

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE.

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee held on Monday, 14 September 2020 at 10.00 am.

County Borough Councillors - Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee. Members in attendance:-

Councillor C. Smith (Bridgend County Borough Council)
Councillor J. Rosser (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)
Councillor S. Merry (Cardiff Council)
Councillor L. Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan)

Council Officers in attendance:-

Mr P Orders – (Lead Chief Executive, Cardiff Council)
Mr M Tate (Assistant Director of Education, Cardiff Council)
Ms P. Ham (Director of Learning & Skills, Vale of Glamorgan)
Mr L. Harvey (Director of Education, Bridgend Council)
Ms G. Davies (Director of Education & Inclusion Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)
Mr P. Griffiths (Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)
Ms S Davies – Head of Finance: Education & Financial Reporting, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Others in attendance:-

Ms C Seery (Managing Director, Central South Consortium)
Ms L. Blatchford (Deputy Managing Director, Central South Consortium)

15 Announcements and Apologies

It was explained to Members that due to a technical issue the Chair would be late attending the meeting and it was agreed that the Vice Chair, Councillor J Rosser, would Chair the meeting in his absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council) and Ms S Walker (Chief Education Officer Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council).

16 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of interest made pertaining to the agenda.

17 Minutes

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the 15th June 2020 as an accurate

reflection of the meeting.

18 Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2020

The Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting presented the Central South Consortium Joint Committee with the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2020, along with the associated Letter of Representation of the Joint Committee.

The Head of Finance drew Members attention to the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations requirement for the Responsible Financial Officer to certify the unaudited Statement of Accounts by 15th June following the financial year-end. The Head of Finance confirmed to Members that the unaudited accounts will be signed by the Treasurer on the 15th June 2020, in line with the Regulations, following their presentation to the Joint Committee on the same day.

It was highlighted that the Statement of Accounts were submitted to Audit Wales for external audit and, as part of the external audit process, a number of minor corrections were made to the final accounts as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The Head of Finance also referred to the Letter of Representation, attached at Appendix 2 of the Report, and confirmed that this document had been prepared after full consultation with all relevant officers.

Finally the Head of Finance drew Members attention to the audited final outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year and the level of general reserve balances as at 31st March 2020.

Following consideration of the report, Members RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019/20 (Appendix1), associated Letter of Representation of the Joint Committee (Appendix2) incorporating the audit enquires letter to those charged with governance and management; and
2. Note the audited final out-turn position for the Joint Committee for the 2019/20 financial year and the level of General Reserve Balances held.

19 Audit Plan update

Mr M Jones of Audit Wales presented the 2020 Audit Plan to Members of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee.

Mr Jones explained that ordinarily the Audit Plan would be presented to the Joint Committee in advance of the audit and went on to note that due to the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 this has resulted in a delay in the Audit Plan

being reported.

Mr Jones drew Members attention to the responsibilities of Audit Wales in relation to the audit of the Consortium's financial statements, the financial statement audit risks and the audit fee.

After consideration of the Plan Members RESOLVED to acknowledge the content of the Audit Plan.

20 Report of Audit Wales - Audit of the Financial Statement

Ms A Worthy, Audit Wales, presented Members with the Audit of Accounts Report – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the 2019/20 financial year.

Ms A Worthy outlined the purpose of the report, the impact of Covid-19 on this year's audit and confirmed it was the Auditor General's intention to issue an unqualified audit report on the Accounts.

Members were informed that all misstatements identified as part of the audit had been corrected by Management and the 'other significant issue arising from the audit' was noted.

Ms A Worthy took the opportunity to thank Members and Officers of the Central South Consortium for their co-operation during audit which had taken place during an unprecedented period as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following consideration of the **Report**, Members thanked the Officer from Audit Wales and RESOLVED to accept the Audit of Accounts Report – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the 2019/20 financial year.

21 Budget Report 2020/2021

The Head of Finance: Education and Financial Reporting provided Members of the Joint Committee with the Budget Report 2020/2021.

Members were reminded that at the Joint Committee on the 21st January 2020 the revenue budget was agreed **and** were informed that since this time a number of proposed budget virements within categories of expenditure and income have been identified, informed by updated service information, to reflect the actual costs to be incurred during the year. It was explained that the overall effect of the proposed virements would not impact upon the value of contributions from constituent authorities which was shown in table 1 of the report.

The Head of Finance went on to provide the Joint Committee with a summary of the 2020/21 budget, the projected outturn position and reasons for key variances, and also drew Members attention to the 2020/21 grant allocations received by the Consortium from Welsh Government as at July 2020.

It was highlighted to Members that the projected outturn position is a £1.5k underspend (projected as at July 2020) and the Consortium will continue to closely monitor and manage its resources and report updates to the Joint Committee throughout the year.

A Member requested an update on how the Consortium is adapting and operating differently as a result of the pandemic, for example, blended learning, and officers confirmed that an update would be prepared.

Following discussion the Central South Joint Education Service Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note and approve the proposed budget virements within the 2020/21 budget.
2. Note the current outturn position for 2020/2021.
3. Note the current grant position for 2020/2021.
4. To receive an update on how the Consortium is adapting and operating differently as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

(To Note: County Borough Councillor C Smith joined the meeting at this point.)

22 CSC Grants Report

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium provided Members of the Joint Committee with an update on the grants to be received by the Consortium in 2020/21, for which notification have been received, and the methods of allocation of each.

Members put forward their views in respect of the 2020/21 grant funding and following consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to approve the distribution of the grants as detailed in section 5 of the report.

23 ISOS Progress Report

The Managing Director Central South Consortium explained to Members that the purpose of the report was to update the Joint Committee on the current position following the ISOS review of the Central South Consortium.

The Managing Director Central South summarised the review that took place in October 2018 and presented the Joint Committee with the progress to date:

- Managing Director appointed November 2019;
- Senior Management Team appointed;
- Managing Director and / or members of the senior leadership team attend Local Authority headteacher meetings;
- A three-year funding model has been agreed with Members and Chief Executives;
- Revised Central South Wales Challenge model communicated to schools as well as the expanded role of clusters to further strengthen school to school working; and
- Initial review of governance models.

The Managing Director Central South Consortium continued to explain the next steps including short term priorities which are:

- Consult and agree a revised governance model;
- Implement the Business Plan 2020/21 and provide updates on progress to the next Joint Committee meeting; and
- Respond to COVID and national policy changes.

Members were reminded that the recommendations from the ISOS report are

included in the Consortium Business Plan, with this being monitored on an on-going basis, and Appendix A to the report showing that progress has been made in all areas. The Chair requested clarification on timescales for completion of actions included within Appendix A and the Managing Director explained that the timescales are included within the Business Plan as part of on-going monitoring arrangements with narrative progress updates being provided to Joint Committee.

Members acknowledge that progress has been achieved since the conclusion of the ISOS review and put forward their questions and observations to the Managing Director Central South Consortium.
After consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to accept the progress report.

24 Governance Proposal

The Managing Director Central South Consortium thanked Members for the opportunity to discuss the Governance proposal.

The Managing Director highlighted various proposals and asked for Joint Committee Members opinion with regard to the way forward.

After discussion, Members **RESOLVED** that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Committee outlining Governance proposals and recommendations.

25 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act ,1972 (as amended) for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

26 Teach First Report

Members of the Joint Committee received an overview of the Teach First Cymru Annual Report 2019/20.

Following the update, Members of the Joint Committee made a number of observations and **RESOLVED** to note the Annual Report for 2019/20 and to receive update reports during the year.

27 URGENT BUSINESS

This meeting closed at Time Not Specified

**CLLR C. SMITH
CHAIR.**