

A meeting of the CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE. will be held at the Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021 at 10.00 am

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 Joint Education Service Joint Committee held on 15th July 2021.

(Pages 3 - 6)

3. REPORT OF AUDIT WALES - AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

To consider the report of the Wales Audit Office

(Pages 7 - 24)

4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

To consider the report of the Treasurer

(Pages 25 - 126)

5. BUDGET REPORT 2021-2022

To receive an update from the Treasurer

(Pages 127 - 134)

6. ACCOUNTABILITY & IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

To receive an update and presentation from the Assistant Director Partnership & Improvement

(Pages 135 - 144)

7. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM LEGAL AGREEMENT

To consider a report of the Managing Director

(Pages 145 - 146)

**8. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM BUSINESS PLAN SUMMER
PROGRESS REPORT**

To consider a report of the Deputy Managing Director

(Pages 147 - 180)

9. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM AS A LEARNING ORGANISATION

To consider a report of the Managing Director

(Pages 181 - 196)

10. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE UNDER-MENTIONED RESOLUTION:

“That press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act”

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.

11. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM RISK REGISTER

To receive a report from the Deputy Managing Director of the Central South Consortium

(Pages 197 - 216)

12. 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. Meeting held on Thursday, 15 July 2021 at 10.15 am .

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

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

Council Officers in attendance:-

Mr E Cooper - Lead Chief Executive, (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)

Mr L. Harvey - Lead Director of Education, (Bridgend Council)
Ms S Davies – Head of Finance, Education & Financial Reporting (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Others in attendance:-

Ms C Seery – Managing Director (Central South Consortium)
Ms L Blatchford - Deputy Managing Director (Central South Consortium)

15 Welcome & Apologies

The Vice of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee explained to Members that the Chair has had some technical difficulties and would join the meeting as soon as it was made possible, therefore it was agreed that the Vice Chair would continue to chair today's Meeting.

16 Declaration of Interest

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

17 Minutes

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the 27th May 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee.

18 CSC Grants Report

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium provided Members of

the Joint Committee with an update on the grants to be received by the Consortium in 2021/2022, for which notification have been received, and the methods of allocation of each.

Members put forward the views in respect of the 2021/2022 grant funding and following in depth consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to approve the distribution of the grants as detailed in section 5 of the report.

(**Note** Cllr Rosser joined the meeting at this point)

19 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE (INDICATIVE 3 YEAR BUDGET - 2022/23 TO 2024/25)

The Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting informed Members of the Joint Committee that the purpose of the report is to allow Members to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update for the 3 year period beginning 1st April 2022 and if agreement, instruct the Treasurer to notify the constituent local authorities of the recommended indicative 3 year budget to inform medium financial planning arrangements within each Council.

The Officer continued and highlighted that the current uncertainties around future public sector funding levels as a result of the on- going impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the implications of the next UK Central Government Comprehensive Spending Review scheduled for autumn 2021, reinforce the importance for robust medium term financial planning.

Members acknowledged that the Chief Executives of each local authority, the Managing Director and the Treasurer have all contributed to updating the Consortium's MTFP and have complied financial modelling scenarios for consideration by the Joint Committee.

The Head of Financial, Education and Financial Reporting explained that the following key assumptions in the construction of options were:

- Employee costs based upon current structure with pay awards of 2% for the 3 years :
- No change to the split of employee cost funding between grant and core;
- No change to pension contribution rates
- Using CPI inflation for the next 3 years for 1.9%, 1.8% and 1.9%.

Members of the Joint Committee considered the following five scenarios:

- A. 0% increase in contribution levels for each of the 3 years;
- B. 1% reduction in contribution rates for each of the 3 years;
- C. 1% reduction for 22/23 then no change for the next two years;
- D. 1 % increase for each of the 3 years; and
- E. Increase in contributions equal to pay awards assumption @ 2%.

The Head of Financial, Education and Financial Reporting informed Members that between 2016/17 and 2021/22 budget savings of £854k have been delivered to meet reductions in core funding levels and have been met from areas that did not impact on frontline school improvement activities and include staffing saving, rationalisation of non- pay budgets and reductions in accommodation requirements and associated costs.

It was also explained that the Chief Executives of the constituent authorities

reviewed the options and have collectively recommend option E. This option requires the consortium to absorb non pay related inflation and results in a cumulative budget gap of £28k over the three year period. It was also explained that the Chief Executives recommendation results in annual increases in contributions of 1.72%, 1.73%, and 1.73% over each of the years covered in the MTFP period and values for each authority are shown in table 3 of the report.

In concluding her report the Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting explained that subject to the Joint Committee agreeing the Chief Executives recommendations:

- The Treasurer will notify the constituent LAs to take account of this within their own MTFPs, and
- The Managing Director and Treasurer will construct a draft Revenue Budget for the 2022/23 financial year and report back to Members in autumn 2021 in line with the timescales set out within Legal Agreement.

The Lead Chief Executive confirmed that Option E was the collective recommendation of the Chief Executives of the constituent authorities.

Members discussed the document in detail and agreed that option E of the Financial Modelling Scenarios would be the best option and **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the Medium Term Financial Plan update (2022/23 to 2024 /25) and instruct the treasurer to notify the constituent local authorities of the recommended indicative 3 year budget to inform medium financial planning arrangements with each Council.

20 URGENT BUSINESS

This meeting closed at 11.00 am

CLLR J. ROSSER
CHAIR.

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Audit of Accounts Report – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee

Audit year: 2020-21

Date issued: September 2021

Document reference: 2588A2021-22

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at infoofficer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Contents

We intend to issue an unqualified audit report on your Accounts.

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Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2020-21 accounts in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with the relevant officers.
- 3 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of 'materiality'. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 4 We set this level at £1.655 million for this year's audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, as follows:
 - Transactions with parties related to officers or members: £1,000
 - Senior officer remuneration: £1,000
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year's audit.
- 7 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves, and our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. There are no relationships between ourselves and yourselves that we believe could undermine our objectivity and independence.

Impact of COVID-19 on this year's audit

- 8 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all aspects of our society and continues to do so. You are required by law to prepare accounts and it is of considerable testament to the commitment of your accounts team that you have succeeded in doing so this year in the face of the challenges posed by this pandemic. We are extremely grateful to the professionalism of the team in supporting us to complete our audit in such difficult circumstances.
- 9 The pandemic has unsurprisingly affected our audit and we summarise in **Exhibit 1** the main impacts. Other than where we specifically make recommendations, the detail in **Exhibit 1** is provided for information purposes only to help you understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this year's audit process.

Exhibit 1 – impact of COVID-19 on this year’s audit

Timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We received the draft accounts in May 2021.• We expect your audit report to be signed in Autumn 2021.
Electronic signatures	We are anticipating that electronic signatures will be used on the Statement of Joint Committee’s Responsibilities, the Certificate of the Director of Finance and Digital Services as Treasurer of the Joint Committee and our Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements.
Audit evidence	All audit evidence was received electronically, and all discussions with officers at the Consortium and the Host Authority were held via video conferencing.

- 10 We will be reviewing what we have learned for our audit process from the COVID-19 pandemic and whether there are innovative practices that we might adopt in the future to enhance that process.

Proposed audit opinion

- 11 We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year’s accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation based on that set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 12 We issue a ‘qualified’ audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 13 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards along with confirmation of other specific information you have provided to us during our audit.
- 14 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Significant issues arising from the audit

Uncorrected misstatements

- 15 There are no misstatements identified in the accounts, which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

- 16 There were initially some misstatements in the accounts that have now been corrected by management; they are set out with explanations in **Appendix 3**.

Appendix 1

Final Letter of Representation

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

[Date]

Representations regarding the 2020-21 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements (including that part of the Remuneration Report that is subject to audit) of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith; and
- the design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and

- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements;
- our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others;
- our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements; and
- the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that the company maintains adequate accounting records.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee on 22 September 2021.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

We have disclosed the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Section 151 Officer

Joint Committee Chair

Date:

Date:

Appendix 2

Proposed Audit Report

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee

Opinion on the financial statements

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

Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee's 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 international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

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 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. 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

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the joint committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

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; and
- the information given in the 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:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- 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.

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 the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, 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.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- enquiring of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying and evaluating laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and posting of unusual journals.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments to address the risk of fraud through management override of controls.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all the audit team and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

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.

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.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
[Date]

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Appendix 3

Summary of corrections made

During our audit we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention due to their relevance to your responsibilities over the financial reporting process.

Exhibit 2: summary of corrections made

Value of correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£484,000	<p>Return on plan assets figure in note 15.2 updated from (£7,101,000) to (£7,585,000). This amendment impacts on a number of other entries in the pension disclosure notes as well as the Remeasurement of the Net Defined Liability on the face of the CIES which increased from (£1,682,000) to (£2,166,000).</p> <p>There is no impact on the reported (surplus)/deficit in-year as a result of this adjustment.</p>	Updated to reflect the latest actuarial information as identified by officers.
£199,000	<p>Adjustment of 'other' income within the Grant Income note from (£747,000) to (£548,000).</p> <p>Disclosure note amendment only.</p>	Year-end adjustment for revenue reserves incorrectly included in other income balance.

Value of correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
£1,000	The Managing Director's pay disclosed in the Senior Officers note has been updated from £112,000 to £113,000.	The pay award for 2020-21 was implemented from 1 September 2020 but should have been implemented from 1 April 2020. The £113,000 reflects the amount receivable by the Managing Director during 2020-21.
Narrative amendments	Three narrative amendments have been made to enhance the understandability of the financial statements.	Various minor narrative additions to improve narrative accuracy increase the understanding of users of the financial statements.



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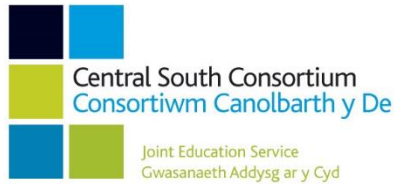
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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.



**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE**

22ND SEPTEMBER 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021**

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is intended to ensure that the Joint Committee complies with the legal requirements relating to the production of a “Statement of Accounts” for the financial year ended 31st March 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Approve the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2020/21 (Appendix 1) and the associated Letter of Representation of the Joint Committee (Appendix 2) incorporating the audit enquiries letter to those charged with governance and management; and
- 2.2 Note the audited final out-turn position for the Joint Committee for the 2020/21 financial year and the level of General Reserve Balances held.

3. STATUTORY APPROVAL PROCESS

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations require the Responsible Financial Officer to certify the unaudited Statement of Accounts by 31st May following financial year end. The Joint Committee complied with the regulations in this

respect and the unaudited accounts were signed by the Treasurer on 27th May 2021 (following their presentation to the Joint Committee on the same day).

- 3.2 The regulations require that the Joint Committee approve the **audited** Statement of Accounts by 31st July.

4. IMPACT OF COVID 19 UPON THE STATUTORY APPROVAL PROCESS

- 4.1 The regulations include a provision whereby if the Responsible Financial Officer does not certify the draft accounts by 31st May, or publication of audited accounts does not take place by 31st July, there is a requirement to publish a statement setting out the reasons for non-compliance. In accordance with these requirements, a [notice](#) has been published on the website of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC.
- 4.2 Welsh Government clarified their expectation for the timescales for the preparation and publication of 2020/21 statutory financial accounts, confirming there is no requirement to amend regulations and would require preparation and certification of draft accounts by 31st August 2021 (unaudited accounts were signed by the Treasurer on 27th May 2021, as noted in paragraph 3.1) and **publication of final audited accounts by 30th November 2021** for all local government bodies in Wales.

5. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 5.1 Following certification by the Treasurer, the Statement of Accounts was submitted to Audit Wales for external audit.
- 5.2 As part of the external audit process, a number of minor corrections were made to the final accounts now included at Appendix 1, these being:
- A number of notes were amended to provide further information to the reader of the accounts.
 - A small number of other presentational adjustments were made to the accounts.
- 5.3 The audit adjustments have not affected the general reserve balances, which remain as follows:

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

6. LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

- 6.1 It is normal practice for Audit Wales to request that the Responsible Finance Officer provides a “Letter of Representation”, which highlights material issues relating to the completeness and accuracy of the information included in their financial statements and could, therefore influence his audit opinion. This is to ensure that the Accounts properly reflect the Joint Committee’s financial standing and is consistent with the approach taken by Audit Wales in prior years.
- 6.2 The Letter of Representation for the Joint Committee has been prepared after full consultation with all relevant officers and is attached at Appendix 2.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The completion of the audit process of the statutory accounts provides the Joint Committee with the assurance that the financial affairs of the Committee have been conducted appropriately during the financial year 2020/21.

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

22nd September 2021

Report of the Joint Committee

Author: Stephanie Davies – Head of Finance – Education and Financial Reporting
**Item X - CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR
THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021**

List of background papers

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

Appendix 2 – Central South Consortium Letter of Representation 2020/21
(incorporating the audit enquiries letter to those charged with governance and management)

Officer to Contact :
Stephanie Davies
Tel no. 01443 680560

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

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2020/21

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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	470

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)	2,166	1,144
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)	1,267	1,144
Transfers to or (from) Earmarked Reserves	132	(132)	0	0	0
Increase or (decrease) in the Year	9	(132)	(123)	1,267	1,144
Balance as at 31st March 2021	147	599	746	276)	470

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	(2,166)	15.2
1,390	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(1,144)	

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	(242)	15.5
(674)	Net Assets/(Liabilities)	470	
	Represented by:		
	Usable Reserves		
138	General Reserves	147	13.1
731	Earmarked Reserves	599	13.2
	Unusable Reserves		
(1,518)	Pensions Reserve	(242)	15.5
(25)	Short-Term Accumulating Compensated Absence Account	(34)	
(674)	Total Reserves	470	

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 CPI inflation pension increases to be paid on Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) for those reaching State Pension Age on or after 6th April 2016. This is an approximate method of recognising the cost of the Government's commitment to compensate public service scheme members from the removal of the Additional Pension element of the State Pension from this date, and for the outcome of the Lloyds judgement which found GMPs to be illegally sex discriminatory. Government is consulting on its approach to compensating affected members. Whilst the final remedy arising from that consultation may be different than that reflected in the accounts, the actuary expects the outcome will include an extension of full indexation for many members yet to be compensated therefore the approach is deemed to be a reasonable estimate.

In October 2020 a second ruling in the Lloyds bank case clarified that compensation would be required for members who transferred benefits out since May 1990. Government has not yet acknowledged a liability in public service schemes nor indicated an approach in rectifying this. Therefore, no allowance for potential liabilities relating to the second Lloyds ruling is included in the accounts.

Goodwin Ruling

In June 2020 an Employment Tribunal ruled in relation to the Teacher's Pension Scheme, that provisions for survivor's benefits of a female member

in an opposite sex marriage are less favourable than for a female in a same sex marriage or civil partnership, and that treatment amounts to direct discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The chief secretary to the Treasury announced in a ministerial statement on 20th July 2020 that he believed that changes would be required to other public service pension schemes with similar arrangements. As these changes are yet to be reflected in the LGPS regulations and also on the basis of materiality, allowance has not been made in the calculations.

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". HM Treasury and the Scheme Advisory Board had paused their reviews following the McCloud judgement in the Court of Appeal. These have now been unpaused and HMT Directions are expected during 2021 allowing reviews to proceed. It is unlikely the outcome of those reviews will be known in 2021 and no changes in benefits or contributions are expected until 2024. No allowance for the impact of the cost management process has been made in the calculations.

5.0 Employees Costs

2019/20		2020/21
£'000	Salaries & Wages	£'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)
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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	(548)
(74,246)	Total Grant Income	(78,143)
	Allocation	
69,182	Paid to local authorities and schools (Note 6.0)	71,987
5,064	Retained by Central South Consortium	6,156
74,246	Total Allocation	78,143

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	(1,010)
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 and support provided to ALN Transformation regional project (£27k) 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

The Central South Consortium holds an earmarked reserve for the funding of specific projects of which £6k is set aside to support school improvement activities (£332k held as at 31st March 2020) and £200k set aside for ongoing service remodelling and medium term financial planning (£200k held as at 31st March 2020).

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)	1,276	(9)	1,267
Balance as at 31st March 2021	(242)	(34)	(276)

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	(7,585)
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	(1,085)
<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 £2,166k (£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 £2,719k (£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)	7,585
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	32,871

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 £8,154k (£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	32,871
Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,518)	(242)

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Joint Committee has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £242k 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 Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Joint Committee on 22nd September 2021. 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 material 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 Joint Education Service'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 *	113	0	0	7	120
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
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* Includes the total amount of salary, fees or allowances paid to or receivable during 2020/2021, part of which (£1k) will be remunerated to the senior officer during 2021/2022.

** The Assistant Director – Curriculum previously held the post of Senior Lead – Curriculum Reform (up to 31st December 2020) via a secondment arrangement and is not included in this note as the post-holder was an officer of the employing local authority (Cardiff) rather than the Consortium itself.

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	67	0	0	0	67

Managing Director (up to 31/03/2020)					
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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:

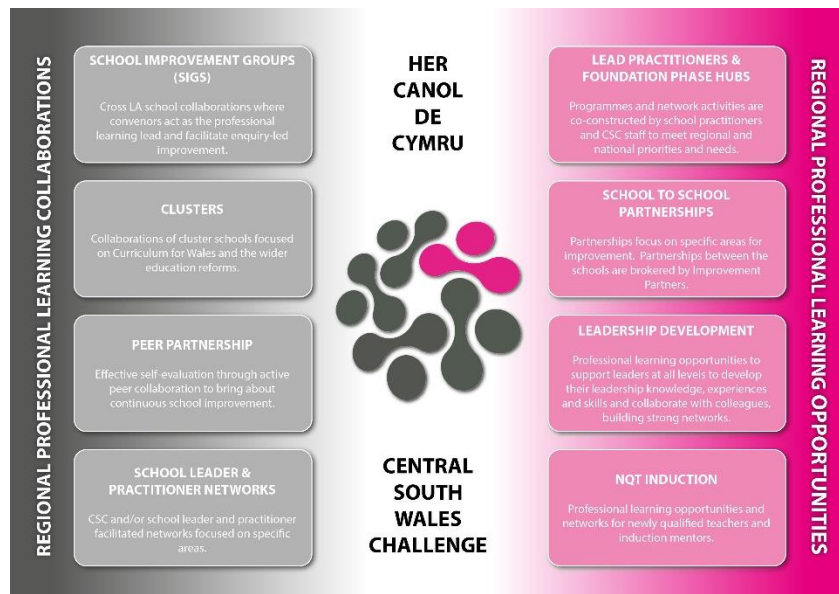
- Bridgend CBC;
- Cardiff CBC;
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC;
- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC; and
- Vale of Glamorgan CBC.

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. • Scrutiny Committees. • Challenge and Review sessions with Welsh Government.
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	<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

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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: Clare Murray Section 151 Officer: Glenn

Chair, Joint Education Committee Jan Ross

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.

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		undertaken during 2019/20)	<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.

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)) and Practice Note 10 "Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom". 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

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the joint committee's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting

for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

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 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:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- ;

- 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.

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.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - Identifying and evaluating laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and posting of unusual journals.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments to address the risk of fraud through management override of controls.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

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.

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.

Adrian Crompton
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
XX September 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.

APPENDIX 2

Date/Dyddiad:
22nd September 2021

Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:
Barrie Davies
(01443) 424026

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Dear Adrian

Representations regarding the 2020/21 Central South Consortium – Joint Education Service Joint Committee Financial Statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements (including that part of the Remuneration Report that is subject to audit) of Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the year ended 31st March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith.
- The design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- Full access to:

- all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- The results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
 - Our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
 - Our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.
 - Our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.
 - The identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that the Joint Committee maintains adequate accounting records.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee on 22nd September 2021.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

We have disclosed the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Section 151 Officer

Joint Committee Chair

Date:

Date:

Matters in relation to fraud

International Standard for Auditing (UK and Ireland) 240 covers auditors responsibilities relating to fraud in an audit of financial statements.

The primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud rests with both management and 'those charged with governance', which for the Central South Education Consortium is the Joint Committee. Management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, should ensure there is a strong emphasis on fraud prevention and deterrence and create a culture of honest and ethical behaviour, reinforced by active oversight by those charged with governance.

As external auditors, we are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. We are required to maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit, considering the potential for management override of controls.

What are we required to do?

As part of our risk assessment procedures we are required to consider the risks of material misstatement due to fraud. This includes understanding the arrangements management has put in place in respect of fraud risks. The ISA views fraud as either:

- the intentional misappropriation of assets (cash, property, etc); or
- the intentional manipulation or misstatement of the financial statements.

We also need to understand how those charged with governance exercises oversight of management's processes. We are also required to make enquiries of both management and those charged with governance as to their knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud, for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud and the internal controls established to mitigate them.

Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud	
Question	2020-21 Response
1. What is management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud and what are the principal reasons?	<p>Good governance flows from a shared ethos and culture, as well as from systems and structures. The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee expects all representatives (i.e. Members and Officers) to conduct their duties with the highest levels of honesty and integrity.</p> <p>Policies underpin the culture in place and the Regional Internal Audit Shared Service test compliance with relevant Policies linked to the core financial systems (in line with the approved Annual Audit Plan).</p> <p>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 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's operating terms and conditions). A comprehensive suite of information such as policies and procedures are available for officers on "The Source" such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Procedure Rules • Contract Procedure Rules • Human Resources policies • Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy • Whistleblowing Policy • Gifts and Hospitality Policy. <p>Codes and Protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members' Code of Conduct • Protocol Standard of Conduct to be followed by Members • Officers' Code of Conduct • Protocol for Member/Officer Relations <p>Where Members and/or Officers do not undertake their duties in accordance with the expected standards then governance arrangements are in place within the Consortium to manage this process in an equitable, fair and transparent manner.</p> <p>Taking all of the above into account, our assessment of the risk of fraud arising and having a material impact on the financial statements is considered to be low.</p>

Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud	
Question	2020-21 Response
2. What processes are employed to identify and respond to the risks of fraud more generally and specific risks of misstatement in the financial statements?	<p>The Consortium has a number of governance arrangements in place that help in the prevention and detection of fraudulent and/or improper activities. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial & Contract Procedure Rules • Systems of Internal Control • Recruitment Policies • Whistleblowing Policy • Local procedures within departments, for example, authorisation arrangements and quality assurance processes (a number of which were undertaken remotely during 2020/21 due to revised working arrangements as a result of the pandemic) • An independent Internal Audit Service (the 'scopes' for audit assignments included in the 2020/21 Audit Plan are taking account of revised working arrangements / potential risks as a result of the pandemic). • An independent Corporate Fraud Team • Combining with Others to Prevent and Fight Fraud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participation in the National Fraud Initiative for example <p>The Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy provides a clear path for raising concerns and facilitating 'tip-offs', and the fraud response arrangements outlined enables such information or allegations to be properly dealt with and reported.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Policy also gives advice on how to raise a concern, as well as providing information on the safeguards and support that are available to those who raise concerns.</p> <p>Given the governance arrangements in place, management can give assurance that the risk of material misstatement is low.</p>
3. What arrangements are in place to report fraud issues and risks to the Audit Committee?	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, the host authority, along with the Consortium are resolute in their determination to maintain a reputation that will not tolerate fraud, bribery, corruption or abuse of position for personal gain, wherever it may be found in any area of Council or Joint Committee activity.</p> <p><u>Arrangements in place to report fraud issues</u></p> <p><u>Whistleblowing</u></p> <p>An updated Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council was reported to and approved by the Council's Audit Committee on 26th April 2021 together with the Whistleblowing Annual Report 2020/21. <u>With regard to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, it was noted at the meeting that the</u></p>

Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud	
Question	2020-21 Response
	<p><u>approved Policy and Procedure would be published on the Council's website and awareness raising undertaken across the Council.</u></p> <p>The purpose of the Policy is to provide a means by which complaints of malpractice or wrongdoing can be raised by those who feel that other avenues for raising such issues are inappropriate. The Policy confirms that so far as possible, those raising concerns under the Policy will be treated confidentially.</p> <p>Workers are encouraged to report any concerns they have via the Council's <u>Whistleblowing webpage "Get Involved"</u>.</p> <p><u>Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy</u> The purpose of the Strategy is to communicate the Council's main principles for countering fraud, bribery and corruption. It sets out the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance approach against fraud, bribery & corruption; • Reporting avenues for suspected irregularities; • Resources that are in place to support a counter fraud, bribery & corruption culture; and • Governance arrangements in respect of reporting to Audit Committee. <p>In the Host Authority's <u>Report It</u> section of the website, instructions for those who wish to raise anti-fraud, bribery or corruption concerns are provided along with the means to complete an on-line form.</p> <p><u>Arrangements in place to report to Governance & Audit Committee:</u></p> <p>At the <u>2nd November 2020 Audit Committee meeting</u>, an Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Progress Report 2020/21 was presented and at the 12th July 2021 Governance and Audit Committee¹, the Anti-Fraud Annual Report 2020/21 was reported that set out progress during 2020/21 and a workplan for 2021/22 (both of which were noted and agreed). This update helps to ensure 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.</p>

¹ Governance and Audit Committee – previously named Audit Committee up to the Council's Annual General Meeting in May 2021 where at this meeting it was agreed for the Committee to be re-named to the Governance and Audit Committee in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021

Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud	
Question	2020-21 Response
	<p>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).</p> <p>At the 26th April 2021 the Audit Committee meeting, whistleblowing activity during 2020/21 was reported (as part of the Whistleblowing Annual Report) and concluded that arrangements were appropriate (note: the updated Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure was also reported to this meeting).</p> <p>Related information is also included under question 5 'Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud'.</p>
4. How has management communicated expectations of ethical governance and standards of conduct and behaviour to all relevant parties, and when?	<p>Employees</p> <p>The Consortium has a number of recruitment and selection Policies in place that help to ensure that new recruits have the integrity and ethical values of the organisation and also the competencies to undertake the duties required of them.</p> <p>Employees have contracts of employment and competency based job descriptions which set out grade, roles and responsibilities. The Human Resources Service oversees terms and conditions of employment, and the Council, as Host Authority, have a suite of policies and procedures that are available for officers to access.</p> <p>Each new recruit is provided with a the 'Basic Rules – A Guide for Employees' booklet, via The Source that gives each employee information in relation to (amongst other things) expected behaviour, use of social media, appearance and attendance as well as the Consortium's Staff Handbook. The expectations of each employee are set out from the outset.</p> <p>The Host Authority describes 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.</p>

Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud	
Question	2020-21 Response
5. Are you aware of any instances of actual, suspected or alleged fraud within the audited body since 1 April 2020?	<p>No instances of fraud relating to the financial management of the Joint Committee were reported to and / or investigated by Internal Audit during 2020/21.</p> <p>In addition, no instances of fraud relating to the financial management of the Joint Committee were reported / identified via the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and Procedure and/or Whistleblowing Policy during 2020/21.</p> <p>To support transparency and openness, the Host Authority's arrangements during 2020/21 included:</p> <p><u>Whistle-blowing arrangements</u></p> <p>A new Regulation came into force during April 2017 which placed a requirement upon the Council to report annually on whistle-blowing disclosures. The Regulation required the Council to publish the annual report on its website or by other means appropriate for bringing the report to the attention of the public. For Rhondda Cynon Taf, this requirement was met for the 2020/21 financial year via an Annual Report to Audit Committee on 26th April 2021.</p> <p><u>Anti-fraud, Bribery & Corruption arrangements</u></p> <p>As set out for question 3 above, the Anti-Fraud Annual Report for 2020/21 was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 12th July 2021 and an in-year Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption progress report was presented to the 2nd November 2020 Audit Committee meeting. Both updates 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.</p> <p>The Host Authority included a payslip insert to all employees in August 2020 providing information on how employees could report any suspicions regarding Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption.</p>
6. Are you aware of any fraud within the Consortium since 1 April 2020?	Please refer to the response to question 5, above.
7. Are you aware of any instances of actual, suspected or alleged fraud	Please refer to the response to question 5, above.

Enquiries of management - in relation to fraud

Question	2020-21 Response
within the Consortium since 1 April 2020?	

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to fraud	
Question	2020-21 Response
<p>1. How does the Joint Committee, exercise oversight of management's processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud within the audited body and the internal control that management has established to mitigate those risks?</p>	<p>Joint Committee 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 the Central South Consortium into one Agreement.</p> <p>The Legal Agreement for the Joint Education Service provides the governance framework within which the Service operates and allocates responsibility and accountability, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Host Authority; • The Directors' Steering Group; • The Advisory Board; • Operational Management Group; • Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee; and • Financial Management
<p>2. Are you aware of any instances of actual, suspected or alleged fraud with the audited body since 1 April 2020?</p>	<p>Please refer to response within "Enquiries of Management" section, Question 5.</p>

Appendix 2

Matters in relation to laws and regulations

International Standard for Auditing (UK and Ireland) 250 covers auditors responsibilities to consider the impact of laws and regulations in an audit of financial statements.

Management, with the oversight of those charged with governance (Joint Committee), is responsible for ensuring that the Central South Education Consortium's operations are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations, including compliance with those that determine the reported amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.

As external auditors, we are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error, taking into account the appropriate legal and regulatory framework. The ISA distinguishes two different categories of laws and regulations:

- laws and regulations that have a direct effect on determining material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements;
- other laws and regulations where compliance may be fundamental to the continuance of operations, or to avoid material penalties.

What are we required to do?

As part of our risk assessment procedures we are required to make inquiries of management and the Joint Committee as to whether Central South Education Consortium is in compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Where we become aware of information of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance we need to gain an understanding of the non-compliance and the possible effect on the financial statements.

Enquiries of management – in relation to laws and regulations	
Question	2020-21 Response
1. How have you gained assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?	The accounts are prepared in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations. Audit Wales have not raised any issues of non-compliance.
2. Have there been any instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations since 1 April 2020, or earlier with an ongoing impact on the 2020-21 financial statements?	There are no instances of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Joint Committee receives assurance on this from the appointed External Auditor.
3. Are there any potential litigations or claims that would affect the financial statements?	Any potential litigations and/or claims are accounted for in accordance with the Code of Practice and where appropriate, disclosed in the letter of representation.
4. Have there been any reports from other regulatory bodies, such as HM Revenues and Customs which indicate non-compliance?	No.
5. Are you aware of any non-compliance with laws and regulations within the council since 1 April 2020?	No.

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to laws and regulations

Question	2020-21 Response
1. How does the Joint Committee, in its role as those charged with governance, obtain assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?	Constituent Local Authorities make appointment of elected members for representation on the Joint Committee. Full Council (Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC) ratifies the appointment of the Section 151 Officer and the Council's Monitoring Officer, whose roles are defined by statute and referenced within the Constitution. The Joint Committee receives assurance from the appointed External Auditor.
2. Are you aware of any instances of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations?	There are no instances of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Joint Committee receives assurance on this from the appointed External Auditor.

Appendix 3

Matters in relation to related parties

International Standard for Auditing (UK and Ireland) 550 covers auditors responsibilities relating to related party relationships and transactions.

The nature of related party relationships and transactions may, in some circumstances, give rise to higher risks of material misstatement of the financial statements than transactions with unrelated parties.

Because related parties are not independent of each other, many financial reporting frameworks establish specific accounting and disclosure requirements for related party relationships, transactions and balances to enable users of the financial statements to understand their nature and actual or potential effects on the financial statements. An understanding of the entity's related party relationships and transactions is relevant to the auditor's evaluation of whether one or more fraud risk factors are present as required by ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, because fraud may be more easily committed through related parties.

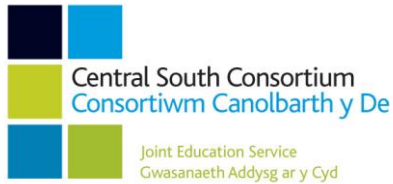
What are we required to do?

As part of our risk assessment procedures, we are required to perform audit procedures to identify, assess and respond to the risks of material misstatement arising from the entity's failure to appropriately account for or disclose related party relationships, transactions or balances in accordance with the requirements of the framework.

Enquiries of management – in relation to related parties	
Question	2020-21 Response
<p>1. Confirm that you have disclosed to the auditor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the identity of any related parties, including changes from the prior period; • the nature of the relationships with these related parties; • details of any transactions with these related parties entered into during the period, including the type and purpose of the transactions. 	<p>Related party transactions are disclosed within the notes to the statement of accounts in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.</p>
<p>2. What controls are in place to identify, authorise, approve, account for and disclose related party transactions and relationships?</p>	<p>Governance arrangements are in place to ensure that a Register of Members Interests is in place and also that Declarations of Interest at Joint Committee are asked for as a standard agenda item.</p> <p>Within the Annual Statement of Accounts of the Joint Committee, there is a requirement for the disclosure of “Related Party Transactions”. This relates to payments made to, or income received from, any organisation in which a Member of the Joint Committee or Chief Officer (i.e. who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team of a Constituent local authority and has a designated role as part of the Consortium’s arrangements), has an interest, financial or otherwise.</p> <p>Additional controls are in place to ensure records of related parties are captured prior to a Member or officer of the Senior Leadership team leaving the local authority.</p> <p>Further additional Controls in place include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts & Hospitality Policy • Contract Procedure Rules • The Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy

Enquiries of the those charged with governance – in relation to related parties	
Question	2020-21 Response
<p>1. How does the Joint Committee, in its role as those charged with governance, exercise oversight of management's processes to identify, authorise, approve, account for and disclose related party transactions and relationships?</p>	<p>Governance arrangements are in place to ensure that a Register of Members Interests is in place and also that Declarations of Interest at each committee are asked for as a standard agenda item.</p> <p>Within the Annual Statement of Accounts of the Joint Committee, there is a requirement for the disclosure of "Related Party Transactions". This relates to payments made to, or income received from, any organisation in which a Member of the Joint Committee or Chief Officer (i.e. who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team of a Constituent local authority and has a designated role as part of the Consortium's arrangements), Chief Officer (who sits on the Senior Leadership Team) of the each of the constituent Council's has an interest, financial or otherwise.</p> <p>Additional Controls in place include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts & Hospitality Policy • Contract Procedure Rules • The Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy.

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CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE

22ND SEPTEMBER 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

REPORT OF THE TREASURER – 2021/22 BUDGET

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Joint Committee's approval for proposed budget virements to be made to the 2021/22 revenue budget.
- 1.2 To provide Members with an update of the projected outturn for 2021/22 (projected as at August 2021).
- 1.3 To provide Members with a summary of 2021/22 grant funding allocations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note and approve the proposed budget virements within the 2021/22 budget.
- 2.2 Note the current outturn position for 2021/22.
- 2.3 Note the current grant position for 2021/22.

3. REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

- 3.1 The 2021/22 revenue budget was agreed by Joint Committee on the 16th December 2020. Since this time, a number of proposed budget virements within categories of expenditure and income have been identified, informed by up dated service information, to more accurately reflect the actual costs to be incurred during the year. The overall effect of the

proposed virements would not impact upon the value of contributions from the constituent authorities and are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Proposed budget virements

Category	Original Budget 2021/22 £	Revised Budget 2021/22 £	Proposed Budget Virement £
Expenditure			
Employees	3,067,186	3,067,186	0
Premises	156,605	156,005	(600)
Transport	28,000	10,800	(17,200)
Supplies & Services	189,020	228,981	39,961
Commissioning	27,655	27,655	0
Support Services	114,566	119,250	4,684
Gross Expenditure	3,583,032	3,609,877	26,845
Income			
Local Authority Contributions	3,563,532	3,563,532	0
Grants & Other Income	19,500	46,345	(26,845)
Total Income	3,583,032	3,609,877	(26,845)
Net Expenditure	0	0	0

3.2 The main reasons for the proposed budget virements to the Original Budget set are as follows:

- Transport – the revised budget reflects a lower estimated expenditure requirement for the year due to the continued impact of COVID-19 (i.e. officers working from home and providing a range of support to schools remotely);
- Supplies & Services – an increase in budgeted expenditure primarily due to annual user licencing costs;
- Support Services – following the outcome of a review of support services received from the host authority, an increase in budget is required to reflect the full cost of services provided (noting that the proposed revised budget remains lower than the 2017/18 budgeted cost); and
- Grants and Other Income – the budgeted income has been revised based on more up to date information regarding the continuation of project support provided by Consortium staff to the ALN Transformation project led by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

- 3.3 The Joint Committee is requested to approve the proposed budget virements, as set out in Table 1, to more accurately reflect the actual costs to be incurred during the year.

Budget Monitoring 2021/22

- 3.4 A summary of the revised budget, projected outturn for the full year (projected as at August 2021) and variances are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Projected outturn position 2021/22

Category	Revised Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Out-turn 2021/22 £	Variance (Under) / Over spend £
Expenditure			
Gross Employees	3,067,186	3,065,678	(1,508)
Net Employees	3,067,186	3,065,678	(1,508)
Premises			
Rent	155,855	155,855	0
Maintenance	150	0	(150)
Other	0	18	18
Total Premises Cost	156,005	155,873	(132)
Transport	10,800	10,800	0
Supplies & Services			
Continuing Professional Development / Staff Adverts	51,774	51,774	0
Licences / Mobile & Telephone Charges / Computer Costs – Hardware / Software	94,261	97,703	3,442
External Audit & Actuary Fee, Employer Liability & Public Liability Insurance	53,020	53,520	500
Photocopying / Postage / Advertising / Stationery / General Office Expenses	29,926	26,848	(3,078)
Total Supplies & Services	228,981	229,845	864

Category	Revised Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Out-turn 2021/22 £	Variance (Under) / Over spend £
Commissioning	27,655	27,655	0
Support Services	119,250	119,250	0
Gross Expenditure	3,609,877	3,609,101	(776)
Income			
Local Authority Contributions	3,563,532	3,563,532	0
Grants & Other Income	46,345	46,345	0
Total Income	3,609,877	3,609,877	0
Net Expenditure	0	(776)	(776)

3.5 The projected outturn position (projected as at August 2021) is a £0.8k underspend and reasons for key variances are set out below:

- Employees (£2k projected underspend) –due to updated Improvement Partner staffing costs for the year; and
- Supplies and Services (£1k projected overspend) – estimated additional one-off costs to enable investment in ICT hardware to support the Consortium in developing further its school improvement capabilities that are partly offset by forecasted underspends across other Supplies and Services budget areas.

3.6 Members will be aware the Joint Committee at its 27th May 2021 meeting approved a £200k earmarked reserve to support the remodelling of the service over the medium term and £6k to support the delivery of a sensory project, with both reserves included in the draft certified Statement of Accounts for 2020/21. For the purposes of this budget monitoring update, both earmarked reserves are forecasted to be fully committed.

4. GRANT FUNDED SERVICE 2021/22

4.1 Table 3 sets out the 2021/22 grant allocations received by the Consortium from Welsh Government as at August 2021.

Table 3 – 2021/22 grant allocations

Grant	Total Grant	Retained to Fund National Priorities	Delegated to Schools/Local Authorities
	2021-22 £	2021-22 £	2021-22 £
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (including match funding)	50,194,101	5,436,962	44,757,139
Welsh Language Framework	77,800	77,800	0
Pupil Development Grant *	37,581,970	318,056	37,263,914
Main	28,984,600	0	28,984,600
Early Years	5,913,300	0	5,913,300
Children Looked After	2,028,600	122,896	1,905,704
Education Other Than At School	277,150	0	277,150
PDG Consortia Led	278,320	95,160	183,160
Pupil Development Grant Adviser	100,000	100,000	0
Total	87,853,871	5,832,818	82,021,053

* Award of funding letter is yet to be issued by Welsh Government. Pupil Development Grant funding is based on indicative allocations provided by Welsh Government.

Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant 2021/22

- 4.2 For Members information, the total award of funding is £47,205,079 for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 and is also subject to Local Authority match funding of £2,989,022 (equating to a total grant of £50,194,101 as per Table 3).
- 4.3 With specific regard to the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant, funding will support the Consortium to deliver against Welsh Government national priorities for education, at the centre of which is a transformational curriculum and a focus on four key enabling objectives (the outcomes will be supported by a range of measures as outlined in the Consortium's Business Plan):
- Developing and delivering a high-quality education profession;
 - Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards;
 - Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being; and

- Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system.
- 4.4 The Consortium has updated its Grants Register to reflect the position set out in Table 3 and will continue to monitor expenditure to ensure the use and effectiveness of grants are maximised across the region.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Following the Joint Committee approving the 2021/22 revenue budget on the 16th December 2020, a number of proposed budget virements have been identified, informed by up dated service information, to more accurately reflect the actual costs to be incurred during the year.
- 5.2 The projected outturn position for the full year is a £0.8k underspend (projected as at August 2021) and the Consortium will continue to closely monitor and manage its resources and report up dates to Joint Committee throughout the year.
- 5.3 The 2021/22 Grants Register has been updated to reflect the current grant funding position.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

22ND SEPTEMBER 2021

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

List of background papers

Freestanding matter

Officer to Contact :

Stephanie Davies

Tel no. 01443 680560

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Improvement and Accountability

Supporting School

Improvement

September 2021 and Beyond

Supporting School Improvement September 2021 and Beyond

Central South Consortium is commissioned by our partner LAs to provide school improvement for the region. This involves providing support and challenge to schools to ensure learners across the region have the right educational experiences to allow them to make progress and be successful in the next phase of learning or employment.

The academic year 2021-22 is a particularly poignant one in the national reform journey with the lead up to a new curriculum in September 2022.

The overarching purpose of school improvement is to support schools to give learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes. In October 2020 the OECD's report to Welsh Government 'Achieving the new curriculum for Wales' emphasised the point that all aspects of the schools system are aligned with and support the new curriculum and its underlying principles. To support such alignment, a draft document 'School improvement guidance- framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability' was published by the Welsh Government in January 2021. This guidance provides a new point of reference for schools, Local Authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn and the expectations of them in contributing to school improvement. It is the intention of Welsh Government that this guidance will become statutory in September 2022. The changes set out in the guidance are not too far removed from the model that CSC adopted and trialled in 2020-21 academic year given the suspension of categorisation. A national evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR) is also being produced which will support schools in undertaking robust self-evaluation. CSC is therefore, in a very strong position to make further refinements to the way we support and challenge our schools and deliver national principles in a local manner bespoke to the needs of our schools.

CSC will continue to provide

- An improvement partner linked to every school;
- A Welsh in Education officer to every school;
- The Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) programme;
- The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH);
- Professional learning for all school-based staff at all stages of their career (including all leadership programmes);
- Extensive professional learning linked to emerging school priorities;
- Extensive professional learning linked to national priorities. For example, intensive support for the development of the Curriculum for Wales; and
- Oversight of grant funded activity.

National Principles

This set of national principles will be applied through local approaches to meet the requirements of the national guidance. This is a cyclical process to support school improvement. The set of national principles are:

1. There will be a discussion / collaborative meeting with schools and governing body representative to:
 - Share and agree school improvement priorities based on self-evaluation and the national reform agenda.
 - Agree the additional support needs of the school / setting (LA and regional support). The agreed support should be reference within the SDP.
 - Identify where the school / setting has strengths and its capacity to support others.
2. Regions will collate an overview of school improvement priorities and the support being provided by both the LA and region.
3. Support provided to schools / settings will be documented.
4. In collaboration with schools, regions and LAs, will provide a termly evaluation on the school's progress towards meeting its priorities, identifying or amending bespoke support as necessary.
5. In collaboration with schools and governing bodies, regions and LAs will identify and discuss any potential risks to progress, identifying or amending bespoke support as necessary.
6. Work collaboratively with schools to undertake a range of self-evaluation activity where appropriate and facilitate opportunities for school-to-school peer working to support self-evaluation processes.

The role of the Improvement Partner

With the significant reform agenda that is in progress across Wales, it is important CSC continues to ensure the support provided by Improvement Partners is holistic, efficient and effective in line with the national principles. It is essential the Improvement Partner forms a strong professional relationship with the Headteacher.

As well as providing support and challenge to schools, the improvement partner also ensures that schools are well prepared and display behaviours that positively support the complete national reform agenda. The complete national reform agenda encompasses 5 areas:

- Curriculum
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Equity, Excellence and Wellbeing
- Teaching
- Leadership

CSC provide schools with excellent professional learning opportunities, resources and guidance to support schools through this transformational reform. School leaders need the time and space to be able to make sense of transformational reform and the plethora of national and regional supporting resource's that go with it. The Improvement Partner role is a hugely significant one in 'signposting' school leaders and other stakeholders to use the pertinent documents e.g. CSC 'Equity and Excellence' strategy and professional learning that is available in the region, a conduit between policy and practice. This will enhance the school's ability to develop as a learning organisation and support putting the new curriculum and other reforms into place.

Improvement Partners will continue to support the Governing Body with the Headteachers performance management and will support the governing body to understand their role in school improvement. Improvement Partners will also collaborate with the Regional Leads for Governors in order to support school governors to fulfil their responsibility in holding schools to account.

In addition, Improvement Partners will continue to:

- Agree eFSM allocation of spend and regularly monitoring impact
- Review monitoring cycle
- Collaborate with LA & CSC colleagues

Allocation of Support

Support will take the form of 'core' or 'enhanced' support that is provided in a fair way that is inversely proportional to needs of the school.

All schools will receive a basic **minimum** allocation of days and further time will be allocated based on the support needs identified. This minimum is:

Primary/Nursery	7
Special/PRU	10
Secondary	10
3-16/19	16

Enhanced support schools will receive additional time to reflect the development needs and monitoring requirements. This support will be agreed between the school and IP and shared with the LA when the School Improvement Priorities are agreed. Specified days might not all be from the same Improvement Partner but might include work of others more specialists in certain areas. The impact of this support will be monitored half termly and will be shared with LAs in the termly review meetings. CSC quality assurance processes will ensure that support is targeted and is meeting the needs of the school. Our processes will focus on the impact of support in school and will ensure consistency across the region.

Support and Challenge Functions

The Improvement Partner will support schools through appropriate challenge to identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation. The IP will work with school leaders to review first-hand evidence and ensure that this is rigorous and accurate. This will work in conjunction with the school systems and will not generate additional work for school leaders. This is in line with the Welsh government guidance where it is the intention that these priorities will in part replace target setting.

Each school will have their own unique set of priorities, based on their own context, self-evaluation, needs and improvement journey, ultimately seeking to improve learner outcomes. Therefore, priorities will need to ensure a focus on pupil progress. Furthermore, the IP will also support schools in ensuring that improvement priorities are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan, helping to reduce workload, streamline schools' strategic planning processes and avoid unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy. These priorities will be made available to the Local Authority for their approval. All support will be referenced in the SDP and the Improvement Partner will work in partnership with LA colleagues based on a shared understanding of their respective roles in supporting schools, to engage with schools on their development plan. It is important that Improvement Partners also capture strengths and emerging practice worth sharing. This can be shared with governors, other Improvement Partners and Local Authorities.

Based on the needs of the school the Improvement Partner will identify the support needs, and broker support required. Support will be tightly focused on the actions in the SDP and brokerage will be coordinated by the Improvement Partner and overseen by the Principal Improvement Partner. This will be internally quality assured by PIPs and our intention is that all support is provided based on need.

Once the support programme is agreed the Improvement Partner is responsible for quality assuring the impact of this support with the HT and governors as appropriate. This will include regular discussions with the support team. This information will be shared with the LA.

Moving between Core and Enhanced Support

If schools are not demonstrating appropriate rates of progress towards achieving their improvement priorities then the Improvement Partner will share this information with the school, governors, LA and CSC and a decision will then be made as to whether the school may need enhanced support. Similarly concerns raised by the LA will follow a similar process to enable the school to receive enhanced support. This reinforces the partnership approach to providing the best support for schools. Improvement Partners will then provide a detailed evaluation of progress with a judgement on the rate of progress. If the school, governors, LA and CSC agree that progress is appropriate, a discussion can then take place about moving the school to enhanced support. The same process exists if a school is making sufficient progress to move from Enhanced support.

Monitoring Progress

The Improvement Partner will be providing challenge on behalf of the LA to ensure support is appropriate and that there is a measurable impact against the improvement priorities. Improvement Partners will provide termly progress evaluations on the school's progress in meeting its improvement priorities and identify or amend support as necessary. These evaluations will be captured in the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) for the school. Improvement Partners will consider schools to be either 'on track' or 'off track'. For those schools who are in receipt of enhanced support, progress will be monitored more regularly, usually on a half termly basis via progress review meetings. The Improvement Partner will also provide a more detailed summative judgement on the rate of progress the school is making towards meeting its improvement priorities. Such judgements will be contained in the SIPL. The LA has access to the summative judgements contained within the individual school SIPLs. PIPs and IPs will share this information with LAs during the existing information sharing meetings. The judgements made fall into four categories and are assigned colours as indicated in the table below:



Very good progress	The school addresses the priority/recommendation in all respects. No aspects require further attention. There is very good impact on pupils' standards and progress/ quality of provision/ aspects of leadership. The school's capacity to maintain and build on this improved practice is very good.
Strong progress	The school addresses the priority/recommendation in most respects. Only minor aspects require attention. There is a positive impact on pupils' standards and progress/ quality of provision/ aspects of leadership. Most aspects have been covered already and there is little significant work left to do. The school's capacity to maintain and build on this improved practice is good.
Satisfactory progress	The school addresses the priority/recommendation in many respects. A few important aspects still require significant attention. The impact on pupils' standards and progress/ quality of provision/ aspects of leadership is not yet strong enough. Many aspects are addressed but there is still significant work to do in important areas.
Limited progress	The school does meet the requirements of the priority/recommendation. All or many important aspects are awaiting attention. There is little or no discernible impact on pupils' standards and progress/quality of provision/ aspects of leadership. There is still much work to do and many aspects still to address. The school is not yet demonstrating strongly enough the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

A CSC report will also be produced by Improvement Partners for the governing bodies of all schools and will be shared in the summer term. The report will capture the progress the school has made during the year and will provide a summary of the support the school has received as well as the impact of professional learning.

Links with Local Authorities

Improvement Partners will continue to develop and foster collaborative working partnerships with LA colleagues. Improvement Partners are mindful of the individual systems and process in each LA and will work accordingly. Joint collaboration will facilitate an effective sharing of information to ensure a mutual understanding to enable effective school improvement. Termly LA Performance meetings provide the opportunity for dialogue and information sharing.

Improvement Partners will continue using the successful strategies in place and will work with LA colleagues to adapt and improve where needs emerge. The Principal Improvement Partner will continue to be a pivotal link with each LA and will ensure an effective two-way flow of information. We will ensure that LAs have regular feedback on the quality of provision and impact of support in all of their schools. Further links with LAs are identified in Framework for School Improvement.

Schools will continue to have the support they require and this will be monitored by IPs and shared with LAs. Where schools cause significant concern specific support and follow up mechanisms will be in place.

Deployment

All IPs are allocated up to 14-20 schools pro rata based on the need and characteristics of the schools. Improvement Partners work with the Principal Improvement Partners to allocate schools based on prior knowledge of these schools. An Improvement Partner is responsible for the accurate understanding of the performance and needs of schools. It is the Improvement Partner's responsibility to get to know schools well, establish and secure effective professional relationships and broker the correct support.

Deploying a range of professionals into a school would ensure effective and efficient use of resources and excellent value for money for the Consortium and for the schools in the region.

A blended approach using a range of school improvement professionals and peer support schools will enable best support. No school is limited to the amount of support it receives. Support is allocated on a needs basis tightly linked to the SIP. The Principal Improvement Partners will ensure that this is reviewed and will be key in ensuring consistency is applied across each LA and the region. This also provides the opportunity to share effective and best practice across the CSC region.

The Assistant Director for Partnership and Improvement will work with the Principal Improvement Partners to monitor workload of staff and can allocate additional tasks to ensure efficiency. Local Authorities are responsible for school improvement and this service is commissioned from CSC, Directors in each LA will be responsible for holding CSC Leaders to account for the progress in their schools. There is a collective responsibility across the Consortium to ensure that children and young people have the best possible outcomes and all schools are supported in line with Welsh Government guidance.

Appendix 1: Improvement Partners' Schedule Of Key Tasks

The framework below has an ongoing theme on pupils' learning, wellbeing and themes that will be discussed throughout the year. Our work will identify the schools starting point and ensure that support and challenge is appropriate to ensure all schools make progress. This schedule is not used as a 'tick list' but will remind staff and leaders as to key days when activity should be completed by. For example, HT PM needs to be completed by December 31s; however many schools have moved this into the first half term to ensure that the staff targets can flow from the HT targets.

Dialogue to be structured around 5 fundamental questions for enquiry:

- What is the school's evaluation of this aspect?
- How do they know?
- What are they doing/planning to do to address any issues?
- How are they evaluating the success of their plans?
- What support do they require?

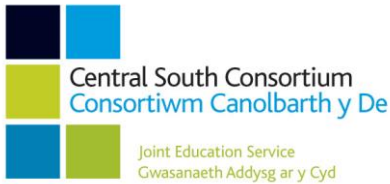
Annual Activities

School Improvement Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the needs of the priorities • Developing strong relationships • Influencing strategic direction of the school • Capturing first-hand evidence
Autumn Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the school improvement priorities and share with LA for approval • Co-construct a SDP identifying support • Broker support for priorities • Allocation of PDG, PL & RRRS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate Peer Partnerships • Discuss use of the Equity and Excellence strategy • Support GB to review headteacher's performance objectives and agree objectives for the current academic year • Collaboration funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • Vulnerable Learners progress check focusing on participation, engagement and learning. Attendance and exclusion • CfW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards priorities • Progress of all learners • Impact of PL • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • PDG evaluation

Spring Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion to focus on moving towards quality and effectiveness of Wellbeing, Learning and Teaching and Leadership. Signposting where appropriate to local, regional and national programmes and initiatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate impact of the PLG and PDG spend • Evaluate the effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • Well-being progress check linked to self-evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of learners • Impact of PL • Review impact of PDG spend • Discuss and QA plans for new PDG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of progress against agreed priorities in school improvement plan • CfW • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate. • Support Governing Body in reviewing progress against headteacher's performance objectives
Summer Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate effectiveness of school self-evaluation • review PDG spend • Impact of PL • Discuss PDG LAC cluster plans • CfW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What PL is planned that will support vulnerable learners for 2021-22 • Effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • Progress of all learners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Governing Body Report • GB Meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete review of impact of current priorities and agree future priorities including identification of possible support



Enhanced Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Half-termly progress report and review of position agreed with the school, Principal Improvement Partner and LA representatives• Regular discussions and information sharing with the support team and the LA.
Other Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estyn pre inspection reports / Estyn follow up• Senior Appointments in Schools• RRRS Spending plans/ Impact• Reporting on KS4/5 Curriculum Offer meeting the Learning and Skills measure• EOTAS reporting/Attendance• Collaboration funding• LA Priorities• Wellbeing support / conversations



**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE**

22ND SEPTEMBER 2021

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR: CSC Legal Agreement & delegated decision making

Author: Louise Blatchford (Deputy Managing Director)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to review the legal agreement, considering the revised changes to governance previously approved.

To seek Members' approval to delegate decision making for proposed staffing structures to the CSC Management Board and CSC Management team as outlined within the report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members review the information contained within the report and:

2.1 Approve a review of the CSC legal agreement to reflect the changes in governance previously agreed by Members in December 2020 with revised terms of reference for governance groups approved in March 2021.

2.2 Consider whether a full review of the legal agreement is required to reflect the changing education landscape

2.3 Consider the proposals for delegated decision making in respect of CSC staffing outlined within the report.

3.0 CSC LEGAL AGREEMENT

3.1 Legal Agreement for Central South Consortium Joint Education Service, (signed on the 15th April 2015 by the constituent local authorities), 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

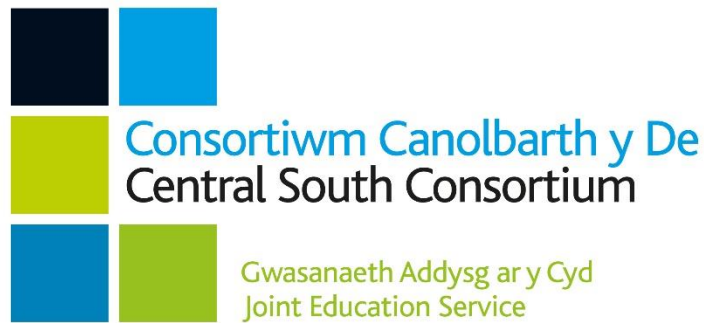
3.2 The Legal Agreement outlines the terms of reference of each of the above groups which form part of the previous CSC governance arrangements.

3.3 In addition, the Legal Agreement it outlines the process for changes to the permanent structure of CSC.

4.0 CONCLUSION

To ensure CSC operates as effectively and efficiently as possible, the CSC Management Board are requesting Members delegate responsibility for staffing to the CSC Management Board and CSC Management Team as outlined below:

- CSC Joint Committee continue to approve any proposed changes to the senior management structure of CSC;
- CSC Joint Committee delegate responsibility for proposed changes to the senior leadership team at CSC to the CSC Management Board;
- CSC Joint Committee delegate responsibility for the wider staffing structure to the Managing Director and senior management team of CSC



Central South Consortium: Business Plan 2021- 2022 Summer Term Report September 2021



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1.0 Business Planning Overview 2021/22

The Business Plan 2020/21 runs from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The Business Plan 2021-2022 was approved by Joint Committee 18 March 2021. Five Priorities were outlined, closely aligning with Welsh Government’s (WG) national approach. Supporting each priority is a detailed operational plan that is summarised as part of a termly review of progress and impact.

1.1 Background

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

- **Priority 1:** Develop a high-quality education profession.
- **Priority 2:** Develop highly effective leadership to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards.
- **Priority 3:** Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing.

- **Priority 4:** Continue to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system.
- **Priority 5:** Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CSC.

2.0 Self-Evaluation Review Process

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, challenged by the members of the drive team and presented to members of the Senior Management Team, for further scrutiny and challenge.



3.0 Summary of Progress

A summary of implementation and progress is outlined in the following table:

Priority	Actions	Not Yet Started	Limited Progress	Satisfactory Progress	Strong Progress	Very Good Progress	*Progress Affected By COVID-19
Priority 1.1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Priority 1.2	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
Priority 1.3	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
Priority 1.4	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Priority 1.5	5	1	0	3	1	0	0
Priority 1.6	4	1	0	3	0	0	0
Priority 1.7	7	1	1	1	4	0	0
Priority 2.1	8	2	0	1	5	0	0
Priority 2.2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Priority 2.3	5	2	0	2	1	0	0

Priority 2.4	5	3	0	1	1	0	0
Priority 2.5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Priority 2.6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Priority 3.1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Priority 3.2	4	0	1	3	0	0	0
Priority 3.3	11	1	1	9	0	0	0
Priority 4.1	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Priority 4.2	6	3	0	3	0	0	0
Priority 5.1	19	5	1	3	6	4	0
Priority 5.2	5	0	0	0	3	2	0
Priority 5.3	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Priority 5.4	9	2	0	1	5	1	0
Total	114	24	5	49	28	8	0

**'Progress Affected By COVID-19' judgements are additional judgements made alongside the Progress Judgement (Limited – Very Good) criteria. Therefore, these figures are not included within the Total Actions figure (114).*

(See Appendix A for Judgement Matrix)

Summer Term Summary 2021/22							
Business Plan Actions	Elements	Not Yet Started	Limited Progress	Satisfactory Progress	Strong Progress	Very Good Progress	*Progress Affected By COVID-19
Totals	114	24	5	49	28	8	0
Percentages	100%	21%	4%	43%	25%	7%	0%

**'Progress Affected By COVID-19' judgements are additional judgements made alongside the Progress Judgement (Limited – Very Good) criteria. Therefore, these figures are not included within the Total Actions figure (144).*

The above grids indicate that during the Summer Term of 2021 - 22 there has been:

- Very Good or Strong Progress made in 32% of elements.
- Satisfactory or Limited Progress made in 47% of elements.
- 21% of elements have Not Yet Started.
- Of 114 elements listed within the Business Plan, none have been significantly affected by COVID-19.

4.0 Identification of Risks

Following the half-termly review and termly impact review meetings, risks and barriers are identified and shared with stakeholders via the dashboard and progress reports. Risk holders review and make recommendations to Directors for changes/updates to the risk register. CSC Management Board review and make final recommendations to Joint Committee to changes to the CSC risk register at termly meetings.

In relation to the actions judged to be potential risks, outlined below is an overview of the specific actions concerned.

Areas of Potential Risk / Barriers To Progress		
Objective	Action	Progress/Comment
1.3a	Support the realisation and implementation of Curriculum for Wales through high quality PL, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Cross regional PL programme * CSC PLO * AoLE network meetings * Bespoke regional PL activities 	428 schools leaders and practitioners from 50% of CSC schools attended synchronous Curriculum for Wales (CfW) PL during April and May 21. A further 10 CfW PL events and 24 AoLE network events have been held during June and July but engagement data is not yet available.
1.3b	Support the realisation and implementation of Curriculum for Wales through high quality resources, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Asynchronous resources * Asynchronous cross-regional PL * AoLE resources * Curriculum models * CfW newsletter 	An increasing number of schools and clusters have requested support and PL on CfW.
1.3c	Support the realisation and implementation of Curriculum for Wales through increased opportunities and participation in collaborations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * CSWC collaboration components (SIGS, clusters, networks,) * Curriculum projects * CfW CSC community area * National networks * External partnerships 	A wide variety of asynchronous PL is available related to CfW, both the cross-regional programme and CSC PL.
1.7d	Support practitioners and leaders to develop high quality curriculum, learning and teaching of the cross-cutting themes	2 editions of the CfW newsletter have been published - 642 views up to June 2021.
1.7e	Support practitioners and leaders to develop high quality curriculum, learning and teaching of the integral skills	Not Yet Started.
3.3i	To continue to work with Adoption UK on pilot programme and to establish a network for schools to support and share good practice in relation to pupils who have been adopted.	IT challenges for Adoption UK continue to impact on engagement of schools. Engagement is currently only with very few schools throughout Wales. The PDG LAC Regional Co-ordinator will continue to work with Adoption UK to address these issues.

5.0 Priority Progress Evaluation

Priority 1: To develop a high-quality education profession

Priority 1 Summer Term Evaluation 2021/2022

Priority 1: Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners in nearly all schools engage in the regional Professional Learning Offer (PLO) Professional Learning (PL) evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in line with school, regional and national priorities that impact positively on learner outcomes In nearly all schools, the impact of PL is demonstrated within self-evaluation activities An increased number of schools operate as learning organisations Practitioner Welsh language competence and skills are increased The number of schools achieving progressive levels of Siarter Iaith / Cymraeg Campus increases Oracy standards of most learners in primary Welsh second language increases Nearly all student teachers achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Most Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) pass induction At least 25 Teaching Assistants (TAs) demonstrate that they are equipped to independently advance learning in the classroom and achieve HLTA status.
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Priority 1.1	The professional learning offer responds to the evolving needs of practitioners and leaders across the region in support of national and regional priorities and the impact of COVID-19	
How will we know if we've made progress?	Nearly all schools engage in the professional learning offer. PL evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in line with school, regional and national priorities that impact positively on learner outcomes. School self-evaluation activities demonstrates the longer -term impact of professional learning	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Practitioners in nearly all schools engage in the regional Professional Learning offer</i> <i>Professional Learning (PLO) evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in line with school, regional and national priorities that impact positively on learner outcomes</i> <i>In nearly all schools, the impact of PL is demonstrated within self- evaluation activities</i> 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSWC model refined to strengthen collaboration and networking opportunities across the region. • Lead Practitioner and Hubs reset through robust application process. • Funded collaboration project opportunities identified in area operational plans have been shared with all schools. Over 700 expressions of interest were received and project group selections have been made following a selection process. 300 practitioners have been selected to participate in focused working groups and projects. A very few project areas are still to be finalised where spaces remain. • Regional PLO continues to be published online. Summary PL and networking document published July 8th. Robust QA procedures ensure alignment of regional message with overall regional and national strategy. • Many (82%) of CSC schools have engaged in at least one regional PL opportunity during April and May 21. Total practitioner engagement 01 April- 31 May 2021 was 1476 (based on 90% completion of asynchronous assignments) • Processes for analysis of engagement data have been refined. Further development planned in autumn term for additional information gathering through school/IP surveys and evaluation. • Most recommendations are planned for within the Area plans as appropriate. This includes PL opportunities and projects related to specific recommendations. A few are still to be planned due to ongoing discussion with partners on the roles and responsibilities and planning of high-quality PL, e.g. Diversity, Mental Health and Well-being Toolkit, Building Blocks etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLO • PLO engagement data and analysis • PLO evaluations • CSC BP
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Priority 1.2	Schools are supported to manage change and develop as learning organisations	
How will we know if we've made progress?	Schools in the region demonstrate progress in the seven dimensions of the Schools as Learning Organisations model.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An increase in the number of schools operating as learning organisations</i> 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government SLO survey data has been reset. 43 schools participated in the survey during the academic year 2020-21. Improvement Partners will actively encourage more school-based staff to participate in the survey, through their work in the autumn term 2021 and use the tool in school improvement conversations. • Many schools have engaged with PL and support related to change management and the dimensions of SLO and enacted the learning as appropriate in their schools. • Increase in the number of schools engaging with enquiry, as evidenced through the Improvement Partner discussions and surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E&E Strategy • EFIs • CfW survey • Annual schools' survey • CfW survey analysis reports • CSWC evaluation report 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in the region developed increasingly evidence-informed and research-engaged strategies as captured within school self-evaluation activities and evidenced through IP discussions and surveys. • Nearly all schools (95%) are developing their vision of curriculum, as evidenced in Curriculum for Wales (CfW) survey. • CSWC evaluation showed impact of PL at changing behaviour level in many cases. • The number of schools engaging with enquiry increased, as evidenced through the Improvement Partner discussions and surveys. • NPEP schools collaborated and became increasingly evidence-informed and research-engaged. • Lead enquiry schools developed as enquiry system leads. • NPEP enquiries are shared across the region via Hwb. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIG evaluations • Cluster evaluations • Network evaluations • Annual schools' survey • NPEP enquiries • HEI NPEP reports
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Priority 1.3	Schools are supported to prepare for the Implementation of Curriculum for Wales and wider reforms	
How will we know if we've made progress?	Professional learning opportunities and support for schools at all levels are aligned to the 'Curriculum for Wales: Journey to 2022- and the national professional learning programme. Nearly all schools engage in the professional learning offer for Curriculum for Wales and the wider reforms. PL evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviours in preparation for CfW and the wider reforms. School self-evaluation activities demonstrate progress towards the implementation of the CfW and wider reforms	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practitioners in nearly all schools engage in the regional Professional Learning offer</i> • <i>Professional Learning (PLO) evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in line with school, regional and national priorities that impact positively on learner outcomes</i> • <i>In nearly all schools, the impact of PL is demonstrated within self- evaluation activities</i> 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 428 school leaders and practitioners from around half of of CSC schools attended synchronous CfW PL during April and May 21. A further 10 CfW PL events and 24 AoLE network events have been held during June and July but engagement data is not yet available. • An increasing number of schools and clusters have requested support and PL on CfW. • A wide variety of asynchronous PL is available related to CfW. • 2 editions of the CfW newsletter have been published - 642 views up to June 2021. • April 21, the Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) model structure was revised and related funding implemented. This further promotes collaboration both within and beyond schools focused on Curriculum for Wales realisation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CfW survey analysis • CfW PLO • PLO engagement data and analysis • PLO evaluations • CfW community area and knowledge bank analytics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster engagement has been strongly promoted through CSWC model, the CfW PL programme and LA meetings. • Funded collaboration project opportunities that support development in identified curriculum areas have been shared with all schools. Over 700 expressions of interest were received and project group selections have been made following a selection process. Summary group membership have been included in LA performance reports. • 599 CfW online community area members. • CSC team area supporting LA project related to CfW. • Participation in the National Networks promoted through the CSWC. 	
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Priority 1.4	Support the implementation of national and regional strategies for developing Welsh in all sectors	
How will we know if we've made progress?	The PL offer for improving Welsh in all sectors is aligned to national and regional needs, the Welsh Language Competency Framework and the impact of COVID-19. Practitioners report that their confidence and competence in Welsh language skills improve and this is reflected in the SWAC. The use of informal and incidental Welsh in schools across the region increase. School self-evaluation activities in all sectors demonstrates progress towards implementing national and regional strategies for Welsh.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In nearly all schools, the impact of PL is demonstrated within self- evaluation activities</i> • <i>Practitioner Welsh Language competence and skills are increased</i> • <i>The number of schools achieving progressive levels of Siarter Iaith / Cymraeg Campus increases</i> • <i>Oracy standards of most learners in primary Welsh second language increases</i> 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 137 practitioners have engaged in Welsh Language Development asynchronous PL since April 2021. In total, engagement is 2218 in part 1, 1160 part 2 and 838 in part 3. • Session 2 of the Leadership of Welsh PL was successfully held on 22/6/21. Nearly all delegates rated the quality of the professional learning as 5/5 stars and the same for the degree which the programme extended their knowledge and understanding. • All WM primary schools have received Welsh Language Immersion resource box and 89 practitioners attended associated PL sessions. • Nearly all participants state that the PL was good or better and Y Ffed Headteachers congratulated CSC on the quality and standard of the resource. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWAC Data • PLO and PL evaluations • WiEO knowledge and information - EFIs • NQT profiles • Evaluations of impact of standardised tests

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of 12 practitioners for 12 spaces for Welsh in a Year sabbatical 2021/22 has been completed with 8 additional practitioners on a waiting list. Development of post-sabbatical support for 2020/21 cohort. 8 partnerships have been strategically identified for collaboration between WM/EM schools. SLA and subsequent recruitment for cluster leads 2021/22 is underway. Collaboration between CSC and Cardiff Welsh Immersion Unit has begun with a view of producing immersion resources for the WM secondary sector. First standardised reading test pilot successful and received positive feedback from practitioners. Second pilot to begin September 2021. 173 delegates have attended a series of successful network meetings sharing best practice e.g., Welsh phonics, tracking pupils and SI/CC progress. All working parties in both WM/EM sectors have collaborated successfully and have produced a wide variety of excellent resources to support programmes of study e.g., ‘Y Silff Lyfrau’ website for KS3. Nearly all primary schools participated in ‘Diwrnod Seren a Sbarc’. This re-launch has contributed to increased momentum for the projects and associated accreditations. 3 schools have received the Siarter Iaith Bronze Award since March 2021 with one school expected to achieve Silver Award and one Gold Award by Summer 2021. 13 schools have received the Cymraeg Campus Bronze Award since March 2021, 2 schools have received the Silver Award and 1 has achieved the gold award. A further school may receive Silver Award by the end of July 2021. 2020/21 Darllen Dros Gymru and Dwlu Darllen Book Quizzes were successfully held with all schools stating the benefit of the competitions to pupils' enthusiasm for reading and the development of their Welsh oracy skills. SSL Welsh has continued contributing to the 2022-2023 WESPs for all LAs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement Partner Feedback Siarter Iaith / Cymraeg Campus Awards Data Book quiz data
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Priority 1.5	The Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP) provides effective pathways for all teaching assistants as part of a national and regional programme
How will we know if we've made progress?	The professional learning provision along the TALP responds to the impact of COVID-19 and results in an increase in the number of TAs gaining HLTA status. The regional bespoke programmes are accessed by most Tas working in specific school contexts and reflect national priorities
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>At least 25 Teaching Assistants (TAs) demonstrate that they are equipped to independently advance learning in the classroom and achieve HLTA status</i>

Evaluation of progress	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of TAs accessing the new asynchronous induction programme increased steadily with 127 engaged by July 2021. This increased particularly following endorsement by IPs. • Nearly 200 TAs have accessed PL and/or the networking opportunities on the website or in Google Classroom. • The regional special school programme is complete and shared with 12 volunteer special schools to pilot. • The bespoke menu of PL for schools for use on INSET days has been developed. • Foundation phase and ALN programmes are in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLTA accreditation data • PLO Engagement Data • TA Evaluations • Area Networking Evaluations • Siarter Iaith / Cymraeg Campus Awards Data • Improvement Partner Feedback

Priority 1.6	Entry into the teaching profession through Initial teacher Education (ITE) and into NQT induction is supported. Professional learning opportunities respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19
How will we know if we've made progress?	<p>Recruitment to the Open University routes results in all targets being met for the salaried and part-time programmes. Ongoing and new PGCE programmes in four ITE partnerships meet the accreditation criteria and are quality assured to capture evidence of impact on schools and student teachers in the region. Nearly all ITE graduates intending to work in the region engage in 'COVID-19 response bridging' PL to prepare for induction.</p> <p>The number of induction mentors (IMs) engage in training and PL increases. Most NQTs engage in national training and national / regional PL in order to pass induction. Transition support is provided for nearly all ITE graduates who intend to work within the region aligned to the WG COVID-189 guidance. All induction stakeholders are supported to engage in the statutory process aligned to revised WG COVID-19 related guidance and most IMs and NQTs participate in national training. The regional and national programme of PL provides bespoke support for all IMs and NQTS and reflects national priorities.</p>
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practitioners in nearly all schools engage in the regional Professional Learning offer</i> • <i>Professional Learning (PLO) evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in line with school, regional and national priorities that impact positively on learner outcomes</i> • <i>Nearly all student teachers achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Most Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) pass induction</i> 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OU recruitment targets for the region were met with a surplus of primary candidates. At least 20 new schools have successfully applied to be ITE lead or placement schools. Strategic ITE projects have been agreed with Cardiff Met, Yr Athrofa and Swansea University to commence in Autumn term. The ITE Graduate network for 2021 has been opened. Currently 100 graduates who intend to work in CSC from September are engaging in preparatory PL and weekly surgeries. 120 IMs engaged with the 'Focusing on the Future of Induction ' conference. 60 EVs supported the regional moderation process. 452 NQTs were eligible of whom 93% passed and 7% required further work on their induction profile. 3 days of national PL has been developed for NQTs in collaboration with the other regional consortia. A revised EV PL offer commenced Spring 2021 consisting of a half day national training event, a Teams network space and monthly comms. A revised IM PL offer has been developed in association with regional consortia, HEIs and accredited providers. This includes national training, coaching and mentoring PL and Teams network space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLO Engagement Data • Practitioner Evaluations • Area Networking Evaluations

Priority 1.7	Provide regional professional learning in curriculum & assessment, pedagogy and qualifications	
How will we know if we've made progress?	<p>Schools implement national and regional strategies in curriculum & assessment, pedagogy and qualifications. The professional learning offer supports new way of working resulting from COVID-19.</p> <p>Nealy all schools engage in the PL offer for curriculum and assessment, pedagogy and qualification. PL evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in relation to curriculum and assessment, pedagogy and qualifications. Schools' self-evaluation activities demonstrate progress towards the development of curriculum & assessment, pedagogy and qualifications</p>	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practitioners in nearly all schools engage in the regional Professional Learning offer</i> • <i>Professional Learning (PLO) evaluations demonstrate changes to practitioner behaviour in line with school, regional and national priorities that impact positively on learner outcomes</i> • <i>In nearly all schools, the impact of PL is demonstrated within self- evaluation activities</i> 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead practitioner appointments have been completed to support pedagogy, learning and teaching, cross-curricular skills and all curriculum areas • E-professional learning and network opportunities continue to be developed in partnership with schools. • PLO engagement April - May 21: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expressive Arts: 6 practitioners ○ Health & Wellbeing: 21 practitioners ○ LLC: 63 practitioners ○ Maths & Numeracy, Science & Technology: 95 practitioners ○ Maths & Numeracy: 29 practitioners ○ Digital: 53 practitioners ○ Pedagogy: 7 practitioners ○ Foundation Phase: 110 practitioners • Project planning for working parties around pedagogy and developing professional learning and networks to support 'adaptive instruction' is ongoing. • Total AoLE project group membership: over 300 practitioners selected to date. The selection process will be concluded in September • Work has been undertaken to engage with aspects of the development of the cross-cutting themes, in particular RSE, RVE and CWRE. Additional capacity is required to support this agenda with schools and considerations for additional Lead Practitioners will need to be consolidated during Autumn Term. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLO Engagement Data • Practitioner Evaluations • Area Networking Evaluations • Funded Collaboration Project participation data

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KS4 Lead Practitioner networks have been re-established following the LP appointment process. Subject area networks will commence Autumn Term 2021.• Schools were supported to facilitate centre to centre discussions in relation to Centre Determined Grades where requested.• Full-time secondment of Post-16 Associate Adviser completed to commence Sep 21.• Sixth form leader networks continued online during the Summer Term. A majority of schools with sixth forms regularly participate in network meetings and discussions.• A total of 22 expressions of interest in post-16 projects have been received to date. These will remain open into the autumn term to support communication with 6th form leads.	
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Priority 2: Develop highly effective leadership to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards

Priority 2: Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Successful completion of PL Pathways Programmes by applicants</i> • <i>A culture of Coaching and Mentoring in embedded across CSC</i> • <i>The development of more effective leaders to support school improvement</i> • <i>Peer Partnership has a positive impact on leadership through effective self-evaluation, leading to the identification of appropriate improvement priorities</i> • <i>Self-evaluation processes are clear and robust and contribute effectively to school improvement</i> • <i>Strong CSC representation is evidenced in nominations across all ‘Teaching Awards Cymru’ categories</i>
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Priority 2.1	Enhance current and future leadership through a comprehensive pathway of professional development.	
How will we know we have made progress	All available places on Professional Learning Pathways occupied by leaders at the appropriate stage in their career.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of Professional Learning Pathways Programmes by applicants. • The development of more effective leaders to support school improvement. 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Middle Leaders Development programme has successfully achieved re-endorsement from NAEL. Cohort 2 (70 participants) have completed the programme. Evaluations have been distributed to participants. An end of programme facilitators meeting evaluated the programme and identified strengths and areas to improve. Cohort 3: In April a new cohort started due to demand, running the financial year 2021-22, 24 applications were received with 17 being successful in gaining a place on the programme. June/July 2021 - Applications have closed with 115 applications received. CSC selection panel have met to endorse the applications - 107 applications were successful. T • The Senior Leaders Development programme has been endorsed by the NAEL. Cohort 1 have completed the programme (68 participants). Evaluations have been distributed to participants. An end of programme facilitators meeting evaluated the programme and identified strengths and areas to improve. An 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO EVIDENCE PROVIDED TO DATE 	

<p>evaluation was also sent to leadership coaches. Examples of effective practice have been collected from coaches and facilitators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort 1 of the Aspiring HT Programme have completed module 4 out of 5. All evaluations are analysed and inform future facilitation. HT facilitators identified for module 5. Attendance at the programme modules is very high 96%. Cohort 2: applications have opened - closing date 22nd October. • The New and Acting HT programme has successfully achieved re-endorsement from NAEL. Cohorts 2 and 3 have completed module 4. Nine participants from cohort 2 have completed the full programme and presented at module 5. The remaining members of cohort 2 have been given an alternative date in September to complete this exercise due to pressures in school at the end of term. • System Leader paper written. Paper approved at CSC Management Board. 	
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Priority 2.2	Develop effective collaboration models to increase leadership capacity.	
How will we know we have made progress	Evidence shows that collaboration models have a positive impact on leadership capacity.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of more effective leaders to support school improvement. • Peer partnership has a positive impact on leadership through effective self-evaluation, leading to the identification of appropriate improvement priorities. 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLA and Constitution for Cyfleoedd+ 2021-22 drafted, shared and signed. Evaluation Strategy shared and to be updated following 08-07-21 meeting. Records of engagement (evidencing enhancement of leadership capacity) by school leads being QA'd by Lead HT and collated on a Cyfleoedd+ MS Team shared with the link IP. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of 18th May and 5th July meetings with Cyfleoedd+ Lead HT • Cyfleoedd+ SLA and Constitution 2021-22. • HT Records of engagement and support
Priority 2.3	Strengthen school governance to provide effective leadership, challenge and support.	

How will we know we have made progress	Governors understand and fulfil their role within individual settings effectively.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of more effective leaders to support school improvement. • Self-evaluation processes are clear and robust and contribute effectively to school improvement. 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently being piloted by RLGs and members of the stakeholder group. Steve Williams has been engaged to co-ordinate the collation of pilot feedback into final product. • Evaluation of 2020-21 academic year training was very positive with over 2500 Governors engaged. • A survey to elicit Governor preference around In-Person or Online training has been sent to all governors. The results indicate that Governors are looking for the majority of training to be provided online, with the occasional in-person session as required. Further analysis of the findings will be shared in the Autumn Term. • New Terms of Reference (TOR) and forward calendars for both groups have been created and through this meeting agendas are now beginning to reflect greater focus on local and national priorities. • Four potential RLG deployments have been identified to schools in Cardiff and the Vale LAs. • Dates have been confirmed for three 'Introduction to coaching' sessions. • Seven RLGs have signed up for facilitator coaching training to take place in the Autumn Term. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement data, evaluation data, survey data • TOR & minutes of both groups • RLG deployment sheets • Evaluation of coaching courses

Priority 2.4	Improve the use of coaches and mentors to further develop school leaders.	
How will we know we have made progress	The development of coaches and mentors is effective as one strand of a package of support to improve school leaders.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of Coaching and Mentoring is beginning to be embedded across CSC. • The development of more effective leaders to support school improvement. 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous coaches have been approached to see if they will continue. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO EVIDENCE PROVIDED TO DATE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date cohort 1 and 2 have delivered to 96 in house coaches, school and CSC staff. Names currently being collated for cohort 3 in the autumn term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1. prioritising clusters without facilitator coaches. ○ 2. ALNCO facilitators x 50 3. ILM facilitators x 25 • 9 x Lead practitioner identified to deliver the CSC professional learning offer. • 4 cohorts providing training for 80 delegates each term - booked via our PL offer - currently live on website. • 1 cohort providing training to 20 CLA leads each term. • 1 cohort providing training to 20 HLTA each term. • 1 cohort providing training to 20 NQT IMs autumn term. (IMs will be expanded in spring term). • 3 cohorts providing training to CSC and LA staff. • All ILM participants are currently completing the programme. 	
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Priority 2.5	Develop and strengthen effective leadership through peer partnership.	
How will we know we have made progress	Peer Partnership has a positive impact on leadership through effective self-evaluation, leading to the identification of appropriate improvement priorities.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer partnership has a positive impact on leadership through effective self-evaluation, leading to the identification of appropriate improvement priorities. 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few known CSC schools involving peers to successfully enhance their self-evaluation and school improvement priorities in line with WG School Improvement draft guidance framework. Developing a Peer Partnership Approach Draft shared and agreed with Directors and IPs. Approach soft launched with schools via IP conversations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a Peer Partnership Approach Document, Case Studies and PPT for Directors

Priority 2.6	Use the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru to recognise and celebrate highly effective practice.	
How will we know we have made progress	Strong representation across the region in all categories of the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong CSC representation is evidenced in nominations across all 'Teaching Awards Cymru' categories. 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG yet to communicate if this is taking place 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO EVIDENCE PROVIDED TO DATE

Priority 3: Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing

Priority 3: Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nearly all schools demonstrate the use of a wide range of meaningful information and data</i> • <i>Most schools’ systems demonstrate vulnerable pupils’ progress through analysis of participation, engagement and learning data</i> • <i>Most schools demonstrate they have effective systems in place to address and mitigate barriers</i>
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Priority 3.1	Continue to develop CSC's Strategy for Equity and Excellence and further promote with schools and partners in order to drive school improvement	
How will we know we have made progress	Effective partnership working ensures there is a clear understanding of quality-first teaching, well-being and inclusion, the implementation and implications of the ALN Act, and robust self-evaluation systems across schools.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nearly all schools demonstrate the use of a wide range of meaningful information and data</i> • <i>Most schools’ systems demonstrate vulnerable pupils’ progress through analysis of participation, engagement and learning data</i> • <i>Most schools demonstrate they have effective systems in place to address and mitigate barriers to well-being and learning</i> 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective 3 team have met with various stakeholders to update the sections of the E and E strategy including leadership and inclusion. There was also a further meeting with various other leaders across CSC to check on progress. The draft has been shared with directors 2/7/21 and was well received. This regional approach has been renamed to the enabling equity and excellence document. • Launch and training of the enabling Equity and Excellence document are planned for September 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC Strategy for Equity and Excellence • SIPL (School Improvement Partnership Log) reports 	

Priority 3.2	Improve outcomes for vulnerable learners and mitigate impact of Covid 19 through effective strategic support.	
How will we know we have made progress	Clear strategic direction in place for the provision for vulnerable learners that is aligned to current learning and local authority priorities.	

	<p>Professional learning opportunities in place to support schools to further develop their provision and delivers improved outcomes for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Schools make effective use of a wide range of meaningful information, including well-being, attendance and exclusion data, to demonstrate vulnerable pupils’ progress.</p> <p>Clear identification of effective practice that highlight positive outcomes for vulnerable learners.</p>	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Most schools’ systems demonstrate vulnerable pupils’ progress through analysis of participation, engagement and learning data</i> 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny of IPs (improvement partners) comments for 2020-21 with a written report of findings has been compiled ready to share with various stakeholders. CSC are still awaiting the terms and conditions for the PDG and PDG LAC (Looked After Children) grant. Initial meetings have been held within CSC to look at the use of SIPL's and how this can support checking on the progress of vulnerable learners. Further decisions to be made about whether to use the OECD document for 2021/22. Challenge Education have presented to directors and it has been agreed that 4 LAs will pilot the RADY (Raising attainment for disadvantaged youngsters) programme with 2 schools per LA. There will be a representation from a range of schools. The lead for equity and well- being has written a paper including finances which has been approved by directors 2/7/21. Schools have been identified. The lead for CSC PDG LAC Regional Co-ordinator continues to engage with schools in developing appreciative inquiry examples and will engage in developing continuous examples. The lead for equity and well-being continues to meet with various stakeholders. CPAG pilot continues in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). CPAG land the lead for Equity and Well-being has met with WG to discuss the impact of the pilot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the PDG grant including information regarding use and its impact on learners Appreciative Inquiries highlighting best practice SIPL (School Improvement Partnership Log) reports Evaluation of the pilot Challenge Education programme Support materials disseminated to schools. Evaluation of the CPAG work 	

<p>Priority 3.3</p>	<p>Work with local authorities, external partners and schools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a consistency of approach for supporting provision for vulnerable learners • address the impact of Covid 19 on vulnerable learners • address the well-being of staff particularly during the current prevailing conditions 	
<p>How will we know we have made progress</p>	<p>Strategic support across CSC and local authorities, including professional learning, is closely aligned with a strong focus on supporting provision for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Ongoing support enables schools to be inclusive and to have effective systems in place to support vulnerable learners to achieve positive outcomes on a range of measures</p> <p>Effective practice disseminated and used to inform future professional learning need.</p> <p>Appropriate support and resources provided that are tailored to improve health and well-being of staff.</p>	
<p>Success Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most schools’ systems demonstrate vulnerable pupils’ progress through analysis of participation, engagement and learning data • Most schools demonstrate they have effective systems in place to address and mitigate barriers to well-being and learning. 	
<p>Evaluation of progress</p>		<p>Evidence</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional ALN Self-Evaluation guidance has been shared in all five LAs by the ALN Transformational Lead. Preparatory work for the small-scale pilot with six schools in Vale of Glamorgan Council to develop capacity for quality self-evaluations processes has commenced. • Further meetings have taken place in the Summer Term. Focus of attendance meetings will be on family engagement and the role of the family engagement officer. Exclusion leads will look at relationship policies and how this can help in reducing exclusions. Directors have agreed to form a well-being board with CSC colleagues forming a critical part of this. The well-being board completed their first meeting 2/7/21. • 3 LAs have submitted their PL offers for 2021/22. The objective 3 team have requested the information from directors. Finances and PL offers have been decided and are being prepared to advertise in readiness for September. Final arrangements are being made with providers to prepare for roll-out in Autumn Term. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALN self-evaluation tool • Examples of whole school self-evaluation approach to ALN • Minutes of meetings with attendance, exclusion leads and EOTAS leads • Regional Relationship Policy • Professional learning programme • Attendance figures for professional learning events • Evaluations following professional learning events

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of the document is in circulation for comment amongst members of the regional task and finish group. Document has been shared with various stakeholders and will be disseminated when complete in the Autumn term. • The four month review took place on the 25/06/21 with positive feedback. Following this schools will have an eight month review with separate sessions with Nurture UK. All schools involved with the trial are developing nurture principles as a whole school approach. • Initial cluster meetings have been held across the 5 local authorities with key messages disseminated to the clusters. All subsequent dates have been set to allow clusters time to plan for attendance and all meetings will be recorded to allow for leads to catch up who are unable to attend the meeting. • IT challenges for Adoption UK continue to impact on engagement of schools. Engagement is currently only with very few schools throughout Wales. • Initial meetings have been held with strategic leadership lead and the objective 3 team to decide how the pilot will run. The lead for PDG CLA has been delivering coaching and mentoring sessions. 40 places will be available initially to clusters. Information has been disseminated through the first cluster leads meeting and the project support team has sent registration forms to CLA leads. Expressions of interest have been made by 10 clusters which is a quarter of the places available. • The lead for equity and well-being has met with various leads across CSC to discuss this document and how it fits in their plans for 2021/22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on provision that would ordinarily be available for ALN pupils in mainstream schools • Reports of wellbeing reviews undertaken by an Inclusion Expert • Wellbeing implementation plans following reviews undertaken by an Inclusion Expert • Appreciative Inquiries highlighting best practice • Evaluations following training • Minutes of meetings with PDG LAC coordinators • Networks in place to support adopted learners • Evaluation of the Coaching and Mentoring programme • Minutes of the foundation phase cluster meetings • Foundation phase best practice case studies highlighted and shared • Directory of wellbeing support and resources for staff
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Priority 4: Continue to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system

<p>Priority 4: Success Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CSC evaluate the quality of self-evaluation, improvement planning, progress and standards in all schools, and report clearly on local and regional level</i> • <i>Fewer schools needing higher level support or causing concern</i> • <i>Improvements and strengths in self-evaluation processes and improvement planning are evident in an increasing proportion of Estyn reports on schools</i> • <i>Schools have established clear and effective processes for internal evaluation and accountability, leading to progress for all learners with most making strong progress</i> • <i>Schools are able to respond appropriately to developing external measures</i> • <i>Schools have productive. Timely, robust and enquiry-based self-evaluation processes learning to clear improvement plans which result in strong progress for all learners</i> • <i>Schools have effective evaluation of the impact of COVID on learner progress and on schools practice, leading to clear plans for improvement planning which build on strong practice</i> • <i>Schools’ improvement plans lead to stakeholders’ wellbeing being improved, in light of the ongoing impact of COVID-19</i> • <i>WG policies linked to priority 4 are implemented across the region in accordance with milestones set in ‘Education in Wales: Journey to 2022’ and ‘The Curriculum Implementation Plan’</i> • <i>All schools causing concern receive appropriate support and thereby improve their capacity for self-improvement</i>
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<p>Priority 4.1</p>	<p>Nearly all schools have timely, broadly evidenced and robust self-evaluation processes as part of a culture of continuous improvement. These productively inform school improvement priorities and development plans, and respond to the challenges and opportunities of learning and wellbeing as a result of the Covid pandemic.</p>
<p>How will we know we have made progress</p>	<p>CSC will work with all schools through support, feedback and guidance to schools on the content, quality and impact of their self-evaluation arrangements, the appropriate identification of improvement priorities, and on school development plans.</p> <p>CSC plans effective support for all enhanced support schools agreed with clear timelines and evaluation processes.</p> <p>CSC maps the school improvement priorities and support needs to its support output clearly, showing strong impact in nearly all cases.</p>

	<p>CSC reports to stakeholders on its impact in supporting self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, in a timely manner. This provides a clear local and regional picture of the quality of self-evaluation, improvement planning, progress and standards.</p> <p>CSC brokers effective, flexible and timely school to school partnerships to deliver bespoke support for all schools, through the Central South Wales Challenge.</p> <p>CSC delivers effective professional learning offers to support schools’ needs.</p> <p>CSC supports schools well in promoting models of engaging with pupils, parents, staff, governors and their local communities as part of the process of school self-evaluation and improvement planning.</p> <p>CSC supports schools well in developing the NEIR to inform self-evaluation processes and improvement planning, where appropriate.</p> <p>CSC teams are deployed to support schools’ needs effectively.</p> <p>CSC provides suitable platforms for the Welsh Government, local authorities, governors and school leaders to impact upon CSC's self-evaluation and improvement planning.</p> <p>Schools have productive, timely, robust and enquiry-based self-evaluation processes leading to clear improvement plans, which result in strong progress for all learners.</p> <p>Schools’ improvement plans lead to most stakeholders’ wellbeing being improved.</p> <p>Schools have effective evaluations of the impact of Covid on learner progress and on school practice, leading to clear plans which build on strong practice.</p>
<p>Success Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC evaluate the quality of self-evaluation, improvement planning, progress and standards in all schools, and report clearly on local and regional level • The region, LAs, schools and their stakeholders have a common understanding of how progress can be measured transparently and fairly at an individual school level, in line with national and local priorities • Fewer schools needing higher level support or causing concern

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements and strengths in self-evaluation processes and improvement planning are evident in an increasing proportion of Estyn reports on schools • Schools have established clear and effective processes for internal evaluation and accountability, leading to progress for all learners with most making strong progress • Schools are able to respond appropriately to developing external measures • Schools have productive. Timely, robust and enquiry-based self-evaluation processes learning to clear improvement plans which result in strong progress for all learners • Schools have effective evaluation of the impact of COVID on learner progress and on schools practice, leading to clear plans for improvement planning which build on strong practice • Schools’ improvement plans lead to stakeholders’ wellbeing being improved in light of the ongoing impact of COVID-19 • WG policies linked to priority 4 are implemented across the region in accordance with milestones set in ‘Education in Wales: Journey to 2022’ and ‘The Curriculum Implementation Plan’ • All schools causing concern receive appropriate support and thereby improve their capacity for self-improvement
Evaluation of progress	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations have started, staff / IPs have been trained in school development and self-evaluation. Staff have received NEIR updates. Most IPs have instigated conversations with schools around improvement. • All programmes on leadership pathway are running across region. All leadership progs have a strong focus on supporting and developing self-evaluation. All programmes fully subscribed. • EE strategy being finalised. Will be built into leadership programmes accordingly to support evaluation and improvement activities. • Some brokerage has started, majority will take place once priorities have been agreed in early Autumn term. Sat progress and on track. • Professional learning has been shared with IPs. The identity of schools piloting of resources to feedback to WG is already underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support identified in school SIP with reference captured in EFI/SIPL • Effective PL identified in EFI/SIPL and data regarding schools accessing PL programme • Support identified in school SIP with reference captured in EFI/SIPL (DAL from school discussion meeting) • Narrative identified through EFI/SIPL • Brokerage evident in EFI/SIPL or termly data capture completed by IP and SA in LA PR. • Identified in EFI/SIPLs (based on a range of shared first evidence) – schools are on/off track with priorities • Engagement data for leadership programmes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokerage evident in EFI/SIPL or termly data capture completed by ST. (possible so what survey). • Practice evident in EFI/SIPL or termly data capture completed by IPs • Support identified through termly data capture (TBA internal PL capture). • Communication identified through CSC bulletin.
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Priority 4.2	Nearly all schools have effective evaluation and improvement processes, which address external and internal accountability measures.
How will we know we have made progress	<p>CSC has provided appropriate support where required to establish these processes with schools. CSC build on this broad range of information to support schools and, where necessary, to identify and intervene in schools causing concern, using the full range of statutory powers.</p> <p>CSC has effective systems and processes in place to productively monitor and evaluate school processes. These use a broad range of information to monitor and understand the performance of schools in their area, rather than a narrow focus on pupil attainment measures.</p> <p>CSC supports schools with clear advice and support on external accountability measures.</p> <p>CSC reports to stakeholders on its impact in supporting evaluation and accountability measures and processes, in a timely manner. This provides a clear local and regional picture of the quality of self-evaluation, improvement planning, progress and standards.</p> <p>Schools have established clear and effective processes for internal evaluation and accountability, leading to strong progress for most learners.</p> <p>Schools are able to respond appropriately to developing external measures.</p>

<p>Success Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC evaluate the quality of self-evaluation, improvement planning, progress and standards in all schools, and report clearly on local and regional level • Fewer schools needing higher level support or causing concern • Improvements and strengths in self-evaluation processes and improvement planning are evident in an increasing proportion of Estyn reports on schools • Schools have established clear and effective processes for internal evaluation and accountability, leading to progress for all learners with most making strong progress • Schools are able to respond appropriately to developing external measures • Schools have productive. Timely, robust and enquiry-based self-evaluation processes learning to clear improvement plans which result in strong progress for all learners • Schools have effective evaluation of the impact of COVID on learner progress and on schools practice, leading to clear plans for improvement planning which build on strong practice • Schools’ improvement plans lead to stakeholders’ wellbeing being improved, in light of the ongoing impact of COVID-19 • WG policies linked to priority 4 are implemented across the region in accordance with milestones set in ‘Education in Wales: Journey to 2022’ and ‘The Curriculum Implementation Plan’ • All schools causing concern receive appropriate support and thereby improve their capacity for self-improvement
<p>Evaluation of progress</p>	<p>Evidence</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionally agreed approach to evaluation and improvement shared with all stakeholder groups, information video for schools and governing bodies ready to be shared before the end of the academic year. Internal staff trained. Progress meetings continue to be held through Summer Term. Sat progress and on track. • Meetings taken place with schools and information shared, WJEC, WG and QualsWales. • All communication linked to performance measures have been shared in the CSC school bulletin and via IPs with schools. • 3 meetings with DDAG reps (attended by IPs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captured through IPs work with schools in EFI/SIPL. Schools on/off track with priorities • LA performance reports and EFI/SIPLs support LA to make evidence informed decisions • Notes of visits in EFI/SIPL linked to OPA • Captured through dialogue with WG • Information disseminated through bulletin • Joint Committee Reports • Termly data capture completed by IPs

Priority 5: Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CSC

Priority 5: Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff involved in extended forms of PL (baseline 2019 termly or more; primary 45%, secondary 45%)</i> • <i>Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff using research to support their PL on a regular basis (baseline 2019: primary staff 50%, secondary 42%)</i> • <i>Communication performance analytics show improvement</i> • <i>Social media engagement</i> • <i>Website – Google analytics – page views at certain periods of focused campaigns</i> • <i>Knowledge Bank: Resources, guidance, updates</i> • <i>School / Staff Bulletins – number of clicks and downloads</i> • <i>Reporting shows CSC PL has a positive impact on improving outcomes for learners</i> • <i>Estyn judgements and requests for case studies are at least comparable with other regions</i>
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Priority 5.1	Align the business planning and self-evaluation processes, focussing on value for money in relation to both progress and impact.	
How will we know we have made progress	Clear and robust evaluation processes provide data (including stakeholder feedback) that is used to challenge CSC performance and improve practice. Evidenced based effectiveness and efficiency report detailing the Impact of CSC and its work.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff involved in extended forms of PL (baseline 2019 termly or more; primary 45%, secondary 45%) • Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff using research to support their PL on a regular basis (baseline 2019: primary staff 50%, secondary 42%) • Reporting shows CSC PL has a positive impact on improving outcomes for learners • Estyn judgements and requests for case studies are at least comparable with other regions 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) ready to launch. All staff have received training on imputing information into the new School Improvement Partnership Log. Data Team are creating a how to video to allow staff to refresh their knowledge. • A regional approach to Accountability, Improvement and Evaluation has been agreed and shared with several stakeholder groups. An information video has been prepared and will be available before the end of the academic year. The Framework for School Improvement will be sent to stakeholders this academic year and all LAs have agree IP deployment to support the framework and School Improvement approach. • Templates for the LA Performance reports have been agreed and two reports detailing the LA Priorities and Regional Recommendations have been shared with Directors. All teams have reviewed their area to refine the report as required. • The Business Plan Annual Report has been produced and has been shared with SLT, Directors and Joint Committee. Guidance has been added to the Operational Plan in the form of the 'Judgement Criteria' tab which includes definitions of areas within the plan. An overview of high level areas that are to be included within the dashboard has been outlined. • Nearly all of CSC annual survey sample schools re-engaged and where gaps have been identified work with IPs/PIPs in ongoing to identify suitable replacements. • Research & Evaluation Board agenda has been revised to ensure the leads are invited to reflect the strands on the Effectiveness and Efficiency report for 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two training sessions have been provided for staff and this has resulted in changes to the SIPL format and guidance. The new format will be launched from September and the contents will continue to be reviewed • Accountably, evaluation and Improvement document • IP deployment Spreadsheet • Framework for school improvement • Meeting Agendas • Training session provided on 15 June 2021, session recorded for staff to watch again • Forward Planner • LA performance reports • Emails to schools • School Survey • Annual Business Plan Report
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Priority 5.2	Increase awareness of CSC key messages and communication channels.	
How will we know we have made progress	Communication strategy to be enacted by all staff in CSC as a shared responsibility. Targeted and relevant stakeholder engagement with CSC communication channels underpinned by an effective communications strategy.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication performance analytics show improvement • Social media engagement • Website – Google analytics – page views at certain periods of focused campaigns • School / Staff Bulletins – number of clicks and downloads 	
Evaluation of progress		Evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback from CSC staff and school regarding communication (comms) channels. Increased awareness of the role and function of the communications team is evident through increased requests for relevant support. • Final version of the professional learning handbook is in the process of being drafted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting has happened with all new staff and also monthly meetings have been ongoing with individual teams and have proved successful • Phase one of the campaign 'Here for You' has been launched. All schools have received a hard copy of the leaflet. Regular meetings are held with school facing staff • Internal and external lists are being maintained, monitored and updated • Communications (comms) dashboard headings provided in readiness for the first dashboard next term • Professional learning handbook
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Priority 5.3	Wider accountability of CSC improved through appreciative enquiry protocol, developed for effective performance development.
How will we know we have made progress	CSC develops a flexible and fully informed staff base through an appropriate professional learning programme focussed on delivering information and developing the skills of all staff. Integrated performance development cycle that is focussed on research and evidence-based strategy.
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff involved in extended forms of PL (baseline 2019 termly or more; primary 45%, secondary 45%) • Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff using research to support their PL on a regular basis (baseline 2019: primary staff 50%, secondary 42%) • Communication performance analytics show improvement • Social media engagement • Website – Google analytics – page views at certain periods of focused campaigns • Knowledge Bank: Resources, guidance, updates • School / Staff Bulletins – number of clicks and downloads • Reporting shows CSC PL has a positive impact on improving outcomes for learners

Evaluation of progress	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff trained in appreciative enquiry and the offer for additional support as required. Performance development cycle to be enacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance development paper work. Staff Professional Learning (PL) session agendas.

Priority 5.4	Realise the value and relevance of research and evaluation on key aspects of CSC work.	
How will we know we have made progress	Work with a higher education institution to focus on the evaluation of our work focussing on the professional learning that is provided. Evidenced based strategy to secure provision for professional learning that develops sustained highly effective practice.	
Success Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff involved in extended forms of PL (baseline 2019 termly or more; primary 45%, secondary 45%) Annual survey data analysis shows an increase of staff using research to support their PL on a regular basis (baseline 2019: primary staff 50%, secondary 42%) Communication performance analytics show improvement Social media engagement Website – Google analytics – page views at certain periods of focused campaigns Reporting shows CSC PL has a positive impact on improving outcomes for learners 	
Evaluation of progress	Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final draft of CFW survey developed and shared with all IPs. Survey completed for nearly all schools. Evaluation roles and responsibilities document completed to share with all staff during induction week. Professional learning engagement data sheet has been refined by strategic team and project team to allow for more effective and efficiency reporting of data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final survey draft. CSC Professional Learning (PL) agendas SLT minutes. Research and evaluation board minutes. Evaluation paper draft 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 'so what' survey has been agreed in principle as part of the collaboration funding shared with schools. This is now under development with the data team.• Research & Evaluation Board agenda has been revised to ensure the leads are invited to reflect the strands on the Effectiveness and Efficiency report for 2021.• Initial report of Consortia as a Learning Organisation survey received from Bangor University. Increased participation from CSC staff. Data team to produce summary report for findings to be shared in initial PL meetings in September.• AOEA: 2 cohorts completing the programme by August 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement data sheets. CSWC evaluation forms• Engagement data sheets• CLO report Bangor University• Staff questionnaire shows that staff are generally positive about the programme. We are now working with other regional consortia and WG to develop a way forward. AOEA are adapting the programme based on feedback from CSC
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APPENDIX A	
PROGRESS JUDGEMENT MATRIX	
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 JUDGEMENT MATRIX	
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-19	Action impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic.

Date Written: 13th July 2021

Issue: Evaluation of the CLO survey undertaken by CSC staff and next steps

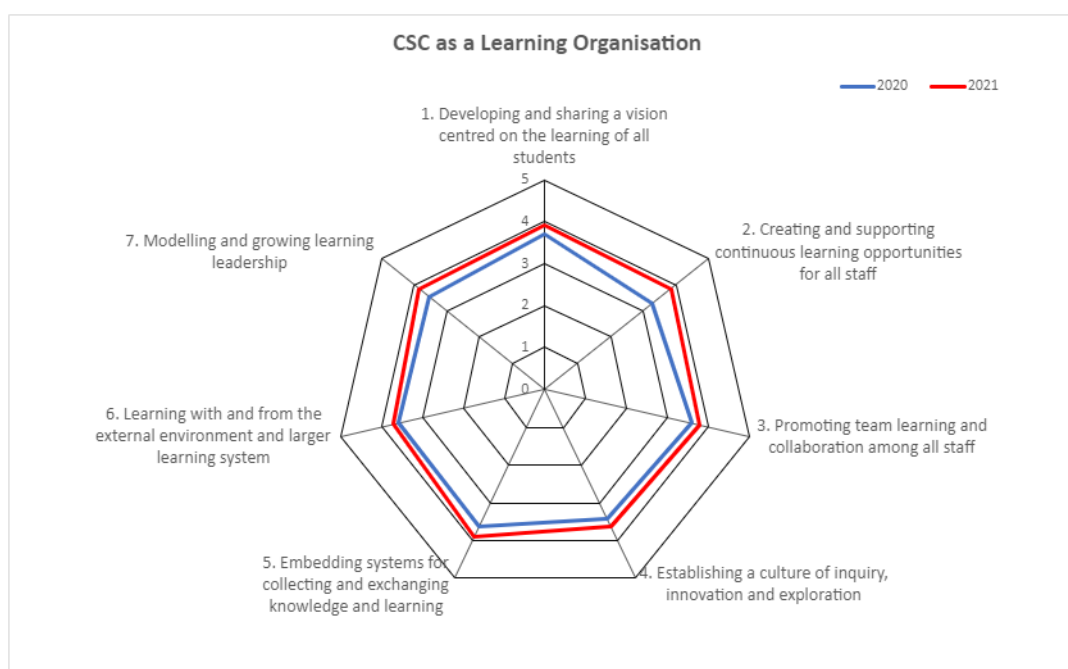
Summary

- In June 2021, and previously in February 2020 all Central South Consortium staff were invited to complete the “Consortium as a Learning Organisation” survey run by the Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact, School of Education and Human Development, Bangor University. Welsh Government is focused on the development of Tier two level organisations in Wales as learning organisations, and this study has been designed to assess to what extent Tier two organisations have developed as learning organisations. Regional school effectiveness and improvements services are the specific focus of Tier two organisations in this survey.

Staff completed the survey in June 2021 for the second time after the initial survey being held between February and April 2020. In 2020 only forty-six staff members returned their completed surveys however in June 2021 this has risen to fifty-eight members of staff.

The survey had the same seven key dimensions with questions asked on a 5-point Likert ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5). The mean scores for each of the seven key dimensions for CSC are between three and four for each dimension, with the lowest scoring dimension being “Creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff”.

The spider diagram for Central South Consortium shows that the mean scores across the seven key dimensions are between three and four for each of the seven dimension, and that each of the seven dimensions has increased between the first and second submission of the survey:



where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

However, no key dimension yet exceeds an average score of 4, which was one of the recommendations from the original 2020 survey. However, both dimension 1 and dimension 5 are within 0.1 of reaching an average score of 4.

In 2020, the lowest performing key dimension was “Creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff” and professional learning protocols were included in the CSC Business Plan for 2020/21 to address these (Objective 4). The analysis of the survey for 2021 shows that this key dimension has improved from a mean score of 3.27 in 2020 to a new mean score of 3.84, this is the largest improvement seen across all dimensions of the survey between 2020 and 2021.

The lowest performing key dimension in 2021 is now “Establishing a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration”. Further discussion is needed on how this will be addressed for 2021/22.

Comparisons between 2020 and 2021

There was an increase in responses from staff in the organisation, but when analysed by job role Business Support staff had the largest increase with fifteen responses in 2021 compared to just three in 2020. The number of responses from challenge adviser/support improvement advisers decreased in 2021 when compared to 2020. A summary of the responses can be seen below:

Job Role	2020	2021
SLT	8	11
Challenge adviser / support improvement adviser	33	29
Business Support	3	15

In 2020 the following areas were identified as areas for development, and in 2021 the questions highlighted blue below continue to be identified as requiring further development, with at least around half of responses being negative or neutral. These survey items are titled :

- a. ‘Governors are involved in developing the organisation’s vision’;
- b. ‘Mentors/coaches are available to help staff develop their practice’;
- c. ‘All new staff receive sufficient support to help them in their new role’;
- d. ‘Staff are encouraged to give feedback to consortia regarding their professional learning’;
- e. ‘Staff observe each other’s practice and collaborate in developing it’; and
- f. ‘Leaders develop the potential of others to become future leaders’

When looking at responses with the highest proportion of “Strongly Agree” judgements, in 2020 only three items were identified with over 29.5% of respondents identifying this during the survey. However, in 2021, there are fifteen survey items with a “Strongly Agree” proportion of over 29.5%. These survey items are:

Ref	Survey Item	Strongly Agree
3.12	I find it professionally rewarding to be working at this organisation	46.6%
1.3	The organisation’s vision embraces all students	44.8%

1.11	Our organisation is responsive to the needs of schools	44.8%
3.8	Staff treat each other with respect	44.8%
2.1	Professional learning of staff is considered a high priority	41.4%
5.2	Structures are in place for regular dialogue and knowledge sharing among staff	37.9%
2.5	Professional learning is aligned to the organisation's vision	36.8%
1.1	The organisation's vision is aimed at improving pupil's cognitive and social-emotional outcomes, including their wellbeing	36.2%
2.2	Staff engage in professional learning to ensure their practice is critically informed and up to date	36.2%
1.4	Learning activities and teaching are designed with the organisation's vision in mind	34.5%
3.13	I would recommend this organisation as a good place to learn with and from colleagues	34.5%
6.5	The organisation as a whole is involved in networks or collaborations	33.3%
5.1	The organisation's development plan is based on learning from continuous self-assessment and updated at least once every year	31.6%
2.4	Professional learning is focused on region's needs	31.0%
3.7	Staff feel comfortable turning to others for advice	29.8%

Please note that survey items 1.7, 3.7 and 3.8 were the three areas identified in the 2020 survey.

Survey items 1.3 “The organisation’s vision embraces all students” and 3.8 “Staff treat each other with respect” continue to show positive responses again in 2021, with around 90% of responses indicating that they either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with these areas, as was shown in the 2020 survey.

Following the 2021 survey, three new survey items have response rates of around 90% for “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” which were not identified in the survey in 2020, these are:

- 2.1 Professional learning of staff is considered a high priority (89.7% (2021)/ 67.4% (2020))
- 2.2 Staff engage in professional learning to ensure their practice is critically informed and up to date (93.1% (2021) / 67.4% (2020))
- 7.1 Leaders participate in professional learning to develop their practice (87.7% (2021) / 60.0% (2020))

In 2021, further survey items had over 75% (and less than 90%) of responses in either the “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” categories, with nine of these survey items also having responses in the same range from the 2020 survey:

- 1.2 The organisation’s vision emphasises preparing students for their future in a changing world (86.2% (2021) / 81.8% (2020));
- 3.3 Staff help each other to improve their practices (82.8% (2021) / 78.2% (2020));
- 3.7 Staff feel comfortable turning to others for advice (80.7% (2021) / 84.7% (2020));
- 5.1 The organisation’s development plan is based on learning for continuous self-assessment and updated at least once a year (86.1% (2021) / 78.2% (2020));
- 5.2 Structures are in place of regular dialogue and knowledge sharing among staff (81.0% (2021) / 78.3% (2020));

6.5 The organisation as a whole is involved in networks or collaborations (78.9% (2021) / 84.8% (2020));

7.6 Leaders give staff responsibility to lead activities and projects (79.3% (2021) / 84.8% (2020));

7.8 Leaders put a strong focus on improving learning and teaching (80.7% (2021) / 76.0% (2020));

7.9 Leaders ensure that all actions are consistent with the organisation’s vision, goals and values (82.5% (2021) / 75.5% (2020)).

1.4 Learning activities and teaching are designed with the organisation’s vision in mind;

2.3 Staff are involved in identifying the objectives for their professional learning;

2.4 Professional learning is focused on region’s needs;

2.5 Professional learning is aligned to the organisation’s vision;

3.1 Staff collaborate to improve their practice;

3.6 Staff listen to each other’s ideas and opinions;

3.10 Staff think through and tackle problems together.

The responses from the two surveys have been compared to highlight areas which had had the either the greatest increase in positive responses, or the greatest increase in negative responses. When looking at the negative responses, there are four survey items that have seen increases of over seven percentage points between the two surveys. These areas can be seen below.

Ref	Survey Item	2020	2021	Difference
3.12	I find it professionally rewarding to be working at this organisation	23.9%	32.7%	-8.8%
4.8	Staff openly discuss failures in order to learn from them	45.7%	53.5%	-7.8%
5.3	Evidence is collected to measure progress and identify gaps in the organisation’s performance	19.6%	28.1%	-8.5%
6.4	Staff collaborate, learn and share knowledge with peers in the regional consortia	45.6%	52.6%	-7.0%

Further discussion is needed to try to address the issues behind the negative responses to these survey items. Planned developments for Academic Year 2021/22 include changes to collections systems, particularly the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) which will help to address survey item 5.3 “Evidence is collected to measure progress and identify gaps in the organisation’s performance”. Information from the SIPL should be easier to collate and extract to provide summary information for all schools in the region in a single source file. Also, the planned introduction of “Project Boards” should help to monitor project work across the organisation and allow for the systematic collection of information, including engagement and evaluations, across the organisation.

Details of the actual responses for each question over the last two years can be seen in the following table:

Survey Items where the negative responses have increased by at least seven percentage points.

Ref	Survey Item	Year	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	-ve Responses(*)
3.12	I find it professionally rewarding to be working at this organisation	2020	4.3%	8.7%	10.9%	63.0%	13.0%	23.9%
3.12	I find it professionally rewarding to be working at this organisation	2021	1.7%	10.3%	20.7%	20.7%	46.6%	32.7%
4.8	Staff openly discuss failures in order to learn from them	2020	2.2%	19.6%	23.9%	52.2%	2.2%	45.7%
4.8	Staff openly discuss failures in order to learn from them	2021	0.0%	1.8%	39.7%	37.9%	8.6%	53.5%
5.3	Evidence is collected to measure progress and identify gaps in the organisation’s performance	2020	2.2%	6.5%	10.9%	67.4%	13.0%	19.6%
5.3	Evidence is collected to measure progress and identify gaps in the organisation’s performance	2021	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%	52.6%	19.3%	28.1%
6.4	Staff collaborate, learn and share knowledge with peers in the regional consortia	2020	4.3%	10.9%	30.4%	43.5%	10.9%	45.6%
6.4	Staff collaborate, learn and share knowledge with peers in the regional consortia	2021	0.0%	17.5%	35.1%	29.8%	17.5%	52.6%

(*) For this analysis a “negative” response reflects responses marked as “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree” or “Neutral”.

When comparing the survey items with overall positive responses, the biggest increases between the 2020 and 2021 surveys are evident for the following survey items. For this analysis the survey items where the increases in positive responses are above twenty-five percentage points are identified in the following table.

Ref	Survey Item	2020	2021	Difference
2.2	Staff engage in professional learning to ensure their practice is critically informed and up to date	67.4%	93.1%	25.7%
2.6	Mentors/coaches are available to help staff develop their practice	28.9%	55.2%	26.3%
2.9	Staff are encouraged to give feedback to consortia regarding their professional learning	30.4%	63.8%	33.4%
3.11	Staff reflect together on how to learn and improve their practice	43.4%	74.2%	30.8%
5.5	Staff use research evidence to improve their practice	43.5%	71.5%	28.0%
7.1	Leaders participate in professional learning to develop their practice	60.0%	87.7%	27.7%
7.2	Leaders facilitate individual and group learning	52.2%	86.2%	34.0%
7.4	Leaders develop the potential of others to become future leaders	35.6%	61.4%	25.8%

Professional learning already provided by the organisation in the last academic year may be responsible for the positive change in responses for some of the survey items above. In addition, changes to the Performance Development process planned for 2021/22 highlight the importance of research across the organisation.

Details of the actual responses for each question over the last two years can be seen in the following table:

Survey Items where the positive responses have increased by at least twenty-five percentage points.

Ref	Survey Item	Year	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	+ve Responses
2.2	Staff engage in professional learning to ensure their practice is critically informed and up to date	2020	0.0%	17.4%	15.2%	56.5%	10.9%	67.4%
2.2	Staff engage in professional learning to ensure their practice is critically informed and up to date	2021	0.0%	1.7%	5.2%	56.9%	36.2%	93.1%
2.6	Mentors/coaches are available to help staff develop their practice	2020	8.9%	31.1%	31.1%	28.9%	0.0%	28.9%
2.6	Mentors/coaches are available to help staff develop their practice	2021	1.7%	12.1%	31.0%	32.8%	22.4%	55.2%
2.9	Staff are encouraged to give feedback to consortia regarding their professional learning	2020	6.5%	43.5%	19.6%	21.7%	8.7%	30.4%
2.9	Staff are encouraged to give feedback to consortia regarding their professional learning	2021	0.0%	12.1%	24.1%	41.4%	22.4%	63.8%
3.11	Staff reflect together on how to learn and improve their practice	2020	2.2%	21.7%	32.6%	30.4%	13.0%	43.4%
3.11	Staff reflect together on how to learn and improve their practice	2021	0.0%	8.6%	17.2%	62.1%	12.1%	74.2%
5.5	Staff use research evidence to improve their practice	2020	0.0%	17.4%	39.1%	32.6%	10.9%	43.5%
5.5	Staff use research evidence to improve their practice	2021	0.0%	1.8%	26.8%	53.6%	17.9%	71.5%
7.1	Leaders participate in professional learning to develop their practice	2020	0.0%	8.9%	31.1%	48.9%	11.1%	60.0%
7.1	Leaders participate in professional learning to develop their practice	2021	0.0%	0.0%	12.3%	70.2%	17.5%	87.7%
7.2	Leaders facilitate individual and group learning	2020	2.2%	15.2%	30.4%	43.5%	8.7%	52.2%
7.2	Leaders facilitate individual and group learning	2021	0.0%	6.9%	6.9%	69.0%	17.2%	86.2%
7.4	Leaders develop the potential of others to become future leaders	2020	4.4%	20.0%	40.0%	26.7%	8.9%	35.6%
7.4	Leaders develop the potential of others to become future leaders	2021	1.8%	12.3%	24.6%	50.9%	10.5%	61.4%

Linked Documents

Copies of the preliminary reports from the University of Bangor can be found via these links:

2021 Report [Preliminary Report of Welsh Learning Organisation Survey for CSC \(Time Two\).pdf](#)

2020 Report [Preliminary Report of Welsh Learning Organisation Survey for CSC Regional Educational Consortia FV.pdf](#)

Chart 1: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 1

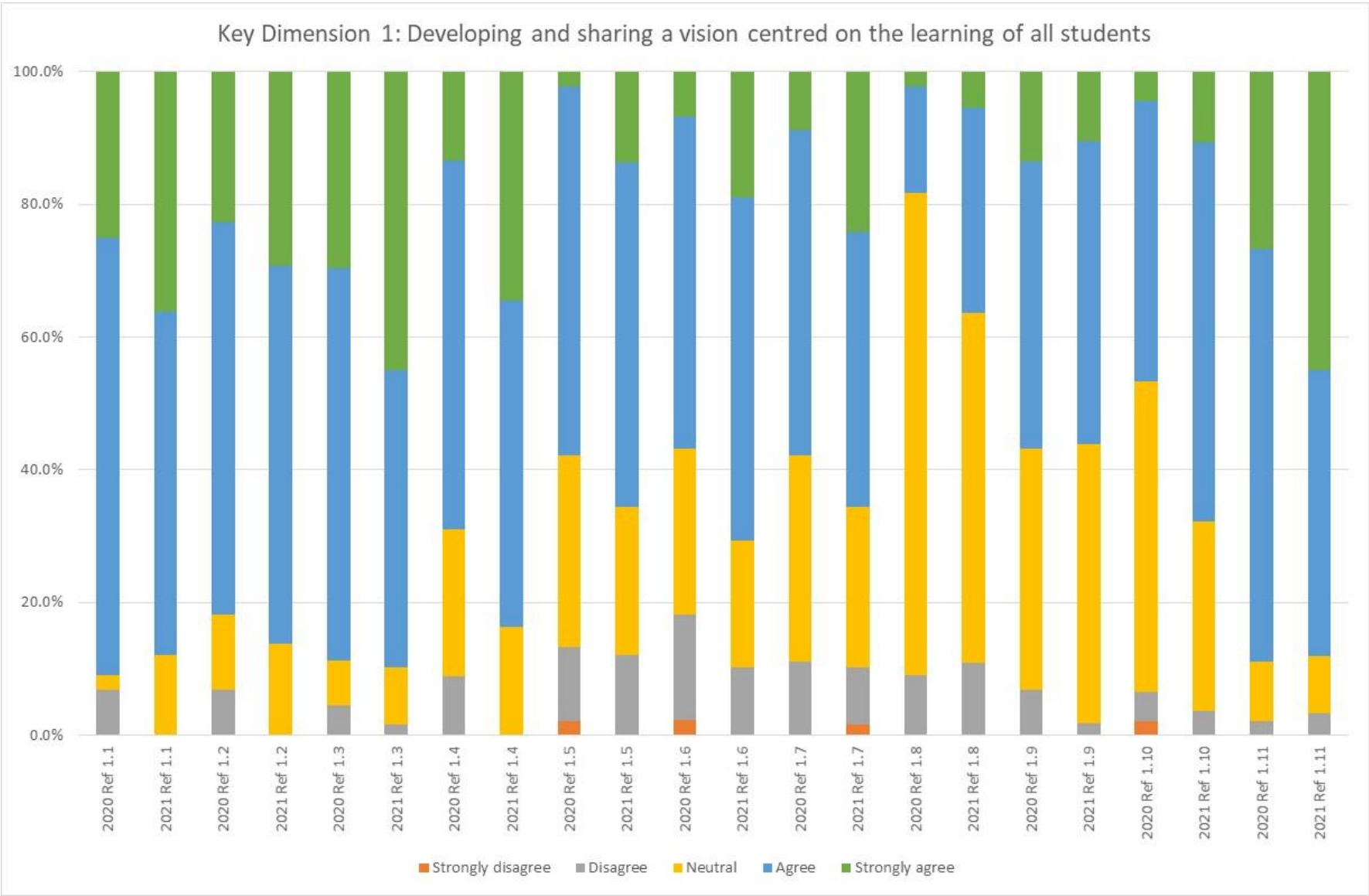


Chart 2: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 2

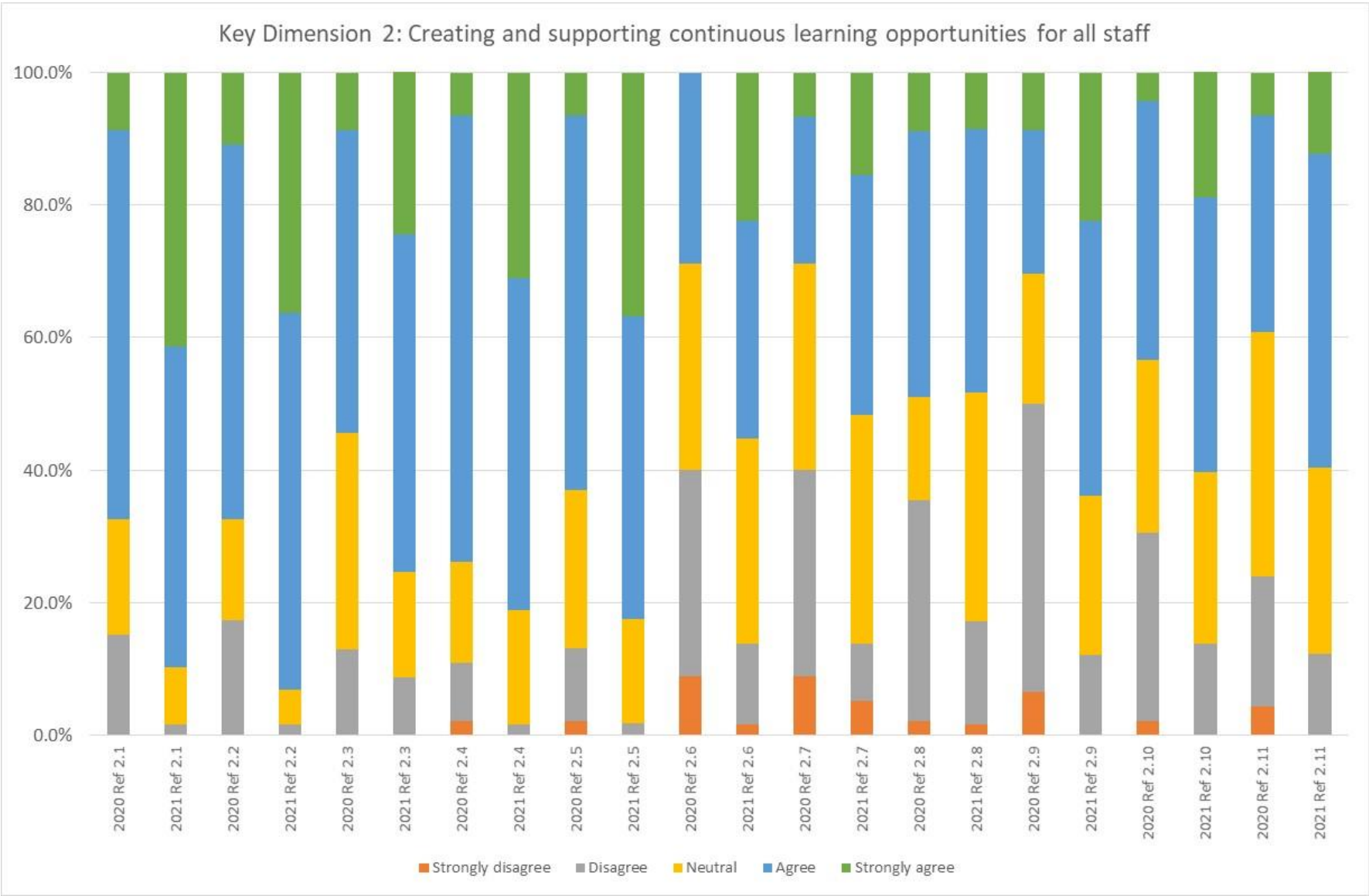


Chart 3: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 3

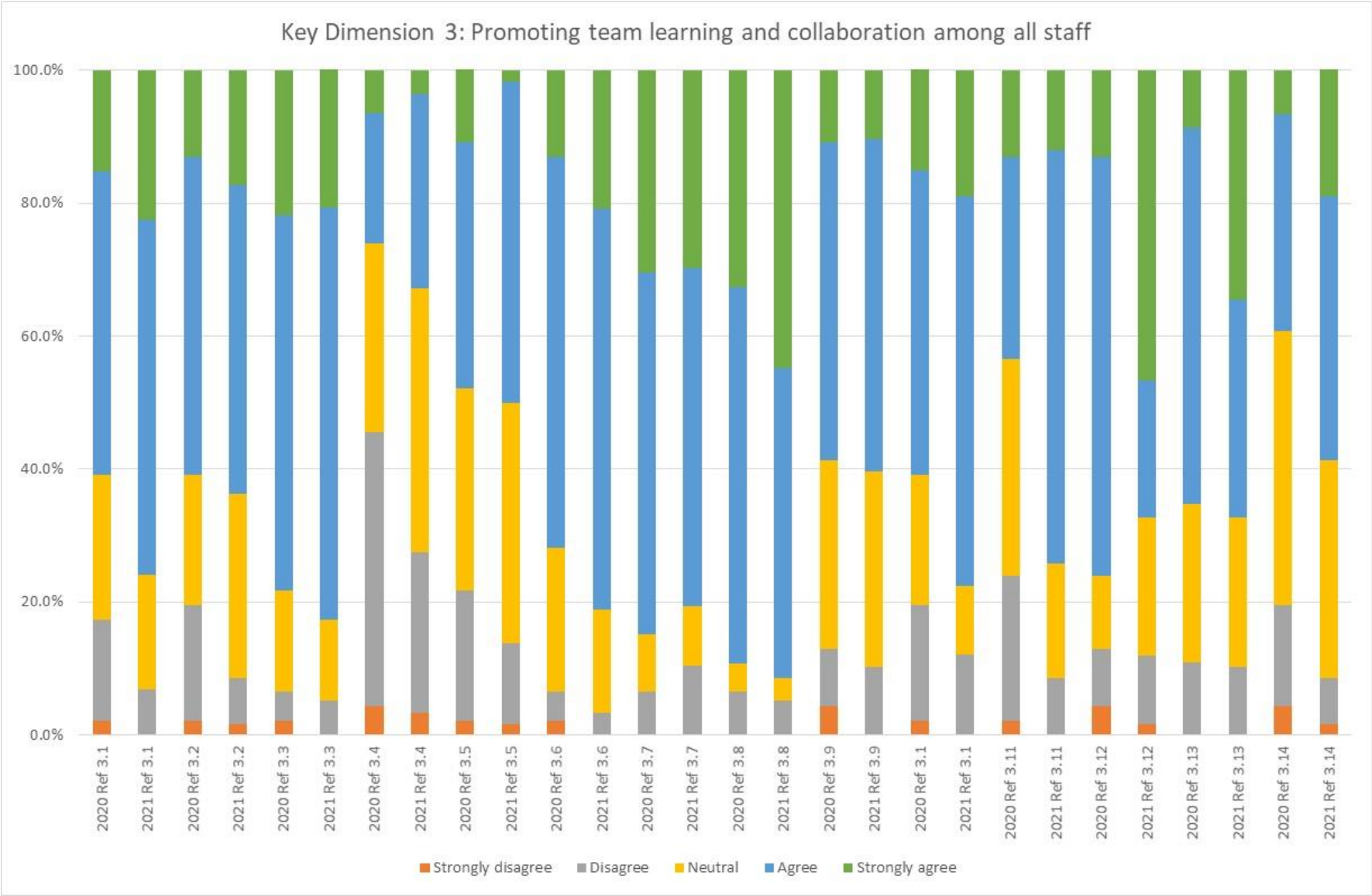


Chart 4: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 4

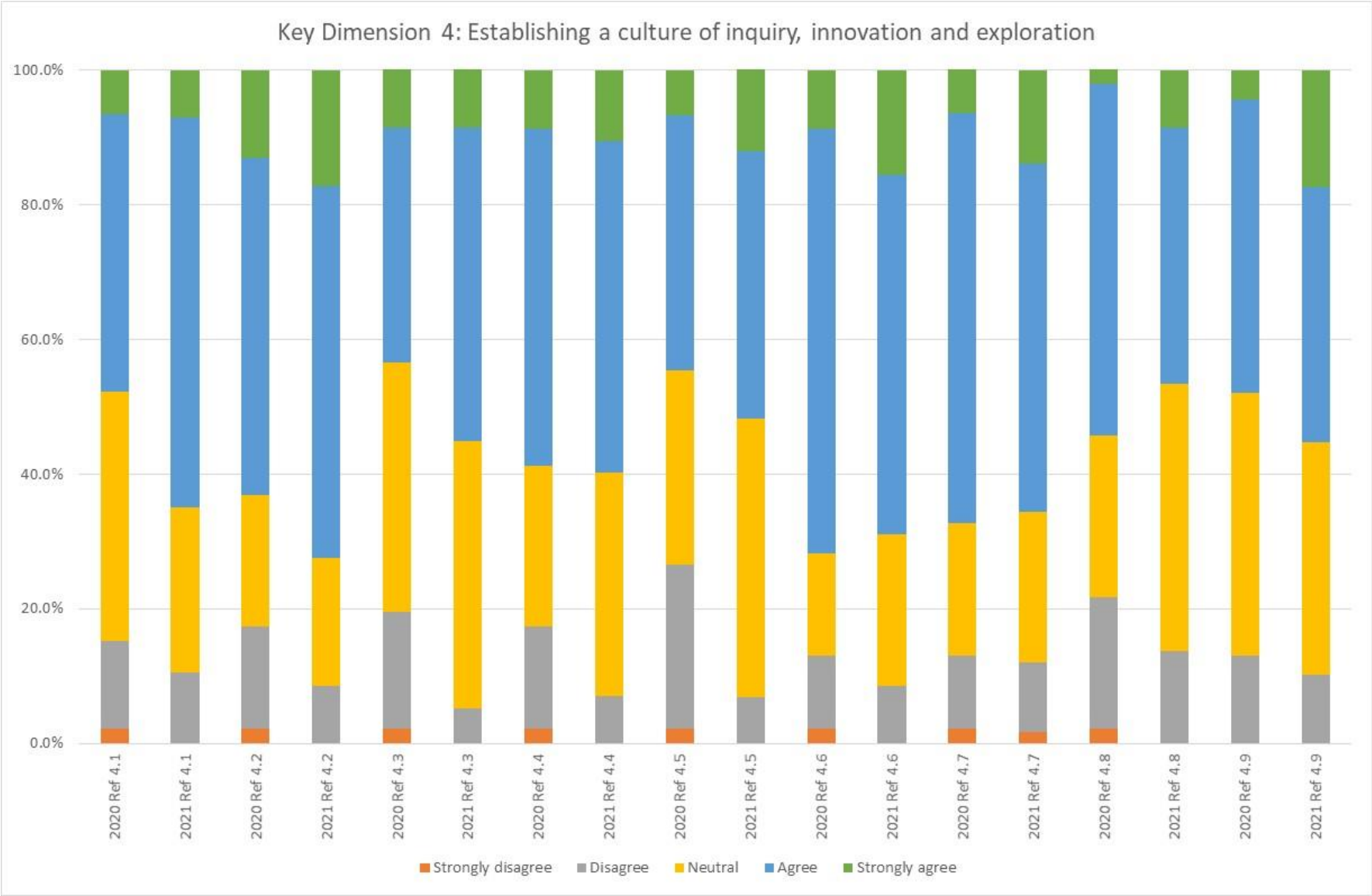


Chart 5: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 5

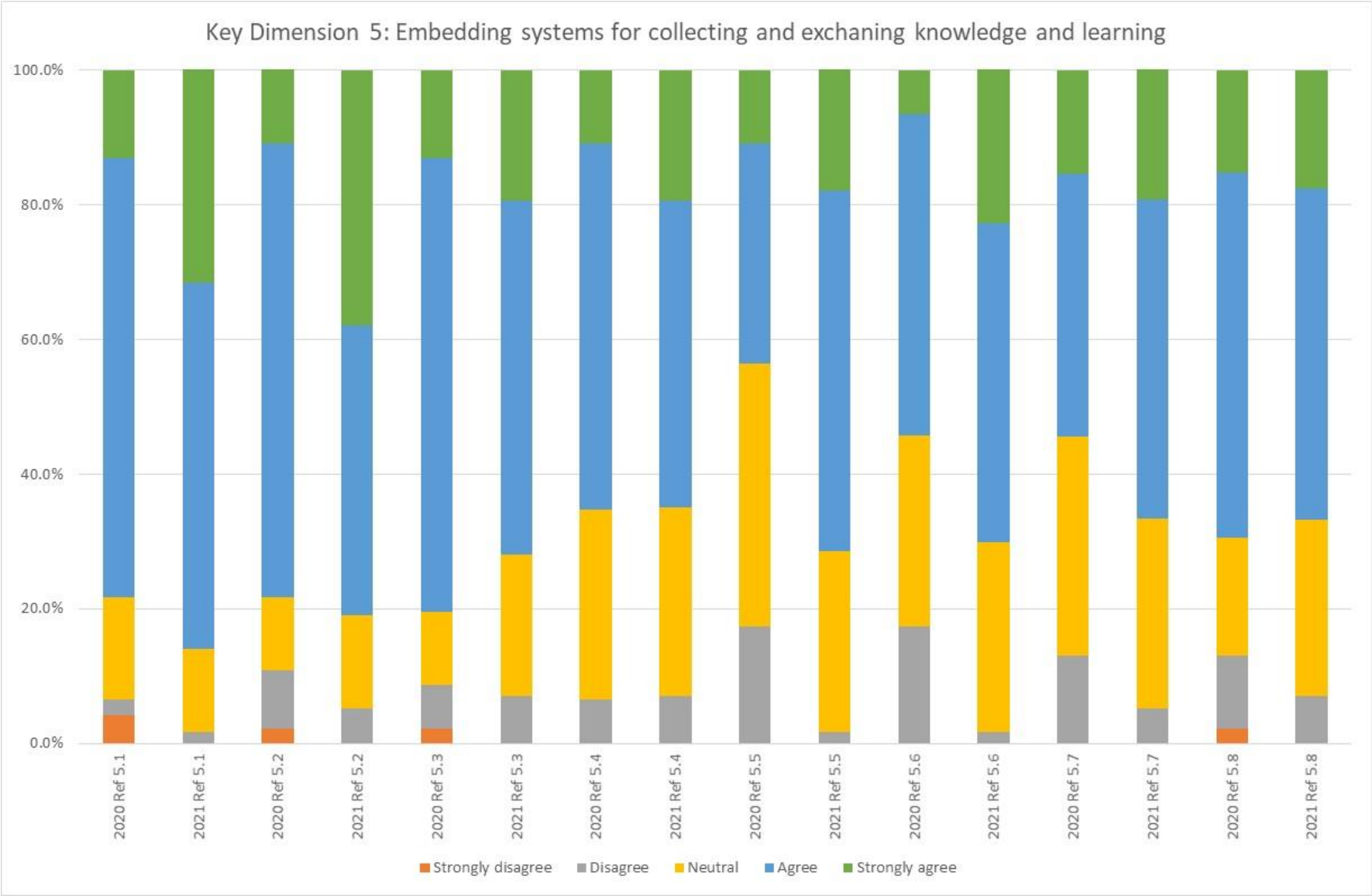


Chart 6: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 6

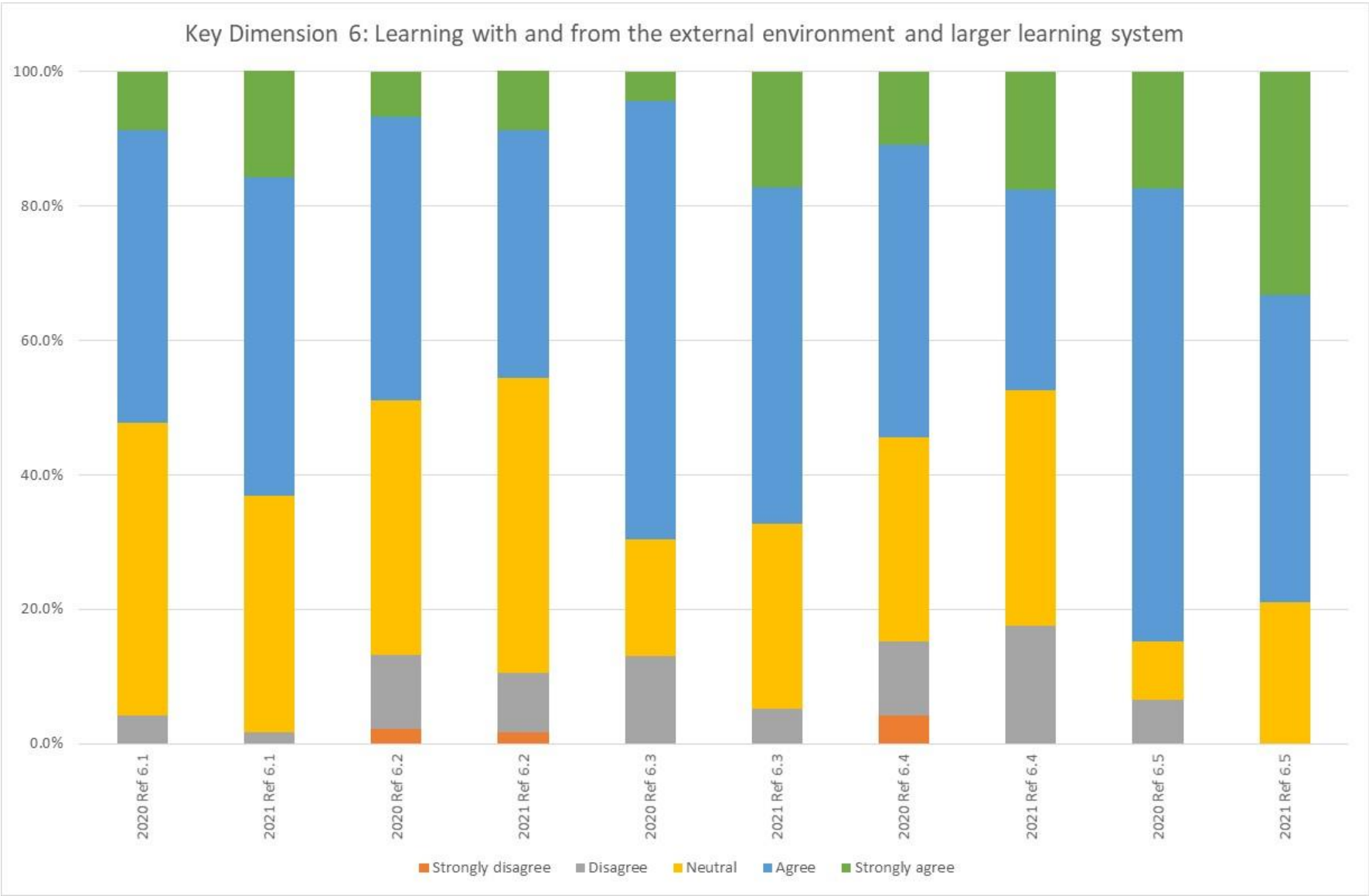
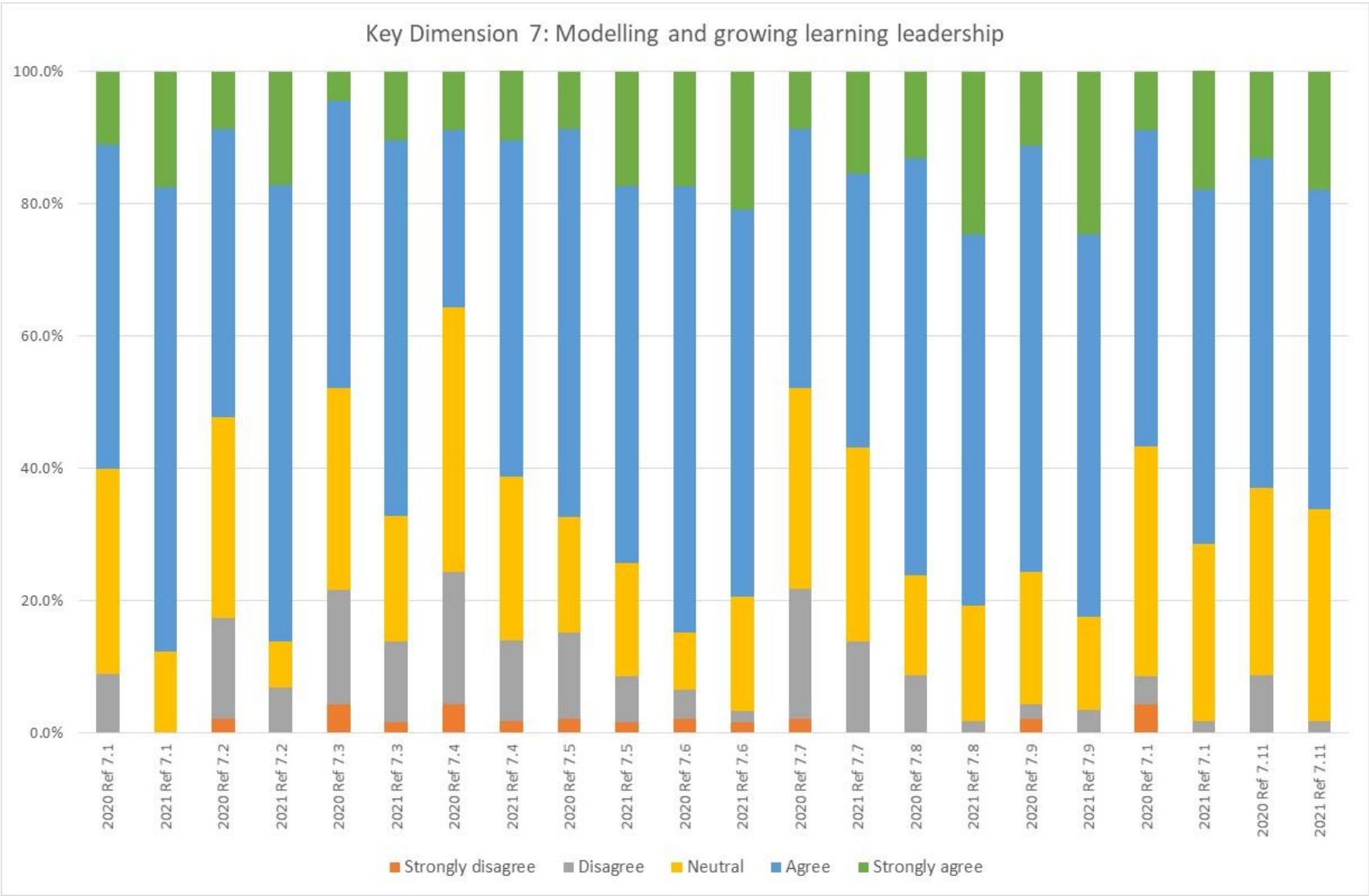


Chart 7: Comparison of responses for Key Dimension 7



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