

Minutes of the Tenth Meeting of the General Teaching Council for Wales

Date: 10th December 2002

Location: The Heritage Park Hotel, Pontypridd

Attending

John Andrews	Frank Bonello	Claude Evans
Ian Guy	Neil Hendry	Angela Jardine
Gareth H Jones	Ian Morgan	Gareth Roberts
Vernon Rowlands	Moira Shepstone	Rhiannon Steeds
Gwen Williams	Linda Wyn	Elwyn Davies
Peter Williams	Mal Davies	Tim Cox
Steffan ap Dafydd		

Apologies

May Castrey	Richard Parry Jones	Diane Farmer
Sheila Drayton	Ian Morgan	Jacqueline Turnbull
Goronwy Jones		

Officers

Gary Brace Chief Executive	Chris James Director of Finance And Personnel	Tegryn Jones Policy and Planning Officer
Hayden Llewellyn Registrar	Darren English Press and Publications Officer	Zoe Grundy Corporate Support Officer

Item one - Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting of 25th September 2002

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

1 Matters arising

- 1.1 Minute 1.2. Members asked if there was any updated information regarding the request from the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) Cymru asking the Council's views on participating in seeking an automatic accredited route to membership of the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT). The Chief Executive replied that a draft proposal was in place, developed by GTCW, UCET and HEW, but some textual input from Estyn regarding the inspection of ITET was required before it could be finalised. A final document could be sent to the ILT in January.
- 1.2 Minute 2.1. A member offered congratulations in respect of recent press coverage achieved in the Daily Post and suggested that further work should be undertaken to gain coverage in the Welsh language media (Y'r Cymro and Golwg). The Chief Executive replied that both publications were on the mailing list for press releases. Additional help from members, if they had contacts in the Welsh language media, was invited.
- 1.3 Minute 9. A member asked when the GTCW Journal, Teaching Wales, would be published. The Chief Executive replied that the Journal would be distributed at the end of January 2003.

1.4 Minute 13. The Chairman updated members on the GTCW response to the National Assembly Education and Lifelong Learning Committee policy review, 'School of the Future', informing members that the response had been presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, 5 December. There had been a favourable response from AMs. Gwen Williams, who represented the Council on the Reference Group, informed members that a report on the presentations made by the organisations contributing to the policy review was planned to be made available in March. Additionally, members were informed that there may be an opportunity for the GTCW to present a second paper before the Committee reports in March, but this had not been confirmed.

1.4.1 A member expressed concern over the composition of the Policy Review Reference Group formed by the Assembly, highlighting the lack of practising teachers or teacher organisations.

1.5 No other matters were raised.

Item two - To receive notification of any issues which members wish to raise in respect of the 'Information' Agenda Items (16 to 23)

2.1 No issues were raised, although a member congratulated officers on the response to the ELWa consultation (Information item 17).

Item three – Draft minutes of the Registration Committee, 29 October 2002.

Gwen Williams introduced the minutes of the meeting. The majority of issues raised during the Registration Committee meeting were on the Council agenda for discussion.

3 Matters arising

3.1 An amendment to the attendance list was made, Vernon Rowlands was incorrectly listed as attending the meeting.

3.2 Minute 3. A member suggested that the Council needed to take a view on health checks as part of the suitability criteria. The Chief Executive responded that this was on the agenda for discussion (item 9).

3.3 Minute 7. The Registration Committee had recommended to Council that all private casework reports issued to members during Council and Committee meetings be collected immediately following the meeting to ensure confidentiality of the information, and then disposed of. Members agreed the recommendation.

Item four – Draft minutes of the Policy Committee, 29 October 2002.

The Chief Executive introduced the minutes of the meeting. The majority of issues raised during the Policy Committee meeting were on the Council agenda for discussion.

4 Matters arising

- 4.1 Minute 10. The Chief Executive informed members that the Council had not responded to the ACCAC survey of curriculum and assessment arrangements (Policy 12/02). Only one member had submitted comments and officers did not feel that an informed Council response could, therefore, be made.

Item five – Draft minutes of the Executive Committee, 6 November 2002.

The Chief Executive introduced the minutes of the meeting. The majority of issues raised during the Executive Committee meeting were on the Council agenda for discussion.

5 Matters arising

- 5.1 Minute 8. The proposed timetable and process for the election of Council members and Assembly appointments was outlined to members. The Chairman asked members to contact him if they had views on the selection process for Assembly appointed member nominations.

5.2 During discussions the following points were raised:

- 5.2.1 Could current nominated members be re-nominated by their organisations? The Chairman confirmed that they could.
- 5.2.2 Would the Assembly invite the same nominating bodies to nominate members again? The Chairman replied that the Constitution Regulations contained the list of nominating bodies, but the list was currently out for consultation by the Assembly as some of the listed organisations no longer existed. Once the consultation was complete, requests for nominations would be sent out to nominating bodies by the Assembly.
- 5.2.3 Would the number of classroom teachers represented on the Council be reduced? It was confirmed that the split of elected, directly appointed and nominated members would not be changed, only the organisations asked to nominate might alter. Members agreed that there was virtue in a degree of continuity.

Item six – Draft minutes of the Audit Committee, 6 November 2002.

Gareth Jones introduced the minutes of the meeting and highlighted that two audit reports received (from the National Audit Office and the Council's internal auditors) were very complimentary about the running of the GTCW.

6 Matters arising

- 6.1 Minute 2.3. The role of the Audit Committee was discussed, in particular the adoption of a wider scrutiny role for the Committee and the establishment of a system and responsibility for reviewing the Standing Orders of the Council, Currently there was no system in place. Members agreed to refer the issue to the Executive Committee, to discuss the proposal that the Audit Committee adopt a wider review role, including identifying any changes needed to the Standing Orders, and referring these to the Executive Committee.

Item seven – QTS and registration report (GTCW 40/02)

The Registrar introduced the report, providing members with an update on the

registration process and the consultation proposals of the Welsh Assembly Government for the Council to take on responsibility for the administration and award of QTS in Wales from 1 April 2003. Members were invited to consider and discuss the matters set out in the report and approve the recommendation in respect of applications for registration in the month of March 2003.

7.2 The report proposed that applications for registration received during March 2003 and the final month of subsequent financial years should be processed but applicants would not be required to pay before the start in April of a new registration year. Teachers applying in March would be charged for the new registration year commencing in April in effect giving 13 months registration for the cost of one year's registration fee. This recommendation was agreed by members.

Item eight – Registration Fee, 2003-04 (GTCW 41/02)

The Director of Finance and Personnel introduced the report, which proposed setting the registration fee for 2003-04 at £28, as recommended by the Executive Committee. Additionally, members were provided with an update to the current and future financial standing of the Council in respect of income from fees and Assembly grant and the changes to income levels in future years when the Assembly grant ceased. Members were invited to accept the recommendation and asked to note the indicative fee for 2004-05 of £32 which would be reviewed during the course of the year.

8. Matters arising

8.1 During discussion the following points were raised:

- 8.1.1 Would tax relief and deduction at source still be applied? The Director of Finance and Personnel replied that both would still apply.
- 8.1.2 The Council needed to be prepared for the potentially negative perception of the 2004-05 indicative fee of £32 compared to an indicative fee of £30 for England.
- 8.1.3 Could overheads be cut to keep the fee in line with England? The Chairman suggested that officers be asked to examine further if overheads could be spread across other income streams, such as CPD activities.
- 8.1.4 Could GTCW reserves be used to finance the development of the GTCW's own registration database, removing the need to be tied to the joint database arrangement? The Chief Executive responded that the registration database arrangements needed re-consideration but that new arrangements could only be made following the end of the current contract which had two years to run.

8.2 Members agreed the 2003-04 registration fee of £28 and noted the indicative fee of £32 for 2004-05.

Item nine – Suitability Criteria for Registration (GTCW 42/02)

The Registrar introduced the report, providing members with an update in relation to the Council's potential work in undertaking suitability checks as enabled by the Education Act 2002. Members were asked to agree the recommendation concerning the cost of the criminal records check and discuss whether the Council's suitability criteria should include a health check.

9 Matters arising

- 9.1 Members' attention was drawn to point 6, referring to the timescale for the implementation of CRB checks by the Council. It was noted that the Assembly had decided to delay the implementation of the Regulations to allow for the completion of a Home Office review of the CRB.
- 9.2 Members were asked to discuss who should pay the cost of the CRB checks, currently paid by LEAs as part of the pre-employment checks on newly appointed teaching staff. During the discussion the following points were raised:
- 9.2.1 How one should deal with students who have had CRB checks, and paid for them, prior to the award of QTS and registration with GTCW? The Registrar replied that a meeting between the Council and ITET colleges was arranged to discuss the overlap, although there were concerns over the short life value (3 to 6 months) of the CRB check in comparison to the length of courses.
- 9.2.2 It was noted that there was a provision in the Act for the Council in the future to have a category of 'provisional registration', for example, for trainee teachers, although the Assembly had yet to introduce Regulations and this would be following further Council discussion.
- 9.2.3 LEAs have indicated a preference for GTCW to undertake the CRB check as part of registration, however, there was an issue regarding the funding to cover the cost. The Registrar reported that it had been suggested that a working group of GTCW and LEAs be established to find a way forward. The Chairman asked whether the Assembly could be approached to fund the cost of checks, estimated to be £17,000.
- 9.3 The issue of health checks was discussed with members agreeing that health was an issue for school governing bodies as employers. Additionally, concern was expressed over defining categories of medical fitness and the challenges of disability discrimination. It was agreed that, at this point in time, the Council did not see the value of a medical fitness check as part of suitability criteria. The Chairman suggested that officers keep the issue under review including developments in England.

Item ten – Recruitment and Retention Report (GTCW 43/02)

The Chief Executive introduced the report, providing members with an update in relation to the Council's work on recruitment and retention. Members were invited to discuss the results of the Council's research work concerning recruitment and retention as set out in the supplied annexed documents.

10 Matters arising

- 10.1 Members were informed that following a meeting with the Minister, the Assembly's January 2004 survey of school vacancies would be likely to incorporate some of the questions asked in the Council's survey, thus ensuring that the Assembly has access to a wider data set regarding the situation of the recruitment and retention of teachers in Wales.
- 10.2 The Chairman emphasised the need for the Action Plan, due to be drafted following the Council's multi-agency conference on recruitment and retention held the previous day, to be high profile to ensure that action was seen to be taken. The 1998 conference, although productive, had been weak on putting

in place systems to tackle the solutions identified. Members would be involved in the drafting process through Policy Committee and Council.

- 10.3 A member asked whether the Council should investigate recruitment and retention issues regarding head-teacher and school leadership staff appointments. The Chief Executive responded that the Council would need to approach LEAs regarding data on headship vacancies and applicants.
- 10.4 A member suggested that the Council investigate whether there had been a drop in the number of applications from England to teaching posts in Wales.
- 10.5 The Action Plan would need to consider how a strategy for Wales would interface with the strategy in England.

Item eleven – Teacher Workload and Bureaucracy (GTCW 44/02)

The Chief Executive introduced the Council's eight point strategy highlighting teacher workload and bureaucracy issues and drawing members' attention to progress made to date under point 18.

11 Matters arising

- 11.1 Members agreed the eight point strategy.

Item twelve – CPD Report and Phase 3 Pilot (GTCW 45/02)

The Policy and Planning Officer introduced this paper, providing a report on progress on Phase 2 and updating members with information on the proposals for Phase 3 of the Council's CPD projects. Members were asked to agree the Information Booklets for Phase 3 and the focus for the evaluation.

12 Matters arising

- 12.1 A member asked whether remaining phase 2 funding would be allocated before the end of the March 2003? The Policy and Planning Officer replied that currently between £50,000/£60,000 was being allocated weekly.
- 12.2 A member asked if teacher sabbaticals were for placements. The Policy and Planning Officer responded that they were primarily for placements.
- 12.3 A member asked for information on how the Phase 3 pilot funding could be protected from abuse. The Policy and Planning Officer replied that the auditing and evaluation of the scheme helped prevent multiple applications. The guidelines for activities under Phase 3 were also tighter. The pilot funding was audited by the National Audit Office and by internal auditors.
 - 12.3.1 A member asked if the report writing aspect of the pilots could be eased to reduce the bureaucratic burden for the remainder of Phase 2 instead of waiting for Phase 3. The Chief Executive replied that this would not be the appropriate time to make a significant change to the Phase 2 arrangements as the Phase 3 booklets incorporating the new arrangements were due to be sent to teachers in January in any case. The evaluation of what was still a

pilot phase and the Council's desire to see the dissemination of good practice required that reports be available. The Policy and Planning Officer added that although only a few Phase 2 reports had been received to date, this was to be expected, as the majority were for long term projects which were not due for completion until March.

12.3.2 A member asked if there had been any improvement in the number of applications from teachers in LEAs identified under Phase 1 as being low. The Policy and Planning Officer stated that teacher uptake by LEA was recorded in the CPD database for evaluation purposes and the number of participating teachers in some LEAs which previously had few applicants, was now increasing.

12.4 Members agreed the information Booklet for Phase 3 of the CPD Pilot Projects.

Item thirteen – Corporate Plan 2003-06, Operational Plan, 2003-04.

The Chief Executive introduced the two documents and invited members to discuss the drafts and remit the approval of the plans to the Executive Committee.

13 Matters arising

13.1 Members were invited to send any additional thoughts regarding the documents to officers by the middle of January at the latest.

Corporate Plan

13.2 Point 2.1. A member stressed the need for balance between reality in the portrayal of the profession and positive promotion.

13.3 Point 4.1. A member suggested that the section titled "How this will be achieved" needed a mention of developing and maintaining the risk register.

Operational Plan

13.4 Point 2.1.1. A member suggested that the media focus section be extended to include direct mention of the Welsh language print media (Golwg and Y Cymro).

13.5 The Corporate Plan and the Operational Plan were required to be submitted to the Assembly by the end of February 2003. Members agreed to remit the Executive Committee to finalise and sign off the documents.

Item fourteen – Disciplinary Procedures and Rules (GTCW 47/02)

The Registrar introduced the paper, setting out proposals for the review and amendment of the Council's disciplinary procedures and rules. Members were invited to discuss and agree the programme of work and timetable.

14 Matters arising

14.1 Members agreed the recommendation.

Item fifteen – Draft response to Assembly Consultation on Staff Disciplinary Procedures and Rules (GTCW 48/02)

The Registrar introduced the paper, inviting members to contribute to the drafting of the Council's response to the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on proposed new guidance for LEAs, schools and governing bodies in relation to staff disciplinary procedures in schools.

15 Matters arising

15.1 Two issues were raised in respect of Paras 31 and 32 of the consultation document – the first in respect of the ability of a small school to carry out the procedures taking into account the size of the governing body; and the second in relation to the decision to set up an investigation and the investigation itself in the light of Article 6 of the Human Rights Act. Officers would consider these points in drafting the Council's response.

15.2 No other issues were raised. Members were invited to post any comments by the 23rd of December at the latest.

Items 16 to 23 – For Information Items

There were no issues raised regarding the 'for information' items.

Item 24 – Any Other Business

There were no additional items of business.

The meeting was declared closed.