

**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 28 September 2017

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Education  
& Head of Education and Children's Services

**Report Author:** Principal Education Manager & GwE Secondary Lead

**Title:** The new GwE Challenge and Support Programme

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### **1. What is the report about?**

The new GwE challenge and support model for Denbighshire schools and revised structure.

### **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide members with information regarding the revised structure and working practices to support school improvement across North Wales including Denbighshire schools.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 That members review and comment on the revised structure and working practices to support school improvement in Denbighshire schools.
- 3.2 That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix1) as part of its consideration.

### **4. The new GwE Challenge and Support Programme**

The GwE Challenge and Support Programme has taken full account of Welsh Government's guidelines as outlined in the guidance document 'National Model for Regional Working' (November 2015). However, between 2013 and 2016 the pattern of improvement across the region has been inconsistent, and concerns remain over the performance and inspection profile of a significant percentage of schools in the secondary sector. During 2015-16, the support programme for both sectors was revised and whilst this led to improvements in the resilience and quality of leadership and teaching and learning experiences in the primary sector, little impact was seen on standards and outcomes in a significant number of secondary schools.

KS4 regional performance data, along with findings from formal and informal discussions with Challenge Advisers, the GwE SLT and senior leaders in schools and authorities across the region, clearly highlighted the need to review the implementation model and urgently establish an alternative method for supporting, challenging and securing accountability on all levels.

The GwE vision statement referred to 'outstanding schools naturally collaborating and jointly identifying direction for improvement which will deliver excellent standards and wellbeing for their pupils'.

GwE expectations in going forward include:

- ensuring a high quality and consistent approach to all secondary schools across the region.
- ensuring that all link advisors have successful experience of senior leadership.
- improving processes within the regional service for business planning, quality assurance, accountability and line management of advisers.
- improving the quality of leadership and management at all levels in schools.
- improving the quality of teaching, provision and assessment.
- eradicating in-school variation.
- raising standards in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5.
- ensuring that pupil learning and wellbeing is at least good in all schools.
- ensuring that all 6 Local Authorities perform well in relation to their FSM rankings and expected benchmarks in Key Stage 3 and 4 [for Flintshire this would mean performing amongst the top 6 authorities in Wales].
- ensuring that no school be placed in an Estyn statutory category.
- ensuring that achievement of FSM and More Able and Talented pupils is addressed as priorities in each school.
- ensuring that Successful Futures is in place in all schools.

#### **4.1 The Revised Secondary Model**

To address the underperformance of secondary schools across the region a revised model for supporting secondary school has been established and agreed with local authorities and headteachers and will be fully operational from September 2017.

The new model will include:

- a) implementing a service and individual performance management model and significantly strengthening the business planning systems and processes. From September 2017 Level 2 and Level 3 detailed Business Plans will clearly demonstrate how we address our 6 key priorities :
- b) Standards – to ensure the highest standards at all key stages and that all learners make appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy from one key stage to another. That all learners achieve qualifications relevant to their ability and potential and are working towards being bilingual by the age of sixteen.
- c) Curriculum and assessment – to ensure that all schools deliver an engaging curriculum which responds to the statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Ensure that all learners are supported to achieve qualifications which enable them to be ambitious capable learners that reach their potential. Ensure all schools have robust assessment processes in place with strong targeting, tracking and intervention procedures.
- d) Leadership – to ensure that all leaders have a clear educational vision and can plan strategically to achieve this. 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.
- e) Wellbeing – create the conditions to ensure that learners develop as healthy, resilient and globally responsible individuals and provide an inclusive, aspirational education system, committed to tackling inequality so that young people achieve their full potential.
- f) Teaching – to ensure that all teachers and support staff are equipped to have a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, based on reliable evidence. In addition, the ability to deliver a range of approaches, effectively matching the needs of the learners with the context, to ensure positive impact on learning and achievement is paramount.
- g) Business – to ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

- in collaboration with the authorities, establishing regional and local standards and quality boards. The local boards will report to the Education Department's Management Team on progress and will respond to any inquiries arising from scrutiny carried out by elected members. The outcomes of local scrutiny in the 6 authorities will then be cascaded to the GwE Joint Committee, who will consider action and progress on a regional level.
- appointing a Senior Secondary Lead with the necessary experience to lead the team.
- appointing two Core Leads for each authority [primary/secondary]. Core Leads will work in tandem with local authority officers to quality assure the support programme and will regularly report on progress and on any further action required where progress in individual schools is a cause for concern. Ensuring that the authority has early access to quality information about the progress of its schools will be paramount to their work. The appointments will also further improve the accountability to local scrutiny. All Core Leads will be line managed by the Senior Secondary Lead and will meet on a monthly basis to update on progress.
- ensuring that all Core Leads and Link Supporting Improvement have relevant, recent and successful experience of senior leadership. From September onwards, the work of the secondary team will be constructed from advisers employed by the service on a full/part-time basis; contributions by Education Officers from the authorities; provisionally seconded members of school leaders; and commissioned independent. The model will also include a pathfinder project where a Lead School is commissioned to arrange and provide the support package for another school or other schools in the Amber/Red categories [for 2017-18 this will not apply to any Denbighshire schools].
- establishing a distributed leadership model within the secondary team, where all members take lead responsibility for planning, delivering and monitoring progress on specific aspects or areas for improvement. The areas identified for development in 2017-18 include : senior and middle leadership; curriculum planning; assessment, tracking and intervention; teaching and learning; role of the governing body; ALN and inclusion; welfare, behaviour and attendance; A Level; Digital Competency; raising standards in English, Welsh, Maths and Science [including literacy and numeracy] and the Welsh BAQ.
- ensuring more effective deployment of Subject Advisers to facilitate and lead networks, to challenge and support underperforming departments and offer support for literacy and numeracy development.
- ensuring that all schools receive a GwE Support Programme to underpin their own Improvement Plan. All support plans will clearly define the nature and intensity of the assistance and support to be provided over the year.
- increasing the monitoring and accountability of Supporting Improvement Advisers who work with Amber/Red schools to ensure appropriate pace of progress.
- working with the local authorities to establish accelerated improvement standards boards in all statutory category or high risk schools to monitor progress towards expected outcomes. Membership will include the Headteacher, the link GwE adviser, the Education Officer and representation from the Governing Body. Progress reports will be presented to local and regional boards.
- continuing to build capacity for a sustainable self-improving system. We will continue to develop senior and middle leaders from schools across the regional so that they can be effectively deployed and utilised for fixed-periods to work intensively with coasting and under-performing schools.

- encouraging and facilitating research and evaluation to develop effective practice. more effectively matching national initiatives to the needs of schools and groups of schools. During 2017-18 we will be working closely with Bangor University to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the revised model.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

This report contributes to the Corporate Priority of improving performance in schools. Members need to be aware of the role and performance of GwE in improving the performance of Denbighshire schools.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

N/A

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

An impact assessment will be carried out after the publication of the verified examination results.

**8. What are the main conclusions of the Wellbeing Impact Assessment (WIA) undertaken on the decision?**

N/A

**9. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

N/A

**10. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

N/A

**11. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The risk that schools and LA are underperforming compared to similar schools across Wales.

That the Estyn school inspection profile is not top ten performing.

The LA will closely monitor the work of GwE to ensure that GwE is meeting the objectives of local authority and the effectiveness of Denbighshire schools.

**12. Power to make the Decision**

Scrutiny's powers with respect to reviewing performance and policy objectives are outlined in Section 7 of the Council's Constitution.

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