

# Executive Board Meeting

## March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### SUBJECT- ERW FOR THE FUTURE

**Purpose:** To consider Carmarthenshire's position and response to the options appraisal for future ERW arrangements.

#### Recommendations / key decisions required:

1. The Executive Board is requested to agree the Swansea Bay City Deal footprint, subject to the provisions of the Legal Agreement.
2. The Executive Board agrees that Carmarthenshire County Council issues notice to withdraw from ERW, should unanimous withdrawal not be agreed, subject to the provisions of the Legal Agreement.
3. The Executive Board to agree an appropriate transition period subject to the provisions of the Legal Agreement. A year (2020/21) is recommended.
4. The Executive Board to authorise the Director of Education and Children's Services and the Executive Board Member for Education and Children's Services in liaison with the Leader and Chief Executive Officer to develop the preferred model and ascertain impact of any changes (including legal, HR and financial), subject to the provisions of the Legal Agreement.

**Reasons:** At the request of ERW's Joint Committee (December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019) Directors were tasked with setting out a roadmap/options appraisal for any likely future ERW arrangements. The Executive Board needs to consider Carmarthenshire's position and response.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted NO

Exec Board Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr. Glynog Davies

Directorate- EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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## March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### SUBJECT- ERW for the future

#### The ERW Regional Education Service

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, ERW's Joint Committee tasked officers with setting out a roadmap/options appraisal for any likely future ERW arrangements. The ERW Consortium is currently a Joint Education Service for six local authorities:

Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire
Ceredigion	Powys
Neath Port Talbot	Swansea

The Consortium acts on behalf of the six local authorities to deliver a service that supports schools to raise standards. There is much speculation at present regarding the future configuration and purpose of ERW. This is a matter of serious concern to our schools and education services.

#### Challenges

Since its inception ERW has struggled, due to numerous reasons, to function as an effective consortium. It has experienced a number of challenges-

- There have been several changes of political and managerial leadership and it has struggled to maintain a consistent strategic grip.
- The sheer size and diversity of the geographical area of the ERW footprint has presented operational and organisational difficulties
- School improvement has in many ways become compartmentalised and divorced from the broader learning, ALN and skills agenda. It has focussed on specific performance measures based almost exclusively on the traditional lines of attainment and attendance within schools and divorced from economic ambition.
- Different Local Authorities have different challenges and priorities and ERW has failed to address all of these successfully.
- There is sometimes conflict between accountability and provision of services.
- Some partners do not identify the added value that ERW provides and are not committed to making it work.

It is timely to review the footprint and consider the best outcome for Carmarthenshire's learners and schools.

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>YES</b>
<p><b>Legal-</b> If the current ERW footprint is changed there will be a requirement to amend the current six-authority Legal Agreement to take into account the withdrawal of the relevant Authorities. Changes to the Legal Agreement will require consultation with all Authorities. This will need to be agreed by respective partners and progressed through each partner's respective democratic processes.</p>				
<p><b>Finance-</b> The core staffing structure agreed by the ERW Joint Committee for 2020/21 is currently not fully funded and relies on increased contributions from each partner. Should partners withdraw from the consortium/not increase their contributions it will be difficult to deliver the agreed structure and ERW's Business Plan. Grant funding currently is delivered to partner LAs and schools via the consortium and should the footprint change we will need to work with Welsh Government on alternative arrangements. To sustain the current model would require an additional <b>£34,185</b> core funding from Carmarthenshire.</p>				
<p><b>Risk Management-</b> The Department and ERW's Risk registers reflect Carmarthenshire's current identified risks in relation to School Improvement and associated remedial actions to reduce the risks.</p>				
<p><b>Staffing Implications-</b> There are key posts within the agreed ERW structure which are vacant or removed due to Directors being charged with reducing core costs of the model. Removing staff to reduce has to be done in line with the employer's HR policies. Changes to the current structure could lead to significant redundancy costs.</p>				

## CONSULTATIONS

If there are any changes to the current ERW staffing structure/footprint we will need to consult and engage with ERW's core team in line with HR advice and guidance.

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

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
The National Model for Regional Working		<a href="https://gov.wales/national-model-regional-working">https://gov.wales/national-model-regional-working</a>
ERW Joint Agreement		In each LA