

**ERW JOINT COMMITTEE**  
**8 JULY 2021**

**VERBAL UPDATE IN REGARD TO PROVISION OF CURRENT  
CONSORTIA SERVICES POST AUGUST 2021**

**PURPOSE:**

To provide the Joint Committee with a brief verbal update on proposed arrangements for the delivery of Welsh Government programmes and Consortia services from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

**RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:**

Joint Committee to note the proposed approaches post August 2021.

**REASONS:**

To ensure that the schools in the region are provided with the services and opportunities required to ensure improvements.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ERW JOINT COMMITTEE 8 JULY 2021



## VERBAL UPDATE IN REGARD TO PROVISION OF CURRENT CONSORTIA SERVICES POST AUGUST 2021

Until March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 ERW was an alliance of six local authorities- Carmarthenshire County Council, Pembrokeshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council, Powys County Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea Council.

When Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council left ERW on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, it became an alliance of five local authorities.

When Ceredigion County Council left ERW on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, it became an alliance of four local authorities-

- Carmarthenshire County Council,
- Pembrokeshire County Council,
- Powys County Council and
- the City and County of Swansea Council

Carmarthenshire County Council and the City and County of Swansea Council rescinded their notices of withdrawal from ERW with a view to leaving ERW on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2021. A Deed of Variation is currently being circulated amongst the 4 current partner Authorities to allow all remaining authorities to withdraw from ERW at the same time and therefore the current ERW Consortium will come to an end and the remaining partners will have to make alternative arrangements for delivering improvements in teaching and learning to secure the best outcomes for all learners.

Discussions are ongoing between the remaining local authorities in terms of the future delivery of the agreed functions.

Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea have agreed to form a new partnership operational from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and Powys are making their own local arrangements which includes working in partnership with Ceredigion on some aspects of school improvement.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**NO- a presentation will be shared with Joint Committee**



## IMPLICATIONS

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities <b>NO</b>	Legal <b>YES</b>	Finance <b>YES</b>	Risk Management Issues <b>YES</b>	Staffing Implications <b>YES</b>
<p><b>Legal</b></p> <p>Legal officers are working on a new Legal Agreement for the new partnership post August 2021. A Deed of Variation is in circulation to provide for each of the remaining authorities to give one month notice so that all authorities can serve notice to leave at the same time and bring ERW to an end.</p>				
<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>For the 2021/22 financial year, due to the planned demise of ERW, Welsh Government have funded each Local Authority individually by disaggregating the funding that would have been passed directly to ERW. To date, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea have contributed 5/12ths of the funding to ERW to meet the April-August costs. There is a concern in regard to meeting the costs for the remaining 7/12ths as the transition to the new structures will not have been complete. It could be argued that any costs above the costs of the new partnerships should be met by ERW's original partners until the new structure has been achieved.</p> <p>Two further meetings of the ERW Joint Committee are likely to be required post 31 August 2021 to consider and approve the Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion and Report, the Annual Governance Statement, the Statement of Accounts and the Audit Wales ISA260 Report and Audit Opinion for (1) 2020-21 and (2) the five month period April to August 2021.</p>				
<p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p>An additional risk, in regard to the costs of the transition from one model to another, has been included in ERW's risk register. A further risk identified is the new partnership's capacity to meet Welsh Government's requirements as the core team will be smaller than the current ERW team. Local Authorities may need to undertake some of these functions. This will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.</p>				
<p><b>Staffing Implications</b></p> <p>The current ERW staffing structure was created to service schools in 6 Local Authorities. Whilst some posts are vacant, others filled by secondments and some staff members have been successful in securing new posts it is probable that moving to new arrangements will still result in some redundancies however we will work to minimise these.</p>				

## CONSULTATIONS

Appropriate consultations will be undertaken with staff and their trade unions in regard to moving from the current staffing model to the proposed structure.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information**  
**List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**  
**THERE ARE NONE**