

# Document Pack



**THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2018**

**ERW JOINT COMMITTEE  
Y LLWYFAN, COLLEGE ROAD, CARMARTHEN  
AT 10.00 AM,  
ON MONDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2018**

**PLEASE FIND ATTACHED ADDITIONAL REPORTS  
AS DETAILED WITHIN THE AMENDED AGENDA.**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 7. 1a) ERW CONSORTIUM ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017-18<br>(additional report). | 3 - 56  |
| 7.1b) ERW CONSORTIUM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017-18<br>(additional report)         | 57 - 72 |



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## ERW JOINT COMMITTEE 16 JULY 2018

### ERW CONSORTIUM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017-18

**Purpose:**

To provide the Joint Committee with the findings from the Internal Audit review of the ERW Consortium for 2017-18.

**RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:**

To note the Internal Audit Report 2017-18.

**REASONS:**

To give assurance to the Joint Committee on the effectiveness of governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements in place for the ERW Consortium.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ERW JOINT COMMITTEE

16 JULY 2018

### ERW CONSORTIUM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017-18

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

To give assurance to the Joint Committee on the effectiveness of governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements in place for the ERW Consortium.

The Internal Audit review for 2017-18, as approved by the Section 151 Officer and the Joint Committee on 1 December 2017, resulted in a limited assurance opinion, the following provides a summary of the key areas of weakness identified:

- The Review & Reform programme has not progressed as intended, as a result of Local Authorities being unable to reach a consensus. Agreement on the way forward needs to be reached to enable the project to be progressed.
- The ERW Legal Agreement has not been reviewed or updated.
- The Regional Code of Corporate Governance has not been approved by the Joint Committee.
- The level of Local Authority contributions and the level of reserves needs to be reviewed to ensure they are sufficient for future years.
- The 2018-19 Business Plan has not been approved by the Joint Committee.
- Delegation arrangements require clarification.
- Improvements are required to grant funding assurance arrangements (other than EIG and PDG), when grant funding is delegated to schools/Local Authorities by ERW.
- A Joint Committee decision is needed on how to progress work to ensure compliance with updated Data Protection Legislation.
- Annual ERW Impact Reports should be published in the public domain to raise awareness of the work carried out by ERW. Value added should be aligned to funding wherever possible within these Impact Reports.
- Support delivered to schools by Challenge Advisers is not applied consistently.

The factual accuracy of the draft Internal Audit Report has been agreed. Management Responses have been received, and are in the process of being agreed and finalised.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES



## IMPLICATIONS

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities <b>NONE</b>	Legal <b>YES</b>	Finance <b>YES</b>	Risk Management Issues <b>YES</b>	Staffing Implications <b>NONE</b>
<p><b>1. Legal</b></p> <p>Section 6 within the report action plan highlights the need for the Legal Agreement to be reviewed and updated, and for the Regional Code of Corporate Governance to be formally approved by the Joint Committee. Section 8 within the report action plan highlights the need for the 2018-19 Business Plan to be formally approved by the Joint Committee. Section 9 within the report action plan highlights that the Review &amp; Reform programme has not progressed as intended, as a result of Local Authorities being unable to agree a way forward. Section 10 within the report action plan identifies areas for improvement to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.</p>				
<p><b>2. Finance</b></p> <p>Section 7 within the report action plan highlights the need for Local Authority contributions and the level of reserves to be reviewed, and for delegation arrangements to be clarified. Section 7 within the report action plan also identifies areas for improvement to grant funding assurance arrangements, when grant funding is delegated to schools/Local Authorities by ERW.</p>				
<p><b>3. Risk Management</b></p> <p>Section 6 within the report action plan identified areas for improvement with the Risk Management arrangements.</p>				

## CONSULTATIONS

Details of any consultations undertaken are to be included here  
Not applicable

### Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
National Categorisation of Schools	<b>Xyz1</b>	County Hall, Carmarthen



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**Internal Audit Service**  
**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**Education through Regional Working Consortium**

**Draft Report**

**Audit No. 17117 (2017-18)**

<b>Current Assurance Rating 2017-18</b>	<b>Limited</b>
<b>Previous Assurance Rating 2016-17</b>	<b>Substantial</b>

<b>Report issued to:</b>	<b>Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director Jon Haswell, ERW Section 151 Officer</b>
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<b>Report copied to:</b>	<b>Ian Eynon, Deputy Section 151 Officer</b>
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<b>Auditor:</b>	<b>Justin Blewitt, Senior Auditor</b>
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<b>Manager/Reviewer:</b>	<b>Charlotte Hodges, Audit Team Leader</b>
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<b>Fieldwork complete:</b>	<b>07-06-18</b>
<b>Draft report issued:</b>	<b>14-06-18</b>
<b>Management comments:</b>	<b>10-07-18</b>
<b>Final report issued:</b>	

## Education through Regional Working Consortium

This report may contain data as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018, which must be treated as strictly private and confidential.

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An audit review of the Education through Regional Working Consortium (ERW) has been carried out as part of the 2017-18 Internal Audit Plan, as agreed by the Joint Committee, the ERW Section 151 Officer, and the Managing Director.
- 1.2 The scope of the 2017-18 audit, as approved by the Joint Committee on 1 December 2017 included:
  - Governance (follow up of previous audit recommendations and Annual Governance Statement Priorities for Improvement)
  - Financial Management
  - Business Plan Implementation & Value for Money
  - Project Management of the Review & Reform Programme
  - Preparation for the Introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

### 2.0 Audit Objectives

- 2.1 To provide assurance to the Joint Committee, the Executive Board, the ERW Section 151 Officer, and the Managing Director that ERW has adequate governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements in place, which are operating effectively and assisting it to achieve its objectives.
- 2.2 To provide assurance that the 2016-17 recommendations have been implemented.
- 2.3 To identify areas of weakness and risk, good practice and opportunity.

### 3.0 Audit Methodology

- 3.1 We took an evidence based approach to our audit review using interviews with staff, review of supporting documentation and sample testing to arrive at our opinion.
- 3.2 Compilation of a formal internal audit report making recommendations for improvement and adding value to ERW.



#### 4.0 Audit Opinion and Assurance Statement<sup>1</sup>

4.1 We have identified a number of opportunities for improvement to the adequacy and effectiveness of existing arrangements, which if implemented, would both improve and add value to ERW.

4.2 Weaknesses in the adequacy and/or effectiveness of the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements in place for ERW were identified and these could have an impact on the ability of the Consortium to achieve its objectives. Therefore, **Limited Assurance** is given on the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements in place for ERW.

4.3 Key areas of weakness and risk, good practice and opportunity identified during the audit review are summarised below:

##### Governance

- The Review & Reform Programme has not progressed as a result of Authorities being unable to agree a way forward. This has impacted on governance arrangements, with the updated Code of Corporate Governance and an updated Legal Agreement not yet being agreed by Joint Committee, one Authority not having paid its contribution, and Welsh Government withholding funding.
- A number of recommendations agreed during the previous audit review, and priorities for improvement identified within the 2016-17 Annual Governance Statement relate to the areas detailed above, and therefore remain outstanding. Recommendations with regards to these have been reiterated within this review.

##### Financial Management

- The level of Authority contributions and ERW reserves requires review to determine if they are sufficient going forward.
- Whilst improvements have been made, there is still non-compliance with standing orders and procurement rules.
- For EIG and PDG, where funds are delegated to schools/Local Authorities, assurance is sought that all funds have been spent as intended and in accordance with the grant terms and conditions. However, for other grants, this assurance is not currently obtained.
- A number of financial compliance issues were noted where controls are in place but these were not always being adhered to.

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of the Assurance Ratings are shown at Appendix B

### Business Plan Implementation & Value for Money

- The 2018-19 Business Plan has yet to be formally approved by the Joint Committee which represents a significant risk. There is a clear process for implementation and links between the objectives/priorities and the plans/actions in place to help achieve these. Processes are in place to monitor progress against actions.
- Annual Impact Reports for ERW are produced to help demonstrate improvements in outcomes achieved and value added. There is an opportunity to improve these further by reverting to the previous format of demonstrating key headline achievements and the use of quantitative data to evidence improvements. There is also an opportunity to publicise these reports in the wider public domain to raise awareness of the work carried out and the achievements made.

### Project Management of the Review & Reform Programme

- The Review & Reform programme was agreed by the Joint Committee in September 2017 and project plans have been documented. However, the programme has not progressed as Local Authorities are unable to unanimously agree a way forward.

### Preparation for the Introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- ERW has received advice on this and have begun some initial work. The next agreed step is for a Service Level Agreement to be offered to Authorities to assist with this work. With the implementation date of 25 May 2018 now passed this is a significant risk area.

- 4.4 The arrangements reviewed and tested and an opinion as to their adequacy and effectiveness are shown in tabular format (Action Plan) at Appendix A, along with the weaknesses and risks, good practice and opportunities identified during the audit review, comments and consequences, and recommendations for improvement.
- 4.5 Prompt action to implement these recommendations will improve the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements for ERW and assist it to achieve its objectives.

4.6 A summary of the Action Plan is shown in the table below:

Expected Arrangements (Controls)		Adequate & Effective <sup>2</sup>	Recommendations <sup>3</sup>						
			A1*	A2*	B1*	A3	B2	C1	Other
6	Governance	x	1	1	1	0	1	0	3
7	Financial Management	x							
7.1-7.7	<i>Budgetary Control</i>	✓	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
7.8	<i>Compliance with Grant Funding Terms &amp; Conditions</i>	x	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
7.9	<i>Distribution of Grant Funding</i>	x	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
7.10	<i>Compliance with Financial Procedures</i>	x	0	0	0	0	4	2	11
8	Business Plan Implementation & Value for Money	✓	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
9	Project Management of the Review & Reform Programme	x	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
10	Preparation for the Introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	x	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>

\* Recommendations graded A1, A2 and B1 may be reported to the Audit Committee

## 5.0 Acknowledgement

5.1 It should be noted that all testing undertaken as part of this audit review was on a sample basis and therefore the results should be considered in this context.

5.2 We would like to thank all staff involved for their co-operation during the audit review. If the Internal Audit Service can be of any further assistance, please contact: Justin Blewitt, Senior Auditor (extension 5641)

Jo Hendy, Governance, Assurance & Information Manager (extension 6213)

<sup>2</sup> A definition of the Adequate & Effective ratings are shown at Appendix B

<sup>3</sup> A definition of the Recommendation Gradings are shown at Appendix B

## ACTION PLAN

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6	<b>Governance</b>				
6.1	Accepted recommendations from the previous audit review have been implemented.	✓	<p>Of the 15 recommendations from the previous internal audit, 10 have been completed as far as possible, 3 have been partially completed, and 2 remain outstanding as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risks within the ERW risk register should be articulated clearly to allow the event, consequence and impact to be defined. <i>Not Complete - assurance was given that training has been provided, but testing identified that risks still do not clearly articulate event, consequence and impact.</i></li> </ul>	<p>a. Risks within the ERW risk register should be articulated clearly to allow the event, consequence and impact to be defined.</p> <p><b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p>a. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> ERW has adopted a new format to present information on risks to Joint Committee. In addition, the new format will focus on activities within the scope of the ERW central team and with accountability to the Joint Committee explicitly. The Finance and corporate risks will feature, but not the LA level risks as the presentation and articulation of these risks cannot be directly influenced by ERW central team. The next Joint Committee meeting on July 16 2018 will ask JC to review tolerances and all risks as this new format is presented for discussion and adoption.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6.1 (cont)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scoring methodology should be consistently applied for all risks recorded within the ERW risk registers. <i>Partially Complete - testing identified that scores following mitigation were included for the Central and Financial registers, however, this was not consistent within each of the Local Authority registers.</i></li> </ul>	<p>b. The risks where the scores following mitigation are not completed should be followed up with the relevant Authorities to ensure a fully complete risk register is in place for reporting to Joint Committee.</p> <p><b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p>b. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> The LAs take responsibility for the LA element of the risk register. It was agreed that it their responsibility to follow up within their own governance process. The capacity to do further follow up adequately with LAs does not exist within the current central team.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> Following each JC Meeting</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> All LA Directors of Education</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6.1 (cont)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools should be required to sign a declaration confirming Capacity Building Grant funding has been used as intended. <i>Partially Complete – for the sample of 5 schools who received Capacity Building Funding in 2016-17 there was no declaration confirming it had been used as intended for 4 of them. However, process has been updated for 2017-18 as a consequence. This is currently being actioned for 2017-18 grant funding.</i></li> </ul>	<p>c. Schools should be required to sign a declaration confirming Capacity Building Grant funding has been used as intended.</p> <p><b>Grade: B2</b></p>	<p>c. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b></p> <p>There has been an improvement in accountability for schools in receipt of grant money. A new format to clarify in year spend, Head teacher authorisation and a clear delivery plan in line with the aims of the grant as part of National Mission is signed electronically on receipt on grant funding. A follow up process to assess impact and confirm that resources are spent as planned. The scheduled follow up on these is June 2018.</p> <p>All forms have been updated to include a clause on compliance with agreed spend.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> July 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6.1 (cont)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Code of Corporate Governance should be updated to ensure it reflects the principles contained within CIPFA's Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016 Edition). <i>Partially Complete - this has been updated but was not accepted at Joint Committee and further work was requested.</i></li> </ul>	<p>d. The Code of Corporate Governance should be approved by the Joint Committee. <b>Grade: A2</b></p>	<p>d. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> The Code of Corporate Governance was amended in light of feedback at Joint Committee with regard to the performance management of Challenge Advisers. It was agreed that the Code be amended to cover central team staff only, and that the individual codes of each LA cover the work of locally employed staff. The revised document with the codes of respective employing LAs attached is scheduled for approval at the next Joint Committee July 16 2018. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> July 16 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6.1 (cont)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is imperative that Standing Orders are complied with for all instances where individual or aggregate payments to suppliers exceeds £50,000 and that the spirit of the Standing Orders are followed for all individual or aggregate payments above the value of £5,000 and below £50,000. <i>Partially Complete – improvements made through strengthening tender arrangements but issues remain with high levels of expenditure with suppliers with no contract/exception.</i></li> </ul>	<p>e. Standing Orders must be complied with for all instances where individual or aggregate payments to suppliers exceeds £50,000 and that the spirit of the Standing Orders are followed for all individual or aggregate payments above the value of £5,000 and below £50,000.</p> <p><b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p>e. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> Powys County Council have been unable to provide support to ERW with regard to procurement. ERW has undertaken its own arrangements in the meantime and has procured externally for services. Since January 2018, Pembrokeshire County Council have supported this work. A paper outlining SLA requirements for the coming year are included as part of the papers for Joint Committee July 16 2018. No other LA came forward to support.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> Rolling programme in place from April 2018. With milestones – September 2018 and January 2019</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>



No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6.2	Annual Governance Statement Priorities for Improvement have been addressed.	✘	<p>Of the 5 Annual Governance Statement Priorities for Improvement, 2 have been completed as far as possible, 2 have been partially completed, and 1 remains outstanding as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Code of Corporate Governance for ERW needs to be re-written in line with the requirements of CIPFA's Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 (refer to recommendation 6.1d).</li> <li>• The ERW Legal Agreement, which would include details of the Service Level Agreements between ERW and respective authorities, needs to be reviewed and updated in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Lead Director. <i>Internal Audit was informed that initial work was undertaken but this is on hold pending the Review &amp; Reform Programme.</i></li> </ul>	<p>a. The ERW Legal Agreement, which would include details of the Service Level Agreements between ERW and respective authorities, needs to be reviewed and updated in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Lead Director.</p> <p><b>Grade: A1</b></p>	<p>a. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> The work on the Legal Agreement was put on hold whilst the Review and Reform programme was shaped. It was envisaged that the Review and Reform programme would lead to changes to the agreement.</p> <p>The ERW Review and Reform Programme was designed and scheduled to mitigate many risks including this one. There has been insufficient progress on actions to facilitate the changes necessary</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> March 2019</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Lead Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
6.2 (cont)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support delivered to schools by Challenge Advisers needs to be applied consistently in line with identified need and recorded so that the impact of support can be effectively measured.</li> </ul>	<p>b. Support delivered to schools by Challenge Advisers needs to be applied consistently in line with identified need and recorded so that the impact of support can be effectively measured.</p> <p><b>Grade: B1</b></p>	<p>b. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> Three Challenge Advisers are employed by ERW and are following the guidance as set out for the termly Core Support Visits. The ERW Review and Reform programme was designed and scheduled to mitigate many risks including this one. There has been insufficient progress on actions to facilitate the changes necessary.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> All LA Education Directors</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7	<b>Financial Management</b>				
<b>Budgetary Control</b>					
7.1	There is a clear budget setting process in place.	✓	ERW has a £250k core budget made up of contributions from each Authority. Internal Audit was informed that the Managing Director, Deputy Section 151 Officer and Senior Accountant set the budget for this funding based on the previous year spend plus inflation and any expected additional expenditure. Use of an element of reserves is also budgeted for at the start of the year. Grant allocations make up the remainder of the funding received by ERW. Internal Audit were advised that a draft budget/spend plan is completed for each grant though this is difficult (particularly at the start of the year) due to late notification of funding from Welsh Government. There is therefore an element for most grants that is recorded as unallocated. The Managing Director stated that there should be improvements to this in 2018-19 as Welsh Government will be awarding just one main grant rather than a number of grants.	-	-

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.2	The ERW budget is formally approved on an annual basis.	✓	The central ERW budget for 2017-18 was approved by the Joint Committee in February 2017. This included a total contribution of £250k from the 6 Local Authorities, an additional £194k from the local authority reserve, and indicative grant figures (no formal grant offer letters had been received at this time). The 2018-19 budget was approved by the Joint Committee on 21/03/18.	-	-
7.3	Budgets are monitored on a regular basis.	✓	The Managing Director confirmed that the budget is monitored in conjunction with the Deputy Section 151 Officer. The Managing Director also stated that 6 weekly business plan and budget monitoring meetings are held, where the budget is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Senior Accountant. The Joint Committee meets on a quarterly basis and budget monitoring reports are taken to each meeting.	-	-

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.4	Financial performance is in line with budgets.	✓	<p>The majority of ERW spend is grant funded and expenditure therefore has to reconcile to the grant awarded. Any underspends have to be paid back to the awarding body, and Internal Audit was informed that this was the case for some Authority expenditure in 2016-17. To avoid this happening in 2017-18, Authorities were provided with funds based on actual expenditure (rather than being given the funds in advance) and verbal updates were requested each quarter to determine if funds had been spent (Internal Audit was informed that for 2017-18 Authorities gave assurance that the funds were spent). Any ERW overspends (central budget or grants) would need to be funded from reserves. Central spend is consistently more than the £250k contributions received from Authorities and an element of reserves is used each year. Reserves are therefore reducing each year and there will come a point where there will not be sufficient funds available. The level of reserves as at 31/03/19 is estimated to be £386k (based on 2017-18 usage, this would only be sufficient to fund a further 2 years).</p>	<p>The level of Local Authority contributions and the level of reserves should be reviewed to determine if they are sufficient or if additional contributions are required from Authorities going forward.</p> <p><b>Grade: A1</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> Both contributions and reserves have been highlighted by the Section 151 Officer in monitoring reports and financial statements to Joint Committee.</p> <p>The ERW Review and Reform programme was designed and scheduled to mitigate many risks including this one. There has been insufficient progress on actions to facilitate the changes necessary.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Section 151 Officer</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.4 (cont)			<p>A "Review of ERW Financial Arrangements" report was taken to Joint Committee in September 2017 and this reflected the fact that the current level of Local Authority contributions would not be sufficient going forward. The outcome of this was that a Programme Team would report back to Joint Committee with a set of proposals which could be considered and agreed. Internal Audit was informed that this is currently on hold as it is linked with the Review &amp; Reform programme.</p>		



No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.5	The use of journals is minimal.	✘	<p>Wales Audit Office, as part of their audit for 2016-17, identified the high number of adjustments on the ledger (2179). The Managing Director stated that controls were put in place to help reduce the number of journals in 2017-18. Written guidance (indicating the type of project for each code) was provided to staff and codes are checked by middle managers when authorising transactions.</p> <p>However, the number of adjustments in 2017-18 almost doubled (4329), with just under half of these (48%) being carried out in Period 14. Internal Audit was informed that changes were made to the budget (grouping related budget codes and increasing the number of subjective codes) but this was not implemented until July 2017 (due to closure of accounts) and this would account for the volume of adjustments. Internal Audit was also informed that a number of journals would relate to salaries, and as ERW is mainly grant funded, there is therefore an option to move salaries between grants depending on work being undertaken by employees.</p>	<p>A review of journals needs to be carried out to determine the reasons for the high volume in order that processes can be put in place to reduce the number of journals going forward.</p> <p><b>Grade: B2</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b></p> <p>There are 3 contributory factors to the high level of journals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As part of the work to improve monitoring and reporting and to align codes better with grant lines from WG, an in year change was made to all subjective codes.</li> <li>2. The high number of grant funded posts also allows for in year changes.</li> <li>3. Human Error.</li> </ol> <p>A review of Journals has been carried out, and it is also noted that errors also take place when posting which need to be corrected. Further guidance and clarification has been provided to staff to eliminate errors.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> March 2019</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.6	All journals have to be authorised on the ledger.	✓	There is a separation of duties between preparation and authorisation of adjustments and this is evidenced on the ledger.	-	-
7.7	The accounts closure process has been reviewed to ensure that high quality financial statements and working papers can be produced on a timely basis, and that only transactions relating to work completed before the financial year end are included as expenditure in the financial statements.	✓	The Managing Director stated that there were issues with the accounts closure in 2016-17 due to capacity (ERW were without a dedicated Accountant for 6 of the 12 months). Posts have now been filled and a Senior Accountant has been in post for the full year and confirmation was obtained that 2017-18 accounts have been published in a timely manner.	-	-



No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>COMPLIANCE WITH GRANT FUNDING TERMS &amp; CONDITIONS</b>					
7.8	Prescribed grant conditions are complied with.	X	<p>With the exception of the Education Improvement Grant and the Pupil Deprivation Grant, assurance is not currently obtained that all funds have been spent as intended and in accordance with the grant terms and conditions when funds are delegated to schools/Local Authorities.</p> <p>Testing also identified that claims for funding are not always being submitted within the specified timeframes (sometimes, but not always, due to Authority claims not being submitted to ERW by specified timeframes).</p> <p>Internal Audit was also made aware of issues with the LAC element of the PDG in 2017-18. The terms and conditions of the grant state that this element should be retained and managed centrally by ERW, but this has not happened and these funds have been delegated to Authorities. Welsh Government are currently carrying out a review of the use of the EIG and PDG in ERW.</p> <p>For detailed testing refer to Appendix C.</p>	<p>For all funds delegated to schools/Local Authorities, assurance (signed by the school/Local Authority) should be obtained confirming that all funds have been spent as intended and in accordance with the grant terms and conditions. A possible option would be to add this to the existing evaluation process.</p> <p><b>Grade: B1</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b></p> <p>During 2017, two letters were brought to the attention of JC in relation to compliance with grant conditions, LAC PDG and Welsh in education.</p> <p>At school level, amendments to current evaluation process has already taken place.</p> <p>Grant Conditions can now be made available on ERW website for all schools or other delegated parties to be fully aware of expectations.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b></p> <p>October 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b></p> <p>Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT FUNDING</b>					
7.9	There is a clear methodology for the allocation of grant funding (including a rationale for selecting schools), and this has been approved by Joint Committee.	X	<p>There was a clear methodology for the allocation of grant funding and a rationale for selecting schools (e.g. directed by Welsh Government, based on performance data and discussions with Challenge Advisers, expressions of interest, posts advertised) for the sample of grants and projects reviewed.</p> <p>However, the delegation arrangements for making these decisions was not clear. A report went to Joint Committee in June 2016 stating that decisions on additional ad hoc Welsh Government grants be delegated to the Managing Director and it was agreed that this arrangement be approved and the Legal Agreement be amended accordingly.</p> <p>However, when this came back to the November 2016 meeting for formal approval, the delegation arrangements which were then formally approved by the Joint Committee stated that decisions on additional ad hoc Welsh Government grants be delegated to the Executive Board. This has not been happening.</p>	<p>The delegation arrangements for the allocation of grant funding need to be clarified and formally approved by the Joint Committee.</p> <p><b>Grade: A2</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b></p> <p>There is a lack of clarity as noted. The lack of clarity has not been helped by the fact that Executive Board only met twice during the financial year. Grants delegated to LAs proportionately (not approved by Executive Board, but agreed by Directors are: MAT, SRE, tests, post 16 money for ALPS).</p> <p>The scheduled work on Governance and organisational design led by two of the Directors – Kate Evan Hughes and Gareth Morgans.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b></p> <p>Dependant on decision of JC linked to above task due of July 2018.</p> <p>A new paper to Joint Committee to agree scheme of delegation.</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b></p> <p>Managing Director / Section 151 Officer</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>COMPLIANCE WITH FINANCIAL PROCEDURES</b>					
7.10	Financial procedures are complied with.		Testing identified a number of instances of non-compliance with financial procedures.	Refer to Appendix D for detail.	Refer to Appendix D for detail.
<b>8</b>	<b>Business Plan Implementation &amp; Value for Money</b>				
8.1	All aspects of the Business Plan are being implemented.		<p>The ERW Business Plan 2017-20 actions are recorded and monitored on the ERW Intranet site. This includes 402 actions, and at the start of March 2018, 36 were recorded as completed, with a further 304 recorded as on track (84% on track or completed). A further 3 were no longer relevant (1%), with 19 behind schedule (5%) and 40 with an early risk identified (10%).</p> <p>Internal Audit were advised that some actions were outside of ERW's control and sat with the Local Authorities. For the 2018-21 Business Plan, the actions are all areas that ERW have control of.</p>	-	-

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
8.2	Arrangements are in place to monitor the implementation of the Business Plan.	✓	<p>The Business Plan sets out the Level 1 Priorities and Plan, which are underpinned by Level 2 Business Plans and Level 3 Business Plans. Each Level 3 Business Plan has a Lead Officer and working group (where appropriate) made up of central staff and Local Authority representatives. Monitoring meetings have previously taken place every half term with any issues escalated to the relevant board. Evidence of this was viewed by Internal Audit.</p> <p>However, this process has changed for 2018-19 and a new quality assurance calendar has been documented.</p> <p>This includes a Business Plan Monitoring meeting each term which will involve all the Level 3 Business Plan Lead Officers and the 3 Heads of Service, with any issues escalated to the Executive Board. However, these will not commence as planned as the Business Plan is yet to be formally approved by Joint Committee.</p>	<p>The 2018-19 Business Plan needs to be formally approved by Joint Committee as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Grade: A1</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> The Business Plan was received by the Executive Board on 22.6.18 and very few amendments were suggested. These have been actioned and the report will now progress to Joint Committee July 16 2018.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> July 16 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
8.3	The Business Plan is aligned with financial planning.	✓	<p>Internal Audit was informed that the business plan is produced based on Local Authority priorities, national priorities, and local needs. From this a business plan with Level 1 Priorities/Objectives is developed, with operational Level 2 and Level 3 plans feeding into this. As information has been more readily available from Welsh Government this year, ERW have been able to identify relevant funding streams for each of the plans, but the plan could not be fully aligned to the budget.</p> <p>The Business Plan has yet to be formally approved by Joint Committee which represents a significant risk.</p>	Refer to recommendation 8.2	Refer to recommendation 8.2

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
8.4	A Value for Money framework is in place, is effective, and the achievement of value for money is clearly demonstrated, measured and monitored.	✓	<p>A Value for Money framework is in place and requires plans/projects to be assessed against 7 criteria. ERW Impact Reports are completed each year and these are circulated within the ERW region (e.g. to Headteachers and Local Authorities) but there is an opportunity to publicise these reports further in the public domain to raise awareness of the work carried out by ERW and the impact and value being achieved.</p> <p>It was noted that previous impact reports included headline figures and more qualitative data to evidence the improvement in outcomes. This was less so in the 2016-17 Impact Report which was much more narrative with no key headline figures. Internal Audit was informed that a new report style was trialled but it is likely that they will return to the previous reporting format.</p> <p>Various data analysis is carried out which indicates some key positive messages which could also be used within these Impact Reports to evidence the impact on outcomes since the inception of ERW.</p>	<p>a. Annual ERW Impact Reports should be publicised in the public domain (potentially via a press release) to raise awareness of the work carried out by ERW and the impact and value being achieved, and increase public perception. Value added should also be aligned to funding where possible.</p> <p><b>Grade: A2</b></p>	<p>a. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> Improved capacity and messages around vfm were planned as part of the Review and Reform programme. The scale is limited within current model but it could be developed further with better communication capacity.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> Dependant on capacity and decision of JC July 16 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
8.4 (cont)			Internal Audit was informed that previously grant funding was allocated to schools and evaluations were not always being completed to evidence how this money had been used, but now money is not given until a spending plan is in place and they will then be required to evaluate against those plans. Where evaluations have been completed, there is an opportunity to improve how value for money is evidenced by using qualitative data wherever possible.	b. Overall ERW Impact Reports, and impact reports for individual grants/projects should include qualitative data, and should be aligned to funding, wherever possible to help evidence the impact on outcomes and value added. <b>Grade: B2</b>	b. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> The model to track follow up and impact in the longer term is now possible through greater capacity to work at a cluster level and capture impact. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> September 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director
<b>9</b>	<b>Project Management of the Review &amp; Reform Programme</b>				
9.1	There is a clear business case setting out the need, aims and benefits of the project.	✓	A decision was made to progress the Review & Reform programme at the September 2017 Joint Committee. A business case overview has been produced and individual business cases for each of the 6 project streams (set out below) have also been documented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Improved Premises for Regional working</li> <li>• Communication &amp; Engagement</li> <li>• Digital Infrastructure.</li> </ul>	-	-

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
9.2	Project objectives (with clear links to ERW's objectives and vision) have been clearly identified.	✓	Anticipated outcomes are included within each business case.	-	-
9.3	A clear project plan has been established and is progressing well.	✗	Project plans are set out within the overview business case and each of the individual business cases. However, Internal Audit was informed that work has not progressed any further as all Authorities are unable to reach agreement on the proposed way forward.	Agreement on a way forward for the Review & Reform programme needs to be reached as soon as possible in order that the project can be progressed. <b>Grade: A1</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> The ERW Review and Reform programme was designed and scheduled to mitigate many risks including those in this report. There has been insufficient progress on actions to facilitate the changes necessary. Key elements such as a sound infrastructure for staff and the organisational design and delivery model are in conflict with each other. This makes progress difficult. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> JC Decision – July 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Lead Chief Executive



No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
9.4	Governance arrangements for the project have been clearly defined.	✓	Governance arrangements have been defined with a Project Manager appointed who reports to a Programme Board. However, the project has not progressed as all Local Authorities are unable to agree a way forward.	Refer to recommendation 9.3	Refer to recommendation 9.3
9.5	Risks throughout the project are monitored and mitigated against.	✓	Internal Audit was informed that a risk register for the programme has not yet been drawn up as the programme has not yet officially started. However, assurance was given that all of the risks have been recorded in the main risk register for ERW.	A risk register for the Review & Reform programme should be documented as soon as possible. <b>Grade: B2</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Refer to 9.3 <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Refer to 9.3 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Refer to 9.3
9.6	A Project Manager has been appointed to work on the Review & Reform programme, and is undertaking duties in line with this role.	✗	A Project Manager has been appointed on a temporary contract. However, the programme has not progressed, and the Managing Director stated that the Project Manager is undertaking tasks commensurate with the pay grade.	Refer to recommendation 9.3	Refer to recommendation 9.3
9.7	Key milestones and progress targets have been set and are on track.	✗	Key milestones have been documented within each business case but these have not progressed and are behind target as a way forward for the Review & Reform programme has not yet been agreed.	Refer to recommendation 9.3	Refer to recommendation 9.3

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
9.8	Sufficient processes for monitoring the progress of the project are in place.	✓	A Programme Board has been established and includes all Directors of Education from the region, the Lead Chief Executive, the Managing Director, the Project Manager, Human Resources, and the Section 151 Officer. The board has met three times to date, however Internal Audit was informed that all Local Authorities were unable to agree a way forward for the Review & Reform programme.	Refer to recommendation 9.3	Refer to recommendation 9.3
9.9	Issues that have impeded project delivery are communicated.	✗	Internal Audit was informed that project delivery has not progressed as a way forward has not yet been fully agreed by all Authorities and that all relevant persons are aware of this. An update on the Review & Reform programme was taken to Joint Committee in March 2018 but the minutes do not show that these issues were communicated.	Refer to recommendation 9.3	Refer to recommendation 9.3

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>10</b>	<b>Preparation for the Introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</b>				
10.1	Plans have been put in place to prepare for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	X	The Managing Director stated that initial advice on this has been obtained from Pembrokeshire County Council and some initial work on completing an Information Asset Template has begun. Training has also been provided to employees via an external provider (South West Grid for Learning). Internal Audit was informed that the next agreed step is to refer this to Joint Committee for a Service Level Agreement to be offered to Authorities to assist with this work. It should be noted that work on this has been left late and the implementation date of 25 May 2018 has now passed.	A Joint Committee decision is required on how to progress preparations for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) urgently. The ICO's "Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - 12 steps to take now" would be a useful starting point. <b>Grade: A1</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> ERW does not have the necessary infrastructure to respond as necessary on issues such as GDPR. GDPR work and advice will need to be provided by the statutory Data Protection Officer from one of the six authorities, by way of an SLA. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> July 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Lead Chief Executive

Assurance Ratings

Level of Assurance	Description
<b>Full</b>	There are either no weaknesses or only low impact weaknesses in the adequacy and/or effectiveness of the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements, which if addressed would further improve the ability of the Consortium to achieve its objectives. These weaknesses do not affect key elements of the arrangements in place and are unlikely to impair the ability of the Consortium to achieve its objectives. Therefore, we can conclude that the arrangements are adequate and are operating effectively, assisting the Consortium to achieve its objectives.
<b>Substantial</b>	There are some weaknesses in the adequacy and/or effectiveness of the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements, which could impair the ability of the Consortium to achieve its objectives. However, they would either be unlikely to occur or their impact would be less than high.
<b>Limited</b>	There are weaknesses in the adequacy and/or effectiveness of the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements, which could have a significant impact on the ability of the Consortium to achieve its objectives.
<b>None</b>	There are weaknesses in the adequacy and/or effectiveness of the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements which, in aggregate, have a significant impact on the ability of the Consortium to achieve its objectives.

Recommendation Gradings

<b>Action</b>	<b>Requires strategic management action or a corporate policy or procedural decision.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A1*</b>	<b>A2*</b>	<b>A3</b>
	<b>Requires operational management action or a directorate/service policy or procedural decision.</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B1*</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>B3</b>
	<b>Continued compliance with an existing policy or procedure.</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	<b>C3</b>
			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
			<b>Critical</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Seriousness</b>					

\*May be reported to the Audit Committee

Adequate & Effective Ratings

- ✓ Adequate and effective
- ✓ or ✗ Partially adequate and effective
- ✗ Not adequate and effective

Compliance with Grant Funding Terms & Conditions

Grant Reviewed	Findings
<b>Schools Causing Concern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst progress update forms were evident for the sample selected there is no detail received on actual expenditure, or assurance sought from schools/Local Authorities that expenditure was in accordance with the spending plan, and the grant terms and conditions.</li> <li>• Due to the late award of the grant, claims were only made in quarter 3 and 4. Both were submitted late. The Managing Director stated that it is common practice to have a verbal extension, and that Welsh Government are supportive of these as they are aware that ERW has been, and continues to be, under capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>EIG &amp; PDG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing identified that all claims for the EIG &amp; PDG in 2017-18 were submitted after the deadline dates recorded in the grant terms and conditions, though Internal Audit was informed that ERW would have had agreement for all of these from Welsh Government.</li> </ul>
<b>Pioneers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final grant claim was submitted late. The Managing Director stated that this was a significant issue at the end of the year, as there was a significant change in reporting expectations from Welsh Government.</li> </ul>
<b>Raising Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing confirmed that all claims were submitted late (though for the first claim it is noted that the award of funding was not received until September 2017 {claim was due 13/10/17}).</li> </ul>
<b>GCSE 17-18 Allocation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant claims were submitted late.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Fund 2017-18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst an interim progress evaluation was completed for each project, there is no monitoring of actual expenditure during the year or assurance sought from Authorities to confirm what the funds have actually been spent on and/or to provide assurance that it has been spent as intended and in accordance with the grant terms and conditions.</li> <li>• The final claim (due by the 31st March 2018) was submitted half way through April. The Managing Director stated that getting the information from all Local Authorities was a challenge, and that Welsh Government understand that all the timescales are established for regions as single entities (and the fact that ERW is not set up in the same way is understood).</li> </ul>

Compliance with Financial Procedures

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>PAYMENT OF EMPLOYEES</b>					
7.10a	All salaries and related expense payments to individuals are paid through the official Payroll System.	✓	<p>All salaries are paid via the official Payroll System (iTrent) with the exception of seconded employees who are paid via their own Local Authority payroll and reimbursement is then sought in the form of an invoice sent to ERW.</p> <p>Examples were identified of expenses being paid using the purchase card. On some occasions this had resulted in the Managing Director effectively authorising her own expenses. Payroll and Procurement both confirmed that accommodation costs should be paid for via the purchase card but any expenses should be paid by the employee and reimbursed via Payroll.</p> <p>The Managing Director raised some concerns with regards to employee's being out of pocket and that some are only seconded. Payroll confirmed the process was the same for all employees whereby the individuals would pay and then be reimbursed a month in arrears.</p>	<p>Expenses other than accommodation costs (e.g. meals) should be paid for by the employee and reimbursement sought via Payroll using the Travel &amp; Expenses Claim Form (seconded employees should seek reimbursement from their originating Authority who can then seek reimbursement from ERW). These should not be paid for using the purchase card and should not exceed the limits set out within the Travel &amp; Expenses policy.</p> <p><b>Grade: C1</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b></p> <p>One employee was not claiming expenses via home LA. It is not clear why this arrangement was set up. This has now been changed to home LA. All meals will be paid and reclaimed, and not as part of accommodation. Any costs which should not have been claimed have been reimbursed by individuals. The total amount was £7.50.</p> <p>However, the limit of claiming no more than 100 miles a day is proving a challenge now moving forward with travel claims for staff working on a regional footprint. Need to request change from Pembrokeshire travel and subsistence policy.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> Already actioned</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.10a (cont)			Seconded employees would need to seek reimbursement from their originating Authority (who would then seek reimbursement from ERW).		
7.10b	Supporting records are maintained and arrangements are in place to verify and monitor payments for seconded employees.	✓	Seconded employees continue to be paid by their employer, who invoice ERW for reimbursement. A spreadsheet of expected payments and invoices received for seconded Leaders of Learning is maintained. Testing identified reimbursements for seconded employees dating back to November 2017 and January 2018 which had not been reimbursed at the start of March 2018. Delays were mainly due to schools not yet having submitted invoices. Internal Audit was informed that the reimbursements for Pembrokeshire would now be processed via journal, and invoices requested from other Authorities.	Schools should be reminded of the need to submit invoices for reimbursement of secondments promptly or alternative reimbursement arrangements should be investigated (e.g. if salary is fixed, a periodic reimbursement could be set up without the need for an invoice to be submitted). Prompt reimbursement of salaries should then be made.  <b>Grade: B2</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Actively, the team have reminded schools. Managing Director is meeting all schools and will remind them before end July 2018. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> September 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director



Page No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
40 7.10c	Authorised signatory lists are up to date and ERW staff are aware of who the authorised officers are.	✓	Authorised signatory details have been provided to the Payroll section. Testing identified a small number of submissions for payment which had been submitted by an Officer <sup>4</sup> (who is not an authorised signatory) with no evidence of authorisation.	All payment requests submitted to Payroll should be submitted by (or show evidence of approval by) authorised officers. If necessary, the authorised signatory list held by Payroll should be updated. <b>Grade: C2</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> All process updated. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Already updated <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director
7.10d	Timesheets are completed accurately and promptly.	✓	Testing identified some delays in the submission and payment of timesheets. Examples of employees submitting claims at the start of December and not being paid until February, and an example of an employee submitting a claim in October 2017 for work/meetings completed in early 2017 were noted.	External mentors should be reminded of the requirement to submit claims promptly, and these should be forwarded to Payroll in a timely manner. <b>Grade: C2</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> This area of work is a known matter of concern due to historical errors. Activities to pay promptly and accurately have been undertaken. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Already undertaken <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director

<sup>4</sup> Specific details have been made available to the Managing Director and Section 151 Officer.



No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.10e	Timesheets are signed off by the employee and an authorised officer.	✓	A sample of timesheets was tested and confirmed that all were signed by the employee (with the exception of one). All had been signed by an authorised officer (though not always dated).	-	-
7.10f	Employees do not work continuously for more than 6 hours without taking an unpaid break (unless there is prior approval).	✗	Review of admin staff flexi records identified that employees are at times working full days without taking an unpaid break. This contravenes the Working Time Directive and Flexible Working Scheme which states that a minimum 30 minute break must be taken after working 6 hours. Internal Audit was informed that ERW will now be moving to electronic recording via Pembrokeshire County Council's HFX system.	Employees should not work continuously for more than 6 hours without taking an unpaid break (unless this has been formally approved and documented). <b>Grade: C1</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> The current spreadsheet was not set up adequately. Therefore a decision to move to the HFX system will support greater clarity and accuracy. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Immediate and already undertaken <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director

Page No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
42  7.10g	Employee absence is recorded accurately and promptly, and is monitored and reported on a regular basis.	✓	<p>Sickness absence is reported to Human Resources and recorded on iTrent via monthly returns. Testing did not identify any issues.</p> <p>Testing of flexi records identified some anomalies resulting in employees being credited with more hours than they are entitled to. Examples included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employees claiming 7 hours 30 minutes per day for annual leave (equating to 37 hours 30minutes for a week when they are contracted for 37 hours) - some were recording 7 hours for leave on a Friday to compensate for this but others were not.</li> <li>employees working less than 37hrs per week were credited with 7 hours 30 minutes for leave rather than their standard working hours.</li> </ul> <p>These should be resolved by ERW moving to electronic records via Pembrokeshire County Council's HFX system.</p>	<p>Correct working patterns should be entered onto the HFX system to ensure that any employees working reduced hours are only credited with their contracted hours for periods of absence.</p> <p><b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> The current spreadsheet was not set up adequately. Therefore a decision to move to the HFX system will support greater clarity and accuracy. All staff have reviewed and corrected their records from April 1 2018.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> Immediate</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>Purchase of Supplies &amp; Services</b>					
7.10h	Relevant staff are aware of the Financial Regulations which have to be followed.		ERW have adopted Pembrokeshire's Financial Regulations and this is referenced in their Code of Corporate Governance, but relevant employees were not clear on this until it was clarified during the audit.	Relevant employees should be reminded of the Financial Regulations, Procurement Rules, and Standing Orders which ERW have adopted. <b>Grade: C2</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Finance staff have read Financial Regulations and notified ERW of this. Specific training has been provided as well as information during induction. New procedures are being developed for procurement. This will support staff. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Already initiated. Initial tender ready for October 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director
7.10i	Relevant staff are aware of the procurement and tendering requirements/procedures which have to be followed.		Relevant staff were aware that ERW have recently adopted Pembrokeshire County Council's Procurement Procedures and Standing Orders Relating to Contracts (from January 2018). However, officers were not fully aware of the detail within the Procurement Rules and Standing Orders.	Refer to recommendation 7.10h	Refer to recommendation 7.10h

Page No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
44  7.10j	A robust process (including separation of duties, authorisation, VAT checks) is in place for the purchase of supplies and services.	✘	<p>A sample of 20 orders and invoices was tested. Only 4 of these had been paid within 30 days. An additional £3k (10% late payment charge) had been added to the invoice for one late payment, although this was not actually paid by ERW. Internal Audit was informed that where late payment charges have been incurred recently, ERW has just paid the original debt and on the majority of occasions the supplier does not query this. A number of contributing factors for late payments were relayed to Internal Audit, including capacity, setting up new suppliers, and the Managing Director being the only authorising officer for transactions over £5k (and she can have issues accessing Commitments when away from the office). The potential for the 3 Heads of Service to be made authorising officers may assist with this.</p> <p>For 13 of the sample of 20, the orders had also not been raised on the Commitments system until after the invoice had been received.</p>	<p>a. Invoices should be paid promptly on receipt, and within 30 days at the latest, to avoid claims under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998.</p> <p><b>Grade: B2</b></p>	<p>a. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b></p> <p>During sampling period, limited capacity in the team had led to errors and slow pace of payments. In addition, sickness period by Managing Director led to further delays.</p> <p>Further work to improve authorisation process have taken place, and allows us to use commitments system more effectively.</p> <p>Further review of roles, responsibilities and capacity will be required as the additional compliance work will need to be allocated.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b></p> <p>Capacity will continue to hinder ongoing improvements. Unclear as to time scales currently. Joint Committee decision on July 16 2018 may help add capacity.</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b></p> <p>Managing Director</p>

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.10j (cont)			<p>An Officer stated that an electronic authorisation form was set up to try and help combat this but this is not yet being used effectively.</p>	<p>b. The number of officers authorised to approve expenditure over £5k on the Commitments system should be increased. A possible option for this would be for the 3 Heads of Service to be given authorisation. <b>Grade: B2</b></p> <p>c. Order should be placed on Commitments system at the time of ordering and not only once the invoice has been received. <b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p>b. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> The fact that Heads of service are not permanent employees of ERW would require change to roles and responsibilities and clarity on delegation arrangements. It is possible that Joint Committee may support additional capacity to central team on July 16 2018. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Dependant on JC decision <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p> <p>c. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Further review of roles, responsibilities and capacity will be required as the additional compliance work will need to be allocated. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018 Executive Board work on Governance <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>

Page No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
46 7.10k	Outstanding orders are reviewed and followed up on a regular basis.	✘	A review of outstanding orders on the Commitments system identified a number of orders which remain open dating back to the end of 2016/start of 2017. Internal Audit was informed that a review would be carried out at year end. It was acknowledged that this should be done more regularly.	A review of outstanding orders should be completed as soon as possible. These should then be reviewed on a regular basis going forward. <b>Grade: C2</b>	<b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> All outstanding orders were reviewed as part of the end of year closure process and there are none outstanding. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Already undertaken <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director
7.10l	The purchase card is operated in accordance with the approved purchase card scheme and guidelines.	✘	Only one purchase card had been used at the time of the audit. Testing was carried out for a sample of transactions and identified the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal expenses being paid for via the purchase card (refer to recommendation 7.10a), and instances of these exceeding the maximum allowance set out in the Travel &amp; Expenses Policy.</li> </ul>	a. Whilst it is appreciated that there is management discretion to exceed the accommodation cost limits in the Travel & Expenses Policy, this should be the exception rather than the norm and where possible accommodation within these limits should be sourced. <b>Grade: C2</b>	a. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Refer to 7.10a <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Refer to 7.10a <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Refer to 7.10a

No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.10I (cont)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation expenditure regularly exceeding the limits set out in the Travel &amp; Expenses Policy. A separate authorisation document in place for the Managing Director to authorise these.</li> <li>Purchases which did not represent good use of public funds (e.g. room service, refreshments for the office, no show at accommodation).</li> </ul> <p>Testing identified that monthly purchase card returns are not being submitted on a timely basis.</p>	<p>b. All purchases should be considered as to whether they represent good use of public funds. Additional extras (e.g. room service, refreshments for office) should be at the employee's own expense rather than from public money. <b>Grade: B2</b></p> <p>c. Monthly purchase card returns should be submitted to Procurement on a timely basis. <b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p>b. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Refer to 7.10a <b>Timescale for Action:</b> Refer to 7.10a <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Refer to 7.10a</p> <p>c. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Further review of roles, responsibilities and capacity will be required as the additional compliance work will need to be allocated. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director / Executive Board</p>

Page No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
Page 48  7.10m	VAT is taken into account and appropriately deducted for purchase card transactions where relevant.	✓	Testing identified that VAT had not been calculated correctly on 2 out of the 20 transactions tested (10%). For a further 2, VAT was applicable but had not been accounted for as VAT invoices had not been received.	<p>a. Where VAT is applicable, VAT invoices should be requested from suppliers in order that the VAT can be appropriately accounted for. <b>Grade: C2</b></p> <p>b. Care should be taken to ensure VAT is recorded correctly for purchase card transactions. This should also be checked as part of the supervisor review. <b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p>a. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Further review of roles, responsibilities and capacity will be required as the additional compliance work will need to be allocated. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p> <p>b. <b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed <b>Management Response:</b> Further review of roles, responsibilities and capacity will be required as the additional compliance work will need to be allocated. <b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018 <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director</p>



No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
7.10n	Card supervisors review and authorise all purchase card transactions.	✓	<p>The card supervisor is the Managing Director who is the budget holder and has management responsibility. Testing identified that all transactions had been authorised on the system.</p> <p>Testing also identified a small number of IT purchases which had been purchased on the IT purchase card. This had been approved by the IT card supervisor. The request for these purchases was made by an ERW Officer, though some were over their authorisation limit, with no evidence of authorisation by the Managing Director. Internal Audit was informed that an electronic authorisation form (to be used for all purchases) was set up to try and help combat this but this is not yet being used effectively.</p>	<p>All purchases outside of the ERW purchasing systems (Commitments and purchase card), such as IT purchases procured through the IT department, should be approved by an authorising officer within ERW.</p> <p><b>Grade: C2</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance:</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Management Response:</b> Further review of roles, responsibilities and capacity will be required as the additional compliance work will need to be allocated.</p> <p><b>Timescale for Action:</b> October 2018</p> <p><b>Responsible Officer:</b> Managing Director / Executive Board</p>

Page No.	Expected Arrangements (Controls)	Adequate & Effective	Comments & Consequences	Recommendation	Management Response
<b>COMPLIANCE WITH STANDING ORDERS</b>					
7.10o	The Procurement Procedures and Standing Orders Relating to Contracts which ERW are to follow have been clearly set out.	✓	ERW have recently agreed to follow Pembrokeshire County Council's Procurement Procedures and Standing Orders Relating to Contracts. However, officers were not fully aware of the Procurement Rules and Standing Orders. A Service Level Agreement has now been documented which should strengthen arrangements.	Refer to recommendation 7.10h	Refer to recommendation 7.10h
7.10p	Spend with suppliers is reviewed periodically to ensure it is compliant with the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts.	✗	Internal Audit was informed that this is done on an ad hoc basis, with reviews undertaken when staff identify expenditure with a supplier is increasing. Testing identified that whilst tenders, quotes or exceptions were in place for some companies where spend was over £25k, formal signed contracts had not been documented, as officers were unaware that this was required under Procurement rules. ERW have recently met with Pembrokeshire's Procurement team (with whom they now have an SLA) to resolve these issues.	Refer to recommendation 6.1e	Refer to recommendation 6.1e

**ERW JOINT COMMITTEE  
 16 JULY 2018**

**ERW CONSORTIUM  
 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017-18**

**Purpose:**

To provide the Joint Committee with the findings from the annual review of Governance arrangements for the ERW Consortium for 2017-18.

**RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:**

**To review and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2017-18.**

**REASONS:**

Statutory requirement.

**Report Author:**  
 Jo Hendy

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ERW JOINT COMMITTEE

16 JULY 2018

### ERW CONSORTIUM ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017-18

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Joint Committee with the findings from the annual review of Governance arrangements 2017-18 for the ERW Consortium and to agree the Significant Governance Issues and the Priorities for Improvement.

Management actions planned have been received, and are in the process of being agreed and finalised.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES



## IMPLICATIONS

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities <b>NONE</b>	Legal <b>YES</b>	Finance <b>YES</b>	Risk Management Issues <b>NONE</b>	Staffing Implications <b>NONE</b>
<p><b>1. Legal</b></p> <p>The review and update of ERW's Legal Agreement has been included as a Significant Governance Issue. The Review &amp; Reform programme has not progressed as intended, as a result of Local Authorities being unable to reach a consensus on the way forward. This has been included as a Significant Governance Issue. The Regional Code of Corporate Governance has not been approved by the Joint Committee. This has been included as a Priority for Improvement.</p>				
<p><b>2. Finance</b></p> <p>The business planning timescales are not aligned to the financial planning timescales, which presents concerns over effective planning within available resources. The level of Local Authority contributions and the level of reserves need to be reviewed, to ensure they are sustainable for future years. These have been included as a Priority for Improvement.</p>				

## CONSULTATIONS

Details of any consultations undertaken are to be included here

### Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

#### THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
National Categorisation of Schools	<b>Xyz1</b>	County Hall, Carmarthen



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Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith  
Education through Regional Working

# Datganiad Llywodraethu Blynyddol 2017-18

## Annual Governance Statement 2017-18

Cynghrair o 6 awdurdod lleol yw ERW a reolir gan gyd-bwyllgor cyfansoddiadol cyfreithiol.  
Y nod yw gweithredu strategaeth a chynllun busnes rhanbarthol cytunedig a chefnogi gwelliant ysgolion.

ERW is an alliance of 6 local authorities governed by a legally constituted joint committee.  
Its aim is to implement the agreed regional strategy and business plan to support school improvement.



## Introduction

ERW is an alliance of six local authorities governed by a legally constituted Joint Committee. ERW provides a single integrated regional professional school effectiveness service driving school improvement and learner achievement across the combined area of six local authorities in the South West and Mid Wales region within three hubs:

- Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire
- Ceredigion/Powys
- Neath Port Talbot/Swansea

### Vision

**“a consistently high performing school network across the region with every school a good school offering high standards of teaching under good leadership resulting in all learners achieving their maximum potential”**

### Mission Statement

**“we will build school capacity through support, challenge and intervention to become self-improving, resilient organisations which continually improve outcomes for learners”**

## Review of Governance Arrangements

### What is Governance?

ERW is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with laws, regulations and its ethical standards. The governance framework is the process, culture, values and systems by which this is achieved.

To deliver good governance in local government, both ERW and its Officers must try to achieve ERW’s priorities whilst acting in the public interest at all times. Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for learners and other stakeholders.

The next two pages outline the Business Planning Cycle and the Governance Structure in place to monitor and provide challenge to the delivery of intended outcomes.



## Planning and Evaluation Cycle



## The Governance and Accountability Process



## **Governance Framework**

### **ERW Business Plan**

A three-year Business Plan is in place to support the collective priorities and actions for the ERW Consortium. The Business Plan is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The [Business Plan 2017-2020](#) explains how ERW will enhance and develop the National Model of School Improvement and deliver the Minister's priorities in 'Qualified for Life'.

### **Joint Committee**

The [Joint Committee](#) is made up of the six Local Authority Leaders supported by the six Chief Executives and is advised by Lead/Statutory Officers, the Executive Board and external school improvement experts. Internal Audit and Wales Audit Office report independently to the Joint Committee.

### **Executive Board**

The [Executive Board](#) is made up of the Directors of Education of each of the six local authorities, the Managing Director, the Section 151 Officer (or deputy), Headteacher Representatives and external members.

### **Scrutiny**

All workstreams and activity both locally and regionally are led by the Joint Committee and are accountable locally. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the six local authorities' Education Scrutiny Committees meet bi-annually as a [Scrutiny](#) Group to consider scrutiny work plans and make requests directly to the Joint Committee.

### **Headteacher Representative Board**

The [Headteacher Representative Board](#) is made up of the Chair or Representative of each Headteacher association in the six local authorities. Its aim is to act as a reference point to ERW in terms of its interface with school leaders.

### **Statutory/Lead Officers**

Statutory/lead roles are divided across the Local Authorities and at the end of 2017-18 were:

Lead Chief Executive Officer – Phil Roberts, City and County of Swansea

Lead Education Director – Ian Budd, Powys County Council

Section 151 Officer – Jon Haswell, Pembrokeshire County Council

Monitoring Officer – Elin Prysor, Ceredigion County Council

## **Internal Audit**

Pembrokeshire County Council, as the Lead Authority for Finance, provides the Internal Audit Service to ERW. The role of Internal Audit is to provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of governance, internal control, financial management and risk management arrangements in place. In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, a risk-based plan of work was agreed with the Section 151 Officer and the Managing Director and was approved by the Joint Committee in December 2017. The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Assurance Opinion concluded that overall, limited assurance is placed on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, internal control, financial management and risk management arrangements in place. Management have agreed to implement the recommendations made following the internal audit review. The implementation of these recommendations in an effective and timely manner will assist in strengthening the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements in place.

In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Internal Audit Service has recently been subject to an External Assessment. The Assessment concluded that the Internal Audit Service conforms to the Code of Ethics and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and confirmed compliance with mandatory requirements.

## **External Audit & Regulators**

The Wales Audit Office are the appointed external auditors for ERW. Estyn provide an independent inspection and advice service on quality and standards in education and training provided in Wales. Estyn in association with Wales Audit Office published a report on the 'Quality of the School Improvement Services provided by the ERW Consortium' in September 2016. In November 2017, Estyn visited ERW to review progress made by the Consortium in relation to the recommendations made within the September 2016 report. They identified one recommendation where limited progress was made, further work is still required and has been included as a Priority for Improvement.

## **Review of Effectiveness**

ERW has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness for 2017-18 was informed by a self-assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016, which all the Education Directors and Lead/Statutory Officers, along with the Managing Director, were requested to complete. Additional assurance was provided from the Head of Internal Audit Annual Assurance Opinion based on the work undertaken by Internal Audit in 2017-18; the Estyn Monitoring Report November 2017, and the minutes from the ERW Joint Committee and Executive Board. The diagram on the next page outlines what assurance was required, what sources of assurance were available under the current Governance Structure, the sources of assurance provided and the areas for improvement identified.

Two Significant Governance Issues have been identified, along with seven Priorities for Improvement. The action plan on page eight provides further detail along with the actions planned and timescales for addressing.

## Review of ERW's Governance Arrangements for 2017-18

### Assurance Required on

- Achievement of objectives;
- Adherence to ethical standards;
- Compliance with laws, regulations and internal policies & procedures;
- Standards of conduct and behaviour;
- Financial management, including achievement of value for money;
- Sustainability;
- Quality of service delivery;
- Management of risk;
- Accountability.

### Sources of Assurance

- ERW Legal Agreement;
- Joint Committee;
- Executive Board;
- Scrutiny;
- Headteacher Representative Group;
- Policies;
- Business Plan & Strategies;
- Financial Plans;
- Internal Audit Reports;
- External & Regulator Reports;
- Self-Evaluation Report;
- Statutory Officers;
- HR policies and procedures;
- Impact Report;
- Value for Money Reviews;
- Risk Registers.

### Assurance Received

- Estyn Monitoring Report;
- Letter from Scrutiny;
- Internal Audit Report;
- Statement of Accounts;
- Head of Internal Audit Opinion;
- Joint Committee Minutes;
- Annual Assurance Checklists and Statements.

### Areas for Improvement

- Legal Agreement and Joint Committee membership balance;
- Allocation of Statutory and Non-Statutory roles;
- Review and Reform Programme;
- Commitment to CIPFA's Good Governance Framework;
- Business Planning alignment;
- Local Authority reserves and contributions;
- Delegation arrangements;
- Compliance with new Data Protection legislation;
- Support to schools;
- Schools causing concern.

### Significant Governance Issues 2017-18

Significant Governance Issue	Action Planned	Timescale and Lead Officer
<p>The ERW Legal Agreement needs to be reviewed and updated to ensure that it is enforceable and equitable to all member authorities. Governance arrangements should be reviewed; in particular, the composition of the Joint Committee and allocation of Statutory Roles, to ensure that there is no perceived conflict of interest.</p>		
<p>The Review &amp; Reform Programme, agreed in September 2017, has not progressed. This has affected the culture in ERW and its reputation with Welsh Government. The purpose of the Programme was to review the functions of ERW and the financial structure. A resolution needs to be agreed by the Joint Committee to ensure that a financially sustainable operating model, with equitable support and commitment across the Region is established. Roles and responsibilities need to be clarified to ensure accountability.</p>		

## Priorities for Improvement 2017-18

Priority for Improvement	Action Planned	Timescale and Lead Officer
<p>The Regional Code of Corporate Governance for ERW has not been formally approved. The Regional Code of Corporate Governance was re-written in line with the requirements of CIPFA's Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. The Joint Committee requested further work prior to approval. <i>This Priority for Improvement was also included within the 2016-17 AGS and remains outstanding.</i></p>		
<p>The ERW business planning timescales should be aligned to the financial planning timescale of the Consortium to enable effective planning within available resources. <i>This Priority for Improvement was also included within the 2016-17 AGS and remains outstanding.</i></p>		
<p>Currently reserves are being used to support the ERW core budget, as the level of contributions from Local Authorities is not sufficient. This is not sustainable and will result in reserves being expended within the near future.</p> <p>The level of Local Authority contributions required to fund the core ERW budget needs to be increased to ensure a balanced budget.</p>		



<p>The Scheme of Delegation needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is robust and operationally practical, whilst ensuring that there is clarity and transparency in decision-making. Decisions need to be recorded so that there is a clear audit trail for accountability purposes.</p>		
<p>Measures need to be taken to ensure that ERW is compliant with changes to Data Protection legislation (General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018) which came into effect on 25 May 2018. This will need to include the appointment of a designated Data Protection Officer.</p>		
<p>Support delivered to schools by Challenge Advisers needs to be applied consistently in line with identified need and recorded so that the impact of support can be effectively measured. <i>This Priority for Improvement was also included within the 2016-17 AGS and remains outstanding.</i></p>		
<p>Estyn, in their November 2017 Monitoring Report, highlighted that only limited progress had been made in addressing one of their recommendations, “that school improvement services address the performance of schools causing concern, particularly in the secondary sector”. Further work is required to address this recommendation.</p>		

We are committed to implementing the improvements outlined above to enhance the achievement of our intended outcomes. We are satisfied that these steps will address areas of improvement identified by both our internal and external assurance providers.

Signed by Betsan O'Connor, ERW Managing Director

Date:

Signed by Phil Roberts, Lead Chief Executive

Date:

Signed by Chair of the Joint Committee

Date: