



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

12 NOVEMBER 2015

Report by: GwE Lead Director / Chair of the Management Board

Subject: Regional Networks

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update members on the Regional Networks structure & agree on the cyclical reporting from the networks to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

2.1 Following the publication of the National Model for Regional Working by Welsh Government (February 2014) a business case detailing the additional elements that are included in the National Model that GwE's core staffing does not currently undertake was presented and agreed by the Joint Committee (15 July 2015).

These elements included:

- a) Governor Advice and Support
- b) Foundation Phase
- c) 14 – 19 Learning Pathways Offer
- d) Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Welsh in Education Grant
- e) Regional co-ordination of ICT Strategy
- f) Specialist HR Support

2.2 It was agreed that the Local Authorities remain responsible for the planning & delivery of these elements, with the existing Regional Networks continuing to work collaboratively in leading on a regional basis.

2.3 £463,004 (11.5% of the GwE Core Budget of £4.186m) is retained by Local Authorities to deliver elements a), e) and f) above via the Regional Networks.

The remaining elements b), c), and d) above together with a variety of other school improvement functions are funded through the non-delegated element of the Education Improvement Grant, a total of £5.48m. This funding is distributed as follows:

Regional Networks : £4.6m

GwE : £860k

The total funding allocation to include National Model functions and non-delegated EIG is therefore :

	National Model	Non-delegated EIG	TOTAL
GwE	£3.69m	£0.8m	£4.49m
Regional Networks	£0.46m	£4.68m	£5.14m
	£4.156m	£5.486m	£9.64m

3.0 Considerations

3.1 The full networks exist as follows (the structure is included as appendix 1):

3.1.1 School Improvement Network

This network monitors and challenges the effectiveness of the networks below & GwE. It looks at policies and practices and agrees on priorities, in order to meet the demands of raising standards and improving school performance for all categories of pupils.

Sponsoring Director / Chair: Delyth Molyneux (Isle of Anglesey)

Membership: Senior Officer from each LA; GwE Senior Challenge Advisers

- **14-19 Network** – this Network will provide an overview of the regional 14-19 offer, including allocation of resources to programmes in line with Welsh Government priorities. This will include: support for planning the use of grants; ensuring schools and provider provision are in line to deliver the expected impact inherent in these grants; working with local authorities to provide a strategic overview to challenge and support all providers, including FE colleges and private training providers, to ensure equality of access to the development opportunities; administering the relevant grants and co-ordinating and supporting bids for emerging grant opportunities.

Sponsoring Director: Karen Evans (Denbighshire)

Chair: John Gambles (Denbighshire)

Membership: representatives of Local Area Networks (LAN), representative from GwE

- **Foundation Phase Network** – this Network brings together the senior office holders for Foundation Phase in order to provide a strategic overview of developments within the Foundation Phase including maintained and funded non-maintained settings. It provides leadership and direction in this key area, supports good working relationships between individual LAs and GwE and can act as a facilitator to support the transition of Foundation Phase into the Regional Service (as per the National Model) when the Directors consider it to be appropriate. The Network can also develop networks of good practice and joint approaches to training across the region, particularly in light of changes to the Foundation Phase grant structure and recent modifications to the curriculum structure, as well as those anticipated through the Foundation Phase Stocktake and Donaldson Review.

Sponsoring Director: John Davies (Wrexham)

Chair: Claire Homard (Flintshire)

Membership: Senior Officers with responsibility for Foundation Phase from each LA, representative from GwE

- **ICT and Data Network** – this Network oversees the creation of common software platforms and databases for the education service in the region with a view to enhancing and sustaining joint working.

Sponsoring Director: John Davies (Wrexham)

Chair: Simon Billington (Wrexham)

Membership: Officers from each LA, GwE Information Manager

- **Governor Support Network** - The network meets at least termly sharing best practice and provides coordination and joint delivery of the regional training programme including the delivery of the Wales Government statutory governor training content; it provides direction and support for an annual governors conference aligned to national, regional and local priorities; it has developed in conjunction with Cynnal an e.elearning toolkit for governors. This toolkit has now been rolled out to other consortia areas with the group continuing to take the lead on its development.

Sponsoring Director: John Davies (Wrexham)

Chair: Ray Wells, Regional Development Officer Governors Wales

Membership: Governor Support officer from each Local Authority and GwE representative

3.1.2 Finance and Resources Network - This network addresses issues relating to regional Grants, school finances, provision of places, capital programmes etc in the context of developing joint-working arrangements, coherence in policies and practices and joint-commissioning cost agreements. In future, it will also look at other areas where the six LAs might wish to collaborate.

Sponsoring Director / Chair: John Davies (Wrexham)

Membership: Finance Officer from each LA; GwE Business Manager

- **Human Resources Network** - This network promotes greater collaboration to develop HR services that ensure consistent high-quality advice and support to school leaders, leading to improved capacity and the development of a self-improving school system (contributing to Qualified for Life Strategic Objective 4) across the region. Key to this being the development and promotion of regional model procedures to manage staff attendance, performance management and capability and ensure consistency of advice and practice.

Sponsoring Director: John Davies (Wrexham)

Chair: Julie Worrall (Denbighshire)

Membership: HR Managers/ Business Partners from each LA

3.1.3 Welsh-Medium and Capacity Building Network – this Network promotes greater collaboration and sharing of expertise in Welsh-medium education to meet the diverse needs of the region. It seeks to improve equality of provision and coherence and to develop policies and practices to share specialisms in other activity areas.

Sponsoring Director: Arwyn Thomas (Gwynedd)

Chair: Garem Jackson (Gwynedd)

Membership: Officers from each LA, representative from GwE

3.1.4 Well-Being and Partnerships Network - this Network addresses issues relating to enabling pupils to partake fully and equitably of the education service's provision in order to improve standards. It comprises the identified specialists in these areas of activity from each authority.

Sponsoring Director / Chair: Richard Ellis Owen (Conwy)

Membership: Inclusion and Social Inclusion Officers from each LA, representative from GwE

3.2 Reporting – the following reporting process is proposed:

- Each of the networks reports to the GwE Management Board.
- The minutes of the network meetings are shared with the GwE Management Board.
- Joint Committee members are given a progress report from one of the networks at their termly meetings. It is proposed that the first report is presented at the next meeting of the Joint Committee & will be made by the Welsh-Medium and Capacity Building Network.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to:

4.1.1 Note the content of the report

4.1.2 Agree to the proposed reporting process.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no new 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 The structure has been agreed by the GwE Management Board.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Networks Structure

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Observations will be made in the meeting.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I've been assured that any relevant financial implications will be funded from GwE's existing resources and/or specific grants.

Appendix 1: Networks Structure

