



Minutes of the Meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee held at the Civic Offices of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil on Thursday, 29th September at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor H. David (Bridgend County Borough Council)
Councillor L. Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)
Councillor H. Jones (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)

Council Officers in Attendance

Ms. D. McMillan (Bridgend County Borough Council)
Ms. P. Ham (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)
Mr. R. Thomas (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)
Mrs. E. Thomas – (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)
Mr. P. Griffiths – (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Also in Attendance

Ms. H. Woodhouse – Managing Director (Central South Consortium)
Mr. M. Glavin – Assistant Director (Central South Consortium)
Ms. L. Blatchford – Business Manager (Central South Consortium)
Mr. M. Jones (Wales Audit Office)
Mr. T. Era (Wales Audit Office)
Mr. M. Maragakis (Welsh Government)

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors E. Hanagan (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council), S. Merry and P. Orders (Cardiff City Council).

19 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

20 CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

The Committee agreed that the agenda would be considered out of sequence and as detailed in the minutes set out hereunder.

21 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016

The Service Director – Performance and Improvement presented the Treasurer's report to the Joint Committee in respect of the Central South Consortium Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2016. The Committee was informed that the updated Central South Consortium Statement of Accounts 2015/16 was attached at Appendix 1 which reflected a number of amendments further to the Wales Audit Office (WAO) undertaking its audit.

Members also noted that the Letter of Representation, attached at Appendix 2, set out the Joint Committee's view, to the best of its knowledge, that the Statement of Accounts were true and fair and had been prepared properly.

It was **RESOLVED** to:-

1. Approve the revised Long Term Debtor balance and approve the Short Term Debtor balance in respect of redundancy costs associated with restructuring the service (Section 4.3 of the report);
2. Consider a revised pay-back period for repayment of redundancy costs (Section 4.4 of the report);
3. Approve the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2015/16 (Appendix 1) and associated Letter of Representation of the Joint Committee (Appendix 2); and
4. Note the audited final out-turn position for the Joint Committee for the 2015/16 financial year and the level of General Reserve Balances held.

22 REPORT OF THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE – AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. M. Jones, 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 for the 2015/16 financial year.

Mr. M. Jones drew Members attention to 'Other significant issues arising from the audit' section of the WAO Report in that the audit work undertaken identified further redundancy costs that had not been accounted for within the 2015/16 draft accounts, but should have been (these amendments have been made by management in the final Financial Statements). Mr Jones also highlighted the long period that the balance of redundancy costs would be

paid back over and asked that the Joint Committee have regard to this to ensure it demonstrates sound financial governance and stewardship.

Members requested that proposals be presented to the next Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee meeting that would enable the repayment period for redundancy costs to be accelerated.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED –**

- (1) To support the recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office.
- (2) That proposals be reported to the next Joint Committee meeting to accelerate the pay-back period for redundancy costs.

23 MINUTE SILENCE

At this junction in the proceedings, Members of the Committee stood for a minute silence as a mark of respect for a fellow Committee Member Ms. J. Hill Director of Learning & Skills (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council) who sadly passed away.

24 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee held on 28th June 2016 subject to it being noted that Mrs. E. Thomas, Temporary Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and Ms. D. Haines, Chief Education Officer names were omitted from the Minutes, but were both present at the Meeting.

25 HEADLINE ANALYSIS REPORT

The Assistant Director of the Central South Consortium presented his report to the Committee and with the aid of PowerPoint slides presented the Performance Summary for 2015/16 Regional Performance.

Members of the Joint Committee were informed that the Consortium performance for Foundation Phase had improved again apart from the main performance indicators which were Language, Literacy and Communication Skills.

The consortiums performance for all key indicators was outlined for foundation phase through to KS2. It was noted that:

For all but one (L2 mathematics) main performance indicators from FP to KS4, the CSC performance is equal to or greater than the Welsh average. At the above expected level for the majority of key performance indicators, the CSC performance is greater than the Welsh average.

CSC performance for nearly all main performance indicators at FP, KS2, KS3 and KS4, continues to show year on year performance for the fourth consecutive year.

The gap in performance at the expected level between children receiving FSM and their peers is narrowing in the FP, KS2, KS3 and KS4. The number of schools not reaching the floor target for eFSM at KS4 has reduced further.

The achievement of more able pupils at the higher outcome/ levels is once again improving at a faster rate for most indicators.

With regards to areas for development:

It was reported that the underperformance of boys is an issue across the regions and that the Consortium would continue to encourage strong leadership and also support the sharing of good practice.

Despite the narrowing of the gap in outcomes between e-FSM and non e-FSM pupils at the expected outcome/ level, gaps are still too wide.

20 schools within the central south region did not meet the floor target for eFSM of 32% (reduced from 36 two years ago)

Further the proportion of e-FSM pupils reaching the higher levels is too low resulting in large gaps in performance when compared with non eFSM learners

Discussions ensued in respect of the gap in performance between children who receive free school meals (FSM) compared to those children that do not (non FSM) which still remained an issue for children living in poverty across the region.

In response, it was reported that many agencies engage at a school level and officers carry out routine discussions with the schools. Further work is being carried out and a report would be submitted to Welsh Government in a bid for extra funding to help address this issue. It was agreed that research should now be undertaken to track pupil data across the region to monitor the progress of pupils across the board to help address the underlying issues, and that information on the comparisons across the region with children having FSM and non FSM be presented to Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director on presenting his report.

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

26 UPDATE AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS BY ESTYN FOR CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM

The Managing Director presented her report in respect of the update against recommendations by Estyn for the Central South Consortium. The Committee was informed that following the joint field work undertaken by Estyn and the Wales Audit Office, Estyn had inspected all four Consortia during the 2015/16 academic year.

Members of the Joint Committee were informed that the Wales Audit Office published a progress report in October against their initial recommendations from the June 2015 report which was mostly positive and recognised the scale of improvement across schools within the Central South region.

The Managing Director informed Members that Directors from across the region had met to discuss the recommendations of the progress report and how they would work effectively together in the future to improve the quality of education for all of their children and young people. The Directors would meet again on 6th October 2016 and feedback would be presented to Committee at a future meeting before the report being signed off on 6th December 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the information.

27 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) THEMATIC REVIEW

With the aid of PowerPoint slides, Ms Cole gave her observation on raising attainment, achievements and aspirations of children who are looked after in Wales.

She informed the Committee that tracking systems are being developed to capture the achievements of children who are looked after and that they would be building capacity in schools through professional development to ensure staff improve their skills to support and challenge looked after children.

A Member asked in relation to strengthening links with foster carers if training would be provided or if there was a modular available to them. In response Ms.Cole reported they continue to provide good quality professional development for carers, adoptive parents and staff in Children's homes and continue to communicate with foster carer's via a website which provides consistent information for all foster carers across the region.

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

28 2016-2017 BUDGET

The Service Director – Performance and Improvement presented the report of the Treasurer in respect of the 2016-2017 budget for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. Members were asked to consider and if appropriate approve virements to the 2016/17 revenue budget and were provided with an update on the projected outturn for 2016/17 together with a summary of 2016/17 grant funding.

Discussions ensued in respect of the projected overspend position for the Service of £0.051M, with the Employees budget category being the primary reason due to the appointment of Consultant Challenge Advisors on higher daily rates than budgeted. The Service Director reported that a review of all areas of expenditure and income is underway to address the projected overspend position and bring expenditure back in line with the approved

budget. The Managing Director confirmed that an up date would be provided at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

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

1. Note and approve the proposed virements within the 2016/17 Budget.
2. Note the current outturn position for 2016/17.
3. Note the current grant position for 2016/17.

29 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.

30 RISK REGISTER – SEPTEMBER 2016

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

After receiving the views of the Managing Director of the Central South Consortium, it was **RESOLVED** to note the information.

31 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Managing Director of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service provided the Committee with an oral update on the Future Work Programme for the Joint Committee.

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

32 URGENT ITEMS

The Committee were informed that Mr. N. Batchelar would be taking over as Chief Education Officer from Ms. D. McMillan.

**HUW DAVID
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 12.24 p.m.