



Minutes of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee held at Ty Dysgu, Nantgarw on Monday, 14 September 2015 at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT:

In the Chair:

Councillor C. Elmore (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)

Members of the Committee

Councillor S. Merry (Cardiff City Council)

Councillor H. David (Bridgend County Borough Council)

Councillor (Mrs) E. Hanagan (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Council Officers in Attendance

Ms. E. Thomas – Service Director for Schools & Community (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Mr. M. Pennell – Group Accountant (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Mr M. Glavin – (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)

Mr P. Orders – Chief Executive, Cardiff City Council)

Mr N. Batchelar – Director of Education (Cardiff City Council)

Also in Attendance

Ms.H.Woodhouse - Managing Director (Central South Consortium)

Ms.L.Blatchford – Business Manager (Central South Consortium)

Robert Hopkins – Head of School Improvement (Central South Consortium)

Mr.K.Napieralla (Welsh Government)

Ms C. Jones – (Welsh Government)

Mr J. Saunders – Wales Audit Office

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. G. Chapman and Ms. L. Buck (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council), Ms. D. Haines (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council) and Mr C. Bradshaw (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members had no personal interests to declare in matters pertaining to the agenda.

17 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee held on the 25th June 2015.

18 OUTCOMES & KEY MESSAGES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The Managing Director, Central South Consortium presented her report entitled the Initial View of Performance in 2014-2015 which provided Committee with an overview of progress to date in respect of the self improving school system. Further handouts were circulated at the meeting which served to summarise the key headings within the report.

Members of the Joint Committee were informed of the positive features of performance such as the improvements across the region building on the 2014 results, schools setting more challenging targets and having greater success in meeting or exceeding those and an improvement in school attendance across both primary and secondary schools. A number of graphs served to produce an overview of school performance and those key areas of focus for 2015/16. Further detail was provided for those areas in need of improvement such as closing the gap for children living in poverty which is a key priority as well as lessons learned from the improvement in red and amber schools.

Mr Robert Hopkins, Central South Consortium, presented the report concerning National School Improvement and Categorisation System. He reported that a review of previous year's developments has resulted in a more rigorous and consistent approach to the categorisation process by Welsh Government and the three step process was outlined. Mr Hopkins reminded Committee of progress last year in terms of improving challenge and support, building a self improving school system and improving support for schools. Following on from the update, the priorities for this year were addressed such as identifying and strengthening support for future school leaders and focussing on effective self evaluation in green schools.

Further discussions ensued in relation to those schools in the green category and how performance in some cases has fallen dramatically. Committee addressed the issue of intervention and how to challenge those schools in the green category that are reluctant to engage with other less well performing schools. A discussion ensued regarding the need to focus on those individual schools and consider ways to effectively address those areas of reluctance.

Members of the Joint Committee also commented that consideration needed to be given to future school budget and grant changes in particular following the end of the School Challenge Cymru initiative. Consideration was also given to the impact of the direct interventions to date by the Consortium.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

19 **REPORT OF THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE – AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.**

Mr J. Saunders, Wales Audit Office, presented to Members of the Joint Committee his report in respect of the Audit of Financial Statements for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee.

The summary of corrections made to the draft financial statements was referred to as set out in Appendix 3 of the report. There were no other issues or concerns to report therefore it remained for the Chair of the Joint Committee to formally thank the officers involved in managing the financial statements for the Joint Committee and it was **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

20 **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015**

The Group Accountant presented his report to the Joint Committee in respect of the Central South Consortium statement of accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2015. Committee was informed that the updated Central South Statement of Accounts 2014/15 was attached at Appendix 1 which reflects the amended position following its submission to the Wales Audit Office (WAO) for external audit. It was reported that the audit adjustments have not affected the general reserves balance.

Members also noted that the letter of representation, attached at Appendix 2, was provided to reflect the accuracy of the audit of the financial statements of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.

It was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Approve the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2014/15 (Appendix 1) and associated Letter of Representation of the Joint Committee (Appendix 2); and
2. Note the audited final out-turn position for the Joint Committee for the 2014/15 financial year and the level of General Reserves Balances held

21 2015-2016 BUDGET

The Group Accountant presented his report in respect of the 2015-2016 budgets for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee. Members were asked for their approval of the revised 2015/16 revenue budget and were provided with an update of the projected outturn for 2015/16 together with a summary of 2015/16 grant funding.

The Group Accountant reminded Members of the Joint Committee that the budget had been formally agreed on the 17th December 2014 and approved by each Local Authority at the Joint Committee meeting on the 26th March 2015. The key headings within the report were addressed and Members of the Joint Committee were advised of the reasons for the variances within the projected outturn.

Details of the grant allocations for 2015/16 were provided and it was noted that the Award of Funding letter to confirm the School Challenge Cymru Grant has not yet been allocated, which has impacted upon the service provision. The Group Accountant assured Members that everything was being done to source other grant streams which would serve to fund the whole programme.

Discussions ensued in respect of the future of the accommodation at Ty Dysgu and the difficulties that CSC could face in vacating the premises during term time. It was reported that the key role of the newly recruited Conference Manager would be to investigate ways to enhance the assets of Ty Dysgu. It was suggested that a report is presented by the Conference Manager at the next Joint Committee to advise Members how it is anticipated that the costs of the building can be covered.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Note and approve the proposed virements within the 2015/16 Budget
2. Note the current outturn position for 2015/16
3. Note the current grant position for 2015/16

22 CENTRAL SOUTH EDUCATION CONSORTIUM GRANTS

The Business Manager for the Central South Consortium presented the report in respect of the Central South Consortium grants to be received by the Consortium for 2015/16, for which notifications have been received, and the methods of allocation of each.

Following the report discussions ensued in respect of how outcomes can be achieved with diminishing budgets. It was confirmed that

budget pressures, school budgets, pooling services, leadership roles spanning more than one school and re structuring services are all topics which have been previously discussed by the Directors of Education and it was suggested that these issues could be brought to the Joint Committee in order to looking at maximising resources.

It was considered that discussions concerning shared efficiencies and additional savings which can be made following local government re organisation should take place during the next Directors meeting in addition to whether the overall Consortium financial reserves should be retained.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to approve the distribution of grants as detailed in section 4 of the report.

23 REPORT ON THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM RESPONSE TO THE WELSH AUDIT OFFICE/ESTYN REMIT REVIEW OF CONSORTIA, PUBLISHED IN JUNE 2015

The Managing Director, Central South Consortium, informed Committee that the report before them will be presented to the Select Committee Hearing on the 16th September 2015 and added that the Directors of Education have had sight of its contents.

RESOLVED to note the report

24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority currently holding that information). Transparency in the accountability for expenditure of public funds within the public sector is outweighed by the fact that the release of the information will prejudice the interests of the Joint Committee, consequently the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information by virtue of which the meeting is likely not to be open to the public during its consideration.

25 RISKS AND PROGRESS – CONSORTIUM BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee considered the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Risk Register as at September 2015.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) That the number of risks on the register is reduced in order to identify those areas of genuine concern and better manage the outcomes.
- (2) That a report is presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the consistent approach required for the recruitment of headships
- (3) That a joint scrutiny model is not pursued
- (4) That a joint programme of scrutiny is established and a letter is circulated to all Chairs of Scrutiny to determine a timetable of joint meetings every term and annual visits by the Consortium

**C.ELMORE
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 1.00 p.m.