

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

Date: 18/01/22

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies
Portfolio Holder for Education and Property**

**REPORT TITLE: Post-ERW working in the Mid Wales Education
Partnership**

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

This report sets out to advise cabinet on the post-ERW plan for professional learning through the Mid Wales Education Partnership

2. Background

- 2.1 Powys is no longer an active part of the Education in Regional Working (ERW) consortia. ERW began as an alliance of six local authorities delivering school improvement services. Neath Port Talbot Local Authority left ERW in March of 2020 and Ceredigion Local Authority followed suit in March 2021.
- 2.2 Given this new landscape of regional working, it is vital that Powys Local Authority work with appropriate partners to ensure that we are not insular and that we give schools the best possible opportunities. In order to work alongside the other regions and partnerships across Wales and secure the best outcomes for schools, it is necessary to commit to being a full and active contributor across the range of areas and groups in education improvement.
- 2.3 Ceredigion and Powys share a number of existing partnerships, specifically relating to the Mid Wales Growth Deal on economic regeneration. The Local Government and Elections Bill came to force in January 2021 and the regulations state that Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) must be established for the following functions: Planning, transport and the economy. The Bill contains reference to Improving Education as a CJC function this is not included in the current regulations; but could be included in the future. The regulations for the Mid Wales CJsCs include planning, transport and the economy. It is therefore natural that Ceredigion and Powys work closely on the education agenda but without bringing Education into the CJC. It is suggested that Powys works with Ceredigion through a voluntary arrangement which develops joint working in appropriate and suitable priority areas for both Local Authorities. Detailed plans have been submitted to Welsh Government by both LAs outlining the areas of joint working. The joint working arrangements is to be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") as set out in Appendix 1

Advice

3.1 It is proposed that the two local authorities agree priority areas, posts and officers working across the two counties of the Partnership to collaborate on local and national developments.

3.2 The Mid-Wales Education Partnership established agreed ways of working in September 2021. It was agreed to function as a partnership rather than separate authorities with just one officer per workstream to jointly represent the Mid-Wales Education Partnership at meetings with Welsh Government and cross-regional working parties. This would ensure representation for schools in the Mid-Wales Education Partnership with the nominated officer responsible for all information sharing before and after meetings. The agreed system of briefing notes ensured all parties remained informed whilst only taking up one 'seat at the table'.

3.3 The focus of collaboration is currently on:

- ❖ Leadership development
- ❖ Support for Induction and Early Career
- ❖ Professional Learning for Teaching Assistants
- ❖ Deprivation and rural poverty
- ❖ Curriculum for Wales
- ❖ Improving pedagogy
- ❖ Research and enquiry

3.4 The Mid-Wales Education Partnership has relished the opportunity to engage with a range of partners including regions, other partnerships and individual local authorities to ensure equitable and quality professional learning experiences for all schools. We are currently working in collaboration on a wide range of national projects including: The National Professional Enquiry Project, the National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry, The National Pedagogy Project, The National Networks and The Wales Collaboratory for Learning Design. The Mid-Wales Education Partnership is taking an active role in these groups, co-ordinating and facilitating the work of practitioners, as well as producing and delivering professional learning on behalf of a range of stakeholders

3.5 Officers of the Mid Wales Education Partnership are full and active contributors to regional working in the following cross regional groups: The regional induction group, early career pathway development, digital professional learning, Curriculum for Wales, assessment and from the beginning of December, the Mid-Wales Education Partnership has full access to the resources and applications for the regional leadership pathways as part of the regional consortia leadership group.

3.6 The Mid-Wales Education Partnership is able to bring additional capacity and expertise to existing cross-regional networks. There is a wealth of experience across the partnership including officers who have worked in school improvement at a local and regional level. Many of the officers in the Mid-Wales Education Partnership have

worked closely with cross-regional colleagues in the past, developing resources and programmes to support professional learning. They have delivered to and facilitated the work of a wide range of groups of practitioners, undertaking rigorous evaluations of the impact of their work.

3.7

It is proposed that the working arrangements for the Mid-Wales Education Partnership should be governed by a MOU between the 2 Authorities and the draft MOU is set out in Appendix 1.

4. Resource Implications

Either an officer from Ceredigion or from Powys represents the partnership in national meetings. There are clear protocols and arrangements as regards to information sharing between officers of both local authorities and relevant officers have been informed of their responsibilities if they represent the partnership. Senior officers from Powys and Ceredigion meet every fortnight in further developing future joint working. This collaborative working is mirrored in relation to a range of projects and workstreams.

The Finance manager for Schools confirms that all resources for the arrangements have been fully costed and are funded from the grants that Powys is now in receipt of directly from Welsh Government in line with the terms and conditions of the grants.

5. Legal implications

The arrangement for joint working in appropriate and suitable priority areas for both Local Authorities will be governed by means of a Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed by both Authorities.

In addition, Powys must make sure that it is protected upon the termination or ERW in respect (a) liabilities and (b) the future Lease arrangements for the ERW building. Legal are waiting to hear from Swansea in relation to (i) a variation to the ERW agreement to allow ERW to be terminated and agreeing on the issue of ERW liabilities with existing and former ERW members and (b) an assignment of the Lease

6. Data Protection

N/A

7. Comment from local member(s)

N/A

8. Impact Assessment

An impact assessment is not required.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that cabinet approve the following:

1. Powys and Ceredigion continue to work together as the Mid Wales Education Partnership
2. Officers from across the partnership will collaborate on a number of agreed local and national priorities
3. The Mid Wales Education Partnership is represented on the full range of cross-regional working parties to ensure equity of provision for schools in Powys and Ceredigion.
4. That the draft Memorandum of Understanding as set out in Appendix 1 to the report is approved, with delegated authority to the Director of Education and the Monitoring Officer to make any further minor amendments that may be required.

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