

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

**DATE: 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2008**

**LOCATION: LAMPHEY COURT HOTEL, LAMPHEY, PEMBROKE**

**Present:**

**Members:**

Mal Davies (Chairperson)	Valerie Merriman
Jacque Turnbull (Deputy Chair)	Jane Morris
Neil Butler	Suzanne Nantcurvis
Tim Cox	Rosemond Nelson
Elwyn Davies	Hugh Pattrick
Mike Edwards	Anne Robertson
Ian Guy	Jane Setchfield
Anthony Hughes	Sarah Stockford
Angela Jardine	Jacky Tonge
Hélène Mansfield	Gwen Williams

**Apologies:**

Phil Bassett	Frank Bonello
Sheila Drayton	

**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)
Kevin Pascoe	Policy & Planning Manager
Jo Harris	Corporate Support Officer (Secretariat)

**1. Welcome and Preliminaries**

- 1.1 The Chairperson welcomed members to the thirty-first meeting of the Council and confirmed the meeting would be conducted bilingually. Apologies had been received from Phil Bassett, Frank Bonello and Sheila Drayton.
- 1.2 A welcome was extended to the observers in the public gallery.
- 1.3 The Chairperson went on to welcome Tom Hamilton (Director of Educational Policy, General Teaching Council for Scotland) who was attending the meeting as an observer. He reported that the Council had hosted a successful annual meeting of Chairs and Chief Executives of the UK and Ireland GTCs on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008.
- 1.4 Members were made aware that Kevin Pascoe was attending his final meeting of Council in his fixed-contract post as Policy and Planning Manager. The Chairperson took the opportunity to offer his thanks for his work for the Council over the previous 8

months. Joy Austin was also introduced to members as the newly-appointed Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive. A letter would be sent to members to outline the respective roles of the Executive Assistant and Corporate Support Officer.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **3. Chairperson's correspondence**

3.1 There were no items of Chairperson's correspondence.

3.2 At this point, the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, reported to members the re-election of Mal Davies to Council Chairperson. This had been notified to members by letter on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson requested. These would need to be submitted to the Returning Officer by noon on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

## **4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

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

### Minute 17.5: Professionalising the Lifelong Learning Sector:

4.2 It was agreed that part of the minute should be amended to read: "The Deputy Chairperson put forward her view that young people aged 14-19 should be guaranteed similar standards regardless of delivery setting."

### Minute 15.2: Estyn Future Inspection Arrangements – developing a Council position:

4.3 The text would be amended to read: "He added his view that, with the support given by consultants and LEAs, the role of Estyn and private inspection would be minimised"

### Matters arising:

4.4 Minute 3.6: Chairperson's correspondence: One member requested an update on the number of queries which had been received following the increase in the Council's registration fee. Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) reported that 130 telephone calls and 60 emails/letters had been received and dealt with.

4.5 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 27)**

5.1 One member notified his wish to discuss the Council's Corporate Plan 2008-11 and Operational Plan 2008-09. This was covered under agenda item 18 and would therefore be discussed later in the meeting.

## **6. Draft minutes of the Executive Committee meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March 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 Policy Committee meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

7.1 The Chief Executive presented these minutes, advising that all items except one would be covered on the meeting agenda.

7.2 Members were made aware that the development of a Council position on ITET (Initial Teacher Training) would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Policy Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008. A report would be made to Council at its next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008. Members were content with this information.

7.3 There were no other matters arising.

7.4 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

## **8. Draft minutes of the Registration Committee meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

8.1 Hugh Patrick introduced these minutes to Council, and invited members to raise any matters arising.

### Matters arising:

8.2 Minute 3: Update on Registration: The Chairperson reported that there had been a need for Council officers to resolve a misunderstanding with a small number of LEAs regarding the fee collection process following the increase to the Council's registration fee for 2008/09. Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) firstly assured members that the fees collection process had now been fully completed. He explained that toward the end of the process a letter from ADEW, circulated to all LEAs, had caused a query on the amount which was to be debited from teacher's salaries. This had been resolved quickly by a letter of clarification issued by the Welsh Assembly Government.

8.3 Minute 5.20: Holding expired orders on the Register: One member welcomed the draft minute stating that it was not the Deputy Chief Executive's intention to recommend that the Council should hold expired disciplinary orders against the names of teachers on its Register of Qualified Teachers nor to consider such information available for disclosure to employers and prospective employers as planned by GTCE.

8.4 There were no other matters arising.

8.5 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

## **9. Draft minutes of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

9.1 In the absence of the Committee Chair, Anthony Hughes presented these minutes.

9.2 Anthony Hughes raised his concern that, whilst a vacancy existed on the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, only 2 members had regularly attended. It had been agreed to invite expressions of interest from a number of individuals who were not Council members but would strengthen the Committee's financial expertise. Members of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee would select the most suitable candidate.

- 9.3 He went on to highlight the positive Internal Audit Report which had been received with the highest level of assurances and requested that the thanks of the Committee to Julia Evans (*Deputy Chief Executive, Finance, Personnel and Corporate Services*) and the staff of Council's Finance Team be noted. This was endorsed by the Chairperson.
- 9.4 Members were also made aware that *Grant Thornton* had been appointed by the Wales Audit Office as external auditors. Mr Hughes drew attention to the very useful relationship which should be most helpful to the Council.
- 9.5 There were no matters arising from the minutes. The Chairperson took the opportunity to acknowledge the member vacancy which existed on the Audit & Scrutiny Committee and on Council as a whole. He reported that he had been involved with the sift of applications on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008 which was being handled by Welsh Assembly Government officials as part of their nominations and appointments process.
- 9.3 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

**10. Registration, QTS and Induction (GTCW 20/08)**

- 10.1 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) presented this paper, drawing attention to the four main areas of the report. These were namely the annual GTCE registration fee process, the Statistics Digest, and updates on the Council's work on QTS and Induction.
- 10.2 Following on from the concise update which was given to members earlier in the meeting, Hayden Llewellyn went on to report that registration fees had been collected from 38,942 teachers in Wales. The majority of registrants were teachers from maintained and Foundation schools but also included approximately 6,500 who worked as supply teachers or had chosen to continue their registration following their retirement. He confirmed that the collection process was now complete.
- 10.3 He then drew attention to the seventh Annual Statistics Digest which had been prepared with a census date of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008 and would be distributed to all schools, LEAs, teacher unions and other relevant organisations.
- 10.4 Members' attention was drawn to the development of provisional registration in England. The Education Act 2002 made provision for both the General Teaching Council for Wales and the General Teaching Council for England to introduce provisional registration arrangements. Hayden Llewellyn pointed out that the GTCE's arrangements would commence with trainee teachers from September 2008 and overseas trained teachers and instructors (as defined in the Specified Work Regulations) working in maintained schools from September 2009. Members were advised that provisional registrants would not be required to pay a fee by the General Teaching Council for England.
- 10.5 He reminded members of Council's position agreed in October 2005 that it should continue to regard all forms of registration as being post-QTS and the Council's advice to the Minister in 2006 that full registration should be re-aligned with the induction standard.
- 10.6 Members had also been invited to note the Council's work in the administration and award of QTS and issue of Induction certificates. Both areas of work were on track.
- 10.7 The report was noted and members went on to seek clarification on a number of points. Hayden Llewellyn advised one member that teachers who chose not to retain their registration after making the payment for the year, would not receive a refund. A concern was also raised about the difference in fee which now existed between the General Teaching Council for Wales and the General Teaching Council for England

and if teachers would be required to pay the difference if moving their employment from England to Wales. Assurances were given that the reciprocal arrangement in place between the two Councils ensured that no additional fee would be payable.

- 10.8 Moving to the Statistics Digest, Hayden Llewellyn explained that the statistical analysis undertaken on the “subject trained in versus subject taught” was based on data from teachers working in both Welsh and English mediums. Whilst specific Welsh medium data was held on the Council’s Register of Members’ Interests, it had not yet been sufficiently populated to date in order to undertake a sound analysis. This would be undertaken at an appropriate point in the future.
- 10.9 Another member queried the cost to supply teachers who paid for the registration fee themselves. He suggested that the Council might take a view that the reimbursement available from the STRB (School Teachers Review Body) should be made available to also cover supply teachers. The Chief Executive responded. Whilst having sympathy with supply teachers, he explained that the Council did not have a remit in regard to teachers’ pay and conditions and that this issue would need to be explored by the teacher unions.
- 10.10 Members were content with the report.

## **11. Funding of Induction & EPD report (GTCW 21/08)**

- 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 2 main items for attention. These were namely, the analysis of planned and actual activities for teachers’ EPD in Wales and to consider, and if deemed appropriate, approve revised guidance for schools to access funding for teachers Induction and EPD in Wales.
- 11.2 The Council had assumed responsibility for administering the funding of Induction and EPD in Wales from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006. The arrangements set out in the document “*Accessing Funding for Induction and Early Professional Development*” had been in place since 7<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and was used by schools and LEAs as a point of reference.
- 11.3 Members had been provided with an update on the total funding paid out to teachers in Wales for their Induction and Early Professional Development. Hayden Llewellyn reported that the Council’s work was on schedule and that a recent external audit had been very positive. Members were then asked to consider the analysis of EPD activities and to note the emerging trend for the majority of funds being used for course attendance.
- 11.4 Members discussed the selection of course-based learning by teachers for their EPD. One member thought that the type of course undertaken was of importance and that those which were considered to be ‘maintenance’ should be funded by LEAs whereas courses which developed individuals’ classroom effectiveness should be supported by the Council. Members concurred.
- 11.5 The Chairperson endorsed members’ comments and concerns regarding the use of the funds administered by the Council and supported the intention to monitor the emerging trends. The Chief Executive reminded members of his opening article in the winter 2007 edition of *Teaching Wales* in which he appealed to headteachers to safeguard the £3 million available to teachers in Wales for their individual professional development.
- 11.6 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers’ Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) reminded members that the Welsh Assembly Government invitation for the Council to handle the administration of the funding of Induction and

EPD required a 'light-touch' approach. Whilst the trend in the selection of course-based training would be monitored, flexibility was to be maintained and the different approach applied with regards to teachers CPD (Continuing Professional Development) was highlighted.

- 11.7 Members were content to note the report.
- 11.8 Members were also informed that Assembly officials were content with the proposed revised guidance procedures. Members approved the amended guidance document. It would therefore be issued to schools and LEAs in June 2008.

## **12. Professional Development Funding programme report (GTCW 22/08)**

- 12.1 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) provided a brief outline on the paper which was divided into two parts, namely, the funding programmes 2007-08 and 2008-09.

### Funding Programme 2007-08:

- 12.2 This report provided members with an update on the Council's work in administering the professional development funding programme for teachers in Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. The total level of funding available to the Council in 2007-08 had been £2.86 million with an additional £530k made available later in the financial year from additional Assembly grant and virement from other grant funded activity.
- 12.3 Members were informed that staffing issues and a significant increase in the number of applications had led to some pressures in completing the current round of final claims, particularly given that approximately an extra £1 million had been allocated compared to 2006-07. As at 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008, £2.126 million had been paid out to teachers in Wales for their individually-focused CPD. Officers were seeking to complete the work relating to the 2007-08 programme by the end of April 2008.

### Funding Programme 2008-09:

- 12.4 A sum of £2.978 million would be available to the Council from the Welsh Assembly Government of which £360,000 had been identified to cover the cost of piloting the Chartered Teacher professional development programme in Wales.
- 12.5 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) reported the positive news that in excess of 800 applications for the new financial year had been received to date. It was understood from Welsh Assembly Government officials that no further funds were likely to be made available. On this basis, it was expected that the monies would be fully allocated by October/November 2008.
- 12.6 The Chief Executive assured members that officers would continue to work with Welsh Assembly Government officials to try to gain further funding. Members would be kept informed. He recalled the problems experienced during the financial year 2004-05 during which funds were limited per term and this led to a 'tap on-tap off' effect which was highly detrimental to teacher uptake of the funding programme.
- 12.7 He went on to endorse the concerns raised by members when an earlier discussion took place regarding the use of funds allocated by the Welsh Assembly Government for teachers individually-focused CPD for low-level courses. Members were assured that officers assessed applications for CPD funding more closely than the 'light touch' approach required for Induction and EPD. Where possible, applicants were guided to obtain funding through alternative activities which met the agreed criteria but were declined if ineligible.

12.8 Finally one member commented, whilst referring to the limited amount of funds available to teachers in the current funding year, that it would be important to ensure that no inappropriate applications were approved which would lead to genuine applications being declined due to the shortfall in funding. The Chairperson concluded that this would be undertaken whilst striving to avoid a process which might be overly bureaucratic.

### **13. Professional Standards update (GTCW 23/08)**

13.1 Firstly, the Chief Executive reminded members that an informal session for members would follow the meeting to include a presentation on the implications of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act from Mike Burns of the Welsh Assembly Government. He went on to highlight the main points for discussion which were namely, the number of persons now available to sit on Professional Standards Committees; the Professional Code of Conduct for Teachers which was due for review; the sharing of disciplinary information between health regulators and the implication for European regulatory bodies following the GMC's signing of the Portugal Agreement.

13.2 Inviting discussion, the Chief Executive raised the challenge of ensuring consistency when reaching decisions in the Council's Professional Standards area of work. There were now 45 persons, with a further 6 following the installation of the newly-elected members, available to populate the standards committees and this might be come more challenging as fewer cases would be 'heard' by each individual. In addition, there was an increasing move amongst regulators in the UK and abroad to demonstrate transparency to the public through separation of role between persons responsible for policy and decision making of the organisation and persons who sit on Professional Standards Committees. Members were invited to consider whether the pool of persons available might be split in order to specialise in particular phases of casework and/or types of cases.

13.3 The Chairperson then drew attention to the forthcoming Annual Disciplinary Refresher Training date for members. Six former and six current members had given their apologies or expressed doubts in their attendance which would affect the eligibility of former members to sit on panels and might affect the consistency of those current members. He appealed for members to attend if at all possible. The date had been notified 12 months in advance with the calendar of Council and Committee meetings.

13.4 One member explained that the regular date in Mid-May was particularly difficult for secondary school teacher members to attend. Officers agreed to look into a later date next year.

13.5 Another member requested that the papers for the Annual Disciplinary Refresher Training be sent to all members who were unable to attend. He went on to request that a list of members' attendance of Professional Standards Committees and Investigating Committees be compiled. Raising the issue of moderating members' performance on panels, another member suggested that the Executive Committee might have a role in assessing the consistency of decisions which had been reached by these committees. Whilst one member felt that the pool of panel members had become too large, another welcomed the increase as it alleviated some pressures following the increased casework load.

13.6 Hayden Llewellyn then drew members' attention to the General Teaching Council for England's use of an outside moderation company. Currently, Council had commenced a pilot of debriefing sessions following each Professional Standards Committee and the outcomes of these were reported in the Private Items paper provided to members.

- 13.7 Members welcomed the principle of moderation of the hearing panels and, whilst not rejecting the option for an outside company to undertake this work, indicated that member of Council might take this role. This role would be independent and not in any way involved in the decision making process on the day. One member did voice his concern about the cost of outsourcing the moderation work but welcomed the report that the General Teaching Council for England had increased the number of warnings issued to teachers at Investigating Committee level.
- 13.8 A brief discussion took place regarding the balance of panels which were required to offer balance in terms of gender, sector and relevance. Members were assured that each Committee was ratified by the Chairperson of Council and that every effort was made to obtain the ideal balance although the availability of members naturally impacted on this. An explanation was given as to why a schedule of future hearing dates could not be set which might assist members in populating hearing panels.
- 13.9 The Deputy Chairperson said that any moderation process would need to look at the process of evaluation and reaching the decision rather than a moderation of decisions themselves. Each case was intrinsically different even though on paper they might look similar.
- 13.10 Finally members discussed the process by which Council might come to its decision regarding the moderation of Professional Standards Committees. It was agreed that a position would be developed by the Registration Committee and further discussion would take place at the next meeting of Council on 11.07.08.
- 13.11 One member raised the issue of developing the Professional Code of Conduct for members. It was agreed to discuss this in Private Session.

#### **14. Chartered Teacher Update**

**(GTCW 24/08)**

- 14.1 Providing an update on the Chartered Teacher pilot, the Chief Executive pointed out the progress with the pilots which had commenced in the 2007-08 operational year. The first pilot *Talk for Thought* had been completed and a summary report would be made available to Policy Committee members in June 2008. The pilot of the accreditation route had commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008 with a participant meeting which took place in Builth Wells.
- 14.2 Council had developed as part of its Professional Development Framework, a programme for teachers in Wales to attain chartered status. The pilot of this programme had commenced in September 2007.
- 14.3 He also drew attention to the 6 pilots which were commencing in the 2008-09 operational year. The first of these *Evaluation and Self reflection* had begun on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at Cardiff University. 15 teachers had commenced the pilot and would continue by undertaking a second module *Learning, Teaching and Assessment* in October 2008.
- 14.4 Council had also issued information packs to teachers who had expressed an interest in participating in the pilot but had not yet been selected. These individuals had been invited to apply for the remaining pilots which would take place in a number of locations across Wales.
- 14.5 Members were informed that the contract for independent evaluation of the pilots had been awarded to the Institute of Applied Education Research at UWIC. An initial scoping meeting had been held with Professor David Egan, Director of the Institute took place on 7<sup>th</sup> April. The tenders had been assessed by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chairperson of Council and Deputy Chief Executive (Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards) following submission of revised tenders

which subsequently met the Council's specific requirements and were within the agreed budget of £50,000. Grant funding would be received from the Welsh Assembly Government to cover the cost of the evaluation.

- 14.6 Members were invited to revisit the commencement date of a mainstream Chartered Teacher programme which had been initially indicated for September 2009 and to remit the initial discussion to the Policy Committee. This would then be reported to Council on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008.
- 14.7 A member said that Council would need to undertake a full evaluation before moving to mainstream the programme taking into account issues such as the foundation phase. Clarification was given on the amount of funding received from the Welsh Assembly Government and that the Council's work in this area was within budget.
- 14.8 A detailed evaluation report to Council on the outcomes of the individual courses was requested. The Chief Executive welcomed this suggestion and would make arrangements for Professor Egan to attend the meeting of Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008.
- 14.9 Hayden Llewellyn (*Deputy Chief Executive, Teachers' Qualifications, Registration and Professional Standards*) made members aware that the Deputy Chairperson had attended the majority of the pilot module events and would also be able to provide feedback to members on their content.
- 14.10 There were no further points of clarification and members were content with the update report.

**15. Developing Council's position on future inspection arrangements - update  
(GTCW 25/08)**

- 15.1 The Chairperson presented this paper as Chair of the Task Group which was formulating the Council's position on future Estyn inspection arrangements in Wales.
- 15.2 Council had agreed the formulation of a Task & Finish Group at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008. The first meeting of the group had considered the role of inspection as part of the overall quality improvement process and had identified its links with the tri-level approach of the School Effectiveness Framework in Wales which, in turn, might lead to a new concept of 'tri-level inspection'.
- 15.3 The annexed minutes had been corrected since the issue of the Council papers to record that Elwyn Davies had attended the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and Anne Robertson had given her apologies.
- 15.4 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. Whilst mindful that the workload of teachers and line managers should not increase, he said that self-evaluation should be at the centre of the future inspection process. He highlighted the emerging structure for the position paper which had been provided to members which was in two stages: by 2010 and longer term.
- 15.5 A further meeting had taken place on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and the last meeting was scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008.
- 15.6 The Chief Executive went on to report on his meeting with Bill Maxwell on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008 during which the Council's work on developing a position of future Estyn inspection arrangements was welcomed. The Chief Executive and Chairperson had been invited to present the final draft to Dr Maxwell in person.

15.7 Members welcomed the report and supported the work undertaken so far by the Task Group members. The proposal of a tri-level approach was well received and one member felt that it might help to move away from the 'blame culture' which was experienced by many teachers in schools following an inspection. The need for joined-up thinking was also voiced.

15.8 Finally, one member welcomed the Chief Inspector's intention to link up with other inspectorates which should benefit all services to children.

## **16. Professionalising the FE workforce (GTCW 26/08)**

16.1 Kevin Pascoe updated members on the work on developing a draft position on professionalising teachers within the FE workforce.

16.2 Members were reminded that they had considered an exploratory paper at the Council meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008. During those discussions it had been agreed that the focus of such a policy position should focus upon teachers within the further education sector rather than other roles or sectors with particular consideration given to the joint delivery of programmes between schools and FE as part of the 14-19 Learning Pathways programme.

16.3 Council had submitted a position paper to the Webb Review in March 2007. No response had been received to date.

16.4 Members were advised that the position paper would be developed in readiness for the Policy Committee meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and a report made subsequently to Council on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

16.5 A brief discussion took place. The main comments were: full costings would need to be undertaken should the Council be invited to assume responsibility for this area of work and that consideration might be given to reducing the Council's registration fee should more registrants be held.

## **17. Corporate Plan 2008-11 & Operational Plan 2008-09 (GTCW 28/08)**

17.1 Members had been provided with the final versions of the Corporate Plan 2008-11 and Operational Plan 2008-09 for information. Council had considered a draft of both plans at the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and had remitted final approval to the Executive Committee.

17.2 Referring to the Corporate Plan 2008-11, one member sought clarification on a number of points. Referring to Objective 5 which outlined "*efficient, effective and robust finance, personnel and administrative systems that support the delivery of the Council's objectives*", he questioned the costs incurred in securing venues for Council meetings, Professional Standards hearings and the outsourcing of member biography work to the Council's PR agent, Freshwater Merlin. Recalling previous choices of venue for the Council's work, the member was concerned about the apparent increased costs.

17.3 The Chief Executive assured members that venues appropriate for the Council to hold its quarterly meetings of Council and the Professional Standards Committees were sourced at competitive rates. Difficulties had been experienced in previous years with venues which were not sufficiently geared for business meeting requirements nor offered the required privacy for professional standards work. He went on to explain that resources had not been available to undertake the piece of biographical work which was required in a short timeframe and so this had been outsourced to the present holders of the Council's PR contract. Assurances were given that the Council's

expenditure was managed carefully and an invitation to members to offer a more frugal steer if felt appropriate.

- 17.4 The Chairperson added that there would be financial benefits in the Council owning its own property which would help to keep down costs incurred in booking Council meeting and Professional Standards Committee venues.
- 17.5 Members raised a number of points and comments in response. One member highlighted the importance of holding Council meetings in different part of Wales so that members of the public and profession could attend if they wished. She added that the selected venue needed to be in keeping with the task in hand whilst ensuring that basic needs were met, such as sufficient parking. Members agreed that there should be a balance between keeping costs to a prudent level whilst ensuring members who had travelled considerable distances were provided with comfortable accommodation. It was felt important for meetings to take place in North Wales in order to build upon the Council's presence there. Another member commented that it was increasingly unlikely that teachers could be released from school in order to observe.
- 17.6 Whilst there was a call for limits to be set on the amounts spent on Council meeting and Professional Standards Committee venues, members concurred that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee held responsibility for overseeing that the Council's expenditure was prudent and within guidelines. This responsibility was in conjunction with the Council's internal Auditors.
- 17.7 It was agreed that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee would be remitted with reviewing the costs of venue hire at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

**18. Any other business**

- 18.1 There was no other business.

**The next Council meeting will take place on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008  
at  
The Celtic Royal Hotel, Caernarfon**