

**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:

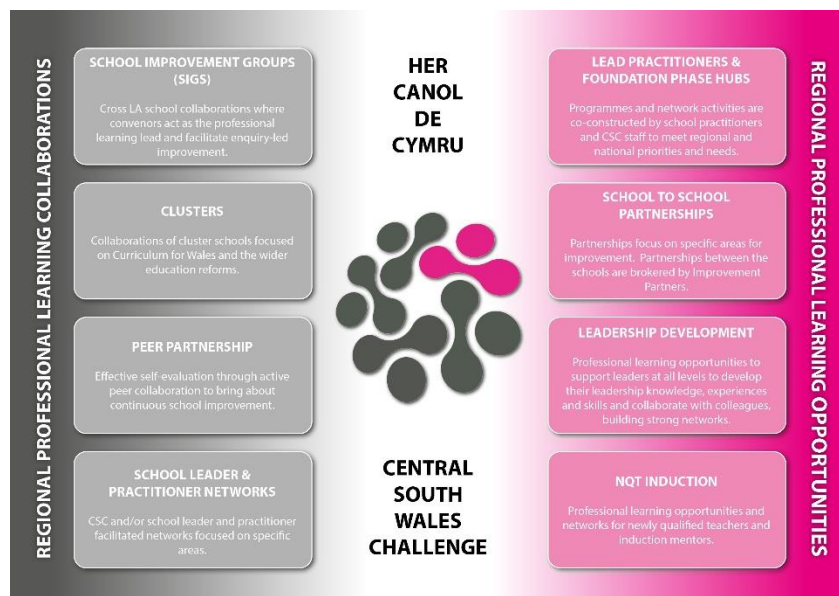
- Bridgend CBC;
- Cardiff CBC;
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC;
- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC; and
- Vale of Glamorgan CBC.

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

<p>and respecting the rule of law</p>	<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.
<p>Ensuring Openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward plans for committee meetings together with the matters to be considered, where appropriate.
<p>Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	<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.
<p>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>	
<p>Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan • Staff Handbook. • Schemes of Delegation. • Self-evaluation process. • Regional Evaluation & Improvement Session
<p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public</p>	<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

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

Managing Director:  Section 151 Officer: 

Chair, Joint Education Committee 

APPENDIX A

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT 2019/20 – POSITION STATEMENT

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

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

		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.