

Special Educational Needs Joint Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2017

- PRESENT:** Councillor Beth Lawton (Gwynedd Council) (Vice-Chair) (in the Chair)
- Gwynedd Council**
- Councillor Eirwyn Williams
- Isle of Anglesey County Council**
- Councillors Trefor Lloyd Hughes, MBE, Gwilym O. Jones, R. Meirion Jones
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Educational Psychologist (Mr Gareth Payne)
Education Officer ALN (Dr Einir Thomas) (IOACC)
Project Manager (Eleri Llewelyn) (Gwynedd Council)
Senior Education Accountant (Mrs Kathy Bell) (Gwynedd Council)
Committee Officer (Ann Holmes) (IOACC)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Llinos Medi Huws (Chair), Ieuan Williams, Kenneth Hughes (IOACC), Councillors Annwen Hughes, Elin Walker Jones (Gwynedd Council)
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The Chair welcomed all those present to this meeting of the Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 MINUTES OF THE 17TH MARCH, 2017 MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee held on 17 March, 2017 were presented and confirmed as a true record.

Arising – The Gwynedd Council Project Manager confirmed that no further comments had been received on the new ALN and Inclusion Strategy Governance apart from those presented to the meeting on 17 March. She said that a draft of the agreement between the two Counties had been presented for the Isle of Anglesey County Council's Legal Department to check from Anglesey's perspective. The arrangements with regard to putting all the elements in place were progressing.

3 THE JOINT-COMMITTEE'S FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH, 2017

The report of Gwynedd Council's Senior Finance Manager incorporating the Joint-Committee's revenue income and expenditure report for 2016/17 as well as the official return on the accounts certified but pre-audit was presented for the Joint-Committee's approval.

The Senior Finance Manager reported that there were specific reporting requirements for auditing the accounts of joint committees. Legislation states that a joint committee of more than one local authority is a local government body and such bodies are required to keep accounts that are the subject of audit by independent auditors approved by the Auditor General for Wales. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (Wales) 2014 state that each Joint Committee should prepare annual accounts. Where turnover is less than £2.5m (as is the case with the Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee) the joint-committee is deemed to be a "smaller joint committee" and accounts have

to be prepared in an annual return format, in accordance with proper practices as stipulated by legislation. The Annual Return (Appendix B of the report) which has been signed by Gwynedd Council's Head of Finance as the Joint-Committee's Statutory Finance Officer is subject to audit by Gwynedd Council's external auditors. If the accounts need to be amended following the external audit, and as Gwynedd Council is the lead Council responsible for the auditing and financial reporting of the Joint-Committee, the intention subject to final confirmation, is to present the amended version to Gwynedd Council's Audit and Governance Committee in September 2017. Following audit, and any necessary subsequent amendments, the representative of the Auditor General will certify the form before 30 September.

Gwynedd Council's Senior Education Accountant reported that it was said at the November 2016 meeting that it was envisaged the Joint-Committee would end the current financial year with a balanced budget. However, information was received at the time about an additional cost of £30,000 for scanning documents so that they can be retained digitally rather than in paper format. It was agreed that Gwynedd and Anglesey Council's would meet the cost of the service. The Officer stated that nothing new had emerged since then. One additional part-time Educational Psychologist has been employed at a cost of £21,984; this cost has been offset by reduced expenditure of £20,245 in the Specialist Teacher provision. Also, a grant of £10,230 for work carried out has been received late in the year and this has contributed towards balancing the budget. The final accounts therefore show a slight increase of £2,856 in the expenditure against the budget with unidentified savings of £55,210 belonging to the Isle of Anglesey County Council.

It was resolved –

- **To accept and approve the Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2016/17 as presented in Appendix A of the report.**
- **To accept and approve the Annual Return for the financial year ending 31 March, 2017 (subject to audit), as presented in Appendix B of the report.**

As this was the final meeting of the Joint Committee as a forum, the Chair thanked all the Officers and Elected Members from both Counties who had contributed to its activities over the years since it was formed. Particular thanks were conveyed to Mrs Kathy Bell, Senior Education Accountant of Gwynedd Council and to Mrs Ann Holmes, Committee Officer, and Isle of Anglesey County Council who had provided the Joint-Committee with finance and administrative support respectively since its establishment in 1996. There were expressions of confidence in the continuation of the partnership between Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey County Council with regard to Additional Learning Needs provision for the future through the new Joint Inclusion and ALN Strategy.

**Councillor Beth Lawton
Chair**