Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Draft Report on The project to reduce the bureaucratic burdens on schools in Wales

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1. Introduction

1.1 The National Assembly for Wales (NAW) is committed to reducing the bureaucratic burdens on schools. It has commissioned a review of the burdens faced by schools in Wales. The review has involved partnership working with national and local bodies in education in Wales and consultation with people at the "chalkface". The project follows the agenda for raising standards set out in 'Building Excellent Schools Together' (BEST), Welsh Office (WO), July 1997 and 'The BEST for Teaching and Learning' , January 1999 which highlights the need to review practices to reduce bureaucratic burdens on schools and communicate with them more effectively. The Partnership Agreement 'Putting Wales First: A Partnership for the People of Wales – published in October 2000 undertakes to, "…. free up teachers' time to teach, by reducing the burden of paper work".

1.2 Outline of Project

Reducing Bureaucratic Burdens Project	
Priority To reduce the bureaucratic burdens on schools	
	Timescale
Researching good practice	September–November 2000
Identifying common features in research	December – February 2001
Draft proposals on reducing bureaucratic burdens	March 2001
Action plans developed	April – May 2001
Recommendations to the Minister	May 2001
Report to Education and Lifelong Learning Committee & Plenary	June & July 2001
Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation	June 2001 onwards in accordance with action plan
Sustainable policy of minimising bureaucratic burdens in place	August 2001 – onwards

1.3 Project Background

The review was led by Mandy Paish, a deputy headteacher seconded to the National Assembly, for a year.

1.4 The project leader visited schools representative of all phases and types of schools in Wales. A number of schools also contacted the project leader (further information at Appendix C). This information was supplemented by meetings with bodies that work with schools to discuss their systems and with organisations that represent schools and teachers to discuss bureaucratic burdens and possible ways of reducing them. (Further information at Appendix C). Available literature on bureaucratic burdens in schools was scrutinised and experiences of other countries were looked at. Appendix A provides a diagrammatic representation.

1.5 Throughout the project focussed on the bureaucratic systems that schools currently operate and considered whether those were as effective, efficient and manageable as they could be, consistent with the need to secure school improvement. The bureaucratic burdens faced by headteachers, teachers, governing bodies and administration staff were discussed and considered. There are potential knock on effects for all school staff of burdens on any one of these groups.

The work of a school was analysed in the following areas:

- Documentation, planning and teaching resources.
- Assessment, recording and reporting procedures
- Target setting
- National assessments at each key stage
- Analysis of data for achievement and attendance
- Special educational needs
- Management of external documentation that schools receive
- Management of meetings and internal systems of communication
- Inspections
- Work of the governing body
- Funding and financial management
- Responses to national and local initiatives
- Partnerships with industry, parents, the community and other schools
- Health and safety requirements
- Behaviour and attendance issues
- LEA requests for information
- The use of IT/ICT for school management
- Performance management of all staff
- Liaison with health and social services

In each of these areas the key considerations were:
Is a task contributing to the key objective of school improvement?
Is it unduly burdensome because of the way that it is managed?

1.6 Advisory Group - The project was supported throughout by an advisory group, comprising of key partners in the education system in Wales (see Appendix B for membership of the Advisory Group and a list of other organisations that were consulted). The advisory group had primarily a consultative function. To date it has met 3 times and has contributed to the identification of issues to be addressed and to the development of recommendations for change. It has had the opportunity to comment on this report in draft but the recommendations and the action plan are the responsibility solely of the National Assembly. The Department wishes to record its appreciation of the group's assistance.

1.7 It is proposed that the members of the advisory group should come together from time to time in the future to monitor the implementation of the action plan and review progress. This will also include consideration of any new requirements placed on schools to ensure that they take account of the need to keep bureaucratic burdens to a minimum. The issue of bureaucratic burdens will be a regular item for meetings the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) and with Teacher Unions.

1.8 Project Outcomes
The schools involved in the project felt that all areas of their work (as identified in 1.5) were necessary and contributed to school improvement, but the bureaucratic systems involved were often burdensome. Schools face demands from a variety of sources which collectively amount to a heavy load for any school

1.9 Welsh Office Circular 22/98 'Reducing the Bureaucratic Burdens on teachers' and subsequent developments were the basis of consideration for many of the areas listed in paragraph 1.5

1.10 The remaining sections of this report set out the current position, actions agreed as outcomes from the project, recommendations and key beneficiaries. They are drawn up in light of the following key principles that underpin WO Circular 22/98:

Schools should be evaluated primarily by the educational standards they achieve;
Teachers should be regarded as competent professionals;
The minimum key information necessary for good communication should be provided both to schools and by schools to parents.

1.11 The report is a starting point for future work. It sets out the way forward and contains timescales for action that commit key partners in education in Wales to delivering an improved service that aims to minimise the burdens of any necessary bureaucratic systems. The report is not limited to the activities of the National Assembly in relation to schools. It covers the impact on schools of local education authorities, Estyn, Assembly sponsored public bodies such as ACCAC and other statutory bodies. It also touches on internal school organisation issues. Changes/developments that can reduce bureaucratic burdens free up time for teaching and more effective management.

1.12 The report sets out what the National Assembly for Wales Training and Education Department NATED and others are committed to delivering and makes recommendations for future work. The action arising from the project is intended to reduce the total impact of bureaucratic burdens rather than eliminating whole areas of activity. In the future a maintenance of total burdens at a reasonable and manageable level needs to be ensured.

1.13 The National Assembly has a high profile commitment to minimising any bureaucratic burdens it imposes on schools. This needs to be maintained and to permeate the whole of the Assembly. The Assembly expects bodies which report to it to subscribe to the same commitment: and invites other bodies involved with schools to make a similar commitment.

1.14 ADEW and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) have indicated that LEAs need to consider the issues in the report and use it as a starting point for local discussion. This should lead to review of LEA procedures and provision of training to assist schools in reviewing their own systems.

1.15 Some bureaucratic burdens are generated by schools themselves, often in response to legal and other external requirements. As a matter of good practice schools – headteachers, staff and governors – need to keep their internal procedures under review. The advisory group has supported the view that it is acceptable for schools to take responsibility to reduce their own bureaucratic burdens, working on this with LEA support.

1.16 As a result of this report and the ongoing work at national and local level, schools should become more confident about challenging the requirements placed on them. Schools should also become more confident, where they have discretion, in deciding <u>not</u> to carry out tasks which they judge are of little benefit to the school improvement agenda.

1.17 Case studies that exemplify good practice are useful in helping schools to manage their own systems. The Assembly will promulgate good practice information using the NAW website and other appropriate means.

2. External documentation

Current Position

2.1 Schools receive a large amount of documentation from a variety of external sources. Managing this can be time consuming and burdensome. Streamlining this external documentation will ease the burden. The Assembly has made a commitment to more effectively control and present its documents for schools. This will start with NATED and in due course engage other parts of the Assembly which issue materials to schools. NATED expects bodies which report to the Assembly to make the same commitment: and looks to LEAs and others to adopt a similar approach in their communications with schools.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To estabish a group to scrutinise the documentation sent by NATED to schools.	NATED Schools Management Division (SMD)	June 2001	
To provide schools with a list of current guidance and regulations already issued to schools.	NATED (SMD)	July 2001	To be with all schools before end of academic year 2000-2001 and to be updated annually
To establish a gatekeeping system to monitor the issue of documents to schools.	NATED (SMD)	September 2001	
To provide schools with advance notification, termly, about forthcoming consultations and guidance.	NATED Teaching and Leadership Division (TLD)	September 2001 From then on termly	Monitored through gate- keeping system.
To standardise the format of documents issued to schools by NATED.	NATED (SMD)	July 2001 onwards	July 2002-sample of schools to be consulted about new format.
To include a one page summary in all documents.	NATED SMD	June 2001 onwards	Monitored through gate- keeping system.

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To establish a consistent approach to consultation exercises including: • Proformas for reply • Timescales for response • Issue to a 10% rolling sample of schools • Posting on INTERNET	NATED (SMD)	June 2001 onwards	Monitored through gate-keeping system.
To ensure that all extant policy documents, circulars and other guidance material is placed on the Assembly website.	NATED Schools Performance Division (SPD)	September 2001 onwards	Monitored through the gatekeeping system.
To extend procedures established by NATED regarding documentation issued to schools to other parts of NAW and bring them into the gatekeeping system.	NATED (SMD)	December 2001	Monitored through gate- keeping system
To work with Estyn, ACCAC (Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru / Qualifications, Curriculum & Assessment Authority for Wales) and other ASPBs with a view to their standardising format of documents, consultation procedures, termly notification, summaries of documents and gatekeeping system	NATED (SMD)	December 2001	Monitored through gate- keeping system

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Reviews and Inspections To raise with the Best Value Inspectorate the need to ensure that requests to schools for information are co-ordinated and kept to a minimum and to reflect this in guidance in order to minimise any burdens.	NATED (SMD)	December 2001	

2.2 The project reinforces the message to schools of WO Circular 22/98 that where documents are voluntary in their application, headteachers and their staff need to weigh up the benefits of using them against the burdens involved

Key Beneficiaries

- Governing Bodies
- Headteachers
- Teachers
- Administration staff

3. Documents and Planning

Current Position

3.1 The preparation of documentation and planning are major parts of a teacher's professional responsibilities. If this can be effectively managed whilst still ensuring the highest possible quality in teaching and learning then undue burdens created by this necessary aspect of school improvement can be minimised. The WO Circular 22/98 included good practice guidance on preparing documents and lesson plans. That guidance, reproduced below, remains valid.

"7. Preparing documents

Schools should review the length of all the documents which they prepare, whether for planning or administrative purposes. There can be no single guideline which applies to all the varied documents which schools need, but it is always helpful to ask whether particular papers can be condensed to a specified length. Keeping documents short is valuable discipline for both the author and the readers, and encourages all concerned to concentrate on the essentials. Individual teachers should not be expected to draft unreasonably long contributions to documents. It is reasonable for teachers to expect concise model policies, which provide guidance on the appropriate length for the document in question to be available prior to the writing or rewriting of policies. Schools themselves should be looking at the standards they set for the length and quality of the most common documents. When developing model policies and looking at standards schools should bear in mind that many documents may need to be bilingual (English and Welsh) or multi-lingual."

"10. Lesson Plans

Effective lesson preparation is central to teaching. Lesson planning is essential. Plans should be updated, perhaps once a year, but then only if necessary. Undue length and complexity should be avoided, as should unduly bureaucratic reporting back on lessons."

3.2 The project research found that the burdens of preparing documentation, planning and preparation of teaching resources incurred by each school could be reduced if good practice and materials were more widely shared between schools and LEAs throughout Wales. Examples of good practice need to reflect the nature of education in Wales e.g. teaching of Welsh as a first or second language, bilingual schools, small rural schools with many ages being taught in one class

3.3 The report on Information and Communication Technology in Schools, (January 2001), commissioned by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee stated that "The National Curriculum in Wales was different from that of England and therefore specific material needed to be developed to support teachers". The report recommended considering the National Grid for Learning , Cymru (NGfLC) as an engine for this and stated that "It will also need to work closely with ACCAC

to ensure that the content being delivered is relevant to the curriculum…. The NGfLC must be in step with and informed by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) own commissioning process so that unnecessary duplication is avoided which could impose a costly bureaucratic burden on schools and teachers".

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To provide advice to NAW on how best to facilitate Curriculum planning	ACCAC	October 2001	Advice to be provided so that any developments can be planned, costed and resources allocated before 2002-03 financial year.
To identify existing examples of LEA produced schemes of work and other support materials in the NC subjects, RE, PSE and WRE	ACCAC	October 2001	Request to LEAs by end of August 2001, responses to be included in October advice
To provide advice on additional ways of raising awareness of ACCAC publications that support curriculum planning and teaching	ACCAC	October 2001	Response to be included in October advice
To determine how existing materials might be shared through NGfL Cymru	NAW Advisory Panel on ICT	Date dependent on setting up of NGfL Cymru [Autumn 2001]	

Key Beneficiaries

- Teachers
- Curriculum managers

4. Examinations

Current Position

4.1 The administration of public examinations has been cited by secondary school teachers and middle managers as unduly burdensome. NATED recognises that this now needs to be looked at and has raised the issue in general terms, with DfEE. NATED will approach the regulatory authorities following the 2001examination season.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Approach regulatory authorities to discuss the administrative complexities of the exam system with a view to reducing burdens.	NAW / ACCAC (if possible with QCA CCEA DfEE DENI)	August 2001	

Key Beneficiaries

- Secondary teachers and middle managers

5. School Inspections

Current Position

5.1 Schools are currently inspected once within a six-year cycle. Additional visits are made to a small proportion of schools for the purposes of monitoring and for carrying out surveys of good practice. Project visits to schools have underlined that inspection is for many staff a cause of stress. Stress experienced by one sector of school eg leaders and managers in turn can create stress for other staff in that school. The bureaucratic burdens involved arise both pre and post inspection.

5.2 Estyn comment that from the start of the current inspection cycle in1998, it has reduced its bureaucratic demands on schools to the production of a small number of essential documents and data needed for planning. Estyn recognise that preparation for inspection can be stressful, particularly where staff believe that a great deal of additional documentation is required.

5.3 Estyn is committed to minimising any bureaucratic burdens created by the inspection process. Estyn has produced the following action plan.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
In the short term Estyn will ensure that surveys and other visits to schools for the purpose of monitoring are kept to a necessary minimum. Where appropriate, single visits will be used to cover a range of purposes.	Estyn	Immediate	Feedback from schools and LEAs Internal monitoring of visits

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
All inspectors reminded of the need to follow strictly the guidance on pre-inspection requirements provided in the Inspection handbook.	Estyn	Completed December 2000 (Primary) January 2001 (Secondary)	Feedback from schools Monitoring of inspections
Written guidance will be given to all inspectors stressing the importance of minimising the burden of inspection requirements.	Estyn	June 2001	Feedback from schools Monitoring of inspections
HMCI will write to all schools, reminding them: • of what is and is not required in terms of preparation for inspections; • of the need to keep preparation for inspections at a reasonable and manageable level; • that inspectors will expect documentation to be updated in accordance with the timescales set out in the school's own development plan;	Estyn	September 2001	

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
• that where the school's development plan addresses some or all of the key issues identified in the inspection report, there is no requirement to produce a separate post-inspection Action Plan for these issues. **In the medium to long term** As part of its review of future inspection arrangements, Estyn will consult all partners about: • establishing a common framework for the inspection of education and training; • streamlining the inspection framework; • reducing the length of notice of school inspections. As part of the review, Estyn will also: • re-assess the nature and extent of pre-inspection documentation and data requirements;	Estyn	Autumn 2001 onwards	

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
• examine ways in which the use of ICT can assist in creating and transferring information. Estyn will also collaborate fully with the National Assembly and LEAs over ways to reduce the need for schools to provide information that can be gathered and held centrally.	Estyn	2001-2002	
Estyn will identify issues arising from bureaucratic burdens and draw attention to good practice in the way schools manage these.	Estyn	September 2001	**Through inspection and surveys**
Estyn will liaise with LEAs, the National Assembly and other partners over the further development of self-evaluation in schools so as to: • ensure that expectations are clear and consistent; across schools and LEAs • avoid duplication or conflict with requirements of schools made by LEAs, the National Assembly or other agencies.	Estyn	Ongoing 2002-2003	Through inspections

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Estyn will consult and liaise with the National assembly, LEAs and Trade Unions over the provision of guidance to schools on a recommended model for school self-evaluation.	Estyn NATED		

Key Beneficiaries

- Headteachers
- Teachers
- Administration Staff

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Current Position

6.1 Assessment, recording and reporting is integral to school improvement and procedures need to be effective and efficient. Where this is the case burdens are greatly minimised. Headteachers and teachers need to work together, alongside LEAs and in light of existing ACCAC guidance, including the *Statutory Assessment and Reporting Arrangements* booklets issued to schools each autumn. Where systems are effective it is not expected that schools should produce additional information specifically for inspection.

6.2 In 1995 and 1996 ACCAC published the *Consistency in Teacher Assessment* materials which give guidance on effective and manageable ways to promote consistency in teacher assessment and exemplify the standards of attainment for subjects in the National Curriculum. Further booklets on art, music and PE were published in 2001.

6.3 Guidance to promote the effective use of assessment information was published between 1999 and 2001. The first booklet *Making Effective Use of Assessment Information: Guidance for governors, headteachers, subject leaders/heads of department and teachers, ACCAC 1999*, provides an overview of effective and manageable means of recording and reporting and making use of assessment materials. Subsequent booklets published in 2000, offer advice and exemplars for manageable recording systems that are neither unduly time consuming nor require vast amounts of information to be kept, and give advice on reporting systems that help teachers to communicate clear and concise information to parents in ways which are not burdensome. A video and booklet showing effective use of assessment information in primary schools will be distributed to schools in autumn 2001.

6.4 In addition, ACCAC is publishing a series of optional assessment materials to support teacher assessment. The materials are designed to promote good practice and provide teachers with a range of good quality units that can be used "off the shelf" or adapted to suit the needs of the school. Materials to support English at KS 2 and 3, Welsh second language at KS3 and science at KS1 have been distributed to schools. Further materials to support Welsh first language, mathematics and science at KS2 and 3 and Welsh second language, IT, design and technology, geography, history, art and music at KS2 are being developed and will be distributed to schools during 2001 and 2002.

6.5 In relation to Pupil Reports, WO Circular 22/98 says that: - "Crisp and concise written reports to parents need to be produced once a year on the progress their children have made. These should provide essential information in a form which parents can readily understand."

6.6 However the Regulations covering reports on Individual Pupils as described in Circular 35/98 'Reports on Pupils' Achievements From 1999' provide for the eventuality that on some occasions more than one report may need to be produced during a school year.

6.7 These two separate pieces of guidance dealing with reporting need to be brought together. The underlying message in both is that where schools provide parents, on an annual basis, with all the information they are entitled to receive about their child in a single report then schools have met their statutory responsibilities. The research for the project showed that where this approach had been adopted reporting to parents was not identified as an undue burden on teachers.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To promote the use of the Making Effective Use of Assessment publications and the optional assessment materials through a series of dissemination conferences for key players	ACCAC	September 2001 – March 2002	Hold and evaluate a series of regional conferences across Wales

Key Beneficiaries

- Teachers

7. Prospectuses and Governors' Annual Reports

Current Position

7.1 The burdens in this area came up repeatedly in visits to schools, particularly in light of the commitment in WO Circular 22/98 which stated that the distribution and contents requirements for prospectuses and governors annual reports would be reviewed.

7.2 This review was carried out between September 1999 and October 2000. As part of the review the Schools Information and Parents Working Group considered the existing arrangements and recommended changes. The Working Group were broadly content with the statutory content of prospectuses and governors' report but did recommend a few minor changes that were taken on board. It was also instrumental in drawing up a set of proposals which included changes to the distribution arrangements for governors' annual reports which were issued for consultation in June 2000. The responses to the consultation were positive and new regulations were made in March 2001 which will come into force in September 2001.

7.3 The new regulations provide governing bodies with two options for distributing their annual reports. The first is to distribute the full report to all eligible parents i.e. the current arrangements. The second allows governing bodies to distribute sections of the report covering members details, arrangements for the AGM and details of the school's performance and targets along with an invitation to attend the annual meeting and tear-off slip to order a copy of the full report. This approach is designed to reduce the cost and administrative burden of producing the full report, but ensures that all parents have the opportunity to contribute to the running of the school and its continuing efforts to raise standards.

7.4 Schools continue to be concerned about the value of the annual meeting of the governing body with parents; given the very small numbers of parents who attend. At the same time the value of providing parents with a formal opportunity to engage with the governors is recognised. The requirement is contained in primary legislation and the National Assembly cannot itself change it. However NATED will consult Governors Wales and schools about the requirement and talk to DfEE in light of that consultation.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To issue supporting guidance/good practice for new arrangements for governors' annual reports	NATED (SPD)	July 2001	
To review the requirements for annual governing body meetings.	NATED (SMD) Governor's Wales	Autumn 2001	

Key Beneficiaries

- Governing Bodies
- Headteachers

8. Health and Safety

Current Position

8.1 The management of health and safety is an important activity for all schools. During school visits this responsibility, and associated risk assessment work, was cited by many headteachers and staff as a growing burden that they did not feel adequately trained to deal with. Discussion with the Health and Safety Executive highlighted confusion about the respective responsibilities of schools and LEAs.

8.2 There needs to be a clearer acceptance at LEA level of its responsibilities for health and safety issues – this is not removed by the delegation of funding for this function to schools. An LEA should have the capacity and funding to monitor schools' performance on health and safety matters and to provide advice to schools. The Assembly will be consulting in Summer 2001 on amendments to the Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations 1999, including one to provide explicit cover for the retention of funding to meet costs incurred by LEAs for monitoring and advisory work.

8.3 The Health and Safety Executive has recognised these concerns and will consult with NATED and other parties to prepare new guidance. This will clarify the responsibilities of LEAs and schools and thus minimise the burden of the management of Health and Safety. This guidance will be with schools by [December 2001].

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Letter sent to HMI for health and safety to further investigate the concern of schools about the management of health and safety	NAW (SMD)	April 2001	Letter sent and oral response received.
Guidance regarding health and safety responsibilities in schools in Wales to be prepared with Health and Safety Executive in relation to: a) Schools where the LEA is the employer b) Schools where the Governing Body is the employer.	Health & Safety Executive in consultation with NATED (SMD), WLGA, ADEW	[December 2001]	Through Best Value inspection

Key Beneficiaries

- Governing Bodies
- Headteachers
- All other staff in schools

9. ICT

Current Position

9.1 Increased and effective use of ICT should, in the longer term, revolutionise administrative and other systems in schools.

9.2 The National Assembly, in collaboration with key partners is working to develop individual pupil level data systems. The exchange of information from these systems and the analysis of the data should reduce the burden of administrative tasks for all schools in Wales. Additional funding will be needed for the investment in software and hardware required to support these administrative systems. Also a key part of the process will be the involvement of LEAs in ensuring well co-ordinated professional development for all relevant staff in schools.

9.3 The need to develop and more effectively manage systems also rests on the provision of additional administrative support in many schools so as to reduce bureaucratic burdens on headteachers and teachers.

9.4 The pupil level systems project outlined below, does have a strong IT focus, however the gains of the project will be wider because it will provide greater flexibility, reduce duplication and improve quality of data.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Project established to allocate a Unique Pupil Number (UPN) to all pupils and introduce a common basic data set for Wales	NAfW Statistical Directorate	• Initial feasibility study Feb-June 2001	To be monitored by project advisory group

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
		• Audit of all LEAs to ascertain readiness to move towards electronic pupil level systems: April-June 2001 • Advice on allocation of UPN to all LEAs for distribution to pilot schools – May 2001 • Explanatory letter about project to be sent to all LEAs requesting that all schools are informed about the pilot – June 2001 • Pilots of common basic data set for Wales to replace the current STATS1 forms: June-July 2001 • Voluntary pilots of pupil level census in 10 LEAs – Summer 2001	Evaluation to be undertaken by pilot LEAs and schools through questionnaires Evaluation to be undertaken by pilot LEAs and schools through questionnaires

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
If there is a positive evaluation and ministerial approval then:			
Possible pilot of pupil level census in all LEAs		January 2002	
Unique pupil numbers to be in all schools		Autumn 2002	
Use of common basic data set in all schools with continuing programme of developmental work.		January 2002-October 2004	Note: The project may lead to increased burdens at the point of changeover to the new arrangements
Connectivity to internet for all schools will enable schools to make use of the internet for administrative and curriculum purposes	NATED (SPD)	All schools to be connected by March 2002	
The use of NGfLC as an engine to produce curriculum planning documentation (as detailed in Section 3 of the report)	ACCAC NAW	Proposal to be considered by ACCAC before the next financial year	
Greater availability of external documentation electronically	NATED	September 2001 onwards	

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
NATED website expanded to include all extant policy documents, circulars and other guidance material and regularly updated.	NATED	September 2001 onwards	Monitored through gatekeeping system (as detailed in Section 2)

Key Beneficiaries

- Headteachers
- Teachers
- Administrative Staff

10. Administrative Support in Schools

Current Position

10.1 Administrative burdens in schools can be considerably reduced where appropriate support is made available to teachers and headteachers to undertake administrative tasks thus creating more time for teaching and learning. This issue has been strongly highlighted in the course of the project.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To review administrative support in all schools with a view to ensuring any case for increased investment is put in the expenditure sub-group report relating to the 2003-04 local government revenue settlement • Authorities formulae for distributing resources to schools appropriately recognise administrative support costs • The case for GEST funding to disseminate good practice or promote innovation is considered	ADEW/ LEAs	March 2001	Through ADEW finance group

Key Beneficiaries

- Teachers
- Headteachers

11. Special Educational Needs

Current Position

11.1 The administration of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs was identified during school visits as burdensome in mainstream education. Processes for special schools were not seen as being unduly burdensome because of the stage of the Code of Practice that children are at, once they enter special schools.

11.2 'The BEST for Special Education' published in 1998 emphasised the need to reduce the amount of paper work involved in complying with the SEN Code of Practice. Consultation has taken place on a new SEN Code of Practice for Wales with a view to its coming into force in the school year 2001 - 2002. The new Code will take account of the need to minimise burdens on schools. Guidance to accompany the new code will deal with ways of managing the Code of Practice processes in an efficient and effective way.

11.3 At the time of compilation of this report work on the new code is not complete and it is not possible to assess its impact in reducing bureaucratic burdens on schools.

11.4 Examples of issues of effective management and delivery raised during the consultation period were:

- the need for adequate training and professional development to implement the code
- the use of ICT in producing and maintaining individual education plans
- guidance to support the notion of progression of pupils up and down the stages of the code which would make a significant contribution to reducing burdens
- the consideration of the administrative burden of the code on SEN co-ordinators (SENCO) in schools (each school is required to have a SENCO, and in practice most have other responsibilities, even in large schools).

11.5 Pupil Support Division (PSD) of the National Assembly which convenes the Welsh Advisory Group on SEN (WAGSEN) will ensure that suggestions to reduce bureaucratic burdens, emanating from the consultation, will be borne in mind when the final draft of the code is reviewed and when guidance to support the code is issued to schools.

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Letter sent to schools/interested parties who were consulted on the revision of the SEN Code of Practice to ensure that they considered how bureaucratic burdens could be reduced in the revised code of practice	NATED Bureaucratic Burdens project	October 2000	Sent (responses to be considered in final draft)
Welsh Advisory Group for Special Educational Needs (WAGSEN) to review final draft of SEN code of practice.	NAW (PSD)	Summer 2001	
Guidance on the code to address bureaucratic burdens issues	NAW (PSD)	Spring 2002	Monitoring through gatekeeping procedures (see section 2)

Key Beneficiaries

- Teachers
- SENCOs

12. Meetings and Written Communications

Current Position

Meetings

12.1 WO Circular 22/98 states "Well-run meetings are essential to the internal management and communications of a school. Schools need to have flexibility to determine the pattern and number of meetings . Those are matters for sensible professional judgement. But schools need to establish a pattern of meetings which is fully justified".

Examples of good practice in holding meetings were identified in the course of visits to schools. There was also evidence that meetings that are not well run are an unproductive burden for all concerned.

12.2 WO Circular 22/98 also stated "All schools should regularly review the number and quality of their meetings, and should assess their existing practice against the following considerations:

- only hold meetings when they are justified and cancel unnecessary ones;
- circulate agendas and papers in good time;
- set time limits and stick to them;
- ensure meetings are efficiently chaired;
- always set a clear purpose for a meeting;
- encourage and take account of all points of view while guiding the meeting to defined conclusions;
- communicate the conclusions to all with an interest;
- ensure effective action is taken as a result"

12.3 Subsequent teacher union guidance to their members has built on WO Circular 22/98. This guidance plus good practice identified in the course of the project will be taken into account in issuing enhanced guidance that will supercede WO Circular 22/98. This will be with schools by Summer 2002.

Written Communication

12.4 On written communications the guidance in WO Circular 22/98 'Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers', paragraph 6 remains valid.

"Head teachers should consider carefully whether all written communications with and between staff are necessary. A general review of working methods within the school may well suggest ways in which written communications can be made more effective. For example, … some schools might benefit from reducing the number of memos and internal circulars and making more effective use of staff notice boards."

Action

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To issue new guidance and good practice information to schools on reviewing internal procedures for meetings and internal communications so as to minimise bureaucratic burdens.	NATED (SMD) in consultation with teacher unions and LEAs (via ADEW)	Summer 2002	Through further meetings of interested parties (see paragraph 1.7)

Key Beneficiaries

- Governing Bodies
- Headteachers
- Teachers
- Administrative Staff

13. Target Setting

Current Position

13.1 Visits to schools did not suggest the setting of targets on an individual pupil level basis (in order to plan for future development) as being particularly burdensome. However some of the teacher unions considered that there was an issue to address.

13.2 Circular 22/98 foreshadowed a consultation on school targets setting and the need to keep systems simple and manageable. The consultation was undertaken in 1998. The consultation paper "School Targets, Information and Performance" was issued in May 1998. The Assembly found that responses to its proposals were positive and the resulting guidance booklet was issued in September 1998. Following a bedding down period and the provision of subsequent advice to LEAs, a revised version of the guidance-"Target Setting: Guidance for Headteachers & Governing Bodies" was issued in May 2000.

13.3 No further action is envisaged at this stage, but target setting will be included in the continuing procedures for monitoring bureaucratic burdens on schools.

14. Secondary School Performance Information Booklets

Current Position

14.1 This was not cited by schools as creating undue bureaucratic burdens.

14.2 At the time that Circular 22/98 was issued a consultation was underway on proposals to replace the Performance Booklets with summary digests and to make the data available on the Internet. Both of these proposals were actioned in autumn 1998. The new digests are easier for schools to handle and distribute to parents and have led to a reduction in production costs for the Assembly.

14.3 In March 2001 the National Assembly published a Consultation Paper- The Future of Secondary Schools' Performance Information- which presents two options for the future. The first is to discontinue the publication of individual school results; the second is to continue publishing the information but to include new indicators which take account of value-added, year-on-year progress and the socio-economic factors prevailing in each community. A decision will be made in light of responses to the consultation in July 2001.

15. Publicity for the project report and arrangements for sustainability of its recommendations

Action

[To be reviewed in light of consideration of the report by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and by the Advisory Group at its meeting on 18 June.]

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
Publication of the report • on the Internet • hard copy distribution to schools • distribution of summary to education press/teacher journals etc	NATED (SMD)	September 2001	
To develop procedures to ensure the minimisation of bureaucratic burdens remains a priority in the Assembly and beyond.	NATED (SMD)	September 2001 onwards	Through gate keeping procedures (see Section 2 of the report)
To devise a continuing strategy to keep schools informed of work being undertaken to reduce bureaucratic burdens on schools.	NAW	January 2002	Discussion with parties involved in the advisory group
To convene 6 monthly meetings of parties involved in the advisory group to review progress in implementing the recommendations of the report and review any new requirements placed on schools	NAW (SMD)	Meeting January 2002	

ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	MONITORING & EVALUATION
To take account of School Teachers Review Body Report on teacher workloads and to incorporate into appropriate guidance on reducing bureaucratic burdens on schools	NAW	Summer 2002	

Key Beneficiaries

- All staff in schools

Conclusion

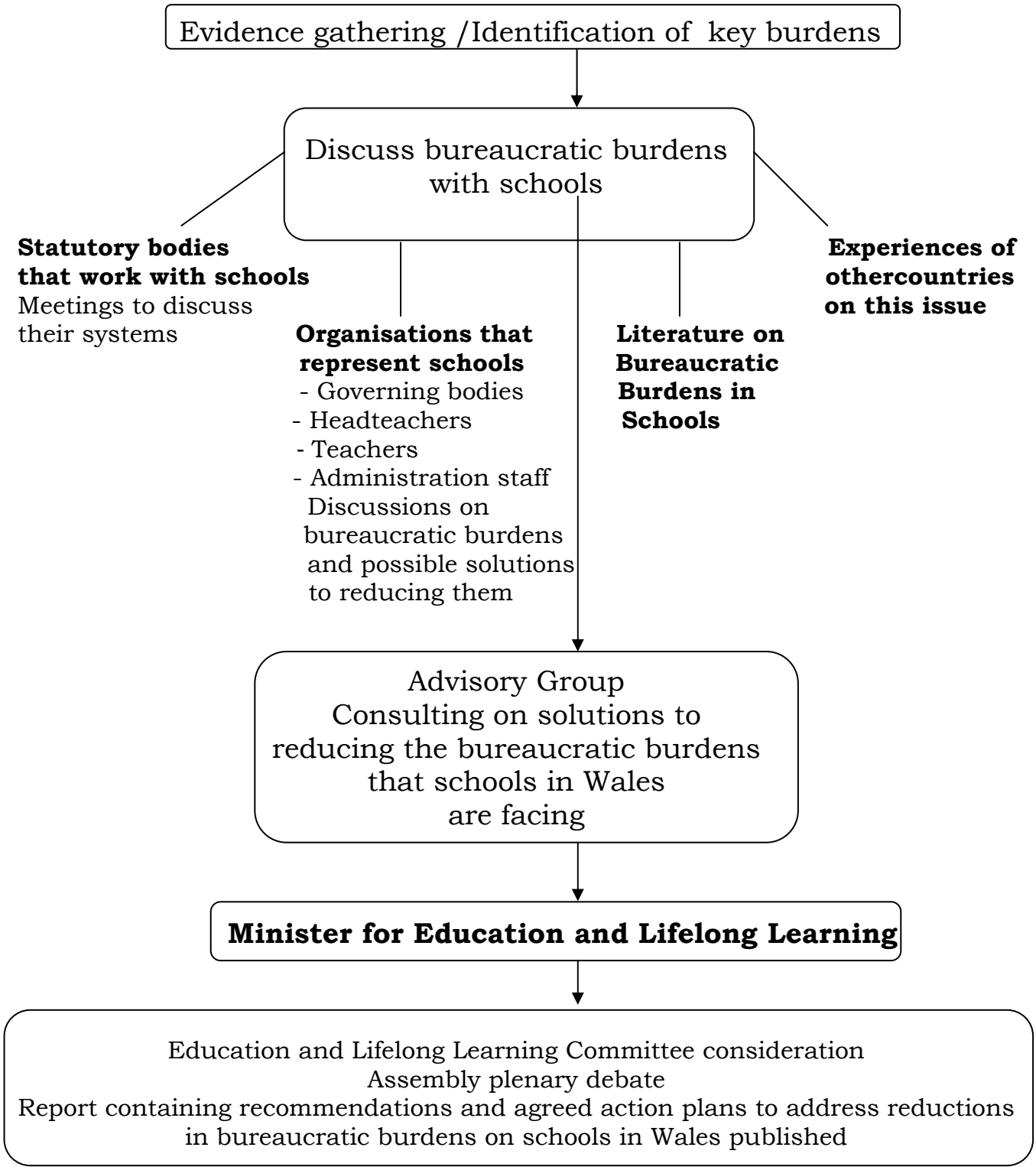
A wide range of school improvement issues are covered in the project and their systems considered in the light of any potential burdens. The research involved and the actions identified are starting points for further work to reduce bureaucratic burdens in schools across Wales. The next steps are for the recommendations to be acted upon by the Assembly and other key partners. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plans will enable the Assembly to determine how effectively burdens on schools have been reduced.

Appendix A

Investigation of bureaucratic burdens on schools in Wales

Building **E**xcellent **S**chools **T**ogether

To ensure that schools are excellent, improving or both.



Appendix B

Advisory Group Members

Elizabeth Arnold Davies	Professional Association of Teachers
Barbara Chidgey	Secondary Heads Association Cymru
Geraint Davies	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers Cymru
Peter Griffin/ Ann Robertson	Governors Wales
Kathy Haggarty/ David Watcyn Jones	Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm Asesu Cymru / Qualifications, Curriculum, & Assessment Authority for Wales
Mike Haines	Estyn
Dave Harvey	UNISON
Chris Hewitt/ Susan Evans	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Gruffydd Hughes/ Edwyn Williams	Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru
Alun Jones/ John Granger	National Association of Head Teachers Cymru
Gethin Lewis/ Heledd Hayes	National Union of Teachers Cymru
Karl Napieralla	Association of Directors of Education in Wales
Peter Tyndall/Seimon Williams	Welsh Local Government Association
	National Assembly for Wales representatives
Suzanne Chisholm	Schools Management Division 2
Mike Clancy	Teaching and Leadership Division
Jon Hawkins	Schools Performance Division 3
Stephanie Hector	Schools Management Division 2
Mandy Paish	Project Leader, Seconded Deputy Headteacher Schools Management Division
Karin Phillips	Statistical Directorate
Elizabeth Taylor	Schools Management Division

Consultative information distributed also to:

Welsh Secondary Schools Association

Welsh Primary Schools Association

Parent Teacher Association of Wales

Church in Wales Board of Mission

Interdiocesan Schools Commission

Diocesan Directors of Education

Welsh Joint Education Committee

General Teaching Council for Wales

Appendix C

Research informed by meetings / discussions with:

- Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning
- Representatives throughout the National Assembly Training and Education Department (NATED) and Statistical Directorate
- DfEE (reducing bureaucratic burdens team) Schools Communication Division
- LEAs in Wales via - ADEW collectively
  - meetings or correspondance with individual LEAs.
  - Welsh Local Government Asociation (WLGA)
- The head teachers and a number of teachers in 12 primary schools and 9 secondary schools covering education in: - Nursery
  Special units and schools
  Welsh Medium, Bilingual, English only
  Small schools with teaching heads
  Roman Catholic voluntary controlled
  Church in Wales voluntary controlled
- Teacher training colleges
- Estyn
- Teaching Unions representatives of: - NUT, NASUWT, NAHT, ATL, PAT, UCAC, SHA, UNISON
- WPSA (Welsh Primary Schools Association)
- GTCW – General Teaching Council for Wales
- WJEC – Welsh Joint Education Committee
- ACCAC – Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru
  Qualifications, Curriculum & Assessment Authority for Wales
- Head teachers of Ex-Grant Maintained Schools in Wales (8 in total)
- Governors Wales Management Committee
- The Centre of Excellence in Governing Body Training and Research at Swansea University
- A number of e-mail and telephone contacts made in the English speaking world.