



Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

GwE Regional Business Plan

2022-2023



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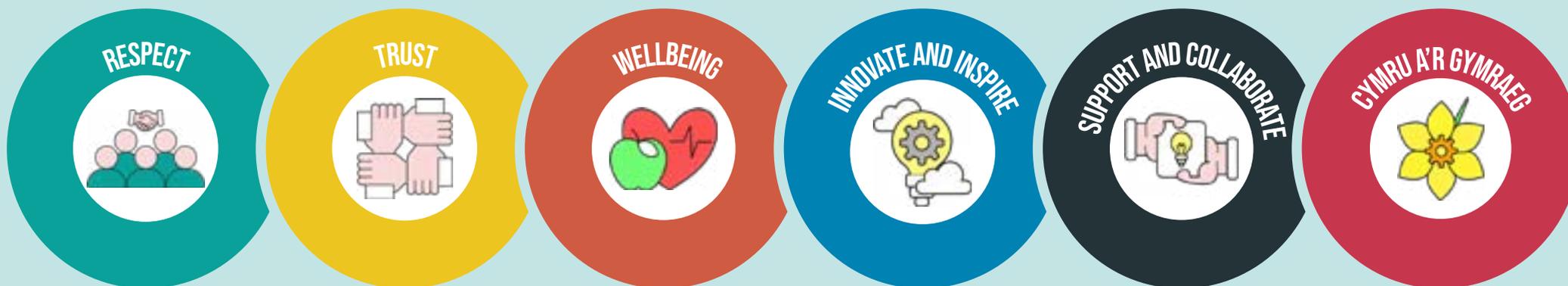
Collaborating, Learning, Succeeding



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 2021 was 82,432. This represents 21.7% of all pupils in Wales. There are 401 maintained schools in the region, 27.2% of all maintained schools in Wales (School Census Results, 2021).

The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals increased yet again from 18.2% in 2020 to 20.4%, which is lower than the national figure of 22.9%. This level of eligibility is still the lowest of the four regional consortia (School Census Results, 2021).

In the region, 41.6% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 29.5% (Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics).

As of the 30th of September 2021, ethnic minorities account for 2.2% of the population in the region and this is below the Wales average of 4.8%. (Annual Population Survey/Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

As of the 31st March 2021, 1,465 children in the region are looked after by a local authority and this represents 20.2% 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

Our 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).



In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities are committed to working in partnership with schools to ensure that we have robust and purposeful systems and processes in place to adhere to national expectations in relation to the 'National School Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability'. Our approach will ensure that we have the confidence and support of all key stakeholders and that each partner will take full accountability for undertaking their role and contribution with transparency, effectiveness and efficiency.

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.

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 business plan, along with the Regional Strategy 'Renew and reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression' incorporates how GwE will respond to the impact of post-Covid in the context of education. Through working with partners and key stakeholders and listening to them, we have identified specific themes to support our aim of ensuring that every pupil in north Wales benefits from provision of the highest possible standard. Their mental health and emotional well-being, their relationships and physical health are all essential enablers of good learning. We will support schools to focus on these areas as well as developing the key enabling skills, which include oracy, literacy, numeracy, planning, organising and critical thinking. In addition, the Supporting Improvement Advisers' initial visit to schools at the beginning of the year have focused on the needs of schools, taking into consideration the impact of Covid. Compound information arising from these visits inform schools' support plans, and we have refined our business plan to reflect this.



The high level priorities for 2022-2023 were agreed with the Joint Committee on 16 February 2022. The Business Plan for 2022-2023 has been formally agreed by the Chief Education Officers of each Local Authority, the Joint Committee and the Lead Chief Executive on 13 July 2022.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives reflects the current regional and national priorities.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2023

- 1 Curriculum & Assessment** - Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.
- 2 Developing a high-quality education profession** - improving the teaching & learning in our schools.
- 3 Leadership** - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks.
- 4 Strong & inclusive schools** committed to excellence, equity & well-being
- 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
- 6 Business** - ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES 2022 - 2023

The four purposes is 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.

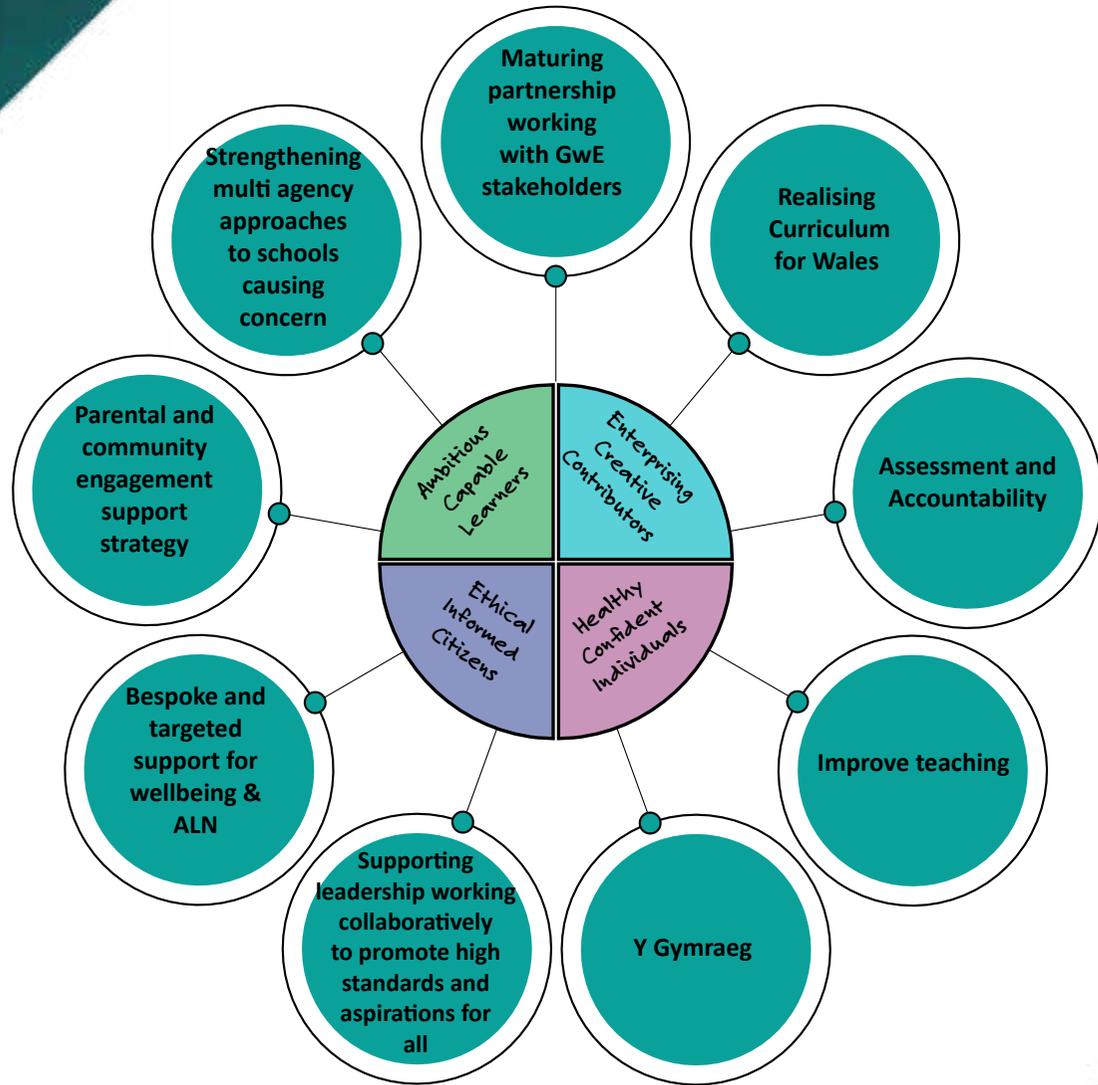
These priorities are supported by the service's detailed operational plans, outlining how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered and setting expectations for the next steps in delivering the reform journey. Also, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head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



OUR HIGH LEVEL PRIORITIES 2022-2023

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

GROWTH
POINTS



ENHANCEMENT

Collaboration

Learning Organisation

Quality Enhancement

Developing leadership and supporting workforce wellbeing



OUR HIGH LEVEL PRIORITIES 2022-2023

OBJECTIVE 1: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

- 1.1 Realising Curriculum for Wales**
- » Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise all aspects of the Reform Journey and implement the new curriculum.
 - » Support all staff and governors to realise Curriculum for Wales through ensuring that all schools are ready for first teaching of the new curriculum and meet mandatory requirements for September 2022
 - » Provide support for secondary schools and settings in preparing for the new curriculum in Years 7 and 8 in September 2023 by:
 - Providing regional and local networks with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment and progression through modelling and exemplifying curriculum practice;
 - Supporting schools to ensure that learners have the opportunity to use, apply and extend the mandatory cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence in a range of authentic contexts;
 - Promoting learner transition by ensuring effective direct engagement between secondary and primary schools;
 - Working collaboratively with leaders to ensure that all settings have a clear plan to effectively respond to the guidance delivered in the Curriculum for Wales and plan effectively for Professional Learning;
 - Ensuring all settings adopt and publish a summary for key stakeholders
 - Continuing to encourage schools to develop and refine their curriculum and assessment arrangements as part of continuous evaluation
 - » Encourage schools to develop methods of holistically capturing and evaluating progress and success of all learners towards an agreed end that encompass the Four Purposes within their school community.
-
- 1.2 Assessment and Accountability**
- » Work in partnership with schools to support the development of effective assessment rationale that addresses the reasons of why and what is assessed and identifies the requirements of different stakeholders for relevant assessment information
 - » Support the principles and practices of the Curriculum for Wales, and create the significant system and culture change necessary for the Curriculum to succeed.
 - » Work in partnership with schools to facilitate effective professional dialogue within and between schools to develop a shared understanding of progression across the breadth of the curriculum, allowing practitioners to identify, capture and reflect on



- » learner progress over time.
- » Support schools to effectively report on learner progress to parents/carers.
- » Work in partnership with schools and local authorities to develop performance indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, which effectively captures the progress of schools and settings against the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- » Work in partnership with schools and local authorities to adopt a revised accountability model, which will include robust quality assurance processes, to ensure that there are clear and appropriate lines of accountability at all levels for regional school improvement.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools

2.1 Improve Teaching

- » Support schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on pedagogy, effective teaching and action research
- » Ensure effective and consistent implementation of formative assessment principles and strategies across and within all schools
- » Ensure consistency of messages in GwE Professional Learning and support for schools regarding the 4 purposes and pedagogy, including the 12 pedagogical principles
- » Support schools to implement the key principles of the assessment guidance
- » Support cross sector collaboration to ensure consistency of effective teaching practice to support learner transition

2.2 Y Gymraeg

- In collaboration with the Local Authorities:
- » Support schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism and the benefits of Welsh-medium education;
 - » Support and incentivise the development of the growth of Welsh-medium provision in the English-medium schools;
 - » Develop a professional learning offer for the Welsh Language in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales (3-16) and strengthen collaboration / transition from primary to secondary sector;
 - » Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales and the Welsh Government target for a million Welsh speakers;
 - » Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus';
 - » Develop the language skills of the education workforce to expand the proportion who can teach and work through the medium of Welsh.

OBJECTIVE 3: LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

- 3.1 Supporting leadership working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all**
- » Continue to support collaboration at all levels of leadership to ensure all learners achieve their potential. Specifically:
 - Ensuring that all clusters and alliances are effectively engaging in developmental work within and across sectors.
 - Further strengthen and embed peer review in all clusters and alliances to ensure robust and rigorous self-evaluation and improvement planning.
 - Support leaders in clusters and alliances with Quality Enhancement processes which evaluate the quality of provision and pupil progress as we move to the new curriculum.
 - Ensuring that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.
 - » 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.

OBJECTIVE 4: STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

- 4.1 Bespoke and targeted support for wellbeing & ALN**
- » Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for practitioners and learners in schools and settings.
 - » Continue to implement regional strategies for children who are vulnerable to learning, concentrating on their inclusion, emotional wellbeing, attendance and any additional learning needs to impact positively on their progress and wellbeing.
 - » Develop a Whole School Approach to wellbeing, promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales'.
 - » Support the Local Authorities in the delivery of ALN Transformation by providing Professional Learning to improve teaching and learning.
- 4.2 Support schools to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment and set high standard for all**
- » Support schools to deliver the long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise.
 - » 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 the pandemic.



- » Further develop and implement the national PDG strategy across the region.

- 4.3 Parental and community engagement support strategy**
- » Develop a parental and community support strategy to help parents and carers on how to best support their child's learning. Encourage schools to listen to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspirations.
 - » Support schools to embed a whole-school approach to family and community engagement;
 - » Encourage schools to develop community partnerships and multi-agency working in order to strengthen family engagement, improve standards and have a positive impact on learning outcomes for those learners from poorer backgrounds;
 - » Support schools and Local Authorities to invest in the learning environment of community schools to secure stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours.

OBJECTIVE 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 Strengthening multi agency approaches to schools causing concern**
- » In partnership with the Local Authorities, further strengthen and develop the processes for supporting and challenging schools causing concern.
 - » Ensure that all schools in statutory category or which have been identified locally as SCC have access to an agreed comprehensive support plan to help them on their improvement trajectory.
 - » Ensure the support package is effectively delivered in a timely manner and is robustly monitored to ensure impact on standards and provision.
- 5.2 Maturing partnership working with GwE stakeholders**
- Strengthen our collegiate approach to school improvement by:
- » Continuing to work closely with schools and settings to deepen the peer work already established to plan, develop and evaluate their priorities and share the professional Learning gleaned.
 - » Providing professional learning to further develop peer review.
 - » Continuing to develop our work in clusters, alliances and sector transition to improve quality and develop the Curriculum for Wales agenda.
 - » Continuing to implement our memorandum of understanding with Bangor University to further develop our evidence-based practice.
 - » Continuing to work collaboratively with other Regions to bring a more consistent approach to deliver national priorities.

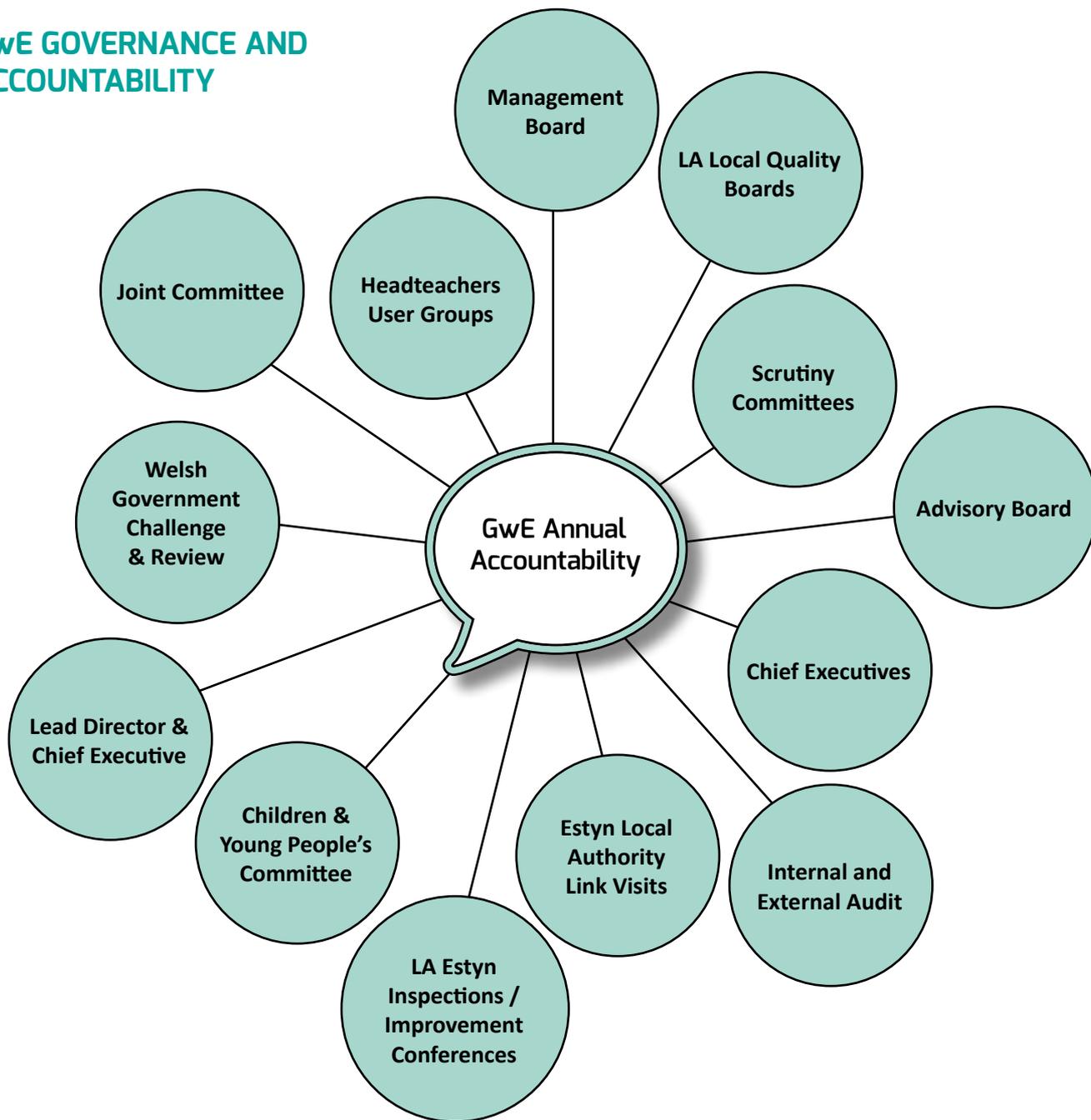
OBJECTIVE 6: BUSINESS

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

5. 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 and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively.

Through our detailed business plans, progress is reported upon quarterly which provides a progress report on:

- Impact against actions and outcomes
- Issues or new risks identified for the reporting period
- Regional data

- Local Authority data
- 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. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

6. 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 cuts and funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affects the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.
- Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey especially in the secondary sector.
- Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools.
- The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations.
- Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region especially Welsh medium.
- Pace of moving deep rooted issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.
- Coherence and range of Reform Journey and its impact on systemic leadership between WG, middle tier and schools with an increasing level of funding going directly from WG to schools.

7. 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 2022-2023 our core budget is £3,924,269. Our core budget is now around 25% less than just before GwE was set up. This year our Education Improvement Grant will be £29,309,224 (including match funding). This is a £7.5million cut on the 2015 budget. At the same time, there has been a 22% increase in 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	£28,776,349	-£288,202	-0.99%
EIG	21/22	£29,397,227	£620,878	2.16%
EIG	22/23	£29,309,224	-£88,003	-0.30%
		Cumulative	-£7,712,072	-22.39%

8. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Detailed Business Plans 2022-2023
- GwE Risk Register
- Regional Professional Learning Offer
- Strategic Priorities of Local Authorities 2022-2023
- Reform Journey Think Pieces



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