

A meeting of the CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE. will be held at the Thursday, 27th May, 2021 at 2.00 pm

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Central South Consortium Education Service Joint Committee held on 18th March 2021.

(Pages 3 - 12)

3. TO ELECT A CHAIR

To elect a chair of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/2022.

4. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIR

To appoint a Vice a Vice Chair for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/2022.

5. APPOINTMENT OF LEAD ROLES - CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND LEAD DIRECTOR

To appoint Lead Chief Executive and Lead Director of the Central South Consortium

6. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2021- 2022 MUNICIPAL YEAR

To consider the proposed calendar of meetings for 2021- 2022 Municipal Year.

(Pages 13 - 14)

7. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRESENTATION: CURRICULUM FOR WALES

To receive a presentation in respect of the Curriculum for Wales

8. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

To receive a report on the Central South Consortium's Communications Strategy by the Managing Director.

(Pages 15 - 60)

9. MONITORING AND REPORTING OF THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM.

To consider a report of the Deputy Managing Director CSC.

(Pages 61 - 82)

10. 2020- 2021 YEAR END POSITION/ ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

To consider the report of the Treasurer

(Pages 83 - 164)

11. CSC GRANTS REPORT (2020/2021 VARIATION)

To consider a report from the Deputy Managing Director CSC

(Pages 165 - 168)

12. CSC GRANTS REPORT(2021/22)

To consider a report from the Deputy Managing Director CSC

(Pages 169 - 172)

13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REPORT

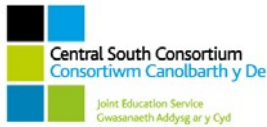
To consider a report from the Deputy Managing Director CSC.

(Pages 173 - 182)

14. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency

To: Members of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee



CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE.

Minutes of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee Meeting held on Thursday, 18 March 2021 at 10.00 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 L. Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan)
Councillor L. Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil Council)

Council Officers in attendance:-

Mr L. Harvey (Director of Education, Bridgend Council)
Ms G. Davies (Director of Education & Inclusion Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)
Ms S Walker – (Chief Officer (Learning)/Chief Education Officer Merthyr Tydfil 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)
Mr W Murphy – Head of Western Learning Federation
Mr D Jenkins – Head of Ty Coch/ Park Lane Special Schools

41 Declaration of Interest

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

42 Minutes

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

43 Matters Arising

Minute No 35 - It was confirmed that Members approved the budget proposed in the December paper and since then the host authority S151 officer has received confirmation from each of the local authorities to confirm agreement to the budget detailed in the December report.

44 Special Schools' Network.

The Chair welcomed Members of the Special School Network Mr Wayne Murphy Head of the Western Learning Federation and Mr David Jenkins Head of Ty Coch and Park Lane special schools.

Members received a presentation which showed the procedures and process in place during the pandemic with the special school arena.

In the first instance Members received an overview of the strengths that have been developed as individual schools and as a network some of the strengths are as follows:

- Multi-Disciplinary Forum which was established early in the pandemic;
- Strong relationships with parents and stakeholder;
- Increased parent engagement ;
- Sector Peer support –working to interpret guidance and make the right decisions based on vulnerability of learners ;
- Support from Local Authority, amongst others.

Officers also presented Members of the Joint Committee with Challenges special schools have faced over the last 12 months, these included health conditions effected long term absences, burn out of staff with the Sector/ illness/ loss, financial pressures and the delayed trauma of the effects of the pandemic.

Finally Members were provided with the next steps for schools within the special school network which are highlighted below:

- Recovery curriculum based on trauma informed school approach;
- Listening to experiences, supporting physical and emotional health and wellbeing;
- Readyng pupils to learn in school;
- Re-establishing social routine, structures =, social interactions;
- Evaluating the past year – maintain the positive, learning from experience;
- Being ready for delayed trauma ;
- Flexibility

The Chair thanked both Headteacher for a very informative presentation and opened up the meeting for Members questions and observations.

Members of the Joint Committee echoed the Chairs praise for the presentation from the Special Schools network representatives and put forward many question to both Mr Murphy and Mr Jenkins.

Members asked if there had been lessons learnt especially in respect of remote support for learners who are unable to attend school going forward and what support can we as the consortium give to help this. In response Mr Murphy explained that there is a system in place now and we need to work together with health and other service to maximise the impact especially for special needs pupils. With regards to support we need to ensure that communication is there amongst schools and consortium and other organisations.

Other Members echoed the comments of Member and commended the staff for all their hard work and commitment during this time.

After further comments Members **RESOLVED** to note the work carried out through this time and wish them well going forward.

45 JOINT REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR AND THE TREASURER – 2020/21 BUDGET MONITORING AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

The Head of Finance –Education and Financial Reporting presented the Committee with an update on the projected outturn position for 2020/21 and a summary of grant funding for 2020/21. Members were also provided with the work underway to refresh the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Head of Finance –Education and Financial Reporting informed Members that the recommendations to this report are detailed within section 2.

The Head of Finance –Education and Financial Reporting continued to provide Members with a summary of the current financial years projected outturn which is set out in table 1 on section 3 of the report. This results in a small underspend of £1.250, very similar to the £1,439 underspend reported in December. The Officer hoped this gives Members of the Joint Committee reassurance on the continued financial control at Central South Consortium and demonstrates that stable and robust financial management is in place.

The Officer continued and provided Members of the Joint Committee with some variances:

- £150K underspend on Employee costs relating to a part year Accelerated Progress Lead £51k vacancy, release of contingency budget £40K used to absorb additional cost pressure relating to increased daily rate of seconded Improvement Partners from £400 to £450 from September 2020, other temporary vacancies such as a PA role and also various savings such as some staff not being in the pension scheme.
- £181K overspends on supplies and services mainly relating to the Improvement Partners pilot project – costs of accreditation £57k, ICT costs £74K and also the facilitation of coaching and mentoring programme across schools £56K to support wellbeing of senior staff.

Members were reminded that at December's Joint Committee approval was given of a distribution of an uncommitted earmarked reserve balance of £322K. This has been redistributed to LAs. The Officer explained there is no change to the £200K earmarked reserve setting aside funding to re-model the service and as part of the year- end report, it is likely that the Joint Committee will be requested to carry this forward into the new financial year.

In respect of grants received by the consortium the officer explained section 4 of the report shows details of the amounts retained and those delegated to schools and local authorities.

Moving on to the Medium Term Financial Plan Members of the Joint Committee the Head of Finance –Education and Financial Reporting reminded Members that in January 2020 the Joint Committee agreed a 3 year plan to reduce LA contributions by 3% for 20/21 (the current financial year) 1% for the next year as approved in December 2020 and 1% for 22/23.

It was explained that since that time, the consortium has worked within those parameters and it's positive to note that:

- the financial position for 20/21 is in line with budget
- a balanced budget was set for 21/22 on 16th Dec 2020

whilst delivering high quality school improvement activities throughout an unprecedented period.

To enable a Medium Term Financial Plan to be presented at the July JC, Members are asked whether they support the parameters outlined in paragraph 5.5.

(a) The need to protect frontline school improvement resources and target available funding to key priorities.

(b) The continued delivery of efficiency savings (recognising that the on-going delivery of savings at levels achieved in previous years will be extremely challenging).

(c) The Consortium to fully fund:

- Estimated employee costs and National Insurance Contribution levels; and
- Estimated non-pay costs (including goods and services inflation).

The Head of Finance –Education and Financial Reporting explained that subject to Joint Committee's feedback, the Managing Director and lead Section 151 Officer will coordinate the process, in consultation with the Chief Executives of member local authorities, and report an updated Medium Term Financial Plan to the July 2021 Joint Committee and will subsequently serve to inform the 2022/23 budget setting process.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and thanked Members for their questions and observations

Following consideration of the report and recommendations, it was **RESOLVED**:

- To note the current projected outturn position for 2020/21
- Note the current grant funding position 2020/21
- To agree broad parameters to refresh the Medium Term Financial

Plan to enable a detailed position be reported to the Joint Committee in July.

46 Audit Plan 2020/2021

Mr M Jones Audit Wales presented the Central South Consortium with the 2021 Audit Plan. He explained that the document sets out the work that is planned to be undertaken as the statutory responsibilities as the external auditor and how he would fulfil his obligations under the Code of Practice.

Members consider the information in the report and **RESOLVED** to note its content

47 Internal Audit Report 2020/2021

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium provided Members of the Joint Committee with the Internal Audit Report issued by the Regional Internal Audit Shared Service (RIASS) to the Central South Consortium during 2020/21.

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium explained that Internal Audit plays an important role in providing independent assurance on the systems of internal control operating with the Central South Consortium.

The Deputy Managing Director continued and reminded Members that the Central South Consortium is also responsible for undertaking an assessment of its governance arrangements each year which includes the system of internal control, the findings from which are set out in an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The conclusions from the Internal Audit's work during 2020-21 will for part of the AGS for this period. The AGS will be reported at the Joint Committee Meeting in May 2021.

Members acknowledged that based on the work undertaken by the (RIASS) during the year, no recommendations for improvement were deemed necessary in respect of the Consortium's internal control arrangements.

After considering the report Members of the Central South Consortium Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the Internal Audit report issued during 2020/21

48 AGS Progress Report

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium presented a progress update on the proposals for improvement made within 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement.

Members were reminded that the CSC'S Annual governance Statement (AGS) relating to 2019/20 financial year was reported and approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting held on the 14th September 2020. The document described the governance arrangements in place, challenged their effectiveness

and set out proposals for improvement.

Members were advised that the AGS made four proposals for improvement and note that the Consortium's Senior Management Team had accepted these and was committed to their implementation during 2020/21.

Members were also advised that an update on progress would be reported to Joint Committee during the year to enable elected Members to review and scrutinise the extent of progress being made.

Following consideration of the report, was **RESOLVED** to note the progress that had been made to date in implementing the proposals for improvement

49 Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Central South Consortium (2019- 2020)

Members were provided an overview in relation to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Central South Consortium 2019-20 by the Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium.

Members were presented with the four main areas of work were selected during 2019/20 for focused evaluation which were as follows:

- Vulnerable Learners Project
- Peer Engagement & Collaboration Models;
- Central Wales Challenge(Hub Focus)
- Annual Survey

When concluding her report the Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium explained that the Central South Consortium are committed to taking the following next steps as identified within strand evaluations within the report:

- Further embed the learning from the Vulnerable Learners' Project, and continue the strong partnership working with local authorities. Identify and disseminate research and practice to share with schools across the region;
- Further develop the strategy for Equity and Excellence as the basis for school improvement activity;
- Evaluate the pilot peer engagement / collaboration models to inform the next steps with the CSC Peer Engagement Process map. Align this work to the National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR) following 2019-20 piloting;
- Develop an e-learning strategy for PL, including increasing capacity to the CSC team to lead this;

- Establish more rigour in the hub and LP model to make it easier to monitor impact;
- Further consideration of CSWC evaluations processes and methods to ensure impact is captured; and
- Redesign the Annual Survey questions in line with the reform agenda and associated PL developments.

In addition, CSC have also identified the following areas for consideration in 2020-21

- Review the Challenge Adviser deployment model in light of the removal of formal categorisation;
- Professional Learning and accreditation for CSC school improvement colleagues;
- Review and propose changes to the way CSC support governors; and
- Support for Continuity of Learning

Finally, CSC propose to provide an annual effectiveness and efficiency report to Members of the Joint Committee in the Autumn Term each year. This report will form the basis of the reports to local authority annual scrutiny committees.

Strand evaluations for 2020-21 should continue for the following areas:

- Central South Wales Challenge Models;
- Peer Partnerships; and
- Support for Vulnerable Learners

Further strand evaluations should be considered for the following:

- Support for Governors
- Digital Learning
- Early Career Pathways
- Leadership Support and Development

Members of the Central South Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report.

50 Central South Consortium Grants Report 2020/2021

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

Members were informed of the method of apportionment and the 2020/21 grants it was explained that approval letters have been received detailing grant levels for Central South Consortium. The Directors have agreed to maintain the local authority dis-aggregation of the funding and to apply a common formula of the delegation of the local authority funding to schools.

Members put forward their questions and observations and **RESOLVED**:

- To approve the distribution of grants as detailed in section 4 of this report.

51 Central South Consortium Business Plan 2020/21

The Central South Consortium Joint Committee were presented with the Central South Consortium's Business Plan 2020/21 Progress Report.

It was explained that the Business Plan 2020/21 runs from April 2020 to 31st March 2021. Members were reminded that the Business Plan 2020-2021 was approved by Joint Committee on the 15th June 2020.

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium highlighted the progress made against the five priorities outlined in the business plan which closely align with the Welsh Government national approach.

After consideration of the plan Members of the Central South Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to note the Business Plan 2020/21 Progress Report

52 Central South Consortium Business Plan 2021/22

The Central South Joint Committee were presented with the final proposals for the Central South Business Plan 2021/22. Members were reminded that they received the draft business plan for consideration on the 16th December 2020 where they approved the following five:

- Develop a high-quality education profession;
- Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards;
- Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing , equity and excellence;
- Develop a robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting self- improving systems.
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Central South Consortium.

The Deputy Managing Director advised Members that the drive teams have meet with a variety of stakeholders (including Directors) to develop the business plan and detailed operational plans that sit beneath the business plan.

The Officer highlighted that indicative grant funding from Welsh Government is yet to be confirmed for all priority areas, and once this is received the funding section of the business plan will be completed and shared with Members.

Members acknowledge the wider stakeholder consultation with all schools and other stakeholders took place in March 2021 and that priorities for all local authorities will be included within the plan once received.

Following consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

53 CSC Governance Groups (Terms of Reference)

The Managing Director Central South Consortium updated Members of the Joint Committee with the draft terms of reference for the previously approved governance structure for the Central South Consortium from April 2021.

Members were reminded that at its Committee held on the 16th December 2020 Members approved Option 3 which preserves the current Joint Committee Structure and creates a Central South Management board with increased membership. This model also recognised the statutory functions of the LAs and retains the Director group as a key group within the governance structure. It also gives Headteachers the opportunity to be involved regularly to develop the strategic direction of the organisation, this model also recognises the key role of Headteachers in school improving systems.

Members considered the Terms and Conditions of the various governance groups with the Central South Consortium and **RESOLVED** to accept the progress made and agree the next steps.

54 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to discuss however Members agreed to move the next meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee from 20th May 2021 to a later date in May to enable Officers to present the final end of year accounts.

This meeting closed at 11.35 am

**CLLR C. SMITH
CHAIR.**

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MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021 - 2022

<p>Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee</p> <p>27th May 2021</p>	
<p>Report of the Managing Director of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee</p>	<p>Calendar of Meetings for the 2021- 2022 Municipal Year</p>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the proposed calendar of meetings for the 2021 - 2022 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee agree the Calendar of Meetings for the 2021- 2022 Municipal Year.

3. BACKGROUND

The following suggested dates for meetings of the Municipal Year 2021 - 2022 for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee is proposed.

Meetings will be held in a virtual setting for the next Municipal year and reviewed going forward.

The Chair has the power to call special meetings if a matter requires urgent consideration.

<p><u>QUARTERLY CYCLE</u></p>
<p><u>AUTUMN TERM</u></p> <p>Thursday 15th July 2021 10:00am or Tuesday 20th July 2021 2:00pm</p> <p>Tuesday 21st September 2021 10:00am or Wednesday 21st September 2021 10:00am</p>

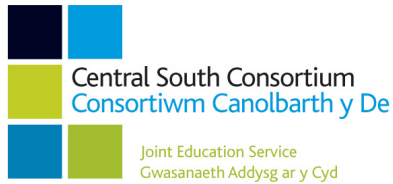
Tuesday 14th December 2021 **10:00am** or Thursday 16th
December 2021 **10:00am**

SPRING TERM

Tuesday 29th March 2022 **10:00am** **or** Thursday 31st March 2022
10:00am

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 24th May 2022 **10:00am** **or** Thursday 26th May 2022
10:00am



CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE

27TH MAY 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR – CSC COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Author: Louise Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members an opportunity to review and scrutinise the recently updated CSC Communications Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Review the updated Communications Strategy issued and determine whether there are any further recommendations for inclusion within the report or any areas Members would like to discuss in further detail.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Our whole education system continues to adapt to challenging times. Education professionals in all settings and in all contexts are having to respond to policy changes and wide scale reform whilst continuing to meet new requirements and demands placed upon them as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. These ever-evolving challenges run in parallel with the need to provide continuity of learning for our children and young people, and good teaching and learning experiences which promote equity and excellence, in order to ensure the best educational outcomes for all learners.

3.2 Our role at Central South Consortium (CSC) is to meet these key challenges by supporting schools in such a complex and constantly changing environment. Clear, simple and consistent communication is vital in achieving this. Our Communications Strategy 2021-24 provides a framework and direction to all media, online, internal, marketing, publications and public relations communications activity undertaken by the Central South Consortium.

3.2 The core aim of our communications is that all schools, Consortium staff, local authority officers, governors and everyone who deals with the Consortium will have a clear understanding and an accurate perception of our vision, aims, values, services and achievements, leading to higher levels of satisfaction, engagement and ultimately contribute to improved pupil outcomes and we will see to achieve this using the most appropriate channels of communication to reach a wide variety of audiences, as illustrated below:

- Consortium staff
 - School staff
 - Local authority officers
 - Governors
 - Parents
 - Welsh Government
 - Ministers and elected members
 - Other Welsh education consortia
 - Press
 - Businesses
 - Qualifications Wales
 - Estyn
 - WJEC
 - Teaching unions
 - Other partner organisations
 - Local community
- Anyone else who works with the Consortium or needs to be aware of our work.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 To realise this vision, the Consortium must be able to communicate with and influence a wide range of stakeholders in a cohesive and co-ordinated way.

4.2 In order to be clear about our direction and our relationships with staff and stakeholders we need to be clear about the answers to the following question:-

- Our overall purpose – what are we here for?
- Our values – what drives us to do the things we do?
- Our key messages – what are we saying about what we offer?

- Our service delivery – what do we provide, compared with what we promise?
 - Our behaviour – how do we treat our schools and our staff?
- 4.3 It is important that we bring these elements together in a unified approach across all communications channels, so that we are consistent in tone, look and feel. Stakeholders and staff need to understand who we are and what we stand for.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

27th MAY 2021

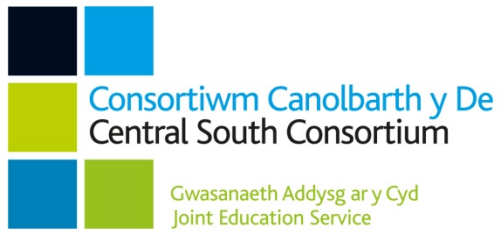
CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

List of background papers

Freestanding matter

Officer to Contact:

Louise Blatchford
Tel no. 01443 281400



Central South Consortium Communications Strategy 2021-24

Contents

Introduction 4

 The Vision Of The Consortium 4

 The Priorities Of The Consortium 5

Aims, Vision And Values for Communications 6

 Aims For Communications 6

 Vision And Values For Communications 7

 What Do We Want Our Communications To Achieve? 7

Cross Regional Working 8

Delivering Our Objectives 9

 What Are Our Key Messages?..... 9

 What Channels Do We Use To Share Our Messages? 9

 School Bulletin 9

 Social Media 9

 CSC Website 10

 Video Content 12

 Podcasts 12

 Events – Online and Face to Face 12

 Snippets of Success Updates for LA Directors 13

 Member Briefings 13

 Media and PR 13

 Internal Communications..... 14

 Design and Print 14

 Contact Details 15

 Third Party Communications 15

Responding to Change 15

 Our Key Challenges 16

 Our Approaches to Communication 17

 Listening and Responding 19

Freedom Of Information 19

Welsh Language Standards 19

Communications Crisis Management 20

Business Continuity Plan 20

Accessibility Regulations 21

Appendix 1 – How Are We Delivering Our Key Messages? 22

Appendix 2 – Stakeholder Engagement..... 24

Appendix 3 - Key Messages for Key Stakeholders 27

Appendix 4 – Corporate Communication Responsibilities 29

Appendix 5 – Key Dates for Annual Consortium Communications Activity..... 31

Appendix 6 – Analytics Dashboard 32

Appendix 7 – Supporting Documents 42

Introduction

Our whole education system continues to adapt to challenging times. Education professionals in all settings and in all contexts are having to respond to policy changes and wide scale reform whilst continuing to meet new requirements and demands placed upon them as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. These ever-evolving challenges run in parallel with the need to provide continuity of learning for our children and young people, and good teaching and learning experiences which promote equity and excellence, in order to ensure the best educational outcomes for all learners.

Our role at Central South Consortium (CSC) is to meet these key challenges by supporting schools in such a complex and constantly changing environment.

Clear, simple and consistent communication is vital in achieving this.

Our Communications Strategy 2021-24 provides a framework and direction to all media, online, internal, marketing, publications and public relations communications activity undertaken by the Central South Consortium.

We will use the most appropriate and cost-effective channels of communication to reach our wide variety of stakeholders including schools, learners, governors, parents, local authorities, elected members, Consortium staff, Welsh Government, other Welsh education consortia, press, businesses and the local community.

Communication works best when messages are clear and easy to understand, and when it is a two-way process. It's not enough to talk – we also have to be able to listen.

Strong communication with stakeholders is a key driver to overall satisfaction and performance and we recognise the invaluable contribution our staff are able to make to help us achieve this.

This is no easy task for an organisation which provides support to 386 schools, works in partnership with 5 local authorities (Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan), has over 118 permanent and seconded staff and an extensive catalogue of external providers.

It is also at the heart of good customer service and will be critical to the delivery of the Consortium's [Framework for School Improvement](#) and [Business Plan](#).

The Vision Of The Consortium

The Consortium's core vision is to **empower schools to improve outcomes for all learners**, by developing the capacity of schools in the region, to lead improvement by supporting teachers and leaders to learn from each other. The following diagram sets out how we seek to realise this vision.



The Priorities Of The Consortium

In order to realise our aims, we will focus on five improvement priorities in 2021/22:

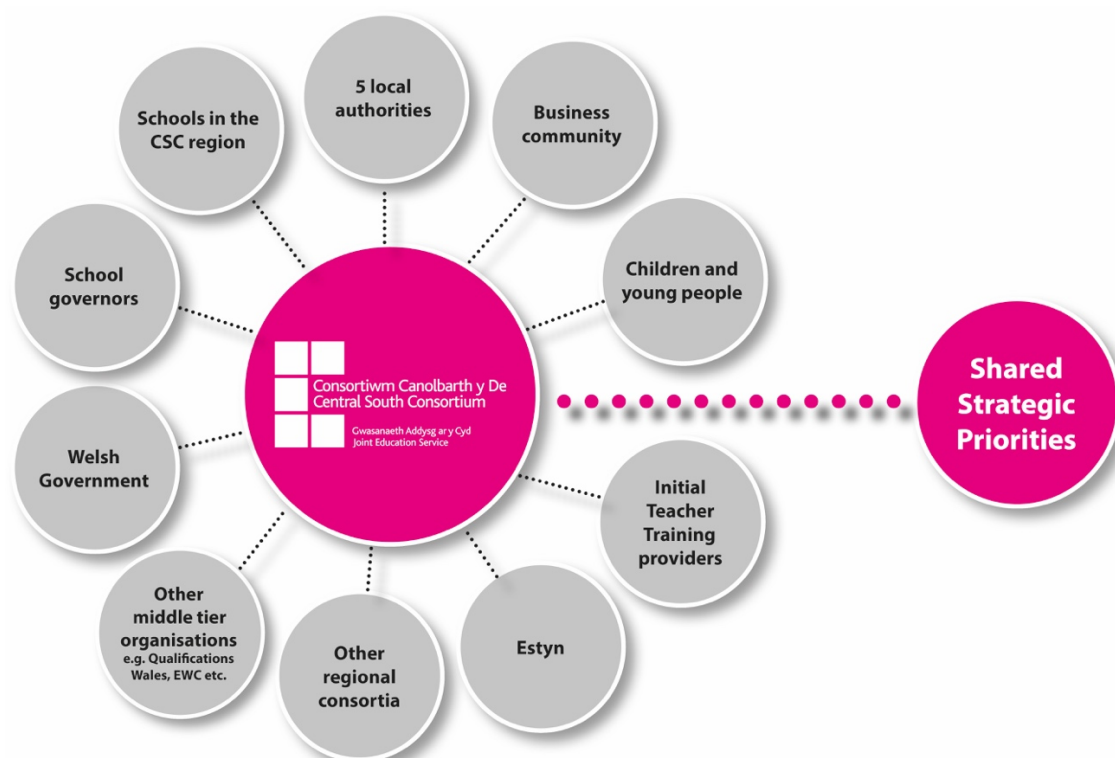
1. Develop a high-quality education profession
2. Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards
3. Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing, equity and excellence
4. Develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting self-improving systems
5. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium

Aims, Vision And Values for Communications

Aims For Communications

The core aim of our communications is that all schools, Consortium staff, local authority officers, governors and everyone who deals with the Consortium will have a clear understanding and an accurate perception of our vision, aims, values, services and achievements, leading to higher levels of satisfaction, engagement and ultimately contribute to improved pupil outcomes and we will see to achieve this using the most appropriate channels of communication to reach a wide variety of audiences, as illustrated below:

- Consortium staff
- School staff
- Local authority officers
- Governors
- Parents
- Welsh Government
- Ministers and elected members
- Other Welsh education consortia
- Press
- Businesses
- Qualifications Wales
- Estyn
- WJEC
- Teaching unions
- Other partner organisations
- Local community
- Anyone else who works with the Consortium or needs to be aware of our work.



Vision And Values For Communications

What are we trying to do?

To realise this vision, the Consortium must be able to communicate with and influence a wide range of stakeholders in a cohesive and co-ordinated way.

We therefore need to . . .

- Ensure that the Consortium's support for schools is easily accessible and that our stakeholders are able to interact with us
- Co-ordinate and direct communications so that all parts of the Consortium are working towards shared objectives, in support of the Consortium's values
- Ensure that all stakeholders understand what we're working towards, and what the outcomes will be – showing people what success looks like
- Ensure staff and partners understand their contribution through clear objectives
- Ensure all stakeholders know who is accountable for the work of the Consortium
- Enable schools to feel better informed and proud to be part of the Central South region
- Make staff feel proud to work for the Consortium and stakeholders proud to work with it

In order to be clear about our direction and our relationships with staff and stakeholders we need to be clear about the answers to the following questions...

- Our overall purpose – what are we here for?
- Our values – what drives us to do the things we do?
- Our key messages – what are we saying about what we offer?
- Our service delivery – what do we provide, compared with what we promise?
- Our behaviour – how do we treat our schools and our staff?

It is important that we bring these elements together in a unified approach across all communications channels, so that we are consistent in tone, look and feel. Stakeholders and staff need to understand who we are and what we stand for.

What Do We Want Our Communications To Achieve?

The aim of our communications is that all schools, staff, stakeholders and everyone who has interactions with the Consortium will have a clear understanding and a positive/accurate perception of our aims, values, services and achievements.

Everyone understands the contribution they can make and how others are playing their part.

Our communications objectives are:

- To secure and strengthen the **reputation** of the Consortium as a service that works alongside schools to enable headteachers to lead improvement within and across schools, and to achieve high quality outcomes that are focused upon our values and priorities
- To promote **stakeholder understanding** of the roles and responsibilities of the Consortium

- To build and maintain a professional **corporate brand** for consistent and co-ordinated use throughout the organisation
- To **promote the image** of the Consortium as an effective, efficient and proactive organisation focused on its schools and their needs
- To ensure that **communications are consistent and co-ordinated** across all channels to give maximum support to the Consortium's strategic priorities
- To ensure all staff **understand the priorities** of the Consortium and feel valued and able to contribute to the service
- To ensure that our communications activities **reflect the full diversity** of the Central South region, there is equity of access to our services and that all public communications are provided bilingually

The Communications team comprises: Communications Manager, Deputy Communications Manager, Translator and Translator/Bilingual Content Support Officer. The team is able to access design support and communications advice from the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) Marketing and Communications team as our host authority as and when required; design work can be accessed on a pay as you go basis. The Consortium accesses reprographics services via the RCTCBC Print Unit as a first port of call but also uses other providers depending on the requirements of the project.

It is important that the Consortium increases its efforts to understand what schools, local authorities and other stakeholders are saying.

This strategy will be fed by the Consortium's various governance and stakeholder groups, including the Joint Committee, local authorities, headteacher focus groups including our representative stakeholder group, Governors' Steering Group, and trade unions and discussions with elected members at all levels to generate feedback on topical issues and to further drill down into their needs.

In addition, working with public sector partners on joint communications is important to us, for example, through the Welsh Government Communications Group (comprising members from all Welsh regional consortia, WJEC, Estyn, Qualifications Wales and **EWC**).

We are also in frequent contact with our colleagues in health, higher education, further education, the third sector and private businesses to share good practice and professional learning opportunities to benefit the region's schools

Cross Regional Working

We work closely with the regional Project Manager appointed to work across the four regional consortia on national projects. A series of work streams have been established for collaborative working and a key element for all the streams is a cohesive and collective approach to communication activity across all regions for these cross consortia projects.

Delivering Our Objectives

The Consortium's reputation is based on perceptions – how people see us.

Managing our reputation means first of all understanding what those perceptions are, deciding how we want to be seen, and planning how to get there.

We will tackle this by focusing internal capacity on the Consortium's key messages and by ensuring that the most appropriate level of resource is available for our key priorities and activities.

What Are Our Key Messages?

We need to ensure that as a minimum all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the following key messages:

- The Central South Consortium is the **school improvement service**, which operates on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- The Consortium provides teams of **improvement partners** working with all schools in the region, with more time allocated to the schools most in need
- The **Central South Wales Challenge** is the Consortium's **self-improving** model for schools

A detailed breakdown of key messages for stakeholders can be found in Appendix 3.

What Channels Do We Use To Share Our Messages?

School Bulletin

On a weekly basis the Consortium issues a school e-bulletin. The bulletin is sent to a subscription list including all headteachers in the region along with other key stakeholders including staff, local authority officers, Estyn, Welsh Government and Governors. Anybody can [subscribe](#) to our mailing list. A back catalogue of all previous bulletins is available for reference via the 'Past issues' button. The bulletins provide a snapshot of the latest updates from the Consortium and have been designed to provide users with an easily accessible bulleted list of information, where the user can click on a link to find out more information if required. The bulletin is currently received by over 5700 people. More information on engagement with our bulletin can be seen in the analytics dashboard in Appendix 6.

Social Media

The use of technology and social media platforms is now embedded across all of our communications channels. We recognise the opportunities that social media can deliver in terms of reputation enhancement, engaging with the public and schools using their medium of choice, greater two-way dialogue and the insights that social media can provide, and as an opportunity to reduce cost versus other communications channels.

Similarly, we recognise the risks of social media and understand that they are channels that require close monitoring.

Our social media platforms are:

- [Twitter @CSCJES](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [You Tube](#)

We encourage strategic teams within the Consortium to establish and maintain their own accounts on social media. These accounts act as mechanisms for increasing engagement and the dissemination of more detailed specialist engagements. We currently have 14 Twitter accounts being managed by CSC teams on a regular basis, enabling them to tailor messages to their target audiences:

[@CSC_TALP](#)

[@CSC_FP](#)

[@CSC_PL](#)

[@CSC_Cymraeg](#)

[@CSC_DigiLearn](#)

[@CSC_Literacy](#)

[@CSC_Leadership](#)

[@CSC_SciTech](#)

[@SiarterlaithCCD](#)

[@CSC_ExpArts](#)

[@CSCHumanities](#)

[@CSC_NQT](#)

[@CSC_Wellbeing](#)

[@CSC_Governors](#)

[@CSC_RARSMerthyr](#)

All social media accounts are closely monitored and staff are required to submit a business case to the CSC Communications team for their creation. All staff have been issued with [guidelines regarding the use of corporate Twitter accounts](#) and are informed in their staff induction of the importance of following the [RCTCBC social media guidelines](#).

Twitter is our most popular channel and our principal [@CSCJES](#) account has over 7,000 followers (as of February 2021). This has grown from 6,000 followers in May 2020, demonstrating the power of this social media channel to engage with our audiences. This figure stood at 3,200 followers in June 2017. For more detailed analytics on the use of our social media channels and website, please see our dashboard in Appendix 6.

CSC Website

We recognise the value of websites as a source of information and as a low cost alternative to face-to-face and telephone contact. Websites are available 24 hours a day and consequently offer good customer service.

The CSC website (www.cscjes.org.uk) provides members of the public with access to general information about the Consortium such as our role, vision, and priorities.

It is the 'shop window' for the Consortium. Our target audience will immediately use the corporate website to form a judgement about us as an organisation. Are we modern, organised, professional, accessible, knowledgeable? It is essential that the website reflects our ethos to encourage buy-in and engagement from schools and other stakeholders. The website is regularly updated and monitored to ensure all content is accurate and user-friendly.

Following the repurposing of schools in March 2020 as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, we quickly identified the need to improve access to key materials via our website through the creation of dedicated homepages for [blended and remote learning](#), [professional learning](#), [direct teaching resources](#) and [Curriculum for Wales](#). These signpost users to the most up to date resources produced by CSC and guidance from Welsh Government and highlight the most appropriate members of staff who are able to provide further information, support and advice to schools regarding these areas.

Our website contains the following key sections:

- [Knowledge Bank](#): The Knowledge Bank provides schools with an easily searchable tool for accessing resources, including our full [professional learning offer](#) and materials for practitioners in a variety of categories including literacy, numeracy, leadership, learning and teaching, digital learning, grants and governors. All resources are tagged and the homepage identifies the most recently added and most popular resources. Users are able to rate and comment upon resources. A revamped Knowledge Bank is planned for release during Spring Term 2021, designed to improve the visibility of content via a simpler structure and content categorised and catalogued more logically.
- [Communities](#): These are online groups focused upon specific areas where users can share information – for example the '[CSC Staff Community](#)' is managed by the Communications team and features key updates and files for CSC staff. By becoming a member of the community the user receives e-mail notifications when an update is made to the community. Strategic teams are being encouraged to make greater use of this tool to communicate directly with their target audiences.

The current corporate website was established in 2017; a more modern and accessible homepage is now needed to improve accessibility of content and work is currently taking place to look at options within available budgets.

Blog

The Central South Consortium [Blog](#), housed on our website, was launched in January 2017 and features a wide variety of authors (including headteachers, teachers, Consortium staff, governors and local authority staff) discussing various aspects of education in Wales. The blog was established to support the exchange of information and best practice in-line with the creation of a self-improving system for the region. The blog was designed to address the perceived declining coverage of education in the Welsh media.

Video Content

An increasing focus has been the sharing of video content, which:

- Adds the personal touch
- Builds trust by bringing the content to 'life'
- Requires minimal effort from an audience
- Allows the audience to 'experience' the content
- Can be accessed digitally and repeatedly at any time of the day

A number of webinars have been recorded by our strategic teams and made available via our [YouTube channel](#) as part of our asynchronous professional learning offer and are linked via the respective areas of the Knowledge Bank on our website where our entire [professional learning offer](#) is hosted.

We also encourage our staff to submit selfie videos that we share on social media with updates on projects they are involved with. We recently ran a successful Twitter campaign featuring our Managing Director and all Principal Improvement Partners congratulating school staff from across the region in the [Professional Teaching Awards Cymru 2020](#). A further campaign is planned for March 2021 where staff have been asked to discuss their recommended reads for learners as part of World Book Day in a joint Twitter campaign via [@CSCJES](#), [@CSC_Literacy](#) and [@CSC_Cymraeg](#).

We also subscribe to online video editing software such as [Moovly](#) and [Biteable](#) to produce short animated films; recent examples produced by our strategic teams have highlighted good practice with remote teaching and preparation for Curriculum for Wales 2022. All Strategic Leads have been given training on using the video creation facility within Adobe Spark that is available via [Hwb](#) and share eye-catching video content via their strategic Twitter feeds. Some members of the strategic team have also received training from the Communications team on iMovie to be able to create and edit their own video content.

Podcasts

We have recently launched our new CSC podcast, Sgwrs (meaning 'conversation' in Welsh). Staff from across the organisation, as well as school staff and stakeholders, are being encouraged to use this platform to share debate and discussions on topics relevant to their areas and will be used increasingly as a method of engaging with our professional learning offer. Guidance and support has been offered by the Communications team to staff wishing to take part. Sgwrs is hosted on our [YouTube channel](#) and listeners are encouraged to subscribe for regular updates. The latest episodes will be promoted via our bulletin and social media.

Events – Online and Face to Face

The Consortium organises a number of key face to face events throughout the year including conferences, presentations, seminars and workshops for school staff. However, since the start of the covid-19 pandemic, all events have moved online and held successfully via Teams and Zoom meetings, including our own staff briefings, leading to environmental and cost benefits and allowing us to work more efficiently. It is hoped this approach will continue with certain events when the pandemic comes to an end. We will proactively seek to raise awareness of key Consortium

messages at these events. We will also seek to be represented, where appropriate, at other key stakeholder events that involve our target audiences and work with key partners to organise joint events, ensuring coordinated and consistent messages are shared and significant reductions in venue, catering, translation and equipment costs are achieved.

Snippets of Success Updates for LA Directors

A Consortium Snippets of Success update has been launched recently to be distributed by email on a fortnightly basis. This contains a snapshot of some of the notable success stories observed by our school facing staff across all phases in all of our local authorities. These are also shared via our weekly school bulletins.

Member Briefings

Senior Consortium officers including the Managing Director make themselves available for briefings to elected members at all levels as and when required / requested.

Media and PR

We will seek to maintain and further improve positive media coverage and develop our media relations to promote and defend the Consortium, recognising the proven link between a school's sense of feeling informed and feeling satisfied. We will continue to celebrate positive news, good practice and success stories from schools identified by our staff via our website, bulletin updates and social media and these will be shared with press colleagues, such as those at Media Wales, to explore further opportunities for promotion.

For example, the four education consortia worked collaboratively with Media Wales recently to coordinate the [Diolch campaign](#), thanking school staff for their efforts throughout the covid-19 pandemic. This included messages from children from across Wales to their teachers and featured several children of members of CSC staff. Some good examples of 'hero school staff' were also shared with Media Wales as good news stories, highlighting where schools have gone above and beyond to support learners and families during the pandemic.

Key Publications

The Consortium publishes the following annual publications:

- [Framework for School Improvement](#)
- [Business Plan](#)

In addition, the following key publications and updates were shared in 2020/21:

- [Guidance for schools in remote learning](#)
- [Roadmap to blended learning](#)
- [Blended learning guidance](#)
- [Distance learning considerations](#)

- [Guidance for continuity of learning during covid-19](#)
- [Professional Learning Offer](#)
- [Curriculum for Wales professional learning offer, updates, poster packs, playlists and FAQs](#)
- [Strategy for Equity and Excellence](#)

Internal Communications

Internal communications plays a key role in ensuring that staff know the Consortium’s plans and priorities, and what is on the horizon.

Employees need to understand how their actions contribute to the overall achievement of priorities and how their behaviour affects the way the organisation is perceived internally and externally.

We have streamlined our internal communications to provide:

Face to Face Updates	Online Updates	Publications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one meetings for staff with line managers • Staff induction programme every September • Performance development meetings with staff throughout the year • RCTCBC Managers’ Briefings for council wide updates • CSC staff development briefings • Team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly staff bulletin • CSC Staffroom on Teams for social/informal updates • RCTCBC Inform intranet • Weekly school bulletin • Snippets of Success for LA Directors • News and blogs on CSC website • Social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan – produced annually • Framework for School Improvement – produced annually • Professional Learning Offer – published throughout the year • Other ad hoc publications

Design and Print

Design takes place in-house by the Consortium Communications team, ensuring a consistent look and feel whilst reinforcing the brand and its values. Members of the strategic team have received training on the use of Adobe Spark to produce flyers for their projects and receive support from the Communications team to ensure branding is consistent with [CSC brand guidelines](#).

Extra design capacity is available through the RCTCBC design team at an additional cost. We work closely with the RCTCBC design team to coordinate the production of Consortium merchandise and signage, for example pop up banners, signage, document wallets etc.

We also have access to the RCTCBC photographer on a pay as you use basis. Photography is a key element of design which adds power to the messages in our documents. We last commissioned photography sessions in around 20 schools across the Consortium region in 2019. The schools received a copy of all the photographs and were able to use them for their own marketing purposes,

similarly they gave permission for the Consortium to use the images in our materials. Due to health and safety concerns in accessing schools during the pandemic, for the moment we will use copyright free images wherever possible and also purchase additional stock photography to be used across our platforms and publications, although where opportunities arise we will endeavour to use bespoke photography of real teachers and learners from our region in our publications, subject to the relevant GDPR permissions.

All print is provided through the RCTCBC print unit, which ensures we achieve best value through centralised buying power.

We will endeavour to use digital methods of communication, as opposed to print, wherever possible to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Contact Details

The Consortium holds contact details for all headteachers and key stakeholders in the region. Our school bulletin mailing list currently contains 5700 recipients, including teachers, governors, local authority staff, Estyn, Welsh Government, parents and other educational organisations. We face a great challenge in ensuring that our contact details are always accurate and have a number of administration staff who are responsible for keeping the details up to date as we are notified of changes. We actively encourage [sign ups](#) to our bulletin via details in our standard email signature used by all staff and staff should remind their schools of the need to sign up during their discussions. We have identified a need to centralise our individual distribution lists held by various teams into one place and will require the input of our school facing staff to achieve this with details for all schools in the region. This will allow greater flexibility to target messages to various audiences, for example heads of departments in secondary schools and subject coordinators within primary schools.

Gathering contact details for chairs of governors remains a challenging task. GDPR restrictions prevent the sharing of information held by LAs and we ensure our LA governor colleagues receive timely messages to share with their distribution lists.

Third Party Communications

We will continue to share details of events or support offered by third party organisations with our schools where we feel they embody Consortium values. In addition, as the region increasingly moves towards a self-improving system we will share details of events or support offered by schools to other schools in the region through our communication channels.

Responding to Change

The Central South Consortium is a reflective organisation that needs to adapt to the ever-changing educational landscape; communications plays a key role in supporting this aim.

Our Key Challenges

We are not here to just share messages and raise awareness, it is also vital that we listen to our stakeholders and that we are seen to be responding quickly to their comments, emerging themes and shifting priorities.

This has led to the identification of the following key challenges for communications:

- **Covid-19, school closures and the emergence of blended and remote learning have changed the way we provide our services to schools.**
 - We have had to adapt our ways of working with schools due to the pandemic, moving all of our professional learning online and developing the CSC website to include direct teaching resources created by schools for schools to support other practitioners.
- **Greater engagement with CSC's digital tools is now required by staff and stakeholders.**
 - There appears to be a disconnect and lack of awareness amongst some staff of our key communications platforms and the content of our website.
 - All school facing staff need to be better informed in order to support their schools as best they can.
 - Strategic teams responsible for content creation need to receive relevant media training to be able to produce engaging online materials across multiple platforms.
 - Our schools need to be familiar with our online communication platforms to be able to access online professional learning and relevant information on our website more easily.
- **Targeted communication often works better than mass communication.**
 - Feedback suggests that school staff can sometimes struggle to find the time to read our bulletins. When there is a lot of content, pertinent items can often seem buried and therefore this reduces engagement.
 - Further development of segmented content delivery, such as via strategic subject area communities and social media feeds, robust collation of school contact details into a centralised database and targeted bulletins and emails would help support better engagement. This needs to be more consistent across all teams.
- **Celebrating the successes and good practices of schools is needed more than ever.**
 - We are in a privileged position to have an overview of school activities in almost 400 schools across the central south Wales region.
 - We need to showcase the good practice we observe and provide a platform for this.
 - We rely on our school facing staff as our eyes and ears to feed this dialogue. As a Communications team, we can help facilitate this.
- **The voice of our audience needs to feed into the way in which we work.**
 - By facilitating conversations and actively encouraging feedback we will help shape future service transformation and improve service delivery, including sharing testimonials from staff and practitioners to promote future opportunities as we will have a better understanding of the needs and wants of the system. We require our staff to share knowledge of their schools with us in order to achieve this.

Our Approaches to Communication

Broadcast engagement

Historically, CSC communication activity has centred around a **broadcast engagement** model. We have shared our messages and materials via the usual communication channels outlined above and these have been consumed by our audiences, for example by practitioners reading our school bulletins and viewing our social media feeds.

We rely upon the input of strategic teams to support this activity through regular strategic Twitter posts and ongoing maintenance of strategic communities on our website to share updates and materials with distinct audiences.

We recognise that whilst this is successful in promoting awareness of our service to schools, this can only ever target those who are already engaged and subscribed to our communications channels.

Facilitated engagement

In order to reach those off the radar who don't engage with our mass communication methods, we need to increase the amount of **facilitated engagement** undertaken and this requires a shift in mindset and culture within the organisation and greater input from our staff in order to achieve this. Our staff need to have a better understanding of our digital communication platforms and the content shared via these. For example, we would expect all staff to read our weekly school bulletins and follow our social media posts in order to flag up useful resources and opportunities pertinent to the schools they work with, using their understanding of the needs of their schools to be able to signpost as appropriate. This should ensure maximum reach and messages received by those who need to see them.

Recent examples of this approach being applied successfully include requests from SMT for materials on remote learning to be shared with schools via an agreed direct email from Improvement Partners to their schools and a follow up discussion regarding this. As a result, our [remote learning guidance](#) document was downloaded over 4,500 times within the first week, becoming one of our most widely read documents in the Knowledge Bank. This demonstrates the value and impact of **facilitated engagement**.

Online Professional Learning Offer

Over the past twelve months we have undertaken a considerable amount of work to enable us to move to a fully online professional learning offer, which has allowed greater access and engagement by practitioners. They are now able to access asynchronous professional learning materials such as playlists and pre-recorded webinars that they can access at their convenience. This work has enabled us to reach a much wider audience than pre-pandemic.

This work links into our **e-learning strategy**.

This is the basis of our key internal communications objective, as part of Priority 5 of the CSC Business Plan for 2021-22, that *communication is everyone's responsibility*.

We will seek to:

- meet with new members of staff as part of their induction to discuss communications and how we can support them in their roles
- meet with teams to discuss project requirements regarding communications, design and branding, bilingualism and upskill staff where relevant
- emphasise the need for our staff to promote our communications channels at every opportunity
- encourage our Improvement Partners and Strategic Advisers to read and share bulletin content and other CSC news and messages as relevant to their schools
- encourage Improvement Partners and Strategic Advisers as our eyes and ears to flag up successes and good news stories to promote via our website, social media, media coverage and Snippets of Success
- develop more robust contacts management to enable us to target communications to distinct audiences

We will monitor progress with the above, where possible, via our analytics dashboards. This will continue beyond the 2021-22 Business Plan monitoring cycle to verify ongoing compliance.

Our Corporate Communications Responsibilities and expectations for all staff regarding this are highlighted in Appendix 4.

Reciprocal engagement

When our stakeholders are signed up to receive our mass communications, and this is backed up by timely and targeted messaging via our school facing staff to support the sharing of information, we gain the confidence and trust of our audience, leading to **reciprocal engagement**.

By this, schools recognise the value of our communications platforms to share their own messages with us and actively contribute to news articles and blogs for our website and bulletins, participate as guest contributors in our podcasts and tag us into their social media posts to showcase their good news and celebrate their successes. This two-way dialogue, using our digital platforms as well as our staff as the conduits for newsworthy content reaffirms our **by schools, for schools** philosophy.

This is the basis of our key external communications priority for 2021-22 as part of Objective 5 of the CSC Business Plan for 2021-22, that CSC is here for you.

We will seek to:

- increase the numbers of people who subscribe to our bulletins
- increase our numbers of social media followers and engagement
- increase usage of our website communities
- increase the numbers of views of website resources, particularly our professional learning opportunities
- increase the volume of content we share by schools for schools via news, blogs and podcasts

We will require support from our staff to be able to achieve the above and monitor progress, where possible, via our analytics dashboards. This will continue beyond the 2021-22 Business Plan monitoring cycle to verify ongoing compliance.

Our Corporate Communications Responsibilities and expectations for all staff regarding this are highlighted in Appendix 4.

Listening and Responding

We listen to our audience through all our channels, and endeavour to respond to all requests and feedback. For example, the Communications team manages the corporate e-mail address (communications@cscjes.org.uk). We ensure that all messages are responded to promptly and that all feedback is passed onto the appropriate teams.

We have analytics available for the majority of our communications channels and regularly monitor them to identify trends and issues. For example, we monitor the school bulletin to identify key areas of interest (via clicks, deletes and opens) and this data helps us to further understand our audience and adapt our activities to meet their needs and an analytics report is received on a weekly basis which outlines social media engagement over the past 7 days.

Continuous professional development is essential for the Communications team to remain tuned in to the latest opportunities and techniques for effective communications. We undertake an annual performance management process and identify development opportunities which align with the needs of the Consortium.

Similarly, networking plays a vital role; it important that we stay alert to collaborative working opportunities, along with sharing and receiving communications knowledge. This has become more important than ever as we continue to work remotely due to the pandemic.

Freedom Of Information

Responsibility for the management of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests sits with the Communications team. A number of requests have been received by the Consortium and all have been responded to appropriately. A page has been published on the Consortium website to promote the [Freedom of Information Act](#), along with details of how to make a request. The Communications team endeavours to provide as much information as possible through its website to avoid the need for individual requests. A report on all CSC FOI requests is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis.

Welsh Language Standards

As a public body, the Consortium is legally bound by the requirements of the Welsh Language Measure under the supervision of RCTCBC as our host authority. The Communications team provides advice to teams across the organisation in order to maintain compliance and works with the Welsh Language team at RCTCBC to share messages and to seek guidance where appropriate. CSC staff have been provided with [RCTCBC guidance on Welsh Language Standards](#) and have been given the opportunity to improve their Welsh language skills as part of their role.

All Consortium communications will continue to be provided bilingually at the point of access with equal prominence given to Welsh and English.

Communications Crisis Management

The reputation of the Consortium is dependent upon the communications that it issues. If these communications are incorrect, confidential or controversial we need to anticipate and plan for damage limitation. Lessons need to be learned from any occasions where this may happen.

To limit such occasions from occurring we have the following in place:

- All corporate communications are passed through the Communications team, who in turn gain approval from the Managing Director or another member of the Senior Management Team before they are distributed.
- All areas of service feed into the Senior Leadership Team who provide guidance and advice to the Communications team regarding communications
- Social media accounts and the press are constantly monitored (Google Alerts are set up using keywords to flag any relevant coverage relating to our organisation and schools in our region)
- Other members of staff are able to access and update the Consortium websites and social media accounts when needed
- All formal meetings are minuted to provide evidence of how decisions were reached ensuring transparency and accountability

As the Consortium's host authority, RCTCBC is available to provide further support regarding crisis management.

Should an occasion occur that requires crisis management the Communications team will immediately inform both the Business Manager, Deputy Managing Director and Managing Director for guidance on how to best proceed.

Business Continuity Plan

Business continuity planning is an important element of good business management and service provision. All business activity may be subject to disruptions such as a pandemic, technology failure, flooding, economic crisis and utility disruption. Robust communication is crucial for business continuity, particularly as organisations transition to remote working operations.

Effective communication planning is an integral part of preparedness and any continuity process. It is essential to disseminate accurate and timely information to staff, partners, stakeholders, and where necessary the public via clear and effective communication channels to inform them of the situation and indicate the likely timescale of interruption and our response to this.

In an event that CSC's communication channels are affected we will ensure that we utilise all other available channels to ensure that we alert our audiences to the situation.

- In the event of IT failure affecting CSC's email system:
 - we will communicate with our external audiences via our website and social media
 - we will communicate with our staff via telephone/mobile phone and Teams/Zoom calls
- In the event of IT failure affecting CSC's website:
 - we will communicate with our external audiences via our social media channels (Twitter and Facebook)
 - we will communicate with our staff and stakeholders via email.

Accessibility Regulations

[\(https://accessibility.campaign.gov.uk/\)](https://accessibility.campaign.gov.uk/)

The new Accessibility Regulations came into force in April 2021 and set out the [regulations](#) to help make sure online public services are accessible to all users, including disabled people.

CSC will ensure that all its development work and improvements to its website and online services meet these new accessibility regulations and are accessible to all its audiences.

Appendix 1 – How Are We Delivering Our Key Messages?

<p>WHO ARE WE?</p> <p>“The Central South Consortium is a school improvement service which operates on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan”</p> <p>Key document: Business Plan</p>
<p>Actions that support the communication of this key message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan: The current Business Plan was published in April 2020 and is available on our website. As of 2nd February 2021, it had 432 views. • Website: The Business Plan is hosted in the Corporate Publications section of the Knowledge Bank. The ‘About Us’ sections of the website have been updated to reflect the content of the Business Plan (e.g. our vision, our priorities etc). • Map: The map of the region has been widely shared (website, presentations, Business Plan etc) to illustrate and reinforce the collaborative model of Consortium working across local authorities.
<p>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>“The Consortium provides teams of improvement partners and strategic advisers working with all schools in the region, with more time allocated to the schools most in need”</p> <p>Key document: Framework for Support Improvement</p>
<p>Actions that support the communication of this key message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for School Improvement: The Framework was published on the corporate website About Us section and Knowledge Bank in September 2020 – the Framework has received 415 views (as of the 2nd January 2021). It has also been shared internally via the Improvement Partner Teams area and within the CSC Staff Community. It has been shared externally in the school bulletin and via social media. • Website: The content from the Framework has been adapted for the corporate website to provide further information about the Consortium and our role.
<p>PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OFFER</p> <p>The regional professional learning offer comprises opportunities for leaders and practitioners to engage in programmes of professional learning and collaborative networks to support local, regional and national priorities.</p>

Website: The online [Professional Learning Offer](#) is available on our website in the Knowledge Bank and regular updates shared with all schools via our usual communication channels (opportunities featured in weekly school bulletin and key programmes featured in targeted bulletins, regular Twitter and Facebook updates, links in direct emails to Headteachers etc).

Key resource: Knowledge Bank accessible via www.cscjes.org.uk

INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

The CSC website has been developed to provide up to date information and resources for schools across the region.

Website: Pages included on the consortium website are organised to provide access to information, guidance and resources.

The [Knowledge Bank](#) section is organised into categories to support access to information, guidance and resources

The [Direct Teaching Resources](#) section of the Knowledge Bank supports access to direct teaching resources that have been '**shared by schools, for schools**'.

The [Blended and Remote/ Distance Learning](#) section of the Knowledge Bank collates resources to support the development of blended and distance learning.

Key resource: Knowledge Bank accessible via www.cscjes.org.uk

Appendix 2 – Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder	Communication Methods
General public (including potential employees) <i>All items in this section also apply to all stakeholders listed below</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School bulletin • Corporate website (www.cscjes.org.uk): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ News and Blogs ○ About Us ○ Key publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Plan ▪ Framework for School Improvement ▪ Professional learning opportunities ▪ Knowledge Bank resources • Corporate Twitter Account (@CSCJES) • Corporate Facebook Account • Corporate YouTube Channel
Headteachers and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Headteacher Meetings • Website communities • CSC webinars, events and conferences • Stands at key Consortium and local authority events • Via Improvement Partner meetings • Via Strategic Adviser meetings • Via Hub School programmes and network meetings • Posters, flyers, booklets sent to schools • Strategic Twitter Accounts (e.g. literacy, numeracy, science, digital technology etc)
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training from Governor Support Officer (including induction) • Information shared via LA Governor Leads • Governor Steering Group • CSC webinars, events and conferences, including the annual conference for Governors • Stands at key Local Authority events • Online professional learning for Governors • Governors' resources in Knowledge Bank
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject/area specific communities on the website • E-mails from Project Support Officers and Strategic Leads • Professional learning resources, assignments and events
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via social media • Via materials shared with schools that might benefit parents
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via pupil engagement events • Via schools

Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Principal Improvement Partners • Local authority meetings and working groups • Reporting to Scrutiny Committee • Local Authority Progress Reports
Welsh Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via meetings and working groups • E-mail communications on revisions to national policy and guidance • Via Welsh Government communications group • Shared hashtags for key campaigns e.g. exam results and categorisation • Annual challenge and review meeting with the Minister for Education • Joint events (e.g. Curriculum for Wales)
Press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases issued via e-mail • Meetings • Inviting members of the press to key events • Sourcing articles and sharing good news stories
Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases issued via e-mail • Meetings • Sharing guidance documents for school staff
Politicians (Members of the Senedd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing sessions for Education spokespeople and MSs in the Consortium's region • Attend Children and Young People meeting at the Assembly
Local Government Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations given to council meetings • Meetings
Other Consortia (ERW, GwE and EAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Regional work streams
SIGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via SIG Convenor training
Other education bodies (e.g. WJEC, Qualifications Wales, EWC and Estyn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Welsh Government Communications Working Group • Meetings
Higher Education Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Engagement with ITE partnerships
Consortium Staff (internal communications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff bulletin • Staff Community • Staff briefings • Staff development days • Staff induction • RCTCBC intranet 'Inform' and RCTCBC Source training materials and briefings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff notice boards <p><i>See 'Internal communications' for more details on staff communications</i></p>
Delegate Headteachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings and plans shared
Contractors (translation companies, designers, venues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand Guidelines for the Consortium logos • Checklist for guest presenters/contractors

Appendix 3 - Key Messages for Key Stakeholders

If our stakeholders only undertake two activities to engage with Consortium communications, our key request is that they subscribe to our weekly bulletin via <http://bit.ly/CSCbulletin> and also follow us on Twitter to receive timely, succinct, and easily accessible information from us.

Stakeholder	Messages									
Headteachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) is the Consortium's self-improving model for schools The revised model comprises the following elements in the development of the self-improving system: 									
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Regional professional learning opportunities</td> <td>Lead practitioners and Foundation Phase hubs</td> <td>Programmes and network activities are co-constructed by school practitioners and CSC staff to meet regional and national priorities and needs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School to school</td> <td>Partnerships focus on specific areas for improvement. Partnerships between the schools are brokered by Improvement Partners.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leadership development</td> <td>Professional learning opportunities to support leaders at all levels to develop their leadership knowledge, experiences and skills and collaborate with colleagues, building strong networks.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NQT Induction</td> <td>Professional learning opportunities and networks for newly qualified teachers and induction mentors.</td> </tr> </table>	Regional professional learning opportunities	Lead practitioners and Foundation Phase hubs	Programmes and network activities are co-constructed by school practitioners and CSC staff to meet regional and national priorities and needs.	School to school	Partnerships focus on specific areas for improvement. Partnerships between the schools are brokered by Improvement Partners.	Leadership development	Professional learning opportunities to support leaders at all levels to develop their leadership knowledge, experiences and skills and collaborate with colleagues, building strong networks.	NQT Induction	Professional learning opportunities and networks for newly qualified teachers and induction mentors.
	Regional professional learning opportunities		Lead practitioners and Foundation Phase hubs	Programmes and network activities are co-constructed by school practitioners and CSC staff to meet regional and national priorities and needs.						
			School to school	Partnerships focus on specific areas for improvement. Partnerships between the schools are brokered by Improvement Partners.						
			Leadership development	Professional learning opportunities to support leaders at all levels to develop their leadership knowledge, experiences and skills and collaborate with colleagues, building strong networks.						
		NQT Induction	Professional learning opportunities and networks for newly qualified teachers and induction mentors.							
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Regional professional learning collaborations</td> <td>School Improvement Groups (SIGs)</td> <td>Cross LA school collaborations where convenors act as the professional learning lead and facilitate enquiry-led improvement.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clusters</td> <td>Collaborations of cluster schools focused on Curriculum for Wales and the wider educational reforms.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peer partnership</td> <td>Effective self-evaluation through active peer collaboration to bring about continuous school improvement.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School leader and practitioner networks</td> <td>CSC and/or school leader and practitioner facilitated networks focused on specific areas.</td> </tr> </table>	Regional professional learning collaborations	School Improvement Groups (SIGs)	Cross LA school collaborations where convenors act as the professional learning lead and facilitate enquiry-led improvement.	Clusters	Collaborations of cluster schools focused on Curriculum for Wales and the wider educational reforms.	Peer partnership	Effective self-evaluation through active peer collaboration to bring about continuous school improvement.	School leader and practitioner networks	CSC and/or school leader and practitioner facilitated networks focused on specific areas.
	Regional professional learning collaborations		School Improvement Groups (SIGs)	Cross LA school collaborations where convenors act as the professional learning lead and facilitate enquiry-led improvement.						
			Clusters	Collaborations of cluster schools focused on Curriculum for Wales and the wider educational reforms.						
			Peer partnership	Effective self-evaluation through active peer collaboration to bring about continuous school improvement.						
School leader and practitioner networks		CSC and/or school leader and practitioner facilitated networks focused on specific areas.								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for all school staff can be accessed online via our website at any time (www.cscjes.org.uk) Headteachers can ensure they stay informed by signing up to the weekly Consortium e-bulletin (www.cscjes.org.uk) 										
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central South Consortium is your school improvement service School improvement is provided through the Central South Wales Challenge; a model which sees all schools sharing their expertise in order to improve the whole system 									

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school has an improvement partner– their role is to assist the school by providing challenge and support to improve the outcomes for learners • Support for schools can be found on our website (www.cscjes.org.uk)
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central South Consortium is the school improvement service, which operates on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. • The Consortium provides teams of improvement partners working with all schools in the region, with more time allocated to the schools most in need • The Central South Wales Challenge is the Consortium’s self-improving model for schools • Governors can ensure they stay informed by signing up to the weekly Consortium e-bulletin (www.cscjes.org.uk)
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central South Consortium is the school improvement service, which operates on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan • The Consortium provides teams of improvement partners who work with the schools in the region • School improvement is provided via the Central South Wales Challenge – a model which sees schools collectively sharing effective practice to improve all schools in the region • The Consortium shares information with you so that you can become familiar with our work and can scrutinise our effectiveness
Members of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central South Consortium is the school improvement service for Central South Wales schools • The Consortium provides teams of improvement partners who work with schools to improve the outcomes for their pupils • Schools in Central South Wales improve by sharing knowledge with each other; this is known as the Central South Wales Challenge • Find out more at www.cscjes.org.uk

Appendix 4 – Corporate Communication Responsibilities

Our staff are vital to the success of this Communications Strategy and we require their ongoing commitment to address our key internal and external communications priorities.

Who?	Expectations
All CSC staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be aware of this Communications Strategy and CSC’s key messages. • Should be mindful that all contact with schools and partner organisations contributes to reputation management and that every member of staff acts as an advocate for CSC. We would encourage staff to share our content via their own personal social media channels and networks if happy to do so. • Should ensure information regarding newsworthy items, projects, events and consultations reach the Communications team • Should inform the Communications team of personal success or achievements for inclusion in the staff bulletin • Should ensure that all printed and online material, as well as signage and corporate merchandise follows CSC corporate branding guidelines and Welsh Language Policy by liaising with the Communications team on any publications. This is covered in the Communications induction playlist. • Should inform line manager/senior managers immediately of any issue which has the potential to impact the reputation of CSC so that appropriate action can be taken.
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should support the principle that ownership of the Communications Strategy runs across the whole of CSC at all levels. • Should define and prioritise the communications needs of each area, include an element of relevant communications activity as an agenda item in key meetings and ensure the Communications team is aware of these for forward planning purposes. • Should ensure bilingual communication implications are considered at every point in the decision-making process. Bilingual communication should be factored in at the beginning of the process, not at the end. • Should identify potentially sensitive issues, reports and publications and notify the Communications team before they are made public. • Should be proactive in providing information to the Communications team regarding possible positive stories, achievements, public/consultation events. • Should ensure all staff understand the role they play in reporting reputation issues.
Strategic Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should raise awareness with schools of CSC communication channels and any relevant information featured in staff and school bulletins • Should continue to feed information to the Communications team and other strategic teams to feature on social media and bulletins as the eyes and ears of the organisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should share succinct information on good practice observed with the relevant Principal Improvement Partner for inclusion in Snippets of Success for LA stakeholders • Should ensure that school staffing changes are communicated so that an accurate contacts database can be maintained • Should continue to share ongoing bilingual updates regarding their professional learning opportunities, the latest resources and news from their area via their respective Twitter feeds and use the digital tools available (with training and support on use of software and branding) to produce engaging social media content (video animations, flyers etc). • Should use their strategic area online Communities as a means of pushing notifications to their audiences and share relevant materials there • Should take ownership for keeping content of related webpages and Knowledge Bank sections up to date with the latest information and resources • Should identify opportunities for school practitioners and other partners to create original content for blogs and podcasts and work with them to produce and promote these • Should use relevant templates for professional learning to ensure content is consistent and promotes brand identity
<p>Improvement Partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be a school's first port of call for information and advice and brokerage of support • Should raise awareness with schools of CSC communication channels and any relevant information featured in staff and school bulletins • Should continue to feed information to the Communications team and relevant strategic teams to feature on social media and bulletins as the eyes and ears of the organisation • Should share succinct information on good practice observed with their Principal Improvement Partner for inclusion in Snippets of Success for LA stakeholders • Should ensure that school staffing changes are communicated so that an accurate contacts database can be maintained • Should identify opportunities for school practitioners and other partners to create original content for blogs and podcasts and work with them to produce and promote these
<p>Business Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should support strategic teams and IPs in maintaining up to date website and Knowledge Bank content • Should support ongoing compliance with Welsh Language Standards and CSC branding and flag up issues as relevant • Should support the ongoing maintenance of contacts databases

Appendix 5 – Key Dates for Annual Consortium Communications Activity

Date	Event	Other Key Publications Throughout the Year
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium Business Plan published • Start of term letter from Managing Director to headteachers and chairs of governors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly school bulletin • Fortnightly Snippets of Success for LA Directors and officers • News articles • Blog posts • Social media coverage • Updates for Headteachers via IPs • Updates for Headteachers via mass email from Communications team • Podcasts
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of term letter from Managing Director to headteachers and chairs of governors 	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff induction materials • Revised Framework for School Improvement published • Start of term letter from Managing Director to headteachers and chairs of governors • Professional learning offer communicated to schools 	
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of term letter from Managing Director to headteachers and chairs of governors 	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of term letter from Managing Director to headteachers and chairs of governors 	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of term letter from Managing Director to headteachers and chairs of governors 	

Appendix 6 – Analytics Dashboard

Digital Communications

Social Media and Website Overview March 01, 2020 – March 01, 2021

Social media has played an integral part in CSCs communication and engagement with its schools during the past year of the pandemic. Online digital communication has been vital to delivering our messages to a wider audience providing the opportunity for an open two-way dialogue.

Our following and friends-base has grown considerably on both our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Social media engagement has proven to be one of the main vehicles where our audiences have received our updates and information during this period.

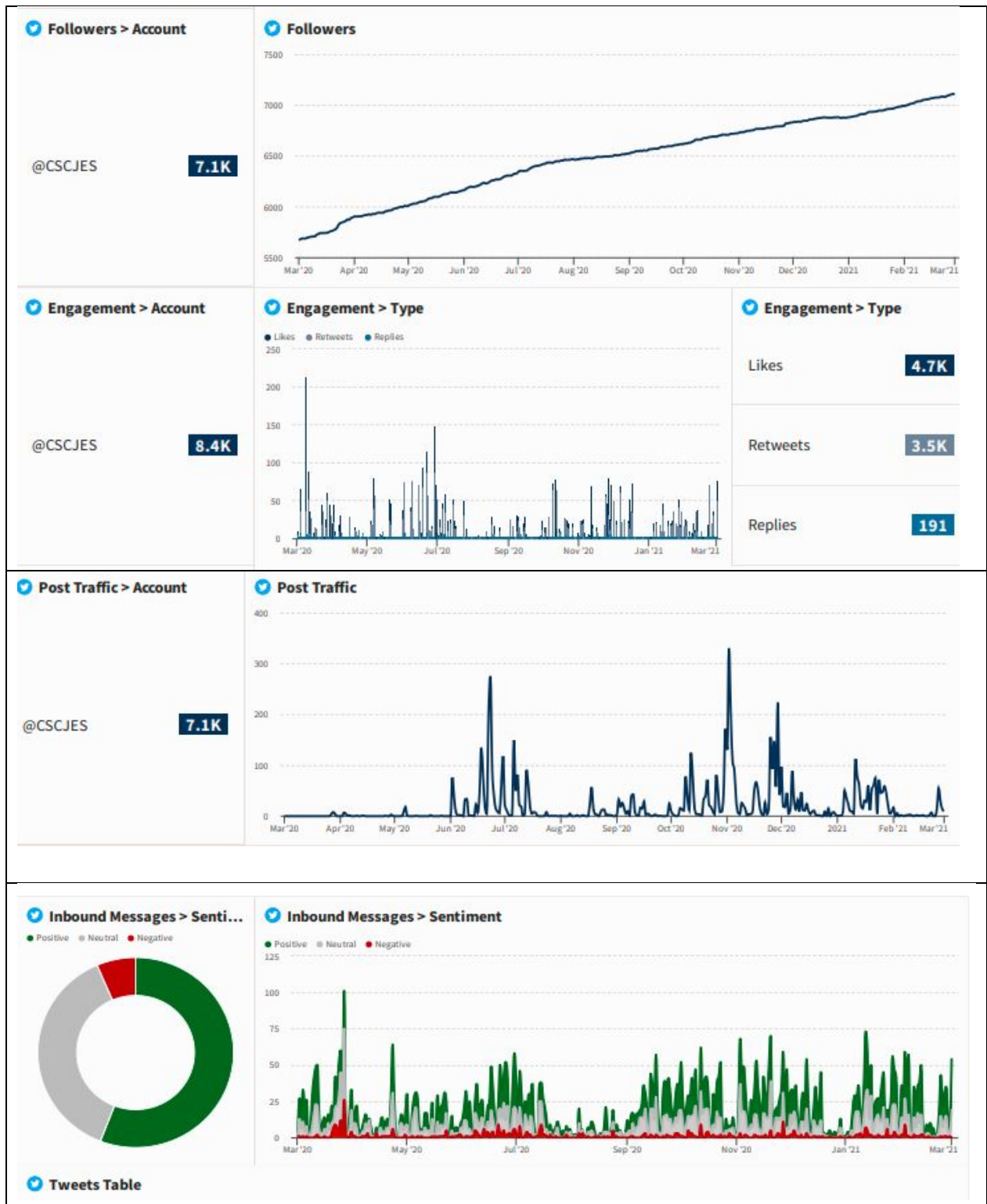
Our website visitor numbers have also increased considerably, again reinforcing the important role that CSC's website has as the 'shop window' for all its activity.

CSC Corporate Twitter Account:						
(analytics from 1 March 2020 – 1 March 2021 - unless it states differently in visual/table)						
Handle	Followers		Following		Tweets	
@CSCJES	March - October 2020	October 2020 - March 2021	March - October 2020	October 2020 - March 2021	Total taken in October 2020	Total taken in March 2021
	6,643	7,141	1,449	1,510	19,900	22,865
Strategic Twitter Accounts						
Handle	Followers		Following		Tweets	
	March - October 2020	October 2020 - March 2021	March - October 2020	October 2020 - March 2021	March - October 2020	October 2020 - March 2021
@CSC_PL	480	542	249	280	1,461	1,529
@CSC_TALP	72	112	80	136	118	272
@CSC_FP	199	362	320	338	299	400
@CSC_Cymraeg	974	1,151	481	649	5,613	6,924
@CSC_DigiLearn	3,237	3,465	247	248	2,684	3,025

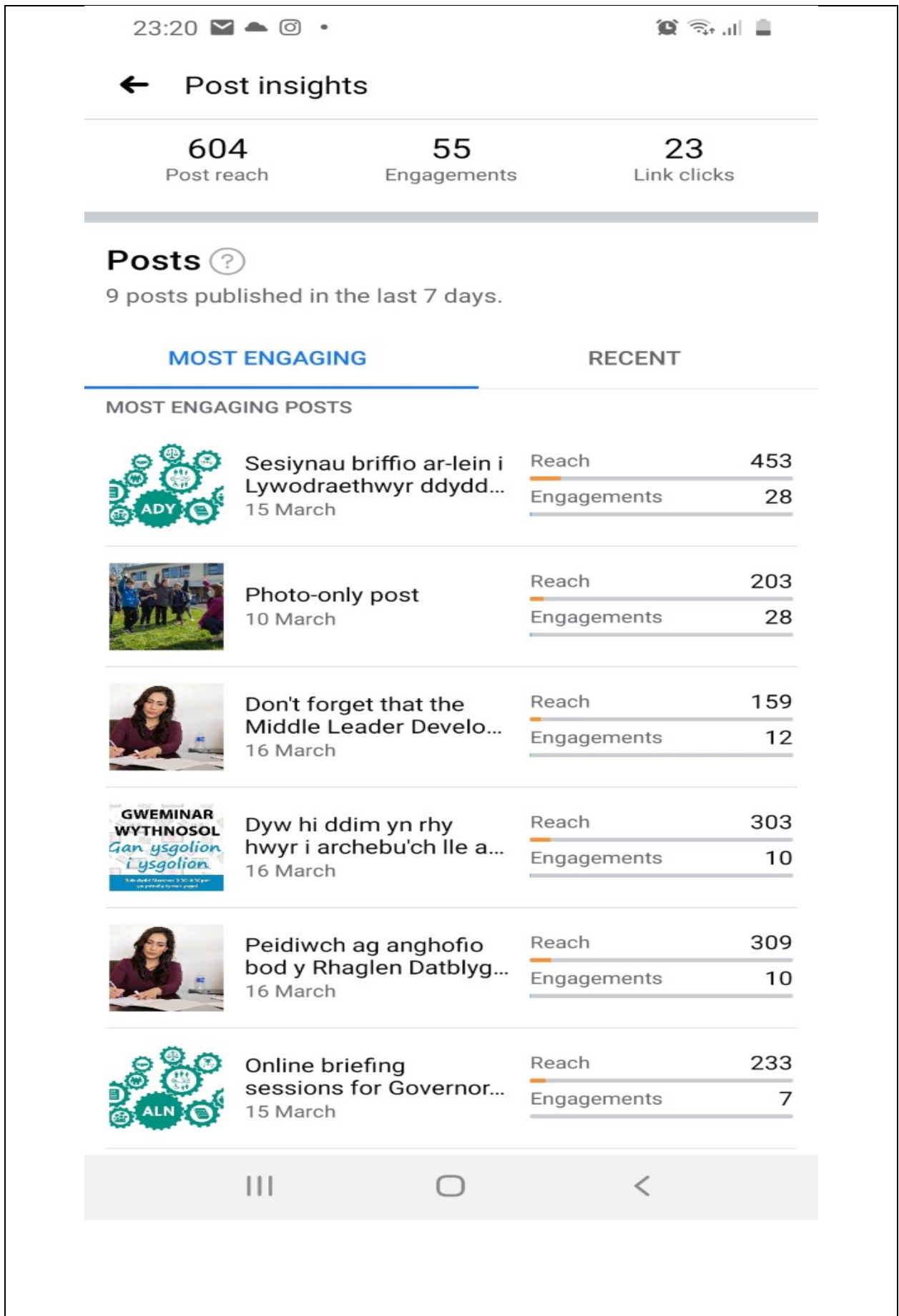
@CSC_Literacy	2,403	2,580	602	615	4,930	5,203
@CSC_Leadership	545	557	179	179	81	81
@CSC_SciTech	769	966	676	795	2,125	3,512
@SiarterlaithCCD	961	1,101	353	449	2,526	2,965
@CSC_ExpArts	328	442	183	201	604	872
@CSCHumanities	177	260	274	370	157	341

Insight Summary for CSC Corporate Twitter Account
 Overview comparison between **March 01, 2020 - March 01, 2021**
 Visuals below demonstrate a consistent increase in followers, reach and engagement

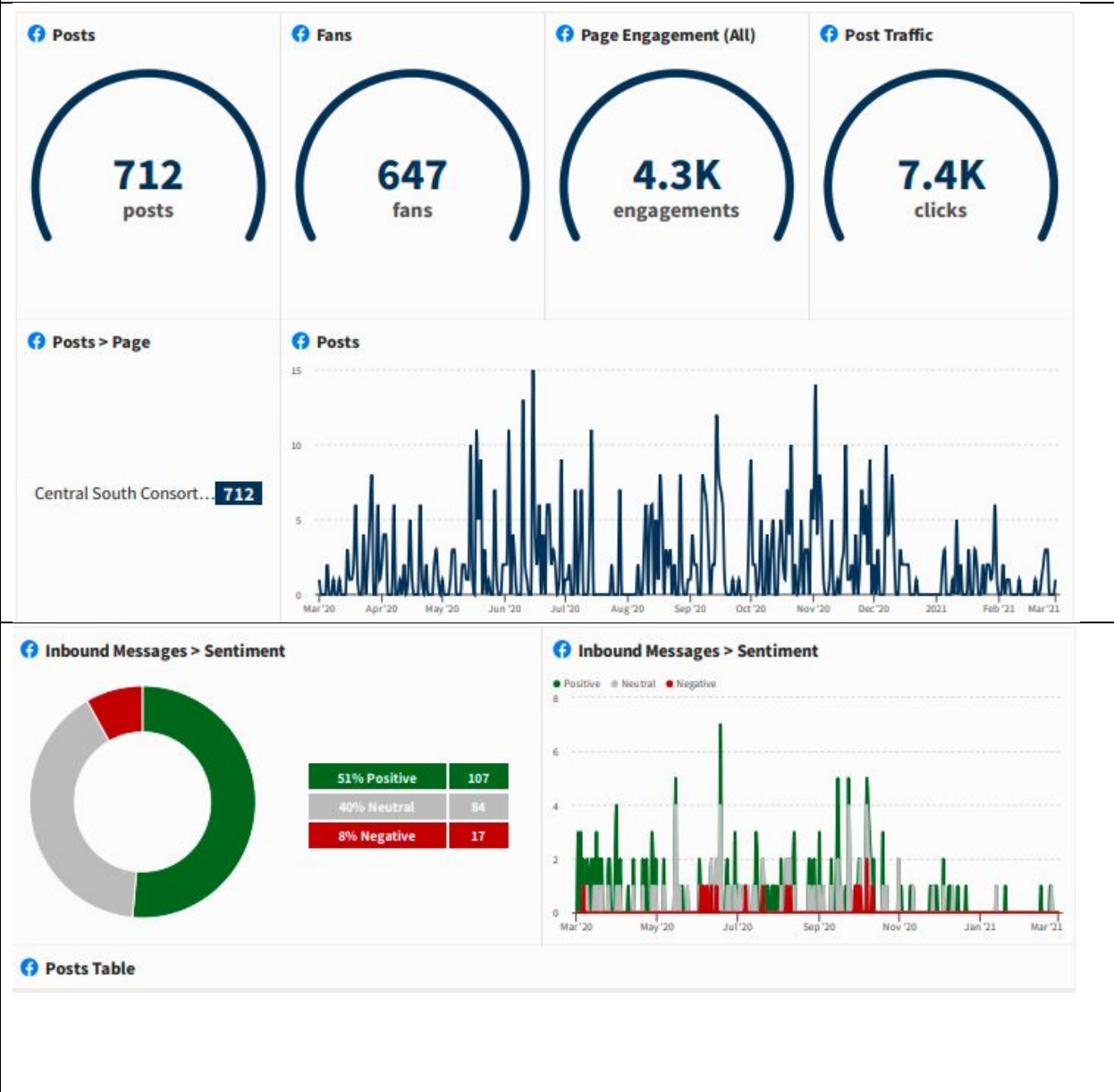


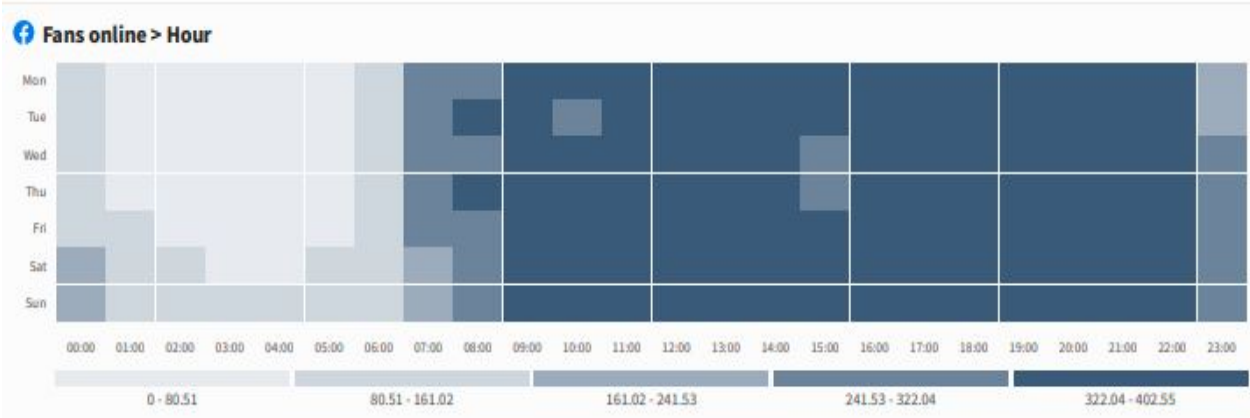
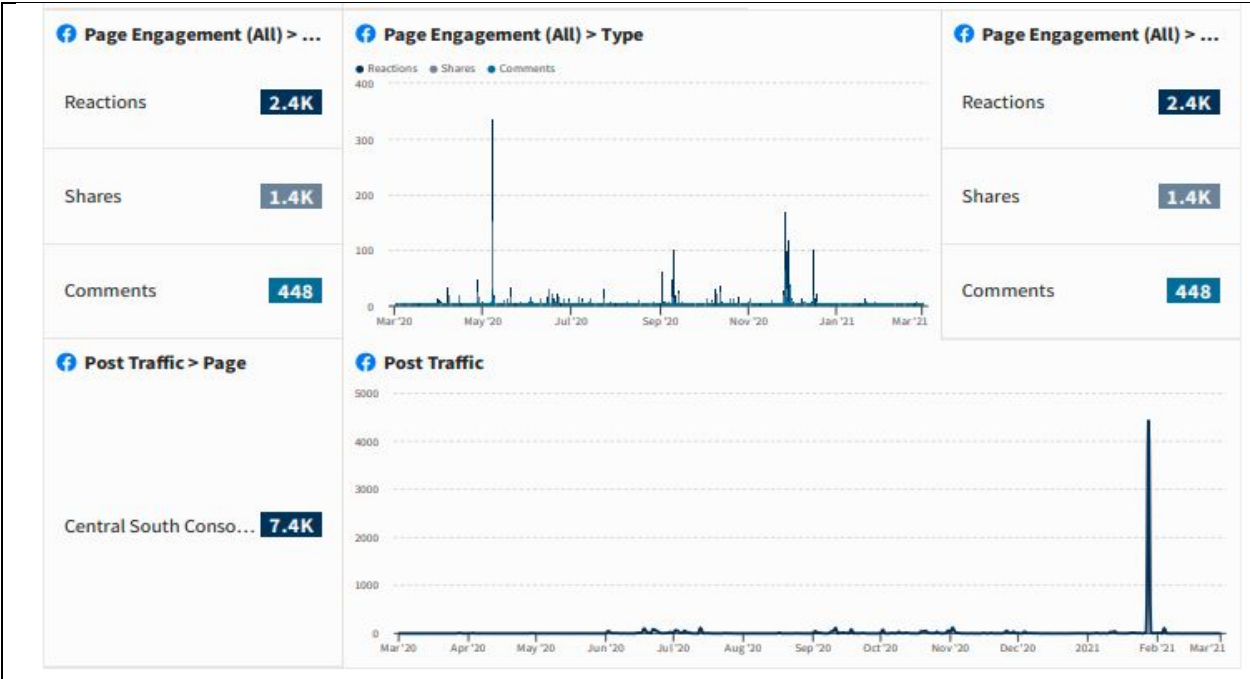


CSC Facebook Account Overview					
Handle/ Address	Followers		Likes		Posts Reach
	March to October 2020	October to March 2020	March to October 2020	October to March 2020	March 2021 9 – 15 March 2021
www.facebook.com/centralsouthconsortium	622	712	570	647	604 increase of 47% from previous 7 days
Visuals below on the following page shows post insight results from the last 7 days: 9 March 2021 – 15 March 2021					

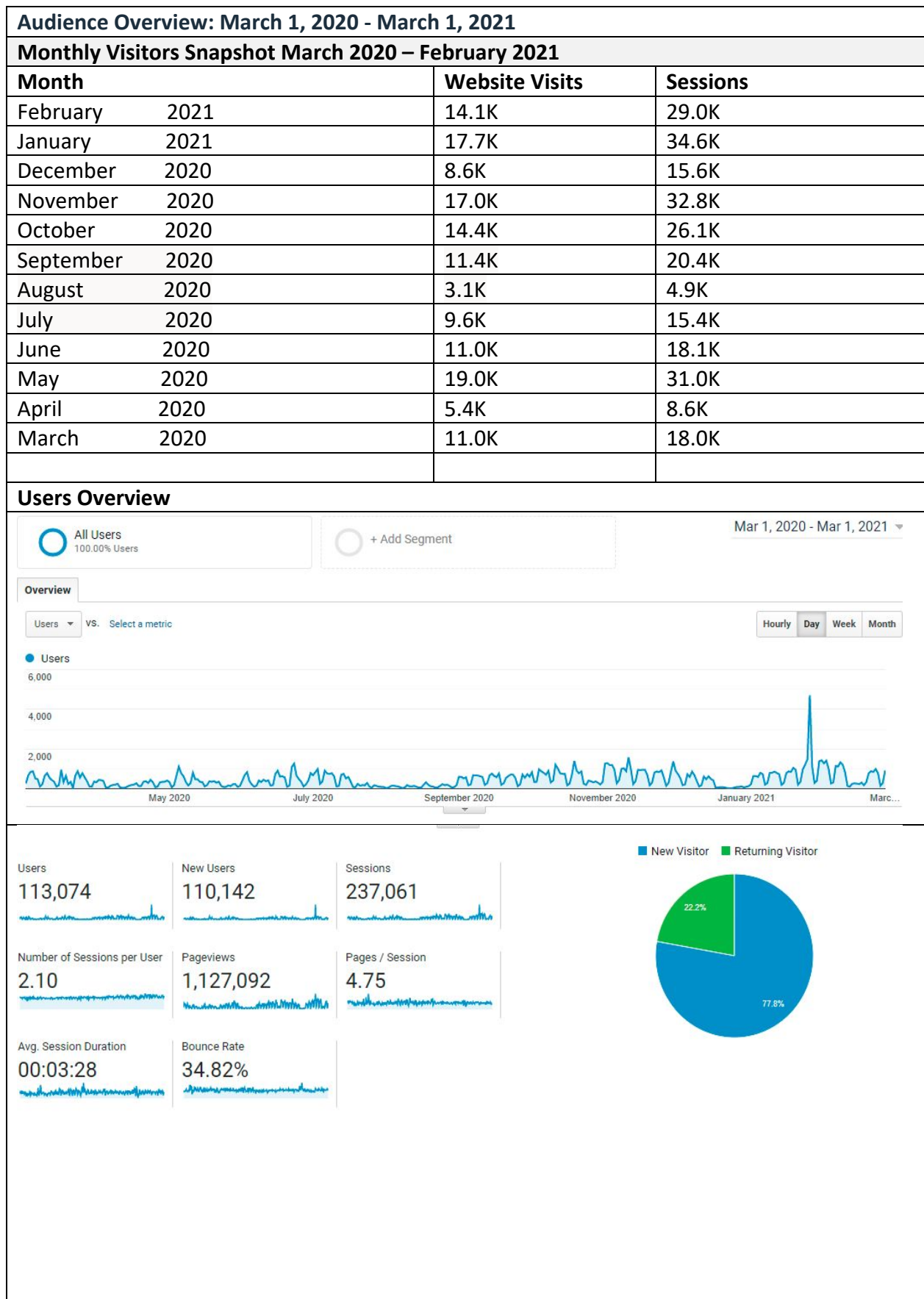


Overview comparison between **March 01, 2020 - March 01, 2021**

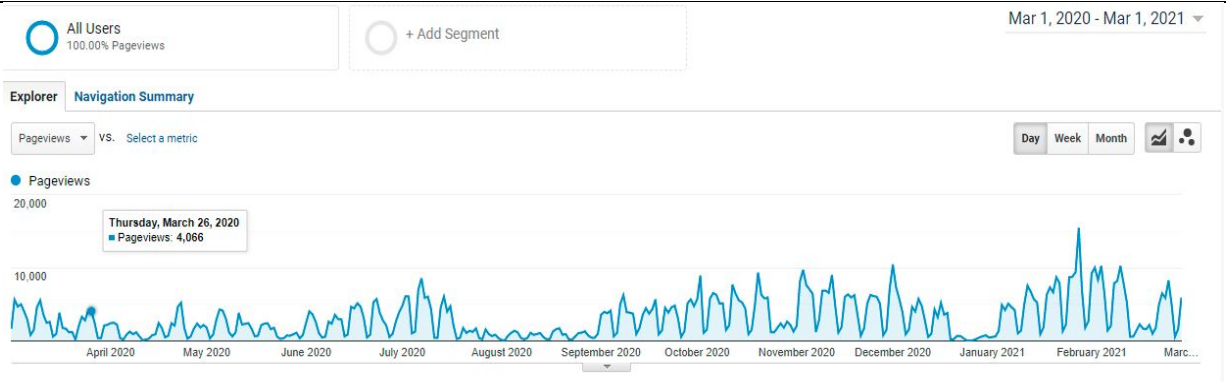




Website Overview



Page Views: Overview



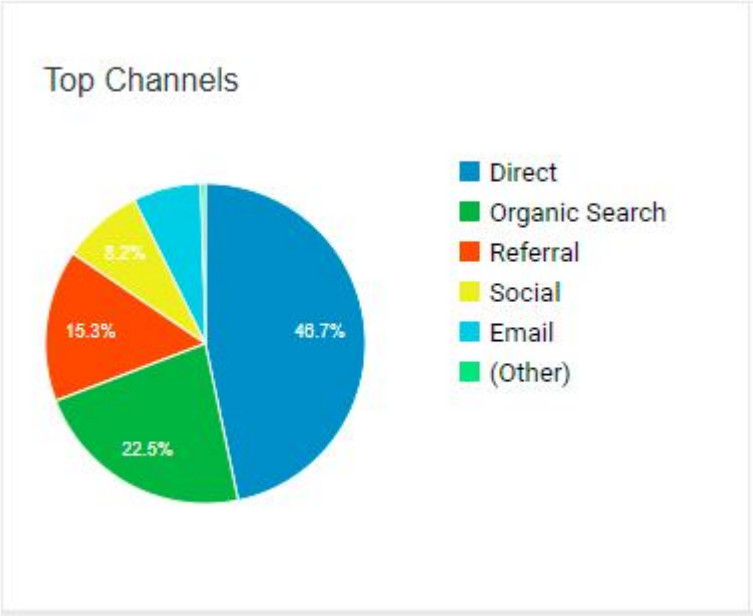
Top 10 pages visited between March 01, 2020 – March 01, 2021

What pages do your users visit?

Page	Pageviews
/	82,448
/workspaces	60,356
/repository/tree?sort=created&language=en	29,538
/?redirectedFrom=Hwb	27,796
/repository/tree?sor...ndation&language=en	16,317
/repository	15,163
/events	14,276
/repository/tree?sor...f-a314-e09d7c99a582	9,739
/vacancies	8,349
/networks	6,748

Mar 1, 2020 - Mar 1, 2021 ▼ PAGES

**How Do Users Reach the Website.
Top Channels: March 01, 2020 – March 01, 2021**



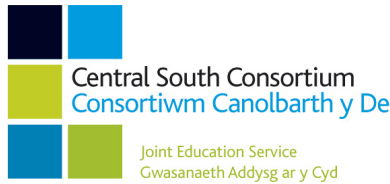
Top Channel: Acquisition Breakdown March 01, 2020 – March 01, 2021

	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Users ↓	New Users ↓	Sessions ↓	Bounce Rate ↓	Pages / Session ↓	Avg. Session Duration ↓
	113,074	110,142	237,061	34.82%	4.75	00:03:28
1 Direct	59,881	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>		50.99%	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	
2 Organic Search	28,806	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>		23.17%	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>	
3 Referral	19,658	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>		29.30%	<div style="width: 60%;"></div>	
4 Social	10,467	<div style="width: 10%;"></div>		34.39%	<div style="width: 70%;"></div>	
5 Email	8,785	<div style="width: 8%;"></div>		24.59%	<div style="width: 50%;"></div>	
6 (Other)	613	<div style="width: 0.5%;"></div>		44.95%	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	

Appendix 7 – Supporting Documents

This Communications Strategy should be read in conjunction with the following key documents:

- [CSC Brand Guidelines](#)
- [CSC Communications induction playlist](#)
- [CSC Twitter Guidance for Staff](#)
- [RCTCBC Social Media Policy](#)
- [RCTCBC Welsh Language Standards Guidance](#)



CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE

27TH MAY 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR – MONITORING AND REPORTING THE WORK OF CSC

Author: Louise Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members an opportunity to review and scrutinise the Monitoring and Reporting Report

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- Review the Monitoring and Reporting report for CSC and determine whether there are any further recommendations for inclusion within the report or any areas Members would like to discuss in further detail.
- Approve the development of an annual forward planner for reporting to stakeholders
- Approve for CSC to work with governance groups to review the purpose and content of each of the reports to stakeholders to ensure the reports meet the needs of the various governance groups.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Welsh Government (WG) confirmed on 7 July 2020 that the Statistical Releases were suspended for reporting on data from 2019-20. WG has subsequently confirmed that releases for 2021 has also been suspended so there will be no performance measures for Foundation Phases, Key

Stage 2, Key Stage 3 or Foundation Phase profile again this year, which will lead to no statistical releases for this information again this year.

In addition, the Statistical releases related to “EOTAS”, “Exclusions in Schools”, “Attainment by eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM)/ not eligible for Free School Meals (nFSM) (Foundation Phase (FP)-Key Stage 3 (KS3))” and “Absenteeism by pupil characteristics” were also suspended for 2019-20 data.

The Minister for Education confirmed on 3 July 2020 that WG would not be publishing performance measures related to the 2020 summer examinations series, which covers all school and post-16 performance measures for the 2019-20 academic year. In addition, given the clear implications that there will be ongoing disruptions for qualifications awarded next year, WG have suspended Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020-21 academic year also.

Also, all Welsh National Tests will now be adaptive tests with only the individual school being able to access the data for diagnostic purposes.

PLASC 2021 has been delayed – this will delay the availability of any official statistics based on this data collection being made available for use in 2021.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Traditional performance data will not be available for inclusion in reports to Members and so further discussions will be required on the content of future reports.

Reporting will need to align to the **Draft School Improvement, Accountability and Evaluation Guidance Document**.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

27th MAY 2021

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

List of background papers

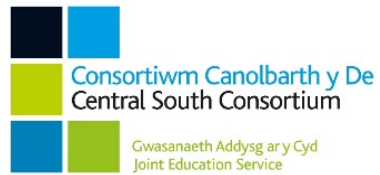
Freestanding matter

Officer to Contact:

Louise Blatchford
Tel no. 01443 281400

Central South Consortium Business Planning / Self Evaluation Overview

April 2021 – March 2022



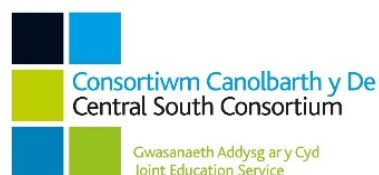
CONTENTS

1.0	Central South Consortium	3
1.1	Context	3
1.2	CSC Inspection	3
1.3	Governance Model	4
2.0	Central South Consortium Priorities 2021/22	5
2.1	Self-Evaluation	5
2.2	Developing the Business Plan	5
2.3	Priorities 2021/22	6
2.4	Local Authority Priorities	6
2.5	Regional Recommendations	7
2.6	Welsh Government Implementation Plan	9
3.0	Monitoring the Business Plan	10
3.1	Budget Monitoring	12
3.2	Reporting in Year Progress	12
4.0	Annual Reporting	13
5.0	Risk Management	14
Appendix A	CSC Governance Matrix	15
Appendix B	Annual Business Plan Cycle	16
Appendix C	Drive Team Overview	17
Appendix D	CSC Monitoring & Reporting Cycles	18
Appendix E	CSC Reporting Overview	19

1.0 THE CONSORTIUM

The Central South Consortium (CSC), established in September 2012, is a Joint Education Service for five local authorities:

- Bridgend
- Cardiff
- Merthyr Tydfil
- Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Vale of Glamorgan



The Consortium is commissioned by, and acts on behalf of, the five local authorities to develop a school improvement service that challenges, monitors and supports schools to raise standards.

The legal agreement was signed in April 2015 which established the CSC Joint Committee of the school improvement service.

1.1 CONTEXT

- Nearly one third of all Wales' school age children are in schools in Central South Consortium, around 149,500 learners
- There are just under 400 schools in the region with over 8,000 teachers and just over 7,000 learning support staff (PLASC 2020)
- In the region, 11% of people aged three or over say they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average on 19% (Census, ONS, 2011)
- The percentage of pupils of compulsory age eligible for free school meals or transitionally protected is 22% for CSC, which is higher than the national percentage of 21.1%. This level of eligibility is the highest of the four regions (PLASC 2020)
- The percentage of pupils aged 5 or over, whose ethnic background was identified as minority ethnic origin is 17.4% in CSC, which compares against a Wales percentage of 11.8% (PLASC 2020)
- 2,350 children in the region are looked after (CLA) by an LA, which represents 35.3% of Children Looked After in Wales (31 March 2020 Looked After Children Census)

1.2 CSC INSPECTION

The previous [Estyn Inspection](#) was undertaken in February 2016 and provided the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that schools improvement services address the variability of performance across schools and local authorities, particularly at key stage 4.
2. Improve the accuracy of the evaluations of schools by challenge advisers in order to ensure a greater focus on improving teaching and leadership.
3. Strengthen the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement work

- Evaluate progress against regional consortium’s operational plans more effectively.

A subsequent [Estyn monitoring visit](#) took place in September 2017. During the monitoring visit there was found to be strong progress in addressing three out of the four recommendations, with satisfactory progress made against the recommendation ‘Evaluate progress against regional consortium’s operational plans more effectively’.

1.3 CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM GOVERNANCE MODEL

The governance model for the consortium ensures all stakeholders have a voice in the system and that there are opportunities for each stakeholder group to meet to focus on issues related to their sector. Also, it recognises that the democratic accountability sits with elected members and that the strategic functions for school improvement sit with the Local Authorities.



The Managing Director was appointed in March 2020, with all other lead roles being held for a minimum period of two years. The current¹ leads roles are held by:

Chair Central South Consortium Joint Committee	Cllr C Smith
Managing Director, Central South Consortium	Ms C Seery
Lead Director on behalf of Central South Consortium Directors’ Steering Group	Ms S Walker
Lead Chief Executive on behalf of Central South Consortium Chief Executives	Mr P Orders
Chair of the Representative Stakeholder Group	Mr C Britton
Chair of the Governor Stakeholder Group	Ms J Stuckey

Membership of each governance group can be found in **Appendix A**

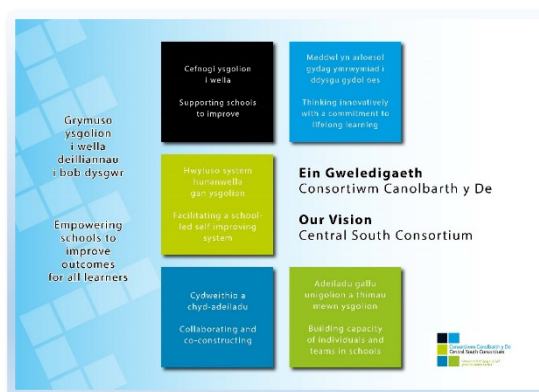
¹ Correct as 22nd April 2021

2.0 CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM PRIORITIES 2021/22

Vision, priorities, objectives, focus and principles

Working with stakeholders from across the region the vision for CSC remains: **“Empowering schools to improve outcomes for all learners”**. This is even more essential in the current climate.

The business plan is designed to meet the priorities of schools, local authorities and Welsh Government, against a backdrop of the pandemic, a new curriculum, new accountability frameworks, new approaches to supporting children with additional learning needs, the implementation of schools as learning organisations, the work of the National Academy for Educational Leadership, and a National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL), as well as changes to the way in which Estyn will inspect schools and local authorities. The delivery strategy within CSC is outlined within the Central South Wales Challenge, and has been developed in light of the challenges schools are facing.



2.1 SELF EVALUATION

Self-evaluation is integral to all aspects of the work of CSC, to ensure business plan priorities are appropriate. Self-evaluation and business planning processes have been developed and refined over the past few years.

It is proposed to produce a self-evaluation report on our performance during the 2021/22 financial year, in addition to the annual effectiveness and efficiency report. The areas identified for development will inform the 2022/23 Business Plan.

2.2 DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22

The Business Plan 2021/22 runs from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The Business Plan 2021-2022 was approved by Joint Committee 18 March 2021. The Joint Committee had previously approved a medium-term financial plan which consisted of a 1% cut to the core contributions to the Consortium for 2021/22, as well as the recommendation for a further 1% cut in 2022/23.

Improvement planning processes included engagement with all CSC staff to ensure their expertise contributed to the development of the Business Plan and increased ownership. This included a series of all staff planning sessions as well as wider consultation with Headteachers, Governors, Directors and other local authority colleagues.

Supporting each priority is a detailed operational plan. Drive teams refine the detail of the operational plans, working with specific aspect leads, challenging on progress and impact of activities.

The annual business plan cycle can be found in **Appendix B**

2.3 PRIORITIES 2021/ 22

The overarching priorities for 2021–2022 were agreed with the Joint Committee on 16 December 2020. The detail of each priority is set in the context of COVID 19.

There are five improvement priorities that relate directly to the national mission:

1. Develop a high-quality education profession;
2. Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards;
3. Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing, equity and excellence;
4. To continue to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements; and
5. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium

Members of the senior leadership team of CSC form drive teams who leads each priority area to take ownership of delivery and achievement. To ensure effective monitoring and oversight of the Business Plan, the 2021/22 approach continues to align priorities with the budget monitoring process. A finance representative is allocated to each drive team.

A member of the data, quality and intelligence unit is aligned to each priority area to ensure data is available to evaluate process with success measures.

An overview of the Drive Teams can be found in **Appendix C**

2.4 LA PRIORITIES

Local Authority priorities are embedded within the CSC business plan. Detail of the priorities can be found in the appendix to the [business plan](#). These are included within the operational plans for each of the priority areas, and progress updates will be provided at each Local Authority Performance Meeting².

Alongside this business plan the consortium produces annual Local Authority (LA) Annexes which set out the support or dedicated work required in each LA which will be funded, led or resourced by the Consortium. This is agreed in the summer LA Performance Meetings and reviewed following the confirmed examination results in the early autumn term. Progress against the agreed actions are then produced as part of the LA performance reports.

In 2021/2022 a budget of £126,000 is allocated from the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) / Local Authority (LA) Contributions in order to fund this activity

² LA Performance Meetings take place termly with LA Directors and CSC senior leadership teams

and is apportioned to Local Authorities using Service Indicator Based Assessments (IBAs) published by Welsh Government.

Table 1 – 2021/2022 LA Annex allocations based on 2021/2022 Service Indicator Based Assessment.

Authority	19/20 IBA '000	Allocation %	19/20 IBA Budget
Bridgend	86,161	15.38%	19,284
Cardiff	202,756	36.20%	45,389
Merthyr Tydfil	35,440	6.33%	7,937
Rhondda Cynon Taf	153,094	27.33%	34,268
Vale of Glamorgan	82,702	14.76%	18,507
Total	560,153	100.00%	125,385

2.5 REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A process has been developed to ensure any recommendations for Consortia, published in a report are incorporated into the operational plans of the business plan. CSC has engaged with NewsDirect who provide a weekly report outlining any Consortia recommendations in reports published by organisation such as:

- Welsh Government
- Children’s Commissioner
- Estyn
- Etc

The senior leadership team then determine which priority areas the recommendations refer to and incorporate the recommendations into the monitoring cycle. As part of the monitoring of the business plan, a report will be provided outlining progress made with the recommendations at regular intervals (depending on the recommendations). These reports will be added to the forward planners for appropriate stakeholder groups to review, and consider whether further progress / impact reports are required.

At the time of writing, the following report recommendations have been embedded into the operational plans:

Report title	Author	Date of Publication	CSC Lead Officer (Proposed)	CSC Update Initial Report Schedule (Proposed)
BAME Report Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group	Working Group for WG (led by Professor Charlotte Williams OBE)	March 2021	Assistant Director (Curriculum)	October 2021

Evaluation of the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme for education practitioners	WG	March 2021	Strategic Lead for Welsh	September 2021
English language and literacy in settings and primary schools	Estyn	March 2021	Strategic Lead for LLC	October 2021
Welsh language acquisition	Estyn	March 2021	Strategic Lead for Welsh	September 2021
Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2021-22	WG CYPE	February 2021	SMT	July 2021
Post-16 partnerships: Shared planning and provision between schools, and between schools and colleges	Estyn	January 2021	Strategic Lead for Curriculum, Assessment & Qualifications	September 2021
Local Authority and regional consortia approach for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19 (*)	Estyn	January 2021	Managing Director	May 2021
Building Blocks: Inclusion in the Foundation Phase	Children's Commissioner	December 2020	Strategic Adviser for Foundation Phase & Primary Literacy	December 2021
Learning to be a teacher for Wales: the induction of teachers into the profession	WG	November 2020	Strategic Adviser for Professional Development	September 2021
Business and social studies subjects at A level	Estyn	August 2020	Strategic Lead for Curriculum, Assessment & Qualifications	September 2021
The value of youth work training	Estyn	October 2020	TBC	June 2021
Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion	Estyn	October 2020	Strategic Lead for Equity & Wellbeing	June 2021
A level Welsh First Language	Estyn	June 2020	Strategic Lead for Welsh	June 2021
Leadership development – case studies of professional learning for school leadership	Estyn	March 2020	Strategic Lead for Leadership	June 2021

Pupil Referral Unit management committees	Estyn	Feb 2020	TBC	July 2021
Partnerships with employers in secondary and special schools	Estyn	Feb 2020	TBC	July 2021
Knowing your children – supporting pupils with adverse childhood experience	Estyn	Jan 2020	Associate Adviser	July 2021
Federated schools: Common features of effective federation	Estyn	July 2019	Strategic Lead for Leadership	July 2021

2.6 WELSH GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022 was published in October 2020 and can be accessed [here](#). This was then followed by the [implementation plan](#). The implementation plan sets out how regional consortia will support schools and settings in the different phases set out in Curriculum for Wales: The Journey to 2022.

This implementation plan bridges *Curriculum for Wales: The journey to 2022* and Our national mission, setting out how the wider education sector will support schools and settings to achieve expectations in accordance with Our national mission commitments. This implementation plan also helps to ensure that all parts of the education system in Wales have a common direction – supporting schools and settings towards the four purposes of the curriculum, and delivering that change for learners, practitioners, and the wider public. It sets out a plan of action for us as the Welsh Government and our middle tier partners to achieve

Shared Aspirations of the Education System

- Learners will realise the four purposes of the curriculum
- All schools will be the designers of their own successful curriculum
- Every curriculum will enable all learners to progress, facilitated by appropriate arrangements for assessment
- High-quality learning and teaching underpin every curriculum
- Every curriculum will raise the expectations for learners and support equity and inclusivity for all
- At every level, there will be a shared understanding and realisation of curriculum across Wales

The roles and responsibility of the consortia are detailed within the implementation plan as outlined below:

Consortia Roles & Responsibilities
Provide a professional learning programme for practitioners across all leadership milestones and the wider workforce, to support the realisation of Curriculum for Wales.
Offer bespoke support for schools and settings in developing an inclusive curriculum for all learners and on the basis of identified needs in line with the vision of the four purposes of the curriculum.

Actively engage with all schools and settings to support the development and preparations for Curriculum for Wales through regular communication as further guidance becomes available.
Facilitate opportunities for schools, settings, clusters, networks and alliances to reflect on their current curriculum provision and support strategic planning for 2022 and beyond in line with system expectations.
Share emerging practice in school improvement planning to enable successful implementation and realisation of Curriculum for Wales in schools and settings.
Encourage schools and settings to share innovative and effective practice with others, creating learning communities which reflect a sense of <i>cynefin</i> .
Work in close partnership with local authorities to support school improvement through a holistic and integrated approach to the wider reform
Enable networking opportunities for practitioners that provide a range of opportunities to develop a shared understanding of progression at individual school and funded settings, and at cluster level across the 3–16 continuum
Support all schools and settings to develop as learning organisations , to be adaptive; leading and planning for change while responding to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Build capacity for professional enquiry so schools and settings can be research informed in their approach to curriculum; support practitioners to actively engage in the Qualified for the Future review and provide support in planning for implementation of future qualifications.
Collaborate with the Welsh Government and partners to develop a wider network of support for schools and settings for the development of aspects within curriculum, e.g. links to third sector organisations and businesses.
Further develop positive relationships with schools and settings to inspire them to develop their autonomy as they design an authentic, meaningful curriculum to engage and excite all learners
Promote collaboration so that schools and settings are able to work together with increased ownership and with high trust, using effective balance of coaching and mentoring.
Contribute to equality of opportunity for all schools and settings to access professional learning across the region.

3.0 MONITORING THE BUSINESS PLAN

Key objectives and actions from the Business Plan and associated operational plans form the basis of the organisation’s operational monitoring processes. Monitoring documents act as rolling templates, updated through half-termly meetings between the drive teams, the operations manager, finance representatives and the Senior Management Team.

A termly cycle of business planning has been adopted to ensure efficient evaluation of the CSC Business Plan and related budgets. The evaluative narrative produced at the termly review meetings complements the self-evaluation of aspects not covered in the Business Plan. This activity is undertaken by the leads for each aspect and discussed with the Senior Management Team.



In order for a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities regarding the development and monitoring of the business plan, a [play list](#) has been designed and developed with and for staff. This will be updated on an annual basis.

Following the end of term impact review meetings, a report is prepared to note progress made (and impact evidence where appropriate) as well as highlighting operational risks. Reports are presented to CSC staff and governance groups for comment and challenge as well as determine future areas for scrutiny and challenge.

Business Plan Progress Reporting 2021/22			
	Summer Term Progress Report	Autumn Term Progress Report	Spring Term Progress Report
SLT	Sept 3 rd	Jan 2022	April 2022
Directors	Sept 3 rd	Jan 2022	April 2022
Governors	Sept 2021	Jan 2022	April 2022
RSG	Sept 2021	Jan 2022	April 2022
Joint Committee	Sept 2021	Jan 2022	April 2022

Progress is measured using the following criteria:

Progress Judgements	
Very Good Progress	The priority action has been addressed in all respects. No aspects require further attention. This has resulted in measurable positive impact to the priority area.
Strong Progress	The priority action has been addressed in most respects. Only minor aspects require attention. It is expected that the work will result in measurable, positive impact to the priority area.
Satisfactory Progress	The priority action has been addressed in many respects. A few important aspects still require significant attention. The impact of the work is not yet strong enough. Many aspects are addressed but there is still significant work to do in important areas.
Limited Progress	The priority action has not been addressed. All or many important aspects are awaiting attention, or the original planned activity is no longer appropriate.
Not Yet Started	The priority action has not been started.

Status Judgements	
Risk	Potential risk or barrier identified.
On Track	Action on track for completion.
Completed	Action completed.
Not Due To Have Started	Action not due to have started.
Progress Affected By COVID	Action impacted by Covid 19 Pandemic.

3.1 BUDGET MONITORING

In order to ensure robust financial management, each budget holder within the business plan is provided with training and guidance materials outlining their roles and responsibilities

Budget holders meet with their finance representative on a regular basis (according to risk) to monitor the budgets and a summary report is provided within the management dashboard³ on a half termly basis. In addition, the finance leads are present at the half termly monitoring meetings and the senior accountant attends the Impact Review Meetings to highlight any areas of concern.

Reports are provided to SMT on underspends / additional funding requirements for consideration.

3.2 REPORTING IN YEAR PROGRESS

Reporting on the progress made of the specific objectives (within the priority areas) throughout the year will include:

³ From September 2021

- Progress with individual priority areas
- Progress with LA Priorities
- Progress with Regional Recommendations

Appendix D & E outline the various reporting cycles and additional documentation produced by CSC. Forward planners can be accessed [here](#).

3.2.1 Progress with Priority Areas

Drive teams will be invited to present progress with the priority area to stakeholders groups throughout the year.

Audience	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
SLT (agenda item)	September 2021 & January 2022	September 2021 & January 2022	October 2021 & February 2022	October 2021 & February 2022	July 2021 & November 2021
CSC Staff (Briefing Session)	October 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	September 2021
Directors (Agenda Item)	October 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	September 2021
Stakeholder Groups (Agenda Item)	October 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	September 2021

3.2.2 Progress with LA Priorities

Local Authority Performance meetings will include a report on the progress made regarding the specific LA priorities. This will be on a termly basis and incorporated into the LA Performance report.

3.2.3 Progress with Regional Recommendations

Progress reports will be produced at intervals throughout the year (see section 2.3 above). These reports will be shared with relevant stakeholders and included within the forward planners for stakeholder meetings

4.0 ANNUAL REPORTING

The following Annual reports will be produced to present an overview of progress of each priority areas as well as the impact of the work of CSC:

- Effectiveness & Efficiency report

- Scrutiny Reports
- Business Plan Annual Report

5.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

A further paper is being developed for this and will include how we propose to:

- Incorporate LA risks
- Incorporate WG risks

APPENDIX A: GOVERNANCE OF CSC

Governance Group	Members	Co-Opted Non-voting Members	Meeting Frequency
Joint Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x Education Portfolio Members (<i>one from each LA</i>) Voting Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Chief Executive Lead Director Chair of the Management board CSC Managing Director & Deputy with other staff as appropriate S151 officer 	4 times a year
CSC Management Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authority- Director of Education/Chief Education Officer x 5 CSC Managing Director CSC Deputy Managing Director Director HR host LA CSC Finance Officer (<i>as an when required</i>) Monitoring Officer (<i>as and when required</i>) Others (<i>as and when required</i>) 		8 times a year
Representative Headteachers group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of each Headteacher association across the region x 10 Managing Director & CSC staff as appropriate Nominated Director 		Half Termly
Governor Steering group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of each LA governor association Managing Director & CSC staff as appropriate Nominated director 		Half Termly
Partnership Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 LA Directors / Chief Education officers 1 x Diocese Representative 1x Chair of HT stakeholder Group 1x Vice Chair of HT stakeholder Group 1x Chair of governor stakeholder group 1 x Welsh Government 1 x WLGA rep 		Termly
CSC Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC Senior leaders 		Weekly

APPENDIX B: DRIVE TEAM OVERVIEW

	Priority	CSC SLT Drive Team	Lead Director	Finance Lead	Data Lead	Project Support
1	To develop a high-quality education profession	Natalie Gould, Richard George, Mandy Esseen, ,	Mel Godfrey (Cardiff)	Craig Flynn	James Patten	Bev Blackburn
2	Develop highly effective leadership to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards	Kate Rowlands, Steve Davies, Emma Coates,	Paula Ham (Vale of Glamorgan)	Alison Winter	Margaret Parrish	Alison Tovey
3	To develop strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being	Emma Willmott, John Welch, Carys Pritchard	Gaynor Davies (Rhondda Cynon Taf)	Carl Webber	Margaret Parrish	Sharon Parker
4	To continue to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system	Andy Rothwell, Caryl Stokes, Andy Hurley, Geraint Lewis	Lindsay Harvey (Bridgend)	Carl Webber	Amy Williams	Kate Nash
5	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central south consortium (CSC)	Andrew Williams, Alyson Price, Louise Muteham, Mari Waddington,	Sue Walker (Merthyr Tydfil)	Alyson Price	Caryl Stokes	Sam Harris

APPENDIX C: CSC REPORTING OVERVIEW (MARCH 2021)

	Report	Frequency	Audience	Content
1	School EFI	On going	CSC Staff, School and LA	To record school based support and progress towards school priorities
2	School Causing concern Progress review	Termly or half Termly	School and LA	To summarise agreed judgements of the progress made against each of the Estyn recommendation / school improvement priorities along with a brief overview of the actions taken, evaluation of the impact of those actions on improving outcomes, supporting evidence and next steps. To evaluate the effectiveness of the support, making revisions, identifying any further actions and commission additional support where necessary
3	LA Performance Reports	Termly	LA	To provide LA with an in-depth understanding of the support provided by CSC to schools in their LA and the impact this has had
4	Annual LA Scrutiny report	Annual	LA Scrutiny Committees	To provide an overview of the work of CSC and to update Members with the contribution of CSC working in partnerships with eth LA to raise standards in schools across each LA
5	Central South Wales challenge Review	Annual	Directors & Joint Committee	To provide an update on the delivery models and the impact on schools across the region & agree funding envelope
6	Team around the school reports	Termly	LA	To provide updates to LA officers on the concerns/risk associated with specific schools
7	Other Ad Hoc LA reporting		LA and CEx	
8	Estyn Pre Inspection reports	As required	LA to share with Estyn	
9	Business Plan Termly progress reports	Termly	LA & Joint Committee	To update stakeholders on the progress towards the objectives in the business plan
10	Business Plan annual report	Annual	LA & Joint committee	To provide stakeholders with an update of the progress on the action plan and the impact this has had on schools across the region
11	Governance Statement	Annual	Joint Committee	Legal requirement as part of the 'Delivering Good Governance in local government framework 2016'. Provides an accurate representation of the governance arrangements in place for the financial year in line with the governance framework
12	Governance Progress report	Annual	Joint Committee	To provide updates on the progress towards the recommendations in the Governance statement
13	Effectiveness and Efficiency report	Annual	LA & Joint committee, also published on CSC website	Annual report to stakeholders on the performance and funding received byCSC. It provides a commentary on the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of CSC and its contribution to school improvement. It analyses key streams of work and provides qualitative and quantitative evidence .
14	Risk Register Report	Termly	LA Directors propose changes to Joint committee	To present proposals for changes to the risk registers (as identified in the monitoring cycles within CSC) to Directors and subsequently to Members of the joint Committee for ratification
15	Annual Statement of Accounts	Annual	Joint Committee	Legal requirement as part of the financial procedure rules. Includes the Audit report from Wales Audit Office
16	Budget Update reports	At least 3 times a year	Directors & JC	To provide regular updates on the financial position of CSC (ratified by the Treasurer)
17	Award of funding reports and additional financial reporting as required	Annual and as required to accept awards of funding	Directors & JC	To seek approval for proposed funding allocations received from welsh Government. Includes Terms and Conditions and proposed funding alloactions
18	PDG Support Plan & Evaluation	Annual	WG	To provide a comprehensive support plan for the PDG Grant. Evaluation report produced at the end of the financial year re impact of the spend.
19	Central South Wales challenge Review	Annual	Directors & JC	To provide an update on the delivery models and the impact on schools across the region
20	Additional reporting to WG	As required	WG	
21	Challenge & Review Reports	Twice Yearly	WG	Progress and impact of CSC aligned to the national missing
22	CYPE Committee	As required	WG	

APPENDIX D: MONITORING & REPORTING CYCLES

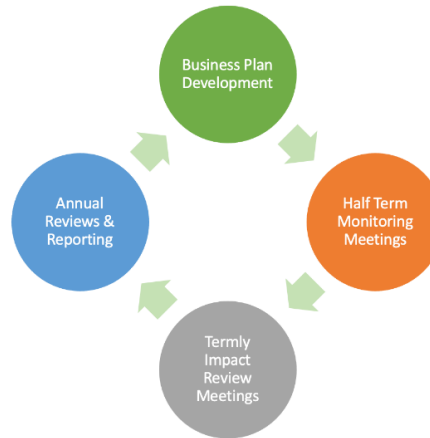
Self-Evaluation, Monitoring & Reporting 2021/ 2022

Business Plan Development incorporates:	
Local Authority Priorities & LA Annex	Welsh Government Priorities
Recommendations from published reports (Inc. Estyn Thematic Reports, Children’s Commissioner Reports, WG Implementation plans etc.	PDG Support Plan
Local Authority WESPS	Stakeholder Feedback



- **Published Business Plan**
- **Operational Plans**

Annual Self–Evaluation Activity
Report / Activity Title
CSC Annual Business Plan Report
LA Performance Reports
Effectiveness & Efficiency Report
LA Scrutiny Reports
PDG Support Plan Evaluation
Central South Wales Challenge Review
Annual Governance Statement
Annual Statement of Accounts
Communication Strategy
Digital Strategy
Managing Information Strategy
LA Annex



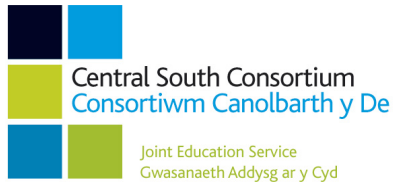
Half Termly Monitoring
Report / Activity
Financial Reporting
School Improvement Forums
Progress Meeting / Reviews
Information Sharing Meetings
BP Progress to SLT
EFI Reports
LA Support Review / Report
Schools Causing Concern Progress Review

Termly Monitoring / Impact Activity	
Report / Activity Title	
Business Plan Progress Reports	Financial Reporting
LA Performance Reports	Challenge & Review with Welsh Government
Risk Register Reports	Team around the school reports

Examples of Ad Hoc Reporting						
Local Authority Reporting		Estyn	Welsh Government	CSC Governance	Other	
Barriers to Learning	IP Engagement with Schools	Core Support Risk Log	Estyn review report	Progress Reports on Funding Streams	Awards of Funding Reports	CYPE
Report to Chief Executives	EMT Schools Causing Concern	FAQs	Pre-Inspection reports			
Cabinet Presentations	Additional Scrutiny Reports	Support for WM				
	Reports for SIG	School Build Consultation				

APPENDIX E: DEFINITIONS

Definitions		
OP Heading	Definition	Example
Priority	The overarching key aim/desired result for CSC to achieve as set out within the Business Plan.	Priority 5: To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium (CSC).
Objective	The aim/desired result of the associated priority area.	Align the business planning and self-evaluation processes, focussing on value for money in relation to both progress and impact.
Action	The task to be undertaken in order to achieve the objective set out within the Business Plan.	Business Plan guidance notes produced including definitions.
Outcome	The aim/desired result of the associated action.	Consistent reporting of progress and impact of activity within the business plan can be presented to all internal and external stakeholders.
Impact	The long term effect/influence that your actions have made in relation to the objective set out within the Business Plan.	Improved method of business planning and self-evaluation. Business Plans and reports now focus on value for money in relation to both progress and impact across CSC.
Evidence	Documentation to support the impact made against the objective set within the Business Plan.	Hyperlink to the Business Plan guidance notes document.
Evaluation of Progress	A summary of the work undertaken and the outcomes achieved against the relevant action during the term.	Business Plan guidance document created and includes definitions. Document approved by Joint Committee in April 2021.
Progress Judgement	Categorisation of the level of progress made against the relevant action during the term.	Strong Progress.



**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE**

27TH MAY 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER – DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
2020/21 (INCORPORATING THE 2020/21 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE
STATEMENT) AND 2020/21 YEAR-END POSITION**

**Author: Stephanie Davies – Head of Finance – Education and
Financial Reporting Tel. No. 01443 680560**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the Central South Consortium draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 (that incorporates the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement) along with the draft outturn position for the year.
- 1.2 To seek Joint Committee's approval of the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement for the Central South Consortium.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Approve the earmarked reserve request set out at 3.2.
- 2.2 Note the draft Statement of Accounts for the Central South Consortium for the year-ending 31st March 2021 (Appendix 1) and the draft outturn position for the year (Section 4 – Table 1).
- 2.3 Approve the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement (as incorporated within the draft 2020/21 Statement of Accounts).

3. EARMARKED RESERVES

3.1 At the Joint Committee meeting held on the 18th March 2021, Members were provided with an update in respect of approved earmarked reserves:

- £332k to support school improvement.
As at 31st March 2021, £322k has been redistributed to Member Local Authorities as agreed by Joint Committee on 16th December 2020 and £4k used to support the delivery of a sensory project. With regard to the remaining balance of £6k, the Joint Committee is requested to approve the re-earmarking to fund the continuation of the sensory project during the 2021/22 financial year.
- £200k to support on-going service remodelling and medium-term planning
As at 31st March 2021, no spend is reported. To support service remodelling over the medium term, the Joint Committee is requested to approve the re-earmarking of the balance (£200k).

3.2 The revised total non-grant related earmarked reserve amounts to £206k and has been included within the Central South Consortium's draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21

4.1 The draft 2020/21 Statement of Accounts for the Central South Consortium is attached at Appendix 1 and requires certification by the Chairperson of the Joint Committee and the Host Authority's Section 151 Officer (i.e. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Director of Finance and Digital Services).

4.2 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 require local authorities to produce and publish Statements of Accounts in line with laid down timescales. For the 2020/21 financial year (and on an on-going basis thereafter), these are as follows:

- The draft Statement of Accounts to be certified by 31st May following financial year-end; and
- The audited Statement of Accounts to be approved by Joint Committee by 31st July following financial year-end.

4.3 I can confirm that arrangements are in place for the draft 2020/21 Statement of Accounts to be certified by myself by 31st May 2021, subject to the Joint Committee approving the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement. With regard to the timescale for the audited 2020/21 Statement of Accounts to be approved by Joint Committee, work is underway with Audit Wales to set out a timetable and, should an extended timeframe

beyond the 31st July 2021 be necessary, the required Notice will be published as set out in the Regulations.

- 4.4 The draft Statement of Accounts, at Appendix 1, also incorporates the draft 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement. This document has been compiled in accordance with 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016' and been subject to review and challenge by the Consortium's Senior Management Team.
- 4.5 Based on the assessment undertaken, the delivery of the CSC's governance arrangements have been revised, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and have remained effective as evidenced through the comprehensive and timely updates provided to virtual Joint Committee meetings during the year; on-going compliance with the requirements of the Legal Agreement; robust financial planning and management arrangements; and tailored provision to schools, in line with Welsh Government guidance, to ensure schools have been supported throughout the pandemic and with their plans for recovery.
- 4.6 With the above information in mind, the Joint Committee is requested to review and if deemed appropriate approve the draft 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement.
- 4.7 In addition to the draft Statement of Accounts, the draft 2020/21 outturn position for the Consortium is a £9k underspend that is proposed to be allocated to the General Fund balance (taking the General Fund balance from £138k as at 1st April 2020 to £147k as at 31st March 2021). A summary of the draft 2020/21 outturn position is set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Draft 2020/21 outturn position

	2020/21 £'000
Controllable Expenditure	
Employees	6,163
Premises	153
Transport	10
Supplies & Services	72,629
Third Party Payments	2,854
Support Services	112
	81,921
Controllable Income	
Local Authority Contributions	(3,728)
Grants & Other Income	(78,201)
	(81,929)
Net Expenditure	(8)

Less Interest Receivable	(1)
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	0
Net (Surplus) / Deficit After Transfer of Earmark Reserves	(9)
General Fund Balances at 1st April 2020	(138)
General Fund Balances at 31st March 2021	(147)

Summary of Redundancy Payments	£'000
Brought Forward Balance at 1 st April 2020 (comprises short term debtor balance of £129k)	129
In Year Costs	0
Payment Made In-Year	(129)
Remaining Balance to be Funded at 31st March 2021	0

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

27th May 2021

Report of the Joint Committee

Author: Stephanie Davies – Head of Finance – Education and Financial Reporting

Item 9 - REPORT OF THE TREASURER – DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21 (INCORPORATING THE 2020/21 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT) AND 2020/21 YEAR-END POSITION

List of background papers

Appendix 1 – Central South Consortium Draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21

Officer to Contact :

Stephanie Davies

Tel no. 01443 680560

**CENTRAL SOUTH
CONSORTIUM
JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE
JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DRAFT – SUBJECT TO AUDIT
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

2020/21

Contents	Page
Narrative Report	2
Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts	10
Certificate of the Director of Finance and Digital Services	11
Movement in Reserves Statement	12
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	14
Balance Sheet	15
Cash Flow Statement	16
Expenditure & Funding Analysis Statement	17
Notes to the Core Financial Statements	19
Annual Governance Statement	41
Independent Auditor's Report	70
Glossary of Terms	73

Narrative Report

1. Introduction

The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service was established on 1st September 2012 to provide a range of school improvement services operating on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan.

This region is the most populous in Wales. It includes 380 schools and serves 149,526¹ learners – nearly one third of the country's school-age children. The region is home to the highest number and the largest proportion of children living in poverty; it is also home to the capital city and the economic, financial and creative industries of Wales.

The Consortium is managed and administered by the Central South Consortium Joint Committee, under powers conferred by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. The Joint Committee is made up of five Members, one from each local authority. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC became the Host Authority upon formation of the Joint Committee.

The accounts for 2020/21 have been prepared in accordance with:

- The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS); and
- The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended).

The accounts set out on pages 12 to 40 comply with the above.

2. Business Plan 2020-2021

The Consortium's role is to challenge and support schools in their work to improve educational outcomes.

The local authorities (through a Joint Committee attended by the Cabinet Member for Education in each authority) agree the business plan and budget for the region and hold the Consortium to account for the impact of its work.

The Consortium receives its core funding from the five local authorities and also receives funding from the Welsh Government to support specific activities in line with national priorities / initiatives.

¹ Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) – January 2020

The performance of the schools in the Central South Consortium region are key to the future educational and economic success of Wales.

How well children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, achieve in this region significantly influences how the country and its education system are perceived within our borders and beyond.

The Consortium's business plan aims to:

- Develop a high-quality education profession
- Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards
- Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing, equity and excellence
- Develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting self-improving systems
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium.

Operational plans underpin each improvement objective.

The Consortium's Business Plan has been compiled in the context of reducing resources, this being consistent with the challenging economic climate facing all public sector organisations in Wales. In line with this, the 2020/21 revenue contributions received by the Consortium from the five member local authorities reduced by 3% and it is anticipated that the position of the Consortium requiring to operate in an environment of challenging funding levels will continue into the medium term.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Welsh Government announced that they would not expect data returns for all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place after March 2020 and before the school summer holidays in 2020. These collections include:

- Attendance: Primary 2020 data collection
- Attendance: Secondary 2020 data collection
- National Data Collections (NDC) 2020 data collection
- Welsh National Test (WNT) 2020 data collection

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2020 and Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) 2020 data collections took place, with Data Exchange Wales initiative (DEWi) closing for data submissions on the 20th March 2020. Analysis of this information has been published by Welsh Government but please note that not all validation processes were completed on this data set and data based on pupil and staff characteristics must be treated with caution and should not be compared to data from previous years for the purpose of comparing trends.

Welsh Government confirmed on the 7th July 2020 that the Statistical Releases for NDC Core, NDC non-core, WNT, Attendance Primary and Attendance Secondary were suspended for reporting on data from 2019/20. In addition, the Statistical releases related to “EOTAS”, “Exclusions in Schools”, “Attainment by eFSM/nFSM (FP-KS3)” and “Absenteeism by pupil characteristics” were also suspended for 2019/20 data.

The Minister for Education confirmed on the 3rd July 2020 that Welsh Government would not be publishing performance measures related to the 2020 summer examinations series, which covers all school and post-16 performance measures for the 2019/20 academic year. In addition, given the clear implications that there will be ongoing disruptions for qualifications awarded next year, Welsh Government have suspended Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020/21 academic year also.

The statistical bulletins for GCSE and A Level results will continue to be published for 2019/20 but will not contain Key Stage 4 or legacy sixth form performance measures and will only include national level data with different content to previous releases of these bulletins.

The publication of performance data on My Local School is also suspended, with the publication of the national categorisation also being suspended for 2020/21 on this website due to the processes not being held for academic year 2020/21.

Therefore, for 2019/20 there are no publicly available performance measures at school, local authority or regional consortia level that can be included in this report.

3. Revenue Income and Expenditure 2020/21

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement provides an analysis of the Consortium’s gross revenue expenditure and income in accordance with IFRS.

The Consortium’s 2020/21 revenue budget strategy underpinned the following broad objectives:

- Support the delivery of key strategic priorities particularly around the need to build teams of challenge advisors to work with all schools in the region (with more time allocated to the schools most in need);
- Provide timely data analysis to support schools’ self-evaluation and improvement planning (including school categorisation judgements);

- Support and fund school-to-school improvement partnerships and broker support between schools;
- Allocate grant funding to schools in the region along with guidance and advice on how grant funding can be used to drive improvement; and
- Work with the Welsh Government to deliver its priorities in the region.

The table shows the budgeted controllable income and expenditure against the actual controllable income and expenditure for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021:

	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Expenditure			
Employees	3,068	2,909	(159)
Premises	154	153	(1)
Transport	7	5	(2)
Supplies & Services	149	473	324
Third Party Payments	126	126	0
Support Services	115	112	(3)
	3,619	3,778	159
Income			
Local Authority Contributions	3,599	3,728	(129)
Grants & Other Income	20	59	(39)
	(3,619)	3,787	(168)
Net Expenditure / (Income)	0	(9)	(9)

The reasons for the variances between budgeted and actual expenditure and income were:

- Employees – savings attributable to in-year temporary staff vacancies;
- Supplies & Services – includes one off investment costs for school improvement activities (Improvement Partner Pilot project), facilitation of coaching and mentoring program and additional contributions being made against historic redundancy costs. The additional contributions made by member local authorities (Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil, due to the agreed repayment period being over 3 years: 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21) are reported against Local Authority Contributions; and
- Income – unbudgeted additional contributions made by member local authorities (Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil, due to the agreed repayment period being over 3 years: 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21) used to offset historic redundancy costs outlined above. Higher than budgeted income received due to grant income for the administration of the Additional Learning Needs Transformation grant.

In addition, the following categories of income and expenditure relating to specific grants were processed through the Central South Consortium's accounts during 2020/21:

	Actual £'000
Expenditure	
Employees	3,273
Premises	0
Transport	4
Supplies & Services	72,459
Third Party Payments	2,407
	78,143
Income	
Grants & Other Income	78,143
Net Expenditure	0

Movement in earmarked reserves (£132k), additional contributions made towards historic redundancy costs (£129k) and interest on the personal account balance (£1k) are included in the tables above but not disclosed in Note 7: Income.

As at 31st March 2021, the Central South Consortium held General Reserves of £147k. Movements on reserves are detailed within the Movement in Reserves Statement.

4. Capital Expenditure 2020/21

There has been no capital expenditure this financial year.

5. Summary of Future Revenue Plans

The Consortium's Business Plan 2021/22 was approved by Joint Committee on 18th March 2021 and sets out the vision, purpose and priorities it aims to deliver within an environment of reducing resources. The 2021/22 Business Plan focuses on the following overarching priorities:

1. Develop a high quality education profession;
2. Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards;
3. Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing, equity and excellence;

4. Develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting self-improving systems; and
5. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium.

The priorities included within the Central South Consortium's Business Plan need to be underpinned by robust financial management in ensuring they are affordable, provide value for money and that their impact can be assessed.

The revenue budget is approved annually by the Joint Committee and is included within the Business Plan. Welsh Government also issue annual settlements on grant awards of funding.

A summary of the latest (i.e. 2021/22) revenue budget is as follows (as approved by the Joint Committee on 16th December 2020):

Type of Expenditure	Budget 2021/22 £'000
Expenditure	
Employees	3,067
Premises	157
Transport	28
Supplies & Services	189
Third Party Payments	28
Support Services	114
Total Expenditure	3,583
Income	
Local Authority Contributions	3,563
Grants & Other Income	20
Total Income	3,583
Net Expenditure	0

6. Pensions Assets and Liabilities

As a result of International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 "Employee Benefits", local authorities are required to account for pensions liabilities in respect of the cost of decisions made up to the Balance Sheet date. Please refer to note 15.0 to the Core Financial Statements for further details.

The effect of IAS 19 upon the reserves of the Joint Committee is as follows:

	£'000
Net Assets/(Liabilities) excluding Pensions Reserve	712
Net Assets/(Liabilities) as per Balance Sheet	(14)

7. Introduction to Accounting Statements

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

This sets out the responsibilities of the Council as the administering authority and the Director of Finance and Digital Services for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts. The Statement has to be signed and dated by the presiding Member at the Joint Committee meeting at which the Accounts are approved.

Certificate of the Director of Finance and Digital Services

This is the certificate of the true and fair presentation of the Accounts by the Director of Finance and Digital Services.

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Joint Committee, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that the Joint Committee may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use) and 'unusable reserves'.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement is prepared to record income and expenditure on an accruals basis. It includes items such as salaries and wages, running costs of the service and income received. The statement is based upon IFRS.

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Joint Committee. The net assets of the Joint Committee (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Joint Committee.

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Joint Committee during the reporting period.

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis demonstrates how the funding available to the Joint Committee for the year has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

Statement of Accounting Policies

The purpose of this statement is to explain the basis of the figures in the accounts. It outlines the accounting policies adopted.

Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement sets out the framework for governance and internal control for the Joint Committee to carry out its functions and reviews its effectiveness. It outlines the main components of the framework, including the arrangements for Internal Audit and how the Consortium has complied with the various elements of the framework.

8. COVID-19

On the 18th March 2020 the Education Minister announced the decision to bring forward the Easter break for schools in Wales. School buildings across Wales then closed for statutory provision for education from 20th March 2020. This resulted in a change of service delivery for the Consortium and a need to cancel or postpone many events which were scheduled to run during Spring / Summer Term 2020 and planned for the 2020/21 academic year.

The impact of the COVID-19 virus on the Consortium has been managed and reported in the risk register to reflect the challenges faced in the ongoing delivery of the school improvement service during the pandemic.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts Central South Consortium Joint Education Service

The Council’s Responsibilities

The Council is required:

- To make arrangements for the proper administration of the Joint Committee’s financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council, that officer is the Director of Finance and Digital Services.
- To manage its affairs to ensure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.

The Joint Committee’s Responsibilities

- To approve the accounts.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Chair of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint
Committee**

The Director of Finance and Digital Services' Responsibilities

The Director of Finance and Digital Services is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts. In terms of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, the Statement of Accounts is required to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the period ended 31st March 2021.

In preparing the Statement of Accounts, the Director of Finance and Digital Services has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently.
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent.
- Complied with the Code.

The Director of Finance and Digital Services has also throughout the financial year:

- Maintained proper accounting records that were kept up to date.
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Certificate of the Director of Finance and Digital Services as Treasurer of the Joint Committee

I certify that the statement of accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Joint Committee at 31st March 2021 and its income and expenditure for the period then ended.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Barrie Davies

Director of Finance and Digital Services

The Pavilions, Cambrian Way, Clydach Vale, Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF40 2XX

Movement in Reserves Statement for the Period ended 31st March 2020

	General Reserves	Earmarked Reserves	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Notes:	13.1	13.2		14.0	
Balance as at 1st April 2019	137	301	438	278	716
Movement in reserves during 2019/20					
Total comprehensive income and expenditure	(405)	0	(405)	(985)	(1,390)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations					
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve:					
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	1,127	0	1,127	(1,127)	0
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(293)	0	(293)	293	0
Adjustments primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account:					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CI&ES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	2	0	2	(2)	0
Net increase or (decrease) before transfers to Earmarked Reserves	431	0	431	(1,821)	(1,390)
Transfers to or (from) Earmarked Reserves	(430)	430	0	0	0
Increase or (decrease) in the Year	1	430	431	(1,821)	(1,390)
Balance as at 31st March 2020	138	731	869	(1,543)	(674)

Movement in Reserves Statement for the Period ended 31st March 2021

	General Reserves	Earmarked Reserves	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Notes:	13.1	13.2		14.0	
Balance as at 1st April 2020	138	731	869	(1,543)	(674)
Movement in reserves during 2020/21					
Total comprehensive income and expenditure	(1,022)	0	(1,022)	1,682	660
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations					
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve:					
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	1,081	0	1,081	(1,081)	0
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(191)	0	(191)	191	0
Adjustments primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account:					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CI&ES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	9	0	9	(9)	0
Net increase or (decrease) before transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(123)	0	(123)	783	660
Transfers to or (from) Earmarked Reserves	132	(132)	0	0	0
Increase or (decrease) in the Year	9	(132)	(123)	783	660
Balance as at 31st March 2021	147	599	746	(760)	(14)

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the Period ended 31st March 2021

Year ended 31/03/20 £'000		Year ended 31/03/21 £'000	Note
	Expenditure		
6,953	Employees	7,029	5.0
205	Premises	153	
55	Transport	10	
70,055	Supplies & Services	72,632	6.0
1,074	Third Party Payments	2,854	
114	Support Services	112	
78,456		82,790	
	Income		
(3,711)	Local Authority Contributions	(3,599)	
(74,307)	Grants & Other Income	(78,201)	7.0
(78,018)		(81,800)	
438	Net Cost of Services	990	
(22)	Interest Receivable and Similar Income	(1)	
(11)	Net Interest on Net Defined Asset/Liability	33	15.2
405	(Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,022	
985	Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability	(1,682)	15.2
1,390	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(660)	

Balance Sheet at 31st March 2021

31/03/20 £'000		31/03/21 £'000	Note
1,583	Current Assets		
	Debtors	2,051	11.0
1,583	Total Current Assets	2,051	
	Current Liabilities		
(739)	Creditors	(1,339)	12.0
844	Net Current Assets	712	
844	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	712	
	Long-Term Liabilities		
(1,518)	Defined Benefit Pension Scheme Liability	(726)	15.5
(674)	Net Assets/(Liabilities)	(14)	
	Represented by:		
	Usable Reserves		
138	General Reserves	147	13.1
731	Earmarked Reserves	599	13.2
	Unusable Reserves		
(1,518)	Pensions Reserve	(726)	15.5
(25)	Short-Term Accumulating Compensated Absence Account	(34)	
(674)	Total Reserves	(14)	

Cash Flow Statement for the Period ended 31st March 2021

Year ended 31/03/20 £'000		Year ended 31/03/21 £'000	Note
	Operating Activities		
	Cash Outflows		
6,106	Cash Paid to and on Behalf of Employees	6,163	
91,868	Other Operating Cash Payments	75,170	
97,974	Total Cash Outflows	81,333	
	Cash Inflows		
(78,150)	Cash Received for Goods & Services	(81,894)	
(22)	Interest Received	(1)	
(78,172)	Total Cash Inflows	(81,895)	
19,802		(562)	
19,802	Net (Increase) or Decrease in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(562)	18.0
	Analysis of Changes in Cash and Cash Equivalents		
(21,224)	Balance as at 1 st April	(1,422)	
19,802	Net Cash (Inflows)/Outflows	(562)	
(1,422)	Cash Balance Owed To/(From) Host Authority	(1,984)	

All cash transactions are administered by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as the Central South Consortium does not operate its own bank account. The cash balance due to/from the host authority is included in creditors/debtors at 31st March.

Expenditure and Funding Analysis Statement for the year ending 31st March 2020

	2019/20		
	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis £'000	Net Expenditure for the Equivalent Amounts for CI&ES ² £'000
Employees	6,106	847	6,953
Premises	205	0	205
Transport	55	0	55
Supplies & Services	70,055	0	70,055
Third Party Payments	1,074	0	1,074
Support Services	114	0	114
Income	(77,588)	(430)	(78,018)
Cost of Services	21	417	438
Other Income and Expenditure	(22)	(11)	(33)
(Surplus) or Deficit	(1)	406	405
Opening General Fund at 31 st March 2019	(137)		
Add Surplus on General Fund in Year	(1)		
Closing General Fund at 31st March 2020	(138)		

² CI&ES – Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Expenditure and Funding Analysis Statement for the year ending 31st March 2021

	2020/21		
	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis £'000	Net Expenditure for the Equivalent Amounts for CI&ES ³ £'000
Employees	6,163	866	7,029
Premises	153	0	153
Transport	10	0	10
Supplies & Services	72,632	0	72,632
Third Party Payments	2,854	0	2,854
Support Services	112	0	112
Income	(81,932)	132	(81,800)
Cost of Services	(8)	998	990
Other Income and Expenditure	(1)	33	32
(Surplus) or Deficit	(9)	1,031	1,022
Opening General Fund at 31 st March 2020	(138)		
Add Surplus on General Fund in Year	(9)		
Closing General Fund at 31st March 2021	(147)		

³ CI&ES – Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

1.0 Significant Accounting Policies

1.1 Accruals of Expenditure and Income

The accounts of the Joint Committee have been prepared on an accrual of income and expenditure basis in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. This ensures activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place not when cash payments are made or received.

Revenue from the sale of goods or services is recognised when the Joint Committee transfers the significant risks and rewards of goods, or provides the services to the purchaser, and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Joint Committee.

Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are used or consumed.

Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.

Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows determined by the contract. Statutory adjustments relating to interest are reflected in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

1.2 Cash and Cash Equivalents

All cash transactions are administered by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as the Central South Consortium does not operate its own bank account.

1.3 Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability is a possible item of expenditure that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the organisation's control.

Such contingent liabilities are not reflected in Provisions in the Balance Sheet as it may not be probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

1.4 **Reserves**

The Joint Committee sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. These are deemed Earmarked Reserves. Earmarked Reserves are created by appropriating amounts from the General Reserves in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year. To ensure this is not a charge against General Reserves, the expenditure is funded via an adjustment in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Joint Committee.

1.5 **Employee Benefits**

All costs relating to employee benefits are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Pensions

The Joint Committee participates in two separate pension schemes.

Staff on Teachers Terms & Conditions - This is an unfunded scheme administered by the Teachers' Pension Agency. The Agency sets contribution rates on the basis of a notional fund. Whilst this is a defined benefit scheme, the Teachers Pensions Agency is unable to identify the Joint Committee's share of the underlying assets and liabilities and accordingly, the Joint Committee has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme.

Other employees - Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC administer a fund on behalf of employees under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended), under which contribution rates are set by the Fund's actuary based on triennial actuarial valuations. Under the regulations, contribution rates are set in order to lead to full funding of the overall liability of the Fund over time. The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a Defined Benefit Scheme.

- The liabilities of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund attributable to the Joint Committee are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis rolling forward the results from the last full valuation and adjusted to allow for the later calculation date and making allowance for changes due to accrual of new benefits and discharge of liabilities, financial and demographic assumptions, impact of known experience and the impact of events which result in a change in liability.

- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.1% (2.3% in 2019/20).
- The Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund is a multi-employer scheme. The assets of the Fund are not formally allocated to any employer within the Fund and are not the legal property of any employer within the Fund. For the purpose of completing the calculations for each triennial valuation of the Fund, the actuary calculates a notional allocation of assets for each employer. The assets of the Pension Fund notionally attributed to the Joint Committee are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

Quoted Securities	–	Current Bid Price
Unitised Securities	–	Current Bid Price
Property	–	Market Value
- The change in the net pensions asset / liability is analysed into the following components:
 - Current Service Cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked plus administration expenses.
 - Past Service Cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years debited to the (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - Interest Cost – the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer to being paid – credited/debited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - Expected Return On Assets – the annual investment return on the fund assets attributable to the Joint Committee based on an average of the expected long-term return – credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - Actuarial Gains and Losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their financial, demographic or experience assumptions – debited or credited to the Pensions Reserve.
 - Contributions Paid to the Pension Fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the Pension Fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the Joint Committee General Reserves to be charged with the amount payable by the Joint Committee to the Pension Fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not

the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with the cash paid to the Pension Fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the impact to the General Reserves of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Joint Committee is able to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any such liabilities arising are accrued in the year of decision to make the award in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme rules.

Accumulated Absences

The Joint Committee accrues for staff holidays earned but not taken at each year-end. The Welsh Government has issued regulations to mitigate the impact of this charge. This Joint Committee has taken advantage of the regulations and charged the additional costs to the Short-Term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account in Unusable Reserves.

1.6 Government Grants and Other Contributions

Grants and other contributions relating to capital and revenue expenditure shall be accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the conditions for their receipt have been/will be complied with; and
- the grant or contribution will be received.

Monies advanced, where there is no reasonable assurance of the above two criteria, are held as creditors in the Balance Sheet.

Where a revenue grant has been recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but not yet used to fund expenditure, it is set aside as an Earmarked Reserve.

Where a claim has yet to be signed off by the Regional Internal Audit Shared Service, Balance Sheet values in relation to grants are included on an unaudited draft claim basis.

For 2020/21, Welsh Government have extended the use of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and Pupil Development Grant (PDG) grants to 31st August 2021.

1.7 Leases

Whether a lease is a finance or operating lease depends upon the substance of the transaction rather than the legal form. Leases are reviewed at inception and classed as finance or operating by reviewing arrangements such as:

- Transfer of ownership at the end of lease contract.
- Option to purchase asset at a price lower than fair value.
- Lease term is for major part of economic life of asset.
- Present value of minimum lease payments amounts to at least substantially all of the fair value of leased asset.
- Leased assets are specialist and only the lessee can use them without major modifications.

Finance Leases

A finance lease is one which transfers substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset to the lessee.

Where the Joint Committee is lessee, an asset and liability is recognised at lease inception. The asset is subsequently depreciated and revalued as though it were the legal property of the Joint Committee. The liability reduces as lease payments are made.

Operating Leases

An operating lease is deemed to be any lease other than a Finance Lease.

Where the Joint Committee is lessee, lease payments are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on a straight-line basis unless another systematic basis is more representative of the benefits received.

1.8 Events after the Reporting Period

Events after the reporting period are those both favourable and unfavourable that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Two types of events can be identified:

- a) those that provide evidence of conditions existing at the end of the reporting period (adjusting events that shall be recognised in the financial statements); and
- b) those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period (non-adjusting events that are not reflected in accounting statements but where material, disclosure is made in the Notes to the Core Financial Statements).

2.0 Accounting Standards Issued, Not Adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requires the disclosure of information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. In the interim potentially relevant standards include:

- Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS 7
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform – Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16.

It is not anticipated that the above amendments will have a material impact on the Consortium's Statement of Accounts.

3.0 Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the Accounting Policies set out in note 1.0, the Joint Committee has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions and those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

3.1 Grants and Contribution Conditions

Judgements are made in terms of conditions attached to revenue grants. Grants are recognised as income when received/receivable. Unless there are assumptions that conditions of the grant are breached, a return obligation is not recognised. As a result, any revenue grants received with no expected return obligation that are to be used to fund future years' expenditure are reflected in Earmarked Reserves in the Balance Sheet.

4.0 Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

This Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Joint Committee about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because assets and liabilities cannot always be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates. The items in the Joint Committee's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2021 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

4.1 Pensions Asset/Liability

Estimation of the net asset/liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. AON is engaged to provide the Joint Committee with advice about the assumptions to be applied.

The effects on the net pensions asset/liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured, however, the assumptions interact in complex ways.

GMP equalisation and indexation

The disclosures allow for full pension increases to be paid on Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) for those reaching State Pension Age after 6th April 2016.

McCloud / Sargeant Judgement

The Court of Appeal found that the transitional protection arrangements put in place when firefighters' and judges' pension schemes were reformed were age discriminatory. This has implications for other public sector schemes that were reformed around the same time (including the LGPS) and could potentially lead to members deemed to be discriminated against being compensated. The Supreme Court denied the Government's application for permission to appeal this judgement on 27th June 2019. The matter was referred to Employment Tribunals for remedy hearings and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) undertook a consultation on the remedy. MHCLG has not yet published its consultation response. The method used by AON to value the McCloud remedy and therefore disclosed within the Statement of Accounts is closely aligned to that proposed in the consultation.

Cost Management Process

Legislation requires HM Treasury and the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) to undertake periodic valuations to monitor the cost of the LGPS to ensure it remains sustainable and affordable. This is referred to as the “Cost Management Process”. This process has been paused until the outcome of the remedy consultation associated with the McCloud appeal is known.

5.0 Employees Costs

2019/20 £'000	Salaries & Wages	2020/21 £'000
4,694	Advisors	4,740
713	Administration	728
435	Management	440
224	Finance Team	217
0	Employee Redundancy	0
35	Employee Insurance	35
5	Employee Advertising	3
6,106	Sub Total	6,163
2	Short-Term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account adjustment	9
845	IAS 19 adjustments	857
6,953	Total	7,029

6.0 Supplies and Services

2019/20 £'000		2020/21 £'000
122	Office Expenses	119
179	Consultants Fees	182
9	Office Equipment	0
34	Computer Costs	117
25	Photocopying	2
6	Subscriptions	5
7	Marketing	5
18	Audit Fees	18
10	Telephones	10
1	Postage	1
462	Training	186
	<u>Grants paid to local authorities & schools:</u>	
37,585	Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)	38,713
31,223	Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	32,856
374	Other	418
70,055	Total	72,632

7.0 Income

2019/20 £'000		2020/21 £'000
	Contributions	
(1,343)	Cardiff Council	(1,303)
(1,014)	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	(982)
(571)	Bridgend CBC	(554)
(548)	Vale of Glamorgan Council	(532)
(235)	Merthyr Tydfil CBC	(228)
(3,711)	Total Contributions	(3,599)
	Other Income	
(3)	School Income	0
(58)	Other	(58)
(74,246)	Grants	(78,143)
(74,307)	Total Other Income	(78,201)
(78,018)	Total Income	(81,800)

7.1 Grant Income

2019/20 £'000		2020/21 £'000
	Grant Programme	
(31,734)	Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	(34,094)
(41,892)	Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)	(43,501)
(620)	Other	(747)
(74,246)	Total Grant Income	(78,342)
	Allocation	
69,182	Paid to local authorities and schools (Note 6.0)	71,987
5,064	Retained by Central South Consortium	6,355
74,246	Total Allocation	78,342

8.0 Related Party Transactions

In accordance with IAS 24, the Joint Committee has a duty to disclose any material transactions with a "related party". This is to ensure that financial statements contain disclosures necessary to draw attention to the possibility that the reported financial position and results may have been affected by the existence of related parties and by material transactions with them.

The Joint Committee transacts with the local authorities and its schools within the Consortium, distributes funding, and provides advisory and inspection

services for which it receives income. During the year, material transactions with these related parties arose as follows:

2019/20		Local Authority	2020/21	
Exp. £'000	Inc. £'000		Exp. £'000	Inc. £'000
26,997	(1,453)	Cardiff Council	29,088	(1,412)
19,290	(1,034)	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	20,359	(1,009)
10,401	(571)	Bridgend CBC	11,545	(554)
9,612	(548)	Vale of Glamorgan Council	9,799	(532)
4,634	(254)	Merthyr Tydfil CBC	4,937	(247)

Income received from Merthyr Tydfil CBC (£19k) and Cardiff Council (£110k), in relation to historic redundancy payments and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (£1k) due to interest received are included in the table above but are not included in Note 7.0 as they do not form part of the Local Authorities core contributions received.

Welsh Government exerts significant influence through legislation and grant funding. The main grants received are shown in Note 7.1.

All cash transactions are administered by the host authority, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, as the Consortium does not operate its own bank account. At 31st March 2021, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC owed the Consortium £1,984k relating to these cash transactions (Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC owed the Consortium £1,422k as at 31st March 2020). During 2020/21, Central South Consortium was charged £112k by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC in respect of Central Establishment Charges (included in the table above, £114k in 2019/20).

Pension contributions are made to both the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund and the Teachers' Pension Agency, in respect of Joint Committee employees. See notes 15.0 and 16.0 for further information.

Interests of elected Members of the Joint Committee are maintained in a register held by their own Local Authority. Records of interests of Senior Officers are maintained by the Consortium. The following transactions occurred with related parties (by virtue of elected Member interest in them) with whom the Joint Committee has had dealings:

2019/20		Organisation	2020/21	
Exp. £'000	Inc. £'000		Exp. £'000	Inc. £'000
29	0	Coleg y Cymoedd	0	0
40	0	Cardiff University	55	0
69	0	Total	55	0

The table above does not include payments to/from the Local Authorities or schools within the Consortium, as they are included elsewhere within the notes.

9.0 Audit Fees

2019/20 £'000		2020/21 £'000
18	Fees payable to the Auditor General for Wales in respect of external audit	18

10.0 Leases

A long term lease arrangement totalling £153k in 2020/21 (£181k in 2019/20) exists between the Joint Committee and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC in relation to office accommodation at the Valleys Innovation Centre. No termination is contained within the lease agreement and occupation is assumed for as long as the service is required.

The Joint Committee holds no assets on Finance Leases.

11.0 Short Term Debtors

An analysis of Short Term Debtors in the Balance Sheet is as follows:

31/03/20 £'000		31/03/21 £'000
1,422	Host Authority	1,984
139	Local Authorities and Schools (31/03/20 inc. £129k short term debtor applicable to redundancy costs)	0
0	Central Government Bodies	0
23	Other Entities and Individuals	68
1,584		2,052
(1)	Provision for Bad Debt	(1)
1,583	Balance as at 31st March 2021	2,051

All cash transactions are administered by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as the Central South Consortium does not operate its own bank account. The Host Authority debtor includes the 'cash' balance owed to the Consortium by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC.

12.0 Creditors

An analysis of Short Term Creditors in the Balance Sheet is as follows:

31/03/20 £'000		31/03/21 £'000
(307)	Local Authorities and Schools	(1,079)
(61)	Central Government Bodies	(17)
(346)	Other	(209)
(25)	Employee Absences Accrual	(34)
(739)	Balance as at 31st March 2021	(1,339)

13.0 Movement on Usable Reserves

	General Reserves £'000	Earmarked Reserves £'000	Total £'000
Balance as at 1 st April 2020	138	731	869
Increase/(Decrease)	9	(132)	(123)
Balance as at 31st March 2021	147	599	746

13.1 General Reserve

The General Reserve is a distributable revenue reserve, which consists of the accumulated surpluses of the Consortium's operations.

	Total £'000
Balance as at 1 st April 2020	138
Increase/(Decrease) 2020/21	9
Balance as at 31st March 2021	147

13.2 Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Reserve balance in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure. All earmarked reserves are deemed to be revenue reserves.

	Balance at 31/03/20 £'000	Transfers Out £'000	Transfers In £'000	Balance at 31/03/21 £'000
Revenue Grant Reserves	199	(199)	393	393
Funding for Specific Projects	532	(326)	0	206
Total	731	(525)	393	599

14.0 Movements on Unusable Reserves

Reserve	Pension Reserve £'000	Short-Term Acc Comp Absence Account £'000	Total £'000
Balance as at 1 st April 2020	(1,518)	(25)	(1,543)
Increase / (Decrease)	792	(9)	783
Balance as at 31st March 2021	(726)	(34)	(760)

14.1 Pension Reserve

The Pension Reserve is the balancing account to offset the inclusion of Pension Liability in the Balance Sheet as required by IAS 19 "Employee Benefits". See note 15.0 for further information.

14.2 Short-Term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account

The Short-Term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the Consortium's Reserves from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31st March 2021.

15.0 Retirement Benefits – Defined Benefit Schemes

15.1 Participation in Pension Schemes

As part of their terms and conditions, the employees of Central South Consortium are offered retirement benefits by the Joint Committee. Although these benefits will not be payable until retirement, the Joint Committee has a commitment to make these payments. The liability for these payments needs to be accounted for at the time future entitlement is earned.

The Joint Committee participates in two pension schemes:

- Teachers – Please refer to note 16.0.
- Other employees – The Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC. This is a funded defined benefit salary scheme, meaning that the Joint Committee and participants pay contributions into the Fund calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets. The pension costs that are charged to the Joint Committee's accounts are defined by IAS 19 "Employee Benefits".

15.2 Transactions Relating to Post-Employment Benefits

The cost of retirement benefits is recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account when earned by employees, rather than when benefits are actually paid as pensions. However, the charge required to be made to the General Reserves is based on the cash payable in the year. The difference is reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been posted in the year:

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Cost of Services:		
Current Service Cost	1,039	1,048
Past Service Cost	99	0
Settlements and curtailments	0	0
<i>Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure</i>		
Net Interest Expense	(11)	33
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,127	1,081
<i>Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability Comprising:</i>		
Return on Plan Assets (Excluding the Amount included in the Net Interest Expense)	839	(7,101)
Actuarial (Gains) and Losses Arising on Liabilities – Demographic Assumptions	(352)	0
Actuarial (Gains) and Losses Arising on Liabilities – Financial Assumptions	(564)	5,736
Actuarial (Gains) and Losses Arising on Liabilities – Experience	1,062	(317)
Net increase in liabilities from disposals / acquisitions	0	0
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	2,112	(601)
<i>Movement in Reserves Statement</i>		

Reversal of Net Charges Made to the Surplus or Deficit for the Provision of Services for Post Employment Benefits in Accordance with the Code	(1,127)	(1,081)
<i>Actual Amount Charged Against the General Fund Balance for Pensions in the Year:</i>		
Employers' Contributions Payable to Scheme	293	191

The total remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure to the 31st March 2021 is a gain of £1,682k (£985k loss in 2019/20).

The cumulative amount of actuarial gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure statement to the year ending 31st March 2021 is a gain of £2,235k (£553k gain in 2019/20).

The figures above do not include allowance for any membership (or associated assets) relating to members who have joined the employer but have not yet exercised their option to link their past service rights to their current employment.

15.3 Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Opening balance at 1 st April	25,553	26,254
Current Service Cost	1,039	1,048
Interest Cost on Defined Obligation	599	602
Contributions by Scheme Participants	237	260
<i>Remeasurement Gains and (Losses):</i>		
Actuarial Gains and (Losses) Arising on Liabilities – Demographic Assumptions	(352)	0
Actuarial Gains and (Losses) Arising on Liabilities – Financial Assumptions	(564)	5,736
Actuarial Gains and (Losses) Arising on Liabilities – Experience	1,062	(317)
Benefits Paid	(1,419)	(470)
Past Service Costs	99	0
Carried Forward at 31st March	26,254	33,113

15.4 Reconciliation of Fair Value of the Scheme Assets

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Opening balance at as at 1 st April	25,854	24,736
Interest Income	610	569

<i>Remeasurement Gains and (Losses)</i>		
The Return on Plan Assets, Excluding the Amount Included in the Net Interest Expense	(839)	7,101
Employer Contributions	293	191
Contributions by Scheme Participants	237	260
Benefits paid	(1,419)	(470)
Net increase in assets from disposals/acquisitions	0	0
Carried Forward as at 31st March	24,736	32,387

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date.

Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets. The actual return on scheme assets in the year was a gain of £7,670k (£229k loss in 2019/20).

15.5 Scheme History

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Present Value of Defined Obligation	(26,254)	(33,113)
Fair Value of Plan Assets	24,736	32,387
Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,518)	(726)

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Joint Committee has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £726k has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Joint Committee as recorded in the Balance Sheet.

However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Joint Committee remains healthy. The deficit on the local government scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme actuary.

15.6 Local Government Pension Scheme Assets

Local Government Pension Scheme Assets investments as at 31st December 2020 (full scheme not Central South Consortium element) are comprised as follows:

	Fair Value of Scheme Assets	
	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
UK Equities	347,778	432,535

Overseas Equities	2,228,117	2,688,782
UK Fixed Interest Gilts	391,863	401,988
UK Corporate Bonds	394,759	575,814
Overseas Government Bonds	39,785	0
Overseas Corporate Bonds	52,598	0
Property	284,637	280,848
Cash and net current assets	44,042	37,085
Total	3,783,579	4,417,052

15.7 Basis for Estimating Assets & Liabilities

Roll-forward of Assets

The valuation results from the last full valuation of the Fund (or results at the previous accounting date as appropriate) are adjusted to the accounting year-end allowing for:

- Investment returns, and
- Cash-flows including investment returns on those cashflows.

The asset value at the start of the accounting period is accumulated with the Fund investment return over the accounting period. Net cashflows are assumed to be paid half way through the period and accrue half of the Fund investment return over the period.

Roll-forward of Liabilities

The valuation results from the last full valuation of the Fund (or results at the previous accounting date as appropriate) are adjusted to allow for the later calculation date (by adding interest to the liabilities) and make allowance for changes in liabilities due to:

- The accrual of new benefits and the discharge of liabilities from the payment of benefits.
- The financial and demographic assumptions adopted at the year-end.
- The impact of any known experience affecting the liabilities, such as the impact of actual pension increases on pensions in payment and deferred benefits.
- If applicable, the impact of events which result in a change in the liability such as past service costs, settlements and curtailments.

The full valuation was based on funded benefits and the principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	31/03/20	31/03/21
Long-Term Expected Rate of Return on Assets in the Scheme (in line with the discount rate)	4.25%	4.25%
Mortality Assumptions:		

Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:		
Men	21.7	21.8
Women	24.0	24.1
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
Men	22.7	22.8
Women	25.5	25.6
CPI Inflation	2.0%	2.7%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	3.25%	3.95%
Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.0%	2.7%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.3%	2.1%
Take-up of Option to Convert Annual Pension into Retirement Lump Sum:		
Post-2010 Service	80%	80%
Pre-2010 Service	80%	80%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant.

	Increase in Assumption £'000	Decrease in Assumption £'000
Longevity (Increase or Decrease in 1 Year)	1,192	(1,159)
Rate of Increase in Salaries (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	66	(66)
Rate of Increase in Pensions (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	629	(629)
Rate for Discounting Scheme Liabilities (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	(695)	695

15.8 Contributions for the Accounting Period ending 31st March 2022

The Employer's regular contributions to the Fund for the accounting period ending 31st March 2022 are estimated to be £199k (£182k as at 31st March 2021).

16.0 Retirement Benefits – Defined Contribution Scheme

Staff employed on Teachers terms and conditions are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The scheme provides teachers with specified benefits upon their retirement and the Joint Committee contributes towards

the costs by making contributions based upon a percentage of members' pensionable salary.

The Scheme is technically a defined benefit scheme. However, the Scheme is unfunded and the Department for Education uses a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employer's contribution rate paid by local authorities. The Council is not able to identify its share of underlying financial position and performance of the Scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

In 2020/21, the Joint Committee paid £94k to the Teachers' Pension Fund in respect of teachers' retirement benefits, representing 23.68% of pensionable pay (£79k was paid in 2019/20 representing 16.48% up to 31st August 2019 and 23.68% from 1st September 2019). There were no contributions remaining payable at the year-end.

17.0 Events after the Balance Sheet Date

The draft, unaudited Statement of Accounts will be authorised for issue by the Director of Finance and Digital Services, as Chief Finance Officer, following approval by the Joint Committee. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provide information about conditions existing at 31st March 2021, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all materials respects to reflect the impact of this information. There are no events that took place after 31st March 2021 requiring disclosure providing information that is relevant to an understanding of the Central South Consortium's financial position.

18.0 Reconciliation of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account to Cash flow

2019/20 £'000		2020/21 £'000
405	(Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,022
20,363	(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	(600)
(132)	Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	(94)
0	Increase/(Decrease) in Inventories	0
(834)	IAS 19 Transactions	(890)
19,802	Cash (Inflow)/Outflow from Revenue Items	(562)

19.0 Officers' Remuneration

During 2020/21, the Consortium paid 81 employees on average every month (80 in 2019/20). Over the year, salary payments totalled £3,724k (excluding employer's national insurance and pension contributions) (£3,606k in 2019/20).

Under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, the Joint Committee must disclose in their accounts the number of employees (excluding specific senior employees who are shown in Note 20.0) whose remuneration in the year fell in each bracket of a scale in multiples of £5,000 commencing at £60,000 (excluding pension contributions). The disclosure includes redundancy payments.

The following salary payments were made within the categories specified:

Remuneration Band	2019/20			2020/21		
	No. of Employees			No. of Employees		
	At 31/03/19	Left in Year	Total	At 31/03/20	Left in Year	Total
£60,000 - £64,999	12	0	12	11	0	11
£65,000 - £69,999	3	0	3	5	0	5
£70,000 - £74,999	1	0	1	2	0	2
£75,000 - £79,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
£80,000 - £84,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
£85,000 - £89,999	1	0	1	1	0	1
£90,000 - £94,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
£95,000 - £99,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
£100,000 - £104,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
£105,000 - £109,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
£110,000 - £114,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	0	17	19	0	19

20.0 Senior Officers

The following table sets out the remuneration for specific Senior Officers whose salary is less than £150k but greater than £60k. There are no Senior Officers whose salary is greater than £150k. Employer pension contributions and compensatory payment in relation to loss of employment are included.

Post Holder Information	2020/21				
	Salary	Taxable Benefits in Kind	Compensation for loss of employment	Employer's Pension Contributions	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Managing Director	112	0	0	7	119
Deputy Managing Director (from 01/04/2020)	92	0	0	6	98
Senior Lead – Standards & Improvement Planning (up to 31/08/2020) / Assistant Director – Standards & Improvement Planning (from 01/09/2020)	80	0	0	5	85
Assistant Director – Curriculum (from 01/01/2021)	20	0	0	1	21

The salary for the Director of Finance and Digital Services, who signs the accounts on page 11, is not included in this note as the post-holder is a senior officer of the Host Authority rather than the Consortium itself.

The comparative figures for 2019/20 are shown in the following table:

Post Holder Information	2019/20				
	Salary	Taxable Benefits in Kind	Compensation for loss of employment	Employer's Pension Contributions	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Managing Director (from 01/03/2020)	9	0	0	1	10
Acting Managing Director (up to 29/02/2020) / Temporary Assistant Managing Director (from 01/03/2020 to 31/03/2020)	106	0	0	11	117
Senior Lead – Standards & Improvement Planning	92	0	0	9	101

Temporary Senior Lead – Teaching & Learning Experiences (up to 28/02/2019)	0	0	22	0	22
Temporary Assistant Managing Director (up to 31/03/2020)	67	0	0	0	67

Between 1st January 2019 and 29th February 2020 temporary senior management arrangements were put in place as set out in the above table. These comprised an Acting Managing Director position (the appointment to which was made from an existing Consortium post-holder i.e. Senior Lead – Business and Operations), a Temporary Senior Lead – Teaching and Learning Experiences (post-holder left 27th June 2019) and a Temporary Assistant Managing Director position (the appointment to which was made from one of the local authorities that comprise the Consortium). A permanent appointment to the Managing Director post took up the position from 1st March 2020 (following Joint Committee approval of the appointment on 19th November 2019) and for the period 1st March 2020 to 31st March 2020 two officers undertook the role of Temporary Assistant Managing Director as part of transitional arrangements. For the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 the post-holder of Senior Lead – Standards and Improvement Planning received an honorarium reflecting additional duties assigned as part of the temporary senior management arrangements.

20.1 Severance Costs

There have been no cost of severance to the Consortium in respect of employees who have left the employment of the Consortium during the financial year.

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM

DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1.1 The Central South Consortium (CSC) is a Joint Education Service commissioned by five Local Authorities namely:

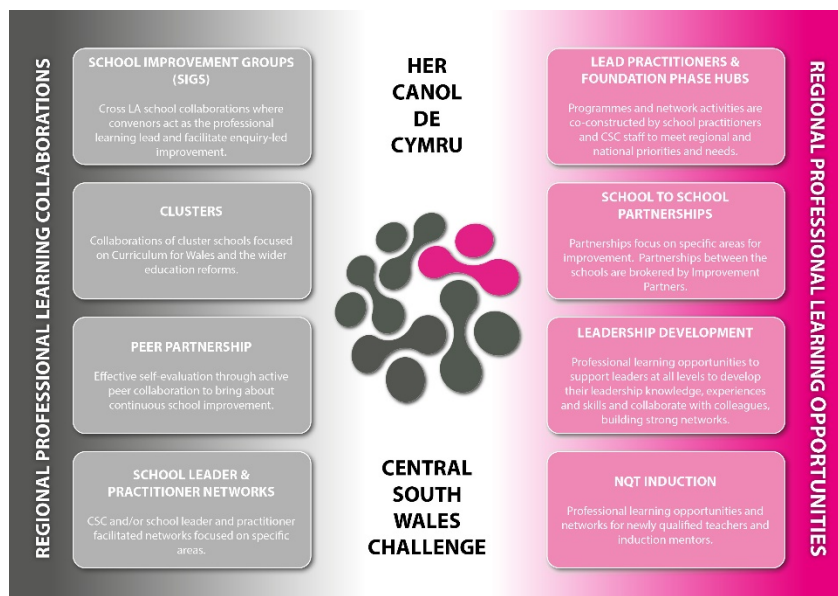
- Bridgend CBC;
- Cardiff CBC;
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC;
- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC; and
- Vale of Glamorgan CBC.

Central South Consortium covers the needs of 380 schools and approximately 149,526 pupils in the region.

1.2 In January 2014, Central South Wales Challenge was launched with the aim of raising standards across all schools within the Region and to stimulate the sharing of expertise amongst schools and joint efforts to innovate to:

- Improve the performance of every school;
- Increase the numbers of good and excellent schools;
- Reduce the gap between high and low performing groups of learners; and
- Improve outcomes for vulnerable groups of pupils.

Subsequently the [Central South Wales Challenge](#) has developed and consists of a number of different strategies:



- 1.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) is responsible for ensuring that its business and that of the Joint Education Committee, for which it has administrative responsibility, is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.4 In discharging this overall responsibility, CSC is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.5 The Annual Governance Statement of CSC aims to provide an accurate representation of the governance arrangements in place for financial year ending 31st March 2021.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, and cultural values by which CSC is directed and controlled, and the activities through which it accounts to and engages with stakeholders. It enables CSC to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage the risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- 2.3 The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of CSC's priorities, to evaluate the likelihood and impact of those risks materialising, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.
- 2.4 CSC has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, an assessment of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The assessment is informed by the work conducted by external agencies and internal arrangements, including performance management arrangements.
- 2.5 The following paragraphs summarise the overall governance framework and the system of internal control, which has been in place for CSC for the year ended 31st March 2021 (and up to the date of approval of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts).

3.0 THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

3.1 CSC has used the *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)* in compiling its Annual Governance Statement. The Framework comprises two Core Principles and five Supporting Principles:

Core principles

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law; and
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Supporting Principles

- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
- Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management; and
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

3.2 The Core Principles permeate implementation of the Supporting Principles with the need for CSC to be committed to improving governance on a continual basis through a process of evaluation and review.

3.3 CSC has applied these principles to structure its Annual Governance Statement for financial year ending 31st March 2021 and to assess the arrangements in place.

3.4 CSC has a range of governance arrangements in place, in line with the ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework’, many of which are set out in CSC’s legal agreement and / or are part of the governance arrangements of RCTCBC that have been adopted by CSC. Table 1 provides examples of the key systems, processes and documents in place within CSC during 2020/21.

Table 1 - Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the CSC

Good Governance Principles	Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within CSC
Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules of Procedure – covering Council, Open Government, Access to Information, Budget and Policy Framework, Executive, Overview and Scrutiny, Officer Employment and Contract and Financial Procedure

and respecting the rule of law	<p>Rules. The rules set out arrangements to be followed by elected Councillors and Officers when conducting the CSC's business with the aim of publicly demonstrating accountability and openness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Whistle-blowing Policy</u> – promoting the highest possible standards of service and setting out how workers can bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of CSC. • Anti-fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy. • Gifts and hospitality Policy. • <u>Comments, Compliments and Complaints</u> – setting out how the Council / CSC handles and responds to the feedback (complaints, compliments and comments). • Officer Guide. • Staff Handbook.
Ensuring Openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward plans for committee meetings together with the matters to be considered, where appropriate.
Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework. • Business Plan and Operational Delivery Plans. • Regular Performance Reports to Joint Committee (including Risk Register updates). • Risk Management Strategy. • Annual Revenue Budget Strategy. • Medium Term Financial Plan.
Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Committees. • Challenge and Review sessions with Welsh Government.
Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan • Staff Handbook. • Schemes of Delegation. • Self-evaluation process. • Regional Evaluation & Improvement Session
Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Strategy. • Annual Performance Report (including Risk Register updates). • An Internal Audit function. • Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and Contract and Financial Procedure Rules.

financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Plan.
Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Accounts. • Annual Governance Statement. • Production of reports on key areas of business. • Internal Audit.

3.5 Legal Agreement

On the 20th April 2015 all parties entered into and signed a revised legal agreement which superseded all previous legal agreements between the Partners. This agreement consolidated the legal arrangements relevant to CSC into one Agreement. From this point forward within the Annual Governance Statement, reference will be made to the 'Legal Agreement'.

3.5.1 The Legal Agreement for Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee provides the governance framework within which the Service operates and allocates responsibility and accountability, as follows:

- The Host Authority;
- The Directors' Steering Group;
- The Advisory Board;
- Operational Management Group;
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee; and
- Financial Management.

3.6 The Host Authority

The Legal Agreement formally assigns RCTCBC as the Host Authority for CSC. RCTCBC provides all support services (save for the day to day administration undertaken by staff in accordance with their duties) required, including but not limited to:

- Financial (Section 151 Officer as defined by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, Accounts, Payroll, Creditors, Debtors, Insurance);
- Human Resources;
- Health & Safety;
- Legal;
- ICT;
- Estates;
- Internal Audit (facilitated by the Regional Internal Audit Service, (RIAS)); and
- Procurement.

The costs of which, where relevant, are charged to Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee through Service Level Agreements.

- 3.7 The Constitution of RCTCBC, which has the financial stewardship of CSC, allocates functions and responsibility within the Authority. It also regulates the behaviour of individuals (Members & Officers) and groups through codes of conduct, protocols and rules of procedure. All functions undertaken by CSC should be done so in accordance with all relevant Policies and Procedure Rules of RCTCBC.

3.8 **Officer Conduct**

To ensure a consistent approach to working practices and processes, all officers are subject to the terms and conditions of employment (which are based on RCTCBC's operating terms and conditions).

3.9 **COVID-19**

On the [18th March 2020](#), an Urgent Decision of the Leader of the RCT CBC set out the current emergency planning arrangements for COVID 19 at UK, Wales and locality levels and the potential implications for Council services when the outbreak escalates and the action the Council should take.

Decision making and governance has continued to operate in compliance with CSC's Legal Agreement. Due to social distancing, all meetings arranged under our governance arrangements have met virtually using either Microsoft Teams or Zoom video conferencing. The Senior Management Team and Senior Leadership Team have also met weekly allowing decision making to continue.

With Covid 19 likely to be prevalent for at least a further year along with social distancing requirements, we need to ensure that the governance processes of CSC continue. The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 have changed the pre-existing laws to enable fully remote meetings to take place as long as those participating can hear and be heard. It also provides for the distribution and publication of all associated documents via electronic means only. As a result, the Joint Committee will continue its committee functions and, in consultation with the Chairs of the Committees, virtual meetings will continue to be held.

Also, on the 18 March 2020, the Education Minister announced the decision to bring forward the Easter break for schools in Wales. School buildings across Wales then closed for statutory provision for education from 20th March 2020. This resulted in a change of service delivery for CSC and a need to cancel or postpone many events which were scheduled to run during Spring / Summer Term 2020 and planned for the 2020/21 academic year.

The social distancing guidance has also impacted on the way staff interact with schools. Working with staff and directors across the five Local Authorities a visitor protocol was agreed. The focus throughout 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 when learners are in school or self-isolating.

The role of CSC in supporting learning has changed since the initial repurposing of Schools in March 2020. The initial focus was on distance learning and digital skill acquisition; however, this has now moved to blended learning support.

The impact of the COVID-19 virus on CSC has been managed and reported in the risk register to reflect the challenges faced in the ongoing delivery of the school improvement service during the pandemic, with updates also reported to the Joint Committee.

4.0 ASSESSING CSC'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 In line with the Core and Supporting Principles of the Framework, the approach taken to assess CSC's arrangements has been to:

- Set out a brief description of the arrangements and procedures in place together with the key outcomes CSC is aiming to achieve;
- Examine and document the main activities that have taken place around these areas, taking account of supporting evidence from CSC's internal processes and Audit Wales reports published on CSC;
- Form a view on the extent to which the activities comply with the procedures in place; and
- Make proposals for improvement, where appropriate, together with recommended timescales for implementation and responsible officers.

4.2 The assessment of CSC's governance arrangements is set out in Section 5.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 PROGRESS MADE TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTED IN THE 2019/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement made 4 proposals for improvement. An update on progress was reported to Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee on 18th March 2021 and following consideration the Committee RESOLVED: *to note the progress that has been made to date in implementing the proposals for improvement.*

As at 31st March 2021, progress had been made against the 4 proposals:

- 3 proposals for improvement have been implemented.
- 1 proposal for improvement was 'in progress' and will be completed during 2021/22 – it is considered that the part implementation status for this area does not have an adverse impact on the robustness of CSC's governance arrangements during the year

Based on the above, it is considered that overall, sufficient progress has been made during 2020/21 in the delivery of the proposals for improvement with the requirement for further work to be completed in 2021/22. A detailed position statement is set out at Appendix A.

5.2 BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY, DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES, AND RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW

Behaving with integrity

- 5.2.1 CSC follows the Host Authority Constitution which sets down how it should operate, how decisions need to be made and the procedures to be followed to ensure they are efficient, transparent and available to local people. Within the Constitution there are a number of [Rules](#)⁴ and [Protocols](#)⁵ that aim to ensure both elected Councillors and employees behave with integrity.
- 5.2.2 CSC has put in place procedures to be followed by the Joint Education Committee when conducting meetings and making decisions during the year to publicly demonstrate an accountable, open and honest approach. This has included considering the accuracy of 'meeting minutes'⁶; recording declarations of personal interest; publishing reports on RCT's website prior to meetings taking place; making decisions based on evidenced based reports; and publishing the minutes of meetings. A review of a sample of Joint Education Committee meetings during the year revealed that the above-mentioned procedures had been followed.

CSC employees

- 5.2.3 CSC Legal Agreement outlines the role of RCTCBC as the host authority. As part of this agreement, CSC adopts the policies of RCT including an Officer Code of Conduct that has been used to create an easy to understand 'Basic

⁴ Rules – for example, Financial and Contract Procedure Rules

⁵ Protocols – for example, Gifts and Hospitality Policy

⁶ Meeting minutes – a formal and agreed record of the events that took place at each meeting.

Rules – A Guide for Employees’ and includes information in relation to, amongst other things, expected behaviour, use of social media, appearance and attendance. The guide is available on-line for all employees.

- 5.2.4 All officers who started employment with CSC were provided with a local induction. In parallel, an Individual Performance Review process was in place to support the personal development of officers, this being overseen by management within the CSC and supported by the Human Resources Service within Rhondda Cynon Taf. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, the usual performance management processes were suspended during 2020/21 and replaced with virtual discussion and support with team members, and will be revised and reintroduced in 2021/22 informed by lessons learned over the past 12 months.

Arrangements in place to tackle potential misappropriation

- 5.2.5 In the event that an officer decides to operate outside of the intended terms and conditions of employment, arrangements were in place for officers to “blow the whistle” through RCT’s [Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure](#).
- 5.2.6 In addition to the Whistleblowing arrangements, there were arrangements in place to tackle potential [fraud, bribery and corruption](#).
- 5.2.7 RCTCBC’s Audit Committee has overall responsibility for overseeing the governance arrangements in place in respect of ‘tackling potential fraud, bribery and corruption’ and ‘whistle-blowing’. Updates received by Audit Committee during the year in respect of these arrangements were:

Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption

- 5.2.8 On 20th July 2020, RCT Audit Committee were presented with the Anti-Fraud Annual Report 2019/20 setting out progress during 2019/20 and agreed a workplan for 2020/21 (the Annual Report was originally scheduled to be reported to the April 2020 Audit Committee; however, due to the impact of Covid-19 this meeting was cancelled). The Annual Report set out that the Council continues to operate within an effective anti-fraud culture across the organisation, with resilient preventative measures capable of identifying and addressing new threats.
- 5.2.9 In August 2020, the Council included a payslip insert to all employees providing information on how Council employees could report any suspicions regarding Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption.
- 5.2.10 At the [2nd November 2020 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Audit Committee meeting](#), an Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Progress Report 2020/21 was presented. This update included references / information on the specific work around financial probity in relation to the award of flooding support to businesses

and residents (i.e. Storm Dennis related) and Covid-19 business support payments, and also the inclusion of data matching for Covid-19 business support payments paid by local authorities as part of the 2020/21 National Fraud Initiative programme of work.

- 5.2.11 The Anti-Fraud Annual Report 2020/21 is scheduled to be reported to Audit Committee in July 2021.

Whistle-Blowing

- 5.2.12 On 20th July 2020, the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Audit Committee were presented with the Whistleblowing Annual Report 2019/20 that set out whistleblowing activity during this period and concluded that arrangements were appropriate (the Annual Report was originally scheduled to be reported to the April 2020 Audit Committee; however, due to the impact of Covid-19 this meeting was cancelled). The Report also recommended that although the whistleblowing Policy is reviewed regularly at an operational level and the changes that have been made since 2016 have been of a housekeeping nature (e.g. changes to job titles of posts), a complete review of the document will be undertaken and reported to Audit Committee in 2020/21 for consideration. The [1st February 2021 Audit Committee](#) meeting (that reported an update on the '2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Recommendations – Progress update') noted that the review of the Whistleblowing Policy will be reported to the April 2021 Audit Committee (at the same time as the Whistleblowing Annual Report for 2020/21).
- 5.2.13 On the 26th April 2021, the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council Audit Committee were presented with the Whistleblowing Annual Report for 2020/21 (with the report concluding that the Council's whistleblowing arrangements were appropriate) and an updated Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. Both documents were approved by Audit Committee.
- 5.2.14 Gifts and Hospitality Policy – CSC aligns to the RCT Gifts and Hospitality Policy with arrangements in place, via registers, to record gifts and hospitality in line with the Policy.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

- 5.2.15 Ethical Values: CSC employees - CSC has described what excellent behaviour looks like for each type of job, for example, '*always treat people with respect*', and this information is used to test candidates suitability for jobs at interview and is used to inform discussions managers have with their staff as part of their development.
- 5.2.16 **The Council's supply chains**

The Council plays a significant role in the utilisation of national framework contracts as well as local contractual arrangements, and is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law, applies high ethical values, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules provides the framework to achieve this and the 'Procurement Policy – Social Responsibility' aligns with the three key initiatives issued by Welsh Government, namely Community Benefits; Code of Practice Ethical Employment in Supply Chains; and Opening Doors: the Charter for SME Friendly Procurement.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/DelegatedDecisions/RelatedDocuments/Decisions/2019to2020/ProcurementPolicySocialResponsibility.pdf>

Respecting the rule of law

- 5.2.17 The Managing Director position leads CSC's officers and chairs the Senior Management Team.

5.3 ENSURING OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Openness

- 5.3.1 Members of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee are governed by the Code of Conduct of their relevant Council. The Codes of Conduct for Councillors and employees within the Constitution of the Host Authority are built on the principles of openness, transparency and honesty.

General Data Protection Regulation

- 5.3.2 The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018. CSC took steps during 2018/19 to demonstrate accountability and transparency when handling and processing personal and sensitive information that it holds in respect of individuals. These arrangements were maintained during 2020/21 by:
- Formally recording the lawful basis upon which data / information is processed within suites of documents called Data Protection Registers; and
 - Establishing 'Privacy Notices' that are available on CSC's website setting out how it intends to use information and how it will deliver its services and statutory responsibilities.

An internal group developed relevant policy papers and refined processes and procedures to ensure GDPR compliance, working closely with the RCTCBC Information Management team.

It is considered that the publication of this information continues to support CSC in complying with the GDPR and demonstrates openness and transparency when dealing with its customers.

Freedom of Information

- 5.3.3 CSC operated a Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 publication scheme in accordance with legislative requirements. FOI updates are provided to Joint Committee on an annual basis and during 2020/21 four FOI requests were received and were responded to within 20 working days. This information is scheduled to be reported to the Joint Committee on 27th May 2021.

Planning ahead

- 5.3.4 CSC consulted with stakeholders on its vision and priorities for 2020/21 and set these out in a document called 'Business Plan 2020/21'; this Plan was agreed by Joint Education Committee on 19th March 2020. During 2020/21, the Joint Committee has received business plan priority updates as self-standing agenda items and a review of business plan progress is reported annually (the latest review, relating to 2020/21, was reported to Joint Committee on 18th March 2021). Based on the updates provided, it is considered that appropriate and regular information is made available to the Joint Committee to review and challenge performance and hold Management of CSC to account.

Looking ahead, it is likely that there will be uncertainty on future year resource levels provided by the UK Government to Welsh Government due to, amongst other things, the impact of COVID-19. CSC has been provided within an indicative budget across a 3-year time horizon (2020/21 to 2022/23), agreed by the Joint Committee on 21st January 2020, that will help to frame medium term service planning and re-modelling options.

Openness – Forward work programmes

- 5.3.5 CSC has in place a forward work plan of Committee meetings together with the matters to be considered and at the 15th June 2020 Joint Committee meeting agreed and published a calendar of meetings for the 2020/21 municipal year.

Decision making and scrutiny of decisions made

- 5.3.6 During the year, Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee made key decisions, for example, reviewing and agreeing CSC Business Plan, Core Revenue Budget and Annual Governance Statement.

The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee is one of the main decision making bodies within CSC and throughout 2020/21 received 20 reports, 17 of which were made publicly available prior to the meetings and 3 were excluded from the press / public on the grounds that the items of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

Key decisions were also taken by the Directors of Education from each of the local authorities at the Director Steering Group meetings.

Based on the above information it is considered that the decision-making arrangements that operated during 2020/21 were open and transparent, and compliant with CSC's Legal Agreement.

Finally, a review of a sample of Joint Education Committee Reports for 2020/21 has confirmed that a consistent format was used.

Engagement with stakeholders

5.3.7 The arrangements for engagement with stakeholders were as follows:

- **The Advisory Board** - The purpose of the Advisory Board is to support the Managing Director in ensuring that the strategies of CSC align themselves with the needs of all Parties to raise educational standards.

The membership, decision making process, meetings and the terms of reference for the Advisory Board are documented within Schedule 2 of the Legal Agreement. For 2020/21, an Advisory Board meeting was not convened due to a review of the CSC's governance structure being undertaken. During this period, the strategic direction of the CSC was directed by the Chief Executives and Directors of Education of the 5 constituent local authorities alongside Senior Management of the CSC. Joint Committee approved a revised governance structure for CSC including the removal of the Advisory Board from the governance of CSC in a meeting on the 16th December 2020

- **Directors' Steering Group** – The Directors' Steering Group comprises the Directors of Education from each of the five local authorities that make up the CSC. This group is responsible for delegated decision making on behalf of each local authority.

The membership, decision making process, meetings and the terms of reference for the Director's Steering Group are documented within Schedule 2 of the Legal Agreement.

A revised governance structure was agreed by Joint Committee on the 16th December 2020 and a CSC Management Board established. This board will come into effect during 2021/22.

- **Senior Leadership Group** - The Group comprises the senior management team of the CSC as well as Principal Improvement Partners for each local authority. Senior officers with strategic responsibilities are also part of the leadership group. The objective of the group is to deliver school improvement activities with the aim of raising educational standards.

The membership, decision making process, meetings and the terms of reference for all groups are documented within Schedule 3 of the Legal Agreement.

- **Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee**

The Joint Education Committee comprises of one elected Member from each Council and one officer representative with responsibility for Education from each Council.

The Joint Education Committee has the powers of each Council with reference to the provision of a Joint Education Service and its performance as set out in the Legal Agreement and guided by the Welsh Government's 'National Model for Regional working'.

The purpose of the Joint Education Committee is to be responsible for the decision making, approval of the business plan, monitoring and accountability and financial reporting of the CSC arrangements in line with its own business plan.

The membership, decision making process, meetings and the terms of reference for the Joint Education Committee are documented within Schedule 4 of the Legal Agreement. Revised terms of reference for the Joint Education Committee was approved by Members on 18th March 2021.

- 5.3.8 There were a broad range of communication methods on offer to encourage stakeholders to express their views during 2020/21; this included social media, focus group discussions with regional stakeholder groups. However due to the COVID 19 pandemic, a decision was taken to suspend the Annual Survey.

5.3.9 **Proposal for Improvement**

- Implement the revised governance structure agreed by Joint Committee
- Review the Legal Agreement against the revised governance structure

- Develop a monitoring and reporting principles document and share with governance groups for agreement. This will provide an annual cycle of reporting and reduce the ad hoc reporting requests throughout the year.
- Produce an annual forward planner for all governance meetings
- Revise the Communications Strategy and share with stakeholder groups. Establish a working party to review the communications requirements of schools.
- Relaunch the annual survey with schools.

5.4 **DEFINING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

Defining outcomes

- 5.4.1 CSC's 'Business Plan 2020-2021' was approved by the Joint Education Committee on the 21st January 2020 and identified five overarching improvement priorities:-
- Develop a high-quality education profession;
 - Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards;
 - Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing, equity and excellence;
 - Develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting self-improving systems; and
 - Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CSC.
- 5.4.2 CSC's Revenue Budget for the 2020/21 financial year was approved at the 21st January 2020 Joint Committee meeting, aligning resources to business plan priorities.
- 5.4.3 Following approval of the Business Plan and Revenue Budget, Operational Plans were put in place for each priority, in line with resources available, detailing outcome aims, the actions to be delivered with timescales for delivery and performance indicators.
- 5.4.4 A review of performance indicator targets included within the Business Plan identified that there is a clear ambition for the CSC to improve in its priority areas.
- 5.4.5 Throughout 2020/21 action plan progress updates have been made public through Joint Education Committee meetings that also contain information on financial performance, strategic risks and investment linked to Business Plan priorities. This has included preparation for Curriculum Reform.

- 5.4.6 Progress with the Business Plan has also been monitored by Welsh Government as part of Regional Challenge and Review Meetings, including a meeting with the Minister on 19th January 2021. For 2020/21 98% of CSC's Business Plan was funded from Welsh Government Awards of Funding.

Proposal for Improvement

- 5.4.7 Further develop the Medium-Term Financial Plan during 2021/22 regarding the needs of schools following the COVID 19 pandemic. This will ensure resources are allocated / categorised over Business Plan priorities and emerging needs of schools. CSC will be able to demonstrate or otherwise the prioritisation of resources and set out service options in line with indicative funding allocations agreed by Joint Committee.

Review the office accommodation requirements of CSC following the adaptations made to working arrangements due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

5.5 DETERMINING THE INTERVENTIONS NECESSARY TO OPTIMISE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INTENDED OUTCOMES

Determining and planning interventions

- 5.5.1 CSC's Legal Agreement lays down the key requirements to be followed when setting its priorities, reporting the extent of progress made in priority areas and also the financial planning and management arrangements that support this. These include the requirement to:

- Agree the draft School Improvement Service annual revenue budget by the 31st December prior to the start of the financial year and submit to each of the Parties for approval with the business plan to be agreed by the 1st February; and
- Publish financial and performance progress updates on a termly basis during the year, which will include explanations of any variances against the profiled budget.

- 5.5.2 When the above requirements were reviewed for the 2020/21 financial year:

- Performance Reports were presented to the Joint Education Committee and the Local Authority Scrutiny Committees during the year, with performance reports also presented to the Minister as part of the Challenge and Review meetings. A review of information reported during the year identified that updates on financial performance; progress against Business Plan priorities; and strategic risks were reported to Joint Committee meetings. In addition, the information reported also highlighted and explained exceptions and noted where corrective action would be taken.

- 5.5.3 Based on the above, it is considered that the information published during the year would provide opportunity for stakeholders to understand CSC's performance and hold it to account.

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

- 5.5.4 CSC's Business Plan set out how the agreed 3% reduction in core funding would be delivered and managed during 2020/21.
- 5.5.5 With this context in mind, CSC took steps to plan the allocation of resources and put in place arrangements to maximise its impact.

Maximising impact

- 5.5.6 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Welsh Government announced that they would not expect data returns for all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place after March 2020 and before the school summer holidays in 2020. These collections include:
- Attendance: Primary 2020 data collection;
 - Attendance: Secondary 2020 data collection;
 - National Data Collections (NDC) 2020 data collection; and
 - Welsh National Test (WNT) 2020 data collection.
- 5.5.7 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2020 and Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) 2020 data collections took place, with Data Exchange Wales initiative (DEWi) closing for data submissions on the 20th March 2020. Analysis of this information has been published by Welsh Government (WG) noting that not all validation processes were completed on this data set and data based on pupil and staff characteristics must be treated with caution and should not be compared to data from previous years for the purpose of comparing trends.
- 5.5.8 WG confirmed on the 7th July 2020 that the Statistical Releases for NDC Core, NDC non-core, WNT, Attendance Primary and Attendance Secondary were suspended for reporting on data from 2019/20. In addition, the Statistical releases related to "EOTAS", "Exclusions in Schools", "Attainment by eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM)/not eligible for Free School Meals (nFSM) (Foundation Phase (FP)-Key Stage 3 (KS3))" and "Absenteeism by pupil characteristics" were also suspended for 2019/20 data.
- 5.5.9 The Minister for Education confirmed on the 3rd July 2020 that WG would not be publishing performance measures related to the 2020 summer examinations series, which covers all school and post-16 performance measures for the 2019/20 academic year. In addition, given the clear implications that there will be ongoing disruption for qualifications awarded next year, WG have suspended

Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020/21 academic year also.

- 5.5.10 The Statistical bulletins for GCSE and A Level results will continue to be published for 2019/20 but will not contain Key Stage 4 or legacy sixth form performance measures and will only include National level data with different content to previous releases of these bulletins.
- 5.5.11 The publication of performance data on My Local School is also suspended, with the publication of the national categorisation also being suspended for 2020/21 on this website due to the processes not being held for Academic Year 2020/21.
- 5.5.12 Therefore, for 2019/20 there are no publicly available performance measures at School, Local Authority or Regional Consortia level that can be included in this report.
- 5.5.13 The individual Local Authority scrutiny committees have provided review and challenge during the year, through their own work programme arrangements.

5.6 **DEVELOPING THE ENTITY'S CAPACITY, INCLUDING THE CAPABILITY OF ITS LEADERSHIP AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT**

Developing the entity's capacity

- 5.6.1 CSC aims to ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and capacity they need to discharge their responsibilities and recognises the value of well-trained and competent people in effective service delivery.
- 5.6.2 The Self Evaluation processes within CSC ensure a rigorous assessment of the current position and areas for improvement. This evaluation is incorporated into service level planning processes as well as ensuring alignment with national and local authority priorities.
- 5.6.3 Effectively managing the workforce – CSC has consistently become more efficient on a year-on-year basis, driven by both proactive and prudent management and also on-going reductions in funding, and at the same time:
- Supported an overall direction of travel of improved performance results in priority areas.
 - Continued to operate a system of agile working arrangements that has taken advantage of digital technology to help CSC to work in new and different ways to meet school needs, reduce costs, support staff productivity and help contribute to a healthy work / life balance for employees. During 2019/20 CSC also maximised the use of space within the Valleys Innovation Centre by downsizing to occupy one area of the

building and in parallel introduced the use of Office 365 and Hwb⁷ to further improve digital competence of the workforce. During 2020/21 all staff moved to agile working arrangements in line with the Council's strategy during the COVID 19 pandemic.

- Aligned the on-going modernisation of its arrangements to RCTCBC's Digital Strategy.

5.7 **Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals**

The CSC Legal Agreement sets out the responsibilities of the Managing Director, the Joint Education Committee and Advisory Group (Schedule 2). A review of a sample of delegated decisions made during the year confirmed that decisions were approved by the designated Joint Education Committee members and employees.

Developing the capabilities of councillors

- 5.7.1 No specific training was provided to Members of the Joint Committee during 2020/21 due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Developing the capabilities of employees

- 5.7.2 CSC is committed to staff development, in line with business needs, to help ensure it has a 'fit for purpose' workforce. During the year this has included staff induction sessions, Leadership and Middle Management Development Programmes, Staff Briefings and a range of operational training such as Curriculum for Wales, National Mission and Lead Creative Schools, Schools as Learning Organisations and Initial Teacher Education. Staff development has been supported through induction sessions, RCT Manager Briefings and a range of relevant leadership training such as SLII (situational leadership), the ALN Bill and Wellbeing.

Proposal for Improvement

- 5.7.3 Undertake a training programme with Members in the local authorities on the requirements of the 'Draft School Improvement, Accountability and Evaluation Guidance'.

5.8 **MANAGING RISKS AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL AND STRONG PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Managing risk

⁷ Hwb – digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales

- 5.8.1 During 2020/21 CSC continued with the termly updating of its risk change template in line with its business plan monitoring and risk policies.
- 5.8.2 This risk change template is updated by all risk owners and then presented for review by the Senior Leadership Team. Following agreement of the SLT, proposals are presented to Directors for consideration and then to Joint Committee meetings for final review and acceptance. During the autumn term the risk change template was presented to Directors on the 16 December 2020. Once this process is completed the risk register is finalised.
- 5.8.3 New risks were incorporated into the register during the year. For example, the risks associated with the COVID 19 pandemic and Curriculum for Wales. This has been incorporated into the Risk Register, with accompany actions to address, and will be reported and monitored by the Joint Committee.
- 5.8.4 **Proposal for Improvement**
- Review risk management strategies and present proposals to governance groups for consideration.

Managing performance

- 5.8.5 The 'Determining and planning interventions' section (5.5.1) of this Annual Governance Statement provides an overview of CSC's Performance Management arrangements. Performance at strategic level is driven and measured through CSC's drive teams. Five drive teams have been established to ensure the effective delivery and impact of the priority plans aligned to the 2020/21 CSC business plan.

Robust internal control

- 5.8.6 The membership and meeting frequency of CSC's Joint Education Committee during 2020/21 was in line with the CSC's Legal Agreement.

Internal Audit

- 5.8.7 The Head of Regional Internal Audit Service is scheduled to present the Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21, based on the work of Internal Audit during the year, to the Council's Audit Committee in July 2021. The work undertaken by Internal Audit in respect of the CSC during the year is set out at paragraph 5.8.16.

Managing data

- 5.8.8 An Information Management Plan is in place in RCTCBC that sets out the framework, including legal requirements, for information management within

the CSC. This work has been reviewed to ensure compliance with new GDPR regulations.

5.8.9 A review of arrangements in place during 2020/21 identified that they were in line with laid down requirements because:

- Key responsibilities were formally designated within CSC: CSC's designated Senior Information Management Risk Officer (SIRO) was the Managing Director, there was an Information Management & Data Protection Act Officer within the host authority who reports to the Service Director – ICT and Digital Services;
- An Information Management Board was in operation in RCTCBC, Chaired by the SIRO, with the Board being supported by an Information Management Working Group;
- Information was available on the RCTCBC website in respect of Data Protection and Freedom of Information, and had in place a Publication Scheme (which has been adopted by CSC) in accordance with the Council's responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and
- The Host Authority has a Public Sector Network (PSN) plan in place to meet the end of year timeframe for renewal i.e. The 'PSN' is the Council's connection to the wider public sector network (Council to Council, Council to Government e.g. Department for Work and Pensions) to enable the Council to communicate and share data securely across all public bodies.

Strong public financial management

5.8.10 Schedule 5 of the Legal Agreement provides the framework within which the finances of the Joint Education Service operate. The Financial Protocol provides the financial framework and relationship between the Parties (the Councils), the Host and CSC. The following areas of business are documented in the Legal Agreement

- General Principles
- Contributions and charging mechanisms;
- Payment arrangements;
- Budgetary control & monitoring;
- Capital Expenditure & long term contracts;
- Annual Accounts & Audit; and
- Financial insolvency.

5.8.11 The Legal Agreement requires the Joint Education Committee to hold at least termly meetings throughout the year. Standard agenda items include a report from the Treasurer.

- 5.8.12 RCTCBC's Financial Procedure Rules provide guidance in relation to all financial matters. The CSC has adopted Rhondda Cynon Taf's Financial & Contract Procedure Rules – as confirmed in Section 17 (Schedule 4) of the Legal Agreement:

“Rules and Procedure

For the avoidance of doubt the Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee shall, where relevant and subject to the provisions of this Agreement, operate in accordance with the Host's schemes of delegation, Rules of Procedure and policies from time to time.”

- 5.8.13 Audit Wales⁸ audits CSC's annual statement of accounts and the outcome from the audit being reported to the Joint Committee.
- 5.8.14 CSC's financial and operational performance is monitored and scrutinised by the Joint Education Committee

The Joint Education Committee receives reports from:

- The Treasurer;
- The Managing Director; and
- Officers, relevant to the operations and governance of the organisation.

- 5.8.15 During 2020/21 the role of the Chief Financial Officer at RCTCBC was compliant with the principles of the CIPFA Statement – Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government 2010.

Internal Audit

- 5.8.16 During 2020/21 the Regional Internal Audit Service reviewed one core financial system (i.e. the General Ledger) of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service, in line with the agreed Internal Audit Annual Plan, and concluded there to be no material weaknesses. This was reported to the Joint Committee meeting held on 18 March 2021.

External Audit

- 5.8.17 The latest audited statement of accounts (i.e. for the 2019/20 financial year) received an unqualified audit report (i.e. clean bill of health) and were approved at the meeting of the Joint Education Committee on 14th September 2020.
- 5.8.18 CSC has continued to publicly demonstrate its commitment to strong and responsible financial planning and management and has supported this through the delivery of sound financial performance during a period of reducing budgets. This is because:

⁸ Audit Wales – previously the Wales Audit Office

- CSC has adopted a suite of protocols supporting strong financial planning and management, for example, 'Financial Procedure Rules' and 'Contract Procedure Rules', that were complied with during the year;
- CSC set a Gross Revenue Budget in December 2019 for the financial year 2020/21 of £3,623,427, representing a reduction of 3% compared to the previous year. Financial performance results were publicly reported every term during the year and scrutinised by the Joint Education Committee. The final outturn position, subject to Joint Committee approval at the May 2021 meeting, demonstrates the delivery of a balanced budget for the 2020/21 financial year after setting aside specific earmark reserves to support the completion of activities that have been delayed as a result of COVID 19.
- CSC is financially stable with General Reserve balances increasing slightly from £138k to £147k (subject to audit); having a track record over a number of years of setting and delivering balanced revenue budgets; and having 'clean bills of health' on its year end accounts when audited by the Audit Wales (previously Wales Audit Office).

5.8.19 The latest Audit Wales report 'Audit of Financial Statements Report and Management Letter' reported to Joint Education Committee on 14th September 2020 concluded that the accounting statements and related notes:

- *Give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Central South CSC Joint Education Service as at 31 March 2020; and*
- *Have been properly prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20.*

5.8.20 The 14th September 2020 Audit Wales report made 1 recommendation to be addressed by CSC and the Host Authority which has been accepted and implemented.

5.9 **IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES IN TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING, AND AUDIT TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

Implementing good practice in transparency and reporting

5.9.1 CSC has implemented an open and consistent approach to reporting its business, as set out in sections 5.4 and 5.5 of this Annual Governance Statement, with the aim of helping to ensure information is understandable to stakeholders and that they have the opportunity to challenge CSC's performance, plans and decisions.

5.9.2 A review of a sample of information reported to the Joint Education Committee has revealed that:

- Annual Reports and Plans are reported publicly, providing an overview of performance, for example, the Council's audited Statement of Accounts 2019/20 reported and approved by Joint Education Committee on 14th September 2020 in line with the statutory timeframe; and
- Use is made of electronic links within reports to provide the reader with more detailed information should they require it; and
- The minutes of meetings confirm that designated officers attend each meeting to orally present reports and answer questions, and several occasions were noted where updates were delivered via presentations, for example, using slides.

6. **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSORTIUM'S ARRANGEMENTS**

6.1 Based on the assessment undertaken, the delivery of the CSC's governance arrangements have been revised, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and have remained effective as evidenced through the comprehensive and timely updates provided to virtual Joint Committee meetings during the year; on-going compliance with the requirements of the Legal Agreement; robust financial planning and management arrangements; and tailored provision to schools, in line with Welsh Government guidance, to ensure schools have been supported throughout the pandemic and with their plans for recovery.

6.2 Notwithstanding this overall position, the assessment has identified areas where improvements are deemed necessary to further reinforce the effectiveness of the CSC's current arrangements. These are set out in Section 7.

6.3 Looking ahead, the robust governance arrangements in place within the CSC, together with implementing the proposals for improvement set out in Section 7, will be critical in supporting the organisation to re-model itself and also continue to provide an effective school improvement service during the recovery period from COVID 19.

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 Further to completing the assessment of the CSC's governance arrangements, Table 1 sets out proposals for improvement.

Core Principle / Area	Paragraph No.	Issue Identified	Proposal for Improvement	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer
Ensuring Openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	5.3.9	Revised Governance Framework for CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the revised governance structure agreed by Joint Committee 	July 2021	Managing Director
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Legal Agreement against the revised governance structure 	September 2021	Deputy Managing Director / RCT Legal Team
		Monitoring and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a monitoring and reporting principles document and share with governance groups for agreement. 	July 2021	Deputy Managing Director
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce an annual forward planner for all governance meetings 		
		Communications with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the Communications Strategy and share with stakeholder groups. Establish a working party to review the communications requirements of schools. 	September 2021	Communications Manager
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaunch the annual survey with schools. 	November 2021	Assistant Director

Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	5.4.7	Financial Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the Medium-Term Financial Plan during 2021/22 	July 2021	Deputy Managing Director
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the office accommodation requirements of CSC following the adaptations made to working arrangements due to the COVID 19 pandemic 	September 2021	Managing Director
	5.7.3	Professional Learning	Undertake a training programme with Members in the local authorities on the requirements of the 'Draft School Improvement, Accountability and Evaluation Guidance'	December 2021	Managing Director
	5.8.4	Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review risk management strategies and present proposals to governance groups for consideration 	September 2021	Deputy Managing Director

Page 155

7.2 The CSC's Senior Management Team has accepted the proposals for improvement and is committed to their implementation during 2021/22. The Senior Management Team has also confirmed that an update on progress will be reported to the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee during the year to enable Members to review and scrutinise the extent of progress being made.

Managing Director: _____ Section 151 Officer: _____

Chair, Joint Education Committee _____

APPENDIX A

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT 2019/20 – POSITION STATEMENT

Core Principle / Area	Paragraph No.	Issue Identified	Proposal for Improvement	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer	Progress
Ensuring openness and engagement	5.3.12	Build on the work of the independent review of the CSC during 2019/20 to further support decision making arrangements (carry forward from work undertaken during 2019/20)	Finalise the review of the overall governance structure for the CSC to ensure increased engagement in the decision making process from Headteachers across the region in line with the requirements of the revised National Model for Regional Working when published and the recommendations from Joint Committee following the ISOS review	March 2021	Managing Director	<p>Completed</p> <p>Initial Proposals presented to Chief Executives & Directors in August 2020.</p> <p>Formal presentation of proposals to Directors October 2020 and recommendations approved by Joint Committee December 2020</p>
Defining Outcomes	5.4.6	Further develop Medium Term Service and Financial Planning	Ensure resources are allocated / categorised over Business Plan priorities to demonstrate or otherwise the prioritisation of resources and set out	March 2021	Deputy Managing Director	Completed for core budget

			service options in line with indicative funding allocations agreed by Joint Committee.			Three-year funding model agreed with Joint Committee
leadership and other individuals	5.7.4	Consortia as a Learning Organisation	Build on the programme of training and support using the information gathered from the Consortia as a Learning Organisation to drive improvement areas and support distributed leadership and ownership of professional learning (taking into account new support requirements / delivery modules as a result of COVID-19).	March 2021	Deputy Managing Director	Completed Annual programme of professional learning for all staff developed.
Managing Risk	5.8.9	Improve reporting framework for performance and information management systems (carry forward from work	The CSC should report on a periodic basis, for example annually, its work and performance around Information Management and provide opportunity for review and scrutiny by the Joint Education	March 2021	Deputy Managing Director	In progress SIRO schedule for 2021/22 to be agreed with RCT.

Page 157

		<p>undertaken during 2019/20)</p>	<p>Committee. This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIRO schedule should be agreed with RCT CBC; • Update all General Data Protection registers; • Update the Information Sharing Protocols; and • Update all related data retention policies. 			<p>Complete updates on Information Sharing Protocols and GDPR Registers</p> <p>RCT confirmed continuation of support for DPR, Privacy Notices and ISP reviews.</p>
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The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the year ended 31st March 2021 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee as at 31st March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the Joint Committee in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require me to report to you where:

- the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the responsible financial officer has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee ability to continue to adopt the

going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The responsible financial officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report and accounts. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated later in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my report.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Joint Committee and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Governance Statement.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, which I report to you, if, in my opinion:

- proper accounting records have not been kept;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;
or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, set out on page 10 and 11, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee, which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the statement of accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the Joint Committee's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Anthony J Barrett
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
XX July 2021

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Glossary of Terms

Accrual

An accrual is a sum shown in the accounts representing income or expenditure relating to the accounting period, which had not actually been received or paid as at the date of the Balance Sheet.

Actuary

An actuary is an individual or organisation that calculates insurance premiums and liabilities and pension obligations.

Audit

An audit is an independent examination of activities.

Budget

A budget (or estimate) is a plan of income and spending. Actual expenditure is subsequently monitored against this plan.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure is spending on long-term assets. These are assets that will be used for several years in the provision of services and are items such as buildings, equipment and vehicles.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

CIPFA is responsible for issuing financial guidance to public bodies.

Creditor

A creditor is an organisation/individual owed money by the Council at the end of the financial year for goods/services received.

Current Assets

These are short-term assets that are available for the Council to use in the following accounting period.

Current Liabilities

These are short-term liabilities that are due for payment by the Council in the following accounting period.

Debtor

A debtor is an organisation/individual who owes the Council money at the end of the financial year for goods/services received.

Defined Benefit Scheme

A defined benefit pension scheme is one that bases retirement benefits upon Career Average Re-valued Earnings.

Defined Contribution Scheme

A defined contribution scheme is a type of retirement plan in which the amount of the employer's annual contribution is specified. Benefits are based on the amounts credited to these accounts (through employer

contributions and, if applicable, employee contributions) plus any investment earnings. Only employer contributions to the account are guaranteed, not the future benefits.

Earmarked Reserves

These are reserves set aside for a specific purpose.

Financial Year

This is the accounting period. For local authorities it starts on 1st April and finishes on 31st March of the following year.

International Accounting Standard (IAS)

Financial Regulations to be followed as set by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB).

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

International Financial Reporting Standards are produced by the IASB (International Accounting Standards Board) with the aim of ensuring consistency within the countries adopting the standards.

Inventories

Inventories are raw materials purchased for day-to-day use. The value of these items that have not been used at the end of the financial year are shown as current assets in the Balance Sheet.

Leasing

This is a method of financing expenditure by paying the owner to use property or equipment for a number of years.

Lessee

User or renter of the leased asset or property. In case of capital leases, the lessee is also the 'debtor' to the lessor.

Lessor

Owner or the title holder of the leased asset or property. The lessor is also the lender and secured party in case of capital leases and operating leases.

Liability

A liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits as a result of past transactions or events.

Long-Term Asset

These are assets that are used in the provision of services (usually for more than one year).

Operating Leases

These are leases where risks of ownership of the asset remain with the owner.

Post Balance Sheet Events

Post Balance Sheet items are those that arise after the Balance Sheet date. These are items that did not exist at the time the Balance Sheet was prepared but should be disclosed if they are relevant to the understanding of the accounts.

Provision

A provision is an obligation to transfer economic benefits as a result of past events where a reliable estimate can be made of the obligation, but the amount or timing of which cannot yet be determined accurately.

Related Party

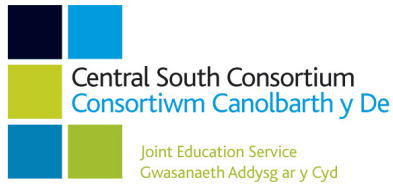
A related party exists where there is control or influence by one party over another.

Strain on Funds

When an employee retires early and is immediately paid a pension, without actuarial reduction, the lost contribution income and interest cost arising from the associated earlier increased cash flow is referred to as pension strain cost. The pension strain cost is determined by actuarial calculation.

Welsh Government (WG)

The Welsh Government is the devolved Government for Wales. The Welsh Government consists of the First Minister, Welsh Ministers, the Counsel General and Deputy Ministers. They are supported by Civil Servants who work across devolved areas of public life such as health, education and the environment.



CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM

JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT

27TH MAY 2021

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM GRANTS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

Author: Louise Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the grants to be received by the Consortium in 2020/21, for which notifications have been received, and the methods of allocation of each.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Directors recommend the following to the Joint Committee:

- 2.1 Approve the distribution of grants as detailed in section 5 of this report (and Annex A).
- 2.2 Accept the extension granted by Welsh Government (WG) for both the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and Pupil Development Grant (PDG) that allows funding to be used by the 31st August 2021.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As host authority Rhondda Cynon Taf will act as 'banker authority' and under the terms of the grant agreements will be responsible for accepting the terms and conditions of grant and putting in place arrangements to distribute the funding, as determined by the Joint Committee, within the Consortium.

4.0 METHOD OF APPORTIONMENT

- 4.1 The method of apportionment of each grant will vary depending on its nature, its intended recipients, its purposes and the associated terms and conditions.
- 4.2 For each grant the following process shall be adopted:
- The Consortium shall prepare a proposed method of distribution taking into account all relevant criteria.
 - The Director of Education (or equivalent) of each authority shall approve the basis of apportionment at the Executive Board of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. This will ensure appropriate and effective use of grant funding to target school improvement equitably across each of the five local authority areas.
 - A report detailing the basis and reasons for the method adopted shall be presented to the Joint Committee for approval.
- 4.3 This report presents details of 2020/21 grants to the Joint Committee.

5.0 2020/21 GRANTS

- 5.1 Grant approval letters have been received detailing grant levels for the Central South Consortium. The Directors have agreed to maintain the local authority dis-aggregation of the funding and to apply a common formula for the delegation of the local authority funding to schools.
- 5.2 Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant – Revised Award of Grant Funding
- 5.2.1 The revised award of funding is £226,500 (Appendix A), taking the total award of grant funding for the financial year 2020/21 to £43,501,335.
- 5.2.2 The aim of the additional funding is to further support the following:
- i) Support for schools - assessment and centre determined grades (CDG) - £214,000
 - ii) Design and Delivery Advisory Group - £14,000
 - iii) NEIR - The National Evaluation and Improvement Resource – (£1,500)
- 5.2.3 Members will note that of the revised award of funding (£226,500), £228,000 is retained initially for future delegation to schools / business plan priorities and (£1,500) retained to manage the programme on behalf of the five local authorities.
- 5.2.4 The original grant award letter (dated 7th July 2020) stated that the funding relates to the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 and must

be claimed in full by 31st March 2021 otherwise any unclaimed part of the Funding will cease to be available. Due to the current circumstances, Welsh Government are allowing an extension for the RCSIG funding to be used by the 31st August 2021.

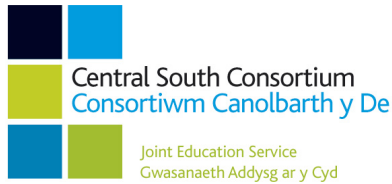
5.3 Pupil Development Grant – Revised Award of Grant Funding

5.3.1 The revised award of funding dated 17th March 2021 varies the funding agreement for the Pupil Development Grant 2020/2021.

5.3.2 The original grant award letter (dated 20th July 2020) stated that the funding relates to the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 and must be claimed in full by 31st March 2021 otherwise any unclaimed part of the Funding will cease to be available. Due to the current circumstances, Welsh Government are allowing an extension for the PDG funding to be used by the 31st August 2021.

Annex A

	Delegated to schools	Retained Initially for future delegation to schools	Retained by CSC for Specific Circumstances	Central Salaries	Total	Areas to include	Provisional Apportionment
	£	£	£	£	£		
Support for schools - assessment and centre determined grades (CDG)		214,000			214,000	Ensure schools are aware of key messages around the assessment process for awarding centre determined grades.	Plans currently being developed with WG - further updates to follow.
Design and Delivery Advisory Group		14,000			14,000	Ensure leadership and professional input is available to support the co-construction and implementation of assessment arrangements for qualifications in 2021.	Allocations as below for schools involved in the areas of work: £3.8k - Cardinal Newman RCHS £4.6k – Ysgol Garth Olwg £3.8k – Fitzalan HS £1.8k – YGG Bro Edern
National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR)			(1,500)		(1,500)	Support the National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (NEIR) develop a resource to support school self-evaluation and improvement.	Recovery of £1.5k funding allocations per school - award of funding included in RCSIG Variation letter dated 11 th February 2021.
TOTAL	0	228,000	(1,500)	0	226,500		



CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM

JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT

27TH MAY 2021

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM 2021/22 GRANTS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

Author: Louise Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the grants to be received by the Consortium in 2021/22, for which notifications have been received, and the methods of allocation of each.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Directors recommend the following to the Joint Committee:

- 2.1 Approve the distribution of grant as detailed in section 5 of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As host authority Rhondda Cynon Taf will act as 'banker authority' and under the terms of the grant agreements will be responsible for accepting the terms and conditions of grant and putting in place arrangements to distribute the funding, as determined by the Joint Committee, within the Consortium.

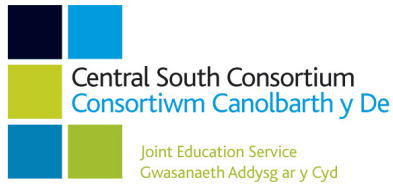
4.0 METHOD OF APPORTIONMENT

- 4.1 The method of apportionment of each grant will vary depending on its nature, its intended recipients, its purposes and the associated terms and conditions.
- 4.2 For each grant the following process shall be adopted:
- The Consortium shall prepare a proposed method of distribution taking into account all relevant criteria.
 - The Director of Education (or equivalent) of each authority shall approve the basis of apportionment at the Executive Board of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. This will ensure appropriate and effective use of grant funding to target school improvement equitably across each of the five local authority areas.
 - A report detailing the basis and reasons for the method adopted shall be presented to the Joint Committee for approval.
- 4.3 This report presents details of 2020/21 grants to the Joint Committee.

5.0 2021/22 GRANTS

- 5.1 Grant approval letters have been received detailing grant levels for the Central South Consortium. The Directors have agreed to maintain the local authority dis-aggregation of the funding and to apply a common formula for the delegation of the local authority funding to schools.
- 5.2 Siarter Iaith 2021/2022
- 5.2.1 The total grant in 2021/22 is £77,800.
- 5.2.2 The aim of the funding is to support the priority area of increasing pupils' informal use of the Welsh language by delivering the Siarter Iaith and its associated programmes.
- 5.2.4 The funding is to be retained by the consortium to fund direct staffing costs incurred in delivering the programme.

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**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE**

27TH MAY 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

**REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR – 2020/21 FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION REQUESTS (FOIs)**

Author: Louise Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the Freedom of Information Requests received and responded to by Central South Consortium during 2020/21.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Review the Freedom of Information Requests received and responded to by Central South Consortium during 2020/21 and determine whether there are any matters arising that require further action or attention.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Central South Consortium is responsible for adhering to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which enforces rights of access applicable to all information held by public authorities. The Act applies to all information no matter how recent or how old, held by Central South Consortium, in a recorded form, at the time a request is received.
- 3.2 Responding to a Freedom of Information Request in accordance with the Act is a statutory obligation and there are consequences for Central South Consortium if it fails to comply with those obligations.

3.3 All Freedom of Information requests must adhere to the following restrictions :-

- Must be in writing, which includes faxes, e-mails and those made via social media
- Must give a name and correspondence address for the applicant. Again, an e-mail address will suffice.
- Must describe the information being requested. However, the applicant does not have to say why they require the information.

3.4 All staff within Central South Consortium will comply with the Act and be able to correctly identify a Freedom of Information Request when received. Such requests should be forwarded to the Central South Consortium Communications Team to ensure the request is logged and acknowledged. A clear decision-making structure has been established, to ensure that decisions relating to the release, or withholding, of information are taken at the appropriate level. The key steps that have to be incorporated into the process are:

- Receiving and acknowledging the requests
- Transferring to appropriate officers
- Considering whether any relevant exemptions apply
- Consulting with third parties
- Estimating and recovering costs (if applicable)
- Tracking progress
- Producing partially disclosed documents
- Authorisation to release response
- Despatching to applicant within the timeframe i.e. 20 working days

4 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 2020/21

4.1 For the 2020/21 financial year, Central South Consortium have received 4 Freedom of Information Requests. A summary of the requests are set out in Table 1. For ease of reference, Table 1 also notes the appendix referenced to the full requests received (that are appended to this report)

Table 1 – 2020-21 Freedom of Information Requests

Date Received	Nature of Request	Date Response sent - within Timeframe?	Appendix Reference
03/04/2020	Copies of challenge adviser records held Records of visits undertaken by CSC staff Interview records for the post of strategic lead for teaching	28/04/2020 Yes, within timeframe	1
28/04/2020	Received in response to the request above Copies of EFI records Copy of report sent by challenge advisors to Estyn	19/05/2020 Yes, within timeframe	2
01/07/2020	Equality Impact Assessment in respect of: The initial school closures Schools reopening with part time / 1 day a week blended curriculum Equality Impact Assessment as per the above and specifically in relation to women	09/07/2020 Yes, within timeframe	3
08/07/2020	FOI request received by Welsh Government - CSC response required regarding increased operation of schools	15/07/2020 Yes, within timeframe	4

4.2 All Freedom of Information Requests were dealt with within the required timescales and no subsequent queries were received.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Central South Consortium is in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and recognises the importance of its obligations.

Appendix 1

Request

Good afternoon,

I would like to make a request under the data protection act for the following records,

I should appreciate if you could forward me a copy of all challenge advisor records held regarding Cefn primary and Craig Yr Hesg Primary 2014-2018

Records of all visits undertaken by CSC staff to Craig Yr Hesg 2014- 2018

Interview records for the post of strategic lead for Teaching

Kind Regards

XXXXXX

Response

Dear XXXXXX

Many thanks for your recent request for information under the Data Protection Act.

I attach a copy of our records held at Central South Consortium regarding Cefn Primary and Craig Yr Hesg Primary for the period 2014-2018.

In terms of your request for interview records, in line with HR custom and practice, the retention of records regarding recruitment is limited to 6 months and as this relates to a recruitment process longer than 6 months ago we are unable to supply this documentation.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards

CSC Communications

Appendix 2

Request

Dear XXXXXX

Thank you for records held.

I would like to request copies of the efi records from the period January 19 - December 19

A copy of the report for both cefn and Craig yr Hesg sent by challenge advisors to Estyn In November 19

As to the interview I.m aware of guidance just wanted a written response.
Thanks for your help in this matter

Regards
XXXXXX

Response

Dear XXXXXX

Please see attached the documents you requested.

If you have any further queries, please let us know.

Kind regards

Steve
CSC Communications

Appendix 3

Request

Hi ,

My details are -

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

I would like to request -

Equality Impact Assessment in respect of -

The initial school closures

Schools reopening with part time / 1 day a week blended curriculum

Also you equality impact assessment as per the above and specifically in relation to woman as well .

Many thanks

XXXXXXXXXX

Response

Dear XXXXXXXXX

Equality Impact Assessments would have been put in place as part of Welsh Government's policy making.

You are able to make a separate Freedom of Information request to Welsh Government regarding this. Further information about how do this is available here: <https://gov.wales/requesting-information-welsh-government-html>

Kind regards

CSC Communications

Appendix 4

Request

Good morning

Please find attached a letter, related to a FOI request received by Welsh Government regarding the increased operations of schools.

Please note the letter kindly asks for a response by 24 July 2020.

Many thanks in anticipation.

XXXXXXX

Response

Hi XXXXXX

I just wanted to let you know that our Managing Director, Clara Seery, has reviewed the document and can see no reason for Central South Consortium to object to this.

If you have any further queries, please let us know.

Kind regards

Steve

CSC Communications

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

27th May 2021

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

List of background papers

Freestanding matter

Officer to Contact:

Louise Blatchford
Tel no. 01443 281400

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