

Minutes of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee held at Ty Dysgu, Nantgarw on Tuesday, 18th February, 2014 at 3.30p.m.

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee

Councillor M.Nott, Bridgend County Borough Council (Chairman)
Councillor H.David, Bridgend County Borough Council
Councillor J.Magill, Cardiff City Council
Councillor H.Jones, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Councillor E. Hanagan, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Councillor C.Elmore, Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council

Officers in Attendance

Mr.D.Mepham, Bridgend County Borough Council
Mr.N.Batchelar, Cardiff City Council
Ms.L.Buck, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Mr.G.Isingrini, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Mr.C.Bradshaw, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Mr.R.Evans, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Mr.M.Pennell, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ms.J.Hill, Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
Ms.S.Moss, Central South Consortium
Mr R. Hopkins, Central South Consortium
Ms J. Edwards, Head of Service, LiNKS

Also in Attendance

Mr.K.Napieralla, Welsh Government
Ms.H.Woodhouse, ISOS Partnership
Professor M. Ainscow, CSW Challenge Wales Adviser

71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S. Davies and Councillor N. Moore (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council) Councillor H. Joyce (Cardiff City Council) Mr K. Griffiths, Mr S. Merritt and Councillor M. Forey (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) Mr G. Chapman (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council) Ms D. McMillan (Bridgend County Borough Council) and Mr S. Vincent (Welsh Government)

72. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

73. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 17th December, 2013 be approved as an accurate record.

74. **CENTRAL SOUTH WALES CHALLENGE**

The Chairman, County Borough Councillor M. Nott formally welcomed Professor Mel Ainscow, CSW Challenge Advisor to the meeting.

Professor Ainscow provided the Consortium with details of his background and that of the initiatives he has been previously involved with, the Greater Manchester Challenge and the London Challenge, both set out to raise standards in schools. He briefly outlined the intention behind both and explained some of the key successes of both strategies such as the leadership that emerged from within the schools and the pairing of schools with relative strengths.

Professor Ainscow explained the background to the strategy, the Central South Wales Strategy, which was launched in January 2014 to improve the performance of every school and improve the quality of education for children and young people in all schools in Central South Wales. Professor Ainscow presented the key initiatives behind the Central South Wales Challenge strategy under the following headings:-

Strategy Group –17 Head teachers nominated by their Local Authorities and selected by Directors and Chairs of Governors have met twice to form the strategy and help lead the implementation of the following phases:-

School Improvement Groups (SIGS) – Each SIG would involve schools from each of the five local authorities at different stages of development with each SIG able to nominate a head teacher to become a Convenor. The Convenors will take collective responsibility and will shortly be meeting on March 11th 2014 to explore ways of improving the learning of every child by sharing knowledge and understanding of how self improving systems work.

Pathfinder Schools – This will involve 35 schools (both primary and secondary) nominated from discussions and a measured against a set of criteria. Each Pathfinder School, who are on the cusp of improvement, will be partnered with another school from a different Local Authority in order to determine how partnerships between two schools can help improve standards.

Operational Group - Made up of 5 senior School Improvement Officers and 5 Challenge Advisors who will oversee the whole initiative and feed into the Strategy Group.

Professor Ainscow explained that on the 12th March 2014 there will be a workshop for Professional Development led by two former City Development Advisors, the purpose of which will be to create Action Learning Sets and a System Change Model.

Ms Hannah Woodhouse, (ISOS Partnership) confirmed that the letters had today (18th February 2014) been sent out to all schools to indicate which pathfinder group they were in.

There followed a discussion as to how the Central South Wales Challenge fits in with the National Model and Mr K. Napieralla, Head of Local Authority Intervention & Support & Consortium, Welsh Government, stressed the need to ensure this Strategy is delivered through the National Model and proposed that Ms Karen Cornish, Head of Early Years, Welsh Government is invited to the meeting on the 11th March 2014 to understand the work involved and minimise the possibility of duplication.

RESOLVED-

1. To note the information
2. That Ms Karen Cornish, Welsh Government, is invited to the meeting of the Governors on the 11th March 2014

75. FINANCIAL REPORT – PROJECTED OUTTURNS FOR 2013/14

In his report, Mr M. Pennell, Group Accountant (Rhondda Cynon Taf) provided Members with details of the projected outturns for 2013/14 for the Central South Consortium School Improvement Service (SIS), Welsh in Education (WEG) and the Learning and Innovation Network for Schools (LINKS) following a detailed review of the income and expenditure for the Consortium since the previous meeting on the 17th December 2013.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the projected outturn for the SCS SIS; WEG and LINKS

76. CENTRAL SOUTH EDUCATION CONSORTIUM GRANTS

Ms Hannah Woodhouse (ISOS Partnership) provided Members with the background to the regional distribution model for the allocation of education grants since the formation of the education consortia. Ms Woodhouse requested that Members agree to the distribution of grants as set out in the report and consider delegating the acceptance of the terms and conditions to the Executive Board so as to ensure the prompt distribution of grants to schools.

Following discussions Members **RESOLVED** that an urgent meeting of Section 151 officers is called, led by Mr Steve Merritt, Rhondda-Cynon-Taff CBC to consider the distribution of grants and the recommendation to devolve the acceptance of grant terms and conditions to the Executive Board and report back to the Consortium.

77. ORAL REPORT IN RESPECT OF PROGRESS AGAINST PROJECT PLAN

Ms Hannah Woodhouse (ISOS Partnership) provided Members with an oral report in respect of progress against the project plan and stressed the importance of managing real time delivery and long term planning in relation to the draft business plan which was seeking Members' agreement at today's meeting (to be considered later on the agenda). Ms Woodhouse reported the progress under the following headings:-

- Challenge Framework – Good feedback from the targeted numeracy and literacy schemes with the teaching programmes having run twice.
- The Policy Observatory has been recognised by the Welsh Government.
- The additional grant from the underspend on the delegated WEG reflects the hard work carried out by the LiNKs teams (as reported by Mr M. Pennell earlier in the meeting).
- To progress the work of Professor M. Ainscow in respect of the Central South Wales Challenge and understand how this fits with the National Model. SIG letters have already been distributed to schools.

- Review of all 'C' Category Schools to take place next Half Term with performance reviews in the first week of March 2014.
- Discussions to take place on Friday, 21st February 2014 around governance arrangements and how it fits within the Local Authority structure
- A progress report to be produced for the next meeting on the 25th March 2014

Members welcomed the review of all Category C Schools and requested that the categorisation of all schools is shared with everyone so that a clearer picture is formed across the region.

Following a discussion Members **RESOLVED**

1. To note the progress against the plan
2. That categorisation in respect of all schools across the region is made available to all (including SIG Groups) and shared with the Consortium

78. ORAL UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE RECRUITMENT OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONSORTIUM MANAGING DIRECTOR, SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Human Resources Manager, Rhondda-Cynon-Taff County Borough Council reported orally at the meeting that work is ongoing with recruitment consultants Gatenby Sanderson as executive search partners. He announced the closing date for the post of Managing Director, School Improvement as the 7th March 2014 which will allow sufficient time to attract the right calibre of candidate. Members were informed of the dates for short listing and assessment interviews as Monday, 24th March 2013 and 9th and 10th April 2013 respectively. The report concluded with the assurance that further timelines would be confirmed in due course.

79. 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.

80. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

Ms Hannah Woodhouse, ISOS Partnership, presented her report to the Consortium in respect of the Central South Consortium draft business plan. She highlighted the background to the report and reminded Members that the Joint Committee agreed in principle the recommendations for the future model of operation, priorities and structures for the Central South Consortium at the previous meeting. The deadline for the draft business plan to be submitted is the end of February 2014 with a final version being brought back to this meeting on the 25th March 2014. She asked that consideration was given to a

number of areas which were highlighted within the report and requested that Members agree or provide comments on the headings set out from A to K on page 32 of the report.

A discussion ensued when many questions/comments were raised in relation to the governance agreement and the structure and accountability of the Executive Board. The officer from the Welsh Government took the opportunity to provide the Committee with further information regarding the composition of the Executive Board. Following consideration of the issues raised the consortium were minded to agree to the draft business plan in principle subject to the views and concerns expressed this day being relayed to Welsh Government. Members were given further assurance that the opportunity would arise to communicate their views at the first review of the consortium in May 2014.

Ms Woodhouse requested that a representative Cabinet Member from the Joint Committee who acts as Champion in the region is nominated to sit on the Executive Board and following consideration of the request it was suggested that a letter would be sent out formally requesting nominations to be submitted for this particular role.

Members of the Joint Committee considered the report and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the draft business case in principle (to include recommendations A-K set out on page 32 of the report) subject to the comments and concerns expressed in relation to the governance agreement and the accountability of the Executive Board to be forwarded to Welsh Government for their comments
2. That a letter is drafted and sent out requesting nominations from Cabinet Members who act as Champion in the region to sit on the Executive Board

81. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Central South Consortium Joint Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 25th March, 2014 at 3 p.m. at Ty Dysgu, Nantgarw.

**M.NOTT
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting closed at 5.10 p.m.

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