

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE GENERAL
TEACHING COUNCIL FOR WALES**

DATE: 11TH JULY 2008

LOCATION: THE CELTIC ROYAL HOTEL, CAERNARFON

Present:

Members:

Mal Davies (Chairperson)	Anthony Hughes
Jacquie Turnbull (Deputy Chair)	Angela Jardine
Phil Bassett	Hélène Mansfield
Frank Bonello	Valerie Merriman
Neil Butler	Suzanne Nantcurvis
Tim Cox	Rosemond Nelson
Elwyn Davies	Hugh Pattrick
Sheila Drayton	Anne Robertson
Mike Edwards	Sarah Stockford
Ian Guy	Gwen Williams

Apologies:

Jane Morris	Jane Setchfield
Jacky Tonge	

Officers:

Gary Brace	Chief Executive
Hayden Llewellyn	Deputy Chief Executive (Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards)
Julia Evans	Deputy Chief Executive (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Services)
Jo Harris	Council Secretary
Joy Austin	Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive

1. Welcome and Preliminaries

- 1.1 The Chairperson welcomed members to the thirty-second meeting of the Council and confirmed the meeting would be conducted bilingually. Apologies had been received from Jane Morris, Jane Setchfield and Jacky Tonge.
- 1.2 A welcome was extended to the observers in the public gallery.
- 1.3 The Chairperson also welcomed Sue O'Halloran (Member of Council from 01.09.08), Judy Moorhouse (Chairperson, General Teaching Council for England) and Ian Matheson (Educational Planning and Research Officer, General Teaching Council for Scotland) who were attending the meeting as observers. He went on to congratulate Ms Moorhouse who had received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.
- 1.4 Members' attention was then drawn to the revised membership of Standing Committees with effect from 1st September 2008 which took into account the newly-elected members and those members whose period of office would cease on 30th August 2008. Members were content with the new compositions.

- 1.5 The Chairperson went on to report that the Welsh Assembly Government had conducted interviews for the outstanding vacancy on Council. A decision was awaited from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and would be reported in due course.
- 1.6 At this point, the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, reported to members the unopposed re-election of Jacquie Turnbull to Council Deputy Chairperson. This had been notified to members by letter on 27th May 2008. The two-year period of office would commence from 1st September 2008. The Deputy Chairperson thanked members for their confidence in her.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's correspondence

- 3.1 A letter had been received from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in response to the Council's Corporate Plan 2008-11 and Operational Plan 2008-09. The Chairperson expressed his disappointment in the response.
- 3.2 The Minister said that there would be a delay in considering the Council's advice on strands three and four of the Professional Development Framework so that it could be considered alongside the post-compulsory sector. The letter requested more detail on efficiency savings but the Chairman pointed out that the identification of cost savings was covered in the Operational Plan 2008-09.
- 3.3 With regards to reference in the letter to the possible removal of the Minister's veto on the Council's registration fee, the Chairperson pointed out that it was the Minister herself who had initiated comment on this possibility during Members' annual meeting with her.
- 3.4 Finally, members were assured that all issues would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting between the Minister, Chairperson and Chief Executive which would take place on 16th September 2008.

4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting held 1st May 2008

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a correct record subject to two typographical amendments.

Minute 15.4: Developing Council's position on future inspection arrangements - update:

- 4.2 The text would be amended to read: "The Chairperson said that it was not only schools which should be held accountable for the quality of service received by school children in Wales."

Minute 15.4: Developing Council's position on future inspection arrangements - update:

- 4.3 The word "the" would be removed from the final sentence.

Matters arising:

4.4 There were no other matters arising.

5. To receive notification of any issues which members wish to raise in respect of the 'Information' Agenda items (19 to 24)

5.1 One member wished to raise a question on agenda item 23: *Reports from Council representatives on external groups.*

6. Draft minutes of the Executive Committee meeting 13th June 2008.

6.1 The Chief Executive introduced these minutes and advised members that all issues would be covered on the meeting agenda.

6.2 There were no matters arising.

6.3 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

7. Draft minutes of the Registration Committee meeting 9th June 2008

7.1 Hugh Patrick, Chairperson to the Registration Committee, presented these minutes and invited members to raise any matters arising.

7.2 There were no other matters arising.

7.3 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

8. Draft minutes of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting 9th June 2008

8.1 Sheila Drayton introduced these minutes to Council and highlighted a number of points.

8.2 Minute 1.2: Welcome and preliminaries: Members were informed that one member of the Committee had not attended the meeting for a third without apology occasion and that it was timely to give consideration to the action which might be taken. However, as the Member's term of office would end on 31st August the Committee had agreed that no recommendation should be made to Council with regard to removal of the member.

8.3 Minute 2.3: Draft minutes of meeting 18th March 2008: A 'virtual' meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee would be scheduled in order that Members could give consideration to the outcomes of the external audit and specifically the ISA 260 report. A full meeting would be called if there were any significant issues which arose from the audit.

8.4 Minute 3: Internal Audit Reports: Members' attention was drawn to the substantial assurances which were given by Council's Internal Auditors with regards to Human Resource, Recruitment and Retention arrangements and the administration of Induction & Early Professional Development and Professional Development Funding programmes. Referring to the Internal Audit Annual Report which had been provided as an annex to the minutes, she pointed out the graph on page six which gave a comparison on the levels of assurance received by the Council in the operational years 2006/07 and 2007/08 and an average of those across other central government clients. The Council fared very well when compared to others and congratulations were duly passed on to officers.

- 8.5 Minute 7: Revised Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Members: Members were informed that the Committee recommended that in the event that it were appropriate for sanctions to be imposed on a member of Council for a breach of the Code, that it be clear that they be imposed by the Council itself rather than by one particular member of Council or an officer.
- 8.6 Minute 8: Cost of venue hire: Following a query which had been raised at the previous Council meeting, it was reported that the costs outlaid in 2007-08 were within budget. Whilst it was acknowledged that there were increased costs when Council meetings were held outside of Cardiff, the Committee agreed that future and anticipated costs for Council meetings were reasonable and that it was important for the Council to be accessible to teachers.

Matters arising:

- 8.7 Another member of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee pointed out some numbering errors in the minutes which would require correction and confirmed that no text was missing.
- 8.8 Finally the Chairperson welcomed the positive outcomes from the Internal Audit report, acknowledging the efforts of Council officers.
- 8.9 There were no other matters arising.
- 8.10 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

9. Draft minutes of the Policy Committee meeting 13th June 2008

- 9.1 The Chief Executive briefly introduced these minutes and drew attention to the progress made in developing Council positions on Professionalising the FE workforce and the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET). Members were advised that the Policy Committee would need to undertake further work on both areas before presenting papers to Council.
- 9.2 He went on to comment that, once the Council's position had been agreed, it was unlikely to lead to an early decision in favour of change from the Welsh Assembly Government. Nonetheless, he said that it was important at this stage for the Council to reach a coherent approach which would put it in a strong position to argue the case now and in the future.
- 9.3 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

10. Funding of Induction & EPD – progress report (GTCW 32/08)

- 10.1 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) presented this paper, drawing attention to the progress with the settlement of payments to schools for the funding of teachers' Induction and EPD in Wales and the shortfall in grant funding provided by the Welsh Assembly Government for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 operational years.
- 10.2 The Council had assumed responsibility for administering the funding of Induction and EPD in Wales from 1st September 2006. The arrangements set out in the document "*Accessing Funding for Induction and Early Professional Development*" had been revised in June 2008 and had been issued to schools and LEAs.

- 10.3 Members were informed that, since the Council had assumed responsibility for the administration of this area of work (1st September 2006), £7.5 million and £1.8 million had been used to support teachers in Wales specifically for their Induction and EPD.
- 10.4 Work was in hand in a number of areas. Officers were following up applications which had been made by a small number of teachers who, were expected to have completed their EPD at the end of the Autumn term 2007, but had not submitted their final evaluation forms. Contact had also been made to schools with regards to the 2008-09 academic year to request that EPD Evaluation forms would be submitted to Council by 4th July in order for the Council to settle payments when schools reopen in September.
- 10.5 He went on to report that the amount of Assembly Grant Funding for the year 2008/09 continued to be less than the amount required. £5.6 million had been provided compared to the £6.7 million which the Council had identified would be needed to support the number of teachers expected to claim their entitlement. In the financial year 2007/08 the Welsh Assembly Government had agreed to make up the subsequent shortfall during the year. The Chief Executive had written on 30th May 2008 to the Assembly drawing officials' attention to the shortfall and a meeting had taken place with Assembly officials on 30th June 2008 to discuss contingency arrangements. An agreement had then been gained to cover any additional funds needed for the 2008/09 year.
- 10.6 Members sought clarification on a number of points including the possible position if all teachers, eligible for Induction and EPD funding, were to claim their entitlement. Hayden Llewellyn confirmed that the take up of both streams of funding was higher than when administered by the individual LEAs. He added that it appeared the Council had assumed responsibility in a non-typical year, where the take up was low, and that this had led to some reconsideration when drawing up the current estimates.
- 10.7 One member was concerned that the Council appeared to have to go 'cap in hand' to the Welsh Assembly Government in order to gain the amount of funds needed which, it was stated should be an entitlement to teachers at this stage of their career. The Chief Executive reported that the Senedd had voted on specific budgets being allocated for such areas of funding and that Assembly officials had stated that these could not be exceeded.
- 10.8 At this point the Deputy Chairperson proposed that the Council might express the view to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills that the budget for the Induction and EPD programme needed to reflect the total possible entitlement. Members concurred and the Chairperson agreed to raise this with the Minister at their meeting on 16th September 2008.
- 10.9 Members were content with the report and no other issues were raised.

11. Professional Development Funding programme – progress report (GTCW 33/08)

- 11.1 In presenting this paper, Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) invited members to note the progress in this area of the Council's work and highlighted the success of the programme during the financial year 2007-08 where 5,844 teachers in Wales were supported with grant funding totalling in excess of £2.7 million.

Funding Programme 2008-09:

- 11.2 Moving on to the 2008-09 programme, a report was given on the amount of funding already allocated to teachers in Wales for their continuing professional development. Of the £2.3 million available, £1.5 million had been allocated to date and it was expected that the entire budget would be allocated by November 2008. Members were informed that further Assembly funding would not be provided although a limited

amount of funds might be considered for virement from other Council administered funding streams later in-year. Overall the Council was in a potentially difficult position. The Council had invested considerable efforts into promoting the programme and concerns had previously been voiced about the effect that a lack of funds in one year had on the number of teachers who subsequently applied. A 'tap on- tap off' approach should be avoided.

- 11.3 Members expressed a number of views. These included that the current situation was unacceptable; that overall, the amount of funding made available by the Welsh Assembly Government had decreased and that all funding, not just that made available to teachers via the Council had decreased in the last decade.
- 11.4 It was noted that a portion of the budget was set aside for the Chartered Teacher pilot and that the amount involved had increased slightly from the previous financial year. This however had been planned and Assembly officials were fully aware of the position.
- 11.5 The Chairperson gave an assurance that he would raise Council's position and concerns at his meeting with the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills on 16th September 2008.
- 11.6 At this point the Chief Executive invited members to consider what action Council should take once the funding for the programme became fully allocated. Consideration was given to reducing marketing of the programme and/or to re-focus the eligibility criteria. This might be in line with earlier member discussions where concerns had often been raised about the significant portion of funding which appeared to be 'hijacked' for maintenance-type courses which, unless relevant to the individual teacher's professional development, should be funded by the school or LEA.
- 11.7 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Qualifications, Registration & Professional Standards*) supported the discussion and added for information that it would be disappointing to retract funding support for teachers in areas where take-up had been low and significant work by officers had now led to enthusiasm and increased applications. He also said that it might cause difficulties if the eligibility criteria were amended part way through the funding year, leading to inevitable inconsistencies in the Council's decisions. Both outcomes would be unpopular with teachers.
- 11.8 One member urged that the issue regarding 'maintenance' courses should be brought to the Minister's attention as, whilst the Council continued to fund them, a poor situation was enabled to continue. Another member voiced his opinion that the funding should simply be allocated until it ran out. Other points of suggestion included: that the remaining funding might be allocated to those who had not applied previously; that it would be dangerous in the long term to reduce marketing efforts as it might then be argued that the programme did not warrant a higher level of funding due to the inevitable lower level of applications; to use marketing specifically to raise awareness with headteachers to only countersign individually focused developmental applications and to use Council's data and evidence to best support the case for increased funding. It was also pointed out that, should the Council decide to amend its stance on how the Professional Development Funding programme would be allocated, that other policy documents might require amendment in order to maintain consistency.
- 11.9 The Deputy Chairperson voiced her view that it appeared timely to ensure that the eligibility criteria were clear and in line with the Council's position and that the analysis of detailed data about the use of funding, which would be presented at the meeting on 22nd October 2008, would be crucial in enabling a coherent and strong argument be put to the Assembly.
- 11.10 Members were content to note the report and no other points were raised.

12. Review of Professional Code

(GTCW 34/08)

- 12.1 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) provided a brief outline on this paper and highlighted that the GTCW was how the only Council in the UK and Ireland which did not have a Professional Code which specifically detailed the minimum standards expected of teachers as part of the regulation of the teaching profession.
- 12.2 Under the 1998 *Teaching and Higher Education Act*, the Council is required to issue a Professional Code for registered teachers. A revised Code was agreed in January 2006 following consultation with the profession. The Code was re-titled to *Statement of Professional Values and Practice* and remained a supportive and aspirational document. To compliment this, *Professionalism in Practice* was developed and illustrated issues and situations which might potentially arise which would call a teacher's professionalism into question. Both leaflets were well received by teachers and teacher unions.
- 12.3 The Chairperson acknowledged the work undertaken by the Registration Committee in developing proposals for the amendment of the Council's *Statement of Professional Values and Practice* for discussion. Members had been provided with copies of Professional Code documents from other professional bodies which did detail minimum standards.
- 12.4 Three recommendations were presented to Council for consideration. These were namely: that the existing Council documents were important and useful to teachers; that the Council should seek to set out the minimum standards in order to both regulate the profession and to provide transparency to the public; and lastly, an approach similar to that taken in the GTC Scotland document which contained guidance and did not seek to address every possible circumstance in which teachers might find themselves or provide an exhaustive list of unacceptable behaviour, was favoured.
- 12.5 Members debated the options available. Whilst one member did not see a need to change or add to the existing Council documents, she questioned if feedback had been received which would deem it necessary. Hayden Llewellyn reported that a number of teachers who had been under scrutiny by a Professional Standards Committee, along with some union representatives, had requested clarity and detail on what constituted a 'relevant offence' which would lead to investigation.
- 12.6 Members also discussed the practicalities of defining acts of misconduct and giving extensive examples. Whilst there was some support for extensive detail, members concurred that the two existing Council documents should be amalgamated to provide a stronger framework within which teachers would be clear where the borderline to misconduct stood.
- 12.7 In light of the steer from members, it was agreed that further development of the revised document would be undertaken by officers and reported to Registration Committee in September 2008. A consultation draft would be provided to Council at its meeting on 6th February 2009.

13. Professional Standards Committees – membership and decision making

(GTCW 35/08)

- 13.1 In presenting this paper, Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Qualifications, Registration & Professional Standards*) invited members to discuss four main areas of discussion. These were namely: Membership of Professional Standards Committees; Chairs of those Committees; Members' training and the consistency of decision

making. These issues had been highlighted for discussion at the previous meeting on 1st May 2008.

Membership of Committees:

- 13.2 Taking each issue in turn, he drew attention to the main points and went on to welcome comment. Consideration was given to the possibility that the increasing pool of members, former members and lay appointees who were available for populating Professional Standards Committees might lead to possible inconsistencies in decision making as a result of fewer cases heard by each member.
- 13.3 Members noted that some former members of Council were still teaching and therefore were able to assume the position of a required teacher on each panel. Additionally, as they were not encumbered to attend GTCW Council and Standing Committee meetings, they might have more scope to be available for hearings. It was acknowledged that there were significant time pressures on members.
- 13.4 The option to develop specific pools of members which would service specific types of cases was well received. Members agreed that the annual refresher training would still need to cover a broad range of aspects to provide a complete understanding of the entire disciplinary process, whilst additional training would facilitate expertise.
- 13.5 Members were content for further consideration to be given to developing the types of cases which were handled by officers. These would still ultimately be signed-off by the Chairperson of the Registration Committee.
- 13.6 A steer was also given on a number of other points. Firstly, the Committee panels could consist of three members rather than five this would also make hearings less intimidating for the teacher attending. Criteria should be developed for those members who would form the pool of persons available to populate Professional Standards Committees.

Chairs of Committees:

- 13.7 Hayden Llewellyn highlighted the number of persons trained as Chairs for Professional Standards Committees which included a small number of practising teachers. He went on to invite members to discuss the future arrangements which might be put in place.
- 13.8 Members concurred that a role specification with a set of criteria or competences for chairs should be developed. It was thought that the Council already had a sense of what was required but had not formally articulated them. Some detail had been developed during the process of recruiting lay appointees and this might be used as a basis to work from.

Members' training:

- 13.9 Hayden Llewellyn drew attention to the numbers of members and former members who did not attend the members' training day in 2008 and raised the question as to whether the session might become compulsory.
- 13.10 Members concurred that the training should become compulsory for pool members in order to be able to sit on Professional Standards Committees. Members welcomed the change in date for the session scheduled for 2009 which would further facilitate attendance.

Consistency of decision making:

- 13.11 Following a successful pilot, debrief sessions continued to be undertaken following each hearing. The process worked well and both the points raised by panel members and the subsequent actions taken by officers were reported to Council and were also presented at the members' training day for discussion.

- 13.12 A lengthy discussion took place during which there were two strands of thought. One was that the Council might follow the lead of GTC England and other regulatory bodies by contracting an outside specialist company to observe and comment on the performance of Professional Standards Committee members.
- 13.13 Members took the opportunity to clarify detail on the arrangements GTC England had put in place and also sought assurance from officers that the costs would be minimised.
- 13.14 Another strand of thought was that the Council, as part of the teaching profession in Wales, might be able to handle well its own self-reflection and review of performance. One member voiced his opinion that the pool of former members provided a valuable resource which might provide the required expertise to undertake an assessment. Members considered whether the self evaluation should measure the Committee's effectiveness or that of the individual member. If the latter, it was felt important that caution should be exercised.
- 13.15 In summary, members concluded that an internal process would need to be sufficiently robust so that it could stand up to external scrutiny and that it was the quality and process of how a decision was reached that was being considered here. Decisions reached by Professional Standards Committees would remain sacrosanct.
- 13.16 Some final points were made at the end of the discussion: firstly, that it would be important to establish if any evaluation reports made to the Council from an external assessor would be accessible under the Freedom of Information Act, and secondly, that a mechanism of dealing with any identified deficiencies would be developed and put in place from the outset.
- 13.17 The Chairperson welcomed the steer provided by members and clarified that no decision had been taken at this point. Officers would develop the options discussed and further discussion would take place at the Registration Committee on 17th September 2008.

14. Chartered Teacher update and timing of mainstream programme (GTCW 36/08)

- 14.1 The Chief Executive presented this report on the Chartered Teacher pilot, pointing out the progress with the ongoing pilot.
- 14.2 The Chartered Teacher programme had been developed as part of Council's Professional Development Framework, which would enable teachers in Wales to attain chartered status. The pilot of this programme had commenced in September 2007 and members were invited to discuss the commencement date for the mainstreaming of the programme.
- 14.3 Members were advised that the first pilot module had been completed and a summary report had been provided by the module partnership comprising Swansea Metropolitan University and NEWI. Three further pilots at UWIC, UWCN and SWAMWAC were due for completion prior to the summer break. The pilot of the accreditation route commenced on 29th February 2008 with four teachers participating, work was ongoing on their portfolio with full support from two advisors and an all-participant meeting was scheduled for 8th October 2008. There were a number of other pilots commencing throughout the 2008-09 operational year and members were made aware that selection was still to be made on the participants for three pilots. Information packs had been issued to all teachers who had expressed an interest to date and had yet to be selected to participate.
- 14.4 Finally, he reported that work had commenced on the independent evaluation by the Institute of Applied Educational Research, UWIC which included a number of scoping

meetings between officers and Professor Egan; agreement on a project plan; draft questionnaire and interview tools and observation of contact days at the Cardiff University and UWCN pilots.

- 14.4 Members were content for the pilot programme to be extended for a further year, taking the commencement of the mainstreamed programme to 2011. Agreement would need to be sought from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in respect of funding for the pilot.
- 14.5 Clarification was sought on the numbers undertaking each pilot module which took into account possible dropout. Members were pleased to note that the pilot programme appeared to be popular with the teaching profession in Wales.
- 14.6 There were no further points of clarification and members were content with the update report.

15. Draft Council position on Future Inspection Arrangements (GTCW 37/08)

- 15.1 In presenting this paper, the Chairperson invited members to consider and, if deemed appropriate, to adopt the draft position on future inspection arrangements in Wales.
- 15.2 Thanks were given to the Task & Finish Group which had been formulated to develop the position and to Kevin Pascoe, formerly the Policy and Planning Manager, who had overseen its development. The position paper had been discussed by the Policy Committee at its meeting on 13th June 2008 and final amendments incorporated before recommendation to Council.
- 15.3 Attention was drawn to the seven key themes which the Council hoped might influence the development of future inspection arrangements. One of the themes urged a move away from the term inspection and toward a model of 'service review' and the overall ethos was to maximise the impact of review whilst minimising intrusion.
- 15.4 Members were content with the final position paper and for it to be adopted.

16. Draft Annual Report 2007-08 and Annual Accounts 2007-08 (GTCW 38/08)

- 16.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper which had been tabled on the day of the meeting. He explained that he would present the Draft Annual Report 2007-08 and that the (*Deputy Chief Executive, Finance, Personnel and Corporate Services*) would present the Annual Accounts 2007-08.
- 16.2 The Council was required to lay Annual Accounts and an Annual Report before the National Assembly for Wales which reported on the Council's finances for the year and achievements against the targets set in the Operational Plan 2007-08.

Draft Annual Report 2007-08:

- 16.3 Members were advised that the report followed the same pattern as in 2006-07, containing a summary of accounts and would be professionally designed and published both in hard copy and on the Council's website. There has been considerable achievements and there were set out in the Executive Summary. He invited members to highlight further key successes and other amendments and for these to be passed to officers by 18th July 2008 for inclusion.

Draft Annual Accounts 2007-08:

- 16.4 Julia Evans (*Deputy Chief Executive, Finance, Personnel and Corporate Services*) explained that the format of the Annual Accounts was largely prescribed and provided the required reports, commentary and unaudited accounts as specified to the Council.

- 16.5 Highlighting points of particular note, she drew attention to the deficit of £207,000 which was detailed on the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March 2008. The deficit had occurred as a direct result of the increased number of Professional Standards hearings. The Council had budgeted for ten hearings but twenty three had been scheduled during the financial year each at an average cost of £15,000. For the financial year 2008/09, budget had been set aside for 25 hearings.
- 16.6 She went on to report on the areas which had seen increases in expenditure, namely: employment of six additional staff and increased legal fees for professional standards casework advice to the Council. Two of the Council's reserves had been used to support the election of teacher members and to support the increased cost of the disciplinary work.
- 16.7 Members noted the reports and went on to ask two questions. The increased cost of rent paid was due to the additional office space which was taken on in September 2006 and the expected rent review. Finally, arrangements for the employee pension scheme were clarified.
- 16.8 No further questions were raised.

17. Revised Disability Equality Scheme (GTCW 39/08)

- 17.1 In introducing this revised scheme, the Chief Executive reminded members that the interim scheme had been adopted in December 2007 with agreement to review in July 2008. The Task & Finish Group of current and former Council members had overseen the further development of the policy which was based upon disabled user inputs.
- 17.2 Key to developing the revised scheme was the input of the Disabled Teacher Reference Group which had been created specifically for this purpose although significant issues were encountered at the outset in securing input from disabled teachers. Council had published a number of articles in the *Teaching Wales* journal and the general press welcoming assistance from disabled teachers and these helped secure crucial engagement from more than twenty teachers.
- 17.3 The draft scheme presented for consideration and, if deemed fit, for adoption had been approved by both the Executive and Policy Committees.
- 17.4 Members welcomed the revised scheme and gave thanks to Kevin Pascoe, former Policy and Planning Manager, who had contributed significantly to its development.
- 17.5 One question was posed regarding disabled access to the Council's offices at Southgate House from the car park. No other questions were posed and members agreed to the adoption of the scheme without further amendment.

18. Consultation on proposals to revise the professional standards for the HLTAs (GTCW 40/08)

- 18.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the Welsh Assembly Government consultation on proposals to revise professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). Due to the short length of the consultation period, four weeks, members were invited to give a steer on drafting a response and to remit the finalisation of the response to the Chairperson and Chief Executive which was to be submitted by 18th July 2008.
- 18.2 The HLTA standards had been published in 2004 and were a mirror of the standards introduced in England. A review of the standards in England had been conducted by

the Training and Development Agency in 2007 and, as a result, the Welsh Assembly Government had launched a web-based only consultation on 17th June 2008. The Assembly proposals were based on the new standards currently in use in England with small amendments to take account of the Curriculum Cymreig and equality of language. The Welsh Assembly Government intended for the revised HLTA standards to be in place from September 2008.

- 18.3 The Chairperson commented on the small number of changes which had been made by Assembly officials when using the English standards as a starting point for the revised position in Wales.
- 18.4 It was clarified that the standards did not make reference to Teaching Assistants, and that the consultation was purely on, Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
- 18.5 One member suggested that child protection issues might be included.
- 18.6 There were no further points raised and members were content for the Chairperson and Chief Executive to be remitted with the finalisation of the response. Future comments were to be submitted to officers as soon as possible due to the short timescale.

19. Reports from Council representatives on external groups (GTCW 45/08)

- 19.1 One member sought clarification on future opportunities for the Council to be involved with the implementation and any reviews of the Foundation Phase. In particular she was concerned about implementation and funding issues. The Chief Executive explained that the Council had not been invited to take up membership of any review group which might exist and that an invitation would be circulated to members should one be received. It was agreed that the Assembly Government should be approached to see if any such group existed and whether GTCW might be invited to have a place on it.
- 19.2 At this point another member proposed that the Council might develop a position on the Foundation Phase. The Chairperson explained that the Council would need to undertake a consultation in order to develop a position and it was agreed to look into this.
- 19.3 No further points were raised and members were content to note the report.

20. Any other business

- 20.1 The Chairperson expressed his gratitude to the outgoing members of Council whose term of office would come to a close on 31st August 2008. On behalf of the Council, he reflected on the excellent progress made from the Council's inception in 2000 and he achievements attained. He noted the contributions of Gwen Williams and Goronwy Jones who had been members since 2000; Rosemond Nelson, Anthony Hughes and Val Merriman from 2004 and Neil Butler from 2007.
- 20.2 Members concurred with the expressions of thanks and the valued work of the outgoing members.
- 20.3 There was no other business in the Public Session.
- 20.4 The Council then moved into Private Session.

The next Council meeting will take place on Wednesday 22nd October 2008

at

The Coed Y Mwstwr Hotel, Coychurch near Bridgend