

Cabinet Meeting 22nd November, 2021

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW REGIONAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Purpose: **To approve the legal agreement to establish a new regional education partnership.**

Recommendations / key decisions required:

- 1) Approves the creation of a Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group on the basis of the terms of reference set out in the legal agreement as amended from time to time.
- 2) Approves the draft legal agreement (attached at Appendix A) to establish a joint committee for a new regional education partnership known as **PARTNERIAETH** to support the delivery of school improvement.
- 3) Approves the appointment of the Leader as a member of the joint committee.
- 4) Delegates to the Joint Committee those functions necessary to support the delivery of school improvement within the Council's area and the region, acknowledging and accepting that the Council and the other local authorities in the region, will each retain statutory responsibility for school performance, together with the responsibility for the exercise of statutory powers, of intervention and organisation of schools in their respective areas.
- 5) Delegates authority to the Director of Education in conjunction with the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services and Head of Administration and Law to make any further necessary amendments to the legal agreement and authorises the Chief Legal Officer to enter into the agreement on behalf of the Council together with any ancillary legal documentation necessary to facilitate the creation and operation of the new partnership.
- 6) Approves the provision of services by the Partneriaeth to councils who are not parties to the legal agreement, namely Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council in accordance with the clause 14 of the legal agreement with authority delegated to the Partneriaeth Joint Committee to agree the terms upon which such services are to be provided.
- 7) Approves the creation of a Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group on the basis of the terms of reference set out in the legal agreement as amended from time to time.

Reasons: As part of the move towards a new model of regional working, within education in the South West Wales footprint, Carmarthenshire has been working in conjunction with Swansea and Pembrokeshire Councils to establish a new regional partnership, the South West Wales Education Partnership, to be known as the **PARTNERIAETH**. The draft legal agreement attached at Appendix A commits Carmarthenshire to enter into a formal partnership with Swansea and Pembrokeshire Councils to establish a Joint Committee to jointly discharge the functions necessary to facilitate school improvement in the region.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted NO		
Cabinet Decision Required YES		
Council Decision Required NO		
CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr. Emlyn Dole- LEADER / Cllr Glynog Davies- Education and Children's Services		
Directorate: Education and Children's Services Name of Director: Gareth Morgans Report Authors: Gareth Morgans Linda Rees Jones	Designations: Director of Education and Children's Services Head of Administration and Law	Tel: 01267 246522 Email addresses: EDGMorgans@sirgar.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Cabinet Meeting
22nd November, 2021

Establishment of a new regional education partnership

Introduction

As part of the move towards a new model of regional working, within education in the south-west Wales footprint, Carmarthenshire has been working in conjunction with Swansea and Pembrokeshire Councils to establish a new regional partnership, the South-west Wales Education Partnership, to be known as the PARTNERIAETH.

The draft legal agreement (Appendix A) commits Carmarthenshire to enter into a formal partnership with Swansea and Pembrokeshire Councils to establish a Joint Committee to jointly discharge the functions necessary to facilitate school improvement in the region.

Carmarthenshire have given notice to withdraw from the Educational through Regional Working (ERW) consortium. In March 2021 Cabinet agreed that that more time was needed to wind down current ERW arrangements and create a new partnership by September 2021.

A Shadow Joint Committee of the Leaders, Education portfolio holders and senior officers of Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Powys met in July to agree how a new legal agreement would need to be drafted so that ERW would dissolve, and a new partnership could be constituted legally.

It has been agreed that upon the establishment of the new partnership all operational services will be delivered through Partneriaeth and that the ERW Joint Committee will remain in force with the sole purpose of winding up its business and establishing all outstanding liabilities. At that point in time all remaining partners in ERW will withdraw from ERW on one week's notice and ERW will dissolve. The ERW Joint Committee legal agreement will be varied to provide for these termination provisions. As part of that deed of variation it has been agreed that all outstanding ERW liabilities shall be divided among the existing partners calculated on a pro rata basis , having first taken account of and deducted any liability of Neath Port Talbot and Ceredigion councils pursuant to clauses 15.2 and 15.4 of the ERW agreement.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: 

Director of Education and Children's Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	YES	YES	YES

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The model is based on a vision of regional school improvement consortia working on behalf of local authorities to lead, orchestrate and co-ordinate the improvement in the performance of schools and education of young people. The prime mission and purpose of regional consortia is to help those who educate our children and young people. Local authorities retain the statutory responsibility for schools and school improvement. Being part of the PARTNERIAETH will support the Director of Education and Children's Services deliver the County Council's statutory duties in regard to school improvement and statutory accountability for school performance together with the responsibility for the exercise of statutory powers of intervention and organisation of schools.

Legal

A legal agreement for a new regional education partnership to be known as PARTNERIAETH will need to be agreed. The proposal replaces the existing Joint Committee for Education through Regional Working (ERW) and seeks approval for a legal agreement to establish a Joint Committee for PARTNERIAETH on a reduced local authority footprint.

Finance

Engagement at a political level through Cabinet, existing ERW Joint Committee and a shadow Joint Committee has been undertaken in respect of the size and diversity of the ERW footprint and the need to consider a smaller entity, value for money, transparency, stronger governance on decision making and high quality professional learning. The new PARTNERIAETH will be funded in the same way as ERW via Local Authority contributions and Welsh Government funding. In approving the legal agreement, there is a commitment to pool resources and specific Welsh Government funding streams to achieve better alignment with national policy and service delivery than can be achieved by each Council working in isolation.

Risk Management

If we did not engage in PARTNERIAETH there would be a risk in us being unable to deliver on our school improvement and professional development priorities. Joining PARTNERIAETH addresses key corporate risk in relation to delivering a high quality education to Carmarthenshire's learners and our ability to recruit and retain high quality and resilient school workforce who can respond to and deal with the transformation of education in Wales.

Staffing Implications

The functions of PARTNERIAETH are mainly described as professional learning to improve education practitioner standards and leadership development. The new PARTNERIAETH will

be a key delivery partner to each constituent Council's school improvement service and will deliver education improvement functions on behalf of each Council. As a result, integration and close collaboration between PARTNERIAETH's central team and local teams is essential.

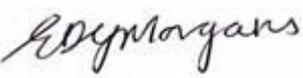
The proposal was to reduce staffing levels proportionately by scaling down the size of the ERW central team and re-setting the functions PARTNERIAETH will deliver. Formal consultation on a staff re-structure commenced on 20th September and ended on 22 October 2021. The new structure was accepted, with minor changes, by the Shadow Joint Committee.

Physical Assets

On behalf of the PARTNERIAETH, Carmarthenshire will be responsible for the lease of Y Llwyfan which is the base for the regional service. However, all costs associated with the lease will be the responsibility of PARTNERIAETH.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed:  Director of Education and Children's Services

Scrutiny Committee- the regional Consortia Scrutiny Group, which included members from Carmarthenshire, have been involved in discussions in regard to the new approach.

Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations- these have been consulted at a regional level.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED YES	Supportive of new approach.
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**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
The National Model for Regional Working		the-national-model-for-regional-working.pdf (gov.wales)