
GwE JOINT COMMITTEE
01.02.2017

Present: Coun. Wyn Ellis Jones (Chairperson)
Coun. Michael Williams (Vice Chair)

Councillors: Chris Bithell, Kenneth P. Hughes, Gareth Thomas,

Co-opted Non-voting Members: Jonathan Morgan (Special Schools' Representative), Ms Rita Pryce (Wrexham Diocese), Mair Herbert (Secondary Schools' Representative).

Non-voting Officers: Ian Budd (Lead Director – Chair of Management Board (Flintshire Council), Dr. Lowri Brown (Conwy County Borough Council), Delyth Molyneux (Anglesey Council), Mrs Karen Evans (Denbighshire Council), John Davies (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Also present: Arwyn L Thomas (Interim Managing Director, GwE), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director, GwE), Susan Owen Jones (Business and Finance Manager, GwE), Martyn Gray (Welsh Government Representative), Hefin Owen (Host Authority Education Finance Manager – Gwynedd Council), Iwan G D Evans (Host Authority Legal Service Manager – Gwynedd Council), Mr Garem Jackson (Host Authority Education Officer – Gwynedd Council), Rhys Howard Hughes (Assistant Director, GwE), Dr Gwynne Jones (Anglesey Council), Sandra Evans (Host Authority Human Resources Senior Adviser – Gwynedd Council) and Einir Rh Davies (Host Authority Members' Support Officer - Gwynedd Council)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dafydd L Edwards and Councillor Eryl Williams.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No member in attendance declared a personal interest.

3. URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent matters.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of this Committee held on 25 November 2016. They were accepted as being a true record, with no matters arising.

5. REVIEW OF GwE's EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Lead Director and Interim Managing Director presented the report and updated the Joint Committee on the findings of the review commissioned at the last meeting. The Joint Committee was asked to support the recommendations of the review and the changes to executive arrangements.

A discussion was had where the following comments were made:

It is evident from the input to the report that all stakeholders want GwE to succeed (Schools/GwE/Authorities) however that improvement is needed across the key stages.

There is a need to look at the Primary/Secondary bias of 80/20 and maximising staff. It was noted that it would be useful to obtain a picture of how different Education Authorities operate in order to make the comparison?

Clarity is needed about the roles and expectations of Schools/GwE/Authorities with regard to the Referral Units' support issues.

It was decided to: Accept, note and approve the report.

6. APPOINTING A CHIEF OFFICER/MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR GwE

The Lead Director presented a report in order to agree on the process for the above appointment.

It was noted that there is a need to proceed quickly with candidates due to attend the Assessment Centre on 1 March, and be interviewed on 7 March.

Iwan G D Evans enquired whether the shortlist would be drawn by the Joint Committee, and it was agreed that this was the case.

It was decided to add the following to the job description:

- (a) The need for evidence of professional development in a relevant area
- (b) Contacts – including Diocesan Authorities on the list.

It was confirmed that the post would be advertised on-line at the end of this week.

It was decided to: Accept the report with the addition of the above.

7. SECONDARY MODEL AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The Interim Managing Director presented the report.

The Joint Committee was asked to approve the proposed changes to the Challenge and Support Programme to:

- develop a revised model of working with the secondary sector; and
- develop a Distributed Leadership model across primary and secondary sectors.

It was noted that it needs to be ensured that there is capacity to better support secondary schools, ensuring that there is an appropriate support plan in place for every school. In order for this to succeed, it was noted that the team would need to consist of a cross-section of individuals, such as Challenge Advisers, Heads, Subject Challenge Advisers and Former Heads and develop teams around individual schools. It was noted that there is already much expertise within the team.

It was noted that there is a need to consider:

- a) The funding of the model, bearing in mind that expenditure needs to be streamlined within the existing resources.

- b) The degree of concern about withdrawing Heads from schools, however it was confirmed that this would be discussed with individuals in an attempt to minimise disruption to the school.
- c) A point by Karen Evans, in terms of the Social Care Agenda, and that it would be timely to have a presentation from Jenny Williams in order to access both her expertise, and that of her team.
- d) Sending a letter to the WJEC Chief Executive and Cabinet Secretary immediately to air some concerns about the GCSE Maths examinations (November 2016). Martyn Gray suggested, if this is a widespread concern across Wales, that there is a need to write as 4 regions or even as 22 Authorities.

It was decided to: Accept, note and approve the report. It was also agreed to contact Jenny Williams and write to WJEC and the Cabinet Secretary.

8. GWE'S ROLE IN APPOINTING SCHOOL STAFF (INCLUDING APPOINTING HEAD TEACHERS)

The report was presented by the Interim Managing Director in order to present the proposed regional protocol to the Joint Committee for consideration and approval.

A discussion ensued in relation to GwE's role in appointing school staff. The protocol was welcomed, especially given that issues do sometimes arise with some appointments in schools.

It was noted that the above is an attempt to bring quality assurance to the appointment procedure and support and strengthen the process.

Please note that staff from the Authority and GwE would not be required to attend an interview.

It was decided to: Accept and approve the report.

9. REGIONAL TARGET SETTING PROCESS

The report was presented by the Interim Managing Director in order to update the Joint Committee on the regional target setting process.

It was noted that there is a need to raise expectations particularly in KS4 and the Joint Committee was reminded that target setting formed part of Estyn's first recommendation in their report following the consortium's inspection.

It was noted that there is discrepancy between the various data published by the Welsh Government – it is not clear which EOTAS learners are included in the data. It was also noted that FSM learners are not included in the data if they attend Pupil Referral Units.

The principles adopted in the report for target setting were welcomed.

It was decided to: Accept and approve the report.

10. DEVELOPING LITERACY AND NUMERACY ACROSS EVERY SECTOR IN THE GwE REGION

The report was presented by the Interim Managing Director in order to outline the need to promote improvement in literacy and numeracy across the region.

A presentation was had on the GCSE Maths Examination results by Alwyn Jones. Concern was noted that the percentage of learners in the region attaining grades A*-C was lower than the national figures. An outline was given of the actions in place between now and the summer in response to the Maths results. It was noted that a meeting of maths representatives from every school would be taking place on 2 February and during April. It was also noted that the Maths Challenge Advisers are working with groups of schools and individual schools.

The Joint Committee was asked to support the development of a regional literacy and numeracy strategy which will help to improve standards in every sector in GwE's region.

It was decided to: Approve the report and work within the existing financial resources.

The meeting started at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 11.35 a.m.

CHAIRPERSON