Welsh language (across the entire age range) and to suggest ideas for strategies that schools/teachers can develop in order to encourage and promote the speaking and listening skills of learners. The work has been developed in collaboration with schools across the north Wales region and Bangor University, with Professor Enlli Thomas (Deputy Assistant Vice Chancellor – Welsh Language) who is an international expert on promoting oracy skills and bilingual teaching strategies, leading the practical research. [The Ein Llais Ni](#) website is publicly available.

The website continues to be updated and refined focusing on the Welsh medium version in the first place. Recently, the Professional Learning section has been added which contains a series of presentations that teachers, schools and clusters can use in training sessions or for reflecting on developing their practices. There is very positive feedback regarding the quality, content and format of the website and there is a national agreement to use the resource as the initial point of reference for any teacher who wishes to develop Welsh speaking and listening pedagogy.

Two part time project officers have been appointed to collaborate closely with the Project Team, and a detailed work programme developed and put in place such as collecting and arranging examples from schools to enrich the website, cluster visits and PL sessions held, cluster network and contact with individual schools. They are promoting the support, the website and successful oral teaching methods in various forums e.g. language coordinators' meeting, cluster INSET sessions.

Lead teachers are working together to exemplify and model effective pedagogy and learner progress in order to reinforce various sections of the website.

A Professional Learning support pack that provides an overview of the programme and its intentions is available for leaders, SIAs and practitioners who are prioritising Welsh oracy. The Professional Learning section of the website is starting to develop.

Work is continuing to support schools, and schools that have attended an 'On Demand' session understand the next steps. Two clusters are developing primary-secondary collaboration. Clear guidelines regarding expectations have been agreed in order to jointly develop and embed further - a Google Classroom has been set up to facilitate this.

Development of a guiding document (Kirkpatrick Model) to illustrate the courses of action that can lead to outcomes on a provision and standards level is ongoing. As a supplementary resource to this, the project team has developed an oracy self-evaluation resource to reflect on a school's current situation and plan for incorporating a whole school approach to developing and ensuring progress in pupils' oral skills. Lead teachers have given their views on the resource and are using it to identify their next steps and celebrate progress and success. This enables the teachers who are leading the programme in school to reflect.

Feedback from lead teachers and clusters is gathered continuously, leading to amending documentation/supplementary guidance. An initial meeting of English-medium schools has taken place (26/6/2023), comprising of Headteachers and local authority officers. An overview of the work and their roles in further developing Ein Llais Ni have been confirmed, and purposeful discussions are taking place on the types of amendments and the support required for the English-medium sector. Plans for a series of 2023-24 networks have been confirmed and the arrangements are under way. It is intended to invite students to the sessions throughout the year and target NQT teachers who have researched the area as part of their personal research in 2022-23.

The Steering Group continues to meet every quarter and has amended the membership of the Board to reflect the direction of the next part of the project. A report by Bangor University evaluating the effectiveness of the Ein Llais Ni project is a basis for creating a programme of work for 2023-24, in order to ensure the work is building on the success of the project in 2021-22 and proceeding in the right direction to ensure long-term impact. Discussions are continuing with Bangor University regarding the method of support and the evaluation of the work.

'Ein Llais Ni' Oracy Programme Event on 24/10/2023 – the event is for all primary, secondary and special school leaders and teachers who are interested in oracy and need to embed pedagogy within their classes. It is suitable for everyone who wants to learn more about how the Ein Llais Ni programme can support you in developing Welsh speaking and listening skills. An invitation has been extended to a range of partners including Welsh Government, Estyn and other regions.

### **Sub-project 1: Targeting practitioners and leaders of Welsh-medium and bilingual schools through the 'Ein Llais Ni' school network**

- Project Officers visit schools to collect examples of successful 'Ein Llais' quality practices. These examples will be added to the website
- One 'On Demand' session has already been held with schools as part of the project and an invitation extended to new schools.
- [A newsletter](#) was shared early in the spring term, drawing attention to the 'O Enau Plant' booklet, website content [www.einllaisni.cymru](http://www.einllaisni.cymru), a possible timetable for developing and embedding the work and [a document](#) for implementing and achieving milestones leading to possible outcomes and evaluation evidence.
- The [Ein Llais Ni](#) website is operational and comprehensive and continues to be developed - teachers have provided feedback on different sections and action is taken on their comments.
- Lead schools have been appointed following analysis of the case studies received, and they meet on a regular basis to ensure that effective models of the various elements of the website are prepared and shared.
- Clusters of schools receive 'Ein Llais Ni' training. Each cluster meeting has a specific focus based on the requirements of individual clusters. In addition, applications are received for sessions during INSET days.
- The Project Officers are in constant contact with lead teachers to embed 'Ein Llais Ni' further in schools and to collate practices and a toolkit to share more widely.

- A Network meeting has been scheduled for every half term to share good practices, make effective use of research and evaluate strengths and areas to develop schools. Specific themes have been identified for each network.

### **Sub-project 2: support to develop speaking and listening skills in English-medium schools.**

Work is ongoing with a specific number of English-medium schools to verify and adapt the original model. A project sub-group has been established, which includes LA officers led by GwE SIAs. This is leading to a joint understanding of the direction of work with schools and of the type of support, expectations and outcomes. Schools have had an opportunity to express an interest in being part of the project. A meeting between LAs and GwE has taken place to select schools to be part of the work and agree on next steps. There are 9 schools involved in this project. 'O Enau Plant' has been translated so that English-medium schools may utilise it and share with school staff.

The roles of schools and GwE are clear, and initial views on developing and adapting resources such as questionnaires and relevant strategies have been gathered. A Google Classroom has been created for sharing information and good practice, and for supporting practitioners with developing their pedagogy, utilising current research.

SIA collaborates with the leading English Medium Schools to create a collection of case studies exemplifying language acquisition strategies by promoting speaking and listening skills within the 'Ein Llais Ni' programme.

SIA collaborates with the leading schools to enrich the resource guide 'Cynllunio ar gyfer taith y Gymraeg' (Planning the journey of the Welsh language) as well as the [Resource to support self-evaluation of Welsh \(Hwb\)](#) pedagogy section, by exemplifying the how the benefits of bilingualism skills can be promoted through bilingual teaching and learning in an English-medium school/locations/streams and the language acquisition strategies that promote the above speaking and listening skills within the 'Ein Llais Ni' programme.

A bilingual interactive presentation has been created with the leading English medium schools, to accompany 'Bilingual voices - Our future speakers', which is the translation of the booklet O Enau Plant'.

### **Sub-project 3: collaborate with Bangor University / CaBan to strengthen the link with ITE.**

Working is continuing to strengthen the link with ITE / provision for prospective teachers and attention to the professional learning needs of teaching assistants. This is leading to incorporating Ein Llais Ni into elements of the course for trainees. There is close collaboration between Bangor University, GwE and specific schools to develop the enquiry skills of practitioners.

This will lead to practitioners understanding the purpose and value of teaching Welsh and speaking and listening skills. It will also improve the understanding and awareness of new teachers and teaching assistants of the pedagogy for developing speaking and listening skills, as well as developing effective communication skills through the medium of Welsh. Discussion have taken place to co-construct the intentions with Bangor University to start implementation in the next academic year.

There is valuable recognition in an Estyn report [Support for Welsh in Initial Teacher Education](#) (pg.18) to the work of a Language Mentor in an ITE Lead School for Bangor University with the teacher receiving credit for the guidance to the students and to other schools that are not familiar with the 'Ein Llais Ni' programme. The teacher was part of the original project which was the basis for developing the current resource.

An invitation has been extended to the students to attend the 'Ein Llais Ni' Conference on 24/10/23. This can lead to a proportion of the students choosing the orality of the Welsh language as their research work, as some of the students did last year.



## OBJECTIVE 7 – BUSINESS

### Priorities:

#### 7.1 - Review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to deliver local, regional and national priorities.

##### Review of current operating arrangements

Following a request by the North Wales Chief Executives, GwE has amended the Terms of Reference for a review of current operating arrangements and staffing structure. As agreed with the Chief Executives, the review will be undertaken in house, considering a range of funding cuts and will look at a more flexible and fluid structure to better manage budget pressures.

The review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure is to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to:

- respond more flexibly to pressures and cuts to the core budget from the Local Authorities and Welsh Government grant funding to change its current structure.
- ensure that schools continue to access effective support post COVID to address the impact of the pandemic on learners' progress and wellbeing.
- ensure that schools continue to access effective support for curriculum implementation and all aspects of the reform journey.
- address national expectations for school improvement as outlined in the recently published 'School Improvement Guidance (June 2022)'.
- build upon the strong foundations of a collaborative way of working that has been established regionally as we move towards a self-improving system.
- ensure that salaries are competitive with similar organisations or with Headteacher and senior leaders' salaries to allow the service to attract high quality staff.
- ensure that we can effectively adapt and evolve following any impending findings of the forthcoming Welsh Government review.
- set out what an effective school improvement service and self-improving system should look like for the future.

The main findings and recommendations will be available following clarification on 2024/25 budget and the findings of the 'Review of school improvement: roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales'.

## 2. APPENDIX:

Regional Data



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo  
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



# GwE Business Plan 2023 - 2024 Regional Data



[www.gwegogledd.cymru](http://www.gwegogledd.cymru)



@GwEGogleddCymru





## 2023 - 2024 BUSINESS PLAN

### REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2023 - 2024

#### Regional Data

#### OBJECTIVE 1 – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

##### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

###### Regional data:

The current profile for each sector identifies:

- 7 schools in statutory category [3 secondary / 4 primary];
- 19 schools causing concern [3 secondary / 16 primary];
- 27 schools where specific concerns have been identified [9 secondary / 18 primary]
- 52 schools which are kept under review [14 secondary / 38 primary].

#### OBJECTIVE 2- CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

##### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & NETWORKS

###### Regional data:

Number of practitioners from schools who attended the celebration event: 261

Number of practitioners from other locations who attended the celebration event: 77

Number of practitioners from schools who contributed to a workshop or stand: 82

TOTAL: 420

##### HUMANITIES

###### Regional data:

Response to Humanities questionnaire:

- 38 teachers responded from across the region (11.10.23).

##### LANGUAGES, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION

###### Regional data:

###### ENGLISH AND LITERACY

- Support for schools: 34

###### WELSH AND LITERACY

- Literacy Coordinators' Network meetings (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools): 14
- English Medium Schools Welsh Language Leaders Network meetings: 13

- 'Workplace Literacy 2023' project: 8
- 'Close the Reading Gap' Project: 10
- Promoting the Welsh language in English-medium schools and the Secondary Language Charter: 1
- GCSE Photography Working Group: 2
- 'Ein Llais Ni' project (this year's project lead secondary schools and English medium secondary schools that have joined Aspect 2): 9

#### **INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES / MFL**

- Power Language up-skilling course registrations: 30 schools / 39 teachers -
- Power Language – subscription: 27.9.2 - 142 schools
- OU 2023-2024 TELT Course: 7
- Sanako Project – 7 schools
- CAL: Creative writing approaches – 15 schools / 16 teachers
- CAL: Learner’s event: 17.7.23: Creative multilingualism in the context of the natural world - 2 schools / 30 learners
- School to school support – support plan: 6
- MFL Mentoring-Recruitment 23-24: 23 Schools / 30 teachers (July 23)
- Immersion training 2024 – registered schools: 23
- BLC Year 9 event - 9 Schools / 150 Learners (27.9.23)
- AATT working group 23-24: 6/7 Schools - 7/8 teachers

#### **MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY**

##### **Regional data:**

	Number of schools	Number of visits
Primary Individual subject school support	10	8
Cluster support (PRIMARY)	16 schools (4 Clusters)	6
Secondary Individual school support	16	26
Secondary MEI course	27	29 (attendees)

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

##### **SCIENCE**

##### **Regional data:**

- Bespoke school visits Secondary (Quarter 2): 3

- Bespoke school visits Primary (Quarter 2): 21
- Network Meetings: 74
- Primary Science: 3 - 8 Practitioners attended Workshop: 21

## **DIGITAL**

### **Regional data:**

- 90% of the region's clusters engage with the digital facilitators programme.
- Number of clusters invited to the 'catch up' session for new clusters or those yet to start the work: 11

## **EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16**

### **Regional data:**

#### **TRANSITION**

- Pedagogy transition project – 12 clusters across all 6 LAs
- Attendance at Transition workshops in Curriculum for Wales marketplace showcase, 22/06/23 – 61 across all 6 LAs
- Cluster visits by SIAs – continuous across region

#### **ASSESSMENT**

- 8 sessions on 3 Purposes of Assessment delivered across the region in May - June 2023
- 7 sessions delivered across the region on On-Entry assessments in June 2023
- 2 sessions on 3 Purposes of Assessment delivered across the region in October 2023
- 2 sessions delivered across the region on On-Entry assessments in September 2023 – around 40 attended the Welsh language session and over 70 attended the English medium session.
- Clusters and individual school across the region will continue to receive support as and when requested including exemplar policy, simple and effective templates as well presentations on successful emerging assessment processes across the region.

## **OBJECTIVE 3 – DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **CONTRIBUTION OF AOLE AND SUBJECT NETWORKS TO IMPROVE TEACHING**

#### **Regional data:**

- Mark Burns – Teaching Backwards event: 76
- Network meeting: 41

### **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (RESEARCH AND ENQUIRY) (RILL)**

#### **Regional data:**

- Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – Phase 3 (Projects 1 and 2): 39

- Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR): 13
- Inclusive Teaching of Early Numeracy (i-TEN) in mainstream primary schools: TBC
- Developing and Evaluating Mainstream Spelling Instruction (DEMSI): TBC

### 3-8 EDUCATION

#### Regional data:

Bespoke support for schools

- Total: 26

Bespoke support for clusters

- Total: 6

On-Entry Assessment training

- Total: 90

### POST 16

#### Regional data:

- Uptake of ALPs upload service: All schools
- Uptake of ALPs monitoring progress service: 6
- Sign up for cross regional National Leadership Development Programme: 9
- Attendance at cross regional PL event: 10

### ITE

#### Regional data:

- Special Schools NQT workshop 09/06/23 – 18+ attendances
- CaBan stand at CfW marketplace – 600+ attendances
- CaBan ALN ITE stakeholder meeting - 48

## OBJECTIVE 4 - LEADERSHIP

### LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES

#### Regional data:

1. Middle Leadership Development Programme	126
2. Senior Leaders Development Programme	111
3. Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (preparing for NPQH)	33
4. New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme	30
5. Experienced Headteacher Development Programme	6

**Regional data:**

## Newly appointed teaching assistants

	2023-24
Regional	12

## Teaching assistants at work

Regional	165
----------	-----

## Prospective HLTA Cycle 6

Regional	25
----------	----

## Cycle 5 HLTA Status Assessments

Regional	34
----------	----

## HLTA Assessors

Regional	25
----------	----

## Outstanding Teaching Assistant

Regional	11
----------	----

## Dyslexia Training

Regional	15
----------	----

**SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME****Regional data:**

Number of schools / clusters / leagues that are part of the programme: 255 / 46

Number of Peer Reviewers trained: 329

Number of Improvement Facilitators trained: 290

**OBJECTIVE 5 – A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE****PDG / LAC****Regional data:**

- TIS diploma GwE 14 and 15 are part way through, training an additional 48 practitioners, across the region.
- 14 schools have signed up for the first phase of the RADY roll-out.
- Support Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners (SVL) - 7 schools are currently trialling this resource.

**OBJECTIVE 6 – CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL****WELSH IN EDUCATION (PL / SIARTER IAITH / CYMRAEG CAMPUS)****Regional data:**

- 14 registered and accepted on the Sabbatical Course 23-24

- 23 have submitted an application form

#### EIN LLAIS NI

#### Regional data:

- Ein Llais Ni Schools (English medium) Project 2: 9



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo  
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

## REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2023

---

**Report by:** Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

**Subject:** GwE Risk Register

---

### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the latest GwE Risk Register to the Joint Committee.

### 2.0 Background

2.1 The purpose of the risk register is to formalise the process of identifying risks and consequently taking action to mitigate the risk.

2.2 Effective management of the region's risks will enable GwE to support the region's strategic objectives and priorities, make effective use of resources, and deliver outcomes as intended.

### 3.0 Considerations

3.1 The GwE Risk Register is a live document which is kept under regular review. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis & also when new risks are identified where the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.

3.2 All of the risks have been reviewed and updated. Amendments to the Register have been highlighted in red.

3.3 It is suggested to remove risk 7 and 10, and add risk 13.

3.4 The following risk matrix has been followed in determining the risk status.

Risk Matrix						
		4	3	2	1	
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Almost Certain</b>	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)	A
	<b>Likely</b>	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)	B
	<b>Possible</b>	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)	C
	<b>Unlikely</b>	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	D
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Extreme</b>	
		<b>Impact</b>				

#### 4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to review and approve the content of the register.
- 4.2 Determine whether there are any risks that the Joint Committee wish to bring to the attention of their respective Cabinet’s etc.

#### 5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Effective management of risks and financial controls help to monitor costs and enable value for money.

#### 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 The GwE Senior Leadership Team and the GwE Management Board.

**9.0 Appendices**

9.1 GwE Risk Register.

---

**OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS**

**Monitoring Officer:**

A risk review system is a fundamental element in effective governance. It is essential that the Joint Committee gives detailed consideration to the assessment and response.

**Statutory Finance Officer:**

GwE's risk register is in a standard format and includes appropriate information. I am satisfied that the contents of the register are a fair reflection of situation and I will support GwE's Managing Director in managing the risks that GwE faces.

RISK NUMBER	SUMMARY	GwE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK	IMPACT OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	CURRENT ACTIVITIES / MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK / OVERALL RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	RISK OWNER	FUTURE ACTIONS
1	Financial	ALL	Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affects strategic long term planning.	M	M/H	2A	Medium Term Financial Plan & VFM Policy & Framework in place. Plans were developed in conjunction with the Local Authority's Section 151 Officer. The Medium Term Financial Plan includes details regarding the financial pressure on GwE and models scenarios. Assumptions are made regarding the future financial position. Some staff are appointed on secondment to ensure flexibility within the service to react quickly to any changes. The Welsh Government's draft grant settlement was announced this year with a 3 year budget outline. The outline suggests cuts to the grant budget are imminent.	M	2B	MD / PM	Following the Westminster Government's comprehensive spending review and identification of the new Welsh Government's priorities, GwE has, and is continuing to work with Section 151 Officer to review possible budgetary pressures for 2023/24 and beyond. Work with Section 151 Officer to review possible future budgetary pressures (given to the potential impact of Covid-19). Work with the Section 151 Officer to review the MTFP & consult with chief officers from constituent authorities regarding the impact of any potential funding cuts. GwE has undertaken a review of the budget and the workforce to ensure that flexible planning can be done for a wide range of outcomes, and is awaiting the decision of the Chief Executives. Main findings and recommendations will be available following clarification on the 2024/25 budget, and the findings of the 'Review of school improvement: roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales'.
2	Financial	ALL	Uncertainty regarding grant funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affects the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.	H	H	1A	Assumptions made regarding future funding situation. A number of appointments made on secondment basis to ensure flexibility within the service to respond quickly to any changes, but this places pressure on the budget. Medium Term Financial Plan in place. The plan was developed in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer. The medium term financial plan includes the financial pressures on GwE and models various situations. Financial modelling work being implemented to steer decisions. <b>Indicative grant allocations for the financial year 2023/24 were received from the Welsh Government in March 2023. However, the offer letter with final allocations and terms &amp; conditions are expected by the end of May 2023. No information has yet been shared regarding the 2024/25 grants budget.</b>	H	2A	MD / PM / Management Board	Work with Section 151 Officer to review Medium Term Financial Plan & Value for Money Policy & Framework to be reviewed periodically. Liaise with WG officials, constituent authorities' education Cabinet members and heads of education, to seek greater transparency and certainty regarding specific grant funding.
3	GwE operating arrangements and staffing structure	ALL	GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure do not meet Welsh Government or regional direction in going forward.	H	M/H	2A	MB, JC and Chief Executives have agreed to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that it meets Welsh Government and Regional direction in going forward. Work ongoing to further evolve and strengthen the current partnership working with Local Authorities to provide clarity, reduce duplication and bureaucracy, and to further improve effectiveness of delivery.	M / L	2C	MD/ MB/JC	Undertake review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure during Summer / Autumn 2023 to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured. Ensure that the Welsh Government and GwE reviews are closely aligned and complementary. GwE has undertaken a review of the budget and the workforce to ensure that flexible planning can be done for a wide range of outcomes, and is awaiting the decision of the Chief Executives. Main findings and recommendations will be available following receipt of information on the 2024/25 budget, and the findings of the 'Review of school improvement: roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales'.
4	Recruitment and succession planning	ALL	Difficulties in recruitment and succession planning within the service as salaries are not competitive with similar organisations or with Headteacher and senior leaders' salaries.	H	M/H	2A	Need to ensure that the organisational structures' accompanying salaries are competitive with similar organisations to allow future successful succession planning and attract high quality staff. <b>Discussions are ongoing with Cyngor Gwynedd in order to align GwE salaries with the salary increases of officers within the Host Authority.</b>	M	2B/2C	MD/MB/JC	Include as part of review of current operating arrangements and staffing structure (as outlined under Risk Number 3).
5	Leadership Development	1, 4 & 6	Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region especially Welsh medium. <b>Factors that contribute to this are issues relating to budgets, support for attendance and behavior issues, and constant action by Teachers' Unions.</b>	M/H	M/H	2A	The National Leadership Development Programmes support the development of practitioners' leadership skills at each milestone of the professional learning pathway. The Leadership Group has worked with other regions to deliver effective workforce development programmes to ensure high quality leadership. The Group has successfully overcome challenges as a result of the constraints of the pandemic and has continued to ensure equity of access to all leadership development programs - ie a blended / virtual approach and updating the content virtually to meet the needs of leaders where those needs are constantly changing. Working with the Authorities, we will ensure access to a range of training to improve the Welsh language skills of the education workforce in order to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh. Collaborate with Bangor University, National College of Learning Welsh, Welsh Government, Authorities to provide rich programme for developing language skills and staff confidence. Collaborate with CABAN / Bangor University to secure Welsh medium placements for ITE students. Identify the workforce that provides Welsh-medium education - plan for further development (assistants, teachers, leaders) through collaboration with the LAs. <b>Continue to share messages through LA / GwE forums to identify recruitment and succession planning problems.</b>	M	2B	MD / AD	Continue to offer a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities in relation to leadership developmental programmes and developing workforce language skills in order to develop present and future leaders.

6	School Improvement	1	Pace of moving deep routed issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.	H	H	2A	Intensive intervention and support programs are in place in these schools that focus on improving learning and teaching; developing tracking and assessment systems; improve leadership at all levels and further develop accountability arrangements and processes for robust self-evaluation and improvement planning. GwE will work closely with the LAs, Estyn and Welsh Government to drive the necessary improvements	M/H	2B/C	MD/AD/ Senior Secondary Lead	From Autumn 2023, WG will once again publish key performance indicators for secondary schools. Evaluation processes in schools for determining progress against key recommendations need to capture a broad range of evidence in line with expectations of new SIG. the effectiveness of regional structure and processes for schools causing concern need to be kept under constant review by the Management Board Task Group.
7	Preparations for the Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales	ALL	The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations.	H	H	2A	GwE has continued to support schools in their preparations for the Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision to meet the diverse needs of schools during the pandemic. GwE has worked with the regional consortia, Estyn and the Welsh Government to identify the expectations on schools and settings for reform as implementation of Curriculum for Wales begins. GwE continues to work in close partnership with the other regional consortia to develop a national professional learning offer that integrates all aspects of the wider reform journey including Schools as Learning Organisations, Welsh Language and the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Bill. This cross-regional offer is aimed at supporting all school practitioners through a range of online workshops, and includes an increasing number of case studies from schools sharing their emerging practice and a focus on developing progression within and across AOELs. GwE staff have also developed guidance and exemplar models for whole school curriculum design, curriculum planning and assessment to support leaders and teachers. Secondary schools have reflected on their preparations and a sharing event in March 2023 enabled practitioners to share their practice and lessons learnt from implementing Curriculum for Wales in Year 7. Since September 2021, the regional Curriculum for Wales network has been established enabling practitioners across the region as part of GwE's ongoing programme of support for schools. Over 100 school practitioners across the region are committed to being involved in this work and will be sharing their emerging practice of local curriculum in a regional Market Place sharing event in June 2023.	M	2B	Senior-Lead CFW	Continue to support all secondary schools to prepare for the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 in line with the national system expectations highlighted in the 'The Journey to 2022'. Continue to support all settings to evaluate and refine their curriculum in line with school improvement guidance and to reflect upon shared understanding of progression of all learners. Continue to facilitate regional Curriculum for Wales network working in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs to develop effective AOEL practice that will help schools on the Reform Journey. All regional meeting resources and recordings available on the GwE website along with resources and examples of design and planning work. Supporting Improvement Advisors continue to offer bespoke support at school and cluster/alliance level as identified in support plans. Continue to engage with all schools through the regional PL proposal and facilitate collaboration across the 3-16 continuum in line with the school and cluster action plan. Continue with GwE team meetings to support the making sense of the Curriculum for Wales. Develop consistent messages across all networks by collecting key messages, support resources, examples of how schools can engage and misconceptions. Continue to work with Bangor University and Lead Professional Inquiry schools to develop a professional inquiry role within learning and teaching.
8	Standards	ALL	Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey especially in the secondary sector.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government and Estyn have taken place over the period to influence national intentions regarding the development of a new accountability framework.	M	2B/2C	AD / Senior Secondary Lead	Continue to work closely with Welsh Government, other consortia, local authorities and Estyn to ensure that schools fully understand the direction of travel outlined in the new SIG and that regional accountability processes and structures support schools to effectively address the requirements of the reform journey.
9	Standards	ALL	Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC held over the period to influence direction.	M	2B/2C	AD / Senior Secondary Lead	Continue to contribute to consultation sessions and to the work of relevant networks and forums to influence direction.
10	Standards	ALL	Coherence and range of Reform Journey and its impact on systemic leadership between WG, middle tier and schools with an increasing level of funding going directly from WG to schools.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government and middle tier held to influence direction.	M	2B	MD/AD	Continue to work closely with Welsh Government, other regions, local authorities and Estyn to influence direction.
11	School Improvement	ALL	Implementing the School improvement guidance	M/H	M	2B	Working within the new SIG will enable newer ways of working for all stakeholders. GwE 2023-26 business plan sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning, and increase aspiration to impact on standards. As a service, we will: ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively; support leaders working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all; support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing action; strengthen multi agency and 'team around the school' approaches with schools causing concern and strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.	M / L	2C	MD/MB/JC	Continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure that national developments feed into regional work and are fully evaluated and impact captured. GwE and the Local Authorities via the Management Board and their Task Group will continue to monitor the effectiveness of regional approaches to identify, create, deliver and monitor Schools Support Plans. The Task Group will explore potential avenues for stronger collaboration across LAs to build capacity and ensure greater consistency of support whilst ensuring that we adopt a holistic and transparent approach in term of reporting and sharing of information. Continue to collaborate with WG to prepare to consult on the School Improvement Framework.
12	Union climate	ALL	Current Union climate.	H	H	2A	Continue to communicate and work with Welsh Government and Unions on how best to support schools with implementing non-statutory School Improvement Guidance under current Union climate.	M	2B	MD/AD	Continue to work with Welsh Governemnt and Unions to ensure effective and successful working relationship.

13	School Improvement	ALL	Continuous inspection and monitoring of the service's work having impact on GwE's core work and on the welfare and morale of staff.	M/H	M	2B	There is a clear and robust accountability framework in GwE. The Business Planning Framework that is in place ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level. It provides a structure for monitoring progress effectively. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the Business Plan will be reported through our governance groups. The regional service evaluates its work regularly and uses information effectively to ensure that areas for improvement are identified swiftly and are firmly addressed via detailed business planning. There is a clear and effective process to ensure that the regional service meets Welsh Government and Local Authorities corporate priorities and targets. Supporting the well-being and resilience of staff has been identified as one of the service's priorities.	M	2B/C	MD/MB/JC	Hold discussions with the Welsh Government, Estyn and Local Authorities to try to reduce the frequency of visits and avoid duplication.
----	--------------------	-----	---	-----	---	----	---	---	------	----------	---



## REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2023

---

**Report by:** Arwyn Thomas - GwE Managing Director

**Subject:** GwE Professional Learning Support

---

### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To share information with Joint Committee members regarding our Professional Learning Offer and offer suggestions as to how our approaches can evolve in the future.

### 2.0 Background

2.1 GwE produces a comprehensive Professional Learning offer that is varied, broad and fit for purpose. Schools appreciate this Offer and it supports our other support streams.

2.2 The Professional Learning Offer is one part of the support that GwE offers to schools. The support as a whole includes:

- Specific support for schools that are in Estyn follow-up categories or schools that meet the Regional definition of 'Schools Causing Concern'. This support is specifically targeted and makes use of the specialties of our team of Advisers.
- Support for schools through their Link Supporting Improvement Advisers. This support is captured in a Support Plan which is drawn up jointly with school leaders. This support can come from the general Professional Learning Offer or the Consultant will broker amongst the team or offer this support directly.
- Promote close collaboration among schools, with a specific focus on Cluster and Alliance collaboration. To facilitate this, we operate a Schools Partnership Programme.
- Promote and support subject, disciplinary and age/sector specific networks to share their successful practices. These networks are also used to share messages and the latest information among the workforce.

2.3 For an overview of the structure of our support to schools which shows how the above interweave, please see: ***APPENDIX A - GwE Professional Learning Offer in the context of our support for schools.***

---

- 2.4 The Offer is available to all practitioners in north Wales in the form of a catalogue that is updated on a regular basis. Schools receive a Bulletin every fortnight to remind them of current Professional Learning and provide information regarding registration. The Professional Learning Offer may be accessed from our website: [GwE Professional Offer - GwE \(gwegogledd.cymru\)](https://www.gwegogledd.cymru)
- 2.5 The Offer is formulated by a cross-section of Supporting Improvement Advisers. It is in response to Local, Regional and National priorities and outcomes arising from the Business Plan.
- 2.6 We have comprehensive processes in place to identify Professional Learning needs in our schools. Through our digital recording processes using Excel and OneDrive we can extract information to identify and group the priorities of every school.
- 2.7 The Offer this year has been structured to respond to the vision of our Service for Professional Learning, which is on three tiers. This system ensures that messages are disseminated to Leaders, there is practical support for practitioners and an opportunity to collaborate and share achievements. For an overview of our vision for Professional Learning, please see: **APPENDIX B - GwE Vision for Professional Learning**
- 2.8 We evaluate the effectiveness of our Offer via our Business Plan quarterly monitoring processes. We have evolved our monitoring processes this year to consider impact on various levels - impact on provision/teaching and impact on learners' learning. We have processes to capture the general impact of our Offer on an individual school/cluster level, as well as processes to target and sample in order to show impact against our outcomes as a Service. We are working to embed these processes this year.
- 3.0 **Matters for consideration**
- 3.1 Based on feedback from schools, we wish to further refine our processes to ensure a more relevant timetable and make the Offer more accessible to schools. An overview of the proposed structure and timetable can be seen here: **APPENDIX C - Proposed Timeline and Structure - The Business Plan and the Professional Learning Offer.**
- 3.2 It is suggested that the Offer should be evolved to focus more specifically on developing effective approaches rather than an offer that responds to areas, aspects, disciplines or specific subjects.
- 3.3 This would support schools to develop as self-improving organisations with schools having a greater role in leading and supporting each other on an individual level and a cluster/alliance level.
- 3.4 It will also contribute to formulating an Offer with research and innovation at its core, and which is based on the most current and successful emerging practice.
- 3.5 Therefore, the proposed Core Professional Learning Offer would:
- Be based on service Objectives/Outcomes
  - Focus on approaches where this could be applied to other situations (with a specific focus on developing schools as self-improving organisations)

- Developmental Programmes - offering a series of sessions and not separate training
- An expectation that attendees are 'committed to action' in all Programmes, identifying what they will undertake back in their schools based on the developmental sessions.
- Incorporate the principles of GwE Professional Learning - Leaders / Practitioners / Networks
- Encourage Cluster collaboration approaches
- Be based on robust research and evaluated internally (and externally)
- Lead to Support Packages

3.6 In this day and age, it must be considered how we can work effectively and generate an income for the Service, formulating a clear strategy that maximises our strengths and expertise.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

4.1 The Joint-Committee is asked to approve the content of the report and plans to develop and evolve our Professional Learning Offer in the future.

#### **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.

---

### **OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

#### **Monitoring Officer:**

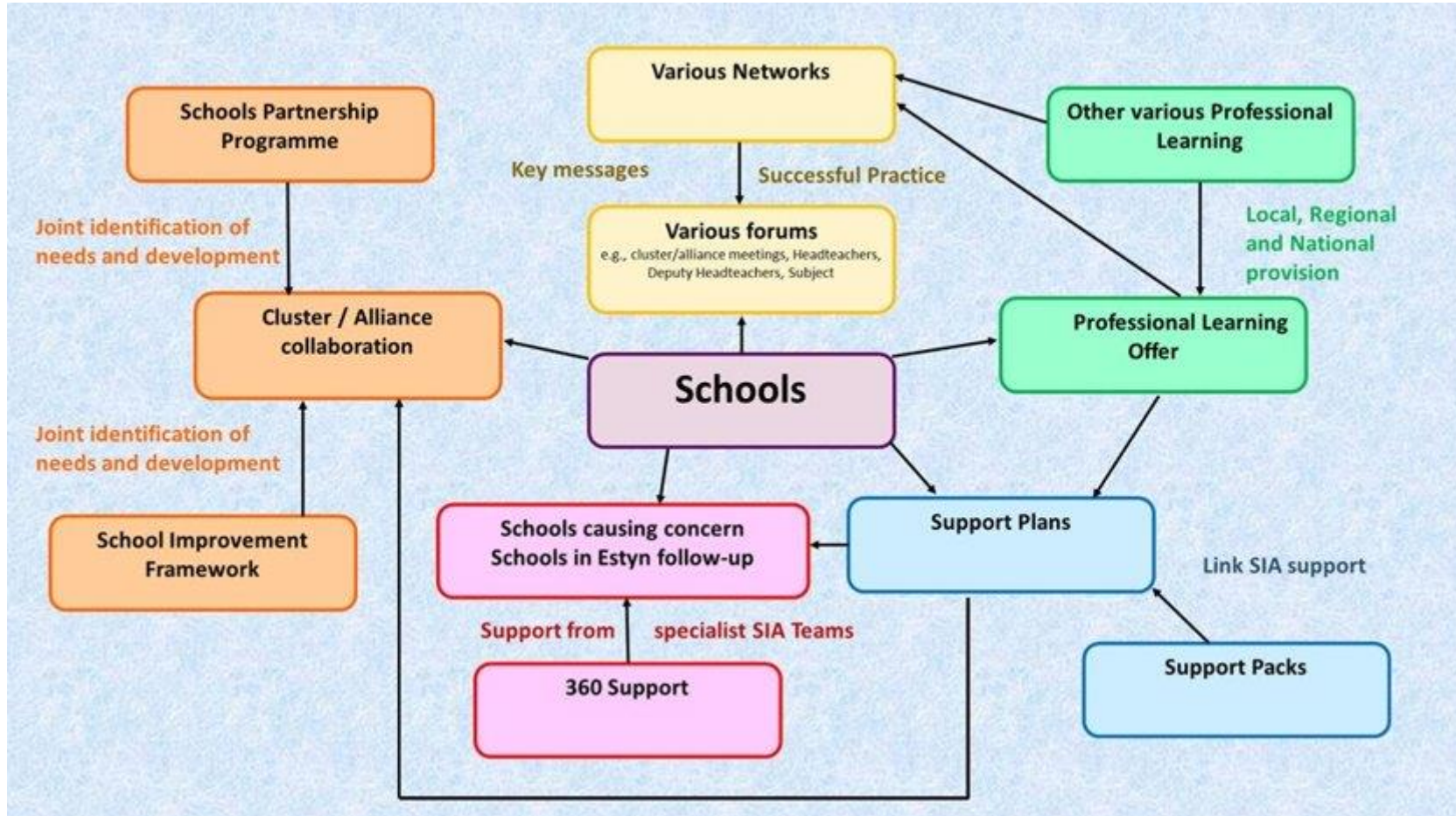
Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

#### **Statutory Finance Officer:**

The decision sought is that the Joint Committee approves the information on the GwE Professional Learning Proposal, and the suggestions for evolving the approaches into the future. This does not create a financial commitment and additional costs and/or income will be considered as these plans develop. I therefore have no objection to the recommendation from the perspective of financial propriety.

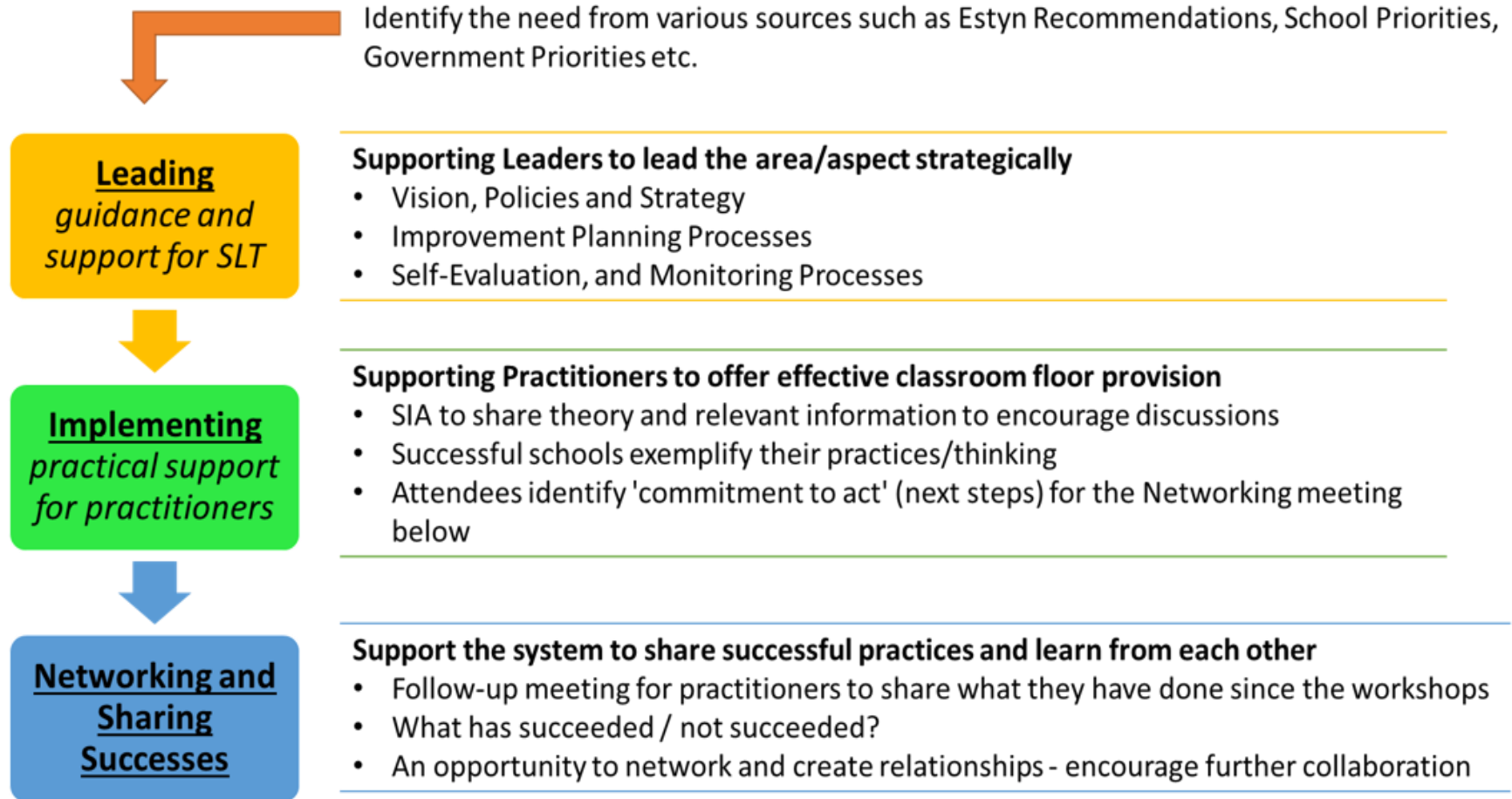


APPENDIX A - GwE Professional Learning Offer in the context of our support for schools

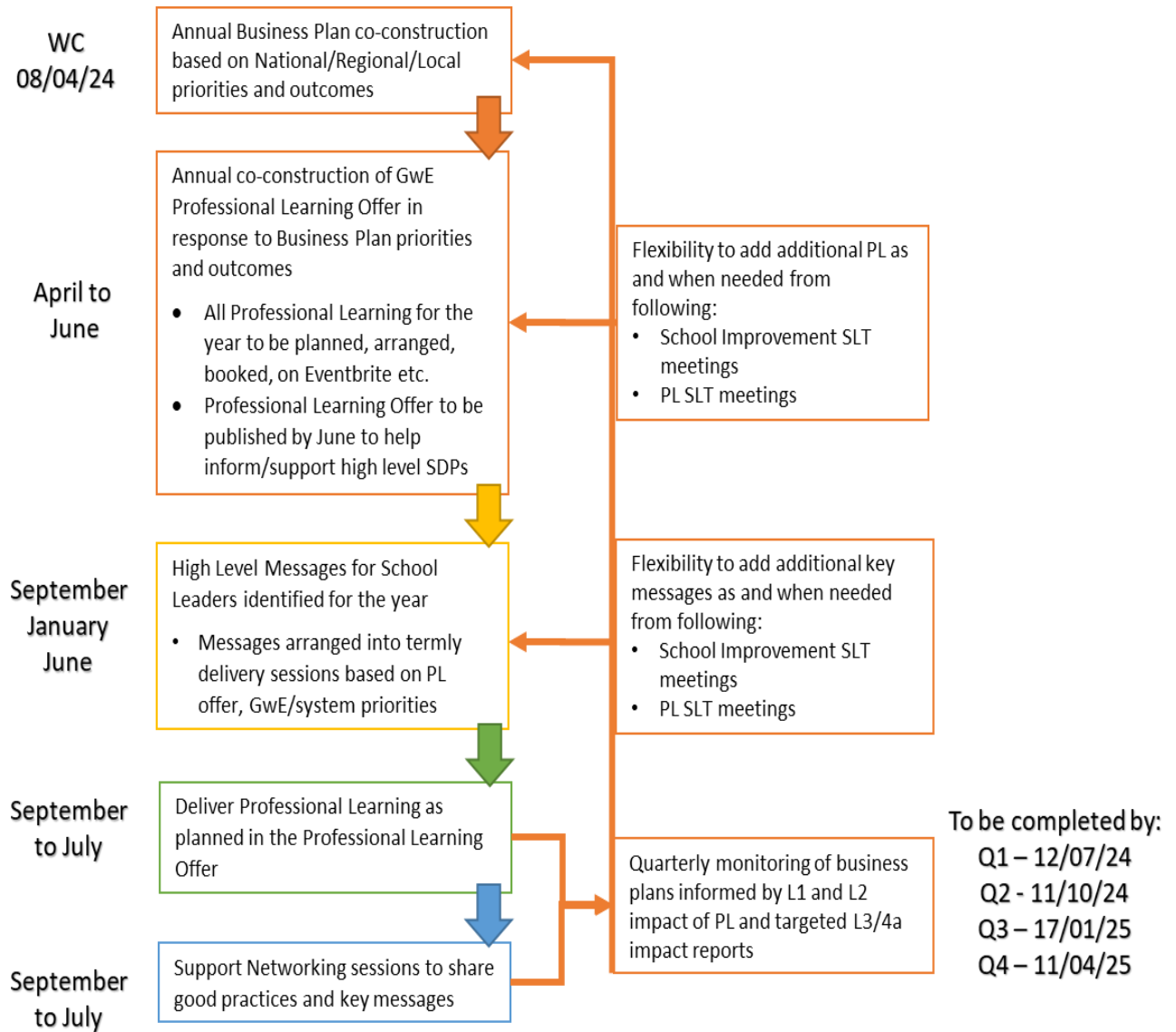




**APPENDIX B- GwE Vision for Professional Learning**



**APPENDIX C - Proposed Timeline and Structure - The Business Plan and the Professional Learning Offer**







## REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2023

---

**Report by:** Alwyn Jones, GwE Assistant Director

**Subject:** Estyn Consultation - Future inspection arrangements for local government education services and school improvement services

---

### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1. To provide the Joint Committee with a formal record of the response to the Estyn Consultation – ‘Future inspection arrangements for local government education services and school improvement services’.

### 2.0 Background

2.1. From September 2024, Estyn will be introducing new inspection arrangements for education providers in Wales. Estyn have already consulted with individuals and organisations in the youth services, schools and PRU sectors, and now want to ask for views from other sectors. These are:

- Welsh for adults
- Post-16 settings (further education, adult learning in the community and independent specialist colleges)
- local government education service

2.2 The consultation which opened on 29 September 2023 until 30 November 2023, seeks the views of individuals and organisations working in, or interacting with, education and training providers, to help inform how Estyn can best develop their inspection guidance and approaches from 2024 onwards. The response - Appendix 1 - on behalf of GwE's Joint Committee, was submitted on 27/11/2023.

### **3.0 Considerations**

3.1. The questionnaire invites views about the changes Estyn are proposing to their inspection arrangements in the local government education services sector, under the following headings:

- Separate inspections of school improvement services and other services provided through a formal partnership arrangement.
- Notification for LGES and school improvement services' inspections
- Local inspection questions
- Inspection Guidance for LGES, School improvement services and services provided through formal partnerships.
- Follow-up activity
- Reporting requirements
- Effective Practice
- Link inspector work
- Schools and PRUs in special measures.

### **4.0 Recommendations**

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to formally note the content of the response to the Estyn consultation.

### **5.0 Financial implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this 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 Consultation with GwE Management Board and the Joint Committee.

### **9.0 Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1 – Response to Estyn Consultation 'Future inspection arrangements for local government education services and school improvement services'

**OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

**Monitoring Officer:**

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective

**Statutory Finance Officer:**

No comments to add to the report from the perspective of financial propriety.

## **Future inspection arrangements for local government education services and school improvement services - consultation**

Dear colleagues,

We invite you to share your views about the changes we are proposing to our inspection arrangements in the local government education services sector. The feedback on our current arrangements from our key stakeholders has been very positive and we propose to continue with many aspects of our current inspection approaches. However, there are aspects we wish to approach differently so that we can consider more effectively the work of the local government education sector, and these form the main basis for this consultation. The consultation also includes proposals relating to our link inspector work, where we are considering building on the more focused topic-based approaches we have been piloting this year.

The consultation will be open on 29 September and will close on 30 November.

**Who is this consultation for?**

**This consultation is for all who have an interest in the inspection and link inspector arrangements for local government education services and school improvement services, including:**

Education professionals and leaders across the sector, including staff from school improvement services

Governors, leaders and staff from schools and NM settings (primary, secondary, PRUs, all age, special)

Elected members

Parents and carers

Public and voluntary sector stakeholders

**Your views will help inform how we can best develop our inspection guidance and approaches from 2024 onwards.**

### **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

The information you provide will be held by Estyn. If you disclose your identity, it will be treated in confidence, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Estyn will use an independent company to assist with general data analysis, this will not include the transfer of personal information about individuals. The analysis report will include only general information and will not name or identify any individuals. The information will be used to help improve how we inspect education and training in Wales.

Here is a link to our [Privacy Notice](#).

## 2. Key information about you

1. Please choose one option below which best describes the capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire.

- Local authority officer
- Elected member
- Senior leader in schools/PRUs
- Teacher or support staff
- School governor
- School pupil
- Parent or carer
- Other (please specify):

Chair of GwE Joint Committee (on behalf of the six North Wales Education Portfolio Leads).

2. Which sector do you represent? Please select all relevant options.

- Local authority
- Regional consortia / school improvement service
- Primary/Secondary/All age schools; Special; PRUs
- Non-Maintained sector
- Voluntary sector
- Other (please specify):

## 3. Separate inspections of school improvement services and other services provided through a formal partnership arrangement.

3. We propose to carry out separate inspection of school improvement services and services provided through a formal partnership of two or more local authorities. The school improvement services' inspections and other services provided through formal partnership agreements inspections will look at the quality and impact of the services with local inspection questions providing specific focus areas for this work.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree



Please use the box below to give us your opinions and to explain why you've chosen the option above:

School Improvement Services are also inspected as part of Local Authority inspections. This leads to duplication and means that the same School Improvement Services provided through regional consortia are inspected several times over by different HMIs during an inspection cycle. Deploying HMIs that know the Service well to each LA inspection would ensure greater consistency and reduce duplication.

In the North Wales region, GwE would potentially be involved in a minimum of fourteen inspections during an inspection cycle (if it includes full and interim inspections). In addition, there may be follow-up visits if the Local Authority or regional consortium go into a follow-up category. Estyn also undertake LALI visits to each Local Authority (that include GwE staff) and to GwE on a termly basis. This has huge implications on capacity for the regional consortium.

How will Estyn ensure that there is a common and fair framework for inspecting school improvement services provided through regional consortia and those Local Authorities that have their own school improvement service? Is there duplication with LGES inspections?

In addition, not all consortia/partnership are undertaking the same responsibilities.

In GwE, the region is not responsible for supporting schools in areas such as ALN, attendance, behaviour and inclusion. Partneriaeth in South-West Wales, for example, are responsible for the PL offer but not the school improvement function. In such a complex landscape, how will Estyn ensure that the framework captures this nuanced approach? And will Estyn have the capacity to address this during an inspection week?

If School Improvement Services are inspected separately then this could be carried out as a rolling programme, each visit focused on specific themes. This approach could allow for a greater understanding and evaluation of impact than what could be captured if the inspection were an 'event'. This would also allow for an ongoing dialogue with Estyn and give continuous confidence and assurances to stakeholders via an annual published written report.

#### 4. Notification for LGES and school improvement services' inspections

**4. We currently provide a 10-week notification for a LGES inspection. This allows us to carry out the pre-inspection activities such as discussing and finalising the local inspection questions, issuing the citizen and headteacher questionnaires and holding the pre-meetings with key stakeholders prior to the inspection week.**

**We propose to shorten the notification period from ten to eight weeks. This would still allow us sufficient time to carry out the pre-inspection activities. We will also notify the local authority that we will inspect their youth services as a stand-alone inspection four weeks into the LGES notification period. This will enable us to consider and include the key messages from the Youth inspection in our LGES inspection.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to shorten the notification period for a LGES inspection to eight weeks?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to explain why you've chosen the option above or to suggest an alternative notification period:

The current 10-week notification is appropriate. However, we have no objection for this to be reduced to 8 weeks (allowing for school and bank holidays).

##### **5. Notification for school improvement services inspection and other services provided through formal partnerships.**

**We propose to have a five-week notification period for a school improvement service inspection and inspections of other services provided through formal partnerships. This will also provide us with the time to discuss and finalise the local inspection questions and issue and analyse the relevant questionnaires before our on-site visits.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to have a notification period of five weeks for the school improvement services' inspections?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and to explain why you've chosen above or to suggest an alternative notification period:

The notification period should be the same as for LGES inspections. There is no rationale for it to differ. However, as noted in Section 3, we are of the view that School Improvement Services should be inspected on a rolling annual programme with a focused theme.

## **5. Local inspection questions**

**6. We propose to continue with developing local inspection questions and discuss and finalise these with the local authority, school improvement service or other services provided through formal partnerships. We think local inspection questions provide a proportionate focus for our inspection work, whilst also ensuring the inspections cover the most important areas.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should continue to use 'local inspection questions' on our LGES inspections?**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

These should be agreed with the local authority and school improvement services and have clear rationale for being included.

As noted in Section 3 above, we are of the view that School Improvement Services should be inspected on a rolling annual programme with a focused theme.

**7. We also propose to develop local inspection questions for our school improvement services inspections as well as our inspections of services provided through formal partnerships.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should have local inspection questions for our school improvement services' inspections and for services provided through formal partnerships?**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

As noted under Section 3 above – we believe that School Improvement Services inspections should be a rolling programme with a focused theme. This would provide an ongoing dialogue with Estyn and give continuous confidence and assurances to stakeholders through an annual published written report. 'Local Questions' or specific themes could be agreed with the School Improvement Services on an annual basis.

**6. Inspection Guidance for LGES, School improvement services and services provided through formal partnerships.**

**8. Our current inspection guidance has three inspection areas – outcomes, education services and leadership. We propose to combine the outcomes and services areas into one inspection area which we are calling 'education services and their impact'. We think strengthening the link between actions and outcomes will make our reports more accessible. For example, we could report on the work the local authority is undertaking to improve attendance and make the link to the difference it is making to the attendance rates in its schools and PRUs.**

**Current inspection areas**

**IA1 Outcomes**

**IA2 Education services**

**IA3 Leadership**

**Our proposed inspection areas**

**IA1: Education services and their impact**

**IA2: Leading and improving**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to combine the outcomes and services areas into one inspection area for our LGES, school improvement services and services provided through formal partnerships inspections?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

There needs to be a clear understanding and agreement of what 'impact' should look like in the short, medium and long term. In the past, the 'impact' of School Improvement Services has been inappropriately linked to learners' progress and end of key stage performance indicators. School leaders and teachers are the ones who have direct impact on learner progress.

School Improvement Services influence the practice and behaviour of the adults working in schools and should be judged on the quality of the support provided and its impact on practice. School Improvement Services should work with schools to support them in capturing impact on pupil progress as part of their school self-evaluation processes. There also needs to be a clear understanding of the timescale required to evidence impact and what would be the expected outcome over time.

There should be an agreed understanding of who 'owns' the impact. For example, how much impact on learner progress, if any, would be expected if a practitioner attends a one-day professional learning session? Pupil progress is affected by a wide range of factors such as the ability of the individual teachers, level of attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. Thus, it is a complex process to accurately measure the direct impact of support for teaching on pupil learning.

## 7. Follow-up activity

### 9. Replacing our current approach with regular monitoring visits.

Currently, when a local government education service is judged to be causing significant concern, we arrange an improvement conference to discuss and agree a forward work plan to address the recommendations. The attendees at this conference are the key stakeholders involved in carrying out and supporting the local authority's improvement plan.

Around a year later, we arrange a 'progress conference' which considers the progress against the targets in the improvement plan. We usually arrange a monitoring visit around a year after the progress conference. The monitoring visit involves a team of inspectors visiting the local authority to evaluate the progress against the plans and determine whether the local authority has made sufficient improvements and does not cause significant concern. The timing of the monitoring visit depends on the rate of progress made by the local authority in addressing the areas requiring improvement.

We propose that our follow-up process will continue to start with an improvement conference, but that the subsequent activities are monitoring visits looking at specific recommendations over time. We believe this approach is more helpful to local authorities as it gives them direct feedback on their work and helps them to consider their next steps. It also provides better opportunities for them to demonstrate their progress against the improvement priorities. Once we have judged the local authority has made sufficient progress against all the recommendations, they will be removed from follow up.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to use regular monitoring visits as part of our follow-up activities in local authorities causing significant concern?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

It would be useful if, during monitoring visits to evaluate progress against specific recommendations, that Estyn had the flexibility to remove some recommendations if they are assured that strong progress has been made. The Local Authority would continue to focus on the remaining recommendations until they are deemed to have made sufficient progress against all of them and removed from follow-up.

**10. We propose to develop the same follow-up processes for a school improvement service or a service that is provided through formal partnerships which is 'causing significant concern'.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to follow-up for a school improvement service or a service that is provided through formal partnership that is causing significant concern?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

This would have potential ramifications on individual Local Authorities, e.g., if no issues had been identified with School Improvement Services as part of their own inspection, but that concerns were raised about the consortia's work during a regional consortia inspection that placed them in a follow-up category.

This is another reason why we believe that that School Improvement Services inspections should be a rolling programme rather than an 'inspection event'. This would provide an ongoing dialogue with Estyn and give continuous confidence and assurances to stakeholders through an annual published written report. There would be no need for a 'Follow-up' category under an annual rolling programme of inspections.

## 8. Reporting requirements

**11. We propose to identify reporting requirements for all our LGES and school improvement services' inspections. This will ensure that we have evaluations of these key areas in all our reports. Our draft guidance identifies the following as reporting requirements:**

**Reports must cover:**

- Impact of the work of services areas on learners' progress, wellbeing, attendance and behaviour
- Equity in the education system
- Welsh language

- **Safeguarding**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the areas we have identified as reporting requirements for our LGES inspections?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree**

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

As noted in Section 6 above:

There needs to be a clear understanding and agreement of what 'impact' should look like in the short, medium and long term. In the past, the 'impact' of School Improvement Services has been inappropriately linked to learners' progress and end of key stage performance indicators. Only schools have direct impact on learner progress.

School Improvement Services influence adults and should be judged on the quality of the support provided and its impact on practice. School Improvement Services should work with schools to support them in capturing impact on pupil progress as part of their school self-evaluation processes. There also needs to be a clear understanding of the timescale required to evidence impact and what would be the expected outcome over time.

There should be an agreed understanding of who 'owns' the impact. Pupil progress is affected by a wide range of factors such as the ability of the individual teacher, level of attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. Thus, it is a complex process to accurately measure the direct impact of support for teaching on pupil learning.

**12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the areas we have identified as reporting requirements for our inspections of school improvement services?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree**

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

Not all areas listed above are the responsibility of the regional consortium. How will Estyn ensure that there is a common and fair framework for inspecting school improvement services provided through regional consortia and those Local Authorities that have their own school improvement service? Is there duplication with LGES inspections? In GwE, the region is not responsible for supporting schools in areas such as ALN, attendance, behaviour and inclusion. How will Estyn ensure that they have the capacity and expertise to deal with such a nuanced approach?

As noted above – we believe that School Improvement Services inspections should be a rolling

programme rather than an 'inspection event'. This would provide an ongoing dialogue with Estyn and give continuous confidence and assurances to stakeholders through an annual published written report. 'Local Questions' or specific themes could be agreed with the School Improvement Services on an annual basis. This would also reduce duplication with LGES inspections.

As above (Question 11):

There needs to be a clear understanding and agreement of what 'impact' should look like in the short, medium and long term. In the past, the 'impact' of School Improvement Services has been inappropriately linked to learners' progress and end of key stage performance indicators. Only schools have direct impact on learner progress.

School Improvement Services influence adults and should be judged on the quality of the support provided and its impact on practice. School Improvement Services should work with schools to support them in capturing impact on pupil progress as part of their school self-evaluation processes. There also needs to be a clear understanding of the timescale required to evidence impact and what would be the expected outcome over time.

There should be an agreed understanding of who 'owns' the impact. For example, how much impact on learner progress, if any, would be expected if a practitioner attends a one-day professional learning session? Pupil progress is affected by a wide range of factors such as the ability of the individual teacher, level of attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. Thus, it is a complex process to accurately measure the direct impact of support for teaching on pupil learning.

## 9. Effective Practice

**13. On our inspections, we identify interesting and effective practice that may be helpful to other providers. We currently share this practice as case studies on our website and have piloted including the case studies in the appendix of the reports. How useful do you find these case studies?**

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful
- Not at all useful

**14. We have also included cameos to highlight interesting, innovative or effective practice within the narrative of the inspection report, such as using a highlighted box in the text. How useful do you find this approach?**

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful
- Not at all useful

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and state the reason(s) why you chose the option above.

It is difficult to gauge how the practice would apply in different context and are probably time limited in terms of their usefulness.

**15. What do you think is the best way we could share effective practice to have most impact**

Annual conference to showcase - facilitated by Estyn.

**10. Link inspector work**

**16. In addition to inspection, a key part of our work with local authorities and school improvement services is our link inspector engagements.**

**We propose to continue with a designated link inspector for each local authority and school improvement service, and their work will mainly involve being a point of contact and gathering general updates from the local authority about their services, which will help us to identify the LA's key assurances and risks.**

**During the last year, we have piloted a topic approach whereby we focus on specific aspects of the local authority or school improvement service's work to get a deeper understanding of the strengths and possible considerations for moving forward.**

**We propose to develop this approach by also undertaking an annual visit with a small team of inspectors to each local authority and school improvement service which will result in a brief evaluative published report. We will agree the focus area with the local authority and school improvement service well in advance so that the relevant officers can be made available for the engagement. We think this will give us a deeper understanding of each local authority and school improvement service's work in specific areas, whilst also providing helpful constructive feedback to the officers involved.**

**To what extent do you agree with our proposal to retain a link inspector for each local authority and school improvement service?**

- Strongly agree**
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

It is useful to have an open dialogue with Estyn through Link Inspector work. It is important to have consistency in HMIs deployment so that they are allowed to develop a deeper understanding of the LA or regional consortium. The LALI should be included in LGES / regional consortium inspections to share their knowledge and understanding harvested from LALI visit.

Written feedback should also be provided following LALI visits to support the LA/Regional consortium on their improvement journey.

There are capacity issues for regional consortia staff attending their own and Local Authority termly visits.



**17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to carry out an annual focused visit to each local authority /school improvement service to look at a specific aspect of their work?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

As noted above, if regional consortia are to be inspected separately, then this could be carried out as a rolling programme with a focused theme. This would provide an ongoing dialogue with Estyn and give continuous confidence and assurances to stakeholders through an annual published written report.

As noted in Section 3 – there are huge capacity implications for the regional consortium if this would be in addition to full and interim inspections.

## **11. Schools and PRUs in special measures.**

**18. Currently we do not formally evaluate the impact of the local authority's work in supporting individual schools and PRUs in special measures. We propose that the link inspector undertakes specific activities which could include for example, joining the monitoring team or visiting the school independently of the monitoring team to consider and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the support provided by the local authority. The outcome of this work will be a brief letter to the local authority. We propose that this activity will take place normally every 12 to 16 months.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that we carry out activities evaluating the impact of local authority's support on the progress being made an individual school or PRU in special measures?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please use the box below to give us your opinions and explain why you've chosen the option above:

See comments in Section 11 regarding impact. Understanding impact of support is a complex process which needs to be discussed and agreed on a national level with all stakeholders involved in school improvement including Welsh Government.

There is merit in giving this recommendation further consideration if the Link Supporting Improvement Adviser for the schools could work closely with the Link Inspector. It would allow the Link Inspector to access detailed information around the quality of the support, guidance and resources shared with the school. It would also mitigate against any conflicting message the school could receive from the Link SIA, Link Inspector and the Estyn monitoring team.

This process could be worthwhile if it is open and transparent for all stakeholders.