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**CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM – CORRESPONDENCE**

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**Reason for the Report**

1. To enable Members to consider the content of a letter received by the Committee's Chair on 27 October 2015, proposing a new model through which elected Members across all five Local Authorities can effectively scrutinise the work of the Consortium, (copy attached at **Appendix A**).
  
2. The letter included:
  - a. a copy of a report on the Central South Consortium response to the findings of a recent Welsh Audit Office / Estyn remit review of the Consortia in Wales (copy attached at **Appendix B**), and
  - b. a briefing paper for the National Assembly for Wales' Children, Young People and Education Committee (copy attached at **Appendix C**).

**Background**

3. This Committee has previously invited the Central South Consortium to present a report three times across the year:
  - a. In November, to scrutinise the Central South Consortium and its contribution to raising standards in Cardiff Schools.
  - b. In January, to support the scrutiny of the Cardiff Schools Annual performance report and to present an account of the role of the Consortium in raising standards and the Consortium's plans to further strengthen the impact of its work.

- c. In June, as part of the scrutiny of the Education and Lifelong learning Directorate Delivery Plan, when the Consortium presents its business plan for the year to enable Members to identify the linkage between the two organisations in driving forward improvements in Education in Cardiff.

## **Issues**

4. The Managing Director of the Central South Consortium, Hannah Woodhouse, has written to all Children and Young People's / Education Scrutiny Chairs in the Central South Region, setting out proposals for a common scrutiny work programme and sharing best practice, copy attached at **Appendix A**.
5. The letter explains that it was agreed at the recent Joint Committee of Central South Consortium by all five authorities that a common programme would be put in place. This would entail the Consortium presenting its outcome against targets and any further areas of questioning, once a year in January to coincide with the Schools Annual Report.
6. The letter further suggests that termly meetings would be held with all Scrutiny Chairs to share developments, areas of concern and sharing best practice. In addition wider briefings with elected Members on the role and function of the Consortia could be provided.
7. The letter also provides feedback on the recent Estyn and Wales Audit Office review of all consortia last year. In the Central South region they gave cautiously positive feedback with a number of areas which need to be addressed. Attached to the letter was a copy of the briefing paper on these reports which the Consortium recently presented to the Children and Young People's Select Committee in the Senedd (copies attached at **Appendix B & C**).

## **Scope of Scrutiny**

8. This report will provide the Committee with an opportunity to review and respond to the proposals contained in the letter around the common scrutiny work programme across all five Local Authorities, and provide any comments or concerns on the Consortium's response to the review of the Consortia (attached at **Appendix B**) and the briefing paper on School Improvement in Central South (attached at **Appendix C**).

## **Way Forward**

9. Members may wish to review the information contained in the letter and associated documents attached at **Appendix A, B and C**, agree a response to the Consortium's Joint Committee proposals, and determine whether there are any issues or comments which they would like to pass on to the Managing Director of the Consortium, Chairman of the Consortium's Joint Committee, Cabinet Member for Education or Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.

## **Legal Implications**

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the

Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

11. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- I. consider the information provided in the letter from the Managing Director of the Central South Consortium;
- II. agree a response to the Consortium's Joint Committee proposals for the future scrutiny of the Central South Consortium;
- III. consider whether they have any observations, comments or recommendations they wish to make to the Managing Director of the Consortium, the Chairman of the Joint Committee, the Cabinet Member for Education and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

**Director of Governance and Legal Services**

**4 November 2015**