

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	19 NOVEMBER 2024
Report Title:	MIDDLE TIER REVIEW
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	SUE ROBERTS GROUP MANAGER (SCHOOLS)
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the Council's policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report contains information about the future direction for school improvement services in response to the conclusions of the Welsh Government's 'Middle Tier Review'.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide Cabinet with an update in respect of the future direction for school improvement services in Wales (in response to the conclusions of the Welsh Government's 'Middle Tier Review');
- seek Cabinet approval to the development of a future operating model as broadly outlined in this report; and
- request that Cabinet receives and approves further reports detailing specific financial implications and final model (probably in spring 2025).

2. Background

2.1 The current 'National Model for Regional Working' was initially developed and agreed in autumn 2013. This model has been progressively implemented since April 2014.

2.2 Central South Consortium was formed as part of this National Model, with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) one of the five constituent local authorities (the

others being Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) and Vale of Glamorgan Council).

2.3 Concerns about the delivery of school improvement services and, to a lesser extent, curriculum and professional learning support have been widespread in Wales for some time, with particular concerns that arrangements do not sit well with local authority statutory responsibilities for the performance of schools in their area. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results also highlight the need for improvements in school performance.

2.4 Reflecting concerns across the nation, Welsh Government commissioned a review of school improvement services (known as the 'Middle Tier Review'). In talking with school leaders, Professor Dylan Jones, who led the review heard some important and consistent messages from across Wales, including:

- School leaders said they felt overwhelmed by the amount of change in the system and felt that there was a lack of clarity about national reforms in some key areas like curriculum, progression and additional learning needs (ALN).
- School leaders expressed serious concerns about the value-added by the regional consortia in Wales. There was a lot of concern about a culture of being 'done to' rather than 'done with'. Concerns about the variability and lack of consistency in the quality of support from regional consortia was also often noted.
- School leaders saw many of the requests from the middle tier as being unnecessary, counter-productive and adding an unnecessary level of bureaucracy. They sought clarity about the roles and impact of all elements within the 'Middle Tier'.
- School leaders felt there was little or no support for some of the biggest challenges facing schools following the pandemic, such as attendance and behaviour.
- School leaders said they and their staff felt overwhelmed by the current professional learning offer and that they did not have the time to access much of it and when they did it was of variable quality.
- School leaders shared concerns about the value-added by national partners such as the National Academy of Educational Leadership (NAEL), as it is currently constituted, and the Education Workforce Council (EWC), and noted concerns about duplication in the professional learning offer across by the Middle Tier.

- School leaders noted a desire to see greater resources being distributed directly within a local context, and in a more-timely manner, to enable a more localised focus for collaboration.

2.5 In identifying areas that are working well, school leaders noted that school-to-school and cluster working were the most important elements of support. School leaders think this should be the foundation for the school improvement system in the future. Existing national and regional networks are helping connect schools together across Wales but are not available to, or accessed by, all schools currently. School leaders have a clear identification with their locality and there are strong relationships with their local authorities in many areas which were strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.6 The Welsh Government review concluded that school improvement services should develop so that:

- school leaders have an opportunity to lead on school improvement matters through a greater focus on local collaboration and partnership working between school leaders and their local authority;
- partnerships could develop between more than one local authority to support wider collaboration; and
- there is stronger national leadership with clearer national priorities for schools and a simplification of the national funding mechanisms with as much resource as possible going directly to schools or supporting groups of schools to work together.

2.7 On the back of the review, Welsh Government has provided guidance to local authorities and asked for proposals setting out plans for re-configuring school improvement services by November 2024.

2.8 Though not explicit, there is a presumption that local authorities will take more direct responsibility for school improvement in line with their statutory responsibilities but in so doing, develop an operating model which empowers/enables schools to take greater (collective) responsibility for their own improvement and that of other schools within their locality. Changes being proposed should not simply seek to localise the current regional operating model but develop a new one.

3. Current situation/proposal

3.1 In broad terms, the current Central South Consortium operating model has two core functions:

- to facilitate school improvement: improvement partners are deployed to provide support and challenge primarily around school self-evaluation and development planning; and

- to develop and deliver opportunities for professional learning including support for the new curriculum.

3.2 Central South Consortium has played an increasingly important role in recent years supporting schools to implement the requirements of Curriculum for Wales. This support is integrated into their professional learning function and is extensive, ranging from, distilling and disseminating Welsh Government guidance so that it is more digestible for schools through to helping schools to meet statutory requirements, for example to develop a ‘shared understanding of progression’ something that schools have been finding particularly challenging. A business support function enables all these activities as well as providing data and intelligence.

3.3 The table below summarises these functions and provides an approximation of the current resources allocated to each (covering all five local authorities), though this should be viewed with caution owing to an increasing number of vacancies which in most cases will not, on current plans, be replaced.

School improvement (around 24 full-time equivalent)	Curriculum and professional learning (around 36 full-time equivalent)	Other services (around 1.5 full-time equivalent)	On behalf of Welsh Government (around 2 full-time equivalent)
<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment of improvement partners to every school providing support and challenge to headteachers • Enhanced monitoring for schools in need of additional support • Work alongside local authorities in facilitating 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks and facilitation of school-to-school working/cluster working to support curriculum development and implementation • Bespoke support for professional learning needs not met through 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor learning • Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of professional pathways for higher level teaching assistants • National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) • Newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction • Siarter Iaith

<p>intervention or package of support for schools in an Estyn category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting governing bodies with headteacher performance management and recruitment • Provision of information for local authorities to inform risk assessments and possible intervention in the case of schools causing concern 	<p>wider offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and delivering and also sourcing and curating professional learning opportunities • Utilising lead practitioners and enhanced lead practitioners to provide professional support 		
<p>Business support across all functions including data analysis (around 24 full-time equivalent)</p>			

3.4 Central South Consortium has articulated the benefits from improvement and professional learning functions being carried out by the same organisation as themes emerging through self-evaluation can be reflected in the professional learning offer. This connectivity is important and, in any future approach, mechanisms to align and co-ordinate professional learning activity with the identified school improvement needs and priorities of schools and local authorities will need to be clear and strong.

3.5 The possible future operating model emerging from the review and articulated in Welsh Government guidance is based on:

- schools leading their own self-evaluation and improvement planning as an iterative process supported by the local authority and other schools;

- schools being part of vertical and horizontal collaborative improvement arrangements enabling leaders and teachers to engage with learning and leadership in other schools supporting a collective understanding of progression;
- local authorities, in partnership with school leaders, facilitating and supporting collaboration to tackle barriers to learning at the earliest possible stage; and
- local authorities working together and the national school improvement capacity to ensure system-wide evidence-based approaches to improvement.

- 3.6 While not advocating any particular delivery mechanism or geographical footprint, the review acknowledges the dislocation and discontent in some areas arising from the way in which the current regional model has separated local authority responsibilities from delivery.
- 3.7 Over the past few months, there has been engagement with headteachers and officers from each of the five authorities within Central South Consortium where they have been collectively considering future arrangements. Headteacher feedback from events and workshops has indicated support for greater school-to-school working and has emphasised the importance of school improvement being facilitated and supported by peers and those with recent and relevant leadership experience. Not surprisingly, while headteachers support the principle of school-to-school working and collaboration and see real opportunities in this, the financial backdrop and workload pressures are a cause of significant concern. Many, though not all headteachers, are uncomfortable with the idea that they may need to ‘judge’ the performance of their fellow schools, others judge that they are best placed to tell it straight.
- 3.8 Schools are keen to work together to support school improvement. They welcome the opportunity for peer reviews and joint self-evaluation as part of this and would welcome support and a light touch ‘infrastructure’ to facilitate collaborative working. Some see wider opportunities stemming from collaboration (for example, sharing administrative functions). Most schools want opportunities to work with schools that share common challenges while also working with schools that bring diversity of thought and approach.
- 3.9 Across the region, there are many examples of schools working together, for example, to support the development of the new curriculum or transition from primary to secondary school. There are also a number of examples where school leaders have seized the initiative and established partnerships between schools to support self-evaluation, improvement planning and professional learning and these potentially offer a model for future arrangements.

- 3.10 School-to-school working is not without its challenges and there are concerns about expectations on schools in a partnership if any of them were to be in an Estyn category or otherwise need considerable support. The experience of the Central South Wales Challenge also highlights the supporting infrastructure needed for effective school-to-school working. Some of the lessons learned include the importance of moral purpose, reciprocity, a shared focus, clarity about roles and responsibilities, including the need for formal processes such as a memorandum of understanding which set out non-negotiables/expectations of all partners. Enhancing school-to-school working will also require professional development for headteachers and others to develop system leadership capability.
- 3.11 The local authority's statutory duty is to promote high standards and fulfil the potential of all learners and a school improvement function needs to stretch the best as well as support those with the greatest challenges. It is perhaps not surprising that attention and energy is often focussed on schools in challenging contexts, but the PISA results tell us that even our highest performing pupils are well below international comparisons; at an all-Wales level, our highest performing pupils are significantly below those in England. An operating model that can deliver right across the spectrum of performance and challenge at all levels to seek improvement whatever the starting point is vital. This has been a key consideration in developing a new approach.
- 3.12 Based on the feedback from headteachers and a wider exploration of school-to-school working as a driver of improvement there is a consensus across the five local authorities in the Central South Consortium region to the core elements of a future operating model. The core elements are:
- School improvement should be underpinned by collective responsibility and be seen as a collective endeavour and this principle should underpin all future approaches.
 - Delivery of school improvement functions to be undertaken by individual local authorities.
 - 'Collaborative Learning Partnerships' to be developed in each local authority - this work is at an early stage and is still under development. It will be co-constructed with headteachers. The form and function of these 'Collaboratives' will depend on local context and existing mechanisms that facilitate collaboration.
 - Some collaborative learning partnerships may work across local authority boundaries where this is beneficial, for example where secondary schools and their partner primary schools work across local authority boundaries or in the case of Welsh-medium or special schools to ensure sufficient scale.

- The role of improvement partners will be revised to reflect the role/responsibilities of collaborative learning partnerships and to provide more explicit recognition of the role of local authorities and their statutory responsibilities.
- Improvement partners working with English-medium primary and secondary schools will be employed by local authorities and will have a reporting line/accountability to their respective Director of Education.
- Improvement partners working with Welsh-medium and special schools to work within a sub-regional footprint (that is, the Health Board footprints), recognising the specialist and scarce nature of this resource and recognising that to be able to form effective collaboratives it may be beneficial for Welsh-medium and special schools to form partnerships across local authority boundaries (as they do now), enabling greater depth and breadth of experience to draw from.
- All improvement partners to be part of a regional network to provide professional development and protect against 'insularity' while also enabling the brokering of school-to-school support across local authorities where this could be advantageous.
- Local authorities to develop governance arrangements to allow representatives from collaborative learning partnerships to come together and collectively discuss and reflect upon the progress being made by schools, bringing together local intelligence to identify local priorities, steer the regional professional learning and curriculum support offer and respond to and inform national priorities.
- Professional learning and curriculum support should continue to be organised and delivered as now across the five local authorities within the Central South Consortium regional footprint. As noted previously, the professional learning offer needs to be led by the priorities of schools and local authorities articulated through local governance arrangements. The delivery model and the scope and breadth of the offer should continue to evolve to support greater school-led delivery of professional learning opportunities, networking within the region and pan-Wales. Simplified and streamlined governance arrangements can be developed to reflect the change in scope and complexity of regional working.

3.13 A schematic overview of how this might operate is at **Appendix 1** with a more detailed, generic, possible operating model at **Appendix 2**. The differing size and

context of the local authorities within the Central South Consortium region means that there will be differences in detail, but the intention is that the core principles and approach should be common across the region. Local authority colleagues are using the generic model and **Appendix 2** to inform the development of bespoke local approaches which will reflect individual context.

3.14 Any change process brings with it risks and issues that will need to be managed. In the changes envisaged here there are four key risks to highlight:

Economies of scale

- One of the reasons for establishing regional arrangements for school improvement was the concern that the local authority footprint was not an efficient or effective scale for delivery of improvement services, particularly where this involves highly specialised, expert resources. Concerns have also been expressed that local authority delivered services could become insular and insufficiently ambitious for the performance of their schools. This risk is exacerbated by the performance information available for comparative purposes.
- This risk is mitigated by the retention of the curriculum and professional learning functions remaining regional, this means expert capacity in priority areas such as Welsh language, curriculum planning and progression, literacy, numeracy and digital competence will continue to be available to all schools across the region subject to financial considerations. In addition, the proposal stresses the importance of improvement partners having a strong regional network with opportunities for their professional development.
- Local authorities will also have the opportunity to establish their own benchmarking mechanisms using the breadth of information available to them to ensure there is pace and ambition in school improvement and outcomes for learners.

Capacity of schools

- Financial and time/workload pressures on headteachers and their senior leadership teams, could affect the willingness and capacity of school leaders to collaborate with others. This is a particular worry for smaller primary schools where it may be less straightforward to manage any calls on the headteachers' time. It is important to appreciate that headteachers already engage in school improvement activity as this is one of their core functions as school leaders. School-to-school working is intended to enhance and support this function and offer a new way of working rather than creating additional demands. Supporting other schools can be seen as drawing resources away from a school but it should be a reciprocal arrangement and experience suggests working with others supports the professional

development of school leaders, helping them to see opportunities for improvements in their own schools. Nonetheless, this is a risk that we should be alive to and improvement partners working with governors will need to be alert to any risks manifesting.

Transition, loss of skilled/experienced staff

- Any change process creates turbulence with the associated risk that staff leave, or current delivery is affected as focus and attention goes elsewhere. Central South Consortium has been through a prolonged period of uncertainty, and it will be important that following approval of the proposals here, there is engagement and consultation with Central South Consortium staff in order to develop detailed operating models setting out new roles and structures that will enable the appropriate human resources and legal processes. This will be led by RCTCBC as the host local authority.

Financial outlook

- The financial context for local authorities is challenging and regardless of the school improvement model adopted, financial savings will be needed in the financial year 2025- 2026 and beyond. Transitioning the approach, while reducing budgets brings with it additional complexity and uncertainty, but school improvement services cannot afford to continue as now. Development of the proposed model takes account of the financial context and allows flexibility to adapt to the resources available and the desire to maximise resources being allocated to schools.

3.15 Subject to agreement that the core elements set out in paragraph 3.12 above should underpin future arrangements detailed operating models will be developed in each local authority, to include:

- How roles and responsibilities will be split between collaborative learning partnerships and the improvement partners. Terms of reference/operating agreements for collaborative learning partnerships will need to be developed alongside the job descriptions for the future improvement partner role. Crucial in this will be proposals on how information on school/collaborative performance will flow to local authorities in order for officers to form a view on performance, and the means by which this is quality assured.
- The criteria that local authorities wish to see adhered to in the establishment of collaborative learning partnerships, for example their size and make up.
- How schools in need of additional interventions (whether as a result of Estyn judgments or based on the school/local authority's own assessment) will be supported.

3.16 Transition plans will also be needed for revised hosting arrangements for the functions that will remain on the current Central South Consortium footprint (that is, curriculum and professional learning) including timescales for implementation of the agreed revised model. Some areas of activity currently undertaken by Central South Consortium will in future be delivered by Welsh Government, this includes National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) and support for curriculum design, assessment and progression so this will also need to be reflected in the operational plan.

Next steps

3.17 Subject to Cabinet approval in respect of the direction of travel established in this report, we will need to:

- develop detailed, costed operating models, underpinned by the core elements outlined above;
- provide proposed structures and delivery arrangements, with clear plans for the transition phase for further scrutiny and in line with Welsh Government timelines;
- set out proposed partnership arrangements; and
- develop transition plans for revised hosting arrangements for the functions that may remain on the current Central South Consortium footprint (that is, curriculum planning and professional learning).

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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report, however a further Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken once proposals for future school improvement services are further developed

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

5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the service.

Long-term Supports the improvement of standards and outcomes in schools.

- Prevention** Development of collaborative working arrangements to secure school improvement, preventing standards from slipping, working with the local authority to monitor the school's progress.
- Integration** Supporting school improvement is key to ensuring that outcomes for schools are achieved thus helping to support a successful economy.
- Collaboration** The local authority works closely with schools, Estyn and other partners to deliver the well-being objectives related to school improvement and to provide appropriate support aligned with findings from evaluation.
- Involvement** This area of work involves all stakeholders in school improvement. Schools work closely with Improvement Partners to refine their improvement plans or post-inspection action plans and to identify strategic support from the local authority and elsewhere (as required) reflecting the diversity of stakeholders involved in aspects of school improvement.

6. Climate Change Implications

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

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

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

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Service delivery costs for the new school improvement function will be dependent on the detailed operating models chosen, with proposals considering the current financial context, flexibility to adapt and the desire to maximise resources being allocated to schools to enable the vision of a self-improving system.
- 8.2 Funding for this will be secured from the current core contribution to Central South Consortium and elements of the Local Authority Education Grant with the total budget for BCBC currently in the region of £1.5m. Any future proposals could deliver some efficiencies, but these details will be reported to Cabinet at a later date when there is greater clarity about the models required, and potential staffing implications and requirements.
- 8.3 The financial implications associated with the termination of the legal agreement are as follows:
- The operation of the Central South Consortium is governed by the terms of a legal agreement dated 20 April 2015, entered between the constituent authorities that form the Central South Consortium.

- RCTCBC acts as the host authority and provides the relevant support services required by the Central South Consortium to operate the service.
- Each constituent authority makes an annual financial contribution in accordance with the terms of the financial protocol set out in the legal agreement. Contributions and apportionments (including liabilities/losses) are based on the respective proportion of the relevant IBAs of each constituent local authority for the relevant financial year.
- All Central South Consortium staff are employed by RCTCBC in its capacity as host local authority and on its terms and conditions. Notwithstanding RCTCBC being the employer in law all liabilities attached to the employment of staff within the Central South Consortium (including potential redundancy costs) shall be a cost to the Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee and apportioned in accordance with the financial contributions of the legal agreement.
- The terms of the legal agreement continue unless all parties unanimously agree to terminate, allowing for a reasonable period of time in order for RCTCBC (as host local authority) to wind down the Central South Consortium. On termination, the Central South Consortium Joint Education Committee shall agree the distribution of assets and liabilities on the basis of the financial contributions of the legal agreement.
- A constituent council can withdraw from the Central South Consortium but must notify each of the other parties by giving not less than two years notice in writing of its intention to withdraw, expiring on 31 March in any given year.
- It should be noted that each constituent local authority retains its statutory responsibilities in respect of its obligations to ensure school improvement.

8.4 The human resource (HR) implications associated with the termination are detailed below:

- Subject to any decision by Cabinet, once the detailed staffing arrangements are developed to support any new arrangement, a Management of Change document will be created. While early discussions have taken place with trade unions, more detailed consultation will take place in due course. This document will be shared and consulted upon with both the trade unions and Central South Consortium staff and will cover areas such as the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE), any matching or interview arrangements and retirement/redundancy matters.

- In addition, while RCTCBC is currently the host employer, a working group of HR staff from across the five local authorities will be established to help manage the transition to the new arrangements.

8.5 Redundancy costs for current Central South Consortium staff who do not secure a post in the new models will be shared between the constituent local authorities of Central South Consortium based on Indicator-Based Assessments (IBAs) as outlined in the current legal agreement dated 20 April 2015, entered between the constituent local authorities that form Central South Consortium. At present, it is important to note that the local authority has no identified budget to cover these costs.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to agree:

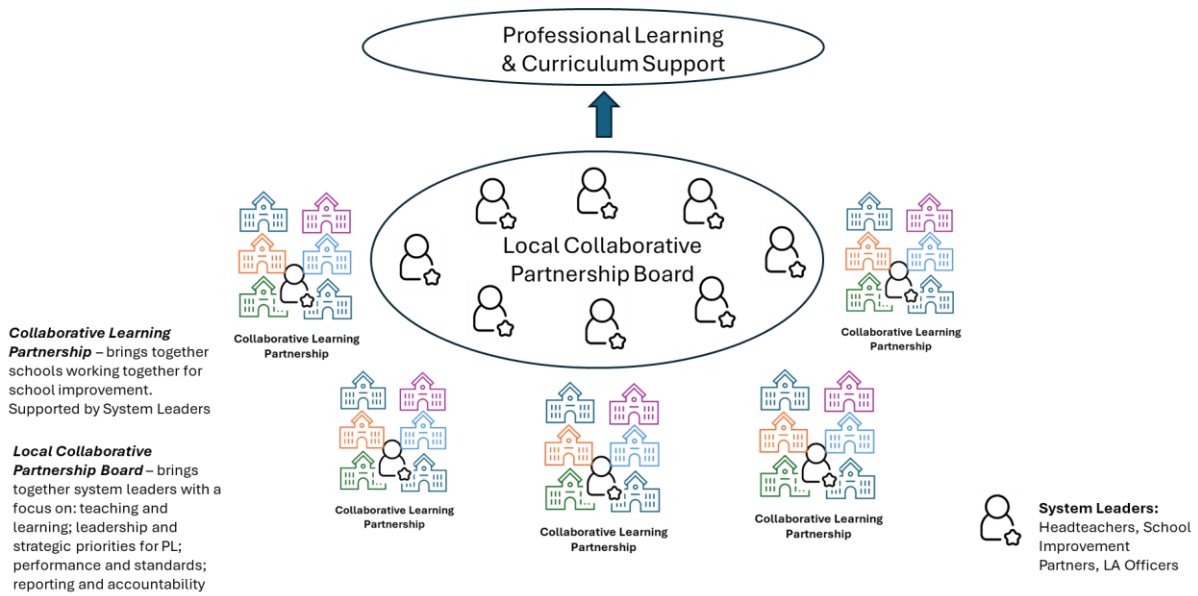
- the development of a future operating model as broadly outlined in this report; and
- to receive and approve further reports detailing specific financial implications and final model (probably in spring 2025).

Background documents:

None

Appendix 1

Overview of proposed school improvement model



Appendix 2

Generic operating model for development in each local authority

1. Make up of arrangements

Local Collaborative Partnership Areas (LCPAs) to be established by the local authority based on geography/community boundaries.

Within these LCPAs, schools form Collaborative Learning Partnerships (CLPs):

- typically 6 to 10 schools based on horizontal collaboration;
- self-select partners (though in practice there may be little choice of partner amongst secondary schools in particular);
- schools could propose a CLP as a mix of primary/secondary; and
- headteacher and deputy headteacher nominated by group as CLP Convenor (not remunerated – possible release of time).

A Local Collaborative Partnership Board (LCPB) to be established – provides strategic forum to discuss school improvement, priorities and professional learning priorities to steer and direct wider professional learning offer. LCPBs consist of:

- CLP convenors and deputies;
- local authority representatives; and
- the Principal Improvement Partner

Vertical collaboration facilitated by LCP and curriculum clusters maintained to ensure curriculum, transitions, progression is planned.

2. Role and responsibilities of CLP/LCP/Improvement Partner

Collaborative Learning Partnership	Improvement Partner*
<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist colleagues by providing an external perspective, challenging and validating the school's own evaluation of standards.• Contribute to the effectiveness and impact of each school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, provide constructive challenge and support in respect of the quality of self-evaluation and the school's improvement plan.	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support and challenge the working practices of a CLP to ensure they are operating as agreed in their terms of reference and an effective Improvement Partner function is in place.• Ensure that a CLP has considered and evaluated the three national priorities for literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

- Promote improvement planning with a clear focus on literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.
- Support the identification and promote opportunities for continuing professional development in line with school development priorities.
- Collaborate on school background operations.
- Establish shared improvement priorities for the CLP and contribute to the strategic development of Professional Learning provision

Behaviours

- Place the learners' interests above all others.
- Being honest and open with each other.
- Share expertise between each other.
- Share information and data between each other.
- Work towards ensuring a high level of mutual responsibility in terms of attainment standards.

Ways of working

- Headteachers (lead) and deputy headteachers (assist) undertake the functions of the improvement partner except for performance management.
- Within collaboration arrangements between pairs of schools, the headteachers of the two specific schools will not act as the main improvement partner for each other's schools.
- Peer reviews and visits could involve different personnel depending on the

- To draw upon their knowledge of effective and successful Collaborations and sign post effective/strong practice.
- Identify and assist in brokering the professional research and learning that will enhance and support the impact of the identified school improvement priorities.
- To contribute to the development of sector-led school-to-school support by identifying and signposting schools to the most effective practice; supporting and facilitating the development of school improvement groups and collaborative working between schools; contributing to the monitoring of the impact of sector-led school-to-school support on standards, quality and leadership.
- Work with colleagues and governors to diagnose and record accurately school improvement needs of each school and ensure the local authority is regularly updated on improvement priorities and implementation of actions in response.
- Additional reviews on request where external perspective helps

Behaviours

- Place the learners' interests above all others.
- Being honest and open with each other.
- Share expertise between each other.
- Share information and data between each other.
- Work towards ensuring a high level of mutual responsibility in terms of attainment standards.

<p>agenda and specific requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed operating agreement/memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be developed by each CLP setting out how they are going to work together, roles and responsibilities. <p>Governance and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a CLP leadership Board. • Nominate a CLP Convenor to rotate every two years. • Provide reports as required to the local authority and the CLP oversight group. • Provide a forum for joint governor meetings. 	<p>Ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that local authorities are fully informed about the school improvement foci being undertaken by CLP and report on why these have been chosen and the progress being made based on first-hand evidence and discussions with a range of stakeholders. • To introduce, develop and embed a coaching strategy that secures a self-improving approach which successfully enables a Collaboration to develop and matures over time. • Robustly challenge a CLP if the first-hand evidence is not demonstrating measurable impact. • Provide advice and participate in the recruitment of schools' senior leaders. • Participate in headteacher performance management in accordance with agreed practices and procedures. • Inform the local authority immediately if there are any leadership challenges in the individual schools in the collaboration. • Working as part of a team, to share solutions, generate ideas and develop innovative approaches based on evidence that will improve consistency and quality in all aspects of the work of the CLP.
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* Using this term for ease

3. Managing schools causing concern (SCC)/in category/enhanced monitoring In 'Category'/SCC

At the outset of establishment of CLPs, schools causing concern, in enhanced monitoring or in an Estyn category should be included. However, their role in the CLP, for example the headteacher acting as an Improvement Partner to other schools may need to be

reviewed to assess capacity to take on this function in addition to the pressures arising within their own school. Existing support arrangements would be maintained although reviewed (as they would be in any circumstance) in light of membership of CLP.

If schools go into a category or are considered to be a school causing concern an Improvement Partner will be given specific responsibility to work with the School to develop with the headteacher the support needed for turnaround.

It might be worth considering whether this 'improvement partner' is commissioned/contracted rather than from the standing team of improvement partners. In a number of cases currently, specialist/expert support is commissioned to support the headteacher rather than the improvement partner take on this role.

The responsibility for supporting a school in category or causing concern sits with the local authority although this does not preclude support being provided by the CLP and as now other schools within the region. A case-by-case approach will be needed.

Enhanced monitoring

CLPs should be responsible for managing schools that need enhanced monitoring/support as the CLP approach is predicated on support being provided with reference to need. The purpose of the CLP is first and foremost to 'diagnose', the subsequent needs identified as part of the 'treatment plan' can be sourced from schools anywhere in Wales and the improvement partner has a key role to play in supporting these wider networks.

CLPs will need to identify which schools are receiving 'enhanced support' though this may be obvious if the system is needs led as intended. Local authorities will receive information on the self-evaluation and improvement needs of schools to help inform their own risk assessment processes as part of the improvement partner function and potentially through the LCPB.

In addition, local authorities will receive an assessment on how well the CLP is functioning as a unit.

Governance/local authority links

LCPBs provide a mechanism for 'system' oversight, the emerging challenges and improvement themes which require a local authority-wide response or where a multi-agency approach may be beneficial, for example tackling challenging behaviour, emotional health and wellbeing issues or the need for different approaches to Post-16 provision, transitions or developing employability opportunities. These will also provide a means to 'escalate' issue to Welsh Government where a national level response might be needed.

These boards will also steer the professional learning offer provided by the new regional 'entity'.

Regional networking

Regional and national networking needs to be strengthened. While CLPs are the means by which schools undertake self-evaluation and identify development priorities (diagnosis), the treatment plan should draw on support from a much wider network of schools. Wider networking can also support self-evaluation, for example if a school wants to look in depth at a particular area of the curriculum it may make sense to invite a peer review from schools with acknowledged expertise in that aspect.

How will this networking be facilitated:

- Nationally this needs action from Welsh Government
- Regionally this could involve:
 - frequent network meetings of IPs to ensure they are sharing their experience of schools with notable practice that would benefit from wider dissemination;
 - the work of the Professional Learning/Curriculum Team will be re-focussed to use and exemplify school-based practice as the primary source of professional learning; and
 - regionally, this could involve re-visiting hub schools.