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**GwE JOINT COMMITTEE**  
**20.07.2017**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** Gareth Thomas (Gwynedd Council), Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council), Meirion Jones (Anglesey County Council), Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Denbighshire Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire).

**Co-opted Non-voting Members:** Jonathan Morgan (Special Schools' Representative).

**Non-voting Officers:** Claire Homard (Flintshire Council), Ian Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council), Garem Jackson (Gwynedd Council), Iona Evans (Conwy County Borough Council), Julian Molloy (Denbighshire).

**Also present:** Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director, GwE), Dr Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director, GwE), Rhys Howard Hughes (Assistant Director, GwE), Susan Owen Jones (Business and Finance Manager, GwE), Iwan Evans (Host Authority's Legal Service Manager) – Gwynedd Council), Dafydd L Edwards (Gwynedd Council), Einir Davies (Host Authority's Members Support Officer – Gwynedd Council), Sioned Williams (Host Authority's Members Support Officer – Gwynedd Council).

**1. ELECTING A CHAIRPERSON**

Meirion Jones motioned Councillor Gareth Thomas as Chairperson, which was seconded by Huw Hilditch-Roberts.

**2. ELECTING A VICE- CHAIRPERSON**

Huw Hilditch-Roberts motioned, and Meirion Jones seconded, Councillor Phil Wynn as Vice-Chair.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Coun. Gareth Jones (Conwy County Borough Council), Mrs K Evans (Denbighshire Council), Alison Fisher (Governors' Representative), Dr Gwynne Jones (Anglesey County Council), Rita Price (Wrexham Diocese), Diane Chrisholm (Primary Schools' Representative), Mair Herbert (Secondary Schools' Representative), Martyn Gray (Welsh Government), Delyth Molyneux (Anglesey Council), Councillor Garffild Lewis (Conwy Council)

**4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

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

**5. URGENT MATTERS**

There were no urgent matters.

**6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of this committee held on 8 March, 2017 were accepted as being a true record.

## 7. ANNUAL REPORT

The report was presented by Arwyn Thomas who noted that the content had not changed since being discussed in March 2017. AT guided the Sub-group through the report, noting the following:

- The report had been updated since the draft report presented in March.
- The report identifies areas in which performance needs to be improved, and which will be prioritised in GwE's Business Plan - this plan will form the detail of the local authorities' specific plans.
- There is a need to focus on the next steps, including restructuring the service, focusing on key stage 4, and streamlining the governance model.
- Members will need to embed GwE's rules and team ethos in schools to ensure that everybody is supporting the same service, at a school, authority and regional level.
- Local authorities will need to look at their individual issues, and work in partnership with GwE on a regional scale to resolve these.

Councillor Ian Roberts noted that Flintshire's Interim Director was unhappy with the authority's performance and that they need to take urgent action to improve this. There were concerns regarding underspend when Flintshire's performance is deteriorating. He suggested that this money should be spent to improve the performance of underperforming schools.

Dafydd Edwards noted that the underspend was misleading. He explained that the Challenge Advisers, against which there had been an underspend in the local authorities, had been going about their usual business, and that the Government grants relating to work outside of their usual remit had been late arriving. Arwyn Thomas noted that GwE works in partnership with the authorities and schools to raise standards.

**RESOLVED:** Huw Hilditch-Roberts motioned, and Meirion Jones seconded, to accept and approve the Annual Report.

## 8. RISK REGISTER

Arwyn Thomas presented the Risk Register. Arwyn Thomas guided the Sub-group through the report, noting the following:

- The list, which includes risks across the region, will be discussed again in light of the summer results for September, and some issues are likely to be removed from the register.

**RESOLVED:** Phil Wynn motioned, and Meirion Jones seconded, to accept and approve the Risk Register as it stands.

Add the Risk Register to the agenda in September in order for the Sub-group to air its contents.

## 9. PROGRESS AGAINST ESTYN RECOMMENDATIONS

AT presented the report and noted the following:

Good progress is being made against the recommendations of the report, however; this will need to be re-evaluated as regards the impact made in light of the summer results.

A brief report was had from Alwyn Jones, where KS4 was discussed following the new specifications in Welsh, Mathematics and English. Alwyn Jones noted the importance of comparing results with other Authorities' figures, and not with the results of previous years. It was agreed that a baseline needs to be established in summer 2017.

Meirion Jones noted the difficulty of the Authority not being informed of the results until the actual morning of the results. Arwyn Thomas confirmed that the issue had been raised with Qualifications Wales, and that there should be mutual trust with regard to confidentiality issues, however Qualifications Wales were adamant.

Arwyn Thomas confirmed the timetable for ESTYN's visit as being the week commencing 16 October 2017, and he asked members of the Joint-Committee to try and ensure their availability for a discussion with Estyn Officers. Arwyn Thomas wondered whether members would be interested in a workshop prior to the meeting to discuss the report.

Huw Hilditch-Roberts noted that the situation of secondments from schools to GwE was quite agonising. He noted the need for a protocol for releasing Head teachers, which would ease the tension somewhat in terms of the needs of GwE/the individual/the school and Authority.

**RESOLVED:** Huw Hilditch-Roberts motioned, and Phil Wynn seconded, to accept and approve the report.  
It was agreed that a workshop be conducted for members in September.

## **10. GwE's 3 YEAR OBJECTIVES**

Arwyn Thomas gave an update on GwE's objectives and GwE's desired position in 2020. The following were noted:

- GwE's Business Plan 2017-18 has fixed targets for standards of teaching and learning.
- The Plan will be formally presented to the Joint-Committee in September.

AT was eager for members to discuss the Plan with heads in their local authorities. Any feedback would be welcomed and comments/suggestions will be used to inform the Plan.

**RESOLVED:** The sub-group to amend the Plan in September by incorporating the local authorities' plans and prioritising objectives.

## **11. GwE's ORGANISATION**

Arwyn Thomas presented the report. The report was motioned by Phil Wynn, and seconded by Meirion Jones, and accepted by the Joint-Committee.

## **12. ACCOUNTS 2016-17**

Dafydd Edwards presented the report and confirmed that the Statement of Accounts element was a statutory element by law. Dafydd Edwards highlighted:

- Challenge Advisers' underspend at £300,000
- Brokerage £139,000

Phil Wynn questioned whether the reserves could be spent on anything. It was confirmed that the main reserves are available, apart from the reserves for IT and pension purposes. Arwyn Thomas noted that he needed a further discussion on the use of reserves.

**RESOLVED:** Meirion Jones motioned, and Phil Wynn seconded, to accept and approve the report.

### **13. GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2016-17**

Arwyn Thomas suggested that a Governance Statement, concerning the propriety of behaviour and propriety of governance, be discussed at the next meeting.

**RESVOLVED:** Meirion Jones motioned, and Phil Wynn seconded, the statement which was then approved by the Joint-Committee.

### **14. EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT GRANT OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK**

Arwyn Thomas presented the report and noted the following:

- As a Consortium, we require a further discussion with the Welsh Government regarding the budget programme over the next 2-3 years, with a request for more flexibility in the grant conditions to accommodate local needs.
- A similar budget model is needed across the four regions with grants focused on supporting teachers and improving children's performance.

**RESOLVED:** Meirion Jones motioned, and Phil Wynn seconded, to accept the report which was then approved by the Joint-Committee.

### **15. MEETING DATES 2017-18**

Arwyn Thomas noted that Susan Owen Jones had assigned specific dates for the Joint Committee's meetings.

Arwyn Thomas reminded the Joint-Committee that members' attendance at these meetings is crucial in order to ensure that they are given the opportunity to steer the discussion.

Iwan Evans noted the need to maintain a quorum of a minimum of three members to vote.

The Chairperson noted that collaboration is fundamental to the Joint-Committee and that he was willing for additional meetings to be held if members wanted to discuss issues further.

It was resolved that the Joint-Committee, in future, would formally start at 10:30am, and informally at 9.30 or 10.00 to enable members to conduct an informal pre-meeting.

### **16. Any Other Matters**

Committee's scrutiny arrangements: the regional scrutiny agreement is currently being confirmed. It was resolved that a report on the scrutiny procedure would be put on the agenda of the Joint-Committee's next meeting.

The meeting started at 11:00am and concluded at 12:45.