

# Complete Agenda



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Meeting

**GWE JOINT COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 2025**

Location

**Virtual Meeting - Zoom**

**\* For public access to the meeting, please contact us\***

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 13/02/25)

# **GWE JOINT COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE**

### **Voting Members**

#### **Councillors**

Councillor Dafydd Roberts	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Diane King	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Mared Eastwood	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn Wrexham	County Borough Council
Councillor Dewi Jones	Cyngor Gwynedd

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

Manon Williams	Primary Schools Representative
Paul Smith	Secondary Schools Representative
Noel Fitzgerald	Special Schools Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative
Jennie Downes	Church in Wales Representative

#### **Non-voting Officers**

Marc Berw Hughes	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Dr Lowri Brown	Conwy County Borough Council
Claire Homard	Flintshire County Council
Karen Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Geraint Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Gwern ap Rhisiart	Cyngor Gwynedd

#### **Officers in Attendance**

Euros Davies	GwE Head of Service – School Improvement
Rhys Williams	GwE Head of Service – Professional Learning
Graham Boase	Denbighshire County Council
Bethan Eleri Roberts	GwE Performance Management
Dewi Morgan	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority

# **A G E N D A**

## **1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

## **3. URGENT ITEMS**

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

## **4. MINUTES**

5 - 8

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 27th November 2024 be signed as a true record.

## **5. GWE BUDGET 2024-2025 – REVIEW TO END OF JANUARY 2025**

9 - 14

To consider and accept the report

## **6. GWE BASE BUDGET 2025/2026**

15 - 18

To consider the report and adopt the base budget for April – May 2025/26

## **7. CONTINUITY OF SERVICE 01/04/2025 TO 31/05/2025.**

19 - 22

To consider the report

## **8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman shall propose that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion on the following items due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12, Part 4, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. This paragraph is relevant as the report includes information about specific individuals who have the right to privacy. At this point no decision has been made and the proposal needs to be considered. There is no public interest that calls for disclosing personal information about these individuals which would outweigh their rights. Consequently, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

## **9. VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCIES**

To consider the report

(copy for Members only)

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## GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

27/11/2024

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### **Attendance:**

**Councillors:** Julie Fallon - Chair (Conwy County Borough Council), Dafydd Roberts (Anglesey County Council), Diane King (Denbighshire County Council), Mared Eastwood (Flintshire County Council) and Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council).

**Co-opted non-voting Members:** Manon Williams (Primary Schools' Representative)

**Non-voting Officers:** Marc Berw Hughes (Anglesey County Council), Claire Homard (Flintshire County Council) and Gwern ap Rhisiart (Cyngor Gwynedd).

**GwE Officers:** Rhys Williams (GwE Head of Service - Professional Learning), Euros Davies (GwE Head of Service - School Improvement) and Bethan Roberts (GwE Performance Management Manager).

### **Host Authority Officers:**

Ffion Madog Evans (Statutory Finance Officer - Gwynedd), Hywyn Lewis Jones (Education and Economy Accountant - Gwynedd), Sion Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager - Gwynedd) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer).

### **Others invited:**

Siwan Glyn and Osian Roberts (Audit Wales)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Paul Smith (Secondary Schools' Representative)

### **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

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

### **3. URGENT MATTERS**

No urgent matters to note.

### **4. MINUTES**

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 2 October 2024.

### **5. JOINT COMMITTEE FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024 AND RELEVANT AUDIT**

A report from the Head of Finance, Cyngor Gwynedd, was presented asking the Joint Committee to consider and approve the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 (post-audit), the Audit Wales 'ISA260' report and the Letter of Representation before authorising the Chair and Head of Finance to endorse the letter electronically.

The Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions (Cyngor Gwynedd), guided Members through the Statement reminding them that conditional accounts had been presented to the Joint Committee in October 2024 when the main issues and relevant notes were highlighted. It was reported that there had not been any changes to the main financial statements of that report (Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditure Statement, Cash Flow and Statement of Movement in Reserves) however that there had been a few amendments to the notes supporting the Statement;

- Note 17b 'Officers Remuneration - there has been no change in the number appearing in the table for 2023/24 (43 officers), but rather a change in which salary band three officers appeared. It was noted that Soulbury 2022/23 pay inflation had not been confirmed until 2023/24 which complicated matters. The note now reflects the picture about salaries in the 2023/24 financial year only.
- Note 20 Related Parties/Members - it had been possible to remove the disclosure as there was no requirement for it to be included to comply with CIPFA requirements.

In addition to this, there were a small number of minor narrative amendments.

The Committee was asked to consider and approve the Statement of Accounts and ISA260 by Audit Wales for the accounts in 2023/24.

On behalf of Audit Wales, Osian Roberts noted that Audit Wales proposed to give an unqualified audit opinion on the 2023/24 accounts adding that the accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position, comply with proper practices and that Audit Wales work to a materiality level. It was reported that the materiality level is set to try and identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause the user of the accounts to be misled. A materiality level of £356,000 was set for the 2023/24 audit and the reporting threshold for misstatements was £17,000 (calculated as 5% materiality). He added that the procedure steps had now been completed and that there were no additional issues to report.

In terms of ethical compliance, it was noted that Audit Wales had remained independent and the Finance Team at Cyngor Gwynedd were thanked for their support.

The report was welcomed and everybody thanked for their work.

A motion to accept the report was seconded.

#### **IT WAS RESOLVED:**

- **To accept and note the ISA260 report by the Auditor General for Wales**
- **To approve the Statement of Accounts 2023/24**
- **To authorise the Chair and Cyngor Gwynedd Head of Finance (as the GwE Statutory Finance Officer) to sign the letter of representation**

#### **6. GwE BUDGET 2024/2025 - REVIEW UP TO THE END OF OCTOBER 2024**

A report by Cyngor Gwynedd Head of Finance was presented updating members on the latest financial review of GwE revenue budget for the 2024/25 financial year and the forecasts towards the end of the financial year. The Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions (Cyngor Gwynedd) explained that the report focuses on the significant financial variances along with full financial information and that the review was conducted based on information up to the end of October 2024. Reference was made to a summary of the closing position with forecasts suggesting that there will be

an underspend of £78 thousand by the end of the financial year. Attention was drawn to the main issues:

- Employees - underspend of £18 thousand. GwE's budget for the current year was set based on the number of staff back in February 2024. A saving has been made with some members of GwE staff leaving their posts, and a grant allocation being received and used to finance posts. It was added that these figures have also incorporated the decision of the Joint Committee on the 1st of August, including the restructuring of the Senior Management Team.
- Rent - overspend of almost £10 thousand. This is in accordance with the historical trend, and it is foreseen that GwE will overspend on this heading again this year as a result of GwE renting a bigger space at the Caernarfon office.
- Transport - the picture is still consistent with previous reviews, with an underspend of £50 thousand in the transport heading, as travel costs have reduced as a result of new ways of working over the last few years.
- Supplies and Services - An underspend of almost £20 thousand is foreseen on this heading.

As regards reserves, it was noted that the sum of the opening fund was £221 thousand and that the fund will increase to £300 thousand after adding the anticipated underspend.

The report was appreciated and staff were thanked for completing the work in a difficult period.

A motion to approve the report was seconded.

#### **IT WAS RESOLVED:**

**To accept and approve the report.**

#### **7. SIX MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON THE 'REFORM' ELEMENT OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION GRANT (LAEG).**

GwE Head of Service - Professional Learning presented a report. He explained the decision of Welsh Government to combine the main education grants under one heading, namely the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) from 2024-25 onwards. The grant will be paid directly to the Local Authorities/Schools with requirements, risks, terms and conditions of grant now being the responsibility of the individual Local Authority.

It was explained that, in order to ensure continuity of support for schools during the middle tier review of the Welsh education system, Welsh Government noted the expectation for any current regional working arrangements to continue during this period and be facilitated through the specific grant funding to support the curriculum and professional learning in schools. It was added that 'Curriculum for Wales' and 'Professional Learning and Leadership' have been fully transferred from the 'Reform' LAEG to GwE by all Local Authorities in the region to deliver support on these aspects whilst meeting the terms and conditions of the grant.

As agreed in GwE and Local Authority business plans for 2024-25, GwE will report to the Joint Committee on the Reform element - 'Curriculum for Wales' and 'Professional Learning and Leadership'. In addition, and in accordance with LAEG monitoring

requirements, GwE will report biannually on these elements in order for Local Authorities to present monitoring reports against set aims and objectives to Welsh Government.

Reference was made to the progress report for the period 01/04/2024 - 30/09/2024 included with the report, noting no service curtailment and no risks to support at present. Attention was drawn also to the high levels of staff attending training sessions despite the limitations of the service.

Thanks were expressed for the report.

The Chair noted that the data is remarkable given all the changes within GwE and staff were thanked for ensuring continuity of service and support for schools, despite the situation. She added that she very much appreciated their commitment to the work.

In response to a question about regional data and availability at an individual Local Authority level, it was confirmed that the information is shared with the region's individual Local Authorities.

A motion to approve the report was seconded.

**IT WAS RESOLVED:**

**To accept and approve the report.**

The meeting started at 10:00 and concluded at 10:25

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**CHAIR**



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<b>MEETING</b>	<b>GwE Joint Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	19 February 2025
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>GwE Budget 2024/25</b> <b>Review to end of January 2025</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 2024/25 financial year.</li> <li>• The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.</li> </ul>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	To accept the report.
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Dewi Morgan, the Host Authority Head of Finance.

## 1. CONCLUSION

- 1.1 Based on expenditure and income up to the end of January 2025 and following receipt of the latest information on the relevant redundancy costs (including the cost of pension release), it is anticipated that the overspend will be £919,477, based on the maximum redundancy costs. This figure is following the full use of the historic underspend fund of £221,310.
- 1.2 The following section of this report explains the reasons behind the main variations expected.



## 2. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

### 2.1 Employees:

#### January 2025: overspend £1,104,407

The GwE budget for the current year, is based on staff numbers in February 2024. A saving has been realised following the departure of some GwE staff, staff on secondment, in addition to a receipt of grants. This report has also incorporated the decision of the Joint Committee on 1 August 2024 to restructure the Senior Management Team.

Following receipt of the latest information, this financial review includes an estimate of a maximum redundancy cost of approximately £1.7m for staff who will not transfer to the authorities. A Welsh Government contribution of £738k (£123k per authority) is expected towards the cost.

### 2.2 Rent:

#### January 2025: overspend £89,534

It was previously reported the likelihood of an overspend on this heading this year as a result of renting a larger space in the Caernarfon office. In addition to this, the cost of terminating office leases needs to be considered and that has increased the overspend for this year.

### 2.3 Transport:

#### January 2025: underspend (£34,032)

Historically, the headline here has been underspending, and based on the April to January trend of this year, we anticipate a situation of underspending continuing. This is mainly due to the new ways of working virtually developed in recent years.

## 3. UNDERSPEND FUND

3.1 At the beginning of the 2024/25 financial year, the fund totalled £221,310.

3.2 As explained in part 1.1 above, it is the intention to make full use of the underspend fund to reduce the overspend for 2024/25 to £919,477.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1: GwE Budget 2024/25 – Review up to the end of January 2025.

## **OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

### **Monitoring Officer:**

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

### **Statutory Finance Officer:**

Author of the report.

**GWE JOINT COMMITTEE - NORTH WALES COUNCILS - Budget Review 2024/25 : Up to the end of January 2025**

	October Updated Budget £	Adjustments £	January Updated Budget £	Estimated Expenditure £	Over / (Under) Spend Net £
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees - Salaries, Training, advertising and other employee costs	7,249,525	482,900	7,732,425	8,836,832	1,104,407
Building - Rent (includes services)	220,152	315	220,467	310,000	89,534
Transport - Travel Costs	163,107		163,107	129,075	(34,032)
Supplies and Services					
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	86,721		86,721	86,721	0
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	19,602		19,602	0	(19,602)
Audit Fees	13,611		13,611	14,091	480
National Programmes / Commissioning	366,794	100,940	467,734	467,734	0
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs					
Legal	6,804		6,804	6,804	0
Human Resources	11,667		11,667	11,667	0
Finance	50,449		50,449	50,449	0
Information Technology	55,798		55,798	55,798	0
National Model Commitments	469,948		469,948	469,948	0
Specific Projects					
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	476,880	(185,903)	290,977	290,977	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	53,985	48,378	102,364	102,364	0
Welsh in Education Project	70,000		70,000	70,000	0
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)	61,770		61,770	61,770	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,376,812</b>	<b>446,630</b>	<b>9,823,442</b>	<b>10,964,229</b>	<b>1,140,787</b>

	October Updated Budget £	Adjustments £	January Updated Budget £	Estimated Income £	Over / (Under) Spend Net £
<b>Income</b>					
Core Service Contributions					
- Isle of Anglesey County Council (23/24: 10.09% - 24/25: 10.04%)	(401,942)		(401,942)	(401,942)	0
- Cyngor Gwynedd (23/24: 17.53% - 24/25: 17.55%)	(702,451)		(702,451)	(702,451)	0
- Conwy County Borough Council (23/24: 15.17% - 24/25: 15.24%)	(609,921)		(609,921)	(609,921)	0
- Denbighshire County Council (23/24: 15.51% - 24/25: 15.62%)	(624,967)		(624,967)	(624,967)	0
- Flintshire County Council (23/24: 22.79% - 24/25: 22.71%)	(908,701)		(908,701)	(908,701)	0
- Wrexham County Borough Council (23/24: 18.91% - 24/25: 18.84%)	(753,808)		(753,808)	(753,808)	0
Services Commissioned by the Authorities					
- Isle of Anglesey County Council (12.99%)	(569,720)		(569,720)	(569,720)	0
- Cyngor Gwynedd (18.40%)	(806,630)		(806,630)	(806,630)	0
- Conwy County Borough Council (14.94%)	(655,581)		(655,581)	(655,581)	0
- Denbighshire County Council (14.23%)	(624,384)		(624,384)	(624,384)	0
- Flintshire County Council (20.80%)	(912,493)		(912,493)	(912,493)	0
- Wrexham County Borough Council (18.64%)	(817,891)		(817,891)	(817,891)	0
Specific Projects					
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(476,880)	185,903	(290,977)	(290,977)	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	(53,985)	(48,378)	(102,364)	(102,364)	0
Welsh in Education Project	(70,000)		(70,000)	(70,000)	0
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)	(61,770)		(61,770)	(61,770)	0
Income from Secondments	(123,347)	(38,550)	(161,897)	(161,897)	0
Other Income	(2,341)	(7,605)	(9,946)	(9,946)	0
Income from Welsh Government / Transition Funding for School Improvement Partnership Programme (Contributions of the 6 authorities @ £123k)	(200,000)	(538,000)	(738,000)	(738,000)	0
Contribution from the general fund	0	0	0	(221,310)	(221,310)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(9,376,812)</b>	<b>(446,630)</b>	<b>(9,823,442)</b>	<b>(10,044,752)</b>	<b>(221,310)</b>
<b>Total Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>919,477</b>	<b>919,477</b>
<b>Memorandum -</b>					
<b>The Underspend Fund</b>					
			<b>Fund balance as at 1 April 2024</b>		<b>(221,310)</b>
			Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2024/25		0
			Less - Use of the Fund		221,310
			<b>Fund balance as at 31 March 2025</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>The Newly Qualified Teachers Fund</b>					
			<b>Fund balance as at 1 April 2024</b>		<b>(455,235)</b>
			Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2024/25		0
			Less - Use of the Fund		0
			<b>Fund balance as at 31 March 2025</b>		<b>(455,235)</b>



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<b>MEETING</b>	<b>GwE Joint Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	19 February 2025
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Base Budget 2025/26</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Present to the Joint Committee : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GwE Basic Budget 2024/25 (Appendix 1)</li> </ul>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Adopt the base budget for April – May 2025/26 as presented in Appendix 1.
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Gwynedd Council's Head of Finance

## 1. Base Budget

- 1.1 The budget has been adjusted to reflect the decision to end GwE on 31 May 2025.
- 1.2 As a result, the budget has been adjusted to include what is needed over the period, including anticipated staffing costs based on salaried staff on 1 February 2025.

## 2. Welsh Government Grants funding method 2025/26

- 2.1 In 2024/25 the Welsh Government decided to pay the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) to councils / schools directly, and not to the regional consortia, with the requirements and risks of the grant now being the responsibility of the individual Councils.

2.2 To ensure that schools and authorities across north Wales continued to be offered equivalent levels of support and service, there was a move towards a commissioning arrangement, whereby North Wales authorities would purchase the current service (such as Professional Learning and Curriculum Development support) from GwE, with this being over and above the core service GwE provided.

2.3 Approximately half of the current posts are funded from this grant, and therefore the budget has been established expecting the authorities to continue to contribute from their grants, with the amount identified being equivalent to 2 months of its 2025/26 allocation from the "Support Standards in Education" and the "Reform Programmes".

### **3. General Fund**

3.1 The report 'GwE Budget 2024/25 – Review to end of January 2025 (a previous item on the agenda) anticipates full use of the general fund by 31/03/2025.

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#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - GwE Base Budget for 2025/26

#### **VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

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

Nothing to add from a proprietary perspective

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

Author of the report

**GwE JOINT COMMITTEE - NORTH WALES COUNCILS - GwE BUDGET 2025-26**

	<b>January Updated Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Adjustments £</b>	<b>Final Budget 2025/26 (2 months) £</b>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
Employees - Salaries	7,732,425	(6,749,617)	982,808
Training and other employee costs	0	12,334	12,334
Building - Rent (includes services)	220,467	(182,987)	37,480
Transport - Travel Costs	163,107	(141,923)	21,184
Supplies and Services			
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	86,721	(71,979)	14,742
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	19,602	(19,602)	0
Audit Fees	13,611	272	13,883
National Programmes / Commissioning	467,734	(388,218)	79,515
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs			
Legal	6,804	(5,647)	1,157
Human Resources	11,667	(9,684)	1,983
Finance	50,449	(15,384)	35,065
Information Technology	55,798	(46,312)	9,486
National Model Commitments	469,948	(469,948)	0
Specific Projects			
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	290,977	(290,977)	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	102,364	(102,364)	0
Welsh in Education Project	70,000	(70,000)	0
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)	61,770	(61,770)	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,823,443</b>	<b>(8,613,806)</b>	<b>1,209,637</b>

		<b>January Updated Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Adjustments £</b>	<b>Final Budget 2025/26 (2 months) £</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Core Service Contributions				
- Isle of Anglesey County Council	(23/24: 10.09% - 24/25: 10.04%)	(401,942)	343,422	(58,520)
- Cyngor Gwynedd	(23/24: 17.53% - 24/25: 17.55%)	(702,451)	600,522	(101,929)
- Conwy County Borough Council	(23/24: 15.17% - 24/25: 15.24%)	(609,921)	520,945	(88,976)
- Denbighshire County Council	(23/24: 15.51% - 24/25: 15.62%)	(624,967)	532,957	(92,010)
- Flintshire County Council	(23/24: 22.79% - 24/25: 22.71%)	(908,701)	777,425	(131,276)
- Wrexham County Borough Council	(23/24: 18.91% - 24/25: 18.84%)	(753,808)	643,069	(110,739)
Services Commissioned by the Authorities				
- Isle of Anglesey County Council	(12.99%)	(569,720)	495,345	(74,375)
- Cyngor Gwynedd	(18.40%)	(806,630)	697,279	(109,351)
- Conwy County Borough Council	(14.94%)	(655,581)	558,050	(97,531)
- Denbighshire County Council	(14.23%)	(624,384)	524,781	(99,603)
- Flintshire County Council	(20.80%)	(912,493)	783,482	(129,011)
- Wrexham County Borough Council	(18.64%)	(817,891)	701,575	(116,316)
Specific Projects				
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)		(290,977)	290,977	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme		(102,364)	102,364	0
Welsh in Education Project		(70,000)	70,000	0
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)		(61,770)	61,770	0
Income from Secondments		(161,897)	161,897	0
Other Income		(9,946)	9,946	0
Income from Welsh Government / Transition Funding for School Improvement Partnership Programme (Contributions of the 6 authorities @ £123k)		(738,000)	738,000	0
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>(9,823,443)</b>	<b>8,613,806</b>	<b>(1,209,637)</b>
<b>Total Income over Expenditure</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>





## REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

19 FEBRUARY 2025

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**Report by:**        **Euros Davies - Head of Service - School Improvement**  
                          **Rhys Williams - Head of Service - Professional Learning**

**Subject:**         **Continuity of Service - 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025**

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### 1.0     **Purpose of the Report**

1.1.     To share information with Joint Committee members on GwE operating arrangements for the period 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025.

### 2.0     **Background**

2.1     The Chief Executives of the six Local Authorities have now confirmed the GwE termination date as 31st May rather than 31st March, 2025.

2.2     This means that the Service continues past the current financial year, and the existing Commissioning Agreements and Business Plans, for a period of two additional months.

2.3     The agreements of individuals seconded or working on commission to GwE come to an end on 31st March which will have an impact on the capacity of the Service.

2.4     This decision raises two specific questions:

- How will the Service be funded during this extended period? (Refer to previous report 'GwE Budget 2025/2026').
- What will be the requirements on the Service during the period?

### 3.0     **Matters for consideration**

3.1     **Implementation 1st April – 31st May** - Although it is a two-month period, schools will only be open for six weeks during the period due to the Easter and half term holidays.

3.2     It is not practical to draw up a Business Plan or a Commissioning Agreement for this short period.

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3.3 During 2024-25, the Service has supported schools under two headings within our Business Plan which are:

1. Objective 1 – School Improvement
2. Objective 2 – Professional Learning

3.4 Below it is explained how we will continue to support our schools during the period in question.

### 3.5 **Objective 1 – School Improvement**

- It is not practical to draw up a Commissioning agreement for a period of six weeks. We will continue to support schools in accordance with the requirements that sit within the aspects below:
  1. Providing a 'Core Lead' function for the Local Authority.
  2. Provide a general core offer to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory function to support, monitor and challenge schools and settings.
  3. Provide additional support based on schools' needs.
  4. Supporting schools that cause concern (using a consistent approach across the region)
- Supporting Improvement Advisors will respond flexibly to schools' requirements ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted service during this transitional period. This will include the usual monitoring visits and ensuring the quality of teaching and learning in the schools.
- As staff numbers are decreasing, in some cases different Supporting Improvement Advisors will work with schools and catchment areas.
- In the event of a shortfall that cannot be filled, we will consider commissioning headteachers by agreement with the Chief Education Officers and in accordance with what has been agreed in the Joint Committee on 2 October 2024.

### 3.6 **Objective 2 - Professional Learning**

#### **National Programmes**

- National professional learning programmes timetables mean that cohorts in the following areas, which are presently the responsibility of GwE, will not be completed by the end of this financial year:
  - Middle Leadership Development Programme
  - Senior Leaders Development Programme
  - New & Acting Headteachers Development Programme
  - Teaching Assistant development programmes – Aspiring HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) / HLTA
  - Newly Qualified Teacher Programmes
- The costs of employing staff, administration and hiring training rooms are linked to the above programmes.

- Welsh Government have verbally committed to ensuring that any National professional learning programme that is delivered locally/regionally continues until its end. This is to ensure equity across Wales and to ensure that practitioners and Local Authorities in the North do not lose out.
- The following financial streams have historically contributed to the running of the above professional learning: Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG), Education Workforce Council (NQT) etc.
- There are sessions in the calendar to take place in the period between the end of the financial year and the date GwE comes to an end on the 31st of May, 2025.
- It is therefore necessary to ensure that funding equivalent to 2/12 is transferred to GwE in order to honour continuation of sessions that have been organised for April and May 2025 after the grant funding has come to an end.

### **3.7 Local/Regional Training**

- Historically, GwE provides professional learning to all practitioners in the Region in the form of a Professional Learning Offer that derives from the Service's Business Plan.
- This year, 2024/25, the Offer has evolved to coincide with the financial year and the offer is limited to the terms and conditions of the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG).
- As GwE no longer ends at the end of the financial year, there will be two months where no Professional Learning Offer will be offered to schools. It is not practical to draw up a Business Plan, formulate and administer a new Professional Learning Offer for a period of two months.
- Staff who historically provide training through the Professional Learning Offer will be available to support schools for this period (at the request of the link Supporting Improvement Advisors through the relevant Core Supporting Improvement Advisors in accordance with the needs of the schools).
- There will be flexibility for these staff to hold a specific individual professional learning session(s) if they see the need and have the capacity. This can also mean supporting In-Service Training at the request of a Cluster or Authority following if enough notice is given. Training will not be limited to the terms and conditions of the new LAEG for April 2025.

### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to accept the content of the report and approve GwE operating arrangements for the period 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025.

### **5.0 Financial implications**

- 5.1. GwE will operate within its financial resources for the period 01/04/2025 to 31/05/2025.

**6.0 Equalities Impact**

- 6.1. There needs to be an agreed timetable across authorities to avoid equality implications in relation to the transition period.

**7.0 Personnel Implications**

- 7.1 With decreasing staff members post 31/03/2025, this will affect the capacity of the Service. In the event of a shortfall that cannot be filled, we will consider commissioning headteachers by agreement with the Chief Education Officers.

**8.0 Consultation undertaken**

- 8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board.
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**VIEW OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS**

**Monitoring Officer:**

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

**Statutory Finance Officer:**

The report offers a practical way forward for the period from 1 April to 31 May. As noted in that part 5 of the report, GwE is expected to operate within the budget agreed for 2025/26.