

**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
REPORT FOR JOINT COMMITTEE**

8TH NOVEMBER 2018

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

**JOINT REPORT OF THE LEAD CHIEF EXECUTIVE – REVIEW OF THE
FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE CONSORTIUM**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out a proposal to undertake a review of Central South Consortium regional delivery arrangements and develop proposals for the future model of school improvement

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider and agree that an independent review of the Consortium is commissioned to inform the future governance, service delivery and financial costs of the regional service.
- 2.2 Consider and agree, that for the remainder of the academic year to September 2019, the Joint Committee increases the frequency of its meetings from three a year to at least five times per year.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Over the past five years, the performance of the pupils and schools in the Central South Region of South East Wales has continued to improve, at a faster rate than the rest of Wales. This improvement has been due in part to the five Councils' commitment to regional school improvement services and in particular the focus on a school to school improvement model that has achieved considerable success in London and Manchester.

3.2 The focus over the past few years has been to embed the following key approaches to the school to school improvement model:

- School Improvement Groups with all schools actively encouraged to participate focused on shared priorities;
- Pathfinders where high performing schools are partnered with schools requiring improvement to support and accelerate improvements in these schools;
- School Hubs where teacher training and development programmes are offered by hub schools that are aligned to the analysis of regional and national need and follow an enquiry led approach. Programmes have been created following an analysis of school improvement plans from all schools as well as forensic evaluation of available data sources;
- Strategic Leadership Programmes developing existing and future leaders in our schools;
- Peer Enquiry has sought to build greater trust across the schools in the system, building social capital to support the development of the school-led system and the vision to develop trust, openness and honesty between peers. The Peer Enquiry programmes also help support succession planning and preparation / aspiration for headship. The lead and supporting head teachers work alongside the associate members and develop their roles as coaches and mentors. Senior schools leaders describe the process as being excellent professional development and preparation for future headship.
- Challenge Advisors – recruiting and retaining high quality school improvement professionals, improving the standard of their work and reducing the administrative burden to maximise their time in classrooms, improving the quality of leadership and teaching;
- Teach First – recruiting high quality graduates in the key subjects of mathematics, science, English and Welsh, working in partnership with Teach First.

3.3 School leaders across the region have been actively engaged in the approach taken by the Consortium over the past few years, and they have become more accountable for the performance of their school, schools in their cluster and in supporting other schools across the region.

3.4 All ten councils and the majority of our schools have seen the benefits of regional collaboration and in many regards the councils and schools of Central South have led the improvement in Welsh educational standards. However, we need to continue to review what we do, to ensure the Regional Service remains both efficient and effective.

4. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

4.1 The Welsh Government is making many changes to the education system in Wales, with a new curriculum from Foundation Phase through to Key

Stage 5, new accountability frameworks, new approaches to supporting children with Additional Learning Needs, the implementation of schools as learning organisations, the introduction of a National Academy for Educational Leadership (endorsing programmes which will in turn attract funding), the launch of a professional learning model (which will impact upon school to school programmes) as well as changes to the way in which Estyn will inspect schools and local authorities. These changes are being made with no direct increase in the funding available to schools and local authorities.

4.2 The financial pressures on schools and local authorities are significant and whilst the current model of school improvement has been successful, we need to consider the following key questions:

- How well are we performing currently and how well do we understand our own performance and strengths and challenges?
- Are there any other examples and work we can learn from in other consortium in Wales or other local education systems particularly around the development of a school led-system?
- Is the current model fit for purpose for the future taking into account WG planned changes to the education system?
- Is the model affordable over the next 3-5 years, with a likely continued period of austerity?
- What needs to change and how would you implement this change over the next 3-5 years?

4.3 It is therefore proposed that we commission an independent review to consider these questions. In discussion with the Chair of the Joint Committee, the Chief Executives and Directors of Education, it is recommended that ISOS Partnership undertake this review. ISOS previously undertook a review of the Consortium in 2014 and were fundamental in developing and introducing the school to school model of school improvement we have successfully implemented. Furthermore, ISOS have extensive experience of working on the development of school-to-school improvement models at both a national and local level. This includes research reports in England into the development of school-to-school support and the changing role of the local authority including a recent LGA publication *Enabling School Improvement (January 2018)* that sets out how eight local systems are developing their approaches to school improvement. This builds on earlier research undertaken into the changing role of the local authority in education (2012) and the evolving education system In England (2014).

4.4 ISOS are currently completing a major piece of national research for DfE into how school groups achieve sustainable school improvement in partnership with the Institute for Education; and supporting a number of local areas to introduce new schools led models of improvement including the development of school improvement boards and schools led companies. This work will help ISOS challenge our existing ways of

working and introduce new approaches for the Joint Committee, Directors of Education and head teachers' consideration.

- 4.5 ISOS will be commissioned in compliance with RCTCBC's procurement rules and the costs of which will be met from within existing budgets.
- 4.6 The review will build on the existing evidence base that we have built up about what is working in the region and what has had impact in school improvement including considering evaluations undertaken by Estyn, Cardiff University and others. It will need to engage a wide range of stakeholders across the region including members, chief executives, directors of education, consortium staff, headteacher groups and other stakeholders involved in the consortium's work. We will ensure the full range of schools are represented in discussions (English and Welsh speaking, Special Schools etc) and we will have the opportunity to agree this sample with ISOS to ensure it is inclusive.
- 4.7 We would aim for the review to be completed by mid-February 2019 for consideration by the Joint Committee to decide how to move forward from academic year 2019-20.
- 4.8 It is proposed to undertake the review in two broad phases:
 - **Phase 1** - an initial evidence gathering stage with interim feedback to the Joint Committee at the December meeting;
 - **Phase 2** - further development and testing of proposals for the future model with a final report being considered by the Joint Committee in March 2019.
- 4.9 Phase 1 will include interviews and where appropriate workshops with the Cabinet Members, Chairs of Scrutiny Committees, Chief Executives, Directors of Education and Consortium managers and staff. There will also be significant engagement with headteachers from a wider mix of schools from across the region and senior Welsh Government officials to understand the latest thinking on the national model and test their view of the consortium.
- 4.10 Phase 2 will focus on the development of more detailed proposals and options for the future model. It is expected that ISOS would develop and test proposals through further workshops during this phase with the following groups: Directors of Education and key consortium staff; head teachers; and Cabinet Members of Education/Scrutiny Leads.
- 4.11 In concluding the review in March 2019, there are opportunities to remodel the school improvement service by September 2019, the Joint Committee will have the opportunity to make such decisions early in the Spring term.

5. ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 At the Joint Committee meeting held on 14th June 2018, Members expressed their frustration that the Committee only meets three times a year, once each school term, and whilst they consider and approve important business, there is insufficient time to consider opportunities to learn from schools and other councils in improving educational outcomes.
- 5.2 It is therefore proposed that for the academic year 2018/19 the Joint Committee meets once every half term, and it is planned that three meetings will be held this Autumn term to thoroughly consider the future budget plans of the Consortium. It is proposed that the Joint Committee will still undertake their review of the Consortium Business Plan, financial information, approve the various Welsh Government grants, but also have the opportunity to consider other key developments that are impacting on school improvement and educational outcomes. For example, the Joint Committee could request reports on the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum Reform;• Peer Review model – delivered by the lead head teachers;• Pioneer Schools in Curriculum Reform – delivered by the lead head teachers;• SACRE• Bilingualism• National Academy for Leadership – delivered by the lead head teacher;• Professional Learning Offer – delivered by the lead head teacher;• Closing the gap Strategy – delivered by the lead head teacher;• Accountability Measures;• ALN;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Post 16 provision across the region;• More able and talented;• PISA – how are we performing?• Teaching Award Winners;• Excellence in Inspections (primary & secondary head teachers);• How can we develop and share services currently funded by MEAG;• Schools as Learning Organisations – delivered by the lead head teacher;• Strategy for Vulnerable Schools;• Self-Evaluation;• Well Being;• Children Looked After;• Attendance;• Governing Bodies – Training & Engagement.
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- 5.3 A number of the examples on the list would be local authority led such as the Post 16 provision, Children Looked After, Attendance, ALN, Well Being and whether we can develop and deliver shared services currently funded by MEAG.
- 5.4 There are also many other opportunities for the Joint Committee Members to challenge and review other services that impact on school improvement

such as Human Resources and the performance management of school based staff.

- 5.5 At the end of the 2018/19 academic year the Joint Committee can then determine its meeting cycle for the 2019/20 academic year and whether it wishes to continue to meet half termly.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

8TH NOVEMBER 2018

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT COMMITTEE

List of background papers

Freestanding matter

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