



**Minutes** of the Meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee held at the offices of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 10 a.m.

## **PRESENT**

### **Members of the Committee**

Councillor H. David (Bridgend County Borough Council)  
Councillor H. Jones (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)  
Councillor S. Merry (Cardiff City Council)  
Councillor E. Hanagan (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)  
Councillor L. Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)

### **Council Officers in Attendance**

Mr. D. R. Thomas – Managing Director (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)  
Mr. C. Smith – Director of Learning & Skills (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)  
Ms. D. Haines – Chief Education Officer (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)  
Mr. P. Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)  
Mrs. E. Thomas – Director of Education & Lifelong Learning (Rhondda County Borough Council)  
Ms. P Ham – Interim Director of Learning & Skills (Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council)  
Ms N. Echaris – (Bridgend 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)  
Ms. S. Lewis- Estyn

## **32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M. Maragakis, Welsh Government and Mr N. Batchelar, Cardiff City Council.

## **33 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**34**     **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

**35**     **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM AND REGIONAL WORK**

In his role as Lead Chief Executive for the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Committee, Mr R. Thomas presented his report in respect of Local Government Reform and the implications for the Central South Consortium. He provided an overview of the background and historical context to local government reform since the Williams Commission on Public Services Governance and Delivery which was published in 2014.

Mr Thomas reported that in October 2016 the new Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government had discarded the previous proposals for changing the current structure of 22 Councils with a view to publishing more detailed proposals in the New Year following a series of engagement sessions held throughout December 2016 across Wales to involve Lead Members and Officers from Local Government

Mr Thomas stressed that as the inter-Council collaboration is based on the Health Board boundaries it was unclear where existing collaborations such as the Central South Consortium would sit although he added that as with the successful working arrangement of the Consortium, where the results speak for themselves, it would take a long time and effort to 'unpick' the arrangement.

Following the presentation Members of the Committee were united in their feelings that performance in this region has improved greater than in any other region and the Central South Consortium has made significant progress. Although it was agreed that work would continue to raise standards through such initiatives as the Programmes for Head Teachers, they agreed with Mr Thomas's sentiment that to unpick the current arrangements at this stage would be detrimental to all involved especially the pupils. Members of the Joint Committee agreed to support the report and following discussion

**RESOLVED** that:-

1. The Chair of the Joint Committee be authorised to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government to address the key points as included in the body of the report in so far as they relate to the position of the Central South Consortium;
2. That a copy of the aforementioned letter be forwarded to the Cabinet Secretary for Education; and
3. That a further update report is brought back to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

## 36 **DRAFT BUSINESS PROPOSALS**

The Managing Director of the Central South Consortium presented her report outlining the Central South Consortium Draft Business Plan 2017/18.

The Director provided a summary of the latest education performance information for the region, the proposed priority areas for development in 2017/18 based on its self-evaluation as well as the proposed budget to underpin its activity and priorities for 2017/18. The Joint Committee was asked to consider the draft Business Plan and to form a view on the proposed priorities prior to a more detailed planning process taking place.

Under Priority 2, a query was raised in respect of the standard of reporting by the Challenge Advisers and it was agreed that this would be discussed under agenda item 5 (Progress Against Estyn Recommendations). Committee stressed the need for the business plan to reflect the need for early identification of those schools causing concern.

The Assistant Director explained how Priority Four (Rapid and Sustainable Intervention) will address the concerns raised by the Joint Committee in respect of early identification of those vulnerable schools by ensuring that the right level of support is directed at them. The role of the Challenge Advisers will be reviewed to ensure they are deployed effectively and their level of support matches the categorisation. He added that frequent reporting will ensure progress is closely monitored.

It was felt that under Priority One, 'Improve outcomes for vulnerable learners', the end of programmes such as Communities First may have a detrimental impact on those vulnerable learners. It was reported that a significant amount of work has been undertaken in the region to bring the appropriate services together and direct resources where they are most needed to narrow the gap between poverty and low attainment. Initiatives such as the Valleys Project are in place to help close the achievement gap. Members agreed that it is essential to bring together the wider services as schools alone are unable to bridge the gap. It was stressed that crucial to improving the outcomes for vulnerable learners is gathering and sharing the appropriate intelligence and the Senior Challenge Advisers play an important role in achieving this.

Members discussed the Teach First programme and it was confirmed that currently there are 19 Teach First participants who are ready to be placed in schools and a number of schools who are keen to receive them, once the procurement process has been completed. The Managing Director agreed to share the list of those schools with Members of the Committee. It was also announced that the Teach First Patron would be in attendance at an event on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016 to which the Cabinet Members for Education would be invited.

The Director stated that the final Business Plan with budget, targets and final planning framework would be presented to the March 2017 meeting and this

would be supported by approved and costed action plans under each improvement plan with intended impact.

In conclusion Members **RESOLVED**:-

- I. To note the reduced budget in line with the proposed priorities before the detailed business planning process takes place;
- II. To note the considerable uncertainty about grant for the 2017/18 financial year and beyond as Welsh Government has yet to confirm the grant position and requirements of Consortia; and
- III. That the comments made by the Joint Committee form part of the detailed business planning process.

### **37. PROGRESS AGAINST ESTYN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Assistant Director presented his report outlining the progress made against Estyn's Recommendations. He explained that the four attached reports outline the progress against each of the four recommendations and Members noted the summary of progress made. The Assistant Director outlined the benefits of the new reporting format to regularly update Directors and the Joint Committee and track progress made by the CSC in meeting the recommendations made by Estyn.

The Assistant Director informed Members that progress has been mostly positive but recognised the need for improvement in some areas and he directed Members to the table on page 29 of the report which set out the recommendations with actions and impacts against them. He added that this table would assist in identifying any gaps so that they can be addressed quickly.

In response to a query regarding the quality of the report writing skills of the Challenge Advisors, the Assistant Director outlined the changes made to improve their skills in this area by ensuring sufficient support is in place together with adequate professional development via workshops and individual coaching sessions. It was acknowledged that there will be a vulnerable period for schools following the end of Schools Challenge Cymru and a discussion ensued regarding the period post March 2017 with plans to ease the transition.

Disappointment was expressed at the inspection outcomes of the first recommendation particularly in respect of those schools termed 'adequate' schools, despite there being good standards reported by some schools. The Assistant Director reported that Estyn select the schools they inspect and on this occasion of the ten schools inspected, eight were 'Red' and 'Amber' schools. He added that there were no surprises to have arisen from the inspection and assured Members that relevant actions are in place to address those areas of concern. The Assistant Director confirmed that he hoped that

more schools in the 'Green' category would be inspected and he also looked to be able to report a more improving picture at the next meeting.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED**:-

- I. To note the report and attached appendices;
- II. To endorse the revised reporting format (to include a fifth report which will show how other developmental needs identified by Estyn's report have been addressed); and
- III. That the final version of reports will be presented to Estyn during their visit to outline both the progress made and where the evidence of that progress can be found.

### **38. 2016-17 BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE AND 2017-18 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS**

The Committee considered the Treasurer's report which provided an update of the projected outturn for 2016/17, a summary of 2016/17 grant funding and sought approval of the 2017/18 revenue budget.

The Service Director, Performance & Improvement presented the projected revenue outturn position for 2016/17 and reminded Members that they had previously requested a review of all areas within the service to bring expenditure back in line with the approved budget. He confirmed that this has been completed and the updated full year projected outturn position was a £2.6K surplus (as set out in Table 1 of the report).

Members were also reminded that at its meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 a request was made for proposals to be considered that would enable the repayment period for redundancy costs to be accelerated. The Service Director explained that a review of this area is currently ongoing and an update would be provided to the Joint Committee during the last quarter of the financial year.

An update was provided in respect of the Conference Centre in Ty Dysgu.

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement went on to provide details of the Consortium's draft revenue budget for 2017/18. The Director informed Members that the draft 2017/18 revenue budget is based on local authority funding contributions being reduced by 5% (£209k) compared to 2016/17 levels and the Consortium had compiled a robust savings plan to address this.

The Service Director reiterated the Managing Director's feed back earlier in the meeting in terms of there currently being uncertainty around future grant funding levels for specific projects and highlighted for Members the fundamental part this source of funding plays in enabling the Consortium to deliver its work.

With the above funding context in mind, the Service Director requested Members to consider endorsing that the Consortium prioritises 2017/18 external grant funding against the key projects as set out in the draft Business Plan for the forthcoming year.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note the projected revenue outturn position for 2016/17;
- (2) To note the current grant position for 2016/17 and endorse the approach for the Consortium to align external funding over the medium term to support priority areas; and
- (3) To note and approve the budget for 2017/18 in order for the home Councils to approve, as appropriate, and to confirm back at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

#### **39. CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM - GRANTS**

At this point in the proceedings and with the permission of the Chair, the Business Manager for the Central South Consortium presented the updated report of the Directors of Education in respect of the grants to be received by the Consortium for 2016/17 which had been previously circulated to all Members of the Committee. Members noted the updated information for which notifications have been received and the methods of allocation of each.

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

#### **40. RISK REGISTER – DECEMBER 2016**

The Committee considered the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Risk Register as at December 2016 and noted the additional risk in place on the register being the debate around Local Government reform (which had been discussed earlier in the meeting).

The Managing Director confirmed that the Pupil Level Database is being developed so that it can be accessed and shared by all professionals.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED** to note the information.

#### **41. URGENT ITEM**

The Managing Director of the Central South Consortium sought Members views in respect of the membership of the Central South Consortium Advisory Board. Following discussion, Committee **RESOLVED** to support the proposal put forward.

**HUW DAVID  
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 12.00 p.m.