

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE.

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.

Meeting held on Wednesday, 22 December 2021 at 10.00 am.

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

Councillor C. Smith (Bridgend County Borough Council)
Councillor L. Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan)
Councillor S. Merry (Cardiff Council)

Officers in attendance

Mr A Williams, Assistant Director Partnership & Improvement Central South Consortium
Ms Stephanie Davies, Service Director, Finance Services
Ms L Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium
Ms C Seery, Managing Director Central South Consortium
Ms Sue Walker, Director of Education (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)

34 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Rosser (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council), Cllr L Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council), Mr L Harvey, Lead Director of Education (Bridgend County Borough Council) and Mr E Cooper, Lead Chief Executive (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council).

35 Chair

In the absence of the Chair, County Borough Councillor J Rosser, County Borough Councillor L Burnett (Vice Chair – Vale of Glamorgan) took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

36 Declaration of Interest

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

37 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 22nd of September 2021 as an accurate reflection of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee meeting.

38 CSC Staffing Overview

The Managing Director provided Members with an overview of the current staffing structures as well as, roles & responsibilities of staff within Central South Consortium (CSC).

The report highlighted the different structures within the different teams in CSC such as, the Senior Management Team, Senior Leadership Team, Principal Improvement Partner and Improvement Partner Team, Curriculum Team & Professional Learning Team and Business Support Team, as highlighted in Appendix 1-5 of the report.

At present, there is a management of change process underway and a change to the leadership structures primarily due to a significant increase of Curriculum for Wales work. The team are working with School Based Practitioners to increase the leadership capacity to manage the growing workload and ensure sufficient capacity to support schools as they move forward. As part of the current recruitment process, the Managing Director noted the difficulty the team has had in recruiting translators.

Following the report provided by the Managing Director, the Chair commented that she was pleased with the CSC plan and delivery process.

Following discussion, the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

39 Annual Governance Statement Progress Report

The Deputy Managing Director provided Members with a progress update on the proposals that were identified in the Annual Governance statement 2020/21 presented to Committee earlier in the year.

Based on the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, 10 proposals and recommendations for improvement were presented to the Committee.

The Deputy Managing Director referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which highlighted the issues identified, proposals for improvement, timescale for implementation and progress of the recommendations regarding two areas. The Deputy Managing Director noted that out of 10 recommendations, 5 have been completed and progress on all others remains on track.

The Chair was pleased to see the substantial progress made, however queried whether the impact of Covid-19 has caused a delay in the completion of the recommendations.

The Deputy Managing Director noted that the revision of the Legal Agreement will be delayed and assured Members that the recommendation would be progressed into the next financial year. However, the Deputy Managing Director confirmed that progress has not been impacted by Covid-19.

Following the update, Members of the Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to note progress made towards the recommendations.

40 Central South Consortium Grants Report

The Deputy Managing Director provided the Joint Committee with an update on the Grants to be received by the Consortium in 2021/22. The funding has already been discussed with directors, and apportionment already agreed across the different areas.

The Deputy Managing Director referred Members to section 5 of the report which highlights the distribution of Grants in 2021/22. A total of £5000 of additional funding has been provided by National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) in Wales to support the System Leadership Development Programme; the System Leaders have been appointed and will be a vital tool in supporting schools across the region.

As part of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant, a revised award of funding has been provided of £4,201,733, thus taking Grant funding for financial year 2021/22 to a total of £51,406,821 as highlighted in Appendix A of the report. Appendix A, provided Members with specific figures of how much is delegated to schools, retained, and retained for specific circumstances. The Deputy Managing Director confirmed to Members the approval of the award funding by the Welsh Government.

The Deputy Managing Director referred Members to the lateness of the award of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) by Welsh Government which will be distributed to Schools in March 2022.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Managing Director for the report, and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the distribution of Grants as detailed in section 4 of the report.

41 Budget Monitoring 2021/22 and Budget Setting 2022/23

The Service Director, Finance Services provided Members with an update on the projected outturn position for the financial year 2021/22 along with a summary of 2021/22 grant funding. The report also provided Members with the proposed 2022/23 revenue budget and basis of appointment of local authority contribution levels for this period.

The Service Director, Finance Services referred Members to section 3, Table 1 of the report which highlighted variances and the projected outturn position for 2021/22. As shown on the Table 1 there has been a small underspend of £1331, similar to the position reported to Joint Committee in September 2021 of a £776 underspend, demonstrating to

Members the stability in the finances of the Consortium. It was highlighted to Members that the main variances such 'Transport' and 'Supplies and Services', showed an underspend due to a reduction of costs mainly as a result of the impacts of Covid-19.

The Service Director, Finance Services drew Member's attention to 'Support Services' variance which has seen an overspend due to requirements for further services being received from the Host Authority.

It was noted that the PDG confirmation had recently been received from the Welsh Government.

Members were referred to section 5, Table 4 of the report which highlights the draft proposed Revenue Budget for 2022/23. Members were reminded of the Joint Committee requirements in approving the Budget in principle by the 31st December 2021 as part of the Legal Agreement.

It was highlighted to Members that the drafted budget 2022/23 is constructed in line with the Medium-Term Financial Plan that was approved by Joint Committee on the 15th July 2021. The option approved on the 15th July was for the Local Authority contribution to cover pay award assumption and the for the Consortium to absorb non-pay inflationary pressures. Table 4 of the report highlights the difference between the current year Revised Budget 2021/22 and the Proposed Budget 2022/23.

Members were referred to Table 5 of the report which highlighted the Proposed Budget 2022/23 construction based upon increases in Local Authority contributions of 1.72%. Members were advised that the report had been shared with Section 151 officers of the 5 Members Authorities and no issues were raised.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- To note the current projected outturn position for 2021/22
- To note the grant funding position for 2021/22
- To agree to the 2022/23 budget in principle subject to confirmation from each of the local authorities of their approval at the next Joint Committee.

42 Central South Consortium Business Plan 2021/25

The Managing Director, Central South Consortium (CSC) provided Members of the Joint Committee with an overview of the Central South Consortium Business Plan 2022/2025 report. It is proposed to alter the CSC Business Plan to a three-year Business Plan to run alongside the Corporate Plans in Local Authorities. As there are significant changes; the three-year Business Plan will allow changes to be monitored and impact analysed over a longer time period.

Members of the Committee were taken through Table 1 of the report which highlighted the five priority areas for the Joint Committee's approval. Upon approval, the five priorities will be built into the Business Plan.

The Managing Director (CSC) informed Members of the uncertainty in grant proposals as figures have not yet been provided; 97% of the current Business Plan is funded through Grants.

The aim for the business plan 2022/25 is to retain the five priority areas from 2021/22. The key areas for development include, the provision for high quality education, inspiring leaders, strong and inclusive schools, robust assessment, and accountability arrangements; and lastly to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CSC working progresses. This is a key area in terms of financial planning and ensuring the correct systems to gather evidence that Local authorities need particularly as we progress into the next progression cycle.

The Managing Director informed Members that they are proposing to change the reporting cycle from termly to quarterly basis to match Local Authority reporting cycles. Dates are being investigated to ensure the new process can work as efficiently as possible.

The Managing Director highlighted the change in processes in 2021, which as a result has seen the involvement of Directors setting the operational plan and Directors invited to an impact review meeting to see how challenges of progress are managed internally to gain an in-depth understanding of priorities.

Flexibility will still be maintained in the operational plans due to the uncertainty surrounding funding and challenges of Covid, as a result a self-evaluation will be undertaken yearly to monitor changing circumstances outside CSC.

The Chair supported of the proposal of a three-year plan as a constructive approach which feeds through to the operational plan and is in-line with Local Authority reporting cycles. This would permit the Scrutiny Committees within Members Authorities to evaluate further.

The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the high-level priorities for the development of the CSC Business Plan.

This meeting closed at 10.37 am

**Cllr L Burnett
Chair.**