



Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

GwE Regional Business Plan

2021-2022



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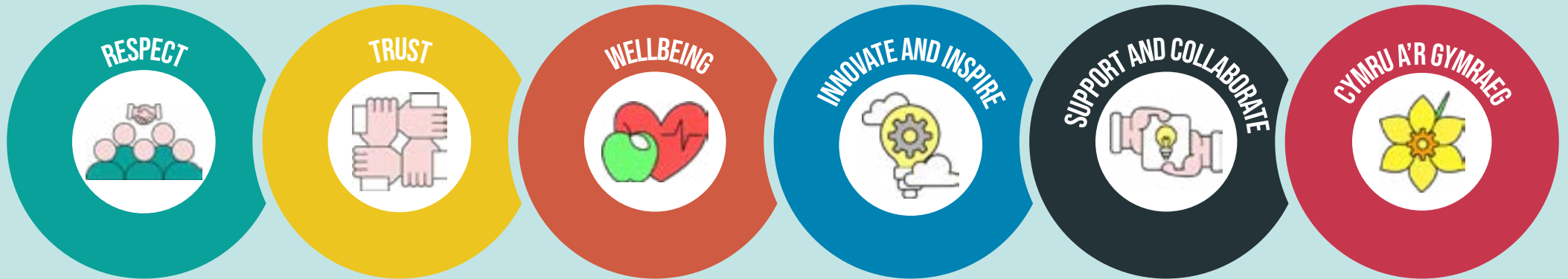
Collaborating, Learning, Succeeding



OUR VISION

- Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.
- Proudly Welsh and internationally informed, we will support our schools to become successful and confident learning organisations. We will collaborate to provide learners with the climate and education they deserve so that they become capable and resilient individuals who realise their full potential.

OUR VALUES



OUR BEHAVIOUR

We will be consistent, objective and fair in our work, valuing everybody's effort, contribution and achievement.

We will be professional, honest and open in our work with everybody. This is the core of successful collaboration.

We will show care, empathy and concern for the wellbeing of all.

We will be ready to take risks with our schools, embracing challenge, curiosity, perseverance and the willingness to learn from successes and failures. By being knowledgeable and sharing good practice we aim to empower and motivate schools to research and develop.

We will be dependable, flexible and sensitive in our support. We will be ready to collaborate and encourage working in partnership with others, recognising that there is room for us all to improve, develop and learn.

We will embrace and celebrate the Welsh language and culture in all aspects of our work.

2. REGIONAL CONTEXT

GwE provides school improvement services for a region of six local authorities: Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Anglesey.

The number of pupils of compulsory school age in 2020 was 82,364. This represents 21.8% of all pupils in Wales. There are 404 maintained schools in the region, 27.3% of all maintained schools in Wales (School Census Results, 2020).

The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals is 18.2%, which is lower than the national figure of 19.9%. This level of eligibility is the lowest of the four regional consortia (School Census Results, 2020).

In the region, 31% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 19% (2011 Census, ONS).

As of the 30th of September 2020, ethnic minorities account for 2.6% of the population in the region and this is below the Wales average of 5.5%. (Local Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey)

As of the 31st March 2020, 1,394 children in the region are looked after by a local authority and this represents 19.4% of looked-after children in Wales. (Children Receiving Care and Support Census)

GwE continues to look outward and to welcome challenge from both inside and outside Wales whilst making sure that what it is developing is right for its context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders especially those of teachers and leaders in schools across all sectors.

GwE has a clear plan that sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning and increase aspiration to impact on standards.

3. INTRODUCTION

The regional Business Plan sets out the priority areas for improvement across the region.

The regional priorities and areas for improvement are based firmly on the findings of our internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews on our current practice and direction of travel, and through consultation with headteachers and the Local Authorities. The Business Plan also addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE.

Additionally, GwE will work in partnership with Local Authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate. It also takes into consideration the views and priorities of other middle tier partners such as Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL), Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Education Workforce Council (EWC).

Our priorities are a combination of improving school provision, leadership and outcomes, as well as delivering the reform journey. Our approach to the reform journey has been integrated in all aspects of our work from the beginning. Not one element of the reform journey can stand alone. It is viewed from the need of learners and the baseline of individual schools and clusters to deliver change according to agreed expectations.

GwE has encouraged schools to collaborate through sharing practice and co-constructing areas that need improving and the challenges of the reform journey. We have invested in various cluster models and encouraged schools to find a range of appropriate partners to deliver improvement and changes. The region has also looked outward for good practice in terms of identifying effective peer review models as well as encouraging our schools to develop and evolve their own practice. GwE believe that peer engagement should closely complement the dimensions identified within the OECD publication 'What Makes a School a Learning Organisation'.

Our focus is on support and on capacity-building for a self-improving system. Challenge Advisers have become 'Supporting Improvement Advisers' and this is more than a name change – it signals a determination to build trust with key stakeholders and to move away from a top-down approach to school improvement, developing a more long-term, supportive and sustainable strategy.

In partnership with stakeholders, GwE has developed a long-term supportive and sustainable strategy which is successfully building capacity across the region to meet the challenges of the wider reform. The integrated approach has focused on developing collaborative opportunities across clusters of schools. To further support schools, GwE has developed the concept of creating termly milestones through the information management system G6. These offer all schools an opportunity to reflect and through continuous professional dialogue with SIAs, activity and its impact along with identification of next steps are shared.

Professional learning will be central to ensuring that all school staff have the professional knowledge and skills to deliver on the education reforms that are well underway in Wales. Taking into consideration the system expectations and working in collaboration with partners, a clear framework for themes for professional learning has been identified for practitioners within schools.

4. GwE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN

Our strategic objectives reflects the current regional and national priorities. The overarching priorities for 2021-2022 were agreed with the Joint Committee on the 24 February 2021.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2021-2022



REGIONAL PRIORITIES 2021 - 2022

The four purposes should be the starting point and aspiration for schools as they prepare to design the new curriculum and support their learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Our priorities outlined below are aimed to support schools as they work towards those four purposes.

These priorities are supported by the service’s detailed plans, outlining how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered and setting expectations for the next steps in delivering the reform journey. Also, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser.

1. Curriculum & Assessment - Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners	
1.1 Reform Journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise the Reform Journey and prepare for the new curriculum. • Develop a regional qualitative framework for holistically capturing and evaluating progress in a school.
2. Developing a high-quality education profession - improving the teaching & learning in our schools	
2.1 Remote learning and Learning Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schools and settings to ensure that their remote learning provision is designed to provide a high quality learning experience for their pupils. • Continue to share regionally developed exemplars – modelled approaches for teaching and learning as part of remote learning. • Support schools and settings to evaluate current practice for remote and blended learning, identifying strengths and areas for development. • Support schools and settings to evaluate pupil’s progress and to identify the next steps for their development.
2.2 Y Gymraeg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for schools and settings who teach through the medium of Welsh as their first language to improve the Welsh First Language skills of their learners, and especially those from non-Welsh speaking homes.
3. Leadership - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks	
3.1 Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all learning organisations have the leadership capacity at all levels to inspire, coach, support, share practice and collaborate at all levels to ensure all learners’ achieve their potential. • Ensure that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.
3.2 Supporting the qualifications process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schools and settings to implement the recommendations of the Design and Delivery Board for the awarding of qualifications in 2021 and 2022.



4. Strong & inclusive schools - committed to excellence, equity & well-being

4.1 Wellbeing and Learning

- Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for practitioners and learners in schools and settings.
- Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification, engagement and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures.

4.2 Parental support strategy

- Develop a parental support strategy to help parents and carers on how to best support their child's learning.

5. Supporting a self improving system - supporting a system in which the education profession have the skills, capacity & agency to continually learn & improve their practice

5.1 Incentivising collaboration to self-improve

- Further strengthen the culture, behaviour, systems and processes so that leaders and teachers are incentivised to adopt a collegiate approach to school improvement.
- Continue to work closely with schools and settings in order to continue to deepen the peer work already established, and to identify the aspects that schools could offer to other schools to develop specific aspects of Professional Learning.
- Provide professional learning to further develop peer review.

5.2 Schools Causing Concern

- Intensively support secondary schools in statutory category, and those causing concern, to improve performance.
- Provide bespoke support to schools and settings in line with agreed school improvement priorities that reflect the current situation and positions of schools and settings.

5.3 Schools developing and sharing successful practice

- Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.
- Continue to work with clusters/alliances in the region to collect, collate and make available blended learning resources as part of an online resource library.
- Continue to facilitate cluster/alliance working and peer to peer support to ensure the continuity of learning and sharing of effective practice and lessons learned from a range of schools and settings for remote and blended learning.

6. Business

- ##### 6.1
- Ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.



5. FUNDING

We like everybody else are living in very difficult financial climate and have to make some difficult decisions. We are grateful for the support of the Chief Executives across the Region and our Elected Members in the Joint Committee for their advice and support in making the best decisions to support our learners and schools.

In 2021-2022 our core budget is £3,753,598. Our core budget is now around 25% less than just before GwE was set up. This year our Education Improvement Grant will be £29,589,444¹ (including match funding). This is a £7.5million cut on the 2015 budget. At the same time, there has been a 16% increase in staffing costs through introduction of minimum wage, living wage and pension contributions. As we manage these financial challenges, we have continued to increase our delegation rates to schools. GwE retains around 3% of the EIG to provide support for schools.

		Grant and match	Grant and match	Grant and match
		Grant and match	Cut (£)	Cut (%)
11 Individual Grants	14/15	£37,021,296		
EIG	15/16	£33,549,764	-\$3,471,532	-9.38%
EIG	16/17	£31,902,703	-\$1,647,061	-4.91%
EIG	17/18	£31,672,444	-\$230,259	-0.72%
EIG	18/19	£29,124,247	-\$2,548,197	-8.05%
EIG	19/20	£29,064,551	-\$59,696	-0.20%
EIG	20/21	£29,589,444	+\$524,893	+1.81%
EIG	21/22	£29,589,444 ¹	0	0
		Cumulative	-\$7,431,852	-20.1%

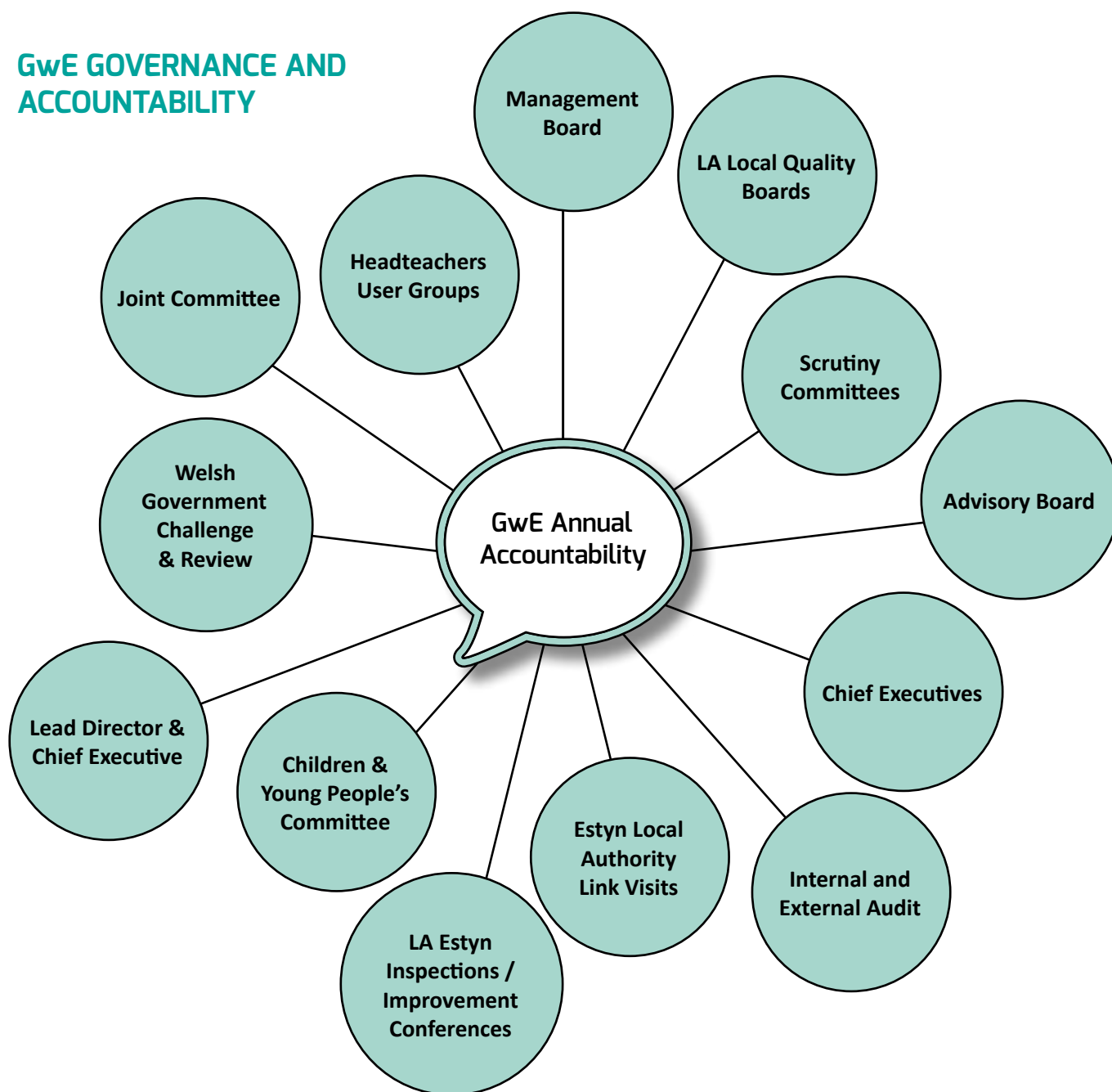
¹Subject to Welsh Government confirmation



6. GOVERNANCE: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There is a clear and robust accountability framework in GwE.

GwE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



The GwE Business Planning Framework that is in place ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level delivery and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively.

Through our detailed Business Plans, progress is reported upon quarterly which provides a progress report on the actions, outcomes / impact and expenditure profile.

Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the Business Plan will be reported through our governance groups as outlined above.

7. RISK REGISTER

The GwE Risk Register is a live document which is kept under regular review. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and also when new risks are identified where the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.

There are several risks that have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of the Business Plan priorities. These are:

- Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affects strategic long term planning.
- Uncertainty regarding grant funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affects the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.
- That the significant scope of Education reform underway to include accountability, professional learning, digital, Welsh language, curriculum development, assessment, leadership and ALN, is not fully embraced & implemented successfully. Schools awareness of the four purposes within Curriculum for Wales and development of the Areas of Learning and Experience as part of curriculum reform is limited & creates uncertainty in schools. Changes in Curriculum and qualifications causing uncertainty in schools. The Covid-19 pandemic has reduced timescale for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations.
- Difficulties in the recruitment of Headteachers across the region / Recruitment of Quality of leadership at all levels
- Cuts in school budgets are affecting schools ability to continue to raise standards.
- Use of the Education Improvement Grant not fully embedded into regional approach - reduce speed & impact of the delivery of the Strategic Business Plan
- That the Pupil Development Grant is not used effectively / Performance of FSM pupils.
- Variation in the performance of individual local authorities at KS4 & the risk of going into statutory category
- Secondary Schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.

8. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Detailed Business Plans 2021-2022
- GwE Risk Register
- Regional Professional Learning Offer
- Strategic Priorities of Local Authorities 2021-2022
- Reform Journey Think Pieces



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