

## DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Dear Cllr Price/ERW Scrutiny Committee,

Thank you for your letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

I'm pleased that Gareth Morgans, Lead Director and Greg Morgan and Ian Altman, ERW's Chief Officers were able to attend your November meeting and respond to your questions.

It is clear that ERW has continued to make progress and ESTYN's recent report, **Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19** highlights the effective practice e.g.

***Cameo: Supporting science teaching***

*ERW subject teams shared clear and helpful guidance which reassured and supported science teachers in the region. For example, the ERW science team gave examples of online sites that included video demonstrations of experiments, and useful and engaging resources that teachers could use for distance learning.*

*Officers in ERW provided a series of webinars for primary, secondary and special schools and PRUs that give an overview of the tools available through Hwb to support blended and distance learning, complementing their earlier work...*

*...ERW commissioned Professor Robin Banerjee to deliver professional learning to develop staff understanding of self-efficacy and connection as key to supporting wellbeing.*

It would be appropriate for the Scrutiny Committee to consider this report and the Estyn Letter which outlines ERW's specific response.

In respect to ERW's future, discussions are on-going, and we will take on board your comments in regard to commissioned services being viable and cost effective for the Consortium.

The proposal on the table is that a future partnership will be based on the City Deal footprint with Powys and Ceredigion developing their own models to deliver Welsh Government's expectations. We are well aware of the need to protect and ensure that the current staff complement are looked after and safeguarded and that any new model which involves delivering for others is at no detriment to the current partners- ultimately this approach could be an income generation one.

Currently Directors are finalising the required core functions of a new partnership which will dictate the type of staffing structure require to deliver those functions. It is clear that servicing 4 Local Authorities will have an impact on the size of the core team.

We will aim to get as much funding directly to schools, if appropriate, in order that they can develop solutions locally or procure support from other schools or ERW. Unfortunately not

all schools are mature enough yet to solve their own issues and will need a central resource to support their improvement journey.

However, it is clear that we will need to retain sufficient funding centrally to support the core team and deliver the core functions as agreed.

The Lessons Learnt activity was proposed by Internal Audit as part of the ERW CONSORTIUM ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019-20-

***Lessons Learned Review-*** *Consideration should be given to undertaking a Lessons Learned review to establish the failings of ERW to ensure sustainability of the future consortia.*

This has not progressed as a discrete piece of work however discussions between Leaders, Chief Executives and Directors of education have articulated the challenges with the current model and which will be addressed as we develop our new approach.

I would be happy for officers to attend a future meeting to share progress and test some of the ideas.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Emlyn Dole  
**ERW Joint Committee Chair**