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| Meeting of: | BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 |
| Date of Meeting: | 11 April 2024 |
| Report Title: | ANNUAL LOCAL AUTHORITY SCRUTINY REPORT CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM 2022-2023 |
| Report Owner / Corporate Director: | CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT |
| Responsible Officer: | SUE ROBERTS GROUP MANAGER – SCHOOL SUPPORT |
| Policy Framework and Procedure Rules: | There is no impact on the Council’s policy framework or procedure rules. |
| Executive Summary: | <p>The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the work of the Central South Consortium, working in partnership with the local authority to raise standards in schools across Bridgend. The report details the work of the consortium for the academic year 2022-2023 and the financial year April 2022 to April 2023.</p> <p>Within the report there is information summarising the school inspections that took place in the academic year 2022-2023, and the progress schools made in a follow up category or enhanced support.</p> <p>There is information on the work of improvement partners, how they are deployed and examples provided of how improvement partners have worked with school leaders, governors and the wider staff team.</p> <p>Section 6 of Appendix 1 records the professional learning provided for schools, and the engagement of practitioners at all levels in the different professional learning programmes available, including the range of collaborations that are supported across the region. There is also information on the bespoke support received by schools to support their strategic priorities.</p> <p>Developing the Welsh language continues as a key priority for the Central South Consortium and in supporting the Local Authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)</p> |

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| | <p>for 2022-2032 with information of how support is provided included within the report.</p> <p>Central South Consortium continues to work in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders to support equity in all schools across the region, with high standards and aspirations for all, to support schools work on areas including attendance, exclusions, looked after children and well-being.</p> <p>As part of Central South Consortium’s business planning process, Bridgend provides Central South Consortium with their priorities and these are built into Central South Consortium’s business plan. An update on progress of Central South Consortium in supporting Bridgend’s priorities is provided as part of the report. The report also provides a summary of the funding of Central South Consortium, including additional grant funding and how this is used.</p> |
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1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- provide an overview of the work of Central South Consortium; and to
- update elected members on the contribution of Central South Consortium, working in partnership with the local authority, to raise standards in schools across Bridgend.

1.2 This report attached at **Appendix 1** details the work of the consortium for the academic year 2022-2023 and the financial year 2022-2023.

2. Background

2.1 Since 2012, Central South Consortium has delivered aspects of school improvement services on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Vale of Glamorgan. This covers 381 schools and 32% of school pupils in Wales. It is a growing region with a rapidly changing demographic, encompassing increasingly diverse communities across the economic sub region. It remains the region with the highest number of children living in poverty, with approximately 25% of pupils eligible for free school meals.

2.2 The service delivers challenge and support to schools on behalf of the five local authorities within the Central South region, governed through a Joint Committee of Cabinet Members from each local authority. The Joint Committee meets regularly and formally approves the annual business plan and budget for the service, holding the service to account in terms of performance and budgetary control.

- 2.3 Scrutiny Committees in each of the five authorities invite Central South Consortium to report and present on the work of Central South Consortium in supporting schools aligned to the Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability Framework (Welsh Government, 2022). An annual report from the consortium relating to progress in the previous academic year and priorities for the year ahead is provided.
- 2.4 The core focus of all school improvement activity is providing support, challenge and professional learning to schools to ensure learners across the local authority have the right educational experiences to allow them to make progress and be successful in the next phase of learning or employment.

3. Current situation/proposal

- 3.1 The Annual Bridgend Local Authority Scrutiny Report for the Central South Consortium for 2022-2023 is attached at **Appendix 1**. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the work of the Central South Consortium and to update Members with the contribution of the Central South Consortium, working in partnership with the local authority to raising standards in schools across Bridgend.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty, and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services, and functions. This is an information report; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals and principles prescribed for within the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 connect directly to the approach to supporting schools. The approach to supporting schools is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle and more specifically as follows:

Long term - The approach to school improvement focuses on meeting the needs of children and young people from the age of 0 to 25.

Prevention - The focus of the school improvement is upon early identification of need and ensuring that there is appropriate learning provision in place to meet individual needs.

Integration - The approach to school improvement addresses the need for a coherent delivery of economic, social, environmental, and cultural outcomes.

Collaboration - A fundamental principle of the approach to school improvement focuses on improving collaboration and creating a unified system.

Involvement - Ensuring that children and young people, parents and carers are at the heart of the system and that needs are discussed in a person-centred way.

6. Climate change implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this information report.

7. Safeguarding and corporate parent implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The cost of Central South Consortium's service to Bridgend County Borough Council was £554,243 for the 2022-2023 financial year. This was met from the Education and Family Support Directorate revenue budget.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The committee is requested to:

- consider the contents of this report; and
- provide feedback.

Background documents

None