**NATIONAL DIGITAL LEARNING COUNCIL**

**THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2017**

**WELSH GOVERNMENT OFFICES,**

**PENLLEGAER, SWANSEA**

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| **IN ATTENDANCE** | **WELSH GOVERNMENT** | **APOLOGIES** |
| Janet Hayward [Chair] (JH) | Ruth Meadows (RM) | Dilwyn Owen (DO) |
| Kay Morris (KM) | Chris Owen (CO) | Gary Beauchamp (GB) |
| Alison Howells (AH) | Mike Jones (MJo) | Catherine Kucia (CK) |
| Paul Watkins (PW) | Marian Jebb (MJe) | Alyson Nicholson (AN) |
| Simon Billington (SBi) | Jane Peffers (JP) | Chris Britten (CB) |
| Simon Brown (SBr) | Kevin Griffiths (KG) | Ty Golding (TG) |
| Hannah Mathias (HM) | Chris Roderick (CR) |  |
| Gareth Dacey (GD) |  |  |

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
   1. JH highlighted the success of the National Digital Learning Event on 21 June. Very positive feedback has been received from stakeholders, particularly in relation to the Marketplace sessions, which would likely feature more heavily at the next event.
2. **Digital and Curriculum Communications Activities – Ruth Meadows** 
   1. RM stated that there have been a number of opportunities to promote the importance of digital skills in recent months.
      1. This has been discussed very positively by AMs during a recent plenary session.
      2. There have been lots of communications around the recent investment in broadband, to further increase and improve coverage across Wales.
      3. A press notice regarding the NDLE Awards is due to be issued today, looking to build on and highlight the successes of the event.
      4. [£1.3m has been provided to expand coding clubs](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-40264545). The Cabinet Secretary and Vaughan Gethin AM attended an event at Llandough Primary on 12 June highlighting a very successful coding club.
   2. AMs held a debate on online safety issues on 17 May, where the Cabinet Secretary [announced a new national online safety action plan](http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/170517-national-online-safety-action-plan-for-children-and-young-people-to-be-created-kirsty-williams/?skip=1&lang=en), to be launched in 2018. Timescales have yet to be finalised, but it is unlikely that this will be ready to launch on Safer Internet Day 2018.
   3. A draft plan will be put before the Council prior to a formal 12 week consultation period.
   4. RM agreed to circulate an updated strategy around curriculum communications.

**Action: RM to circulate updated communications strategy, requesting views of Council members.**

**Enrichment of the curriculum – Kevin Griffiths**

* 1. KG provided a brief background on the development of the new curriculum.
  2. AoLE working groups have produced reports which detail their thinking regarding the high level design of each AoLE.
  3. These six reports have been put to the curriculum and assessment group for consideration and circulated to Council members requesting their views, as per their specified AoLE at the last meeting. In particular, the Curriculum Design Team is seeking views on the AoLE current thinking to inform the next stage of the process.
  4. The current aim is that the AoLEs could be available from as early as September 2018, with a formal go-live date of September 2021, though this is kept under regular review.
  5. Digital Pioneers are due to attend Curriculum Pioneer meetings in July 2017, to assist in the embedding of digital learning within each area and ensuring that this is considered a priority.
  6. The experience and knowledge of NDLC members would also be of great benefit to the working groups. JP agreed to circulate contact details to the group leads for them to make contact with Council members.

**Action: JP to circulate contact details of the NDLC to the AoLE working group leads.**

1. **Post-16 Digital Strategy – Marian Jebb**
   1. MJe provided an overview of recent developments across the FE sector, including discussions around a new strategy for digital skills post-16.
   2. The Further Education Learning Technology Action Group (FELTAG) report, which provided practical recommendations aimed at ensuring the effective use of digital technology in learning, teaching and assessment in FE and Skills, established that while there is a considerable amount of good practice available, there is too much fragmentation across the sector, with no consistent view of what “digital” should look like. Whilst trying to establish a more co-ordinated approach, the Group also looked at how technology can add value to lessons.
   3. It was felt that links should be made with the DCF wherever possible; to establish how the sector will need to adapt and respond to the new approach.
   4. CollegesWales held two events in March:
      1. Digital in FE seminar - to explore the appetite for a post-16 digital strategy and discuss what this might look like.
      2. Teaching and learning conference with digital/blended learning as one of two key themes - to share good practice and provide practical examples of digital learning in FE.
   5. CollegesWales have since produced a report on these events (available via the collaboration site).
   6. The FE and WBL sectors need an overarching strategy, which is not prescriptive or elaborate, but provides a coherent idea of what digital learning should look like.
   7. This could be seen as an opportunity to ask for more money, but whilst there may be scope for investment in order to help achieve established goals, any potential spending will need to be considered very carefully, establishing how this will assist in aligning priorities.
   8. Discussions with Jisc are ongoing, as to how their knowledge, expertise and broad scope can be utilised in the development of the plan. It is hoped that Jisc could lead on developing the strategy, commissioned by Welsh Government and in close collaboration with the sector.
   9. Looking for work to take place by March 2018, including lots of engagement with stakeholder groups.
   10. A White Paper has just been issued regarding the establishment of a new funding body for post-compulsory education and training, who will be responsible for managing, planning and funding post-16 institutions.
   11. More joined up thinking between FE and HE is required, in addition to the establishment of a link between schools and HE. HE institutions must communicate what skills they expect to see in school leavers.
   12. A consultation on FE and work based learning professional standards is currently ongoing. It was highlighted that digital learning has been listed in its own section, rather than across all other elements. It was felt that someone should have an overview to ensure that this is considered a key theme across the whole strategy.
   13. The ALN bill and how this will fit in with current plans was also highlighted as an area of concern.
   14. HF-E highlighted that the differences and similarities identified are consistent across the education sector. There should be more of a link between school development and FE, though this must be tailored to suit needs, with the right balance needing to be found.
   15. Schools must be involved in the development of plans in order to ensure better integration between pre- and post-compulsory education. Issues around colleges obtaining required data from schools proving a struggle were raised.
   16. MJe requested views on whether this should be a "Digital Strategy" or "Digital Learning Strategy". This has been raised with Jisc, but the Council agreed that this should include ‘learning’, as this should cover all elements of education.
   17. MJe requested any further comments from members.

**Action: Members to provide any further comments on strategy/plan to MJe via the secretariat.**

1. **“A National Approach to Professional Learning” – Huw Foster-Evans (HF-E)**
   1. HF-E presented the attached presentation on the proposed new national approach.
   2. Points of note to the Council:
      1. HF-E acknowledged the efforts being made around the development and dissemination of the DCF and reinforced that digital skills must be fully embedded within the new curriculum.
      2. A promotable brand should be developed for professional learning, to ensure that this is at the forefront of teachers’ minds.
      3. There needs to be a change in understanding the curriculum in Wales – how subjects are taught and assessed is just as important as the content itself.
      4. Building sufficient capacity and up-skilling teachers is a challenge. Options are currently being investigated, including:
         1. improving and providing additional INSET opportunities and budgets.
         2. prioritising what is most urgent and establish what could potentially be stopped.
         3. The development of National Networks of Excellence across all AoLE areas
         4. Professional Learning ‘Champion’ schemes
      5. This approach is in line with the LNF in terms of this needing to work through every element of the system.
      6. It was agreed that HF-E should be invited to speak again at a future meeting to update on progress.
2. **Digital Competence Framework – Jane Peffers**
   1. JP provided an overview of developments around the DCF, with this now having moved from the development phase to the implementation phase. The focus is now on supporting schools in taking this forward, ensuring that Digital Competence skills enhance all subjects across the curriculum.
   2. JP has taken over as the Welsh Government lead for the DCF, with this moving towards a structure that supports the whole curriculum, in a similar way to the rollout of the LNF.
   3. A consultation period on the framework has been completed, with feedback being taken into consideration. An updated version of the framework will be available towards the end of the summer term, with some minor amendments.
   4. It was stressed that only minor changes have been made to wording, providing further clarification and clearing up misconceptions on particular areas. There will be communications to teachers to stress that this will not have any effect on plans already in place and that no further changes to the framework are planned for the foreseeable future.
   5. The potential for the DCF to be made statutory was raised. At this time, this is considered unlikely and it is hoped that encouraging its use, rather than prescribing it, will support and encourage a more significant change in culture, for teachers to adapt to the new ways of working.

**Professional Learning Tool**

* 1. Recent feedback regarding the tool has been taken on board to make this more useful and relevant to teachers.
  2. CO provided an overview of the latest version of the tool, which is now accessible under the new Hwb Tools menu.
  3. Each area within the tool now provides links to the relevant sections of the DCF, to assist teachers in both assessing and establishing how to develop their skills.
  4. Heads/SMTs now have access to a dashboard which allows them to view all responses submitted by their teachers, note teacher identities remain anonymous. The overall aim is to provide additional information on areas where it is deemed that further support will be required as part of their professional development.
  5. There is a free text notes box which teachers can use to aid in discussions with managers regarding their development, though this is not mandatory.

**Professional Learning Approach – Sonny Singh**

* 1. SS stressed that digital skills are one of the most crucial elements of the new curriculum. Teachers at all skills levels and proficiencies will need to continue to develop their skills to stay ahead of the curve. There will soon be a guide to assist teachers in this continued development.
  2. Both heads and teachers must continue to build their own capacity for learning and development. They must be able and confident enough to develop their own plans in order to ensure their success, rather than replicating examples they have seen which could potentially fail in a different context. (i.e. buying iPads to replicate successful lessons seen elsewhere, which may not have the same impact within an alternative setting.)
  3. Having a national platform like Hwb in place, where all materials and resources can be consolidated, will be very beneficial.
  4. There should be a focus on encouraging school leaders to get involved, to ensure a whole school approach, rather than focussing on digital leaders.
  5. Heads must also be on board with a digital learning strategy and understand the importance of establishing requirements for infrastructure and resources (i.e. sufficient broadband speeds to support the number of learners)
  6. Estyn could assist in stressing this message to school leaders – to be put to Ann Keane?
  7. Heads should give their staff permission to take reasonable risks – if a plan fails, there is still the potential to learn from any mistakes and achieve success.
  8. Schools should also work with local employers to drive their thinking – what skills are they looking for in digitally literate school leavers/workers?
  9. There will be a need to build these developments into Initial Teacher Training. The audience for the approach was questioned. Given the national standard, all teachers should be able to relate and establish where they are on the scale. However this would also need to be designed to encompass staff within consortia.

**Curriculum Group – Luke Mansfield**

* 1. Further to the feedback at the Council meeting in April, the Curriculum Group has reconsidered its initial approach regarding the development of specific tasks for learners to demonstrate each individual element of the framework and is now instead devising richer tasks which will enable learners to demonstrate a wider range of skills. It was stressed that these should also cover non-digital elements.
  2. The group has also agreed that it will not propose any specific themes (i.e. the Romans) for teachers to tie these in with any plans already in place.
  3. The issues around the translation, design and quality assuring of these newsletters remain, but the priority is getting these published and spreading the message to teachers that these are available as soon as possible. It was agreed that these should be promoted as widely as possible via newsletters and social media, and also via Hwb.
  4. As there were no plans for there to be a central space for these to be hosted, CO and JP agreed to discuss the best way of these being hosted on Hwb - potentially via an open teacher network.

1. **Learning in Digital Wales Update – Chris Owen**
   1. CO highlighted the success of the NDLE. Initial feedback indicates that delegates like the short sharp sessions during the marketplace, being able to cover so many different topics in a relatively short time.
   2. Resources have already been made available via a marketplace area on Hwb relating to the various topics covered.
   3. Over 50 per cent of schools are now regularly logging into Hwb each month (100+ user logins). We need to continue to capitalise on successes achieved to date.
   4. A new major release occurred on 9 June. With such a major change, there was a potential for huge disruption to stakeholders. No issues had been fed back to date, and this release is being considered a very successful and seamless transition to the new look platform. The new Hwb Lite interface with a more intuitive setup for younger learners has also been received positively
   5. KM highlighted an issue around “My Hwb” appearing on her Welsh version of the homepage page, rather than “Fy Hwb”. CO explained that this element was being treated as a brand and as such would not translate.

**Hwb+ Engagement Activities**

* 1. WG will be providing correspondence for RECs to issue to their schools, which will request feedback on their views regarding the Hwb+ Learning Platform.
  2. Four workshops are being arranged to engage stakeholders around use of Hwb+. These are open to all schools, but RECs will further encourage high-usage Hwb+ schools to attend.

CSC – 7 July

EAS – 7 July

ERW – 10 July

GWE – 12 July

* 1. An independent company has been contracted to facilitate the workshops and to assess the feedback received. They will then produce a summary report.
  2. A stakeholder survey will also be issued to all schools, requesting their views on the Hwb+ learning platform.

**Statistics review**

* 1. Statistics across all of the LiDW digital tools and resources are used to track engagement and usage.
  2. The Hwb Team has access to a full breakdown of usage of all individual tools available via Hwb and Hwb+. However, following on-going discussions with the Hwb+ supplier, this platform’s statistics now have certain caveats applied:

*Page Views: The total number of pages viewed. Repeated views of a single page are counted.*

*Users: The count of users per device or browser. Users will be counted on a device regardless of the number of logins on that device or counted again if on the same device cookies are cleared.*

* 1. A discussion around the caveat on the ‘Users’ statistics took place. It was agreed that as this could not be base-lined, alternative engagement options needed to be developed.
  2. The Hwb Team is currently exploring the impact of these caveats on the way that the data is being interpreted, including its use for the previous LiDW Evaluation report.
  3. CO proposed establishing a sub group to determine the best way forward.

**Action: CO to establish sub group to consider available data and usage statistics and determine a new method of defining active engagement with the platform. Members to provide nominations to the secretariat.**

* 1. HM stated that data should be more open and available. The provision of learner analytics is becoming more common throughout FE and HE.
  2. Jisc is also looking into similar processes. It was proposed that Alison be invited to participate on the sub group.

**National Digital Learning Event 2018**

* 1. There was discussion of potential venues for next year’s event – north, south and west Wales were proposed.

**Action: Members to suggest any potential venues to the secretariat.**

* 1. CO indicated that the priority will be on the marketplace sessions next year.
  2. RM proposed running a Digital Learning Week, with events running in different areas across Wales on different days, potentially to be managed and run by consortia. It was felt that this would be appreciated by schools, to ensure that there is an event that they can attend within a reasonable distance, possibly with HwbMeets also being held throughout the week.
  3. CO stated that filming or streaming marketplace sessions would prove challenging, though it may be possible to film some bespoke sessions with speakers.

**Action: CO to present options for NDLE 2018 to the Council at the next meeting.**

* 1. RM confirmed that the National Digital Learning Awards will be brought under the wider teaching awards banner, though the categories for next year’s awards have yet to be discussed.
  2. The Council felt that it was important to hold onto both the Digital Content award and the Pupil award, which were important to encourage innovation. These could continue to be associated with the NDLE, with winners to be announced there.
  3. There was discussion of whether there should be a digital element included as a requirement for entering the other categories.

**Action: RM to bring proposals for 2018 awards to next meeting.**

1. **Digital Standards – Mike Jones & Ben Wong**
   1. MJo provided background from recent stakeholder engagement activities, where issues around broadband speeds and infrastructure were raised and often intertwined. MJo highlighted common misconceptions by staff within schools and local authorities, where perceived issues with broadband speeds were often related to constraints related to the in school infrastructure.
   2. MJo provided an update on school visits the team had undertaken and a brief overview of the scale of investment which had been undertaken across schools. MJo highlighted the need to standardise and consolidate the ICT foundations in schools and proposed an amendment to the original objective of ‘developing a digital exploitation strategy’ to instead ‘develop digital standards to help improve schools awareness and understanding’.
   3. The proposal was discussed and accepted by the council, with MJo proceeding to outline the proposed next steps.

**Proposed changes of approach**

* 1. MJo highlighted the need to review local authority (LA) ICT operating models due to the significant variance in how LA ICT support services support their schools
     1. It was highlighted some LAs provided assistance at every stage, while others offer little support above connectivity service. This often resulted in schools with little time or expertise to manage ICT issues directly or alternatively to sub-contract this to external suppliers – at potentially higher costs and introducing more silo working.
     2. It was recognised there needed to be greater emphasis on ensuring schools understand the importance of infrastructure in order to support digital initiatives in the classroom and the various support which was available to schools.
     3. There needs to be a clear understanding from the outset on what is required at all levels, with particular focus on driving standardisation for the learner throughout the various stages of their education journey.
  2. MJo explained he was exploring the possibility of conducting a schools audit to benchmark the variance in schools infrastructure to inform the maturity of schools to support and adopt the various changes to the curriculum.
     1. An audit is proposed to assess the current set up within schools to establish a baseline on the variance between schools and assist in the assessment of local authority operating models. .
     2. It is expected the outcome of the audit will inform the digital standards and guidance and help to maximise the investment decisions being made by schools and LAs to continue to achieve improvements.
     3. It is anticipated an audit would help provide hard evidence for what issues exist and need to be investigated. An example highlighted was some external companies who manage IT services for schools (as per 5.4.1) who often advise schools to purchase more equipment – without consideration to investment in infrastructure and other prerequisites to ensure the equipment will work as expected.
  3. MJo advised work was already underway to develop and launch technical standards to aid schools in making informed investment decisions and to build upon (and share) good practice which exists across Wales.
     1. The council discussed the need to establish why some schools are choosing external companies over local authorities for support and consider the various operating models that exist throughout Wales.
     2. MJo and RM are currently working with PSBA to work through an action plan to exploit possible shared services. While there is no additional funding, work is underway to raise the awareness of the need to standardise the way schools support digital initiatives, which should in turn help to realise economies of scale.
     3. It was highlighted that issues already exist with regards to LAs and schools not considering future costs to refresh outdated equipment or keep hardware maintained. MJo agreed this needed to be reflected in the standards being produced.
     4. MJo stated a steering group, including representatives from the council, had been established to inform and oversee the development of the standards. It was agreed this sub group would provide an update to future council meetings on the progress and work undertaken.

**Action: MJo to provide a highlight report to future council meetings.**

**Action: Council members to submit nominations to the secretariat should they wish to participate in the working group developing the standards**.

* 1. MJo highlighted work would continue to maximise and exploit the investment made in national digital platform services.
     1. MJo quickly emphasised the key principles being considered and referenced the earlier discussions surrounding the exploitation of Hwb.
  2. MJo provided an update on the exploratory work already undertaken in relation to Bring your Own Device (BYOD) initiatives and confirmed work would continue to be undertaken in this area.
     1. The council recognised some of the issues highlighted, but were surprised by some of the interpretations of BYOD initiatives.
     2. SBi highlighted an initiative he had recently undertaken to improve the infrastructure to support BYOD, and emphasised the cost dependency if this was done individually by each LA. It was suggested this could be a possible avenue to explore in relation shared services.
     3. SBi also highlighted there were lessons that could be learnt and provided an example regarding a finite number of IP addresses available within LAs, resulting in capacity issues if not considered in advance. MJo agreed to visit Wrexham to follow up further on the work undertaken.
     4. The council recognised schools are unsure around risks involved in use and often there was a lack of confidence to progress with BYOD initiatives..
     5. MJo requested suggestions of any schools using BYOD effectively, for the Digital Delivery Unit to engage and explore various implementations across Wales.
     6. HM highlighted BYOD schemes in FE had been very effective and would be happy to support a visit.

**Action: MJo and BW to arrange visits to Wrexham CBC and Cardiff and Vale College to better understand the infrastructure and BYOD initiatives implemented.**

* 1. Other issues discussed:
     1. It was suggested the links with the web filtering standards should not be overlooked and it was agreed this work would be tied in to the standards. The council also asked for the web filtering document to be circulated back to original group for consideration.
     2. Issues around providers undercutting PSBA services were raised. MJo recognised there were several schools who had benefitted from alternative services, however the council acknowledged PSBA provided additional wrap around services, which were not always evident in other service provider offerings. MJo advised work was in hand to promote the wider benefits of the PSBA and he would follow up with PSBA regarding the ongoing market testing.

1. **Minutes**
   1. The minutes were cleared as drafted.
2. **AOB**

**Meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Education (CSfE) – 24 May**

* 1. JH fed back from her meeting with the CSfE on 24 May.
  2. The CSfE was very positive around the work and role of the Council over the last five years and encouraged the future involvement of members in the continuing evolution of the DCF.
  3. There was discussion of the balance between Welsh language protocols and limiting factors these are currently being taken into consideration.
  4. The CSfE asked CO to write to all LAs regarding web filtering standards, asking them to confirm that these have been put into place.
  5. JH informed the CSfE that Council members are now involved in the AoLEs, which was encouraged.
  6. There was also discussion of the professional learning passport and how this could be improved. RM has discussed this with the policy lead, who is due to brief the CSfE on some proposed changes shortly.

**Action: Secretariat to invite representative from Professional Learner Passport Team to a future meeting.**

**ALN Agenda**

* 1. HM highlighted that FE and HE are heavily involved in this area and that Hwb could potentially assist in terms of promoting Prevent and other safeguarding services.
  2. A new ALN bill is currently with the Assembly and will hopefully receive royal ascent next year.
  3. The ALN team have expressed an interest in the Council having an input into the ALN transformation programme which is one element of the Bill.

**Action: Secretariat to invite ALN Transformation Team to speak at a future meeting**

**Digital News and Information Taskforce**

* 1. HM announced that [the report produced by the taskforce](http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1730), regarding how the Welsh Government could engage more with the general public, was published on 21 June.
  2. HM highlighted that Hwb referenced as a positive influence, and that the Welsh Government should produce more original content, rather than relying on the media.
  3. There should also be more of an effort to use a more personal approach, rather than focussing on what's going on in the Senedd, which the public may not be able to relate to/have an interest in.
  4. Some recommendations from the report of potential interest to the Council:

*10. A dedicated, easy to use National Assembly for Wales area should be established on the Hwb platform with resources for teaching that are mapped to the needs of the new curriculum currently being developed.*

*12. Social media platforms best suited to engage with young people and learners should be adopted. The Assembly should embrace the potential for digital engagement utilising other platforms such as Skype, Facetime, Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality.*

**Dates of future meetings**

22 September 2017 – Future Inn, Cardiff Bay

7 November 2017 – Welsh Government Offices, Merthyr Tydfil

25 January 2018 – venue TBC

6 March 2018 – Aberystwyth University

27 April 2018 – venue TBC

June 2018 – to be tied to NDLE once date is confirmed.

**Actions**

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| **Ref** | **Action** |
| 2.4 | RM to circulate updated communications strategy, requesting views of Council members. |
| 2.11 | JP to circulate contact details for AoLE working group leads. |
| 3.17 | Members to provide any further comments on strategy/plan to MJe via the secretariat. |
| 6.14 | CO to establish sub group to consider available data and usage statistics and determine a new method of defining active engagement with the platform. Members to provide nominations to the secretariat. |
| 6.17 | Members to suggest any potential venues to the secretariat. |
| 6.20 | CO to present options for NDLE 2018 to the Council at the next meeting. |
| 6.23 | RM to bring proposals for 2018 awards to next meeting. |
| 7.6 | MJo to provide a highlight report to future council meetings. |
| 7.6 | Council members to submit nominations to the secretariat should they wish to participate in the working group developing the standards. |
| 7.8 | MJo and BW to arrange visits to Wrexham CBC and Cardiff and Vale College to better understand the infrastructure and BYOD initiatives implemented. |
| 9.6 | Secretariat to invite representative from Professional Learner Passport Team to a future meeting |
| 9.9 | Secretariat to invite ALN Transformation Team to speak at a future meeting |