

Appendix 4 - Welsh in Education Grant and Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

National Model For Regional Working – Strategic Options for Welsh in Education Grant and Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

1. Background and Context

- a) The North Wales Education Consortium previously co-ordinated and monitored the Welsh in Education Grant. The Senior Leader of the Consortium had a general responsibility for financial matters, a Consortium officer was responsible for the strategic co-ordination and monitoring of the grant and regional plan and a Consortium officer was responsible for the administration and remittance of the grant.

2. Current Arrangements for the Welsh in Education Grant

- a) One FTE who is responsible for the administration and remittance of the grant (one of a suite of regional grants) has been transferred from the former North Wales Consortium to GwE since September 2014. GwE has therefore adopted the remittance and administrative responsibilities associated with the grant as part and parcel of the said staff transfer. GwE is therefore in alignment with the National Model in terms of the administration and remittance of the said grant.
- b) Gwynedd Council currently acts as the banking authority for the North Wales region and GwE and a regionally agreed formula is utilised for the division of the grant to individual authorities to support the delivery of their WESPs. It is assumed that Gwynedd Council will continue to act as a banking authority for the Welsh in Education Grant. It is also assumed that a regionally agreed formula will continue to be utilised once the WEG becomes integrated into the new Education Improvement Grant.
- c) Individual authorities devolve a portion of their Welsh in Education Grant to schools.

3. Current Arrangements for Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

- a) A Gwynedd Council officer is now responsible for the co-ordination of the regional plan and alignment with the aims of Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Education Strategy as Gwynedd Council's Head of Education Chairs the regional Welsh Medium Sub-group.
- b) The pan North Wales Welsh Medium and Capacity Building Sub-group provides a quality assurance role in that it is a forum to discuss and share best practice across the region and to set clear regional objectives in relation to the delivery of the aims of Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Education Strategy. The Chair of the said group (Gwynedd Council Head of Education) also provides a quality assurance role for the region in terms of aligning the regional plan with Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Education Strategy.
- c) WESPs are produced by individual authorities based on LEA priorities and collated into a regional plan that is then approved, monitored and quality assured against the aims of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy by Welsh Government.
- d) GwE does not currently co-ordinate or quality assure the delivery of the aims of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy by ensuring alignment of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans as this is done to some extent by the aforementioned Gwynedd Council officer, regional Welsh Medium Sub-group and Chair of said group.
- e) In some cases, GwE is consulted with and has an input into the production of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.

4. Statutory Obligations and Responsibilities:

- a) On 4 March 2013, the Schools Standards and Organisation Wales Act 2013 came into force. Local Authorities, by means of the said Act, are responsible for the preparation of their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and their submission to Welsh Government for a period of 3 years from April 2014 to March 2017. These plans outline how Local Authorities intend to achieve Welsh Government's aims and objectives as outlined in the Welsh Medium Education Strategy.
- b) The local co-ordination of the committees, working groups or networks that contribute to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans is undertaken by officers from each LEA. These duties are part and parcel of the wider role of individual officers within each authority and contribute towards the preparation, submission and delivery of the said plans.

5. Requirements of the National Model for Regional Working:

- a) In order to address the requirements of the National Model for Regional Working GwE is expected to undertake the following responsibilities:

“to co-ordinate and quality assure the delivery of the aims of the Welsh medium Education Strategy by ensuring the alignment of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) and the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) across each of the local authorities within the regional consortia, so that there is consistency in the development of excellence in pedagogy, and the meeting of agreed targets, not only across both the Welsh-medium and bilingual sectors, but also in the delivery of Welsh as a second language”.

- b) The interpretation of the National Model wording is of paramount importance when considering the following options for alignment. It is understood that the National Model requires the Regional Education Consortium (now GwE) to co-ordinate and quality assure the regional plan and the division and remittance of the grant in order to ensure that the aims of Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Education Strategy are delivered. The National Model does not stipulate that the Education Consortium (GwE) is responsible for the preparation, submission to Welsh Government or delivery of the strategic plans which is undertaken by LEA employed officers (partially funded by WEG and LEA core funding according to their Strategic Plans).

6. Strategic Options

- a) In view of the above facts, the following options are deemed to address the requirements of the National Model for Regional Working in terms of the regional co-ordination and quality assurance role:

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages	Minimum Score 1 – Maximum Score 5			Total Score
			Alignment with National Model	Delivering Additional Value	Potential for Successful Change Delivery	
<p>1. Do Nothing (Maintain Current Arrangements)</p> <p>(i.e. previous Consortium officer now responsible for administering of grant through GwE / Gwynedd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of delivery without any change Robust regional collaboration by means of Welsh Medium Sub-group and lead authority Head of Education as Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GwE would not meet National Model requirement of co-ordination and quality assurance role No link between GwE and LEAs in terms of co-ordination and quality 	0	0	0	0

<p>to remain banking authority/ Gwynedd to remain lead authority on WEG & WESP matters and co-ordination of regional plan / Chair of Regional Sub-group & group itself to provide quality assurance role in terms of delivering WG Welsh Medium Strategy aims and objectives)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantage of wealth of expertise and experience within said group to undertake quality assurance role and sharing of best practice across the region to drive improvement • No additional costs for delivery 	<p>assurance of WESPs but link in terms of WEG administration and remittance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No independent evaluation of quality and consistency of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans within region 				
<p>2. Create new post within GwE to undertake co-ordination and quality assurance role of WEG and WESP matters across the region</p> <p>(i.e. Gwynedd would no longer be required to co-ordinate the regional plan / the Welsh Medium Sub-Group would still be required to discuss and share best practice across the region in order to raise standards / GwE representative would sit on said group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of delivery without major changes • Robust regional collaboration by means of Welsh Medium Sub-group and lead authority Head of Education as Chair • Clear accountability in terms of co-ordination and quality assurance of WESPs to deliver WG Welsh Medium Education Strategy • GwE would be fully aligned with the requirements of the National Model • Link between GwE and LEAs in terms of WESPs and WEG • New post would possibly provide more focused regional link to Welsh Government • Minimal additional cost (one FTE at most) • Post would concentrate on co-ordination and quality assurance and would provide consistency by means of being a constant presence on the Sub-group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost of new post • Additional post in GwE structure 	0	0	0	0
<p>3. GwE to commission an independent consultant to conduct a quality evaluation of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. Evaluation findings to be utilised by GwE, LEAs and regional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of delivery without major change • Robust regional collaboration by means of Welsh Medium Sub-group and lead authority Head of Education as Chair • Advantage of wealth of expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination and quality assurance elements would be separated – co-ordination would remain with lead authority and quality assurance would sit with GwE • Additional resource would need to be 	0	0	0	0

<p>Welsh Medium and Capacity Building Sub-group to share best practice and to drive improvement</p> <p>(i.e. previous Consortium officer now responsible for administering of grant through GwE / Gwynedd to remain banking authority/ Gwynedd to remain lead authority on WEG & WESP matters and co-ordination of regional plan / Chair of Regional Sub-group & group itself to provide quality assurance role in terms of delivering WG Welsh Medium Strategy aims and objectives)</p>	<p>and experience within said group to undertake quality assurance role and sharing of best practice across the region to drive improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear accountability in terms of lead authority to co-ordinate production of regional WESP • Clear accountability in terms of GwE to commission independent quality evaluation of WESPs • GwE would be aligned with the requirements of the National Model in terms of quality assurance • Link between GwE and LEAs in terms of WESPs and WEG • Minimal additional cost to appoint consultant to undertake quality evaluation of strategic plans (£5k - £10k annually) • An independent quality evaluation would give an impartial and objective view of the WESPs • GwE focus would remain on improvement 	<p>allocated to GwE to commission consultant to undertake quality assurance exercise of WESPs</p>				
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