

Proposed tightening to SLAs and in-kind arrangements between individual LAs and ERW

Context

ERW has been in existence in its current form since May/June of 2014. Standards have continued to improve at or above the Wales average and especially for pupils entitled for free school meals. Estyn have reported that our work and services to improve schools is good.

It is therefore timely, as the organisation matures and consolidates the rapid recent improvement, to refine key documents and working practices. In addition, it is expected that Welsh Government will have increasing expectations of regional consortia and a key role to play in delivering new ministerial priorities.

Therefore, the 'contributions in kind' (covered under the legal agreement) and the services provided to ERW under Framework of Shared Services require refining and in some cases formalising. It is proposed that the paid for services are reviewed for 2018, and the in-kind services in 2019.

Overall, the services provided to ERW both under agreements and by SLA from Local Authorities have been successful. However, it is timely to review value for money and the quality and scale of services as the organisation grows.

All local authorities should also recognise the principles in the legal agreement and the importance of being able to share services in this way. There is a legitimate and important principle here for collaboration and a common ownership of outcomes. ERW has led this style of distributed governance and shared services, and secured its success.

It is proposed that:

1. The arrangements for services in kind and paid for are made clear and explicit through a common style of SLA
2. Where current services work well they are secured until 2018 with time for review from April 2018. This reduces workload in making many and sudden changes at once and allows for planned exit changes.
3. Where current services do not fulfil the expectations/ requirements of ERW that the MD and Lead Director make interim arrangements to manage the situation until improved arrangements can be secured from April 2017.
4. Openness and transparency is given to the arrangements and all LAs are given equal access to the provision of services to ERW
5. Every effort is made to keep the ERW pound within the constituent LAs
6. The principle of shared services in-kind is maintained for one aspect of work (in each of the 6 LAs)

Service and evaluation	Arrangement and scope	LA	Cost	PROPOSAL
Audit Quality and also feedback and contribution to quality and improvement in ERW has been good in previous 2 years.	SLA in letter form. Amended annually	Pembrokeshire	£20,000	PROPOSE – to continue for period of Lead Financial authority is held by Pembrokeshire The Section 151 officer notes that having the IA function of Pembrokeshire supporting his statutory role is pivotal to accountability due to distributed nature of ERW’s governance of resources.
HR (employment)– Pembrokeshire ERW staff are employed by Pembrokeshire County Council for payroll purposes. Similarly, seconded staff arrangements are managed through Pembrokeshire. Pembrokeshire HR currently processing work but not undertaking HR work on behalf of region. Capacity due to ERW growth unplanned and can lead to significant delays.	No SLA Unclear how agreement was made prior to May 2014. Needs to include all HR work for ERW employees and secondees.	Pembrokeshire	No cost currently	PROPOSE – Continue until 2018 under clear SLA. Valued at equivalent of 2.5 officer days per week. Open up for expressions of interest to all LAs for three yearly period post April 2018.

Communications Working well and having significant impact on perceptions and brand of ERW.	SLA from 19 th February 2016 – 31 March 2017 Communications Officer working 3 days per week to promote purpose and objectives of ERW to all audiences, promote work of schools across region promoted to press and website. Working in partnership with LAs/ WG on plans and systems Maintain bilingual website and publish monthly e-newsletter	Carmarthenshire	£22,400	PROPOSE - to continue until March 2018 and to open for expressions of interest from all LAs for 3 years post 2018.
Scrutiny This work has had positive impact on the role of scrutiny in ERW and elected members report this as effective and joins up the work well.	Terms of reference set out. (No SLA) Organisation and preparation of ERW Scrutiny meetings and	Swansea	In kind	PROPOSE – to continue until March 2019 and as part of review of in kind services, to open up for expressions of interest for three years post 2019.

Estyn report work as good	<p>seminars with each LA</p> <p>Changes to Swansea in-kind commitment to ERW negotiated between Director and MD</p>			
<p>IT</p> <p>Due to IT support being located in Pembrokeshire and the increasing amount of secondments to ERW, support not always efficient and forthcoming especially when new equipment needs to be ordered and set-up for new members of staff.</p>	<p>Annual SLA April 2015 – March 2016</p> <p>Unclear as to how arrangement was set up prior to May 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reactive IT Support Services. - Provision of IT including laptops, i-pads, mobile phones, e-mail. - Provision of server storage, backups and printer access for just email. - Lack of proactive and timely service 	Pembrokeshire	£10,000	PROPOSE – continue until April 2018 under clear and renewed SLA. Open up for expression of interest from all LAs for three years for period from 2018.

	can hinder effective working.			
Monitoring Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide advice and guidance to Managing Director, Lead Director and Lead Chief Executive on matters relating to ERW's operation and governance. - To support Joint Committee and Executive Board members in undertaking their role within ERW's governance structures. 	No SLA, agreed within ERW Legal agreement	Ceredigion	In kind	PROPOSE – Continue until March 2019. Open up for expressions of interest from all LAs for three year for period from 2019.
Legal Services <p>To provide legal services to ERW.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eg drawing up of legal documentation for 	No SLA	Ceredigion	As necessary	PROPOSE – Pay for as required on advice of Monitoring Officer until March 2018. Open up for expressions of interest from all LAs for three year for period from 2018.

licence to occupy offices at Y Llwyfan.				
Network Admin Effective temporary arrangement to meet immediate needs	No SLA. Amendment to expectation in Legal agreement. ERW's intranet and systems have been developed on HWB. This expertise is not available in ERW team currently. 3 Days' per month Changes to NPT in-kind commitment to ERW negotiated between Director and MD	Neath Port Talbot	In kind	PROPOSE – continue until 2018. Review service needs at that point.
HR (School improvement) Effective guidance and advice to MD, Lead director and Exec Board	3 days a month on average. To lead, inform and coordinate the work of the 6 LAs in supporting capability and HR functions. Coordinate the	Pembrokeshire	In kind	PROPOSE – continue until 2019. Review service needs at that point and open up for expressions of interest from all LAs for three year for period from 2019.

	joint approach to pay and conditions. Advise Lead director and MD in TU negotiations.			
Procurement No activity has taken place. This has caused difficulty in establishing adequate arrangements.	No SLA, agreed within ERW Legal agreement Provide and facilitate all procurement activity in partnership with MD, and Pembrokeshire County Council as lead finance LA.	Powys	In kind	PROPOSE – change to use Pembrokeshire’s procurement regulations as lead finance authority. Changes to Powys in-kind commitment to ERW negotiated between Director and MD based on need.
Committee Services Clarity of arrangements and expectations have led to effective work	No SLA, agreed within ERW Legal agreement Provide clerking role for the Joint Committee meeting and the Executive Board meetings. Administrative function for Joint Committee.	Carmarthenshire	In kind	PROPOSE – to continue until 2018 (March) and for 3 years post 2018.
Section 151 Officer –To	No SLA, agreed within	Pembrokeshire	In kind	PROPOSE – Continue until March 2019. Open

<p>provide advice and guidance to Managing Director, Lead Director and Lead Chief Executive on matters relating to ERW's finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finance Officer employed to assist in all grant work, claims to Welsh Government, monitoring of budgets and paying invoices. 	ERW Legal agreement			up for expressions of interest from all LAs for three year for period from 2019.
<p>Finance Support</p> <p>JD and (new) appointment will be agreed by Section 151, Lead Director and MD.</p>	<p>No SLA.</p> <p>Support and administration of grants and financial management for ERW. Coordination between LAs</p>	Pembrokeshire	£30k ERW pays the salary of one FTE financial officer to support the work of the Lead Financial Authority	PROPOSE -- to continue for period of Lead Financial authority is held by Pembrokeshire