

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE.

Minutes of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. Virtual meeting held on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 10.00 am.

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

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

Council Officers in attendance:-

Mr E Cooper, Lead Chief Executive, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Mr L. Harvey, Lead Director of Education, Bridgend Council)
Ms S Davies, Head of Finance, Education & Financial Reporting Rhondda Cynon Taf

Others in attendance:-

Ms C Seery, Managing Director Central South Consortium
Ms L Blatchford, Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium
Mr A Williams, Assistant Director Partnership & Improvement Central South Consortium
Mr M Jones, (Audit Wales)

21 Welcome & Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Rosser (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) and Cllr L Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council).

Cllr L Burnett (Vice Chair – Vale of Glamorgan) continued to chair today's Meeting.

22 Declaration of Interest

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

23 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 15th July 2021 as an accurate reflection of the meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee.

24 Report of Audit Wales - Audit of the Financial Statement

Mr M Jones, Audit Wales, presented Members with the Audit of Accounts Report – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the 2020/21 financial year.

Mr M Jones outlined the purpose of the report and confirmed it was the Auditor General's intention to issue an unqualified audit report on the Accounts.

Members were informed that misstatements identified as part of the audit were detailed at Appendix 3 and all had been corrected by Management.

Mr M Jones took the opportunity to thank Members and Officers of the Central South Consortium for their co-operation during audit praising the quality of the draft accounts provided by Officers.

Following consideration of the Report, Members thanked the Officer from Audit Wales and **RESOLVED** to accept the Audit of Accounts Report – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee for the 2020/21 financial year.

25 Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2021

The Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting presented the Central South Consortium Joint Committee with the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2021, along with the associated Letter of Representation of the Joint Committee.

The Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting highlighted to Members sections 3 and 4 of the report covering the impact of Covid-19 on the statutory approval process.

It was highlighted that the Statement of Accounts were submitted to Audit Wales for external audit and, as part of the external audit process, a number of minor corrections were made to the final accounts.

The Head of Finance also referred to the Letter of Representation, attached at Appendix 2 of the Report, and confirmed that this document had been prepared after full consultation with all relevant officers.

Both the Managing Director and Deputy Managing Director acknowledged the work undertaken by the Consortium's finance team in obtaining such a positive audit report.

Following consideration of the report, Members **RESOLVED** to:

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

26 Budget Report 2021-2022

The Head of Finance: Education and Financial Reporting provided Members of the Joint Committee with the Budget Report 2021/22. Members were reminded that the 2021/22 revenue budget was agreed by Joint Committee on the 16th December 2020.

The Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting outlined a number of proposed budget virements within categories of expenditure and income that have been identified, having been informed by up dated service information, to more accurately reflect the actual costs to be incurred during the year. Members were directed to this information in Table 1 of the report.

A summary of the revised budget and projected outturn for the full year (projected as at August 2021) and variances was presented to Members at Table 2 of the report. It was highlighted to Members that the main variances were contained within 'Supplies and Services' with the Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting drawing Members attention to the overspend in IT costs to facilitate digital content and also increased licencing costs. The Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting also detailed underspends for services such as photocopying and postage as a result of agile working.

Finally, the Head of Finance, Education and Financial Reporting highlighted to Members Table 3 showing the 2021/22 grant allocations received by the Consortium from Welsh Government as at August 2021. Members noted that to date there had been no confirmation of award of funding for PDG as yet.

Following discussion the Central South Joint Education Service Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Note and approve the proposed budget virements within the 2021/22 budget.
- 2) Note the current outturn position for 2021/22.
- 3) Note the current grant position for 2021/22.

27 Accountability & Improvement Framework

With the aid of a Power Point presentation, the Assistant Director- Partnership & Improvement provided Members with an update on the Accountability and Improvement Framework. He outlined the six principles agreed by the 4 regions and advised Members that these are then interpreted at a local level. He took Members through each principle and highlighted the importance of each. The six principles outlined are:

1. Discussion
2. Overview
3. Broker
4. Termly evaluation
5. Risks to progress
6. Collaboration

He continued by discussing the role of the School Improvement Partner and

Members were advised that the approach is to be a facilitator and allow sharing of expertise around the system. He presented Members with information regarding allocation of support and acknowledged that currently there is an ongoing impact on the position of schools as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which will determine the right support.

The Assistant Director- Partnership & Improvement outlined the support and challenge functions emphasising the aim is to make sure that the priorities are suitable for each school and focused on achieving the best outcomes. Members were advised of 2 support areas, Core and Enhanced and the differences between these were explained. He explained that the new approach gives the opportunity to work with schools throughout the year producing reports for Governing Bodies when required. He moved on to highlight the importance of having good links with Local Authorities which are even more key given the current Covid-19 context.

Lastly, he covered the deployment aspect detailing how the blended approach ensures that it is not sole responsibility for providing answers but allows the facilitation of conversations and signposting to the best place for support.

Members were invited to ask any questions. The Chair thanked the Officer for a comprehensive and insightful presentation and praised the approach for collaborative working. Comments were made on the challenges presented by ensuring all partners work together without leading to any delays in the process. The Assistant Director- Partnership & Improvement acknowledged previously this had been a barrier but detailed the access that Local Authority Officers now have real time access to key information that allows for active participation in leadership meetings and sharing information widely. He also emphasised the importance of the role of Governors in the process.

The Chair thanked the Officer and **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information.

28 Central South Consortium Legal Agreement

The Managing Director Central South Consortium took Members through the report outlining the purpose to seek Members' approval to review the legal agreement, considering the revised changes to governance previously approved and to seek Members' approval to delegate decision making for proposed staffing structures to the CSC Management Board and CSC Management team as outlined within the report.

After discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to:-

- 1) Approve a review of the CSC legal agreement to reflect the changes in governance previously agreed by Members in December 2020 with revised terms of reference for governance groups approved in March 2021;
- 2) Approve a full review of the legal agreement is required to reflect the changing education landscape ;
- 3) Approve the proposals for delegated decision making in respect of CSC staffing outlined within the report.

29 Central South Consortium Business Plan Summer Progress Report

The Deputy Managing Director Central South Consortium provided Members of the Joint Committee with an overview of the Central South Consortium Business Plan 2021- 2022 Summer Term Report.

Members were taken through the 5 improvement priorities that align directly to the national priority areas. The Deputy Managing Director drew Members attention to the table outlined at 3.0 which provided an overview of priority areas, actions required and judgement on progress. Members were advised that no priority areas were affected by Covid-19 and the information reflects the current position.

The Deputy Managing Director highlighted the information contained at 4.0 of the report outlining risks identified and the mitigating actions taken. Members attention was also drawn to the information in the appendices relating to a detailed summary of Priority Progress Evaluation.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to note the detailed summary report.

30 Central South Consortium as a Learning Organisation

The Managing Director, Central South Consortium took Members through the report outlining the purpose was to receive an evaluation of the 'Consortium as a Learning Organisation' survey undertaken by Central South Consortium staff and the next steps following the results.

Members were advised that 'Creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff' was the lowest key performing dimension in the 2020 survey and the Managing Director highlighted that the 2021 results show an improvement for this area.

The Managing Director continued by taking Members through a comparison of the results from 2020 and 2021 pointing out the key areas that require to be continued to look at as a result of the survey responses this year. These included:

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

The Managing Director informed Members that the intention is to continue to look at the results and to be collaborative ensuring staff have adequate time to complete and understand the language used in the survey. Members were invited to ask questions or provide comment on the report.

One Member noted the content of the report referencing closer working with the organisation and highlighted their agreement with this statement. They referenced good practice in one local authority which provides an updated

'newsletter' style document which provided Members with key information on the service area and a list of key contacts. The Managing Director acknowledged the benefits of such a document and advised Members that they hope to share similar information in the near future.

Following discussion Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

31 To consider passing the under-mentioned resolution:

RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act ,1972 (as amended) for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

32 Central South Consortium Risk Register

Members of the Joint Committee received an update on the current risk register of Central South Consortium.

Following the update, Members of the Joint Committee noted the contents of the report and **RESOLVED** to:-

- 1) Consider and approve the recommended changes from the risk change template to amend the Central South Consortium risk register.

This meeting closed at 11.20 am

**CLLR L. BURNETT
CHAIR.**