

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE.

Minutes of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. Meeting held on Wednesday, 16 December 2020 at 9.30 am .

County Borough Councillors - Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. 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)

Councillor L. Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil Council)

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)

Ms N Echansis (Head of Education and Early Help , Bridgend 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)

Ms C A Jones (Deputy Head at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro.Edern)

28 Declaration of Interest

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

29 Minutes

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the 16th December 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

30 Blended / Distance Learning at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Edern

The Assistant Head teacher of Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Edern thanked Members for the opportunity to provide the Joint Committee with the procedures that had been developed and put in place by the school to enable blended and distant learning.

Members were presented with presentation in relation to how a school has adapted to home learning, the assistant head teacher explained the guidance they had put in place firstly from March to July 2020.

Members were provided with information for what support staff, pupils and families had available such as practical support ideas, tips for free online accounts, regular drop in session, pastoral support etc.

Members were also provided with information of what has been provided and developed since September 2020.

Members thanked the Assistant Head teacher for a very informative and enlightening presentation and RESOLVED to acknowledge its content and commented that these good practices would benefit other Authorities in their delivery of blended learning.

31 Central South Consortium Support for Schools during COVID.

The Managing Director Central South Consortium presented Members of the Joint Committee with an overview of the work of the Central South Consortium during the COVID 19 pandemic along with an overview of the support and guidance provided to schools through out these unprecedented times.

Members of the Joint Committee were provided with information regarding school contacts across the Central South Consortium from September to October. It was explained working with staff and directors across the five authorities a visitor protocol for our staff.

It was highlighted that the focus across the autumn term was to support the wellbeing of staff and learners across the region as well as supporting schools to ensure high quality learning is taking place when learners are in school or self-isolating.

The Managing Director Central South Consortium continued and explained the great deal of work that had been done by the consortium with regards to supporting learning and teaching.

Members recognised that the role of the consortia in supporting learning has changed since the initial repurposing of the Schools in March 2020. The initial focus was on distance learning and digital skill acquisition, however this has now moved to blended learning. Members were presented with an overview of the guidance given in respect of Distance learning consideration for Schools Guidance, Blended Learning Guidance along with the roadmap to blended learning.

In respect of continuity of learning during COVID-19 it was explained that the Central South Consortium have produced a Supportive Document for schools that offers operational considerations alongside examples of what schools within the region are trying.

The Central South Consortium has already identified the need to provide professional learning (PL) opportunities through digital means and was developing an e-learning strategy. This meant that the systems and processes were quickly developed to produce high quality professional synchronous and asynchronous e-learning. With regards to the COVID -19 Pandemic a number of professional learning opportunities were specifically developed based on feedback from practitioners across the system. These focused on well-being, pedagogy and specifically/ distance and blended learning.

The Managing Director Central South continued to update Members of support provided under the following headings:

- Digital support;
- Support for Welsh;
- Early Career Pathway Support;
- Support for Vulnerable Learners;
- Equality & Wellbeing Professional Learning Offer;
- Continuity of Learning Programme;
- Online support for Schools;
- CSC Organisation;
- Barriers to Blended Learning.

In respect of next steps the Managing Director explained that the Consortium is continuing to respond to the issues raised by schools and are supporting staff to work with schools to identify the cause of the barriers to accessing blended learning. Also work across the region to empower schools to support all learners. This involves the issues, leaning from research, providing tangible guidance and support as well as sharing effective school practice.

After in-depth discussion Members of the Joint Committee thanked the officer for all the hard work and RESOLVED to:

- Acknowledge the content of the report and agree to continue to monitor the work carried out.

32 Digital Devices Support for Schools

The Directors and Cabinet Members of each Local Authority provided the Joint Committee with an overview of what strategies have been used to support schools in the role out of digital devices. Each Authority explained the current procedures that were in place and how they would continue to support schools and families through this difficult situation.

After discussion Members RESOLVED to note the information

33 Digital Technology Support from the Central South Consortium

The Deputy Managing Director thanked Members for the Joint Committee for the opportunity to present the report, she continued by introducing Mr M Humphries who hold the position of Strategic Lead for Digital Learning who is in attendance if there any questions that need more in-depth answers.

It was explained that during March 2020, in response to Covid-19, planned support for professional learning was adapted to respond to school needs. Throughout the Summer term the digital team continued to support schools with previously identified needs. It was highlighted that bespoke support was offered to all schools across the region to ensure continuity of learning.

With the increase of demand for the service support the digital team was expanded to include a further Lead Practitioner. The digital support team supported in the use of online collaborative platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom. To give idea of support provided it was explained that between March and July 2020 the team directly supported over 70 individual schools and since September 2020 the team has supported a further 54 schools.

The nature of support have been context driven and the majority of requests have be directly linked to blended learning.

The Deputy Managing Director continued and explained the impact to date and highlighted the items of progress to note:

- Following direct support, schools have been upskilled in the use of Hwb platform applications to support distance learning;
- Schools shared approaches and considerations for blended learning at Network meetings;
- Hwb platform usage has increased significantly ;
- Publish guidance has supported schools to review and adapt distance learning provision. Along with this information Members of the Joint Committee were provided with case studies to support the information.

In respect of next steps the short term priorities include:

- Complete the DCF in-depth cluster pilot;
- Publish Computational Thinking Unplugged to support professional learning
- Support schools in utilising technology for direct teaching:
- Respond to emerging school needs and national policy change.

In concluding her report the Deputy Managing Director Central South explained that the Consortium continues to support schools and respond to the challenges presented by the pandemic. and a growing e-professional learning offer continues to provide further support and guidance to practioners across the region.

Members put forward their question and observations and REOLVED to:

- Accept the progress made by the Consortium;
- Acknowledge the work of the Consortium to support schools across the regoin.

34 Central South Consortium Grants Report

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium presented Members with update regarding the award of funding from Welsh Government for the 2020/2021 financial year and the use thereof.

After consideration of the report Members RESOLVED to:

- Note the award of grant funding;
- Approve the use and distribution of the grant in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award; and
- Agree that the Lead Chief Executive and S151 Officer approves the receipt of funding.

35 Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 and Budget Setting 2021/2022

The Head of Finance – Education and Financial Reporting (RCT) provided Members with a summary of the 2020/21 current financial year projected outturn position in table one of section 3 of the report., which showed a small underspend of £1,439, similar to the underspend reported to the Joint

Committee at its September meeting.

The Officer highlighted some variances for Members to acknowledge which were:

- £155k projected underspend on Employee costs relating to a part year Accelerated Progress Lead vacancy , and other in year , temporary vacancies such as the Personal Assistant role.
- £176k projected overspends on supplies and services mainly relating to the Improvement Partners pilot scheme: and
- Overachieving income budgets by £22k due to additional income being received from ALN transformation grants for administration support.

The Head of Finance – Education and Financial Reporting reminded Members that the Joint Committee is asked to approve the distribution of an uncommitted earmarked reserve balance of £322k and once approved by Members these funds could be distributed to local authorities before the financial year end.

Members were also provided with an overview of the grants received by the Consortium. However in relation the additional RCSIG grant, details are not included at present and will be presented once approved.

In accordance with the terms of the Joint Committee legal agreement, the Head of Finance – Education and Financial Reporting sought the agreement of the Joint Committee in respect of approving the budget for 2021/22 in order for the member local authorities to approve as appropriate and to confirm their approval to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Head of Finance –Education and Financial Reporting detailed that the budget has been set based on protecting frontline school improvement resources, targeting available funding to key priorities, delivering efficiency savings and with the consortium funding pay and non-pay related inflation.

It was noted that the resulting 2021/22 local authority contributions were calculated based on 2020/21 Indicator Based Assessments published by Welsh Government and reflected an overall 1% reduction in contribution levels in line with 3 year Indicative Revenue Budget agreed by the Joint Committee in January 2020.

After further discussion Members RESOLVED to:

- Note the current projected outturn position for 2020/ 21
- Note and approve the red-distribution of the un- committed earmarked reserve balance to member local authorities;
- Note the current grant funding position for 2020/21;and
- Approve the budget for 2021/22 in order for member local authorities to approve as appropriate and to confirm their approval to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

with an overview of the draft business plan for 2021/22. It was explained that the final business plan would be presented to the Joint Committee in March 2021 for approval.

Members were informed that the business plan for 2021/22 will take account of:

- Aspects within existing business plan that were identified to be developed in 20/21 but had to be paused due to the impact of Covid- 19;
- The Outcomes of the self-evaluation processes;
- Emerging requirements of local authorities;
- National priorities (including National Mission 2)
- Cross consortia planning ; and
- Feedback from Estyn (including the Thematic Review Oct 2020 recommendations) one received.

The Deputy Managing Director continued and reminded the Joint Committee of the current set up of the Consortium in terms of revenue funding received from the local authorities and funding via grants by Welsh Government. It was highlighted that at the time of writing the paper, there was no agreement on the overall funding envelope available to the Consortia.

The Deputy Managing Director also reminded the Joint Committee that 97% of the current business plan is funded by grants which have terms and conditions which are incorporated into the planning process as well as the national development of success criteria for the enabling objectives and at this stage it is not possible to provide detailed plans as indicative funding allocations have yet to be received.

After a great deal of discussion Members of the Joint Committee RESOLVED to:

- Approve rolling forward the high level business Plan for 2020/21 to 2021/22. And agree operational plans will continue to be developed over the coming months and share in the Spring Term.
- Provide a steer on any particular area for improvement and before the detailed operational planning process takes place.
- Note there remains uncertainty about grants for the 2020/ 21 financial year and beyond as the Welsh Government has yet to confirm the grant position and requirements of Consortia and LA's

37 Governance Proposals

The Managing Director Central South Consortium reminded Member of the independent review that had been carried out in October 2018, within the report Members were reminded that a recommendation was made to review the governance arrangements ensuring that there is effective governance and effective stakeholder involvement.

Members were presented with 3 options for consideration along advantages and

disadvantages of each. After in depth discussion on all three option Members of Central South Joint Committee RESOLVED to

- Agree model 3 in principle; and
- Agree to review and modify the terms of reference for each group to ensure reflect the purpose of each group, enable effective and timely governance and meet the requirements of the legal agreement.

38 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.

39 Central South Consortium Risk Register

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium provided Members with an update on the current risk register of the Central South Consortium.

Following Consideration of the report Members of the Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the recommended changes to the risk register for the Central South Consortium.

This meeting closed at 11:00am

**CLLR C. SMITH
CHAIR.**