

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 10 APRIL 2014**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (GWE)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service (GwE).

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 Discussions and consultation on initial Business Cases for the setting up of the Regional School Improvement Service took place in 2011 and the Full Business Case was approved by Cabinet in February 2012. The Service (GwE) became fully operational on 1st April 2013.
- 2.02 The report to Scrutiny in December 2012 identified the future key functions of the service to be developed to be:
1. to support local authorities to undertake their statutory functions in relation to school effectiveness;
 2. to provide support for both LAs and schools in school improvement activity;
 3. to specifically undertake responsibility for the implementation of the School Effectiveness Framework and the Common Inspection Framework;
 4. to make provision for the development, maintenance and review of regional frameworks on a commissioned basis;
 5. to provide a centre of expertise for Management Information service and for management, analysis and interpretation of data; and
 6. to provide a specialist centre for Education Management matters and an Education Human Resources Service to provide expertise and advice.

2.03 The Minister for Education has recently supported the GwE business plan for 2014-15, concluding that:

- the region, and its constituent local authorities, have responded well to the challenges of the National Model for regional working on school improvement;
- representatives have engaged well in the process of co-constructing the model and this spirit of collaboration and dialogue has continued as the business plan evolved;
- the plan articulates the vision the consortium has to realise to bring about school improvement;
- outcomes identified are appropriate and intelligence driven;
- actions to deliver the outcomes are useful, and reflect the significant developments underway and those delivered at a regional level;
- governance, accountability arrangements and structures are detailed and illustrate how the consortium is taking steps to advance the National Model regionally; and
- the consortium is developing a data collation and sharing system to add capacity to and inform its work of their model for school to school working.

2.04 A copy of the full GwE business plan has been placed in the Members Library. The agreed National Model envisages a more detailed plan for each individual authority to be developed as part of future annual service planning cycles.

2.05 Flintshire County Council and all North Wales Local Authorities are committed to working collaboratively with each other and the Welsh Government to ensure that children and young people are given the best possible start in life and achieve life skills of the highest standards. The commitment is embodied in local improvement plans and the development of the National Model for regional working on school improvement.

2.06 Whilst learner outcomes in Flintshire continue to improve, we recognise that Wales as a whole has a major challenge in ensuring that its levels of educational attainment are at least comparable with its competitors in the world economy. Our society and economy have no greater asset than the skills and learning capacity of our people. Through the local improvement plan, the regional business plan and the national improving schools plan we recognise that we must play our part in making a significant change in how the education system monitors, challenges, supports and intervenes in schools, in order to work in partnership with schools to drive the raising of standards in pupil achievement. The ongoing evolution and development of GwE as our commissioned school improvement service is an important step within the new delivery mechanisms.

- 2.07 GwE's mission is to develop and deliver a quality school improvement and effectiveness service in a cost effective and efficient manner, to raise standards and 'make a difference' for children and young people. The service's aim is to ensure a consistency of challenge and support for schools leading to our children and young people fulfilling their potential. It hosts new robust systems of performance information to measure effectiveness. It seeks to raise standards – improving literacy and numeracy; promoting well being, raising aspirations; improving pupils' resilience as learners; improving outcomes and reducing variation between and within schools to realise the moral purpose of education; supporting education improvement in schools; and supporting leadership development within schools and governing bodies.
- 2.08 GwE is commissioned by North Wales local authorities, including Flintshire. It is also accountable to North Wales local authorities, including Flintshire. This is embodied in the developing model for performance planning and reporting (including to scrutiny). It is also embodied in the participation of the Cabinet Member, Chief Education Officer and school representatives in service governance. It is also embodied in the participation of commissioning officers and delivery officers in local scrutiny.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The attached PowerPoint slides support the presentation of progress with development of the service to be given to this committee by Huw Foster Evans, Chief Officer of GwE.
- 3.02 The future development of GwE is guided by the agreed National Model for regional working on school improvement. An update report on the National Model has previously been considered by the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That members receive the update from the Chief Officer of GwE and support the planned development of the regional service within the framework provided by the National Model for regional working on school improvement.
- 4.02 That scrutiny incorporates the school improvement business plan for Flintshire and outcome reporting, envisaged within the National Model, into its annual work programme.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Local Authority contributions to GwE for the school improvement functions it provides are protected in 2014-15. In line with Cabinet decisions across North Wales, additional funding to meet functions

identified in the National Model will only be transferred to GwE following the individual authority's approval of a business case.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 The Welsh Government, the Local Authority, School Improvement Consortia and Schools are committed to anti poverty working and reducing impact of disadvantage as key priorities for school improvement.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 There are no equalities impact implications arising directly from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 There are no personnel implications at this point. Additional services listed in the National Model may be incorporated into regional delivery models, in stages, subject to a satisfactory business case for each and a supporting transition plan to ensure service continuity and performance. This will involve appropriate consultation with staff and their representatives.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Ongoing consultation with school leaders, governors, school improvement officers, partner authorities and the Welsh Government will be required in developing and implementing the regional business plan for 2014/15.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 Consultation of the National Model has included engagement with Local Authorities and with School Leaders. The Chief Officer of GwE has met with Flintshire Headteacher groups in relation to the development of the service.

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation
Appendix B: Lime Survey Feedback

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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